

MOUNT LAUREL FIRE DISTRICT #1
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
February 21, 2017
Fire Department Headquarters Station
Meeting Minutes #3

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

NOT IN ATTENDANCE:

1. Commissioner DiPietrantonio

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Ridenour at 8:03 PM.

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

Public announcements were read by Commissioner Hamilton.

ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS:

- Resolution #2017-10 "Promotion of Lawrence J. Fox to the Position of Battalion Chief for the Year 2017". Commissioner Roura made a motion to approve the resolution that was seconded by Commissioner Shestack. The motion was unanimously approved the Board. Commissioner Ridenour administered the oath of office.
- Resolution #2017-11 "Promotion of Joseph A. Maschke to the Position of Captain for the Year 2017". Commissioner Roura made a motion to approve the resolution that was seconded by Commissioner Shestack. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board. Commissioner Ridenour administered the oath of office.
- Resolution #2017-12 "Promotion of John E. Barlow to the Position of Lieutenant for the Year 2017". Commissioner Roura made a motion to approve the resolution that was seconded by Commissioner Shestack. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board. Commissioner Shestack administered the oath of office.
- Resolution #2017-13 "Promotion of Michael J. Denelsbeck, Jr. to the Position of Lieutenant for the Year 2017". Commissioner Roura made a motion to approve the resolution that was seconded by Commissioner Shestack. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board. Commissioner Roura administered the oath of office.
- Resolution #2017-14 "Promotion of John T. Stenton to the Position of Lieutenant for the Year 2017". Commissioner Roura made a motion to approve the resolution that was seconded by Commissioner Shestack. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.
- Resolution #2017-15 "Promotion of Matthew J. Weston to the Position of Lieutenant for the Year 2017". Commissioner Roura made a motion to approve the resolution that was seconded by Commissioner Shestack. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board. Commissioner Shestack administered the oath of office.
- Resolution #2017-16 "Appointment of Peter J. Toso to the Position of Firefighter for the Year 2017". Commissioner Roura made a motion to approve the resolution that was seconded by Commissioner Shestack. The motion was unanimously approved the Board. Commissioner Roura administered the oath of office.
- Resolution #2017-17 "Appointment of Justin Z. Dunn 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 Shestack. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board. Commissioner Hamilton administered the oath of office.

The Board took a brief recess at 8:36 PM so that the families of the new members could take pictures. The Board reconvened the meeting at 8:58 PM.

FINANCIAL MATTERS:

Commissioner Roura reported that he had reviewed the monthly bills for February and found them all to be in order. He made a motion to approve the payment of monthly bills totaling \$575,560.52 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. There were no questions or comments from the Board.

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. There were no questions or comments from the Board.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Building and Grounds: Commissioner Ridenour reported that the roofing contractor has installed an 8" curb extension on an existing HVAC unit at Masonville as part of the contract punchlist to prevent water and snow intrusion.

OTHER MATTERS:

Administrator Jones reported that Saturday's election was held with only a few small issues reported and that the budget passed overwhelmingly. Commissioners Ridenour and Hamilton congratulated Commissioners Shestack and Roura on their re-election. Commissioner Roura stated that he knew of no issues at Station 361 and asked if anyone else had any issues to report. Commissioner Ridenour reported that there was a minor issue at Station 361 that he was aware of with a voter signing their name in the wrong spot, but it was straightened out. Commissioner Shestack stated that the biggest problem is still the voting district boundary lines and voters going to the wrong polling place. He knew of about 10 voters that came to Headquarters to vote but had to be turned away and told that they had to vote at Station 362. There was a brief discussion about the voting district boundaries and what causes these problems.

COMMENTS OF FIRE DISTRICT PROFESSIONALS:

Solicitor Braslow updated the Board on pending legislation, reporting that the November election bill had been released from a 2nd Assembly Committee without objections and was now supposed to be considered by a Senate Committee on Monday. He had heard that 2 senators (Senators Turner and Beach) had some problems with the language in the bill involving the capital appropriations meeting changes. Last Monday he met with Senator Beach, Cherry Hill FD representatives and the Senate Democrats aide and discussed issues that they may need clarification on. The aide indicated that many legislators have an issue with Fire District capital appropriations because they felt that they were abused. Solicitor Braslow explained that the vast majority of Fire Districts follow the statutes to the letter but there are some that do not and they should be addressed, not all Fire Districts in general. He took the opportunity to ask for a few amendments and clarifications to the legislation involving capital appropriations and capital meetings. He felt that he was able to get the aide to understand many of his points and felt that we have a good chance of getting them incorporated. He commended Senator Beach for being an advocate of the Fire Service and believed that he cared about the issues that we had discussed. He hoped that the DCA and Senator Turner would not get in the way of the changes in the legislation that had been tentatively agreed to.

