

**MOUNT LAUREL FIRE DISTRICT #1**  
**BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS**  
**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
May 19, 2014  
Fire Department Headquarters Station  
Meeting Minutes #6

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

1. Commissioner Cornue
2. Commissioner Ridenour
3. Commissioner Roura
4. Commissioner Shestack
5. Commissioner Hamilton
6. Chief of Department Colucci
7. Deputy Chief Burnett
8. Administrator Jones
9. Solicitor Braslow

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Roura at 8:00 PM.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence observed.

Public announcements were read by Commissioner Hamilton.

Chief of Department Colucci presented Lieutenant Opizzi, Firefighter Jenkins, Firefighter Cimino and Firefighter Haas with a CPR Save Award and Unit Citation.

**RESOLUTIONS:**

- Resolution #2014-25      "Appointment of David C. Demree to Junior Membership in the Mount Laurel Fire Department". Commissioner Ridenour made a motion to approve the resolution that was seconded by Commissioner Cornue. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.
- Resolution #2014-26      "Appointment of Artis Miller to Active Membership in the Fellowship Fire Company #2 and the Mount Laurel Fire Department". Commissioner Roura made a motion to approve the resolution that was seconded by Commissioner Ridenour. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board. The new member was administered the oath of office by Commissioner Cornue.
- Resolution #2014-27      "Appointment of Remesh Radhakrishnan to Active Membership in the Masonville Fire Company #1 and the Mount Laurel Fire Department". Commissioner Hamilton made a motion to approve the resolution that was seconded by Commissioner Cornue. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board. The new member was administered the oath of office by Commissioner Ridenour.

The Board took a brief recess at 8:13 PM to allow the families of the award recipients and the new members to take pictures. The Board reconvened the meeting at 8:19 PM.

- Resolution #2014-28      "Acceptance of Audit Report for 2013". Commissioner Ridenour made a motion to approve the resolution that was seconded by Commissioner Cornue. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.
- Resolution #2014-29      "Authorization for the Sale of Surplus Equipment Assets". Commissioner Hamilton made a motion to approve the resolution that was seconded by Commissioner Cornue. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

### **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:**

Commissioner Roura made a motion to approve the 4/21/14 Regular Meeting minutes that was seconded by Commissioner Ridenour. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

### **FINANCIAL MATTERS:**

Commissioner Ridenour reported that he had reviewed the bills presented for payment this month and that he found everything to be in order. He made a motion to approve May 2014 bills totaling \$517,607.57 that was seconded by Commissioner Roura. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

### **MONTHLY REPORT BY ADMINISTRATOR:**

The Administrator had submitted his monthly report to the Board for their review prior to the meeting. He reported that our RAS representative had provided us with the final draft of the newsletter that we had to wrap up by 5/22 because he was leaving for a 3 week honeymoon and vacation. Commissioner Hamilton felt that the pictures were unnecessary and Commissioner Cornue agreed that they might not be needed although he did not want this to force a whole redesign of the newsletter. Administrator Jones stated that the reason we included pictures of the things we were trying to address is that they are the most effective way for people to understand the problems. Commissioner Ridenour stated that he was fine with the pictures and the final draft and agreed with Administrator Jones that they drive home our point. Commissioner Shestack was okay with the pictures. Commissioner Roura agreed with Commissioner Hamilton that the pictures were not needed because the narrative itself painted a nice picture for the residents. He felt that some of the pictures fail to illustrate the problems we want to address and felt that it would be better to have them shown as part of the Open House presentation and the community forums that were being planned. Solicitor Braslow felt that the pictures were useful in conveying the message. Chief of Department Colucci liked the pictures but felt that some may not illustrate the problems as well as they could. He felt that if the pictures were larger and showed more detail of the catastrophic problems we have, the message would be more effective. Deputy Chief Burnett stated that he took a lot of the pictures and that it was difficult to find graphic ones that point out the problems. Commissioner Shestack suggested that we go with 3 pictures that best show the worst of the problems. Chief of Department Colucci agreed and felt that we could provide a link to the website where people can view all of the pictures. Commissioner Hamilton stated that he would go with those ideas as long as the photos included in the newsletter are graphic enough to show the problems.

Commissioner Shestack summarized that Commissioners Hamilton and Roura don't want any pictures included but would accept a few that best illustrate the issues and that Commissioners Ridenour and Cornue are okay with the layout as it currently is. He asked the Chiefs and the Administrator if they were okay with that. Administrator Jones replied that he was not thrilled about reconfiguring 2/3's of the final newsletter draft at the last minute and felt that including only a couple of pictures would diminish the newsletter's effectiveness. He added that the pictures in the final draft are the best that we have and that if we had pictures of huge holes in the roof or cracks in the parking lot/aprons the size of canyons, we'd probably look very bad for letting things get that out of control. He added that the problems we are trying to fix are not that bad but unfortunately there is a lot of them that will take significant funding to fix. He also stressed that the newsletter is going to be the only thing that most residents will get about the election and why it is necessary and that we all know how hard it is to get residents to even open it and read the articles and look at the pictures – he felt that most people will never take the time to go to our website to look at our presentation and even fewer will take the time to come out to any of the open house presentations that we schedule. Commissioner Shestack repeated that it comes down to including the pictures or excluding the pictures and he asked everyone to indicate their preference. Commissioners Ridenour, Shestack, Cornue were in favor of the current newsletter draft, Commissioner Roura was in favor but had reservations and Commissioner Hamilton preferred that the pictures be eliminated.

