

May 12, 2014

FLORENCE TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT NO. 1
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING May 12, 2014

Board Chairman Charles Bauer called the regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners of Florence Township Fire District No. 1 to order at 6:30pm. After saluting the flag, 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 posted at the township municipal building and on the fire district’s website.”

ROLL CALL: Present – S. Arnold, C. Bauer, B. Mayer, A. Popso, W. Rzomp
Absent – None

Also in attendance were Solicitor Gaskill, Chief Scully, B/C Mullen, B/C Taylor, FM Richardson, IT Specialist Estelow, Captain Gyenge, and EMS Supervisor Taylor. Also in attendance were special guests, Darnell Taylor and his wife Laura, and The Florence Little League Yankees.

Special Award: Darnell Taylor

The special award of “Civilian Metal of Honor” was given to Darnell Taylor in appreciation for his outstanding and heroic actions on April 15, 2014 in which he rescued the occupants from a vehicle in the river. Congratulations Darnell!

There was a brief recess for refreshments.

Minutes of the previous meeting: (Open Sessions) – April 14, 2014 and April 28, 2014

A motion was made by Commissioner Arnold, and seconded by Commissioner Mayer to approve the minutes of the April 14, 2014 and April 28, 2014 meetings as distributed. Motion carried unanimously.

AUDITORS REPORT: (Rob Inverso)

1. The Audit has been completed. The Board has received a copy.

SOLICITOR: Robert Gaskill

1. Solicitor Gaskill reported that he has met for contract negotiations with the union and has had numerous phone calls with the union attorney. He believes that they now have an agreed upon contract that will be discussed in closed session.

BATTALION CHIEF/BUSINESS MANAGER REPORT: Kevin Mullen submitted report via email.

BUREAU OF FIRE PREVENTION: Brian Richardson submitted report via email.

CHIEF REPORT: Keith Scully submitted his report via email.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Personnel:

1. Commissioner Rzomp reported that he and Commissioner Popso had met with the union to finalize FM Richardson's contract. They also met to start reviewing the contracts for the firefighters. They will be reaching out to the union to set up dates to start the process.

5-Year Planning:

1. Commissioner Mayer and B/C Mullen reported progress.

Insurance:

1. Commissioner Bauer received updates from our insurance broker.

Purchases:

1. A list was emailed to the Board.

Policy:

1. Policy 270 Incentive and Policy 225 Participation Requirements have been updated and reviewed by the committee.
2. Policy 440 Medical & Wellness in under review.

Training: Marc Stranko submitted his report via email.

1. Commissioner Mayer inquired if they could look into scheduling training on different nights. They seem to be scheduled on the same nights every month which makes it difficult for those who have monthly meetings scheduled on the same nights to attend training. Chief Scully said that he would look into it.

Truck/Equipment/Building & Grounds: Brian Richardson submitted his report via email.

1. Parking Lot – FM Richardson reported that he has two quotes and is trying to get a third quote. He has not gotten any responses for the third quote and he will document that he has attempted to get the third quote.
2. FM Richardson reported that he has a roofer out to do some repairs on the roof to address some leaks. That should be completed in the following week.

Fire Company Liaison:

1. Commissioner Mayer reported that Commissioner Rzomp has the contract and he is typing it up and they will send it over.

Information Technology Report: Todd Estelow submitted report via email.

1. He will be doing a Fire Wall update.

Financial:

1. Commissioner Popso reported financials are good.

Radio:

1. Progress.

APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP:

1. None

COMMUNICATIONS:

1. None.

PRESENTATION OF BILLS

- 1.

Bills List dated May 9, 2014	\$52,644.99
Additional Bills	
Carrot-Top Industries, Inc.	\$379.41
CDW Government, Inc.	\$814.00
Fire & Safety Services, LTD	\$2,400.00
Franklin Alarm Company, Inc.	\$264.00
Verizon	\$77.93
PSE&G	\$2,146.63
Sub Total	\$6,081.97
TOTAL	\$58,726.96

A motion was made by Commissioner Rzomp and seconded by Commissioner Mayer to pay the bills as presented and including the PSE&G bill for this the month. Motion carried unanimously.

TREASURERS REPORT:

1. The following report was submitted by the Treasurer for approval.

Treasurers Report – Period Ending April 30, 2014

Beginning Cash Balance (4/1/2014)	\$311,982.52
Cash Receipts	\$163,582.95
Cash Disbursements	\$179,192.07
Ending Cash Balance (4/30/2014)	\$296,373.40

A motion was made by Commissioner Arnold and seconded by Commissioner Rzomp to accept the treasurer's report. Motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. **Resolution 2014-14** RESOLUTION SETTING THE BILLING RATES FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE DISTRICT.

