

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
Pennington Borough Fire District No. 1
P.O. Box 387
Pennington, NJ 08534
April 18, 2023

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The regularly scheduled remote 'Zoom' meeting was called to order by Commissioner Brian Hofacker at 7:30 p.m. following adequate and electronic notice under the Open Public Meetings Law and N.J.A.C. 5:39. The meeting was also opened at Pennington Fire House for a Hybrid meeting. Annual meeting notice including information on how the public could access and participate in the remote meeting, make public comment and where relevant documents, if any, would be made available published in the Times of Trenton and Hopewell Valley News, provided to the Hopewell Express, sent to the Borough Clerk for filing and public posting and posted on the board's website, at the firehouse entrances and at board offices, as well as provided to any person requesting same in advance of the meeting.

ROLL CALL

Present by roll call were Commissioners Robert DiFalco, Ryan Fraser, Sandra Radice and Chairman Brian Hofacker. Meeting is hybrid with remote access and in person at the Fire House. Quorum established.

Also present: Attorney Appleby

Appointment to fill vacancy

A motion was made from the floor by Commissioner Hofacker to appoint Scott Schaub to the unexpired term of Commissioner Blackwell, said term to expire on December 31, 2023. The nomination was seconded by Commissioner DiFalco, and all voted in favor. Commissioner Schaub was sworn in by Attorney Appleby.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Hofacker opened the meeting up for public comments.

With no one in the public asking to speak on Zoom or at the Fire House, public comments were closed.

Chief's report will be later in meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Attorney Appleby requested any edits or comments regarding regular session minutes from March 21, 2023. Motion made by Commissioner DiFalco to approve minutes, followed by second by Commissioner Fraser. All voted in favor. Commissioner Schaub abstained.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Chairman Hofacker discussed the need for a resolution regarding an emergency appropriation for the pumper tanker truck repair. Attorney Appleby discussed the regulations and the limit of 3% of operating costs in budget. Chairman Hofacker indicated that he had discussed this issue with the Board Auditor and understood the limitation, that a supermajority vote was required and that this would need to be approved by the Pennington Borough Council.

Chairman Hofacker discussed the details of the bills. Attorney Appleby asked to address the LOSAP resolution to pay the plan provider.

Resolution 2023-13

Resolution authorizing Periodic CPI Adjustment to the Length of Service Awards Program (LOSAP) and Payment to the Plan Provider

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Fraser and seconded by Commissioner DiFalco.

Roll Call:

Chairman Hofacker	yes
Commissioner DiFalco	yes
Commissioner Fraser	yes
Commissioner Radice	yes
Commissioner Schaub	yes

Resolution 2023-14 Resolution for payment of monthly bills (March-April 2023)

Motion to approve payment of bills in the amount of \$42,230.62 made by Commissioner Fraser and seconded by Commissioner Radice.

Roll Call:

Chairman Hofacker	yes
Commissioner DiFalco	yes
Commissioner Fraser	yes
Commissioner Radice	yes
Commissioner Schaub	yes

No abstentions.

Assistant Chief Ingram and Chairman discussed needed PO's. Chairman Hofacker asked that all requests to bookkeeper to be on the 2nd Tuesday to reduce workload and billing.

2023-50 \$2178.86 Witmer Public Safety Air Pack Flow Testing

2023-51 \$1822.28 Champion Fire

2023-52 LOSAP payment

2023-53 \$1 Fox International (State Contract) Tanker repair

2023-54 \$1 Four Lanes End Tanker valve

2023-55 \$556.05 Union Line Yukon Oil Pressure

2023-56 \$275.00 Hunterdon County Fire Academy

2023-57 \$222.95 Amazon Lock out tag

2023-58 \$95.70 Amazon replacement batteries for pagers

2023-59 \$1300 Knox Box power

CHIEF'S REPORT

43 calls for the month. 3 in the Borough. 24 in the Township. 1 in the Hopewell Borough-52, 4 Hopewell Township -53. 6 Out of District (Ewing).

2 Gas leaks, 1 MVA/rescue, 9 accidental alarms, 10 mutual aid calls. 70.5 service hours at fires, 389 man hours for drills.

Chief Roger Demareski discussed volunteer recruitment. Chief further discussed mandatory training and how to handle member's compliance with training. Chairman Hofacker discussed if putting list out, let members know what they are missing. New auxiliary members got gear. Chief discussed the limitations on auxiliary members in response. Commissioner Fraser discussed consequences for failure to train and ability to respond to calls. Chief said that some of the training is online and want to be flexible. There will be two categories of firefighters. Workers' Compensation coverage can be compromised and liability discussed.

Chief discussed issues as to dispatch and communications. Response to Trenton – not sending crew unless one of officers responding also due to disagreement over which channel to use and Trenton’s refusal to move over to Mercer County channels.

Water rescue equipment – new issue for Company. More calls than used to be. Creeks and brooks not handling rain and creates issues.

Chairman asked as to number of car fires at hospital. Chief speculates that stormwater required a certain grass to be planted and if car with catalytic converter parks over it, causes fire.

Chief discussed the hydrants and Borough form for water use.

First Aid Squad Building - local government event. Chief talked to Mayor. Support putting an ambulance in the building. Any money from Borough to maintain? Expenses not overwhelming. Donation of equipment? Possible lawsuit. Hopewell Township Fire Commissioners believe that equipment belongs to them. Company may get some money. Commissioner DiFalco distinguished between Hopewell paying for service and ownership of equipment. Also discussed duty crew and dorms for overnight.

OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner Radice – discussed that Blackwell still on as administrator for wireless. Need to address and change. Commissioners need to file financial disclosure statements.

- Driver Abstract updates – Chairman Hofacker indicated “in progress.”
- District vehicle transfer of title to District – did it occur? Chairman Hofacker indicated that MVC problem and it was a work in progress. We have not gotten a new registration.
- Chaplain and insurance – Chairman Hofacker to make call.

NEW BUSINESS:

Attorney Appleby asked if the Board wanted to address the emergency appropriation for a pumper tanker truck that is in need of substantial repairs, namely main seal replacement, engine repair, brake repair and repair of a hole in the pumper, with said repairs being critical to maintaining public safety and welfare in the community fire service.

RESOLUTION 2023-15

A RESOLUTION OF THE PENNINGTON BOROUGH BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS, DISTRICT NO. 1, COUNTY OF MERCER, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AUTHORIZING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$17,380, FOR THE REPAIR OF A PUMPER TANKER TRUCK AND FURTHER CERTIFYING THE APPROPRIATION TO BE RAISED IN THE DISTRICT'S 2023 CURRENT FUND OPERATING BUDGET, IN ACCORDANCE WITH N.J.S.A. 40A:78-13 AND N.J.S.A. 40A:14-78-14.

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Schaub and seconded by Commissioner DiFalco.

Roll Call:

Chairman Hofacker	yes
Commissioner DiFalco	yes
Commissioner Fraser	yes
Commissioner Radice	yes
Commissioner Schaub	yes

Commissioner DiFalco asked about the budget amendment and emails were still personal emails that were sent to Trenton. Need to address with Auditor.

Commissioner DiFalco asked to discuss insurance audit with Mr. Nichols.

Chief asked about replacing tanker. Set up meeting as to repair with committee of Commissioners and Chiefs. Trucks are taking 3 years to build.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Fraser and seconded and Commissioner Schaub. All voted in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.