

January 15, 2008

MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners, Fire District No. 1, was held on the above date at Hose Company No. 1. The meeting was called to order at 8:00 p.m. by Chairman Giorgi with Commissioners Moriuchi, Fisher, and Bowman present. Also present were Administrator Chesner, Chief Constantine, Asst. Chief Green, Battalion Chief Poole, Battalion Chief Witkowski, Training Officer Bickmore, Fire Official Worrell and Fire Police Lt. Boileau.

Chairman Giorgi opened the meeting by reading the following "Open Public Meetings Act;" by title only,

Public Notice of this meeting, pursuant to the "*Open Public Meetings Act*," has been given by the Board of Fire Commissioners, Fire District No. 1, of the Township of Moorestown in the following manner; by posting written notice on the Public Meetings Act bulletin Board in Town Hall on March 7, 2007, and entering the same in the official book of the Fire District in the Municipal Library; mailing written notice to the official newspaper, the Burlington County Times on March 7, 2007; filing written notice with the Clerk of the Township of Moorestown on March 7, 2007; filing written notice with the Clerk of the Board of Fire Commissioners, Fire District No. 1; and mailing written notice to each person who has requested copies of the schedule of meetings and who has prepaid the fixed charge for such service.

Following that, Chairman Giorgi led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, after which he indicated the emergency exits.

MINUTES:

The minutes of December 11, 2007 were deferred to the January 22, 2008 meeting.

Chairman Giorgi explained that tonight's meeting will focus on the public hearing on the 2008 Budget and approving a series of resolutions usually done the beginning of the year.

PUBLIC HEARING RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution 2008-01 "*Authorizing the Reading of the 2008 Budget by Title Only at the Public Hearing of January 15, 2008*" was offered on a motion by Commissioner Fisher, seconded by Commissioner Bowman. There being no questions or comments the resolution was adopted by the four Board members present on a roll-call vote.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Chairman Giorgi opened the Public Hearing on the 2008 Budget at 8:03 p.m. The Chairman asked the public for comments or questions and also pointed out that a copy was available if they desired one.

Commissioner Bixby arrived at 8:05 p.m.

The session proceeded with a number of significant questions and comments from the public that the Board members and the District Administrator addressed. Member of the audience Karl Shelley asked why the program of pay-per-call of \$40,000.00 was located in promotions. Treasurer Bowman advised that money was placed in that line item because monies utilized for retention in past years have been placed in the promotion line item. Karl Shelley mentioned that it might be better placed in a compensation line item. Chairman Giorgi stated that they wanted to make sure the money was

in the 2008 budget in case the Board decided to move forward with the program. Treasurer Bowman stated that if it wasn't in the budget at all the Board wouldn't be able to move forward with the program if they so desired. There was continued conversation on this topic.

Karl Shelley also asked about the budget line item equipment rental and service and the Board's financial software. He stated that he heard the District was looking at moving to different software such as Quicken and that he cautioned the Board that the Division of Local Government Services approves all financial software and that the Districts current software meets all the requirements while other software may not. He also added that the current staff is familiar with the financial software in use presently. Treasurer Bowman mentioned that he had suggested that we look into different software because of the annual expense of our current software. Treasurer Bowman also explained that he wants to look into a back-up plan in the case that if ever something happened to the Administrative Clerk or the Administrator members on the Board who are familiar with other financial software could step in and assist. Treasurer Bowman acknowledged all the good comments of Mr. Shelley. There was continued discussion concerning this topic.

Karl Shelley asked why the personal protective equipment line item jumped up in the 2008 budget. Administrator Chesner stated it had to do with the matching funds for the grant if awarded. Administrator Chesner stated that it was a 5% match. Member of the Audience, Arthur Collins, asked if we were in a joint purchase on this grant; Administrator Chesner advised yes with Fire District No.2.

Karl Shelley asked about the thought process behind how the Board arrived at salary increases for this year. He stated that the salaries were all over the place and that he felt that the cost of living adjustment wasn't used in these figures. He also made mention of the percentage of individual increases and that the overall criteria doesn't make any sense. Mr. Shelley continued to discuss the overall salaries and indicated that it looked to him that the salaries were lopsided and he didn't know if there was a program intended or not to de-emphasize administration. Treasurer Bowman explained that no one individual received a zero percent increase and that the cost of living adjustment was calculated and used for every employees salary recommendation this year as well as comparing the individual salaries to those found in the League of Municipality for New Jersey publication of salaries. Treasurer Bowman further stated that there was quite a lot of methodology that went into salaries, and the other piece that we utilized for salaries was merit. Further discussion took place concerning the topic. The Board mentioned that all were in favor of the salaries as proposed in the approved budget.

