

Franklin Township Fire District No. 1
Meeting Minutes
September 8, 2020

Meeting opened with the Flag Salute

The 234th meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners, Franklin Township Fire District No. 1, Township of Franklin, County of Hunterdon, was called to order by President C. Patkochis at 6:30 PM.

ANNOUNCEMENT: “This meeting is convened in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Adequate notice of the meeting has been provided by furnishing announcement thereof, to the *Hunterdon County Democrat*, and/or *The Express Times*, and/or the *Star Ledger*, and/or the *Courier News*, by posting notice in the Municipal Building and by filing a notice with the Municipal Clerk.”

ROLL CALL: President C. Patkochis, present; Treasurer G. Reichert, present; Secretary P. Enea III, present; Vice President, E. Kolibas, present; Assistant Secretary, H. Laine, present.

APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MONTH: A Motion to accept the minutes of the August 11, 2020 meeting was made by G. Reichert, seconded by H. Laine. All in favor, Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES EXECUTIVE SESSION OF AUGUST 25, 2020: A Motion to accept the minutes of the Special Meeting, Executive Session of August 25, 2020 meeting was made by P. Enea, seconded by E. Kolibas. All in favor, Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT: G. Reichert advised of a total income of \$3995.38 and expenses totaling \$21,319.22 for the period of August 12, 2020 through September 8, 2020.

Motion to pay the bills for the period of August 12, 2020 through September 8, 2020 was made by G. Reichert, seconded by H. Laine. Roll call vote, G. Reichert, aye; P. Enea, aye; E. Kolibas, aye; H. Laine, aye; C. Patkochis, aye. Motion carried.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS:

C. Patkochis reported that there are two repairs that need to be approved. The first is \$800.00 for shocks on Engine 91 and the second is for repairs to gauges, etc. on Tender 2 totaling \$1200.00. Total expenditure would be \$ 2000.00 and there is money in the budget to cover these necessary repairs. E. Kolibas inquired as to why the shocks would need to be replaced on Engine 91 since the truck is essentially brand new. C. Patkochis advised that going with the stock shocks from Pierce was a mistake. Better quality shocks are needed on a truck of that size and weight, thus the “bouncing around” issues that will be corrected with the new shocks. The repairs will be completed through Fire and Safety.

G. Reichert made a Motion to spend \$2000.00 to make the repairs, seconded by P. Enea. All in favor, Motion carried.

C. Patkochis advised that Tender 1 needs to go out for service, no price is available at this time.

C. Patkochis discussed Worker’s Compensation and some cost saving measures that have been taken with Benchmark to bring the premiums down from approximately \$7800.00 to \$ 4879.00 by eliminating inactive members from the policy. This was accomplished by B. Crampton and the QFC.

H. Laine gave an update on work that has been completed thus far in bringing the Policies up to date. H. Laine reported that the policies are essentially divided into three categories; things that govern the Board, things that cover the staff and the employers of the staff and then there are the tactical fire fighter standard operating procedures (SOPs). So, going forward the policies that directly effect the Board will be handled by the Board. Since there will be changes with how the employee portion will be handled in the near future, this will need to be coordinated with QFC to make sure that all the policies reflect those changes and that the QFC is following that outline. Thirdly, as far as the fire fighter SOPs, H. Laine suggested that having a liaison from the QFC coordinate with the District as there are probably already policies in place with QFC. D. Desaulniers advised that he will compile what is available to sit down and put it all together in a cohesive document available to access easily.

C. Patkochis advised that documentation has been received with the exception of their background checks, which are pending due to the State being behind, for the three proposed Career Employees presented by the QFC for District approval. Their names are Andrew Rudd, Darryl Higgins and Sean Gilmore. C. Patkochis asked to a Motion to approve these employees pending background checks.

E. Kolibas made a Motion to hire the three Career Employees, pending successful completion of background checks, seconded by P. Enea. All in favor, Motion carried.

FIRE MARSHAL'S REPORT: R. Dziminski reported 3 Inspections, 8 Smoke Certs and 9 Re-inspections. In general, the office has returned to in-person inspections for residential inspections. PPE is being worn and contact with staff is limited. It should be noted that all parties involved have been respectful and compliant.

R. Dziminski advised that he has discussed an on-going issue with C. Patkochis regarding Pet-Valu in the the Walmart Shopping Center. The continue to be in violation with repeated locked/blocked fire doors. As of the latest inspection in August, their fines are up to \$1000.00 with repeated attempts with store management face to face and contacts to corporate entities being ignored. Phone contacts and emails go unanswered. R. Dziminski advised that he has escalated this case to contacting Attorney Braslow who will be drafting a letter to their Corporate office. If they continue to be in violation and ignore attorney letter, a complaint will be filed in Municipal Court. G. Reichert inquired if Pet-Valu is aware, in the Fire Marshal's opinion, of the consequences going forward. R. Dziminski advised that he has taken the manager through the process step by step and feels that he has done is due diligence to make the process clear. The next, best recourse would be a daily penalty.

