

FLORENCE TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT NO. 1  
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS  
WORKSHOP MEETING JUNE 24, 2013

Board Chairman Scott Arnold called the workshop meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners of Florence Township Fire District No. 1 to order at 6:30pm. The following statement of compliance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act was read by the chairman:

“This meeting is being held in accordance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act. Notice of this meeting has been sent to and published in the Burlington County Times and the Register News. It has also been published at the township municipal building and on the fire district’s website.”

We saluted the flag and roll call was taken.

**ROLL CALL: Present** – S. Arnold, R. Roberson, and W. Rzomp  
**Absent** – C. Bauer and B. Mayer

Also in attendance were Battalion Chiefs Mullen, Taylor, and Popso.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. The contract with the Florence Township Volunteer Fire Company was tabled until the July 8, 2013 meeting.
2. A motion was made by Commissioner Rzomp and seconded by Commissioner Roberson to adopt Resolution 2013-21 RESOLUTION OF FLORENCE TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT NO. 1 AUTHORIZING AN AGREEMENT WITH ENDEAVOR EMERGENCY SQUAD, INC. TO PROVIDE A BACKUP AMBULANCE UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES

ROLL CALL: Chairman Arnold – yes, Commissioner Roberson – yes, and Commissioner Rzomp – yes. Motion passed 3-0.

NOTE: Commissioner Mayer is present at 6:31:30pm.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Battalion Chief Mullen requested permission to write a Grant Amendment for the 2012 Assistance to Firefighter Grant to apply to the thermal imager cameras.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rzomp and seconded by Commissioner Roberson to approve the Grant Amendment. Motion carried.

2. Battalion Chief Mullen and Commissioner Mayer discussed the Bureau will be funding part of a Community Outreach Program. The Bureau has funded programs similar to this in the past.
3. Chairman Arnold said Chief Scully, B/C Mullen, Commissioner Rzomp and he were part of a conference call with Virtua in which Virtua stated they would be moving

back to Mansfield. He added there were no issues with Florence but they were better served the area in Mansfield. Chairman Arnold said Commissioner Rzomp spoke with the solicitor and phone notification does not constitute the written notice required under the contract. He asked B/C Mullen to write a letter to Virtua in regards to the notice given and have the solicitor review it before it is sent. The lock on room six will not be changed for now so that the room may be utilized by the company for storage. The lock will be changed on the bathroom so both can be utilized again.

4. Battalion Chief Taylor gave a short presentation on the new “hourly-based” incentive plan to be implemented starting October 2013. He has started to put the policy together for first reading in July. B/C reported Josh Peters, Dave Motta, Chris Perlingiero, and Joe Parker have been appointed as “Engineers” to assist the officers. This is not a line officer position and is non-stipend. There were numerous questions and discussion after the presentation as follows:

Q: Comm. Rzomp – Do we know what the average percentage of calls per person, per year made, off the top of your head? What was the highest percentage last year, do you know?

A: B/C Taylor gave Commissioner Rzomp the numbers for year-to-date through April. Depending on the members, and medicals, and out of service time affects that number. He showed calls attended for each individual; duty crews attended; total duty crew points. Calls plus duty crews gives them their total points for the year; and then their yearly percentages.

Q: Comm. Rzomp – EMS doesn’t count on these, or does it?

A: B/C Taylor – No. EMS, if you ride an ambulance, you are compensated through separate policy. We can put some type of event and training criteria in there, but we are not going to have the 3 ½ shifts per month criteria for them to hit. We would have to come up with an eligibility, and the committee can definitely discuss that. The goal all along was more than just answering calls. The duty crew has always been intended to bolster the training numbers, and to take care of this building. Oh, we have to schedule a clean-up and we have a mass event, and a half dozen people show up. My intention with the platoons is: they will have a monthly training requirement to meet that will be administered through the officers, and they are going to have a work assignment for the month. The officers and the engineers got a fresh list at the officer’s meeting at the beginning of the month of what they have to do. They were out there running the saws. They have a schedule, a bi-weekly truck check, bi-weekly equipment check, etc. But it gives us people to assist with the work. And the more time people are touching the trucks, doing things, getting familiar, the better off we’re going to be when we hit the street.

Q: Comm. Rzomp – If during duty crew there is a second rig call, and there are EMTs in the building, how is that going to go?

