

**TOWNSHIP OF MONROE**  
**Board of Fire Commissioners**  
**Fire District No. 2**  
**Minutes of the Agenda and Regular Meetings**  
**Wednesday, February 9, 2011**

The Monroe Township Board of Fire Commissioners of District No. 2 met at the Monroe Township Fire District #2 & EMS building, 10 Halsey Reed Road, corner of Applegarth Road, Monroe Township, New Jersey for an Agenda Meeting.

Chairman Mahler called the meeting to order with a Salute to the Flag at 7:00 pm. Chairman Mahler asked for a moment of silence for all firefighters and military that have died in the performance of their duties.

**UPON ROLL CALL** made by Commissioner Martin Berkowitz, the following members of the Monroe Township Board of Fire Commissioners of District No. 2 were present: Martin Berkowitz, Glenn Borsuk, Maurice Mahler and Lawrence Reisch. Commissioner Mitnowsky was not present.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Board Attorney Richard J. Shaklee, Esquire, and Val Cier, Recording Secretary.

There was one career firefighter present: Chief Carbin

There were no volunteer firefighters present.

There were three members of the public present: Michael C. Konowicz, Harold Dower and Charlie DiPierro.

Chairman Mahler announced that the meeting was being held in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act, having been published in the April 9, 2010 newspaper, posted on the bulletin board of the Office of the Township Clerk, and notices sent to those requesting such.

**AGENDA MEETING**

Chairman Mahler asked the board to review the minutes. Commissioner Borsuk, Berkowitz and Reisch had corrections to pages 1, 2 and 5 of the minutes.

Chairman Mahler asked the board to review the Claims against the Board.

Chief Carbin reported on the problem with thermostat on EMS side of building - the exhaust pipe for the heating came apart at the seam. It has now been fixed and is working.

7:12 pm Charlie Dipierro arrived.

Chairman Mahler stated he spoke to Board Accountant Dan Carlstrom regarding funds they are still waiting for payment from Mr. Lang. Attorney Shaklee stated Mr. Lang would address the outstanding funds after the first of the year. Attorney Shaklee stated he reached out to Mr. Lang, CFO of Monroe Township.

Commissioner Berkowitz read letter dated 1/26/11, to Chief Carbin from the Mayor of Plainsboro, regarding the fire on 12/28/10 in which they assisted with a major residential fire at Ravens Crest.

Chairman Mahler stated there was a problem with getting out the postcards for the change of the polling location, but it has been resolved. Postcards should be in residential mailboxes by this Saturday, 2/12. They were mailed out at 24 cents, as non-profit. Advertisement on new polling location for Applegarth firehouse voters to vote at new building was placed in the Cranbury Press papers of February 4<sup>th</sup> and February 11<sup>th</sup> editions.

Chairman Mahler distributed a sample of a postcard that will be used instead of the Firewire. There were 10,900 mailings at 24 cents; after March 31, and the content on the postcard can be changed.

7:23 Firefighter Mike Gilette arrived with his family.

Chairman Mahler stated there will be no need for a closed session.

Commissioner Reisch would like to collect money for insurance premiums from the township. Will need to discuss how the board will collect the money from the township.

**UPON MOTION MADE** by Glenn Borsuk and seconded by Martin Berkowitz, the agenda meeting was adjourned at 7:28pm.

**ROLL CALL:** Aye Berkowitz  
Aye Borsuk  
Aye Mahler  
Aye Reisch

**REGULAR MEETING**

Chairman Mahler called the regular meeting to order with a Salute to the Flag at 7:45 pm.

Chairman Mahler asked for a moment of silence for all firefighters and military that have died in the performance of their duties.

**UPON ROLL CALL** made by Commissioner Martin Berkowitz, the following members of the Monroe Township Board of Fire Commissioners of District No. 2 were present: Martin Berkowitz, Glenn Borsuk, Maurice Mahler and Lawrence Reisch. Commissioner Mitnowsky was not present.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Board Attorney Richard J. Shaklee, Esquire, and Val Cier, Recording Secretary.

There were two career firefighters present: Chief Carbin and Firefighter Crocker.

There were three volunteer firefighters present: Dan Steadman, Mark Davis and Dennis Cronin.

There were many members of the public present: Michael C. Konowicz and Howard Dower, Charlie Dipierro, family of Mike Gilette.

Chairman Mahler announced that the meeting was being held in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act, having been published in the April 9, 2010 newspaper, posted on the bulletin board of the Office of the Township Clerk, and notices sent to those requesting such.

**RESOLUTION APPOINTING NEW FIREFIGHTER**

Attorney Shaklee swore in Mike Gilette, Jr. Board and Chief Carbin welcomed Firefighter Mike Gilette, Jr.

