

Franklin Township Fire District No. 1
Meeting Minutes
November 10, 2020

Meeting opened with the Flag Salute

The 237th 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 October 13, 2020 meeting was made by G. Reichert, seconded by E. Kolibas. All in favor, Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING: A Motion to accept the minutes of the Budget Workshop meeting held on October 25, 2020 was made by E. Kolibas, seconded by G. Reichert. All in favor, Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT: G. Reichert advised of a total income of \$ 719.25 and expenses totaling \$29,675.10 for the period of October 14, 2020 through November 10, 2020.

Motion to pay the bills for the period of October 14, 2020 through November 10, 2020 was made by G. Reichert, seconded by P. Enea. 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 introduced the proposed Budget for 2021 (January 1, 2021- December 31, 2021). The Budget is completed and copies have been provided for the Commissioners to review. C. Patkochis read RESOLUTION 2020-23 into the record. The total Fire District Budget is \$499,000 with the amount to be raised by the Fire Tax is \$ 391,000 (.072 cents per \$100 of assessed value). Final adoption of the 2021 will take place at the December 7, 2020 meeting. C. Patkochis advised the Board that there is an additional \$ 63,000 in the Cap Bank, giving the District the ability to raise the Budget next year and still be under the Budget Cap.

G. Reichert made a Motion to accept the first reading of RESOLUTION 2020-23, seconded by H. Laine. Roll call vote, G. Reichert, aye; P. Enea, aye; E. Kolibas, aye; H. Laine, aye; C. Patkochis, aye. Motion carried.

G. Reichert advised that he and P. Enea met with D. Desaulniers and B. Patkochis, who represented QFC, on October 29, 2020 to discuss the following:

*Arrival of the new ladder truck – which has since arrived – proposed equipment purchases for the ladder truck

- *Plan for replacement of Tender 91-1
- *Plan for disposing of Squad 91
- *Plan for repairs to Tender 91-2

G. Reichert advised that nothing definitive was decided on any of the above, just a general discussion on where the District and QFC stand on the matters at hand. Eliminating the Squad would create the needs for a pumper. Ideas were exchanged on the possibility of a 4 wheel drive, 4 door vehicle on a commercial chassis. Regarding selling of the Squad it was mentioned that perhaps Fire and Safety would know of someone interested. Regarding the replacement of Tender 91-1, it was discussed that it would be something similar to Tender 91-2 with a swinging rear chute. The QFC inquired if the District had any plan in place for apparatus replacement. G. Reichert advised that he was not aware of one. P. Enea added that it was an open discussion and ideas were exchanged for both sides. R. Medine advised on behalf of the QFC that QFC recommends selling or trading in Squad 91 as it is not used very often and it's role can be redirected to other apparatus they currently have. Regarding replacement of Tender 1 would be ideal since the pump is small (450gpm) and repairs to Tender 2 are needed due to it being the 2nd out piece of equipment for structural alarms. With the sale of the Squad, the financial burden on the District to purchase a new Tender would substantially less.

C. Patkochis clarified that the QFC's position is to sell or trade Squad 91 for a new Tender. R. Medine advised that is the hope of QFC. C. Patkochis advised that eliminating the Squad immediately would create a problem as it is the only piece of apparatus that carries the correct foam utilized at the two airports in our response area. C. Patkochis said that the foam would need to be converted on the engine, which is an easy fix, but it would need to be done prior to selling the Squad. The QFC needs to make sure this happens. The second issue is finding out whether the Squad can be sold or brokered to an out of state entity or only in the State of NJ. C. Vallat advised that he believes it must be to a NJ agency and recommended brokering it through Fire and Safety at a set price as a trade on a new Tender or advertising it for sale privately, which would mean being short a piece of apparatus. C. Vallat also advised that Pierce will have a 9% price increase effective 2/2021. C. Patkochis advised that he feels private sale is probably the best way of disposing as it would not be worth as much on a trade-in. C. Patkochis advised that we need to have money in hand to avoid the long process of a financed purchase like the last vehicle. Without selling the Squad there is not enough money to purchase a new Tender without financing it, which requires going to the State, a public vote, etc. too much to go through if we could just sell the Squad first. Plan is to find out who we can sell it to and advertise it. Also retro-fit another vehicle for the foam. QFC to advertise with an anticipated value of \$200,000-230,000, and include hose and equipment as a package deal.