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC (Public Comment on Resolution 2014-14):

A motion was made by Commissioner Mayer and seconded by Commissioner Arnold to open the meeting up to the public for comments on Resolution 2014-14. Motion carried unanimously.

Hearing none, a motion was made by Commissioner Rzomp and seconded by Commissioner Arnold to close the meeting to the public for this resolution.

A motion was made by Commissioner Mayer and seconded by Commissioner Arnold to adopt **Resolution 2014-14** RESOLUTION SETTING THE BILLING RATES FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE DISTRICT. Roll call vote: Commissioner Arnold – Yes; Commissioner Bauer – Yes; Commissioner Mayer – Yes; Commissioner Popso – Yes; and Commissioner Rzomp – Yes. Motion carried unanimously.

In answer to questions from Solicitor Gaskill, B/C Mullen reported that yes, this was published and also posted in four public places that there would be an open public meeting, and yes, this is the second reading.

2. Adopt updated Policy 225 Participation Requirements
Commissioner Mayer requested this be held until after closed session for discussion.
3. Adopt updated Policy 270 Incentive Program
Commissioner Mayer requested this also be held until after closed session for discussion.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. A motion was made by Commissioner Rzomp and seconded by Commissioner Arnold to approve the Chief's request not to exceed \$6,000.00 to send members of the department to Firehouse Expo in Baltimore.
2. Adopt **Resolution 2014-15** ANNUAL AUDIT.
A motion was made by Commissioner Mayer and seconded by Commissioner Arnold to adopt **Resolution 2014-15** ANNUAL AUDIT. Roll call vote: Commissioner Arnold – Yes; Commissioner Bauer – Yes; Commissioner Mayer – Yes; Commissioner Popso – Yes; and Commissioner Rzomp – Yes. Motion carried unanimously.

GOOD OF THE BOARD:

1. Commissioner Mayer thanked everyone who came out and supported Relay for Life. \$65,000.00 was raised. The fire department was instrumental in doing a lot of things from the torch run in the morning right through the luminary ceremony at night. Those involved with the Relay were very grateful for all of the support.
2. Commissioner Arnold gave a “hats off” to those who walked around in their gear and air packs for several laps.

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

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

1. **Mr. Albert J. Jacoby:** “Al Jacoby, Bustleton Road. I am here speaking primarily as a company member, as a resident, and primarily fireman. Why in this fragile environment – the company, officers, commissioners, auxiliary – are things being done to erode the connectivity between the five or six entities that fall within the department? There are a few things on the list, specifically some stuff that’s on Facebook recently that I was really disappointed in that came out. And really, I’m so pissed off actually that I read it. I’m glad the meeting was a couple weeks later. I’m so mad about you know, it’s just how it’s not the forum for that kind of stuff. It’s just disappointing that people and the citizens are reading this stuff, and in this era that we are going to ask for additional monies for personnel and large purchases for apparatus, that they are reading squabbles over things. I totally wasn’t in agreement with that stuff with the company and the dues. There are mechanisms in place to handle those types of situations; a phone call to find out what’s going on; read the bylaws, see where the discrepancies are, because I understand there are a few discrepancies; talk about the mailing, there was some discrepancy with the mailing. There’s a series of things to add. But when I read those things, I was just sick almost about it when those things came out. And I just need to know why that’s going on. And not only that thing, but holding the company money up. Nobody elected me to come here and talk about the company or anything like that, and I’m not speaking on anybody’s behalf but myself. I just don’t understand where that stuff is coming from. I know that you guys have been in, and I’ve said most of this stuff at the company meeting, and we have the executive officers to meet with the liaisons and it’s in your court, it’s in your hands. I understand that, I respect that. I am not here to question that part of it or put my two cents into it. But why are these things occurring? It just funnels down from top to the bottom and the bottom back up to the top. And it’s eroding some of this stuff.”

Commissioner Mayer: “Can I respond to contract since I was the one who made that motion?”

Commissioner Bauer: “Sure.”

