

December 14, 2015

FLORENCE TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT NO. 1
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING DECEMBER 14, 2015

Board Chairman Charles Bauer called the regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners of Florence Township Fire District No. 1 to order at 7:00 pm. 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 – Charles Bauer, Barbara Mayer, Andrew Popso, Robert Schoen

Absent – William Berry

Also in attendance were Solicitor Robert Gaskill, Chief Kevin Mullen, Deputy Chief Keith Scully, FM Brian Richardson, IT C. Todd Estelow, T/O Marc Stranko, Chief EMT Carolyn Taylor, Captain Joe Wargo, Lieutenant David Motta, and V.P Michael Newell.

CLOSED SESSION

1. Adopt **RESOLUTION 2015-41 CLOSED SESSION**

A motion was made by Commissioner Schoen and seconded by Commissioner Popso to adopt **Resolution 2015-37 Closed Session**. Roll call vote: Commissioner Berry – Absent; Commissioner Mayer – Yes; Commissioner Popso – Yes; Commissioner Schoen – Yes; Commissioner Bauer – Yes. Motion carried unanimously at 7:01 pm.

2. A motion was made at 7:34 pm by Commissioner Mayer and seconded by Commissioner Popso to adjourn closed session. Motion carried unanimously.

MINUTES

1. Minutes of the previous meeting – Open Session November 9, 2015 and November 23, 2015. Closed Session September 14, 2015 and November 9, 2015.

Commissioner Mayer requested to have the open and closed session motions separately.

A motion was made by Commissioner Popso and seconded by Commissioner Mayer to approve the minutes of Open Sessions November 9, 2015 and November 23, 2015 meeting as distributed. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Commissioner Popso and seconded by Commissioner Schoen to approve the minutes of Closed Sessions September 14, 2015 and November 9, 2015. Commissioner Mayer abstained. Motion carried 3-0-1.

SWEARING IN CEREMONY

1. Andrew Leach – Firefighter. Solicitor Gaskill swore in Andrew Leach as Firefighter.

Brief Recess – Refreshments (19:37 – 19:51)

AUDITORS REPORT: (Rob Inverso)

1. None

SOLICITOR: Robert Gaskill

1. Nothing for open session.

CHIEF REPORT: Chief Mullen submitted his report to the Board via email.

BUREAU OF FIRE PREVENTION/MAINTENANCE: FM Richardson submitted his report via email.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Personnel:

1. Commissioner Mayer reported nothing at this time.

5-Year Planning:

1. Chief Mullen reported there is a resolution to approve tonight for the purchase of the ambulances.

Building and Grounds:

1. Commissioner Mayer reported Brian ordered new blinds for the Blue Room and they have arrived.
2. Brian Richardson has selected a paint color for the Radio Room.
3. Todd Estelow was able to speak to someone from Fathead about the Wifi in the Blue Room.

Insurance:

1. Chief Mullen reported there is a resolution to approve for the JIF.

Purchases:

1. A list was emailed to the Board.

Policy:

1. Chief Mullen reported policy Sections 100 and 200 sent to the Solicitor for review; Sections 300-400 sent to the Board for review; and he is still working on Sections 500+.

Fire Company Liaison:

1. Commissioner Schoen – Nothing to report.

Radio:

1. Nothing

APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP:

1. Chief Mullen reported an application has been received from Nicholas Yurcho – Explorer. A motion was made by Commissioner Mayer and seconded by Commissioner Popso to accept the application from Nicholas Yurcho and it takes its normal course. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Commissioner Popso reported no communications.

PRESENTATION OF BILLS

1. A motion was made by Commissioner Mayer and seconded by Commissioner Schoen to pay all the bills with the exception of the PSE&G bill. Motion carried unanimously.
2. A motion was made by Commissioner Mayer and seconded by Commissioner Popso to pay the PSE&G bill. Commissioner Bauer abstained. Motion carried 3-0-1.

