

**TOWNSHIP OF MONROE**  
**Board of Fire Commissioners**  
**Fire District No. 2**  
**Minutes of the Agenda and Regular Meetings**  
**Wednesday, September 14, 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, Monroe Township, New Jersey for an Agenda and Regular Meeting.

Chairman Mahler called the meeting to order with a Salute to the Flag at 7:05 pm. Chairman Mahler asked for a moment of silence for all firefighters and military who 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, Edward Mitnowsky and Lawrence Reisch. **ALSO PRESENT:** Board Attorney Richard J. Shaklee, Esquire, and Val Cier, Recording Secretary. There was one career firefighter present. Firefighter Cackowski  
There were five volunteer firefighters/support present: Dennis Cronin, Jeff Levy, Norman Olinski, Mel Nudelman, John O'Brien.  
There were three members of the public present: Charlie DiPierro, Mike Konowitz, Harold Dower.

Chairman Mahler announced that the meeting was being held in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act, having been published in the April 1, 2011 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 if there were any corrections to last month's minutes.

Commissioners Borsuk and Reisch had corrections to various pages of the minutes.

Commissioner Reisch stated that district 2 tax rate is 21 cents and district 1 is 11 cents, and district 3 is 29.4 cents, since it was mentioned in last month's meeting by Mr. Dipierro but not noted with the three rates.

Chairman Mahler mentioned they did get a check of \$1400.00 in SRECs given to the Chief to deposit. The district has over \$10,000.00 in solar energy refunds since February.

7:13pm Benjamin Vivona arrived (district 3)

Chairman Mahler stated the building has no leaks since all the rain and hurricane that just passed. Flashing and closing worked and no repairs are need. There is a check for Santorini that still needs to be paid. Commissioner Berkowitz reported that he has no correspondence tonight. Fire prevention and volunteer's reports will be reviewed at regular meeting.

Chairman Mahler received a call and email that district 2 will get a 150 pound piece of the World Trade Center. Chairman Mahler would like to coordinate with volunteers to pick up the

piece at JFK, hanger 17. It will be part of the memorial garden. Every year they choose a firehouse location to have a special memorial - hoping the garden will be done and the firehouse chosen. At memorial at high school, the attendees had the opportunity to touch their Trade Center piece.

Chairman Mahler reported there will be no closed session tonight. Chairman Mahler received a call from Mr. Valentino and advised nothing is going on until committee meeting of October 17th.

**UPON MOTION MADE** by Glenn Borsuk and seconded by Martin Berkowitz, the agenda meeting was adjourned at 7:19pm.

**ROLL CALL:** Aye Berkowitz

Aye Borsuk

Aye Mahler

Aye Mitnowsky

Aye Reisch

## REGULAR MEETING

Chairman Mahler called the regular meeting to order with a Salute to the Flag at 7:34 pm.

Chairman Mahler asked for a moment of silence for all firefighters and military who 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, Edward Mitnowsky and Lawrence Reisch. **ALSO PRESENT:** Board Attorney Richard J. Shaklee, Esquire, and Val Cier, Recording Secretary. There were two career firefighters present: Firefighter Cackowski and Chief Carbin. There were six volunteer firefighters/support present: Dennis Cronin, Jeff Levy and Norman Olinski, Mel Nudelman, Ben Vivona and Don O'Brien. There were three members of the public present: Charlie DiPierro, Mike Konowitz, Harold Dower.

Chairman Mahler announced that the meeting was being held in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act, having been published in the April 1, 2011 newspaper, posted on the bulletin board of the Office of the Township Clerk, and notices sent to those requesting such.

## MINUTES

Chairman Mahler asked for a motion on the Minutes.

**UPON MOTION MADE** by Glenn Borsuk and seconded by Ed Mitnowsky, a motion was adopted to approve the minutes of the August 10, 2011 agenda and regular meetings, as amended.

**ROLL CALL:** Aye Berkowitz

Aye Borsuk

Aye Mahler

Aye Mitnowsky

Aye Reisch

## CLAIMS AGAINST THE BOARD

Chairman Mahler asked the board to review the claims against the board.