A: B/C Taylor – Current policy states “will.” The EMT on in-house fire duty crew will come off the duty crew and handle the second rig call. They will not get credit for that fire call, but they are not being penalized against their duty hours. They are then being compensated under the EMS policy. Those doing the home response duty crew are not expected or required to handle that EMS call.

- Q: Comm. Rzomp – Does monthly meetings count for any time served on duty crew?  
A: B/C Taylor – It would be events. So if you are here on a duty crew, it would be an event.
- Q: Comm. Rzomp – If you're not on duty crew, do you still get paid or no?  
A: B/C Taylor – Yes. The duty crew is the minimum. That replaces our 15% of calls that we operate under now. We have transitioned from the old days of “percentage of” calls to the realization of need for scheduled duty hours.
- Q: Comm. Rzomp – You will have an established list of who is on the duty crew, right?  
A: B/C Taylor – The platoons will be assigned and posted. The officers will be responsible for scheduling their four people for their crew. The schedule will be in IAMRESPONDING.
- Q: Comm. Rzomp – If you don't have someone participating in duty crew but they show up to a company meeting or an event?  
A: B/C Taylor – They are not getting a dime. You have to do your participation in duty crew to be eligible for incentive. Comm. Arnold added “As of right now, this and everything we've discussed in the committee, this is for active, riding members on the fire trucks.”
- Q: Lt. Reeder – To get incentive, you have to participate in duty crew?  
A: B/C Taylor – Yes. Commissioner Arnold the committee will need meet to talk about the “give me fund”, and consider if this fund is also for the EMS per Diems, the career staff, and just active company members who don't ride the fire trucks. He feels that should be for everybody, but it is a committee decision.
- Q: Comm. Rzomp – If you are signed up for duty crew and you have a class at the County, do you get double pay that night? It can happen.  
A: B/C Taylor – Historically while on duty crew, if you go to class, I have not given dual credit for the duty crew. But if we have a drill and go somewhere, we would get credit for the call and the training. If we are training at the county and they finish out the rest of their duty crew shift when they get back, they would get credit for both the training and their full duty crew shift. They are two different requirements that need to be met. We are making it as easy as possible for people to meet it.
- Q: Comm. Rzomp – It sounds like the committee doesn't want to use the \$50,000 that we have allocated this year, right?  
A: B/C Taylor – I think we have used a large portion of it. We are still going to pay out under the old plan at potentially a higher dollar amount. Commissioner Arnold stated that he informed the Board at one of their regular meetings was bumping up the amount we are giving out this year, but we are not changing the program until October. There is a potential to go over that \$50,000 next year and they would like to put some of that money into next year's budget.
- Q: Comm. Rzomp – If we don't use it, can we roll that over into other funds?  
A: B/C Taylor – Because we have talked about sending people to Indianapolis, all expenses paid.

A: B/C Mullen – Sure, we can.

Q: B/C Popso – If you do not participate in the fire duty crew, but you are an individual who come here for calls, say 25, 15, 10, there is no more percentage any more, unless you are attached to the duty crew, that's the only way you are going to get stipend?

A: B/C Taylor – Correct.

Q: B/C Popso – And you feel that is correct?

A: Comm. Rzomp – I thought about that Andy, but the other end of it is, the duty crew is all that they are doing. I gave it some thought and I wanted to make sure we aren't pushing people away. The chiefs are only asking when your availability is to volunteer.

Q: B/C Popso – I will use myself as an example; I have a different priority in life now. So what you are saying to me is if I'm not on an EMS call and I come down here on a fire call, and I opt not to be a part of the fire duty crew, but I do opt to take fire calls when I am available. I am going to be in the truck doing the same exact thing as the same exact person next to me, yet, because I am not scheduled on that schedule, I get nothing out of return?

A: B/C Taylor – The rationale behind the minimum shift requirement and the minimum hours of duty, we are scratching calls. The old school “come when you can” is not streeting trucks. It is not working. The drop everything and respond from home mentality is antiquated in the fire service. It is not working. I do the numbers every month, it is not working.

B/C Popso: That could be, but I can honestly tell you that I know for a fact that there are individuals that respond out there that do not want to belong to the duty crew but can make it when they can. You are going to lose individuals. I am telling you right now, you are going to lose individuals.