**UPON MOTION MADE** by Glenn Borsuk and seconded by Martin Berkowitz, a motion was adopted on the resolution to appoint and employ new career firefighter Mike Gilette, Jr of Fire District #2.

**ROLL CALL:** Aye Berkowitz  
Aye Borsuk  
Aye Mahler  
Aye Reisch

Firefighter Gilette and family left the meeting.

**MINUTES**

Chairman Mahler asked for a motion on the Minutes.

**UPON MOTION MADE** by Lawrence Reisch and seconded by Martin Berkowitz, a motion was adopted to approve the minutes of the January 12, 2011 agenda and regular meetings, as amended.

**ROLL CALL:** Aye Berkowitz  
Aye Borsuk  
Aye Mahler  
Aye Reisch

## CLAIMS AGAINST THE BOARD

Commissioner Reisch reported:  
General Operating Claims Total      \$101,465.91  
Capital Project Claims Total          \$1,725.33  
Net Payroll Claims Total              \$ 68,321.95  
Total Claims Against the Board      \$171,513.19  
December 11, 2010 - January 18, 2011

**UPON MOTION MADE** by Lawrence Reisch and seconded by Glenn Borsuk, claims against the Monroe Township Board of Fire Commissioners of District No. 2 were approved in the amount of \$171,513.19.

**ROLL CALL:** Aye Berkowitz  
                  Aye Borsuk  
                  Aye Mahler  
                  Aye Reisch

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Chairman Mahler asked for the treasurer's report.

Commissioner Reisch reported the following as of January 18, 2011:

Hudson City Savings Bank:

Unrestricted Funds      \$923,947.55  
Restricted Funds        \$405,989.83  
Capital Projects         \$118,255.70  
Cash on Hand            \$170.00  
Restricted due from Capital projects \$3,654.03

Total Balance            \$1,448,363.08

## BUILDING COMMITTEE

Resolution authorizing a change order number GC-63 for \$1385.00 for the supply and installation of revised interior construction plaque.

**UPON MOTION MADE** by Martin Berkowitz and seconded by Glenn Borsuk, to

**ROLL CALL:** Aye Berkowitz  
                  Aye Borsuk  
                  Aye Mahler  
                  Aye Reisch

## CORRESPONDENCE

Chairman Mahler asked if there was any correspondence to be read. Commissioner Berkowitz had no correspondence.

## **FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU REPORT**

Chairman Mahler asked Chief Carbin to review his Monthly Fire Prevention Report.

Chief Carbin highlighted some incidents and updates:

- Many EMS assists during snow storm
- Eight units lost in Raven Crest December fire
- Keyfob system is up and running - provided 100 key, will need 100 for EMS
- Non-profit postage issue has been resolved
- Patriots Path would like Fire Prevention presentation, which will take place on 2/16 at 7:30pm.
- Command vehicle check has been cut, anticipated completion is for next week
- Truck committee went to Pierce the end of January 30. Toured every plant. Assembly plant is phenomenal and clean. The repair plant was more impressive. Looked at trucks that had been in accidents. Feel more comfortable now with the cab. Contract states July due date. Made minor changes while out there.
- Firefighters that made top 15 will be offered per diem; new firefighter hired.

New Truck: There will either be a pre-paint or post paint job inspection. Suggest going there after the paint job to ensure nothing was missed. Final inspection is taking the entire spec to review and then do all the testing. Pierce will deliver the truck. Go through the acceptance one more time. There has been a good experience with Pierce, and it will probably come in before the due date.

Chairman Mahler asked if the hand blowers in the restrooms will be taken down. Chief Carbin will take them down and replace with new hand dryers. They will call Jason Martin regarding the Solar kiosk to get it back up and running.

Commissioner Berkowitz questioned who will service the new truck. It was put in the spec that service will be done in Piscataway.

Commissioner Reisch mentioned District 3 said they will save money using Gateway, carriers outside of JCPL. Chief Carbin stated he switched the gas to MX, as District 3 did. Chief Carbin will look into Gateway. Commissioner Reisch mentioned the electricity bill is running very high at the new building.

Chairman Mahler stated the SREC were sold on commodities exchange for almost \$3000.00 (\$655 each SREC).

## **APPLEGARTH VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY**

Chairman Mahler asked for the Applegarth Volunteer's report. President Dennis Cronin reported the following:

- Change of organizational positions: President is Dennis Cronin; Vice President is Dan Steadman; Deputy Chief is Mark Davis.

