

TOWNSHIP OF MONROE
Board of Fire Commissioners
Fire District No. 2
Minutes of the Agenda and Regular Meetings
Wednesday, December 9, 2009

The Monroe Township Board of Fire Commissioners of District No. 2 met at the Applegarth Volunteer Engine Company No. 1 Firehouse, Applegarth Road, Monroe Township, New Jersey for an Agenda Meeting.

Chairman Mahler called the meeting to order with a Salute to the Flag at 7:02 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: Lt. Volkmann.

There was one volunteer firefighter present: David Lesser.

There was one member of the public present: Brian Moore - Epic.

Chairman Mahler announced that the meeting was being held in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act, having been published in the March 27, 2009 newspaper, posted on the bulletin board of the Office of the Township Clerk, and notices sent to those requesting such.

AGENDA MEETING

Chairman Mahler announced the vote on the command vehicle and introduction of the budget will take place at the regular meeting.

Chairman Mahler asked if there were any corrections to last month's minutes. Commissioner Borsuk and Commissioner Reisch had correction to multiple pages.

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

Chairman Mahler mentioned the firefighters have received their flu shots.

Chairman Mahler stated there is correspondence that will be read in the regular meeting, and there is no need for a closed session.

Commissioner Mitnowsky suggested buying turkeys for the firefighters for Christmas. Chairman Mahler stated the board cannot do that, but suggested going to the Stop & Shop manager to ask for a donation.

Commissioner Reisch would like to discuss some newspaper articles Commissioner Berkowitz had distributed. Commissioner Mitnowsky also has an article about solar systems.

Commissioner Reisch has an article about perks, and an article in Greenbriar's paper for Fire

District 3's election, which was very informative. The board needs to work on a publication for District 2, prior to the election.

UPON MOTION MADE by Glenn Borsuk and seconded by Martin Berkowitz, the agenda meeting was adjourned at 7:24.m.

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 7:32 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 four career firefighters present: Lt. Volkmann, Firefighters Cackowski, Grande, and Nuber.

There was one volunteer firefighter present: David Lesser.

There were two members of the public present: Brian Moore - Epic and Jason Martin.

Chairman Mahler announced that the meeting was being held in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act, having been published in the March 27, 2009 newspaper, posted on the bulletin board of the Office of the Township Clerk, and notices sent to those requesting such.

PUBLIC VOTE

Attorney Shaklee read the question for public vote: Is the fire district authorized to expend funds, not to exceed \$80,000.00, for the purchase of a new command vehicle.

For all those persons who are residents in favor of the question, a raise of hands was requested. A vote was taken, and all six residents of the public were in favor of purchasing the command vehicle:

- Jason Martin - 4 Old Church Road, Monroe Township
- Maurice Mahler 32 Daniel Webster Avenue, Monroe Township
- Martin Berkowitz - 171C Vernon Road, Monroe Township
- Lawrence Reisch - 5 Dolley Madison Drive, Monroe Township
- Glenn Borsuk - 51 Bently Road, Monroe Township
- Ed Mitnowsky - 313 Greenleaf Way, Monroe Township

No residents opposed to the purchase of the command vehicle. Attorney Shaklee stated the vote had passed to purchase new command vehicle, not to exceed \$80,000.00.

INTRODUCTION AND APPROVAL OF 2010 FIRE DISTRICT BUDGET

Chairman Mahler introduced the 2010 Fire District budget to the board and public review.

The board and public reviewed the 2010 budget. Commissioner Reisch stated the tax rate has increased by 4/10th of one cent, based upon the ratables received from township on October 1st. The district doesn't get a confirmation of the exact ratables from the county until January 10-15. We could lose 30 million or 50 million in ratables, it's really unknown at this time.

Commissioner Reisch stated the main increase was in the health insurance, and the pension expense also went up.