B/C Taylor: The numbers say otherwise.

B/C Popso: Trust me. You are going to lose individuals.

Comm. Arnold: Andy, if you are only making 15 calls a year, you are not going to meet the incentive anyway. You are not making it this year.

B/C Popso: I'm not talking about me! I was only using me as an example, Scott.

Comm. Arnold: Anybody. If you're not making the (interrupted)

B/C Popso: What you're saying is, you're basically putting down that unless you abide by, you come down here and leave your family, or you go from home, and you give us the commitment, you do not get anything. So I got to come down here and make 50 percent of the calls on my own, without being a part of the incentive program, and I get diddley squat. And all these individuals have to do is the minimum, and they're going to get something. That's what you're saying.

Comm. Rzomp: To be honest with you, I looked at it both ways, and I was on the fence for the longest time. But, there are two things that the Board here has seen, is one, we are months away from having a huge tax increase and hire more paid guys. Lets be honest, we got to get the trucks on the street, and we are scratching calls.

B/C Popso: You are bending our hands.

Comm. Rzomp: The other end of it is, all you are doing is telling Steve “Hey, Friday night me and Toby have nothing to do, I will be available from 6 to midnight to answer a call for you.”

B/C Popso: What if you can't give 3 ½ shifts that month, but next month you can?

Comm. Arnold: It evens out.

B/C Popso: One month you can, one month you can't?

Comm. Rzomp: That came up in one of our meetings with Steve and there was a commitment that they would honor that. Hey, you got a busy month at work, and we all get those, or hey, I can't make it. Look at Scott and I.

B/C Popso: So you're basing it not as a "per month," you're basing it as a "whole."

Comm. Arnold: As a whole, yes. Actually, it's quarterly.

(Numerous people speaking! Unable to understand what is being said.)

B/C Popso: This fiscal year, you're going to look at it and say "you needed 64 shifts".

Comm. Rzomp: At one point we looked at it as Zack because he still goes away for his weekends and sometimes 2 weeks at a time. So for that month, it is going to be hard for him to make his percentage. So we know that and he reports to the Captain or the Chief. But come the next month and the month after that, I will make up this week this month, and this week... so there is some flexibility in that. I don't think our goal is to ever push anybody away from the volunteer side. But on the other end of it, we've got to give it a try and see how it works. Who knows, by the end of the year this might be a flop. I don't think it will, but.

B/C Popso: If this is all it takes, that's good.

Comm. Rzomp: At this point, we've got to try something.

B/C Taylor: Since the presentation that was made at the March fire company meeting, there were questions asked that night that were similar to "I have to work; My schedule says I can't leave until six o'clock." Those questions were answered and addressed. Do we know exactly how we figure that out? No, we don't. But we will work with and accommodate, reasonable accommodations for any member. The goal is not to drive anyone away. No one has come to me with anything negative, and quite honestly, you are the first person to say anything negative about losing people.

Comm. Arnold: Andy, this is very candid, and I'll tell you straight up. Since February, other than last month because last month was a busy month for me, so I didn't put in a duty crew calendar. But every other month Steve gets a calendar from me, and it's for every Sunday, (interrupted by B/C Popso) Please let me finish.

B/C Popso: Actually, I was just curious...

Comm. Arnold: Let me finish. He puts me on the duty crew schedule every Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday night from 11pm to 4am. Now, that doesn't fill out the 8 hours that he needs, but they are the hours that I can work. And guess what? Those 3 days a week equal out to 44 hours a month. You know how many calls I've been on in those 4 months on that shift? You know how many calls I've had to wake up for in the middle of the night? Two.

B/C Popso: The reason why I ask is that we have some individuals here, like for example, and I apologize they are not here because I am speaking for them, and I don't have their permission to really speak for them. We have individuals here like Mr. Jacoby. Is Mr. Jacoby going to put in for that? No. Does Mr. Jacoby deserve something? Absolutely! He has been here. He's a cornerstone by far.

Comm. Arnold: But he's already signed up for it.

B/C Popso: But what I'm saying is, this is the discussion prior to this. You gotta understand, this is virtually the first thing that I've been to.

Comm. Rzomp: Sure, this is something that we've heard and you haven't heard yet.

Comm. Arnold: So you're coming in late.