Commissioner Roura asked him when the changes outlined in the legislation would take effect if it is approved by the legislature and signed by the Governor. Solicitor Braslow replied that if the bill is signed, each County Clerk would have 30 days to certify that the voting districts align with Fire District boundaries. Fire District Boards that want to move to the November date would adopt a resolution, which would also mean that the Commissioner petition submission dates would change significantly. County Election Boards would take over all aspects of the election process and the terms of the existing Commissioners would expire in December. Commissioner Roura asked him if it would take effect this year and Solicitor Braslow indicated that it would. Administrator Jones disagreed and noted

that there was a change in the bill that stated that once signed, the legislation would take effect on the January 1st of the year after the bill was signed.

Solicitor Braslow added that supposedly the Governor has indicated that he will sign the bill. Administrator Jones added that he brought up several points with Solicitor Braslow regarding the timing that the State follows in releasing key information on the annual employer share of pension costs and the State Health Benefits Program rates, which together amount to about 25% of our budget. He wondered how we would be able to have our budget completed and submitted for DCA approval in September/October if we don't have those figures. Solicitor Braslow stated that this is something that the DCA will have to address depending on what they change with the budget/election calendar that they develop each year. Chief of Department Colucci asked Administrator Jones how the school board handles the budget that they have to submit for approval now that they are on the November election date. Administrator Jones replied that the school board budgets are based on the school year and that our school board does not participate in the SHBP so their health benefit numbers come from a different source. They also don't have to make an employer contribution to the TPAF pension system for the teachers, only a much smaller PERS contribution for some of the non-teaching staff and he assumes that they make an educated guess.

Solicitor Braslow reported that his appeal of the DCA Cherry Hill ruling is scheduled for a settlement conference on 5/25 and that the Hamilton Township merger was the subject of a public hearing last week that resulted in some public disagreement between Mayor and Council about whether to have a municipal fire department or a single consolidated Fire District. He also noted that the Voorhees Fire District has now been formally dissolved and is now a municipal Fire Department.

Solicitor Braslow also noted that the DCA is now scrutinizing the annual budget ballot questions to make sure that the "amount to be raised by taxation" figure is properly spelled out. Commissioner Shestack read off the text of several budget ballot questions that he had researched on other Fire District websites and that none of them used the same language. Solicitor Braslow commented that several of the ones that he read aloud were completely and obviously invalid. Administrator Jones noted that starting last year, the DCA now requires that we provide a copy of the ballot with the election results, so this may explain why they are now interested in this. Solicitor Braslow stated that we will see where this goes but if the DCA is asking for copies of the ballot, it means that they are scrutinizing them and that more changes will probably come.

COMMENTS OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Roura stated that he was thrilled with the Department-wide cooperation between the career and volunteer staff this election cycle and that he believes that staff relations have never been better. Commissioner Hamilton congratulated Commissioners Shestack and Roura on their re-election. Commissioner Ridenour also congratulated the re-elected Commissioners and agreed with what Commissioner Roura said about the Fire District coming together and unifying for the betterment of all. He appreciated everybody coming out to vote and the fact that the Union helped by hand delivering reminder cards to voters, especially in his Laurel Creek development. Chief of Department Colucci added that the cost of the green reminder cards was split by Fellowship Fire Company and the Union and that volunteers and career staff did all of the distribution.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Commissioner Shestack stated that Chief of Department Colucci had suggested a good idea, which was to note the number of residents in the audience each meeting, which was 2 tonight. He had observed this being done by other government entities and felt that it was a good way to note public participation for the record. Commissioner Ridenour agreed that it was a good idea and that his Executive Board did it at Laurel Creek Homeowners Association meetings.

Resolution #2017-18 "Closing of Meeting Pursuant to Open Public Meetings Act". Commissioner Roura made a motion to approve the resolution that was seconded by Commissioner Shestack. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

**THE OPEN SESSION ENDED AT 9:35 PM.
A CLOSED SESSION BEGAN AT 9:36 PM.
THE CLOSED SESSION ENDED AT 9:56 PM.**

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

THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:57 PM.