Arthur Collins asked about the appropriation of \$4,000.00 for Medical Director. Health and Safety Officer Bickmore explained that the director would act as the Fire District advocate for all medical related issues. He further went onto explain that we are in the process of developing a Health and Safety program and the director would help solve medical related questions as it relates to firefighting duties. The Medical Director would also assist in policy writing. Arthur Collins also asked what we anticipate our 2008 tax rate to be after the revaluation comes out. Administrator Chesner stated that the revaluations received by residents indicated that it doesn't include the fire district tax levy. Administrator Chesner stated that the rate would drop, to what extent he was unsure, to be in line with the recent revaluations. A brief discussion continued concerning the revaluation going on in town and how it would affect the tax rate.

Administrator Chesner stated that the 2008 budget was approved by the Division of Local Government Services.

Arthur Collins also mentioned that almost thirty eight percent of employee compensation is for health and fringe benefits. Mr. Collins mentioned that he believed that to be high.

There being no further comment on the 2008 Budget, a motion was offered by Commissioner Bixby, seconded by Commissioner Moriuchi to close the Public Hearing on the 2008 Budget at 8:45 p.m. Motion carried.

Resolution 2008-02 "*Adopting the 2008 Approved Budget as Read by Title Only at the Public Hearing of January 15, 2008*" was offered on a motion by Commissioner Bowman, seconded by Commissioner Moriuchi. On a roll-call vote, the resolution was unanimously adopted 5-0.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Administrator Chesner stated that there were no correspondences.

RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution 2008-03 "*Approving the Temporary Budget for the Fiscal Year 2008 Pursuant to P.L. 1985, Chapter 288*" was offered on a motion by Commissioner Moriuchi and seconded by Commissioner Bixby. On a roll-call vote, the resolution was unanimously adopted 5-0.

Resolution 2008-04 "*Establishing a Petty Cash Fund for the Fiscal Year 2008*" was offered on a motion by Commissioner Bixby, seconded by Commissioner Fisher. On a roll-call vote, the resolution was unanimously adopted 5-0.

Resolution 2008-05 "*Appointing Officials of the First District and Establishing their Compensation for the Fiscal Year January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2008*" was amended prior to reading, eliminating the additional titles of Assistant Fire Marshal as being made a part of the Administrator and Fire Prevention Specialist was offered on a motion by Commissioner Fisher, seconded by Commissioner Bowman. On a roll-call vote, the resolution was unanimously adopted 5-0.

Resolution 2008-06 "*Appointing Members of the Fire Department to Serve in Certain Official Capacities of the Fire Department and Fire District for the Period January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2008*" was offered on a motion by Commissioner Bixby, seconded by Commissioner Moriuchi. On a roll-call vote, the resolution was unanimously adopted 5-0.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Administrator Chesner mentioned again the need for assistance for this year's newsletter. He advised the Board that articles would need to be submitted to the press no later than the 25th of January to allow the newsletter time to reach the doors of the citizens of Fire District No.1 two weeks before the election. He would like to have articles from operations, training as well as from the Board. Administrator Chesner mentioned that he had already received a nice article from Fire Official Worrell. He also mentioned that as in the past year he would place the ballot in the newsletter with an explanation of the 4% tax levy cap.

Administrator Chesner talked briefly about the 2008 Fire District Election and the process of creating the ballot that would be placed on the two machines that have been reserved for the Districts use; also he informed the Board that letters had been sent to the tellers and the judge that would be working the poll. Commissioner Moriuchi will once again be the Clerk of the Election.

Administrator Chesner informed the Board that the 2008 mileage checks would be ready for their approval on the January 22, 2008 meeting. He informed the Board that the checks came in slightly less than that which was budgeted. He also advised the Board that the Relief Association will be meeting during the evening of January 16th in the Commissioner's Meeting Room and that the Fire Police Association would be meeting in the apparatus bays of Station 311 during the evening of January 23rd.

Chairman Giorgi lead a brief discussion concerning the definitions that Bill Jenaway used in the draft copy of the Master Plan concerning policy which would be handled by the Board as well as guidelines and procedures which would be handled by the Chief and Assistant Chief of the Department. Chairman Giorgi asked if the Board was in favor of the definitions so Bill Jenaway could go ahead with the final draft. Other than Commissioner Bowman's questions as to whether there would be an instance which the Administrator would need to deal with a procedure or guideline, the Board agreed with definitions as presented.

Chairman Giorgi also mentioned that the Chief has spent a great amount of time discussing with the Township the water concerns that he and the Fire District have. Chief Constantine made mention that the Township is moving in a better direction but he would like to have the Board's approval for him to draft a letter to the Township concerning the water issues so that they may be on record. The Board approved a letter to be drafted and sent to the Township by Chief Constantine.

Chief Constantine and Fire Official Worrell mentioned that they would have formal reports at the next regular meeting.

PUBLIC SESSION:

No Comments.

PUBLIC SESSION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

On a motion by Commissioner Moriuchi, seconded by Commissioner Bowman, the regular meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

R. Max Fisher
Secretary/Clerk