Commissioner Arnold: “Before we talk about the contract, I want to address the Facebook thing because I know exactly what Al is talking about. It’s a post that I made and first of all, let me apologize to Al and any other member who’s offended by it. But when I saw that members were getting dismissal letters, most of the members that got dismissal letters didn’t get letters that told them they owed dues. I myself didn’t get a dues note; I found it in my mailbox here under a couple of other letters. And then people are getting dismissal letters while we are in a position that we are trying to get trucks out. And instead of trying to get these people who are members, or are certified firefighters to come back, we’re not doing anything to get them back. We are pushing them out the door over three dollars. And it’s very frustrating. And yes, I let my emotions get the best of me and I answered a post with two posts. And I gave them the options that I thought they could take regarding the bylaws because based on life membership and things like that, as you and I discussed when you were shocked that I had gotten a note about not paying dues. And again, I apologize to anybody who is offended. I’ve asked to have it removed. But at no time did I mean to...I felt that the original post was disparaging the entire department, and I want it to be known that the Fire District, or me as a member of the company, as a fourteen year member of this department, I’ve never agreed with the

fact that we have to pay dues to serve our community. I don't have to pay dues to be a baseball coach. I don't have to pay dues to be a Cub Scout master. But I have to pay dues to put my life on the line, and I've never agreed with that. And again, I apologize. And you're right; it's not the right forum for that."

Mr. Jacoby: "I was just wondering if I could have the floor again. The dues notice, I don't know what happened, it's not my thing you know. Mr. Schoen, he sent them out, you know. Whatever that case is, it is. But a simple phone call, a letter. And when it makes you mad don't add to the things, fix them."

Commissioner Arnold: "You're right."

Mr. Jacoby: "And there is a provision I believe, that if you are active, you don't have to pay dues. Does anybody disagree with that?"

Commissioner Rzomp: "I think you have to make your percentage."

Chief Scully: "You have to be accepted in the incentive program."

Mr. Jacoby: "Active, no dues, right? Or a Life Member. That's why I was shocked when your name was on there."

Commissioner Arnold: "I was shocked too because it is what it is."

Mr. Jacoby: "I don't know, I don't want to harp on it, or beat a dead horse, or harp on things, but *(interrupted)*"

Commissioner Arnold: "I can only assure you that I'm aware you gotta get."

Mr. Jacoby: "And you know, we have these discussions when the alarm goes off, you know I'd rather have you guys right there with me, Scott, and things like that. But it's just mind boggles sometimes with some of the things that are going on at all levels. Why fight it and all that kind of stuff. There is no blame pushed on anybody about, we are doing it to ourselves. Everybody, not just one person, the group, it's the whole all six entities that need to come together. I said this April of 2007 when Ed was Chief, we need a clearinghouse. One person to kind of coordinate everything so when the Trustees have an issue they could come, it might be the same type of issue that all the line officers are looking at. And I go back to that trash enclosure: when there was supposed to be a training thing in there; it was supposed to be covered to cover up the equipment. There is no training item out there and the equipment is still sitting outside, so. And you know, it just went to a head fisted, not physically, but it came to a head and got nowhere. And I still say today we need a clearinghouse, no matter what the title is, we need someone to coordinate all of the entities, cause the auxiliary, the per diems, the paid staff, everybody, to kind of get together and coordinate and funnel the good, positive things so the negative things don't bring everything else down. That is my opinion now."

Mr. Albert A. Jacoby: "Alright. Sit down, my turn."

Commissioner Mayer: "Wait. Can I answer his thing about the contract? I was the one that made a motion about the contract in holding the check last month and that was because we were looking at a different way of doing the payments. It wasn't because we were in negotiations and no one moving. It was because we were, we were looking at a different form of payment. It would have changed. So,"

Mr. Albert A. Jacoby: "Well that's exactly what I'm here to talk about."

2. **Commissioner Bauer:** "Could you state your name and address?"

Mr. Albert A. Jacoby: "You sit down. It's my turn. My turn."

(Multiple people speaking, not legible.)

Commissioner Bauer: "State your name for the record now."

Mr. Albert A. Jacoby: "Albert A. Jacoby, 911 Wallace Avenue, Roebling section of Florence Township, 08554."

Commissioner Bauer: "I got it Al."

Mr. Albert A. Jacoby: "I'm disappointed in the way the contract thing was handled. Where was the good faith of giving us the \$1,000.00 and then still talking? But you cut our funds right off, just like that. The career people don't have a contract and they're still getting paid, aren't they? Well, what difference are we? We're the volunteers, the Company."

Commissioner Mayer: "Tonight both checks were approved."