Commissioner Reisch read the report:

General Operating Claims Total	\$136,140.80
Capital Project Claims Total	\$0.00
Net Payroll Claims Total	\$108,472.39
Total Claims Against the Board	\$244,613.19

August 11, 2011 - September 16, 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 \$244,613.19.

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

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Chairman Mahler asked for the treasurer's report.

Commissioner Reisch reported the following as of September 16, 2011

Hudson City Savings Bank:

Unrestricted Funds	\$113,493.31
Restricted Funds	\$375,989.83
Capital Projects	\$66,213.68
Cash on Hand	\$170.00
Total Balance	\$555,866.82

Commissioner Reisch stated the board has not received the quarterly check from the township yet.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

Chairman Mahler asked for the correspondence to be read.

Commissioner Berkowitz had no correspondence. Chairman Mahler reported that the 150 pound piece of the World Trade Center is ready for pick up. It will be part of the memorial garden. Chief Carbin will make arrangements for pick up.

Commissioner Reisch asked Chief Carbin if there was correspondence from Wayne Hamilton regarding the districts money. Chief Carbin reported that Mr. Hamilton has the paperwork. Mr. Mcgrath sent proper paperwork.

### **FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU REPORT**

Chairman Mahler asked for the Fire Prevention Report.

Chief Carbin reviewed the following:

- Training has begun on the new truck
- Few more mounting brackets to be installed on new truck
- Incident run log is 7 pages this month - reviewed various calls
- During hurricane, Monroe was like 3 islands - couldn't get to district 3. Most areas were only accessible by boat or school bus. The Applegarth firehouse was flooded and could not drive to Rt. 33 from Applegarth road. The water didn't come from the river, but the northeast side of the road. Contractors came in Sunday and Monday. Multiple adjusters have been there. Need prices for the repair. Commissioner Borsuk and volunteers got apparatus and gear out of the firehouse in time. The brunt of the rescues were in district 1.
- Chairman Mahler stated there was no communication from township and/or his

### community during the storm

Chief Carbin stated all communities were notified, as part of OEM (office of emergency management). OEM called community management on Friday - advised that residents in low lying areas must be out before storm, have shelters operable. Chief followed ICHIEF guidelines of 50 mph wind and torrential downpour, they wouldn't respond, but it didn't get that bad.

OEM meeting included Ernie Fiest and Wayne Hamilton. Chief Carbin stated they were OEM basement Saturday into Sunday night for 12 hours. They couldn't get down to get Mayor due to weather. Six to seven calls per minute; could have used more people but it worked. Mr. Hamilton came in Sunday morning and stayed the day. All communities had heads up notification.

7:44pm Dan Medina and Firefighter Grande arrived

Chairman Mahler asked if the board should get a zodiac. District 3 has 1 zodiac, district 1 has a zodiac and aluminum boat. Chief Carbin would recommend staying away from the zodiac. He prefers a rescue CRT with trailer and has 20 horsepower.

Chairman Mahler suggested looking into a grant. Chief Carbin stated they may get a grant through FEMA now. Chief Carbin has the paperwork. District 2 had to call mutual aid because they couldn't get to vehicle on Rt. 33 that had water up to window (man & 3 yr old). Manalapan came in with boat and Millstone transported to hospital. There were 3 other cars out there but they were empty.

7:56pm Dan Steadman arrived.

- Rcvd claim check for lightening strike. Volunteers received the printer
- Chief Carbin didn't do health fair
- Fire safety presentation was done at Patriots Path
- Attended 9/19 at Encore for fire drill
- Stonebridge -career and Chairman Mahler/Commissioner Berkowitz attended and there where about 250 people for 9/11 ceremony
- Thanks to the volunteers for attending Firefighter Lebrun's father passing away. Chairman Mahler would like an email sent in the future to make the board aware.
- Southfield Estates - call that burned up and back fed to the houses and had exterior damage. At 5 Cier Court lost 95% of electronics in house.