B/C Popso: I'm coming in late. I'm asking questions that I feel I need to. No disrespect for anybody. For the program, something needs to be done, I concur. I believe in that system. I believe in, I just want to make sure that I understand it correctly that, look, you guys are looking at basically you're looking at a full, you're looking at basically a paid department.

Comm. Arnold: Sort of. Yes. It's combination.

B/C Popso: It offers, we can volunteer but you're not going to get anything out of it.

Comm. Arnold: But Andy, Ok. I've been here 13 years. For 10 of those 13 years I've made the incentive every year. Every year, and I've brought home between \$500.00 and \$1,000.00 a year. At Christmas I get one check – a very nice little check to get a week before Christmas.

B/C Popso: Absolutely.

Comm. Arnold: Over the last three years, my priorities have changed with what's going on with my kids in sports, so I've dropped off of that list. I still make calls. The list right there, I've made 23 calls this year, but I'm not – as the incentive plan stands right now – even with that and duty crews, I won't make incentive. It doesn't offend me or bother me that I work next to Zack on any call, and he's getting an incentive.

B/C Popso: That's why I brought up that as an example. You know, you say that you've been here 13, I've been here 23.

Comm. Arnold: But if somebody is making... (interrupted by B/C Popso)

B/C Popso: I understand where you are coming from.

Comm. Arnold: If somebody's making 50 percent of the calls here but he's not participating in the duty crew, then we've missed something in looking at these numbers because there is nobody that is making that kind of...(interrupted)

B/C Popso: I know. That is like I stated, using that as an example because there is the possibility that someone can do that. You know that.

Comm. Arnold: There is. There is.

B/C Popso: There is absolutely.

Comm. Arnold: Steve and I have been looking at these numbers... (interrupted)

B/C Popso: That's why I'm asking.

Comm. Arnold: ...for four years now...

B/C Popso: OK.

Comm. Arnold: ... since we were both captains, we have been looking at these numbers. We have had this duty crew, this platoon system in for 3 years (interrupted)

B/C Popso: It just kind of feels, it kind of feels like its being forced upon ... (interrupted)

Comm. Arnold: It is not being forced upon anyone.

B/C Popso: ...as opposed to be elected upon.

Comm. Rzomp: Really, to be honest with you, Andy, it's a ... (interrupted)

B/C Popso: Alright Billy, you and I started together (multiple people talking).

Comm. Rzomp: Trust me. I don't want to see any volunteer ever get pushed out of here.

B/C Popso: Yeah.

Comm. Rzomp: It's literally our last ditch effort ... (interrupted)

B/C Popso: And I agree. (Continuing to speak but is not legible.)

Comm. Rzomp: ...before the tax payers are going to get a huge shot out of this deal.

B/C Popso: I'm just saying that coming into this information new, I'm just saying is, I didn't know if anybody ever thought maybe that there was an opportunity to look at both aspects of you can do it this way, or you can do it this way. But either way, you're going to get something as incentive.

Comm. Arnold: If we split it up that way for incentive, then that group that says "You know what? I don't feel like going to Garlick Farms at 4 in the morning. I'm not going." Then the truck doesn't get there. Then the next thing you know they are dialing 322 or 303. And that has happened 4 times this year alone.

B/C Popso: I am well aware. So, like I said, I don't mean any disrespect for anybody or the program itself, it's just, I want to make sure that I voice my opinion of what my feelings are on the situation, and like I stated, I have a different priority in life now.

Comm. Arnold: We all do.

B/C Popso: And things are going to be a lot different for me. But I just, I'm speaking on behalf of individuals that might have this question, because if you stated, I just wanted to make sure someone didn't put that into consideration during this process.

Comm. Rzomp: We did. And trust me, you can ask Scott, I scrutinized the heck it ever since I ever heard him first say anything about it. But you give it some thought and again, like Steve said, you're not required to be down here. You are required to be available. All you are doing is, Steve is just organizing who is available in town, that's all. Instead of that Saturday when, and trust me, and on that Saturday when you get into that car and you're responding... and you're responding... and that second tap is going, and you're responding... and you're going "Christ, is that truck going to get out or not?" That sucks!

