

Franklin Township Fire District No. 1
Meeting Minutes
February 9, 2021

The meeting opened with the Flag Salute

The 241st 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 January 12, 2021 meeting 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 \$ 2,753.51 and expenses totaling \$35,316.01 for the period of January 13, 2021 through February 9, 2021. Insurance installment payment was the largest expense for this period.

Motion to pay the bills for the period of January 13, 2021 through February 9, 2021 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, abstain. Motion carried.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS:

C. Patkochis introduced the following Resolutions for the Board's approval regarding Worker's Compensation and VFIS insurance policies. He noted that by choosing to purchase the policies together through the companies allows for a significant discount over previous years. A request to the QFC for the proof of sale date (copy of check, receipt of sale) of the old ladder truck has been requested so that it can be dropped from the VFIS policy and a refund requested for that period. The new policies will take effect on 2/15/2021.

RESOLUTION 2021-01 – Benchmark Insurance as insurance carrier for Worker's Compensation Policy in the amount of \$ 26,200.

A Motion was made by G. Reichert, seconded by P. Enea to purchase the Worker's Compensation Policy from Benchmark. Roll call vote, G. Reichert, aye; P. Enea, aye; E. Kolibas, aye; H. Laine, aye; C. Patkochis, aye. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION 2021-02 – Nottingham Insurance as insurance carrier for VFIS (Building, grounds, vehicles, equipment) in the amount of \$ 36,450.39

A Motion was made by G. Reichert, seconded by H. Laine to purchase the VFIS Policy from

Nottingham Insurance. Roll call vote, G. Reichert, aye; P. Enea, aye; E. Kolibas, aye; H. Laine, aye; C. Patkochis, aye. Motion carried.

Additionally, C. Patkochis presented a contract from the Auditor/Accountant (Colantano) for 2021 and a Pay to Play notification from Attorney Braslow.

C. Patkochis advised that a background check had been completed for John Kowalski but he has no additional information regarding his application. R. Geib advised that the application process is complete with the exception of the physical. C. Patkochis advised that the process needs to be tightened up going forward with all phases of the application process being complete before presenting to the board.

G. Reichert made a Motion to approve J. Kowalski as a volunteer firefighter pending successful completion of the physical portion, seconded by P. Enea. All in favor, Motion carried.

G. Reichert advised that the Fire Marshal Ordinances are still pending with the Township Committee, however there is a meeting scheduled for the end of the month which he plans to attend. G. Reichert will also be dropping off the quarterly payment vouchers to the Township this week to ensure that timely payments are received.

G. Reichert reported that a Firefighter/EMT sustained a dog bite injury to the hand while making a delivery during the Barbecue Fundraiser on February 7, 2021. Initially there was some difficulty getting information from the dog's owner but it has been determined that the dog is up to date on shots and licensed. FF/EMT completed an incident report. C. Patkochis advised that going forward a police report should be obtained and notification to our insurance should be made so that we are covered.

H. Laine updated the Board on the status of the Policy Handbook. It has been uploaded to Microsoft 365. Would like clarification on the adoption date being added and how they will be formalized. C. Patkochis will check with the Attorney and advised that we need to get this completed. It was confirmed that there is a Return to Work Light Duty Policy in the handbook.

P. Enea gave an update on repairs and maintenance. Headlights were replaced on Car 2 inhouse by C. Milcarek and D. Desaulniers. Engine 91 had a leak in the cascade air primer which was fixed by Fire and Safety. A gas strut was replaced on the Rescue rollup door. A hose reel solenoid was replaced in house. Car 2 also had an exhaust leak that was fixed by Rick Allen Auto Repair.

E. Kolibas met with representatives from QFC and Fire and Safety regarding blueprints for the proposed new Tender. The Tender would not be delivered until some time in 2022 with a price of approximately \$450,000. C. Patkochis advised that because it was not in the District Budget for this year we would need to discuss how it would be paid for, and by whom. Many questions about how it would be titled if it is partially paid for by a Grant. Could QFC purchase and then District purchase from QFC. Also, a Grant in the amount of \$ 275,000-\$325,000, which isn't scheduled to be awarded until July at the earliest, would only cover a part of the purchase and the chances of getting the Grant are less than the Grant for Cancer Reduction Exhaust. C. Patkochis said that it would be better to go for the Cancer Reduction Equipment Grant and make other plans to pay for the Tender. Financing the purchase of the Tender is not an option we should consider.

FIRE MARSHAL'S REPORT: C. Patkochis advised of 1 Inspection in January, the annual LEA report was submitted and 2021 Registrations and Pre-plan sheets were mailed out.

QUAKERTOWN FIRE COMPANY CHIEF'S REPORT: D. Desaulniers reported 46 incidents for the month of January. Over the past month the QFC participated in hydraulic tool demonstrations from 3

manufacturers. Following the demonstrations and reviewing price quotes, the officers of QFC have determined that purchasing a “demo” set of tools that are slightly used for only demonstration purposes, would be the way to go to improve rescue capabilities while providing a cost benefit of \$8000 over new tools. The Holmatro tools would be available June 1st. Retail is \$ 38,000. Demo tools \$28,818. B. Patkochis presented this information via email as well. C. Patkochis added that due to the cost, the QFC should make sure that the prices are on State Contract before we proceed with the purchase.

D. Desaulniers also advised that QFC is looking to purchase 8 25 foot lengths of 3 inch color coded “pony lines” which B. Crampton advised would be beneficial. B. Crampton has not requested price quotes but advised D. Desaulniers but thought it would cost approximately \$500. C. Patkochis advised that the price would be significantly higher (\$1400) and before we approve the purchase it should be looked into further.

D. Desaulniers advised that he, as well as the QFC would like the District to consider sharing the cost of the Grant Writer as it benefits both entities. To date, QFC has paid for the Grant Writer, \$ 3000.

G. Reichert made a Motion to share the cost of the Grant Writer 50/50, seconded by P. Enea. All in favor, Motion carried.

QUAKERTOWN FIRE COMPANY PRESIDENT'S REPORT: R. Geib reported that the first month of Career Member employees at QFC has gone smoothly. There are currently 2 full time and 9 per diem employees.

A Barbecue Fundraiser held on 2/7/21 was the most successful to date which also benefited a local family in need. QFC will be donating proceeds from the event to the family of Morgan Hewitt, a 16 year old neighbor who is fighting Leukemia at Children’s Hospital in Philadelphia. #WeFightWithMorgan

R. Geib advised that an item of concern at their last business meeting was the declining number of volunteers at QFC. The QFC is requesting assistance in the form of ideas and support in their efforts to attract and retain volunteer members in the coming months as current volunteers are going back to school, leaving the area and taking employment opportunities that make them unavailable.

The QFC is also addressing ongoing computer connectivity issues.

OLD BUSINESS: LED headlights, no new information

NEW BUSINESS: C. Patkochis advised that the snowblower is broken and not worth repairing. Due to the ongoing heavy winter weather, new snowblowers are not available. L+L Equipment suggested holding off until late summer at this point.

E. Kolibas inquired on disclosure documentation for Commissioners and was advised that he would receive an email from the Township when information is needed.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business a Motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7:22 PM by G. Reichert, seconded by P. Enea. All in favor, Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Elise Ennis

Charles Patkochis, President