TREASURERS REPORT:

1. A motion was made by Commissioner Mayer and seconded by Commissioner Popso to approve the treasurer's report as received. Motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Adopt change to policy POL210 Line Officer Appointments
A motion was made by Commissioner Mayer and seconded by Commissioner Schoen to adopt the changes to POL210 Line Officer Appointments. Roll call vote: Commissioner Berry – Absent; Commissioner Mayer – Yes; Commissioner Popso – Yes; Commissioner Schoen – Yes; Commissioner Bauer – Yes. Motion carried 4-0.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Approve Fire Line Officers for 2016
A motion was made by Commissioner Schoen and seconded by Commissioner Popso to approve the Fire Line Officers for 2016. Commissioner Mayer abstained. Motion carried 3-0-1.
2. Approve Line Officer Pay for 2015 – This is being held for closed session discussion.
3. Adopt Budget **RESOLUTION 2015-42 – 2016 BUDGET**
Chief Mullen gave a short synopsis state that the 2016 budget includes capital items such as a \$25,000 down payment on the engine; includes the refunding of the bonds which is a \$31,000 savings to the District; increasing supplies & maintenance to replace the carpet in the big meeting room; training was increased back to up to \$21,000 from \$17,000, basically minor changes in the budget. It also includes the increase in pension numbers and healthcare. A motion was made by Commissioner Mayer and seconded by Commissioner Schoen to adopt **Resolution 2015-42 – 2016 BUDGET**. Roll call vote: Commissioner Berry – Absent; Commissioner Mayer – Yes; Commissioner Popso – Yes; Commissioner Schoen – Yes; Commissioner Bauer – Yes. Motion carried 4-0.
4. Adopt **RESOLUTION 2015-43 – CAPITAL PLAN**
Chief Mullen reported this would authorize the District to seek approval at the annual election to purchase two (2) ambulances, one in 2017 or later and another in 2019 or later. The first ambulance shall not exceed \$210,000; the second ambulance is not to exceed \$230,000. This includes all the necessary equipment as well. This project came out of the 5-year planning committee.
A motion was made by Commissioner Schoen and seconded by Commissioner Popso to adopt **Resolution 2015-43 – 2016 CAPITAL PLAN**. Roll call vote: Commissioner Berry – Absent; Commissioner Mayer – Yes; Commissioner Popso – Yes; Commissioner Schoen – Yes; Commissioner Bauer – Yes. Motion carried 4-0.
5. Adopt **RESOLUTION 2015-44 JIF INSURANCE RENEWAL**
A motion was made by Commissioner Popso and seconded by Commissioner Mayer to adopt **Resolution 2015-44 JIF INSURANCE RENEWAL** based on the information presented.

Roll call vote: Commissioner Berry – Absent; Commissioner Mayer – Yes; Commissioner Popso – Yes; Commissioner Schoen – Yes; Commissioner Bauer – Yes. Motion carried 4-0.

6. Adopt **RESOLUTION 2015-45 BUDGET TRANSFERS**

Chief Mullen reported that after November 1st, the District is allowed to move money in different line items within their budget. This is something that is done every December.

A motion was made by Commissioner Mayer and seconded by Commissioner Schoen to adopt **Resolution 2015-45 BUDGET TRANSFERS** Roll call vote: Commissioner Berry – Absent; Commissioner Mayer – Yes; Commissioner Popso – Yes; Commissioner Schoen – Yes; Commissioner Bauer – Yes. Motion carried 4-0.

7. Approval to write the 2015 AFG (Assistance to Firefighters Grant) – Chief Mullen would like to write for AEDs (defibrillators).

A motion was made by Commissioner Mayer and seconded by Commissioner Schoen to authorize Chief Mullen to write the 2015 AFG for defibrillators. Motion carried unanimously.

GOOD OF THE BOARD:

1. A motion was made by Commissioner Popso and seconded by Commissioner Schoen for the Board of Fire Commissioners to have Solicitor Robert Gaskill write a letter supporting the appeal process for Carol Taylor with the Civil Service desk audit. Motion carried unanimously.

Solicitor Gaskill gave a synopsis stating the results of the desk audit with regard to Carol is that there are certain duties that Civil Service felt that she couldn't do anymore. Carol had a right to appeal and has exercised her right to appeal. The Board has reviewed the appeal and has chosen to have me (*Solicitor Gaskill*) to write a letter in support of that appeal. For the time being during the pendency of the appeal, Carol's duties are going to remain the same unless specifically ordered by Civil Service to change those duties.

2. Commissioner Bauer thinks the Christmas lights look really good and thanked everyone who helped to put them up.

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

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

1. **Carolyn Taylor, Main Street, Roebling NJ**

Chief EMT Taylor: "We would like to know ah, who requested the desk audits for Todd and myself?"

Commissioner Bauer: "If you are asking me, I have no idea."

5 **Commissioner Mayer:** "Did we get that information from Civil Service?"

Chief Mullen: "I called Civil Service and they would not tell me who requested it."

Chief EMT Taylor: "The Board didn't request it?"

Commissioner Bauer: "This Board member did not."