Commissioner Reisch stated they had a \$145 bill received for repair to door. For a smaller amount, the volunteers can handle payment. Dan Medina asked what is considered significant amount. Commissioner Borsuk stated this would need to be reviewed on a case by case basis, for example \$16,000.00 is significant.

Dennis Cronin stated they paid the bill the last time, as did the commissioners. Commissioner Reisch told the Chief to let the \$145 go through this time.

### **APPLEGARTH VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY**

President Dennis Cronin reported:

- Deputy Chief Davis would like to submit a budget for 2012 to the board. When should

it be submitted for 2012 operating budget. As president, he would like to know. Commissioner Reisch stated this is a new request. The volunteers can submit the budget for board review and have it ready by the next meeting on 10/12. Mr. Cronin asked if they can extend the date due to what is going on at firehouse. Commissioner Reisch stated he will need it by that time because the board meets with accountant. The board needs to look at what's going on politically with the consolidation as well.

- Commend following volunteers: Glenn Borsuk, Mark Davis, Lt. Fernicola, Mr. Sean LeBlanc-they evacuated all the equipment during flood
- Chairman Mahler suggested Commissioner Berkowitz write a letter from the board for their efforts
- Commend Chief Carbin for all he's done for the firehouse since the flood
- Mayor, Council, commissioners from other districts, have all visited the firehouse to view the damage, but commissioner from district 2 haven't been to the firehouse to view the damage

Chairman Mahler stated he calls Chief Carbin daily for a status on the firehouse and knows what has to be done.

President Cronin would like to introduce support members and fire police:

Norman Olinski  
John O'Brien  
Mel Nudelman  
Ben Vivona

Three or four will go to fire police course. Commissioner Reisch stated they deserve a round of applause.

- Assistance for trade center artifact - volunteers would like some advance notice to participate. Chairman Mahler stated Chief Carbin is making arrangements. Mr. Cronin would like to offer Mel Nudelman, he worked for the Port Authority during 9/11 and has taken many photos. He could take pictures during the event. Chairman Mahler would like his number.

## **MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Chairman Mahler opened the meeting to the public.

Harold Dower has information to submit to Chief Carbin - a follow up to OPRA request from a few months ago - answers from government records council. Would like to propose the board supply an agenda for the monthly meeting and make it available to the audience the night of the meeting. The board can accommodate the request.

Mike Konowitz questioned who collects and counts absentee ballots. Commissioner Berkowitz stated those ballots to the board of elections in Middlesex county. They count the ballots.

Mr. Konowitz asked if the board provides provisional ballots at polling location. Commissioner Berkowitz stated the board can provide provisional ballots, but Board of Elections has not responded on how they should be handled. Mr. Konowitz asked who collected and counted them. Commissioner Berkowitz stated the provisional ballot were not counted because they didn't follow the procedure by the township. Board of Commissioner clerk for this coming election will be Ed Mitnowsky. Chairman Mahler stated they are called a teller. Attorney Shaklee clarified that the teller is the person at the polling station.

Mr. Konowitz asked, as commissioner, what is his title. Chairman Mahler stated Ed Mitnowsky is Assistant Treasurer/Secretary.

Mr. Konowitz said there are two laws that state the board clerk is responsible too. In the past have your boundaries changed, and where and when have they changed. Commissioner Borsuk stated the boundaries haven't changed since the 80's. The district lines haven't changed since the 3 districts were created.

Chairman Mahler mentioned there was a dispute with February elections. They said district 3 folks were trying to vote at district 2. District 2 sent postcards out due to the new firehouse polling location. There is no way of separating who lives in what district and where they go to vote. If you look at your tax bill you will see your fire district. The board sent OPRA request and mentioned to Mr. Hamilton about it to find out why can't we get disc from the people that send out tax bills. Attorney Shaklee did OPRA from tax assessor office for people that live in district 2.

Mr. Vivona had to do that in Colonia because he couldn't separate from Avenal and Woodbridge. They had to get a list for whole township - same problem.

Attorney Shaklee received a call from the clerk's office and the fee was \$29.75 and it is 365 pages, it's not on a disc. It's all the people that live in district 2. The request and information is from the tax rolls.

