

FLORENCE TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT NO. 1
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
WORKSHOP MEETING OCTOBER 28, 2013

Board Vice-Chairman William Rzomp 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 – C. Bauer, B. Mayer, R. Roberson, W. Rzomp
Absent – S. Arnold

Also in attendance were Battalion Chief Mullen and Battalion Chief Taylor.

COMMUNICATIONS:

1. B/C Mullen reported communications will be held off until the regular meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. 2014 Budget Update – B/C Mullen reported that he started to work with some numbers. The valuation of the town went up less than \$10,000,000.00, which was much less than expected. There will be more value added to the town, but won’t show in our numbers because of the timing issue according to the tax assessor. Our rate should go down.
Most of the numbers are for personnel which make the numbers shoot up above the cap. The Board will need to discuss and get an idea of how many to hire and when to hire them, and maybe look at a bigger plan of what they plan on doing. If they hire during the year, the following year they would have to pick up a full year of everything which won’t be in the budget for next year. The grant is still hanging because the government was shut down for 3 weeks, and none of the grants were being reviewed. That pushes that process back a bas well. B/C Mullen states he has a few ideas he can present with the budget next meeting, or meet with the personnel committee. Commissioner Rzomp will meet with B/C Mullen and FM Richardson. Commissioner Bauer stated “The only thing I have to say is the taxes can’t go up next year. How’s that. I say that every year. A magician. It could be your job on the line, who knows. That will keep the tax stable. So, aren’t you glad I’m back?”
Commissioner Mayer replied “I am” and asked what the tax increase would be roughly if we budgeted for the two that were put in the grant for all year? B/C Mullen reported it would probably be about a 1.5 to 2 cents increase to the budget.
Commissioner Rzomp inquired if that was with bringing them on in March or April? B/C Mullen replied “Yes. And that would give you 24-hour staffing with 2 people to mix in with the fire duty crew program. The duty crew program is just as important as having the two people. The two have to work. It is not giving us full staffing, but

keeps that consistency of staffing where at nights it falls off, it will give you the extra staffing to keep it going. The fire duty crews, that is.”

Commissioner Rzomp inquired if that gives us some cushion in the finances for the end of the year with air packs and things like that? B/C Mullen replied yes, and also reported that he put in the budget for a \$25,000.00 down payment on the packs for 2014. In talking with the Chief, if the packs are ordered at the end of next year, we will get the 2014 pricing, and try to space out the delivery in 2015. They are not sure if the manufactures will go into 2016 because that would be 2 product price increases, but they might. Putting the down payment in 2014 gives you an option. If you choose not to do it, it will just get rolled into 2015’s budget.

Commissioner Mayer inquired if there are any other big ticket items next year? B/C Mullen reported not that he is aware of. He is decreasing the “Supplies and Maintenance” because Brian is back working on and fixing things.

B/C Mullen would like to meet with the Finance Committee over the next two weeks and prepare a budget for the next meeting. He would like to stream-line the process this year. Commissioner Bauer reported that he would not be available the next two weeks. If the Finance Committee approves what B/C Mullen comes up with, he will forward it to the Board before the next meeting for review so the Board can ask any questions at the meeting, and adjustments be made. The budget needs to be done and officially approved and sent up by December 17, 2013. Commissioner Mayer reported that she and Commissioner Roberson will not be at the December meeting. Commissioner Rzomp stated we made the commitment to put in the grant for the firefighters, so we have to hope for the best on that and at least prepare for hiring. We have to have finances in place for that. That should be our top item, and then the air packs. B/C Mullen reported the \$25,000.00 is in there now and the rest would have to look at financing the rest. Our reserves are about \$105,000.00, and about \$30,000.00 restricted for Capital. He will have another estimate by the end of the week for the rest of 2013.