Commissioner Mayer: "This Board member did not."

10 **Commissioner Popso:** "Same here, this Board member did not."

Commissioner Schoen: "Did not."

Solicitor Gaskill: "I can tell you on behalf of the Board, I did not."

15 **Chief EMT Taylor:** "Ok. Alright, because after ten years that Todd and I have both been in our positions – Todd has been in ten years and I have been in just shy of ten years – why all of a sudden are we being singled out for a desk audit? Because, if the state does a desk

audit, they do a desk audit across the board. So somebody specifically had to request the desk audit for them to happen for Todd and myself.”

Solicitor Gaskill: “I think you are absolutely correct.”

Multiple Board Members: “You’re absolutely correct.”

20 **Chief EMT Taylor:** “Ok so the Chief and the Board didn’t ...”

Solicitor Gaskill: “Carol, you can ask us again, and now it’s going to get offensive.”

Chief EMT Taylor: “Ok.”

Solicitor Gaskill: “No.”

Chief EMT Taylor: “Ok.”

25 **Solicitor Gaskill:** “No. No. No.”

Chief EMT Taylor: “Thank you. Thank you so much for your time.”

Commissioner Bauer: “I wish to add something to that. I certainly don’t need the complications of what we got from that. And there is a lot of people here know that I don’t need the extra work.”

30 **Chief EMT Taylor:** “I understand.”

Commissioner Bauer: “You know, or the grief. And that’s just what it’s been. It’s been, so, you may have to look somewhere else to see who did that. Because we don’t, we ...”

Chief EMT Taylor: “I just..”

Commissioner Bauer: “...we’ve had discussions about it, and we don’t, we don’t know. And it’s certainly...”

35 **Chief EMT Taylor:** “I’m just asking.”

Commissioner Bauer: “Nope.”

Chief EMT Taylor: “That’s all.”

Commissioner Bauer: “Nope.”

40 **Commissioner Popso:** “You need to get an answer.”

Solicitor Gaskill: “And I think that you can take that since we are supporting your appeal...”

Chief EMT Taylor: “Right, I understand that...”

Solicitor Gaskill: “...that our position would be...”

45 **Chief EMT Taylor:** “...and I appreciate that very much.”

Solicitor Gaskill: “Ok.”

Chief EMT Taylor: “Thank you very much. I do appreciate that. Ok.”

Commissioner Mayer: “I can speak for myself, I was very happy to hear the other day when you said that you were putting in the appeal.”

50 **Chief EMT Taylor:** “Ok. Thank you.”

Commissioner Bauer: “You are quite welcome. Is there anybody else?”

2. **Albert A. Jacoby, Wallace Avenue, Roebing**

Mr. Jacoby: “...51 year member of the fire department. Ah, I would like to ask the Board when the determination comes back, what happens with the two individuals, which by the way they are life members of the Fire Company, past officers, past fire chief. We should stand behind them and do whatever you can to correct the situation. I know this Board here didn’t create the problem. I should say problem, but create the situation. It happened in past Boards. But, it is up to you five commissioners to straighten it out. And...”

55 **Commissioner Mayer:** “I agree.”

60 **Mr. Jacoby:** “You see where I’m coming from?”

Commissioner Bauer: “I understand. I don’t think that there is anything that needs to be straightened out. I mean everybody’s, you know we, that’s cutting us down. That is cutting out manpower down if they are taking duties away from Carol.”

Mr. Jacoby: “I realize that. But...”

65 **Commissioner Bauer:** “And you heard, it didn’t come from us. And ah, you know.”

Mr. Jacoby: “Well, it came from some place. And I don’t know if we have to do the OPRA thing, find out go back to the state, but I mean there’s ways of doing it.”

Solicitor Gaskill: “I would be interested in knowing.”

Mr. Jacoby: “Pardon?”

70 **Solicitor Gaskill:** “I would be interested in knowing.”

Mr. Jacoby: “Yeah, and I’m sure we are going to find out eventually. And I’m going to push for it. But ah, just whatever happens, whatever the final thing is, take care of these two individuals and don’t just push them out the door.”

Commissioner Bauer: “I’m not pushing anyone out the door while I’m here, Albert.”

75 **Mr. Jacoby:** “Ok. That’s all I wanted to say. Thank you.”

Commissioners Mayer and Popso: “Thank you Mr. Jacoby.”

3. **Joe Parker, Florence Tollgate Place, Florence**

Mr. Parker: “This is more for the EMS line officers appointments. With her appeal, is that going to prolong the EMS officers’ interviews?”

