

Franklin Township Fire District No. 1
Meeting Minutes
May 12, 2020

Meeting opened with the Flag Salute

The 229th 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: Due to Covid-19 restrictions, there was no meeting held on April 14, 2020 per the advise of Fire District Attorney. G. Reichert pointed out a correction to be made in the March 10, 2020 meetings in the QFC President’s report. The correction should be to the posting for sale of QFC property located at 2 Perryville Road, which was incorrectly recorded as 2 Quakertown Rd.

TREASURER'S REPORT: G. Reichert advised of a total in income of \$ 563.71 and bills totaling \$ 17295.09 for the period of March 11, 2020 through April 15, 2020

Motion to pay the bills for the period of March 11, 2020 through April 15, 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. All in favor, motion carried.

G. Reichert then advised on the financials for the period of April 15, 2020 through May 12, 2020. Income of \$ 85,435.16, which included the payment from Franklin Township and expenses of \$ 26,282.23.

Motion to pay the bills for the period of April 16, 2020 through May 12, 2020 was made by E. Kolibas, seconded by H. Laine. Roll call vote, G. Reichert, aye; P. Enea, aye; E. Kolibas, aye; H. Laine, aye; C. Patkochis, aye. All in favor, motion carried.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS:

RESOLUTION 2020-18 Authorizing FTFD No.1 President to Approve Payment of Utility Bills, Payroll, etc. in Lieu of Meeting. This Resolution allows the President to approve payment of certain bills between meetings, such as the cancellation of a regular meeting due to unforeseen circumstances. To avoid late fees and penalties and delay of payment of certain bills. The Attorney recommended this Resolution. C. Patkochis read the Resolution into the record.

A Motion was made by G. Reichert approving the above Resolution at read, seconded by E. Kolibas. Roll call vote, G. Reichert, aye; P. Enea, aye; E. Kolibas, aye; H. Laine, aye; C. Patkochis, aye. All in favor, motion carried.

RESOLUTION 2020-19 Approving 2019 Auditor’s Report with No Recommendations

C. Patkochis advised that there were no recommendations by the Auditor for any changes and that all of our records are in order. A copy of the report was provided to each member of the Board and also is available online.

A Motion was made by G. Reichert, accepting the 2019 Audit Report, seconded by P. Enea. Roll call vote, G. Reichert, aye; P. Enea, aye; E. Kolibas, aye; H. Laine, aye; C. Patkochis, aye. All in favor, motion carried.

C. Patkochis reported that since our last meeting in March an Employee Handbook has been created. The need for the Handbook had been discussed previously but more recently it was brought up again in the process of the QFC acquiring Accreditation for EMS providers as it is required that an Employee Handbook be in place. A copy of an Employee Handbook us by another agency was obtained by W. Crampton and adapted to the needs of QFC and FTFD No. 1. The handbook has been distributed to the QFC and FTFD No.1 electronically for review. The State of NJ approved the handbook and the QFC has received their Accreditation approximately two weeks ago.

P. Enea made a Motion to adopt the Employee Handbook, seconded by G. Reichert. G. Reichert advised that he felt it was well-written but there are some “clean-up” items and typos that need to be addressed. All in favor, Motion carried.

C. Patkochis advised that since the last meeting the QFC has begun cleanup for a paving project and made no provisions for the fuel tank from Lebanon Township to be installed. Because of this, the District will now obtain all gas and fuel by purchasing through Hunterdon County. The price will most likely be comparable to what we are paying now.

Additionally, C. Patkochis reported that by dropping the Ladies Auxiliary from the insurance, we received a \$200 refund.

The District will no longer be utilizing a program called Dropbox, resulting in a savings of about \$850. Per year and switching to a program called Microsoft 365. A refund was received.

C. Patkochis advised that the Engine, Squad and Tender 2 all need to have to be serviced the pumps tested, although no prices have been received. G. Reichert made a motion, seconded by P. Enea. All in favor, Motion carried.

C. Patkochis advised that the hose testing will take place at Foster Wheeler on June 15, 2020.

C. Patkochis reported that the District is looking into direct deposit for payroll and also doing payroll bi-weekly. Cost-wise this may increase by about \$70 per month. More information to follow at next meeting.

C. Patkochis advised that in researching the Accident and Sickness Insurance Policy it was discovered that the policy no longer covers the Per Diem employees. The reason behind this is most of the Per Diem employees work more than 25 hours per week. We are in the process of getting an updated price.

FIRE MARSHAL'S REPORT: C. Patkochis gave the reports for both March and April. The report for March included 0 Inspections, 1 Smoke Certification, 0 Re-Inspections, 0 Permits and 0 Complaints. The Fire Marshal reports that he is continuing to address issues with 363C Pittstown Road with the landlord. An Affidavit in Lieu of Inspection Program was instituted for smoke detector certifications due to Covid-19 restrictions that is in compliance with NJDFS. This system requires filling out a form and having it Notarized. It was also noted that the Pre-Plan does not format properly on the I-Pads so they are working on getting that cleaned up. The Fire Marshal has not been able to respond to calls or perform any

inspections, residential or commercial, due to restrictions of Covid-19. R. Dziminski advised that as soon as restrictions are lifted he is ready to pick up where he left off.

