

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

January 17, 2011

Fire Department Headquarters Station  
Meeting Minutes #2

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

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

**NOT IN ATTENDANCE:**

1. Chief of Department Gallos

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Cornue at 8:00 PM.

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

The Public Announcements were read by Commissioner Shapiro.

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:**

- There were no meeting minutes ready for approval by the Board.

**ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS:**

Resolution #2011-05 "Resolution to Approve the 2010 LOSAP Program Final Certified List of Eligible Volunteer Members". Commissioner Roura made a motion to adopt the resolution, which was seconded by Commissioner Shestack. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

**FINANCIAL MATTERS:**

Commissioner Shestack made a motion to approve the bills for the month of December totaling \$132,461.43, which was seconded by Commissioner Nash. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

**MONTHLY REPORT BY FIRE OFFICIAL:**

Fire Official Kownatsky reviewed the 6 year review analysis attached to his monthly report with the Board. Commissioner Nash asked him why the revenue received was so much greater than what was billed in 2010. Fire Official Kownatsky replied that this was due to his aggressive collection of previously uncollected fees.

He reported that after further review of his initial proposal for acceptance of credit cards, he is recommending that we not use the original vendor that he had proposed, Heartland Payments. He was not satisfied with the way they report revenue to their clients, which would have made it difficult for the clerical staff and the Administrator to reconcile payments being made and credited to our account. He has identified a State Contract vendor, Merchant Processor, that provides a much more detailed report and should make reconciling this income much easier for our staff. He hoped to have more information for the Board at the next Work Session.

### **MONTHLY REPORT BY ADMINISTRATOR:**

The Administrator had submitted his monthly report to the Board for their review prior to the meeting. Administrator Jones noted that the 2010 End-of-Year and January 2011 financial statements were attached for the Boards' review. He reported that as of the end of 2010, he estimated that about \$1,030,000 will revert to surplus. He added, however, that \$519,000 of that total was in line items that were reserved, such as the referendum, capital improvement program, LOSAP, unspent grant and grant matching funds and unallocated funds. The remaining \$508,000 was composed of \$128,000 in unspent salary and benefits and \$380,000 from all other line items. We collected \$165,000 less in revenue than we had anticipated, which has to be factored into the total surplus resulting from 2010 operations. We did not receive the full amount of the federal SCBA grant that we had anticipated nor did we receive the State SFSP grant that we normally receive. With the bond issue refinancing, we did not spend all of the funds allocated for debt service payments. Commissioner Nash asked him if these amounts will become surplus for our use in 2011 and Administrator Jones replied that it would revert to surplus as of 12/31/10 but we will not know the actual amount until the audit is completed in April. He added that we are using \$376,000 of surplus in the 2011 Budget, which should leave us with approximately \$1 million for use in balancing the 2012 Budget, which could be a tight year because of the new 2% Levy CAP. He also noted that we depend on the Fire Prevention Bureau getting their annual billing notices out in early January so that payments start rolling in while we wait for the Township to provide us with our 1<sup>st</sup> tax payment in late February. Fire Official Kownatsky added that all of the annual billing notices have been generated and will be mailed to our businesses early next week.

Commissioner Cornue stated that it was nice to see that the Station 362 shower reconstruction project was nearing completion. Administrator Jones reported that the delivery of the shower partitions and seat hardware is holding up completion, but they should be in and installed shortly. He added that although it has taken awhile, the contractor is doing really good work and our management company is very pleased with their cooperation and the fact that although we have made a few design changes, there have been no change orders from them. They have done a few things that were beyond the scope of the original contract and he would be happy to see them qualify for future work.

Commissioner Nash asked why the financial statements indicate that we have not received the FEMA grant reimbursement yet for the \$274,000 that was spent. Deputy Chief Colucci explained that we completed the on-line payment application in late November/early December and they acknowledged that we should receive payment in 3 to 5 business days. To date, we have still not received it and he is in the process of tracking it down with FEMA. Administrator Jones added that he anticipates that the audit will have to show an adjustment to reflect the fact that we spent money to purchase the SCBA equipment authorized under the grant in 2010 but that the actual grant revenue was not received until 2011.

### **MONTHLY REPORT BY DEPUTY CHIEF:**

The monthly report of the Deputy Chief is being moved to the Special Meeting / Work Session agenda for discussion.