Mr. Martin asked if legal and accounting fees went up due to the new building. Commissioner Reisch confirmed that is the reason for the increase. Mr. Martin also asked if the salary for career pay includes performance increases and is it enough. Mr. Martin mentioned he pays more for coffee in a year, than he does for fire protection. Commissioner Reisch stated the amount amply covers career pay, and it includes overtime as well.

Commissioner Berkowitz read the Resolution introducing 2010 Fire District budget in the amount of \$3,188,250.00, with the amount to be raised by taxation of \$2,896,250.00.

UPON MOTION MADE by Lawrence Reisch and seconded by Glenn Borsuk, the resolution introducing the 2010 budget was approved.

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

MINUTES

Chairman Mahler asked for a motion on the Minutes.

UPON MOTION MADE by Glenn Borsuk and seconded by Lawrence Reisch, a motion was adopted to approve the minutes of the November 11th agenda and regular meetings, as amended.

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

Firefighter Barta arrived.

CLAIMS AGAINST THE BOARD

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

Commissioner Reisch reported:

General Operating Claims Total	\$127,004.40
Capital Project Claims Total	\$586,872.98
Net Payroll Claims Total	\$ 77,189.99
Total Claims Against the Board	\$791,067.37

November 14, 2009 - December 11, 2009

UPON MOTION MADE by Glenn Borsuk and seconded by Lawrence Reisch, claims against the Monroe Township Board of Fire Commissioners of District No. 2 were approved in the amount of \$791,067.37.

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 December 11, 2009:

Hudson City Savings Bank:

Unrestricted Funds	\$337,009.17
Restricted Funds	\$404,296.13
Capital Projects	\$1,975,652.80
Cash on Hand	\$170.00
Total Balance	\$2,717,128.10

BUILDING COMMITTEE REPORT

Chairman Mahler asked to do all the building resolutions, as a consent agenda.

Attorney Shaklee read the resolutions, by title, Resolutions authorizing change order GC14 and GC15 for the construction of Halsey Reed Road Fire House/Emergency Medical Services Facility:

- GC14 in the amount of \$19,500.00 - additional cost to install fire hydrant and water service for 6" fire service
- GC15 in the amount of \$2,373.00 - supply and install aluminum pass windows in the vestibule

UPON MOTION MADE by Glenn Borsuk and seconded by Lawrence Reisch, to approve the consent agenda resolutions, GC14 and GC15, as presented.

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

Mr. Moore stated they are not doing a wired traffic light, instead doing a solar light. There is money left in CMX account, need to determine if that is enough to cover the remaining cost. Mr. Moore is waiting upon CMX response.

Chairman Mahler asked Attorney Shaklee if the Township responded regarding the check of \$100,000.00 for the solar. Attorney Shaklee has not heard from the Township. Chairman Mahler asked Attorney Shaklee to call Wayne Hamilton to pursue.

Mr. Moore stated April 30th as completion on project. They slipped a week due to weather. Cost wise, the chart shows where they stand on contingency. Soft cost would include what you have on fees. Commissioner Borsuk stated the soft cost committee will get together within the week. Mr. Moore stated they will need to stay within soft cost allowance. Commissioner Borsuk spoke with Chief Carbin about the phone system. Mary Bremar is the contact for the phones, from Tech Systems and Services Inc, at 908-534-5150 x 302, in Lebanon, NJ.

Mr. Moore stated Chief Carbin has information on the fuel tanks - relocation of the fuel tanks for the trucks. Chairman Mahler stated that rather than 500 gallon, they will be using two 300 gallon tanks - need engineer to design and CMX doesn't do it. Chairman Mahler found an engineer in Glenrock.

Mr. Moore reported that Chief Carbin is working on phone system and alarm system. The sanitary line started this week for senior center - not sure if the Township is reimbursing the fire district for this. Chairman Mahler stated the Township is going to court and may delay construction. Commissioner Reisch asked what would hold up the firehouse. Mr. Moore stated the only issue is the storm water management on the overflow, and it goes back to Fiest Engineering.

