

**MOUNT LAUREL FIRE DISTRICT #1
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

April 20, 2010

Fire Department Headquarters Station
Meeting Minutes #10

IN ATTENDANCE:

1. Commissioner Cornue
2. Commissioner Nash
3. Commissioner Roura
4. Commissioner Shapiro
5. Deputy Chief Colucci
6. Administrator Jones
7. Solicitor Braslow

NOT IN ATTENDANCE:

1. Commissioner Shestack (out of town due to work)
2. Chief of Department Gallos (sick)

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Cornue at 7:33 PM.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence observed.

The public announcements were read by Commissioner Roura.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

There were no minutes ready for approval by the Board.

RESOLUTIONS:

- Resolution #2010-37 "Appointment of Justin C. Bates to Active Membership in the Masonville Fire Company #1 and the Mount Laurel Fire Department". Commissioner Nash made a motion to approve the resolution, which was seconded by Commissioner Roura. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.
- Resolution #2010-38 "Appointment of Hesham H. Aly to Active Membership in the Fellowship Fire Company #2 and the Mount Laurel Fire Department". Commissioner Shapiro made a motion to approve the resolution, which was seconded by Commissioner Roura. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.
- Resolution #2010-39 "Appointment of Robert A. Zmirich 2nd to Active Membership in the Fellowship Fire Company #2 and the Mount Laurel Fire Department". Commissioner Shapiro made a motion to approve the resolution, which was seconded by Commissioner Roura. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

FINANCIAL MATTERS:

- Commissioner Nash noted that the Board approved payment of our pension liability this month in the amount of \$644,350. Commissioner Roura made a motion to approve the April bills totaling \$93,027.16, which was seconded by Commissioner Nash. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

COMMENTS FROM DIVISION #1 FIRE COMPANY PRESIDENT (or his designee):

- None.

COMMENTS FROM DIVISION #2 FIRE COMPANY PRESIDENT (or his designee):

- None.

COMMENTS OF IAFF LOCAL 4408 PRESIDENT (or is designee):

- None.

MONTHLY REPORT BY FIRE OFFICIAL:

- Fire Official Kownatsky had submitted his monthly report to the Board for their review prior to the meeting. Commissioner Shapiro asked him if, during the Standing Committee reports, he could give a brief overview of what he has accomplished so far in the Fire Prevention Bureau.

MONTHLY REPORT BY ADMINISTRATOR:

- The Administrator had submitted his monthly report to the Board for their review prior to the meeting. Administrator Jones hoped that the 2009 Audit would be completed within the next 2 weeks. He added that the State Comptrollers' office had contacted him and asked for a copy of our 2009 Audit, which was not yet completed nor statutorily due until 4/30. They are apparently starting to look into Fire Districts for some reason. After discussing it with our auditor, he called the Comptrollers' office to find out what they were looking for. He believed that it was all politics and that because we are one of the larger Fire Districts, we are drawing some unwarranted scrutiny. The Comptrollers' office called him again and indicated that they had made a mistake and were actually looking for the 2008 Audit. Administrator Jones e-mailed them a copy and advised them that they can find all of our audits back to 1984 posted on our website.

MONTHLY REPORT BY DEPUTY CHIEF:

- Deputy Chief Colucci reported that he has signed off on the FEMA reimbursement claim for the 2/5/10 snowstorm. Commissioner Nash asked Administrator Jones if that money can be used when it is received. Administrator Jones replied that in the past, it would be deposited into the "Miscellaneous Income" revenue line item because FEMA typically does not advise exactly what expenses they have approved for reimbursement, therefore he cannot directly credit back overtime and other expenses. Deputy Chief Colucci indicated that they have advised us how much we will be getting in reimbursement and that it is broken down. Administrator Jones stated that if the breakdown sufficiently identified what we were getting reimbursed for, he could credit back to the 2010 accounts. Otherwise, the funds received will go into surplus as "Unanticipated Income" and be used to offset expenses next year.

MONTHLY REPORT BY THE CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT:

- Chief of Department Gallos was not present and had not submitted a monthly report.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

TRAINING:

- Commissioner Nash had nothing to report.

LONG RANGE PLANNING:

- Commissioner Nash reported that he has moved the "current year" arrow on the Meeting Room LRP wall timelines from 2009 to 2010 and he hopes to find some time to update some of the things on the wall.

EQUIPMENT:

- Commissioner Roura had nothing to report.

BUILDING & GROUNDS:

- Commissioner Roura had nothing to report.

FIRE PREVENTION:

- Commissioner Shapiro asked Fire Official Kownatsky to brief the Board on Bureau progress. He reported that during the 4 months he has been in the Bureau, things are starting to go well; but he had made numerous changes and it has been a challenge. They have already collected a lot of outstanding penalties and registration fees, including about 45 past due 2009 registration fees that were paid when the business paid their 2010 bill. He believed that many of these businesses were learning for the first time that they owed money and because we are getting serious with collections, they are taking us more seriously now.

He reported that the Bureau Fire Inspectors were writing violations more efficiently and know that they will be supported by his office. Smoke detector certifications are coming back up and we are back up to doing them 2 full days each week.

He reported that 1 Fire Inspector is currently out on workers compensation and would be having surgery in the next 2 weeks.

