

**Board of Fire Commissioners
Fire District No. 1
330 Stillwells Corner Road
Freehold, NJ 07728**

Regular Meeting

May 28, 2024

Commissioner John Toutouchi called the regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners to order at 6:00pm, and Chief Haas led the flag salute. Roll call was taken, and the Commissioners present at the meeting were John Toutouchi, Andrew Story, Michael Fogarty, Phil Engel and Jonathan Dunberg. Board Secretary-Rachel Davis was also present. Board Attorney-Richard Braslow attended the meeting via teleconference.

Chairman Toutouchi called for a moment of silence for Memorial Day.

Treasurer's Report: Commissioner Fogarty read the May 28, 2024 Treasurer's Report into record.

Motion was made by Mr. Fogarty to transfer \$30,000 from Ocean First Money Market to Ocean First checking and to pay the bills in the amount of \$23,167.25.

Second: Mr. Engel

Roll call vote: 5-0 all in favor

Motion was made by Mr. Story to approve the minutes from the May 14, 2024 regular and executive meetings.

Second: Mr. Engel

Roll call vote: 5-0 all in favor

Insurance:

Commissioner Dunberg has the estimate back from 1st Asst. Chief-Frank Santore's car, which the insurance company will pay, less deductible, and Chief Santore will have to set up a time to have the work done. He hasn't heard anything on the flagpole matter, but it should go straight to the insurance company for payment.

Legal: Mr. Braslow reviewed three proposed bills that were introduced in the senate bill and worth supporting: 2083 (would allow certain volunteer firefighters to claim \$2,000 gross income tax exemption); 2386 (provides gross income tax credit to active members of volunteer emergency services organizations per use of their personal vehicle); and SCR82 (proposes a constitutional amendment authorizing municipalities to provide partial property tax

exemptions of up to 15% of assessed value for the primary residence of certain volunteer first responders). Mr. Braslow will keep the Board updated.

Buildings:

Commissioner Engel reported that the exterior lights are to be finished on Friday, and they will also be looking at the interior bay lights; Georgia generator—waiting on update; flagpole light at Georgia—waiting on Andy.

Commissioner Dunberg is still waiting to hear from the sign company for an updated quote. Mr. Braslow indicated that he knows a commissioner who does surveys, and he will inquire.

Commissioner Story working on shredding documents.

Website: (up to date)

Chief's Report: Chief Craig Haas reported the following:

- Provided a battery quote to the Board;
- Working on SCBA's, everything is operational;
- All packs are operational;
- This week 78 back in service;
- Meeting with DCA fire service to go over reports and make sure it's being done correctly and also finding out more about RedAlert.

Commissioner Story questioned the number of packs being replaced. 2nd Assistant Chief Dan Petersen responded by explaining that the packs are 14-15 years old, were cracked and starting to dry rot.

Commissioner Toutouchi asked who is qualified to check the air packs. Chief Petersen said that based on the owner's manual, anyone can do a basic inspection, but the only one who can repair an air pack is a certified technician.

Chief Petersen also reported that he will have the job performance sheet for the next meeting.

Chief Haas said he submitted the 5-year plan. Board would like to review it with him.

Fire Company: (no one present to represent) Mr. Fogarty needs to follow up with President Keane on the Fire Protection contract and have it signed.

Chief Petersen had a question about a check his son received for the engineer's payment. He will look at the check and get back to the Board.

Commissioner Fogarty discussed the member log-in kiosk system, which is charging annually. RedAlert will start once the county is ready, and they won't charge until January of next year.

Old Business: Mr. Fogarty discussed the subject of the Board approving members' gear for firefighting. A lengthy discussion was held. Mr. Braslow stressed that this is about uniformity within the district as well as a liability issue. He also stated that this is not a punishment, it is for the protection of the Board, the Fire Company and the individual.

Motion was made by Mr. Fogarty that, going forward, no PPE gear should be worn unless it is purchased or approved by the Board.

Second: Mr. Story

Roll call vote: 5-0 all in favor

Board discussed the family/child/friend in Chief's vehicle matter, which was previously made known by 1st Asst. Chief Santore. Mr. Braslow's concern was liability and public perception and recommended that the Board give the matter to the insurance company to look at. The Board then discussed the matter at length.

Motion was made by Mr. Fogarty that no fire apparatus can respond to a fire call if a non-first responder is in the vehicle.

Second: Mr. Story

Roll call vote: 5-0 all in favor

(Commissioner Engel left the meeting at 7:26pm.)

New Business: Commissioner Story discussed attending a Commissioner Association meeting with Commissioner Fogarty.

The Board addressed Chief Haas on the matter of the liability of responding to elevator and CO calls without lights and sirens. Chief Haas stated that the response matches the level of the call. Mr. Fogarty advised Chief Haas to use discretion and be very conscious of what information he is basing his decisions on.

Mr. Fogarty also advised the Chief to be very careful about bringing Chief's vehicles to bars and restaurants due to public perception.

Mr. Toutouchi asked Chief Haas what the procedure was for the Chief's vehicle when the Chief is on vacation. Chief Haas said that they always made sure that the company officers had a vehicle.

A lengthy discussion was held on members talking and complaining to the commissioners. It was concluded that these members are more than welcome to come to meetings instead of being anonymous. Chief Petersen suggested that they take their complaints to the Line Officers.

Due to time, the Board decided to table the 5-year plan review.

Sayreville air packs are still available per 2nd Asst. Chief Dan Petersen. The Board weighed their options from a life-safety perspective as well as a financial standpoint and decided to purchase the used bottles.

Motion was made by Mr. Story to purchase Sayreville's 110 used bottles given by NJ Fire Equipment Company at a price of no more than \$450 per bottle.

Second: Mr. Fogarty

Roll call vote: 4-0 all in favor

Chief Petersen said he will take care of purchasing said bottles.

(Mr. Braslow left the meeting at 8:07pm.)

Commissioner Dunberg requested that the Board consider lowering the minimum age for driving the pick-up truck. The Board discussed.

Motion was made by Mr. Fogarty to reduce the age for driving the pick-up trucks and Chief's vehicles to the age of 18 years, in only a non-emergency capacity and as long as they have their CEVO4 (or equivalent) certification.

Second: Mr. Dunberg

Roll call vote: 4-0 all in favor

Audience: (none)

There being no further business, Mr. Story made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:27pm.

Second: Mr. Fogarty

4-0 all in favor

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Dunberg, Secretary

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