

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
Pennington Borough Fire District No. 1
P.O. Box 387
Pennington, NJ 08534
May 16, 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, Scott Schaub and Chairman Brian Hofacker. Meeting is hybrid with remote access and in person at the Fire House. Quorum established.

Also present: Attorney Appleby and Auditor Weiss.

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

41 calls for the month. 5 in the Borough. 23 in the Township. 3 calls for Hopewell Township-52, 2 calls for Hopewell Township -53. 1 call for Out of District (Ewing) and 2 for Out of District (Lawrence).

Total 41 service hours at fires. Total of 333 man hours at fires. 3 automobile/machinery. 1 brush/leaves/field call. 1 gas leak. 7 mutual aid calls. Engine 51 used 28 times.

Chief Roger Demareski stated that it has been uncharacteristically quiet. Crew went to Trenton for school fire on Monday. Tri-township Chiefs meeting occurred (Lawrenceville, Princeton, Ewing) and discussed need to meet with County Administrator regarding central dispatch.

Tanker repairs going better than expected. Cosmo DeMaro is in charge of long-range on equipment. Pump, transmission and engine all intertwined. Brakes in rear do not need to be replaced. Two major expenses did not happen. Bill between \$5,000 and \$6,000.

Discussion regarding first aid squad closure and building. Motor for boat (20 Hp) cannot be used. May use to trade in to get smaller motor or sell on GovDeals.

Ambulance was donated and Fire Company wants to use it. Chairman asked whether the vehicle had been checked out. Attorney Appleby asked who would own it, District or Company. Formal action should be taken to accept the donation. Donation in cash also made to Fire Company. Building could be used for duty crew and a gym. Pennington Borough not responding to Chief's emails. Chief wants the building to stay with volunteers and not go to paid station. Afraid that will affect volunteers. Chairman and Vice-Chairman to meet with Mayor on May 25th regarding shared service agreement. Mayor indicated that he did not want to talk about the status of building. Discussion as to hypothetical as to who would own the building and rental fees paid by Fire Company. Asking for District to consider at budget time assistance to Company.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Attorney Appleby requested any edits or comments regarding regular session minutes from April 18, 2023. Motion made by Commissioner Fraser to approve minutes from followed by second by Commissioner DiFalco. All voted in favor.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Resolution 2023-16 Resolution for payment of monthly bills (May 2023)

Motion to approve payment of bills in the amount of \$14,682.95 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.

Question to Auditor as to whether the District needs to keep Quickbooks subscription. Auditor Weiss indicated that do not need to renew Quickbooks.

Auditor stated that working on Audit and LOSAP.

Auditor Weiss discussed the Emergency Appropriation Resolution. This will be a deferred charge in 2024 budget. Should be forwarded to Borough for approval. Chairman asked if it effects any line items in 2024. Auditor stated that money will be raised in 2024 budget. Will offset with surplus. Will show up as its own line item, not a contingency line item.

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

PO's:

2023-60 cancelled and start with 2023-63.

2023-63 \$625 Continental Fire equipment, battery chainsaw

2023-64 \$450 NJ Fire Equipment, chainsaw upgrade

2023-65 \$1598 Witmer, equipment

2023-66 \$4000 Witmer, water rescue equipment (two full technician sets)

2023-67 \$1304 Witmer, gas detector out of warranty

2023-68 \$115 Amazon, pager batteries

2023-69 \$600 Marker Tech, batteries for wireless headset on truck

2023-70 \$4300 NJ Fire Equipment, Rope rescue (water)

2023-71 \$1200 Strobes & more, additional lighter for gaiter

2023-72 \$1500 O'Connor Designs, regraphic ambulance

2023-73 \$2400 additional racks

2023-74 \$8.95 Walts Outdoor Center

2023-75 \$35.27 Napa Auto, truck repair

2023-76 \$2275 Home Depot, tool boxes

2023-77 \$1500 Strobes & more, emergency lights on trailer

2023-78 \$935 Bookkeeper (not a line item)

2023-79 \$159.93 for Board computer (not a line item)

Assistant Chief Ingram stated that these PO items were after seeking multiple quotes.

OLD BUSINESS

- Emergency Appropriations already discussed.
- First Aid Building - already discussed
 - Clarification on procedures for receiving quotes – already discussed
 - No issues on water hydrant use
 - Drive Abstract updates are done
 - Chairman discussed vehicle transfer of title from M. Blackwell. Title came in the mail. Hold over for one more month.
 - Firstnet – try to get Karen Swift on as administrator for wireless.
 - Financial disclosures done.
 - Commissioner Fraser to get to bank to be a signatory.
 - Budget amendment – going forward, business emails to be used.
 - Commissioner DiFalco discussed insurance audit. Not satisfied with insurance companies responses to him.
 - Meeting for replacing tanker – meeting set up for 5/18/23 with Hopewell Township Commissioners at 7 pm.
 - Oath of Office – Scott Schaub form completed and to be sent to Attorney Appleby per Chairman.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Elections: Attorney Appleby discussed election and open terms. There will be two full terms up in November and one unexpired term for one year. Discussion as to who will be running for what term (Fraser, Radice, Schaub) will be deferred until next meeting.
- State Association of Fire Districts - \$300 fee. Join and see if worthwhile as to lobbying for legislation and fire issues.
- Shared Service Agreement with Hopewell – to be considered in August/September. Contract will continue on month to month until finalized. Current split is 24/76.
- Incentives for duty crew. Chief discussed possible incentives such as clothing allowances, point system for gift cards. Need to explore legalities.
- Fire Tax and developments. Chief discussed Bristol Meyers property and sale. Tremendous amount of calls there. Beijing Pharma must be paying fire tax and where is it going. Fire tax revenue should be tracked and not all going to Township.
- Attorney compensation discussed. Split expenses amount to \$150 a month.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Fraser and seconded by Commissioner Schaub. All voted in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:51 p.m.