Commissioner Shapiro asked him about ideas for the October Fire Prevention Open House and he indicated that he was working on some new ideas and a new location for the event, even though we are limited in the funds that we have available.

Commissioner Nash asked him if he could see any improvement in fire inspection consistency by the Bureau Fire Inspectors and if it was because of their permanent assignments. Fire Official Kownatsky replied that there is improved inspection work being accomplished as they learn what he expects them to do. He also notices improvement based on the phone calls he is getting as business owners are more aware of what they need to do. He hoped to be able to maintain having the 3rd Fire Inspector in the Bureau and to possibly rotate station staff through that position to improve their skills. He complimented Firefighter Johnson on his increase in knowledge and competency during the 3 weeks he has been assigned to the Bureau. Commissioner Nash suggested that perhaps newly promoted Fire Officers might gain from a short rotation through the Bureau before being assigned to their company.

Commissioner Nash referred to Fire Official Kownatsky's request for a 3rd Fire Inspector. Fire Official Kownatsky explained that since 1999, there has been a 25% increase in property registrations and a 40% increase in inspection tasks, including new witnesses of internal pipe inspections, emergency lighting, etc. He definitely felt that 3 Fire Inspectors are needed in the Bureau to keep up with the higher workload and that a 4th Fire Inspector would be ideal. Commissioner Nash reminded him that we are currently experiencing a serious financial crisis and that the ability to bring on additional Fire Inspectors is probably not going to be possible right now. Fire Official Kownatsky stated that he understands the situation and will do the best that he can with what he has to work with.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS:

- Commissioner Shapiro had nothing to report.

INSURANCE:

- Commissioner Shestack was not present.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY:

- Commissioner Shestack was not present.

FINANCE:

- Commissioner Shestack was not present.

PERSONNEL:

- Commissioner Cornue had nothing to report in Open Session.

LABOR / MANAGEMENT RELATIONS (combined):

- Commissioner Cornue had nothing to report in Open Session.

OTHER MATTERS:

Duty Crew Program Meal Money Adjustments: Commissioner Cornue reported that the Board has not had an opportunity to discuss this issue and that he hoped to bring it up at the next Board Work Session.

COMMENTS OF FIRE DISTRICT PROFESSIONALS:

Solicitor Braslow had no comments.

COMMENTS OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Shapiro wished Administrator Jones luck in the School Board election today and felt that his skills will be very helpful to them if he should win a seat.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Fire Official Kownatsky asked the Board if they had any questions about his new vehicle acquisition proposal. He stated that he had discussed this purchase with Administrator Jones, who felt that the earliest we could move forward on this was during the August time frame due to potential cash flow difficulties we experience during that period. He reported that State Contract pricing for the Ford Escape he is proposing ends on 5/16. The fuel economy of the Escape is much better than the large passenger vans the Fire Inspectors are using and which are getting more maintenance intensive each month. He has discussed their status with Mechanic Skeenes and he agreed that they both will need some costly maintenance in the near future. He urged the Board to strongly consider approving his proposal so that we can meet the 5/16 order deadline.

Commissioner Nash asked him about the State Contract and he replied that there are a lot of vehicles on the State Contract list but the only one in the size that we want is the Ford Escape. Other options such as the Chevy Impala and Ford Expedition are also available, but they are really more than what the Fire Inspectors need. He is only requesting some basic equipment be purchased for installation in them, and they will not have any emergency warning equipment.

Commissioner Nash asked Administrator Jones why he wanted to wait until later in the year to proceed with this acquisition. Administrator Jones explained that when the Township is slow in releasing new tax bills for the 3rd quarter, they don't collect taxes on time and we don't get our 3rd quarter tax payment at the end of August when we need it. This year will likely be like last year, when their budget problems forced them to adopt it late and delay the normal release date for the tax bills. This caused a cash flow close call for us last year that he worked around for 2 weeks. The longer we hold on to our cash from the 2nd quarter tax payment, the better chance we have of being able to make payroll in late August/early September. He asked Fire Official Kownatsky for a copy of his proposal because he hadn't received one. Fire Official Kownatsky stated that there is an average 8 to 10 week delivery period after placing the order with another 45 day grace period to pay for them, which gets us through August.

Commissioner Roura suggested that the Chief of Department, Deputy Chief and Administrator discuss this proposal prior to the May Work Session and provide the Board with a recommendation. Administrator Jones stated that there are always vehicles on State Contract and that expiration dates are typically extended a year at a time. He explained that 5/16 is most likely not the expiration date for the State Contract, but the manufacturer order deadline date for current model year vehicles. If you miss that deadline, there is usually a short delay before new model year orders can be placed.

Resolution #2010-40 "Closing of Meeting Pursuant to Open Public Meetings Act". Commissioner Roura made a motion to approve the resolution, which was seconded by Commissioner Nash. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

Commissioner Roura made a motion that the "Memorandum of Understanding" that Commissioner Cornue and Deputy Chief Colucci worked out on his contract be approved by the Board, which was seconded by Commissioner Shapiro. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

**THE OPEN SESSION ENDED AT 8:30 PM.
A CLOSED SESSION BEGAN AT 8:40 PM.
THE CLOSED SESSION ENDED AT 9:45 PM.
THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:46 PM.**