Mr. Albert A. Jacoby: "It was completely out of order what you did. In the thirty years, over thirty-five years that the Commission has been established, we've never had a problem until the last year,

year-and-a-half. And we've had meetings in there. We've had four Commissioners at the meetings at different times. Every time there was a meeting with the Executive Board, there was a different set of Commissioners in there. We took with what you wanted with taking the Wildwood money, separating that. January 2nd I was at the bank doing a new account. That was done. Then it comes again you want a voucher system. Ok, we agreed to that the other week. But it was unfaithful what you did with cutting money. It was out of context. It shouldn't have been done and it was a bad item. And it caused a lot of distention among the members, especially the older members. Not so much the younger members because they still don't know the finances of the Company. And I showed you black and white there the financial reports of the Fire Company. And Kevin gets the report every quarter with the Treasurer reports, and I've never been questioned once about 'I want to see a receipt'. Now all of a sudden, we need receipts. I'm done."

Commissioner Mayer: "We have the changes?"

Commissioner Rzomp: "Yes. I did email the President, the last meeting we approved to remove everything with the exception of the payment plan. I told George I just haven't had the chance to retype up the new contract. So we are back to where we were a year ago. No voucher system; a check every month for \$1,000.00, no questions asked up to your \$24,000.00. And Barb was saying too, the idea behind it was is just if we were going to a voucher system, which is what the Board at the time were leaning towards, that was why. There was no 'to hold it over your head and say we are not going to pay you' or anything like that. And we apologize for that. The chairman has Barb and I down hard, the final, you know. And we had with you guys, we had a really good meeting that night after we went through the contract, we established that we are going to start having our every, what?..."

Commissioner Mayer: "Third Sunday night."

Commissioner Rzomp: "...third Sunday night." to start meeting with you guys off the table, more or less, just to discuss things so that we can, as Al asked, or stated, we have to join to get this going again. You know, it's not one groups fault, it's not anybody's fault. It's we have to work together to get this department back to where we were at. And you know, starting to have these meetings from the top down to get the company, get the district and all that involved, and get this company back to where it was back in the day. Um, I'm just as baffled as you are. I mean it just seems like around here, I can't get it, you can't put your finger on it, where things go and why it went so bad. I do see now, I think there is a lot of the entities see where we are at and I think everybody's trying to claw to get back, but no one is communicating. You know everybody, one group is doing this and one group is doing this. I think if we could all talk, and that's what that third Sunday of the month is hopefully to get action plans together and get things going so we all communicate and hopefully get this back. It's, it's a shame to see where we are. Even between the ranks of the members, you have the young and the old don't communicate and all that. I mean you just see a lot you know, you can see a lot of animosity. You can see a power struggle it almost seems like.

Mr. Albert J. Jacoby: "I don't know what that is. I like going to fires. I like going to calls. That's the only thing I care about, honestly, for me to be selfish about it. I agree with you. You know maybe we need to just open our mouths a little bit and tell them when there is the B.S. stuff going on, 'knock it off.' I don't know what else to do. But, thanks for listening. Thanks for sending them guys to training in Baltimore. It's worth it. And going back to some changes that Barb was talking about, in 1998 or whatever it was when Ed sat down and said we were going to consolidate the five entities, I looked at the guy next to me, and maybe it was you or Scott actually, and said 'this guy's f'n nuts!' But here we are. But it took eleven years to get there. Not pulling stuff up, but there's a right way of doing stuff and changing stuff especially in this type of organization that can get things done. Whether it's a change of payment or structure of the Executive Board, whatever it is, there's a way of doing things. So, but then again, that's my opinion. Thanks."

Commissioner Arnold: "I think Al, we had a road map on how to get the five companies in, the five entities into one. What we lost somewhere after we became one is how we keep, how we move on, how do we move forward as one? We had the Fire District, we had the Fire Company. And somewhere along the way, all of us, not just one person, not just two, but somewhere along the way we forgot that under those two entities comprise the Florence Township Fire Department. That's how I've always..."

Mr. Albert J. Jacoby: "And that terminology most people don't understand that. They can't grasp it. So, thank you for your time."

Commissioner Arnold: “Thank you for bringing it up.”

Commissioner Bauer: “Is there anyone else at this time with concerns? Seeing none...”

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

CLOSED SESSION:

A motion was made by Commissioner Arnold, and seconded by Commissioner Rzomp to go into the closed session to discuss the contract issues that Solicitor Gaskill brought up and personnel, and Policies 225 and 270. Motion carried unanimously. The Board went into closed session at 19:24 hours.

A motion was made by Commissioner Arnold and seconded by Commissioner Mayer to return to open session. Motion carried unanimously at 20:38 hours.

BACK TO OLD BUSINESS:

1. A motion was made by Commissioner Mayer and seconded by Commissioner Rzomp to table the revisions to Policy 225 and Policy 270 so that it can be sent out to all members so that they may have input. Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT:

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

The meeting was adjourned at 20:43 hours.

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Taylor