

**MOUNT LAUREL FIRE DISTRICT #1
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

August 17, 2015

Fire Department Headquarters Station
Meeting Minutes #11

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 Shestack at 8:00 PM.

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

Public announcements were read by Commissioner Hamilton.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Ridenour made a motion to approve the 7/20/15 Regular Meeting minutes that was seconded by Commissioner Cornue. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board with Commissioners Shestack and Roura abstaining.

RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution #2015-39 "Appointment of Matthew J. Cherubini to Active Membership in the Fellowship Fire Company #2 and the Mount Laurel Fire Department". Commissioner Cornue made a motion to approve the resolution that was seconded by Commissioner Roura. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board. Commissioner Ridenour then administered the oath of office to the new member.

Resolution #2015-40 "Appointment of Moses Guzman to Active Membership in the Fellowship Fire Company #2 and 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. Commissioner Ridenour then administered the oath of office to the new member.

The Board took a brief recess at 8:08 PM so that the families of the new members could take pictures. The Board reconvened at 8:13 PM.

Resolution #2015-41: Establishment of the Part-Time Paid Position of Training Officer for the Mount Laurel Fire District #1 (First Reading)". Commissioner Ridenour made a motion to approve the resolution that was seconded by Commissioner Cornue. The motion was unanimously approved to the Board.

FINANCIAL MATTERS:

Commissioner Roura reported that he had reviewed the August monthly bills and found all to be in order. He made a motion to approve monthly bills totaling \$497,519.66 that was seconded by Commissioner Hamilton. 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 the Township was slow in getting the property tax bills out again this August, which seems to be happening every year because the County delays

setting their tax rate. The property tax bills have now gone out and are due by 9/8/15, so we should have our 3rd quarter payment from the Township sometime around the end of August or early September.

BOARD QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT:

Chief of Department Colucci had submitted his monthly report to the Board for their review prior to the meeting. He reported that earlier this evening he had attended a meeting at the Holiday Village East community center to receive a recognition plaque that they presented to the Department for protecting the lives and property of their community.

He reported that we are having some issues with our Comcast e-mail service that are being investigated.

He reminded everyone that our annual Fire Prevention Night Open House will be held on 10/7/15 at Wegman's in the Centeron Square shopping center. He also reminded everybody that the annual Township Fall Festival will be held on 9/19/15, which is also the Firemen's Convention weekend in Wildwood, and that the annual Junior Firefighter's Competition will be held on 10/3/15 on the County Fire Academy grounds.

He announced that Battalion Chief Collier has applied for retirement effective 11/1/15 and that a "pass and review" ceremony will be held for him on 10/30/15 at 10:00 AM at Station 363. Battalion Chief Collier's friends and family are organizing a retirement party for him on 11/13/15.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Labor/Management: Commissioner Cornue reported that discussions about the Stipend program were started over a year ago and have gotten hung up on some legal issues and that at the Labor/Management meeting tonight, it was decided to push hard to get this project moving again. He will meet with Deputy Chief Burnett next week to summarize and review the status and will bring it up at an upcoming meeting for discussion.

Building & Grounds: Commissioner Ridenour stated there we are in a holding pattern right now waiting for the work on the schools to be completed and that things will get going again in September.

Finance: Commissioner Roura asked Administrator Jones when we would be able to meet to start the 2016 Budget review. Administrator Jones replied that he has done as much with the 2016 Budget as he can at this point without further input from the Chiefs and some other sources. He needs to meet with the Chiefs to go over equipment requests that they have and is still waiting for 2016 health benefit premium costs from the State. He has incorporated staff changes for Battalion Chief Collier's retirement and Chief of Department Colucci's staffing plan proposal. He anticipated that he would have something ready for the Committee to review in mid-September.