2. Commissioner Mayer inquired about how November looks with the new “Platoon” system. B/C Taylor reported that his email was a reaction to one of the platoon officers that had only received one calendar back. B/C Taylor wanted to make sure and confirm that everybody was on the email list. He reported at the Company meeting that one platoon was at 90% participation and is anticipating that it will be at 100% for November. The other two platoons were each above 70% and he believes those numbers will go up as well. Most nights, if not all, have coverage, at least some level of staffing. They are still working out some minor issues. The program is optimistically successful.
3. Commissioner Bauer inquired if there was going to be a “Closed Session” this meeting. Commissioner Rzomp stated there was nothing listed on the agenda, and Commissioner Mayer stated that he could add to the agenda any time, confirmed by B/C Mullen. Commissioner Bauer would like to have a Closed Session to discuss personnel.
4. Commissioner Bauer questioned if the “fire personnel” that will be hired are going to be EMT’s? He commented that what we need in town is people who can go out and save people and rescue people when it comes to EMT stuff. Currently the per diems are doing it, but if there is a second rig that needs to get out. Commissioner Mayer commented that we currently don’t have a second rig to send out. B/C Mullen has statistics that shows second rigs. B/C Mullen reported contractually, you can hire a firefighter, but you can not require it (EMT) at the time of hire, but you can require six months in or you have one year to get your EMT. If you hire an EMT, you can not

require him or her to be a firefighter. Chief Rzomp stated the chiefs are pretty good with Endeavor and the response times coming into town are pretty good. We have to weigh the options. Can they do both? If there is a priority one call were medics are involved, they're required to take the ambulance. But if there is a medical emergency, they stay back or respond with the engine. I don't know, I don't want to put the cart before the horse. Maybe they triage and the second rig comes in an transports. We have to look at what the goal was to get the manpower. B/C Mullen will take this back and talk to the Chiefs about it. He also added that he hopes that we would make it a requirement to become an EMT. Everybody else does. Bordentown Fire District #2 doesn't even have an ambulance, and they require all of their guys to be Firefighter/EMT's. It is in their contract that they have one year to get their EMT. Commissioner Bauer added that's where he is going with it and we need to take care of some of these people in town. We've had a lot of issues with the turnpike, but we have a lot of issues in town too.

5. AFG Thermal Imaging Cameras Update – B/C Mullen reported that he met with B/C Taylor and they will be meeting again after this meeting. More progress. We have to get 4 cameras to get the \$20,000 from the grant. Commissioner Bauer commented that he was at one of the warehouse fires where we had to borrow something from another fire company to see where the heat was. Commissioner Rzomp replied that it may have been a closer truck, and that we do have cameras already.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Worker's Compensation Reimbursement – Commissioner Mayer reported that Commissioner Arnold had sent out a memo to the Board stating basically that Brian will get paid full salary through the District and we would get reimbursed again through workman's comp. It was sent to Bob just to verify since we had done the resolution the other way for after the year. He said it was fine to go to that. Commissioner Rzomp added and that was for the step-down, the 20 hours this week and as he moves forward, just to cover whatever hours he is not working full-time here, for the next three weeks. He has to go back to the doctor and get cleared one more time and then he will be back full-time. B/C Mullen reported that we will be burning tomorrow.
A motion was made by Commissioner Roberson and seconded by Commissioner Mayer to pay Brian Richardson his full salary and we be reimbursed through worker's comp. Motion carried unanimously.
2. Uniforms and T-Shirts – Commissioner Mayer reported that she had sent an email to Chiefs Scully and Mullen about getting t-shirts for the auxiliary. They had purchased their own shirts five years ago. B/C Mullen reported the list for platoon shirts is ready to be ordered. There was an issue with the job shirt quote and once that is rectified, that order will be placed also. We have the information and quote for the polo shirts for EMS. Commissioner Rzomp wants to be sure that with the auxiliary, we capture everyone such as Toby Houseworth and all. Commissioner Mayer suggested that at the November Company meeting when it is indicated those who have met the four-meeting mark to keep their eligible status to vote, they use that status for the auxiliary members to keep it consistent.
Commissioner Rzomp inquired how we are doing on duty uniforms. B/C Taylor replied "horrible!" B/C Mullen agreed. Several lists have been gathered. Captain Wargo had sent an email out asking for everyone's "needs". We scrambled to get uniforms for the parade. Some people didn't get everything and other people are