### **STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Commissioner Cornue asked each Board member to review their assigned Committee areas so that we can discuss 2011 goals and needs at an upcoming meeting.

### **OTHER MATTERS:**

- Commissioner Cornue reported that since our last meeting, Administrator Jones and Deputy Chief Colucci have met with Bob Schiers of RAS Associates to develop a first draft of the community newsletter, which we received late this afternoon. Commissioner Roura asked Solicitor Braslow if we could include the language on the mailing panel that specifically called for support of the budget. Solicitor Braslow reviewed Administrator Jones' copy of the newsletter draft and suggested that we change it to call for residents to "vote on" rather than "support" the budget just so that it is not so overt. Commissioner Shapiro noted that there does not appear to be room for any 2010 statistical information or updates on fires we have responded to. Deputy Chief Colucci stated that we didn't give them any of the 2010 statistical information because we felt that it is best to focus on the budget and new apparatus issues. Commissioner Shapiro asked Administrator Jones if he wrote most of the articles and he replied that he provided RAS with the original draft and facts and Deputy Chief Colucci provided them with the pictures and we let them repackage everything. Administrator Jones felt that they had done a good job capturing what we wanted the residents to know, although he felt that we still needed more emphasis on the stable tax rate and no new debt service message and we would work with them this week on that. He added that RAS Associates will solicit the quotes for printing and mailing the newsletters as part of their fee.

Commissioner Cornue asked if we were on schedule with the timeline that we had initially set up and Administrator Jones indicated that we were. He hoped to have input from the Board tonight so that we can work it in and have a final draft for the Board to review this weekend, which keeps us on schedule with a few extra days built in.

Commissioner Cornue suggested that we finalize details about the Budget Forum event so that we can put something in about that. Deputy Chief Colucci suggested holding it the Saturday before the election on 2/12/11. Administrator Jones stated that post office delivery of the newsletter to the residents won't be made until the Monday or Tuesday after that date. He suggested that holding it on the Thursday before the election would allow us to put it in the newsletter and give residents a couple of days notice so that they can make plans to attend. After a brief discussion, the Board agreed that we should hold it on Thursday, 2/17/11 from 7 PM to 9 PM. Deputy Chief Colucci reported that he was working on the PowerPoint program and is hoping to get around to some of our civic groups between the 1<sup>st</sup> week of February and the election.

**COMMENTS OF FIRE DISTRICT PROFESSIONALS:**

Solicitor Braslow reported that there are a number of fire-related bills in the legislature and various committees and that he is scheduled to meet this Friday with the lobbyist for the NJ State Association of Fire Districts to discuss their position on them.

Commissioner Nash asked Solicitor Braslow about a rumor of a pending State takeover of a North Jersey Fire District. Solicitor Braslow stated that the rumor has foundation and if it happens, it would absolutely be a first. That Fire District has significant fiscal issues and the DCA is involved in deciding on what to do with them. He should know more about this next month. He added that in the past with Apparatus Capital Leases that were presented to the Local Finance Board for approval, it has been his experience that they only usually asked what you were replacing and do you have voter approval. However, when he was last there 2 months ago, they questioned how many bid specification packages were sent out, how many bids were received and other questions about why the new apparatus were needed. He has tried to make the case with them in the past that with fire apparatus, we can send out 10 bid packages and only get 1 back, which they seem to be having difficulty with. Other questions that they asked included whether you were a multiple Fire District town, how many volunteers and/or career members you have and how active they are. Although he has never had an application denied, he feels that they are doing more due diligence and not rubber-stamping anything. He added that he doubted if the DCA would want to take over a Fire District that was in trouble, but it also wouldn't shock him because this is a perfect opportunity for them to make a point to Fire Districts about getting their house in order.

**COMMENTS OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS:**

- None.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

- None.

Resolution #2011-06 "Closing of Meeting Pursuant to Open Public Meetings Act". Commissioner Roura made a motion to adopt the resolution, which was seconded by Commissioner Shestack. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

**THE OPEN SESSION ENDED AT 8:45 PM.  
A CLOSED SESSION BEGAN AT 8:56 PM.  
THE CLOSED SESSION ENDED AT unknown.  
THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT unknown.**