

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
Pennington Borough Fire District No. 1
P.O. Box 387
Pennington, NJ 08534
October 17, 2023

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The regularly scheduled hybrid in-person and remote 'Zoom' meeting was called to order by Chairman Hofacker at 7:32 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 Chairman Hofacker, Commissioner Robert DiFalco, Commissioner O'Connor, Commissioner Sandra Radice and Commissioner Schaub. Meeting is hybrid with remote access and in person at the Fire House. Quorum established.

Also present: Attorney Appleby via Zoom, Auditor Carducci.

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

Chief Demarski gave the Chief's report. 49 calls for the month. 5 in the Borough. 28 for Hopewell Township-51. 2 calls for Hopewell Township-52. 3 calls for Hopewell Township-53. 6 calls for Out of District (Ewing), 1 for Out of District (Trenton), 2 for Out of District (other), and 1 for Hopewell

Borough. 65 total service hours, 475 total man hours at fires. 1 vehicle fire, 1 electrical/power line issue, 14 unintentional alarms.

Chief Demarski stated was overall things going really well. Three associate members (not in fire school/cannot go) including chaplain. Witmer made a math error and needed to be corrected going forward. All is under State Contract, and did not get the discount on some of gear purchased.

Chief applied for a grant from defunct Squad that can only be given to a non-profit. Fire Company will get \$30,000 for a 6-wheeler. Also applied for a high water truck in the amount of \$75,000.

Hopewell Valley continue to meet. Commissioner Schaub and Commissioner Radice may participate.

Company responding to commercial properties but have missing information. Some knox boxes rusted shut. Fire Marshall not sharing information, claiming confidentiality and won't give access to software. Particular concern responding to Bristol Myers. Fire Marshall not cooperating. May need intervention. Fire access lane an issue as to site plan approvals for development also.

Two vendors are working on drawings and options for a commercial chassis. Specifications will be ready soon.

Open P.O. on work for truck discussed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Attorney Appleby requested any edits or comments regarding regular session minutes from September 17, 2023. Motion made by Commissioner DiFalco to approve minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Radice. **All voted in favor** except Commissioner Schaub, who abstained.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Commissioner Radice stated that total expenditures for month were \$28,387.91. Credit to bookkeeper for getting WC premium lowered by \$40,000.

Resolution 2023-22 Resolution for payment of monthly bills (September/October 2023)

Motion to approve payment of bills in the amount of \$28,387.91 made by Commissioner O'Connor and seconded by Commissioner DiFalco.

Roll Call:

Chairman Hofacker	yes
Commissioner DiFalco	yes
Commissioner O'Connor	yes
Commissioner Radice	yes
Commissioner Schaub	yes

No abstentions.

2024 Budget: Auditor Carducci spoke to Board regarding 2024 budget. Discussed projected over/under. Need to order before end of year for issued P.O. Introduction by December 19, 2023. Radio repair was the only item over budget. Also include the \$17,000 emergency appropriation. Have a cap bank and need to consider that will raise tax rate. New development on tax rolls does not affect tax rate yet. Over 2% cap will require February election. Need to lessen budget by around \$4600.

Discussion regarding when a special election is required, and difference between capital purchase and the 2% cap levy question. Cap bank expires if do not use after certain time.

OLD BUSINESS

- Old First Aid Building. No update.
- No update on title transfer as to truck and MVC.
- Tanker. Looking at two vendors and preparing specs.
- Elections. November 7, 2024.
- Shared Services Agreement. Meeting with Hopewell Township earlier in the month. Looking to clean up the language. Percentage acceptable.

NEW BUSINESS:

No new business.

Other Business: none.

Resolution 2023-23 Resolution authorizing the convening of an executive session in accordance with the Open Public meetings act to discuss personnel issues.

Motion to go into executive session made by Commissioner DiFalco and seconded by Commissioner Radice. All in favor. Went into Executive session at 8:50 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (separate minutes).

Motion to go back to open made by Commissioner DiFalco and seconded by Commissioner Schaub. All in favor.

OPEN SESSION:

RESOLUTION 2023-24 Resolution that the District shall adopt a policy that if any firefighter is injured or has an accident/incident or appears to be not to be unfit for duty, whether on or off duty, the Chief of the Fire Company shall bring the issue to the Board for a determination as to whether that person needs further testing and evaluation prior being allowed to resume firefighting activities for the Company.

Motion made by Commissioner Schaub and seconded by Commissioner Radice to approve Resolution 2023-24.

Roll Call:

Yes: Hofacker, Schaub, Radice, DiFalco, O'Connor

Additional discussions regarding damage to personal phones on fire call and policy to reimburse for damage to personal property of firefighters damaged in course of active duty. Attorney Appleby to prepare resolution for consideration at next meeting.

Motion to close made by Commissioner DiFalco and seconded by Commissioner Schaub. All in favor.

Adjournment

Meeting ended at 9:33 p.m.