

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 7:30 p.m. by Chairman Fisher with Commissioners Bowman, Bixby, Pluckhorn and Shelley present. Also in attendance were Administrator Chesner, Acting Fire Chief Green, Acting Asst. Chief Poole, Acting Battalion Chief Booth, Training Officer Bickmore and Fire Police Lieutenant Boileau.

Chairman Fisher 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 6, 2009, 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 6, 2009; filing written notice with the Clerk of the Township of Moorestown on March 6, 2009; 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 Fisher led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag after which he indicated the emergency exits.

Chairman Fisher announced that tonight's meeting was a budget workshop meeting.

MINUTES:

On a motion by Commissioner Bixby, seconded by Commissioner Bowman, the minutes of the October 27, 2009 meeting were approved by the five Board members present.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Chairman Fisher opened the floor to the Commissioners for comments concerning health benefits and whether Commissioners should continue being eligible for health benefits for them and their families. Commissioner Shelley gave a history of the benefits in the Fire District beginning with the Fire District having a private plan and moving forward to buying our benefits from the State Health Benefits Plan in 1986 and adopting Chapter 88 of the same. Commissioner Shelley explained how it came to be that Commissioners and part-time employees were offered health benefits. Administrator Chesner explained the cost of our current benefits, the benefits for retirees and explained Chapter 88 and 48 and how it relates to retiring employees. Each Commissioner gave their individual opinions on the matter. The Board decided that a final decision will be made at the next regular meeting in November. Chairman Fisher asked Administrator Chesner to place it on the agenda for the November 24th meeting.

PUBLIC SESSION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Barry Middleton of Moorestown stated that his Uncle and Father were both Commissioners and neither one of them received health benefits or compensation from the Fire District. He then asked Commissioner Bowman if he is offered benefits from his employer and if so why is he taking benefits from the taxpayers of Moorestown. Commissioner Bowman stated that benefits are available to him by his employer. Commissioner Bowman went onto to say that if he doesn't take health benefits from his employer he isn't compensated in return and that he takes the benefits from the Fire District because they were offered to him. Continued conversation took place between Commissioner Bowman and Mr. Middleton concerning health benefits for elected officials.

Acting Battalion Chief Booth stated that in the School District if you opt out of the health benefits you don't receive any compensation.

On a motion by Commissioner Pluckhorn, seconded by Commissioner Bowman, the regular meeting was recessed at 8:31 p.m. and the 2010 Budget Work Session convened at 8:32 p.m.

Discussion took place concerning the personal protective gear replacement schedule and the testing of the same. Training Officer Bickmore reviewed his executive summary and recommendations on the testing of gear and the advantages and disadvantages of in-house testing versus an outside vendor. After a lengthy discussion concerning the testing of gear and what gear is offered to firefighters, it was decided to place \$700 in the budget for a hydro-static tester for the Fire District to test the gear and \$11,000 in the budget for vapor barrier replacements for the turnout gear. Commissioner Bowman asked if there is software available to track gear that we test; Training Officer Bickmore stated that a module is in Firehouse Software that can track the gear.

Acting Chief Green explained the gear replacement program that was placed in the budget. It included sixty sets of gear at a price of \$2,300 each over a five year period. NFPA recommends that we replace our gear every ten years and since we are in the fifth year of the black gear we have budgeted monies to replace sixty sets by year 2014. It was decided by the Board that if gear is needed for inventory that we purchase what we can this year to keep from placing it in the 2010 budget.

Discussion took place concerning the 2002 Chevrolet Impala Operations vehicle. Since the transition of officers, the vehicle has been kept at the Fire District for Administrative and Division of Fire Prevention use. After some discussion the consensus was to allow operations to utilize the vehicle between the two Battalion Chiefs and that they would workout a schedule for who would have the vehicle on a particular day. The Board will review the status of this at the same time next year.

Acting Asst. Chief Poole mentioned that the second night of physicals went like clockwork. Acting Chief Green mentioned that for those firefighters that where required to complete a physical and don't do so by December 1st, a letter from his office will be sent to that individual indicating that they will need to comply by December 31st or they will be removed till they get their physical. Further discussion took place on the physicals required by the Fire District.

Administrator Chesner reviewed the budget documents found in the Commissioner's packets. Included in the packets was an overview of the budget line items, past tax rates, and key areas that the Board will need to look into for the 2010 Budget. Also, he briefly reviewed the current revenues and expenditures to date. Discussion took place concerning some individual budget line items. Chairman Fisher asked that at the regular scheduled meeting in November that both the Fire District Worksheets and the NJ State Budget be projected onto the screen in the meeting room. Administrator Chesner indicated that he would do so.

Administrator Chesner also mentioned to the Board that he received a memorandum from First Responders Insurance Fund concerning the need for the Fire District to place in their physical fitness policy a competitive or sports related activities exclusion. Administrator Chesner went onto explain that we are still waiting on quotes from three insurance carriers and he will investigate further when this physical fitness policy needs to be adopted.

On a motion by Commissioner Pluckhorn, seconded by Commissioner Bowman, the 2010 Budget Work Session was adjourned at 10:33 p.m.

On a motion by Commissioner Bowman, seconded by Commissioner Pluckhorn, the regular meeting was reconvened and adjourned at 10:34 p.m. without further official action.

Respectfully submitted,

Karl A. Shelley
Secretary/Clerk