Mr. Konowitz stated that at district 3 board of commissioner meeting. They do not want to go out on their own to find out who is in district 3. They don't want to get any more involved then they have to.

Mr. Dower mentioned since this building was used for the first time for the election so there was a need to send out the notice.

Commissioner Reisch questioned that district 3 commissioners refused to remedy their situation. Mr. Konowitz said that 3 or 4 years ago the town council changed their boundary lines (found that is not true) district 3 and district 1; they won't do provisional ballots; and they won't have county come out; will only do the alphabetized on the ballot.

Norman Olinski asked why are we concerned about district 3. Chairman Mahler stated in the last election there were 2 people running for election in district 3. When district 2 moved the polling location from old firehouse to new firehouse, the board had postcards sent out to advise voters, based on county requirements. People from district 3 came to district 2 to vote.

Dennis Cronin mentioned that Mr. Konowitz called it an absentee ballot, but it is a vote by mail ballot. Mr. Cronin was asked if he was going to vote, and he said no, he voted by mail; commissioner asked him as well. Where is the protective measure that he didn't vote twice?

Mr. Vivona asked if the state is looking to combine the districts. Chairman Mahler explained it's not the state. There are 3 districts in Monroe. Each district levies their own taxes. The township hired a consultant to see if it's an efficient way of operating (180 pages). Mr. Vivona stated his understanding is the state is trying to combine to save money to combine 5 commissioner instead of 15.

Chairman Mahler stated they are in the midst of meetings now about consolidation. Township is telling what they want done and not listening to the board members. They were going to

make a decision in April, but still waiting.

Mr. Vivona asked if it combines in Monroe, does it impact other townships. Commissioner Reisch said the state has nothing to do with it. Mayor Pucci and his administration have started this. It started 4 years ago and started again a year and a ½ ago. It was inferred that they want to consolidate district 2 and 3. This board hired a consultant, and are fighting it. If township wants to consolidate all 3 districts, everyone in Monroe will pay same tax rate. Biggest fight is tax disparity:  
Dist 1 -11 cents/100  
Dist 2 -21 cents/100  
Dist 3 -29.4 cents/100

This big disparity can be alleviated to some degree without consolidation.

Mr. Vivona mentioned they want 5 commissioners to do all Monroe Township. Commissioner Borsuk stated each municipality is handling on their own. The state encourages consolidation in many things, but has no direct say. The districts are not formed by the state.

Mr. Vivona said the state can come in and take the firehouse. Commissioner Borsuk stated that may be the fire prevention bureau, but our fire prevention bureau goes with district, but it doesn't have to be that way.

Attorney Shaklee stated the fire districts are formed by an ordinance of the township. There can be 1 ,3 ,5 districts. The state cannot dissolve a district. The statutory scheme is done by each municipality.

Mr. Dower questioned that the board does not favor consolidation unless it's all three districts. Commissioner Reisch/Chairman Mahler replied yes.

Commissioner Reisch has no problem with district 1 lower rate and all the volunteers. But don't combine just districts 2 and 3. Chairman Mahler mentioned district 3 had 34 paid. If consolidation occurs, their staff can suffer. This board has a plan that can make it work, and there is still a lot to review.

The township paid \$38,000.00 for a consultant, and each meeting the consultant gets paid and the taxpayers pay.

John O'Brian asked how the districts are broken up. Commissioner Borsuk stated there is a boundary map at the station - see Chief after the meeting.

Commissioner Borsuk mentioned a freelance reporter from Cranbury Press came to the station and interviewed Mark Davis and Glenn about the history of the volunteer firefighters and what they are doing now.

## **ADJOURN**

Chairman Mahler asked for a motion to adjourn.

**UPON MOTION MADE** by Glenn Borsuk and seconded by Lawrence Reisch, the meeting was adjourned.

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



Agenda/Regular Meeting  
September 14, 2011

Aye Mitnowsky  
Aye Reisch

MARTIN BERKOWITZ  
Board Secretary  
MAURICE MAHLER  
Chairman

**NOTE: Appendixes can be obtained upon request from the Board Secretary.**  
PREPARED BY: Val Cier