

Meeting Minutes

March 12, 2024

Meeting opened with the Flag Salute

The 285th 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 D. Stephens, 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 February 13, 2024 meeting was made by H. Laine, seconded by D. Stephens. All in favor, Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT: D. Stephens advised of expenses totaling \$606,971.19 and income totaling \$ 110,494.75 for the period of January 10, 2024 through February 13, 2024.

Motion to pay the bills for the period of February 14, 2024 through March 12, 2024 was made by P. Enea, seconded by E. Kolibas. Roll call vote, D. Stephens, aye; P. Enea, aye; E. Kolibas, aye; H. Laine, aye; C. Patkochis, aye. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Residents of Baker Road were in attendance to address concerns specific to 24 Baker Road in which A. Buterbaugh and others from the Fire Marshall's Office have been involved in an ongoing investigation of alleged violations of the Fire Code and other State and Local laws and ordinances. James and Jane Bowers of 32 Baker Rd., spoke regarding their concerns with the use of the property being against it's residential zoning designation. Mr. Bowers advised since the new owners took over he property there have been multiple issues that are of concern including running a commercial business, over-crowding, using the barn for residential purposes, over taxing the well and septic and run off as well as large trucks making deliveries. The Bowers' have contacted multiple agencies including Township Zoning and Building Departments as well as the Fire Marshall's office. A. Buterbaugh addressed the Bowers's concerns where it was appropriate and advised he has issued citations on 2/29/2024 for multiple violations of the Fire Code. The owners, who do not speak English, are allotted a period of time to make repairs at which time he will reinspect for repairs and if they are not made they will be fined. That time period has not elapsed. A. Buterbaugh advised them that they need to address their concerns with the Zoning and Building Departments about the Use Variance that the new owners would need to continue the Commerical operations taking place. A. Buterbaugh also advised them that their concerns with water runoff and septic/water well issues should be reported to the Hunterdon County Health Department. A. Buterbaugh will continue to monitor 24 Baker Road closely for violations of the Fire Code. The Bowers's left the meeting along with Dolores Reich and her husband of 56 Baker Rd who expressed the same general concerns. All expressed their appreciation to the Fire Marshall's office and the Board for their time and consideration in the above matter.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS:

C. Patkochis advised the Board of an estimate from Fire Flow to perform hose, ladder and pump testing in the amount of \$5700. D. Stephens made a Motion to approve the testing to performed by Fire Flow in the amount not to exceed \$5700, seconded by P. Enea. All in favor, Motion carried.

C. Patkochis presented an estimate from Allegiant for Engine 91 service and brake repairs in the amount of \$3585.00. H. Laine made the Motion to approve the repairs and service, seconded by D. Stephens. All in favor, Motion carried.

D. Stephens advised that the Title for the Engine has been received after several emails.

C. Patkochis advised that the Workman's Compensation audit notification has been received and the documents requested have all been gathered for submission. C. Patkochis advised that last year's audit resulted in an additional \$5700.00 bill and expects the same in this year's audit.

C. Patkochis announced that we have received notification of Grant monies in the amount of \$68,000 has been awarded to the District. The money will be used to purchase fifteen sets of turnout gear, boots and other personal protective equipment. A list of firefighters needing new gear is being compiled for measurements. A Motion was made to accept the Grant, seconded by D. Stephens. All in favor, Motion carried.

FIRE MARSHAL'S REPORT: C. Patkochis advised the Board of multiple inspections and re-inspections performed throughout the past month as well as permits issued and smoke detector certifications. Several penalties have been issued totaling \$1250.00 for this month. Total receipts year to date are \$18,325.00.

QUAKERTOWN FIRE COMPANY CHIEF'S REPORT: B. Patkochis advised of 65 calls in the month of February. He also advised that he and others had visited Florida to inspect the new Tender 91-1 and the punch list is completed and is expected for delivery sometime in early April. All was as expected except for mud flaps that are being replaced. Fire and Safety is ready to receive the old Tender 91 for slated repairs as planned as soon as the new Tender is in service. B. Patkochis advised that Alexandria Township has requested quarterly reports from QFC for their attorney to review. The information includes location, apparatus used, staffing, type of call. It's time consuming and comprehensive but is believed to be used with their consultant's study of response area. QFC has applied for the Assist Firefighter Grant in the amount of \$224,000.00 and will use the monies, if received, to purchase new radios.

B. Patkochis advised the Board of continued issues with the Hampton Inn, specifically with false alarms caused by smoking in the guest rooms. B. Patkochis is requesting research by the Fire Marshall's office into an ordinance in Franklin Township to fine the Hampton Inn for the repeated false alarms. It would be up to the Hampton Inn to pass this fine along to the registered guest of the room. A. Buterbaugh will look into what is out there.

QUAKERTOWN FIRE COMPANY PRESIDENT'S REPORT: R. Medine read R. Geib's report in his absence. E. Lundy was promoted from Per Diem to Full Time. M. Abelowitz changed from Full Time to Per Diem. S. Phillips was hired as Per Diem and Tom Hoffman was welcomed back to the staff.

OLD BUSINESS: H. Laine advised there has been no new developments with LexPol

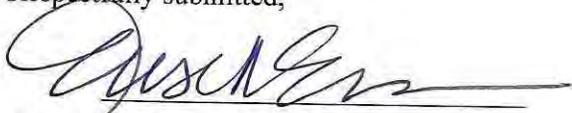
EXECUTIVE SESSION:

C. Patkochis read RESOLUTION 2024 -4 EXECUTIVE SESSION - SHARED SERVICES

H. Laine made a Motion to enter Executive Session to discuss Shared Services, seconded by P. Enea. Roll call vote, D. Stephens, aye; P. Enea, aye; E. Kolibas, aye; H. Laine, aye; C. Patkochis, aye. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business a Motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 PM by H. Laine, seconded by D. Stephens. All in favor, Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Elise Ennis', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Elise Ennis

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Charles Patkochis', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Charles Patkochis, President