C. Patkochis presented Ordinances that the Fire Marshal submitted to the Board for review at an earlier meeting. They have been reviewed by the Board and are ready to be forwarded to the Township Committee for approval. The Ordinances include the following:

- Smoke Alarm – Carbon Monoxide- Fire Extinguisher Compliance Inspection
- Fire Alarms and Fire Reporting
- Interference with Fire Department Operations – Violations and Penalties
- Non-Life Hazard Use Fees

R. Dziminski provided details on each proposed Ordinance change and its purpose. Mainly they consist of small fee changes, responsible parties regarding notifications and clarifying the responsibility of the property owner regarding safety precautions.

G. Reichert made a Motion to present these Ordinances to the Township for approval, seconded by E. Kolibas. All in favor, Motion carried.

QUAKERTOWN FIRE COMPANY CHIEF'S REPORT: D. Desaulniers reported 64 calls for the month of August. D. Desaulniers inquired if the Career Employees that the District has now approved would be eligible to cover open shifts not covered by District employees. C. Patkochis advised that is acceptable. There are also training opportunities coming up on September 21st and October 26th that the QFC would like to invite District employees to participate in. The drills would be held at the training center and allow the District employees and QFC staff to become acquainted and train together. Additionally, the QFC would like to purchase some rescue specific equipment, ie, dry suits, rope rescue equipment, harnesses, etc. as members are using their own equipment on these types of calls. The QFC has done some research into the type of equipment needed and will forward their wish list to B. Crampton. C. Patkochis inquired as to the price of this equipment. D. Desaulniers advised that they have been looking into a "kit" that includes all the basic equipment needed and they are approximately \$ 1500. Each. The QFC would like to purchase 3. Harnesses run approximately \$ 300-400. C. Patkochis advised that there is \$21,750 left in the equipment account, minus \$ 10,000 for 4 sets of turnout gear leaving approximately \$ 11,000 left to spend. A list will be generated with these things in mind and presented to B. Crampton to obtain bids.

Lastly, D. Desaulniers advised that the QFC is actively looking to purchase a 2009 Pierce Dash ladder truck from Yardley-Makefield. The truck is immaculate, low miles and was spec'd out very well. Yardley-Makefield is well known for their attention to detail when purchasing apparatus and spared no expense when this truck was built. There are many layers that will go into making this purchase. The plan would include selling Squad 91 which is underutilized and also sell the tower. This would reduce the number of apparatus and also provide some savings on insurance. D. Desaulniers inquired if the District would be on board moving forward. G. Reichert advised that as a Board member he feels that is proactive on the part of the Board and the QFC to be looking into ways to save money while providing a higher level of safety to the communities we serve. P. Enea advised that he has seen the truck, looks very well kept and very clean. C. Patkochis simply stated that before presenting the proposal to the Board, it would be wise to present it to the QFC first. There are processes that need to be followed if the District were to approve the purchase, but first the QFC needs to get their member approval. The sale of the existing apparatus is a long process as well, requiring advertisement and a bidding process. Any money contributed by the District would require a vote as well. D. Desaulniers advised that the September meeting has not yet been held due to the holiday falling on their regular meeting day. A meeting will be held with additional information to follow.

QUAKERTOWN FIRE COMPANY PRESIDENT'S REPORT: J. Nieliwodski advised that a Drive-thru BBQ was held on August 16th and was very successful with delivery to Franklin Twp. Seniors. Due to popular request Oktoberfest-to-Go will be held on Saturday October 3 from 2-6pm.

On Sunday, September 6th there was an incident in the QFC parking lot where a power pole fell. The pole, owned by Century Link,, with a transformer fell causing damage from leakage to the parking that was recently newly paved. Three other poles were damaged as well. J. Nieliwodski advised that he has been in contact with representatives of all agencies involved to try to determine responsibility for damage and repair. The pole that fell was "red tagged" in May for replacement. No injuries were reported.

The kitchen project is complete with the exception of paint.

J. Nieliwodski reported that R. Gieb will be rolling out the Microsoft 365 update to everyone over the next month.

Additionally, it appears that through better communication, membership issues between the QFC and District are falling into line with anticipated continued improvement going forward.

OLD BUSINESS: N/A

NEW BUSINESS: N/A

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business a Motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7:16 PM by P. Enea, seconded by H. Laine. All in favor, Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Elise Ennis

Charles Patkochis, President