

MEETING MINUTES
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
HOPEWELL BOROUGH DISTRICT NO.1

DECEMBER 13, 2023

PRESENT: Cmsr. Morehouse
Cmsr. Myers
Cmsr. Davies
Cmsr. Blasi

Call to Order: The scheduled meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners was called to order at 7:05 pm by Chairman Morehouse following proof of compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act. Flag salute by all persons present. Notice of the meeting was given through the Annual Meeting Notice and was filed with the municipal clerk, posted at the municipal building, the board's office, the fire district website, and advertised in the official newspapers of the district as required by law.

Open public hearing: At 7:07 pm Chairman Morehouse opened the first special hearing for the expenditure not to exceed \$100,000 to purchase a Utility type vehicle for fire and EMS use. With no public present Commissioner Myers motioned to close the hearing seconded by Commissioner Blasi at 7:10 pm.

At 7:11 pm Chairman Morehouse opened the second special hearing for the expenditure not to exceed \$50,000 to purchase new radios for fire and EMS use. With no public present Commissioner Blasi motioned to close the hearing seconded by Commissioner Myers at 7:12 pm.

Clerk Mullen administered the Oath of Office to Commissioners Blasi, Davies and Myers.

Reorganization: The Chairman opened the floor for nominations of officers. Commissioner Morehouse motioned for Commissioner Davies to be the Treasurer, seconded by Commissioner Myers. All in favor; motion passes 4-0. Commissioner Morehouse motioned for Commissioner Blasi to be the Secretary, seconded by Commissioner Davies. All in favor; motion passes 4-0. Commissioner Morehouse motioned for Commissioner Myers to remain as the Vice Chairman, seconded by Commissioner Blasi. All in favor; motion passes 4-0. Commissioner Davies motioned for Commissioner Morehouse to remain the Chairman, seconded by Commissioner Blasi. All in favor; motion passes 4-0.

Minutes: None

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Treasurer's Report:

A copy of the treasurer's report was made available to each commissioner with a list and description of the bills to be paid. The Chief Financial Officer certified that there were sufficient funds in the 2023 budget to pay the bills and designated the account to which each would be charged.

1. Bills were submitted to be paid from the 2023 budget in the amount of \$132,166.04.
2. Motioned by Commissioner Myers and seconded by Commissioner Blasi to pay the bills as submitted with a roll call vote all in the affirmative passing via majority. Resolution 23-49 passed 4-0.

Resolution 23-56 to allow down payment to workers compensation policy dated 1/1/2024. Motion by Commissioner Davies, 2nd by Commissioner Blasi. All in favor; motion passes 4-0.

Commissioner Myers spoke about the insurance rates for workers comp policy, the State reduced the rates, however our experience rating was at 31% penalty has increased to 60% penalty. The accidents that occurred will follow us until end of 2025.

Fire Department Administration:

Tree lighting & Santa visited community. Large turnout, took about 2 hours to get thru the line. Fire alarm system installation in full swing. Project Santa visited 114 homes with 260 kids and produced a total donation of \$4,733.

EMU Report: 47 Calls for November, a lot of stroke and heart attack calls. Doing as much as possible to keep the membership numbers up; as of now 28 new members. Amwell Valley had 22 members at their monthly meeting, hopefully showing a resurgence for their department and making calls. Spoke about budgeting issues that we currently are behind increasing funds and needs. Question is whether or not to increase budget at this time. Only way to do that is to pull more money out of reserve.

Commissioners discussed provided more funding to the EMS operations. Clerk Mullen advised of the cap bank funds could offset the rise in the needed funds, without going to the voters to exceed the 2% cap. LOSAP line was increased for 2024, EMS training costs are rising.

Budget Introduction resolution 23-52 moved by Commissioner Davies 2nd by Commissioner Blasi. Roll call vote; motion passed 4-0.

Fire Chief Report:

There were 30 calls for November. New water rescue training is required. Need to train members with the motor. Fire Alarm system installation is going smoothly. Would expect to have it operational in a few weeks. Commissioner Morehouse asked how many active members were responding to fire calls, in which Deputy Fenton responded about 20 that are always responding. 1 new member just graduated from fire school missing valedictorian by ¼ point of the grade. Spoke about recruitment and retention.

Chairman Morehouse will be attending the East Amwell council meeting tomorrow night. He will make it known that the Board will not be able to entertain an agreement for primary EMS response.

Chairman Morehouse spoke about overspending line items in the budget. Manage your budget wisely, as it is Chief Officers responsibility. Overspending is inexcusable and embarrassing that we are in the shape we are in right now. If you have an issue with budgeting or lack of funding it must be brought to the Boards attention.

Fire Official Report: Not on file awaiting delivery.

Attorney Report: No report from the attorney.

Committee Reports:

Resolutions:

Resolution 22-50: Amending the Award of the Fire Alarm System; Motioned by Commissioner Davies and seconded by Commissioner Blasi to pass the resolution. Motion was unanimously passed 4-0.

Resolution 23-51: Account line transfers, Motioned by Commissioner Davies and seconded by Commissioner Blasi to pass the resolution. Motion was unanimously passed 4-0.

Resolution 23-53: Annual meeting notice for 2024; Motioned by Commissioner Myers and seconded by Commissioner Blasi to pass the resolution. Motion was unanimously passed 4-0.

Resolution 23-54: Extending the term of fire protection shared services agreement with Hopewell Twp BOFC. Motioned by Commissioner Davies and seconded by Commissioner Myers to pass the resolution. Motion was unanimously passed 4-0.

Resolution 23-55: Appointing a PACO. Motioned by Commissioner Davies and seconded by Commissioner Myers to pass the resolution. Motion was unanimously passed 4-0.

Adjournment: There being no further business to come before the board, on a motion by Cmsr. Morehouse and seconded by Cmsr. Davies unanimously approved the meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the board will be held on January 10, 2024.