### **MONTHLY REPORT OF THE CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT:**

Chief of Department Colucci had submitted his monthly report to the Board for their review prior to the meeting. He added that he and Battalion Chief Evans travelled to Shanksville PA and Washington DC to pick up 9/11 artifacts for display at our memorial, which are being kept in the East Wing conference room for now. Commissioner Ridenour asked him if we participated in the motorcycle run to the Memorial and he replied that we did standby at the Route 295 overpasses. Commissioner Roura asked him about the progress of the "non-profit" IRS application and he replied that our application for 501c3 tax-exempt status has been filed with the IRS and we are awaiting a final decision.

**STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Insurance: Commissioner Shestack reported that we have basically 2 options for our liability and Workers Compensation coverage - VFIS and the First Responder JIF that we are a member of. However, he has been approached by a new insurance provider that can provide New Jersey fire districts with this coverage. They are marketing their services for the 2015 renewal year and he has asked them to send him their information for our evaluation.

Finance: Commissioner Shestack reported that the Administrator had contacted our former financial advisor (Phoenix Advisors) to get information on a debt service schedule for multiple terms (20, 15 & 10 years) for a \$2.95 million bond issue and he was happy to report that our estimates from late last year on the annual payments were pretty close. He provided the Board members with these spreadsheet documents and explained how to interpret them. He reminded everyone that these figures were projections using current interest rates and felt that the 15 year term looked to be the best to him. Commissioner Roura stated that we've still got a few apparatus to consider replacing between now and when our current bond issue and capital lease debt service is paid off in 2021. Administrator Jones confirmed that everything that we currently have in our debt service schedule is done in 2021 and that the Board needed to seriously consider replacement of our E-One Ladder Tower and 2 engines over the next few years because they may not have 7 years of front-line service left. Chief of Department Colucci added that SCBA and new radio equipment will also become items that we have to consider over the next 2 or 3 years.

**OTHER MATTERS:**

None.

**COMMENTS OF FIRE DISTRICT PROFESSIONALS:**

Solicitor Braslow reported that regarding the bills that would change our election date from February to November, almost every one of them seems to have come to a grinding halt because they have confirmed what we have told them in the past that they can't fit us on the November ballot and the voting district boundaries are a real problem in multiple-fire district towns.

**COMMENTS OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS:**

None.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

Resident Doug Jones stated that after serving for many years on the Long Range Planning Committee with Commissioner Cornue and former Commissioner Nash, the Fire District has still not adopted a Long Range Plan for facility major maintenance needs, apparatus replacement, radio equipment replacement, SCBA replacement and other major capital investments. The "wall paper timeline" developed by Commissioner Nash that used to be on the walls of this meeting room has been removed and tonight the Board is talking about how long they should be going into debt. He believed that the SCBA cylinders purchased in 2010 are coming up on their 2<sup>nd</sup> hydrostatic test and will only have 10 years of usefulness left. He urged the Board to be proactive now and reactivate the Long Range Planning Committee and have them update and finish a plan so that the Board and the public knows what major expenditures are coming up. Commissioner Cornue agreed that the "wall paper timeline" put together by Commissioner Nash was a very valuable visual tool and a constant reminder to every one of the major expenditures that are on the horizon. Although a formal report was never generated, he felt that the work that was done provided a framework of what needed to be done by the organization for the future. He felt that even if the Committee is reactivated, we would be on the same course that we currently find ourselves on. Doug Jones agreed with him but was more concerned about the public and membership's lack of awareness of a Long Range Plan. Commissioner Shestack added that everyone has to realize that since the last Long Range Plan document was developed there has been significant changes and restrictions in how we operate financially that would likely make that plan invalid anyway because we are so limited in the amount of money that we can raise each year by taxation. Deputy Chief Burnett added these restrictions have forced many area fire departments have revised their long range plans to only forecast 1 to 2 years out. Commissioner Shestack agreed that our Long Range Plan certainly needs to be reviewed and revised.

Doug Jones stated that he thought that the CPR Save award ceremony tonight was very well done and worthwhile. He added that on 12/25/10, he and his crew also had a CPR save on a 20 year old male that went down in his living room and that they were recognized at a State EMS awards dinner in AC that was attended by Commissioners Roura and Cornue and they were also recognized by the MLEMS at their annual banquet that year. Unfortunately, our Department never formally recognized this incident. He suggested that this oversight be researched and that the members on that crew be recognized for the actions that they took. Commissioner Shestack asked Chief of Department Colucci to look into it and see what could be done. Deputy Chief Burnett stated that it is the responsibility of

the Officer of the crew involved to submit the incident for recognition, which then is reviewed by a review board and forwarded to the Chief of Department. Doug Jones replied that he remembered submitting his crew for recognition to the Battalion Chief and the Chief of Department in office at the time. Commissioner Shestack assured him that we will look into it.

Doug Jones added that he was going to respect the Board's time by not going over the information that he had sent to Commissioner Shestack but that he and his wife would like to meet with the Board to go over the facts relating to the incident that led to his early retirement. He asked that the Board look at this with an open mind and understands that the Board has an obligation to take into consideration whatever the Chief of Department has told them but he reminded them that there are always 2 sides to every story and when you only hear 1 side you can't make an unbiased decision.

Resolution #2014-30 "Closing of Meeting Pursuant to Open Public Meetings Act". Commissioner Hamilton made a motion to approve the resolution that was seconded by Commissioner Cornue. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

**THE OPEN SESSION ENDED AT 9:07 PM.  
A CLOSED SESSION BEGAN AT 9:10 PM.**

Commissioner Cornue asked Chief of Department Colucci if Firefighter Cimino's illness was anything serious. Chief of Department Colucci stated that he did not know and had not had a chance to speak to him directly.

**THE CLOSED SESSION ENDED AT 10:54 PM.**

Commissioner Ridenour made a motion to adjourn the meeting that was seconded by Commissioner Roura. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

**THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 10:55 PM.**