missing things for whatever reason. This is more than a year later and we still are dealing with uniforms. He is wearing a job shirt that he goes out and answers calls with that is three-and-a-half years old. He hasn't had a new job shirt in three-and-a-half years. Why are uniforms such a problem? We have a standard; we have a policy for everything else. This is the uniform set. This is when you get another one. Let's keep some inventory. There are four sizes of blue shirts and \$5.00 name tags that go on them when we send people to school, or classes, or have new members, or new hires come in and start to ride. Our system is broken. We have plenty of officers; we just need someone that can do it. Commissioner Mayer reported that Captain Wargo had sent out that email and he got a total of 13 responses. Some of the people who were complaining that they don't have uniforms are some of the ones who did not respond. So he can send it out and request it, but if people aren't going to answer it. Commissioner Rzomp stated that financially, we want to give you guys the money that you need to get the uniforms. Make sure everyone has a Class B uniform. Make sure that everybody that had a Class A uniform, and who needs it. Make sure that we have additional job shirts. Let's get this done. These are not big ticket items. We have the money in capital waiting for. B/C Mullen reported that he and the Chief have discussed changing vendors again. His recommendation is to go back to Samzie's. They are open on Saturdays. You just go up there and get measured. Some of the issues aren't from the uniform places. They are actually from the vendors they are buying the uniforms from. That's the uniforms. The job shirts should not be an issue. He will talk to the Chief. He has another vendor lined up for those as well.

B/C Taylor thanked the Board.

Commissioner Bauer commented that is nothing that we have to deal with. If the system is broke, it is broke because somebody down there is not taking care of it, not the Commission. We are ready to go. Somebody has got to figure it out.

Commissioner Rzomp agreed and stated that they want to get you guys what you need and that's why we are bringing it up. If someone can spearhead it. B/C Mullen will take it back.

Commissioner Mayer asked that we also look at equipment because there are at least 2 people that have leaking boots, and Mr. Reillo Sr.'s SCBA mask was removed from his rack. B/C Taylor will address it. Commissioner Bauer asked about the chain of command for getting a pair of leaky boots fixed. B/C Taylor reported that turnout gear is assigned to a fire lieutenant that is on a leave of absence, so there is a gap in the chain of command. So whoever got told that night, to his knowledge, never took it anywhere else, or the completely bypassed him. There is a communication problem on their end in which he will address with the officers. We are coming into the first of the year where job assignments will be assigned.

Commissioner Roberson inquired how often do we replace job shirts? B/C Mullen stated we try to replace them as needed. The issue now is that this quote and the original quote is \$11.00 more per job shirt, times that by about 15 job shirts. B/C Taylor added that every member does not need a new shirt every year. A member who is here doing EMS shifts and fire shifts are going to wear their shirts out sooner than others. Then there are people who wear their fire company t-shirt, fire company pants, and their fire company job shirts as their every day jacket, which is very common in this service, and they wear it out. That's on them! How do we police that or regulate that? Commissioner Mayer asked who would people go to if they need a new job shirt? B/C Taylor stated they are supposed to be reporting to either captain. The captains are assigned uniforms.