For the month of April there were 0 Inspections, 6 Smoke Certifications, 0 Re-Inspections, 1 Permit and 0 Complaints. Pre-plans continue to be entered. Smoke Certifications continue to be done utilizing the Affidavit in Lieu of Inspection Program. A quick reference emergency contact binder in the radio room and in the Chief's car. These binders contain all contact information for business owners in Franklin Twp. And is not to be shared with the general public. Commercial inspections are on hold, to be completed by the end of the year. Verizon continues to ignore repeated requests from the Fire Marshall to provide a corporate address or contact to pay their registration fee. This has been going on for two years. The fees add up to \$ 400 per year plus penalties. A letter from the Attorney has been drafted, it is unknown if it has been sent. R. Dziminski advised that pre-plans should be completed by the end of the month.

QUAKERTOWN FIRE COMPANY CHIEF'S REPORT: R. Medine presented the Chief's report for the months of March and April, 2020. For the month of March there were 49 and April 41. Since Covid-19 pandemic began in the Month of March both the QFC and FTFD No.1 have been evaluating and updating SOG's to conform with the recommendations of federal, state and local authorities. Franklin Township OEM has assisted in obtaining PPE for the membership's safety. Additional measures have been put into the place to protect the staff and volunteers, including daily cleaning and decontamination and limiting the general public's access to the building. In-person meetings and training have ceased for the time being but will now be resuming in small and manageable groups. Virtual monthly business meetings and training. Some topics covered were review of updated SOG's regarding Covid-19 responses and engine company operations. As mentioned earlier, BLS provider licensing from the NJ Dept of Health was received. Special thanks to the Commissioners and District Staff for their assistance in reaching this goal.

In the past few weeks, the Chiefs have done some restructuring of the operational staff for the remainder of 2020. See Attached detailed report for the Roster.

C. Patkochis requested that R. Medine advise the Chiefs of the following regarding the filling of pools. There are to be no pools filled without the Waiver being signed by the homeowner. There will be no more pools filled until a procedure is put in place that includes the Waiver being signed by the homeowner and given to the Administrator. Additionally, C. Patkochis inquired on the process of QFC reimbursing the FTFD No. 1 for the pool fills, including use of equipment, fuel charges, maintenance of the vehicles and cost of water used. C. Patkochis advised that the FTFD No. 1 will not be absorbing all the costs of this service and until a procedure is in place no pool fills will be done. A meeting between the representatives of QFC and FTFD No. 1 needs to take place to come up with a plan.

Additionally, C. Patkochis advised R. Medine that the Fire Marshal's vehicle and pick up truck, both belonging to the District, are being used/removed without permission from the property and being kept at private residences. It has been the practice in the past that the Fire Marshal's vehicle can be kept at a private residence but must be returned when the Fire Marshal is on duty. This has not been happening so the Fire Marshal has had to use his own vehicle. This is to stop immediately. The pick up truck is never to be kept at a private residence to respond to calls and will cease immediately. Permission from the FTFD No. 1 is needed to remove the pick up truck from the property for anything other than District business.

QUAKERTOWN FIRE COMPANY PRESIDENT'S REPORT: J. Nieliwodski gave the report. Former President D. Strange resigned effective May3, 2020, replace by Vice President J. Nieliwodski. See attached report for detailed roster change. J. Nieliwodski also advised of the following:

official licensing by the Department of Health for BLS services due to countless individuals.

Parking lot paving pre-construction meeting to occur the week of 5/18 to discuss location of trucks and amount of time the process will take – approximately 3 days.

Parking lot drainage improvements have been completed including decommissioning of water tank.

A buyer has been found for 2 Perryville Rd. property. Closing is planned for 5/19/20

Additional Kitchen improvements are planned for this month including new work area and 3 bay sink.

Several bylaw amendments were formally approved after the second reading at the April Business meeting.

The fire company is looking into purchasing a lawn tractor and has purchased a battery powered string trimmer, blower and hedge trimmer. This is in an effort to save some money.

Used fitness equipment is being procured as part of member retention and health.

Memorial Day 2020 to proceed with socially distanced plan, approved by the Franklin Township Plan. Current plan is limited members to conduct traditional ceremony with no attendees and to be virtually broadcast on Facebook live or YouTube.

OLD BUSINESS: N/A

NEW BUSINESS: C. Patkochis commented that appreciated the attendance of all at tonight's meeting with the current situation. Additionally, he relayed that even with the number of events being reported nationally, locally we are not seeing the number of incidents and in fact, our numbers are much lower. We should all be grateful that this immediate area has not been drastically affected, which is a direct reflection on our efforts.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business a Motion was made to adjourn at 7:08 PM by G. Reichert, seconded by P. Enea. All in favor, Motion carried

Respectfully submitted,

Elise Ennis, Secretary

Charles Patkochis, President