80 **Commissioner Mayer:** “Unfortunately yes.”

Commissioner Popso: “Yes.”

Mr. Parker: “How come? I mean I know you guys are deciding on what she, her duties are going to be if she gets put back as EMS Chief. But aren’t the line officers for the EMS division, aren’t their duties already lined out on what they have to do? So like I’m just confused on why it’s prolonging the interview process for the people who put in for line officers compared to what you are going to be giving her.”

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Commissioner Bauer: “Well to tell you the truth, if they force, if they forced her to do that job, we were going to find out if she had to be the chief...what was that title again?...”

Chief EMT Taylor: “Chief EMT.”

90 **Commissioner Bauer:** “Right.”

Chief EMT Taylor: “I hold the title.”

Commissioner Bauer: “We were going to take her input on the amount of officers that she needed to perform the job correctly. Now once this gets straightened out, right now, it’s staying the way it is. Ok. I believe your Captain is going to stay there. And there’s going to be, you know, until this is settled, that’s the way it has to be. Because if we move things around and they say Carol’s got to do this, and then we need her input on how she is going to run it. But, if she stays where she is at, then everything stays the same. Am I correct in what I just said?”

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Multiple Commissioners: (*Agreeing*)

100 **Commissioner Bauer:** “Ok, that’s it. Joe, did you understand what I...”

Mr. Parker: “MmmHmm.”

Commissioner Bauer: “And that’s the only reason why there is a holdup with.”

Mr. Parker: “Ok. I was just concerned; I was confused that at the last meeting we were, I was told that it was because they weren’t sure what duties she is getting and then what duties the officers were going to get.”

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Solicitor Gaskill: “And that remains that way.”

Commissioner Mayer: “And that remains because it is in an appeal process.”

Mr. Parker: “Ok.”

Commissioner Bauer: “If she got that job and she says she needed 2 captains, and 6 lieutenants to do the job the right way, that’s what we are worried about, doing the job the right way, then we have to revisit that.”

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Mr. Parker: “Ok.”

Commissioner Bauer: “But right now things seem to be going ok.”

Mr. Parker: “Ok.”

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Commissioner Bauer: “Alright.”

Mr. Parker: “Thank you.”

Solicitor Gaskill: “And all this is subject to change at any minute from Civil Service. So, we are telling you what we know as of right now. So if we get a letter tomorrow, things could change.

120 **Commissioner Bauer:** “Anybody else?”

4. **Gary Richardson, your Chaplain, Florence.**

Chaplain Richardson: “Just to let everybody, if anybody is in the hospital, or they’re sick, they need me to come visit, just let somebody know and I will gladly come to the hospital to visit in that realm. Ok. Just put out that word, that ok where are you at? Your house? I will still come by and visit. Just let me know if I can help. Ok.”

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Solicitor Gaskill: “Very nice to know.”

Multiple Commissioners: *(Thanking Chaplain Richardson)*

Commissioner Bauer: “Nothing? No more questions Joe? Tobe, you got nothing?”

Mr. Houseworth: “I got nothing. If I do, I will let you know.”

130 **Commissioner Bauer:** “I know, one way or another, right? All right. Seeing no one else, I need a motion to close the public portion.”

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

SECOND CLOSED SESSION

1. Adopt **RESOLUTION 2015-46 CLOSED SESSION**

A motion was made by Commissioner Schoen and seconded by Commissioner Popso to adopt **Resolution 2015-46 Closed Session**. Roll call vote: Commissioner Berry – Absent; Commissioner Mayer – Yes; Commissioner Popso – Yes; Commissioner Schoen – Yes; Commissioner Bauer – Yes. Motion carried unanimously at 8:14 pm.

2. A motion was made to come out of the second closed session by Commissioner Mayer and seconded by Commissioner Schoen. Motion carried unanimously at 8:52 pm.

RETURN TO NEW BUSINESS

2. Approve Line Officer Pay for 2015

A motion was made by Commissioner Mayer and seconded by Commissioner Schoen to pay the following positions the following stipends for the year: EMS Captain \$1,250; Fire Lieutenant \$750; two Fire Captains \$850 each; one Battalion Chief \$2,000; and one Deputy Chief \$5,000. To clarify, the EMS Captain was raised from \$1,000 to \$1,250. Commissioner Popso opposed. Motion carried 3-1.

Commissioner Mayer wished everybody a Merry Christmas, and a happy, and safe, and healthy 2016. And she thanks everybody for all they’ve done for the District in 2015.

ADJOURNMENT:

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Taylor