OTHER MATTERS:

Commissioner Shestack asked Chief of Department Colucci whether he had an update on his staffing proposal and the promotions needed to backfill Battalion Chief Collier when he retires on 11/1/15. Chief of Department Colucci reported that he has begun the review/selection process required to backfill Battalion Chief Collier's retirement opening. He stated that there are 3 Captains eligible for the provisional Battalion Chief promotion - Captains Fox, Santone and Pine with Captain Pine removing his name from consideration. He stated that there are 3 Lieutenants eligible for the Captain position that will become vacant - Lieutenants Opizzi, Maschke and Vanselous with Lieutenant Vanselous removing his name from consideration. He stated that there are 3 firefighters eligible for the Lieutenant position that will become vacant - Firefighters Jenkins, Denelsbeck and Gaynor. Commissioner Shestack asked him if we would be testing 2 ranks below for any of those positions and Chief of Department Colucci replied that we have had current promotional lists available for most of our promotional needs over the last few years and haven't had to do that. He added that he has asked these personnel to submit current resumes and will be meeting with them over the next few weeks in order to prepare his recommendations for the Board. Commissioner Shestack asked why Captain Pine and Lieutenant Vanselous had removed themselves from consideration and he replied that we would respond to that in Closed Session. He added that he hoped to make the promotions at the October Board meeting so that they would be effective on 11/1/15 when Battalion Chief Collier retires. Commissioner Shestack asked him about the firefighter vacancy that will be created and how he planned to backfill it and he replied that he wanted to wait on that until after the next Firefighter list is released by the State so that some of our volunteers have a chance to be on it. He felt that our last round of hiring revealed that the IGT process has depleted the pool of good candidates and that by waiting for a new Firefighter list from the State in the spring, we can show our volunteers that we are willing to wait a little bit in order to give them an opportunity to be hired.

COMMENTS OF FIRE DISTRICT PROFESSIONALS:

Solicitor Braslow reported that he has worked on the language of the proposed Election Date bill with the County Clerk's Association and was able to include something to address the Capital Improvement Program special meeting/election requirement with legislative services and the sponsoring Assemblymen. This bill appears to be in final form but the Assembly is on summer recess and that it probably will not be acted on until very late this year if at all. The Senate is still in session but is taking action on very few bills, which means that this bill may "die" in the current session and have to be reintroduced next year. Commissioner Roura asked him if the bill that provides for the election to be moved to November also eliminates the public vote on our annual budget so that we have the same process as the School District has. Solicitor Braslow replied that the bill removes the requirement for a vote on the budget unless we seek to exceed the 2% levy CAP. He added that the bill will not permit towns with multiple Fire Districts to move their election since most of the time their election district boundaries do not match the Fire District boundaries. The bill also may have a provision for a study to come up with a solution to that problem. The Capital Improvement Program special meeting/election requirement would be eliminated and replaced with one that allow the inclusion of the Capital Improvement Program in the next budget by adoption of a Board resolution following a public hearing with 21 days' notice in at least 5 public places.

COMMENTS OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Roura commended Chief of Department Colucci on the great job that he has done with his staffing plan proposal and rolling it out to the membership.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

None.

Resolution #2015-42 "Closing of Meeting Pursuant to Open Public Meetings Act". Commissioner Ridenour made a motion to approve the resolution that was seconded by Commissioner Cornue. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

Commissioner Shestack stated that he and Commissioner Ridenour would be putting together a public relations policy package for discussion by the Board at an upcoming meeting in an effort to get more press for the good things that we are doing in the Community and that he would be reaching out to Personnel Assistant Delp to be part of that effort.

There was a brief discussion about our Comcast e-mail and problems Board members have recently experienced sending and receiving Department e-mail. Chief of Department Colucci stated that it was being investigated by IT Technician Lupan.

**THE OPEN SESSION ENDED AT 8:35 PM.
A CLOSED SESSION BEGAN AT 8:36 PM.
THE CLOSED SESSION ENDED AT 9:06 PM.**

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

THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:12 PM.