Mr. Moore reporting on building:

- Base coat in around back of building
- Block work should be done shortly
- Windows going in this week
- Duct, electrical and sprinklers are going in

Chairman Mahler stated Commissioner Borsuk to setup meeting with Chief Carbin on soft costs. Mr. Moore stated the board will need to award phone system and data in January since they will need to close up ceilings in February. Mr. Moore stated Chief Carbin has 3 bids. Lt Volkmann stated there were questions about Mary Bremar of Tech Systems and Services Inc, on her bid, but she was low bid.

CORRESPONDENCE

Chairman Mahler stated there was a meeting in Concordia for Government Affairs appointed by their Board of Trustees. There were some disparaging remarks about Fire District #2 and Chief Carbin, which Attorney Shaklee will be reviewing the tape of the meeting. There were questions to township officials about the fire districts, and the answers given were more politically driven. There was also a resident that was at a previous FD#2 meeting, and a dispatcher in NYPD, who made comments about response time, etc.

Chairman Mahler would like a letter from the board concerning misrepresenting himself as a firefighter/dispatcher and utilizing that as leverage to advise township officials on how the fire districts should run. The letter should state he is in violation of telling stories out of context.

Mr. Martin stated he may be on a substitute firefighter list, but his remarks are almost slanderous. He is not familiar with the NJ Board of fire commissioners. The Board should be in a similar environment to voice the facts.

Commissioner Reisch met with the Chairman of the Government Affairs Committee, Ira Winter and the liaison to the committee. Commissioner Reisch met with both men and told them how the board felt and wanted a rebuttal to what Wayne Hamilton stated with representation from Chairman Mahler, Chief Carbin and himself. The remarks were off base by Wayne Hamilton and Mr. Silverman. The procedure is to meet with the Government Affairs Committee in order to go to the meeting, which is the 3rd Tuesday of the month. Commissioner Reisch also wants it taped for television. They will not meet in the next 3 months. We will get our day in Concordia, and we also want to do the same in Clearbrook. Commissioner Berkowitz will pursue arrangements in Clearbrook.

Commissioner Reisch won't appear before the Concordia committee until April, so the board members should attend meeting in May.

Attorney Shaklee will review the tape and draft a letter to Mr. Silverman. Commissioner Reisch stated we do have freedom of speech, so he has mixed feelings. Chairman Mahler stated that Chief Carbin isn't elected official, and he shouldn't use his name in a slanderous way. Attorney Shaklee will review the tape first.

Commissioner Berkowitz will arrange to meet with the Government Relations committee in Concordia.

Chairman Mahler stated the residents at Forsgate sent a Christmas card to board.

Commissioner Berkowitz asked why was the focus on District 2 at the Concordia meeting. Commissioner Reisch stated that Mr. Silverman brought it up, and he brought up the number of policemen to fireman. In addition, Wayne Hamilton said there are 52 paid firefighters in Monroe as compared to 30 paid firefighters in Perth Amboy. He didn't bring up the fact that Monroe is 42-43 square miles and Perth Amboy is only 4.8 sq miles.

Lt. Volkmann also clarified that Perth Amboy has 55 career firefighters (45 firefighters and 10 officers), and it's also stated on the City of Perth Amboy website. Their top paid firefighter makes \$89,000.00.

Firefighter Cackowski stated Wayne Hamilton said council is being approached by residents about these numbers, but Firefighter Cackowski said anyone he has transported to hospital are thankful there are paid personnel. Mr. Silverman just wants to be heard. Commissioner Berkowitz stated the league of women voters have been doing this for years. Firefighter Cackowski stated that as long as you had a good answer for them, they are content with your answer. I don't see residents complain about services.

Chairman Mahler stated the concern is the number of fire commissions. It wasn't answered until much later that it is state law. Wait until the bill for the new high school and re-tool the high school to be a middle school.

