

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

Regular Meeting

April 28, 2026

Chairman A.J. Story called the regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners to order at 7:00pm, and led the flag salute. Roll call was taken, and the Commissioners present at the meeting were A.J. Story, Michael Fogarty, John Toutouchi (on Zoom), Phil Engel, and Jonathan Dunberg. Board Secretary, Jaime Story, joined the meeting.

Motion was made by Mr. Toutouchi to approve the minutes from the April 14, 2026 meeting.

Second: Mr. Fogarty

Roll call vote: 5-0 all in favor

Treasurer's Report: Mr. Fogarty read the April 28, 2026 Treasurer's Report into record.

Motion was made by Mr. Fogarty to transfer \$30,000.00 from Ocean First Money Market to Ocean First checking and to pay the bills in the amount of \$22,876.89

Second: Mr. Engel

Roll call vote: 5-0 all in favor

- VFIS did not cash check for LOSAP yet; waiting for that to process.
- Mr. Fogarty is waiting to hear back from the bond committee to get on the agenda for the next meeting.

Legal: N/A

Buildings: Mr. Engel reported on the following:

- Two new magnet vents from plymovent magnet vents are \$15k; recommended to get one for now. Need three quotes, unless they are a state contracted company. Chief Santore also recommended to look into Clean Air Box, as it eliminates vents all through bays. Mr. Engel will follow up on state contract and price on one vent.
- Will be renewing service contract for generators at all three firehouses at \$2700/year
- Requested that officers keep an eye on the AC in their office to check that it's working.

Insurance: N/A

Chief's Report: Frank Santore reported on the following:

- March fire statistics included 884 total calls, 299 year-to-date calls, and 493.75 manhours. Activities included one work detail, one drill, 23 duty crew/extras, five special events/fire preventions, and Unit 78 responded to Long Branch for a strike team assignment. The department also responded with mutual aid to a second alarm fire at the Game Room.
- Potential summer fireworks details in Long Branch and Sea Bright are being considered, provided adequate town coverage is maintained.

- Rescue Weekend planning is ongoing. Payment coordination will be handled with President Greco, and the District firehouse and insurance rider are needed from the Commissioners.
- On Saturday, May 2nd, Units 86 and 67 will attend New Jersey State Forest Fire Training. Unit 80 will be out of service beginning May 4th for repairs, and Unit 95 will be placed at the District for coverage.
- Chief Santore requested use of the District building on May 5th for the Western Monmouth meeting. The second CPR class will be held on May 19th.
- A new forcible entry training prop has been received, and previously ordered gear has been reassigned to a new vendor/company.
- The District and Smithburg firehouse both passed inspections for training facilities and received Class A status.
- Unit 88 will be sent to Ford in the coming weeks for full service.
- Mr. Story raised concerns regarding the Long Branch fire response potentially leaving the firehouse without drivers available for local coverage. Chief Santore stated he will review the best response approach moving forward in coordination with the county mutual aid program.
- Chief Santore will include Mr. Fogarty and Mr. Dunberg in discussions regarding any reported damage to Unit 80 and whether repairs may be covered under warranty.

President's Report: N/A

Old Business:

- Harrisburg trip will be on May 16th – let Mr. Story know if you are interested.
- Recommendation by Mr. Story to purchase three AEDs for each firehouse; will consider adding to some trucks as well. Chief Santore will look into county discounts, if any.
- EMS bags are being updated by Second Assistant Chief Erik Schneider and Peggy Haas, Associate Member.
- Mr. Story spoke with the County Fire Marshal, who stated the county will not dictate IAR access. Everyone previously removed will be reinstated. There was also discussion regarding Chief 360, where some access has been restricted to prevent responders from jumping calls.

New Business:

- Mr. Fogarty asked the Board to begin planning for major budget items in anticipation of an upcoming large truck payment that will impact finances.
- Registration for Unit 86 remains expired. Mr. Engel is working to transfer the renewal process to the county due to ongoing DMV delays.

Audience: N/A

Motion was made by Mr. Story to go into executive session for personnel reasons at 7:34pm.

Second: Mr. Dunberg

Roll call vote: 5-0 all in favor

(back from executive at 8:17pm)

Motion was made by Mr. Story to suspend Chief Santore for two weeks from all fire calls and fire functions, effective April 28, 2026, due to improper vehicle operation. If any future incident of this nature happens again, it may result in removal from the position of Chief of the District, at which time he would no longer be recognized as Chief by the District #1 Commissioners or permitted to serve in that capacity.

Second: Mr. Fogarty

Roll call vote: 5-0 all in favor

As discussed in Executive Session, for the next two weeks the two assistant chiefs will be in charge, not Chief Santore. No one is to contact Chief Santore during this time. Mr. Story and President Matt Greco will contact First Assistant Chief Craig Haas on April 28, 2026, to ensure he understands that along with 2nd Assistant Chief Erik Schneider, they will be in charge. However, the policies and procedures set forth by Chief Santore should not be changed during this time. An exception will be made for Chief Santore to attend the May 5th Western Monmouth meeting, which he is hosting. The Board also noted its continued confidence in Chief Santore's leadership as Chief of the department.

There being no further business, Mr. Fogarty made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:19pm.

Second: Mr. Engel

Roll call vote: 5-0 all in favor

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Dunberg

/js