3. Company Contract – Commissioner Mayer inquired about discussion for the Company contract. Commissioner Rzomp reported he spoke with Scott. Commissioner Rzomp has some ideas. There is a line item for the Fire Company budget in the budget. His thought is for the commission to hold that money; there is a line item in the contract that says “this is the money you get once you produce the bills.” The reason behind this is we give them money for the dinner and the picnic, and \$1,000.00 a month. I’m not saying we are going to take it away. It’s \$24,000 for the year contract. Spend it as you will, but you need to show us that you are spending it to your members and for the company’s good. He feels that they are giving them \$1,000.00 a month and the members that are riding that truck are not seeing that money. Take a realistic picture of this place: We fix everything in the building because it is a District building; when a firefighter joins, we pay for their physical, we pay for their training, we pay for their equipment, and we pay now for their riding abilities. I’m not saying not to do away with the Fire Company. But we are giving everything we can for these members, and you look at the Fire Company end, the only thing you ever hear is that they are putting more money in the savings. Where is it going to the members? Where is it going to these guys that get stuff? We are looking to buy shirts for everybody. We will never stop doing that. But, I think this puts them in a position that where, we are not taking their money away, I’m not saying that. Give us the receipts, we will pay you.
- Commissioner Roberson asked “Up to \$1,000.00 a month? We can’t say do whatever you want... (interrupted, numerous people speaking, not understandable.)
- Commissioner Rzomp stated “If they want to spend \$12,000.00 on the dinner, God bless you. Here is your \$24,000.00, give us the receipts, we will pay it and be done. Every month we are giving that thousand, and there’s three guys right there, how much do you see from the company?” Commissioner Rzomp continued by saying he could answer that himself because he has been on that end of it too. He has never seen \$1,000.00 at all. B/C Taylor stated the November meeting is going to be fun.
- Commissioner Rzomp stated “I am saying this on a recorded line, so it doesn’t bother me. But on the same end, I’m not saying we are taking away any money from the Company. The money would be there. But they got to start using it for their members. I think that’s the part I just have this issue with.”
- Commissioner Mayer reported at the October meeting, they just put another \$10,000.00 into their savings.
- Commissioner Rzomp stated “We pay for all of the utilities. When you write down everything that the District pays for, there is no expense on the Company end. You know, if something breaks in that kitchen, we pay for it. You know, hey, that’s a great thing. These members deserve to get everything they can get. But on the other end, come on, your own company has to start giving back to you guys. That’s ridiculous. We are shelling out this money. I am sure my name is going to be mud, but.”
- Commissioner Bauer replied “It won’t be the first time, Bill.”
- Commissioner Rzomp continued “Hey, but you know what? Someone has to finally say it. This is ridiculous! I don’t think it will really affect the budget. That was my goal. Look at what the line item was this year. That way it covers till the dinner, it covers the picnic, and it covers their reimbursement per month. But we are telling them, and they have been asking to have more responsibility. Here is your money. But we are going to be the bank and you got to show us that you are spending it. You want that money? Show us that you’re spending it.”
- Commissioner Roberson inquired “What happens to the rollover if they don’t spend it?” Commissioner Rzomp replied “I guess it goes back into our capital then. I don’t

know.” B/C Mullen inquired “If they don’t spend the \$24,000?” Commissioner Mayer replied “Yes. Let’s say they only spend \$18,000.” B/C Mullen stated “Then it just rolls back into surplus. It is like any other line item that is under spent. It just goes back into surplus.”

Commissioner Rzomp stated it’s just time to (paused) B/C Mullen “It’s more of an accountability thing.” Commissioner Rzomp “That’s all. I am sure that everybody is going to be pissed. But bottom line is, the money will still be there. There will be a line item on that budget for 2014.

Commissioner Bauer inquired “Is that sort of like they should buy those T-shirts for the auxiliary?” Commissioner Rzomp replied “Well, we can get into that. But you know, if it takes for us to be maybe the right person to do it, we’ll buy them. What are we talking about, probably about \$300.00 for auxiliary T-shirts or something like that?” Commissioner Roberson replied “That’s probably going way over.”

Commissioner Bauer stated “You know I do everything on principal.” Commissioner Mayer reported that we have \$30,000.00 left over in the incentive program we did not use because the incentive platoon system did not kick in as we expected. So lets use a little bit of that and get everybody a T-shirt. Again, it’s like \$300, \$400.00, even if we spend a thousand and go high end. Commissioner Bauer commented but the Fire Company is pretty rich as we are doing this. Billy says we pay for this, we pay for this. Commissioner Mayer commented now we are going to make a change.