Firefighter Grande stated the question isn't why there are so many firefighters, firefighters are staffing to a minimum. There are not enough cops on the road. They are shifting spotlighting on fire departments. There are 4 police on road vs. 4 firehouses with 4 firefighters per truck vs. 1 policeman/car.

FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU REPORT

Commissioner Borsuk reviewed report on the Fire Prevention Report with some additional notes:

- Truck committee going to Lakewood to see Pierce - leave station at 6pm.
- Mr. Moore and Chief Carbin are looking at floor covering
- Looking for approval for training session for Firefighter Fenstermeister -2 days in NY, he is not working, therefore no coverage needed, cost of \$400 if before January 31st.

UPON MOTION MADE by Glenn Borsuk and seconded by Lawrence Reisch, to approve the two day training session in the amount of \$400.00 for Firefighter Fenstermeister.

ROLL CALL: Aye Berkowitz

Aye Borsuk

Aye Mahler

Aye Mitnowsky

Aye Reisch

APPLEGARTH VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY

Chairman Mahler asked if there was a report from the Volunteers.

Dave Lesser reported on behalf of President Medina, who could not be present due to another meeting to attend.

- The annual Children's Christmas Party will take place this Sunday, December 13th, from 1 to 4 pm.
- The new officer's for Applegarth for 2010 will be as follows:
Line officers: D/C Lesser, A/C Borsuk, Captain Mark Davis and Lieutenant Gary Fernicola
Executive officers: President Mark Davis, Vice Pres Jeff Dunham, Secretary Tish O'Connor and Treasurer Tom Hahn
- The volunteer's annual installation dinner to be held on Saturday, February 6th, 2010. Invitations will be going out soon.
- Where is the Commission currently on the lease agreement?

Chairman Mahler stated there is no update.

- Annual Fire District voting at Firehouse - will forward notice/request to Mark Davis, new president.

Commissioner Reisch asked for a report on the checking account for the next meeting.

MEETING OPEN TO THE BOARD

Chairman Mahler opened the meeting to the board, and asked if there was a Tri-district meeting. Commissioner Borsuk stated there was no meeting - district 3 hasn't agreed to any dates to attend.

Commissioner Reisch stated his impression is that district 3 doesn't want to commit themselves until after negotiations. There is no true consolidation if district 2 & 3 are only consolidated. District 1 is volunteers. All 3 districts would have to consolidate, if that's the

direction. Mayor and Wayne Hamilton say they need to take care of the volunteers. Commissioner Reisch would like to see District 2 volunteers built up. Firefighter Cackowski stated there are 16 men in a station at all times in District 2 & 3. District 1 may have 150 volunteers, but no guarantee 4 men will show up at a call.

Commissioner Reisch stated the ratables for district 3, for the past 10 years, were \$120-\$130 million more than district 2. Even now, with all the growth, they still have about \$50 million more in ratables than district 2. In a few years, we will have a few good ratables. District 3 cushioned excess funds, that should have gone to their taxpayers. They have been 7, 8, and 6 cents more than us.

Commissioner Reisch stated there was an article about volunteer firefighters needed in Perth Amboy. Commissioner Reisch would like to see our volunteers do something like this in a local newspaper, and have an open house. Dave Lesser stated the volunteers have had open house for the past couple of years, and advertise in the paper and in schools. This year the open house was rained out, which is usually around fire prevention week. Commissioner Borsuk stated the volunteers can consider moving the date to the spring. Commissioner Reisch stated there are 5 firefighters that regularly show up; maybe do something to expand the number of volunteers, and have a duty crew.

Chairman Mahler stated that Commissioner Mitnowsky provided an article on loans to install solar systems. Commissioner Reisch stated the board is making 1.39% on their money; if you are paying less than that it may be worth it.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Chairman Mahler opened the meeting to the public, but no members of the public spoke at this time.

CLOSED SESSION

Chairman Mahler announced there was no need to hold an executive session.

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
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