G. Reichert made a Motion to begin the selling process of Squad 91, seconded by H. Laine. Roll call vote, G. Reichert, aye; P. Enea, aye; E. Kolibas, aye; H. Laine, aye; C. Patkochis, aye. Motion carried.

G. Reichert advised that the Fire Marshal's proposed Ordinance changes have been submitted to the Township. On the Agenda for the meeting this coming Thursday at 7:30PM to be published and read. Hopefully will be adopted at the December 10th meeting.

C. Patkochis advised that he will be contacting the District Per Diem employees who have not be hired as Career Employees by the QFC to advise them that their at-will employment will be terminated at the end of this year. Once notification has been made, QFC Executive Board to be notified.

C. Patkochis reported that 4 new tires for Car 3 will cost \$540 (\$135 each) from Jack Williams Tire. A Motion was made by G. Reichert to purchase the tires, seconded by E. Kolibas. All in favor, Motion carried.

C. Patkochis advised of a proposed purchase of 3 fire helmets (\$ 260 each) with shield (\$38 each) total of \$894 from the Fire Store. A Motion was made by H. Laine, seconded by E. Kolibas to purchase the helmets with shields. All in favor, Motion carried.

C. Patkochis reported that N. Wilczak's background check was successfully completed. A short discussion was held with no resolution on who would pay for future background checks for newly hired employees and members. C. Patkochis feels that it should be up to the QFC since the District is not the source of hire.

FIRE MARSHAL'S REPORT: C. Patkochis advised of 5 Inspections, 3 Smoke Certs and 5 Re-Inspections. The Fire Marshal worked with NJ Dept of Fire Safety at 2 locations to correct registration status and both are now up to date (Rich's Tree Service and Pittstown Wood Pellet). C. Patkochis added that Attorney Braslow had been asked to send letters to Hunterdon Carpentry and Lawson's Excavating regarding their refusal to respond to repeated requests for compliance.

QUAKERTOWN FIRE COMPANY CHIEF'S REPORT: R. Medine gave the report. He reported 58 calls for service in the month of October. Members have been training both in house and that the Hunterdon County Emergency Services Training Center over the past month. Topics included rope rescue, water rescue and responding to agricultural equipment emergencies.

The QFC took delivery of the new Ladder 91. Tower Ladder 91 was sold at the QFC November business meeting to Montoursville Fire Company, Pennsylvania. Members have been working on mounting of tools and hose on the new ladder since it arrived. R. Medine advised that there are some modifications needed for the pump panel 4 inch hose conversion to 5 inch hose requiring the purchase of 3 couplings which have an approximate price of \$ 1053.75. G. Reichert made a Motion to purchase the coupling conversions, seconded by P. Enea. All in favor, Motion carried. C. Patkochis advised R. Medine that there is \$9337 left in the equipment budget for 2020 and to present a list by the next meeting of any equipment to purchase.

QUAKERTOWN FIRE COMPANY PRESIDENT'S REPORT: J. Nieliwodski advised that during the past month Tower 91 was sold and Ladder 91 was purchased. Election Day was held in the back foyer with no issues noted. The QFC has entered into a signed retainer agreement with a Labor Attorney in regard to their Career Membership Program. C. Patkochis advised J. Nieliwodski that the QFC needs to be sure that the Labor Attorney is aware that these positions are being paid for with Municipal Funds.

OLD BUSINESS:

C. Patkochis advised that he spoke with the Auditor and the County set the tax rate at an even number which represents the extra \$3000 collected. That money is kept by the Township.

H. Laine advised that the Policy Handbook was complete, however with the change of employees being the responsibility of the QFC, it would be necessary to revisit some of the Policies to make any changes related to records, payment, etc.

NEW BUSINESS:

C. Patkochis advised if possible the next regular meeting to re-organize would need to be completed by noon on Tuesday, December 8. He advised that the Board would meet on Monday, December 7th at 6pm as the QFC meeting begins at 7. All present are available.

Year End meeting will be December 29, 2020 at 6:30PM

E. Kolibas asked that the Board recognize our local Veterans both members and residents, as tomorrow is Veteran's Day. All present expressed appreciation for this important reminder.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business a Motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7:15PM by G. Reichert, seconded by E. Kolibas. All in favor, Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Elise Ennis

Charles Patkochis, President