- The have recruited more members: one new member, one probationary member, one support member, and one junior member.
- Two members went through fire/police academy and hope they will be used more frequently in the township to help cut costs.
- Need to get plastic helmets for kids - Chief Carbin may have some available.
- Plan on picking up recruitment efforts.
- Sign at volunteer firehouse has been changed to reflect the election voting location
- Career firefighters took the shed from the old firehouse and the career firefighters put the contents in old firehouse bay. Request to move it out of Applegarth firehouse. Chief Carbin stated they are waiting for snow to be moved out. Should be soon.
- Would like to know the firehouse electric bill for the Applegarth station

Commissioner Reisch would like to meet to review the electric bill and other items when it gets warmer. Commissioner Reisch reviewed the bills and he shows for 130 Applegarth Road:

- Water bill \$87
- Fuel bill/heating oil \$1441.09 (1/9 to 1/31)
- Dumpster \$80/mo
- JCPL \$194.38 (actual)
- Phone \$246.01; long distance \$56.95 > those belong to Fire Prevention  
443-4444 (long distance line -old fire prevention and fire alarm)  
448-5555

Chairman Mahler stated he would supply a print out of the bills. Chief Carbin can supply a print out. Mr. Cronin stated they are trying to cut down on electric and heat.

Mark Davis stated this month had 7 members that are in VIP program. Commissioner Reisch asked how many trucks went out. Mr. Davis stated 2 or 3 calls had the tanker and engine out, although trucks were out more than those 2 or 3 calls.

### **MEETING OPEN TO BOARD**

Chairman Mahler opened the meeting to the board - the board had no new business.

### **MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Chairman Mahler opened the meeting to the public.

Mr. Konowicz questioned:

- Policy of removing snow around fire hydrants

Chief Carbin stated the township has ordinance that individual is responsible, but they wont need hydrants; firefighters would shovel if needed. Chief Carbin waits until day after the storm and requests the communities to clean. Fire department polices that hydrants are cleared.

- Who does it in rural areas? Attorney Shaklee stated it depends on what code it's in and should state who the code enforcement officer is. They have power to issue summons. Mr. Dower stated it may be zoning officer. Mr. DiPierro stated MUA has an ordinance on their books and feels it would be their responsibility. He will share what he finds out.
- Mr. Konowicz stated many hydrants are not shoveled out. Chairman Mahler suggested calling the township.

- Mr. Konowicz is there a committee overseeing the solar system and recalls. Chief Carbin said the company sun electric is installer. Mr. Konowicz stated that some invertors are being recalled.
- Mr. Konowicz asked for the voting locations: non-gated at new firehouse; gated locations at Encore, Clearbrook, Ponds, and Concordia.

Chairman Mahler questioned if there is a snowstorm on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of February for the election. The PRC management will close the clubhouse, which is where voting takes place. The Board of Election didn't have an answer.

- Mr. Konowicz asked where the tally is -Tally at firehouse.

Commissioner Reisch stated that in a storm, PRC residents can't get out. Four PRC's amount to 8000 to 9000 residents.

Commissioner Borsuk questioned if there is a statute that will prevent the PRC from closing a polling location. Attorney Shaklee called Board of Elections to question about the snow storm. They said would provide guidance.

Mr. Dower had a request for information and would like poll results from last election. Chief Carbin will provide an OPRA form tonight. Mr. Dower wanted to clarify the 100 EMS in town. Chief Carbin stated there are 100 in Monroe township.

Mr. Dower questioned if Pierce is paying for the trips out to Wisconsin and inspections. Chief Carbin stated if they are in the contract it costs more. If you don't put in contract, you can get it for less cost. The Initial trip was paid by Pierce.

Mr. Dower questioned - wouldn't you want that meeting before committing to the truck. Trying to figure out the reasons for making several trips out there. Chief Carbin stated that when buying it, you need to make sure it's right. Mr. Dower feels the pre-construction meeting and the inspection here is the one that counts.

Commissioner Borsuk stated if they can fix it, it may take more months if it wasn't inspected. Each truck is custom. Making sure we are getting what is needed is determined through the inspections.

Commissioner Reisch stated the truck price came in about a quarter of a million lower than what was expected. The truck is prepaid and Commissioner Reisch negotiated an interest payment for 10 years at 3.79% interest rate. The principal and interest is about \$116,000/year. Interest rates have bottomed out, they can only go up.

Mr. Cronin read from the minutes last year's tax rate was .20926; this year the tax rate is .19468. Commissioner Reisch stated that it was 21 cents last year; this year they have to go by the ratables that the township provides on October 2010, and start formulating budget. It came in at .2097 (21 cents), but they knew that their would be claims in the township. Commissioner Reisch had to use the figures from October. The new tax bill will be in July/August.