B/C Taylor: Some history to this process. Last January 2012, when Jason was the captain, him and I sat down and we talked about the platoon-based system. And we looked at the roster and we couldn't build three platoons. And we kicked around the idea of how to make it work, and it wasn't feasible. There was no way that it was going to fly. This January, I sat down and looked at the roster and looked at the names, and I was able to create three platoons. We've had some attrition since then and the numbers are a little thinner than they were. But (interrupted)

B/C Popso: I mean to me, its nuts (interrupted)

B/C Taylor: Let me finish. We went through and we could build the platoons. Once I knew the numbers, not the names, the numbers said the program would work, I started poling the members. And I spoke to personally, spoke to 75% of the members: old members, new members, young members, old members, married members, single members. Everyone agreed that it has the potential to be a very good system and work. We came to the company in March with a power point presentation outlining the process – sample schedules, how many people it would take. Didn't have a shift total because we didn't know what the actual numbers were going to be – hadn't figured it out yet – presented it to the company. I was asked to present it to the Board at a workshop and refused. Because it was going to the company first, because if the members don't buy in, it can't come from the Board and be told that we are going to do it. The Company is coming; the members are coming to the Board to tell them "This is how we are going to staff the trucks." No one has come to me with anything negative. And I spoke to not only, I actually used the individual that you listed as an example of the flexibility built into the program.

B/C Popso: Yes.

B/C Taylor: So the ability is there for everyone to meet that requirement.

B/C Popso: I guess that would be my, what ultimately (interrupted)

B/C Taylor: So this was not something that was cooked up overnight.

B/C Popso: No, I know. Trust me.

B/C Taylor: Like Scott said, there is four years of work.

B/C Popso: I'm all for what's best for this department. Trust me. It's just a matter of, just something that I thought of, that I wanted to make sure that (interrupted)

Comm. Arnold: And I appreciate you coming.

B/C Popso: There were individuals because, believe it or not, and as you said you been there and spoke to certain people but, I've spoken too, and this is a question that had been brought. This is not just as a question from Andrew Popso, but a question from other individuals as well. I just happen to be the one that's in here right now... (interrupted)

Comm. Arnold: They are more than welcome, and encouraged, to speak to any member on the incentive committee.

B/C Popso: Well that's the thing. That's the thing. I just wanted to...

Comm. Arnold: This committee was of riding members, out of town members, long time members and short time members.

B/C Popso: And you say this is done quarterly, so basically what you're saying is you're not looking at, and I will use myself as an example, "Andrew did nothing in January."

Comm. Arnold: But in February and March, he did everything, so he gets paid for (interrupted)

B/C Popso: It's not about the money. It's about the principal of it, the fact that he did something. So, I'm sorry. I'm through.

Commissioner Arnold: Last comment on the incentive plan.

Lt. Reeder: Regardless if there is an incentive or not, I mean I would be coming regardless. Like he said, the check is nice and whatever the reason it is, I would still be coming. So if you can't make it, why not just come to the call regardless? Who cares if you're getting paid?

Comm. Rzomp: OK. I understand what you're saying, but on the other end is, your situation and his situation, there is a big difference. And you will find out in a few years, trust me. There's a big difference.

(Multiple people speaking. Unable to understand what is being said.)

Commissioner Arnold: Anything else on the incentive plan? Steve, thank you.

### **MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:**

A motion was made by Commissioner Rzomp, and seconded by Commissioner Mayer to open the meeting to the public. Motion carried unanimously.

1. There was no public comment.

A motion was made by Commissioner Roberson, and seconded by Commissioner Rzomp to close the public portion of the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

### **CLOSED SESSION:**



A motion was made by Commissioner Mayer, and seconded by Commissioner Roberson to go into the closed session portion of the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

- Personnel – Staff Planning

A motion was made by Commissioner Roberson and seconded by Commissioner Mayer to go back into regular session. Motion carried unanimously.

**GOOD OF THE BOARD:**

1. Commissioner Mayer thanked the crew from last Friday night for staffing an engine and the pick-up and attending the balloon release for Collin. It was appreciated by the family.
2. Commissioner Rzomp inquired about the follow-up with motor vehicle about Mr. Cunningham's plates. B/C Mullen said a letter has been sent.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

A motion was made by Commissioner Rzomp seconded by Commissioner Roberson to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kevin P. Mullen and Carolyn H. Taylor