Commissioner Rzomp stated they have about half of what we have in surplus right now. Commissioner Mayer stated they have more than that. Commissioner Roberson commented let them be a little creative in the platoon and make it a little competitive; make them use that money to do things. Commissioner Rzomp stated “buy them job shirts. Christmas time, have a party and say thank you to everybody, buy them a shirt.” Commissioner Mayer commented “I don’t know who did this last year, but there was no picnic, so that’s why they did the Christmas party. Is that correct? This year they are just doing the kid’s party again, but it seemed like the Christmas party itself went over very well last year.”

Commissioner Rzomp stated “I think that we always try to throw something together after we take Santa around usually.” B/C Mullen “I thought the Fire Company would do that.” Commissioner Rzomp “They could cater that sucker and have some party. Let me tell you.” Commissioner Mayer “So is that something we need to bring up to the Trustees as a suggestion?” Commissioner Rzomp “I thing the active members in this room need to take that to the” (interrupted) Commissioner Mayer “I thought last year was very well received by everybody. I thought it was a nice thing after we took Santa out. It wasn’t just for kids, there were families. It was simple, it was pizza and wings. I will talk to Marvin and make that suggestion.”

Commissioner Rzomp stated “I think we as a Board, I think everybody here agrees this is the cheapest paid fire fighters we can get, so let’s get them what they need. Let’s face it. Again, we keep saying we are still at that repeater – ‘Make these guys want to come around.’ – I think that’s that problem. Maybe I’ll have to sneak into November’s meeting and sit right there. Commissioner Bauer commented “you ain’t sneaking into anything. I’m sorry. I had to say it.” Commissioner Rzomp commented “Maybe there will be snipers on the roof. Again, I am sure that it is going to be perceived as we are taking away; we are going to question everything. By and by, in the contract we sign with them, as long as the receipts are there, and it’s within the \$24,000.00.” Commissioner Mayer inquired “Do you want Scott and I to reach out to Marvin and Toby as the liaisons?” Commissioner Rzomp replied “Sure, if you want to give it to them so it’s not a shocker. And if Marvin wants to discuss it, by all

means. But I don't think it's a hard thing to come up with." Commissioner Roberson commented "It makes sense." Commissioner Mayer stated "I completely agree." Commissioner Rzomp commented "They are going to be upset because of the power; challenge them to spend more money, but." Commissioner Bauer commented "I can remember them doing a split when we did the counters and stuff. We got some money back from them, I think." Commissioner Rzomp "Yeah, but the counters weren't really that much." Commissioner Bauer "Well, yeah." Commissioner Rzomp "To a point. Do you guys really care that there are stainless steel counters out there?" Commissioner Bauer inquired "You don't like the stainless steel counters Joe (Parker)?" FF/EMT Parker replied "Oh, I like them. I just didn't see the problem with the old ones except they kept chipping off and breaking." FF Bill Blackwell "Yeah, that's how I saw it." Commissioner Bauer "You get a piece of the Formica in your hoagie next time and see how you like that." Commissioner Rzomp "They look nice out there, that's great.

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

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

1. B/C Steven Taylor thanked the Board for their diligence in resolving our uniform issues.

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

CLOSED SESSION:

A motion was made by Commissioner Mayer, and seconded by Commissioner Bauer to go into the closed session portion of the meeting for personnel issues only. Motion carried unanimously.

- Personnel issues only

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

GOOD OF THE BOARD:

1. B/C Mullen reported in discussions with the Chiefs and got some feedback on the imagers, and we may have the bid go out. Looking at the end to meet the bid laws, probably awarding the bids at the workshop meeting in November.

ADJOURNMENT:

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

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn H. Taylor