The Board did amend the budget on January 10<sup>th</sup> with the new figures; the district lost \$102 million in ratables. The board wanted to adjust the budget to keep it the same. Taxpayer will pay same tax rate amount in July/August of 21 cents. There is no change to the taxpayer. The

public is voting on the budget and amount to be raised on taxation. The township used to round the tax rate to 2 digits. Commissioner Reisch forced them to round it out to 3 digits and saved school districts money.

Mr. Dower stated he had someone get an absentee ballot but it didn't have his name on it. Commissioner Berkowitz stated all the ballots have the 4 candidate names and that is what the county has as well.

Mr. Dipierro asked how many houses in the district. He has ratables for the districts and he is trying to determine how many houses in this district. Commissioner Borsuk believes the number of items (units) is 8096 in District 2, 7080 in District 3. Mr. Dipierro questioned how come District 2 can man their district with a 4 man crew and district 3 has 8 man crew. Their budget was turned down at 29 cents, at special meeting asking them to take out of the reserve. If their rate is approved, it will go up 4 cents.

They want them to take another \$250,000.00 out of their reserve. If they are putting in \$700,000, it comes out of taxpayers either way. If they move forward and are successful this year, next year they can't put \$700k in. How will they generate another \$700k. There is no plan for that, they are looking at consolidation. We need to work together in purchasing equipment, manpower, etc. Mr. Dipierro has put in 43 OPRA requests since December. They are the reason we are having consolidation. Mr. Dipierro is concerned as a taxpayer.

Chairman Mahler stated they don't get the scope of senior communities. It's becoming a political football and the taxpayer will suffer.

Mr. Dipierro stated they built a machine that they can't keep running in district 3. The NFPA guideline 1710 states you need 17 men, but they only have 8 men. How do they qualify for the NFPA guideline. Now they are paying and financing on a truck they don't have. Mr. DiPierro questioned why was their township vehicle in Trenton. Why is the taxpayer paying for township vehicle being driven on private matters. Mr. Dipierro filed an OPRA for the firefighter contract 3 times and it has not been received. The Mayor's office told him to file a complaint. Mr. Dipierro stated their board has flyers to vote yes for the budget; telling the public how to vote.

Commissioner Reisch tried getting together with the other districts on a palatable union contract and district 3 didn't want to be part of it. Chairman Mahler stated that homeland security won't let us do grants unless its tri district request. District 3 never joined the ranks.

Commissioner Reisch mentioned the article he read said 29 cents would be their (district 3) tax rate. It was turned down. They are putting in and additional \$250k to keep the tax rate same as last year. Next year it should be 27.6.

Mr. Dipierro said when it went to DCA it had 1.6 cent increase. January 10<sup>th</sup>, they were turned down and had a special meeting to put a question out to public.

Commissioner Reisch stated for the last 10 years their ratables (district 3) have exceeded district 2 by \$100 million every year. The new ratables are more by \$102 million. They can't complain about ratables. They have always been over. If they consolidate, it must be the whole township and district 1 will suffer the most. Commissioner Reisch stated this can be done without consolidation. Disparity in the tax rate between the 3 districts is the problem,

but it can be remedied. Commissioner Reisch has solutions.

Commissioner Reisch read an article in the Cranbury Press. Monroe township is 42- 43 square miles: District 1 - 14 miles; district 2 - 14 miles, district 3 -24 miles (adds up to 52- incorrectly noted in paper).

Commissioner Reisch asked what the true mileage is of 3 districts.

Commissioner Borsuk believes: District 2-16 miles; District 1-12 miles; District 3-14 miles  
Article was biased toward dist 3. Commissioner Reisch told him he wants a retraction in the paper.

#### **MEETING RE-OPENED TO THE BOARD**

Commissioner Reisch requested Attorney Shaklee to draft a letter to go to the township for money due from the township. Attorney Shaklee asked who sends the letter to the township for insurance reimbursement. Chief Carbin has insurance information on a disk.

Commissioner Reisch will look into Soden Insurance. District 1 pays \$48,000 plus \$10,000 for workers compensation for 48 guys. Saved for payroll. Commissioner Reisch states district 2 is cheaper at \$77,000 and covers workers compensation.

#### **CLOSED SESSION**

Chairman Mahler announced no need for an executive session.

#### **ADJOURN**

Chairman Mahler asked for a motion to adjourn.

**UPON MOTION MADE** by Glenn Borsuk and seconded by Martin Berkowitz, the meeting was adjourned 9:20pm.

**ROLL CALL:** Aye Berkowitz  
Aye Borsuk  
Aye Mahler  
Aye Reisch

MARTIN BERKOWITZ  
Board Secretary  
MAURICE MAHLER  
Chairman

**NOTE: Appendixes can be obtained upon request from the Board Secretary.**

PREPARED BY: Val Cier