

Franklin Township Fire District No. 1 Meeting Minutes

January 13th, 2026

Meeting opened with the Flag Salute

The 310th 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 H.Laine 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 H.Laine, present; Treasurer D. Stephens, present; Secretary P. Enea III, present; Vice President, C.Patkochis, present; Assistant Secretary, S.Bell, present.

APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MONTH: A Motion to accept the minutes of the December 9th, 2025, meeting and December 30th, 2025, Special Budget Transfer Meeting was made by S.Bell seconded by D.Stephens. All in favor, Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT: D.Stephens advised of a total income of \$682.49 and expenses totaling \$15,753.03 for the period December 31st, 2025, through January 13, 2026.

Motion to pay the bills for the period of December 31st, 2025, through January 13, 2026, was made by S.Bell, seconded by C.Patkochis. Roll call vote: P. Enea, aye; S.Bell, aye; H. Laine, aye; C. Patkochis, aye. Motion carried.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS:

Resolution 2026-1 Appointing Fire Inspector

H.Laine advised the board that they would like to appoint Scott Phillips as a Fire Inspector. Motion to Approve Resolution 2026-1 by P.Enea seconded by C. Patkochis. Roll call vote: P. Enea, aye; S.Bell, aye; H. Laine, aye; C. Patkochis, aye. Motion carried.

W.Hockin advised the board that he met with First Net to lower the monthly costs of the apparatus cradle point wifi. First Net came back with a solution which would pay for the monthly usage instead of the unlimited plan, capped at \$36.99. Additionally, he presented a hotspot device that was recommended to act as a station backup for inclement weather when the station loses internet. A motion to accept the new plan to lower First Net monthly costs and the station hotspot backup was made by C. Patkochis seconded by S.Bell. Roll call vote: P. Enea, aye; S.Bell, aye; H. Laine, aye; C. Patkochis, aye. Motion carried.

H.Laine advised the board that the Fire Company has requested new Thermal Imaging Camera batteries as the current batteries are not operating appropriately. H.Laine requested a motion to purchase new TIC batteries, not to exceed \$1,500. A motion was made by D.Stephens seconded by P.Enea. Roll call vote: P. Enea, aye; S.Bell, aye; H. Laine, aye; C. Patkochis, aye. Motion carried.

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H.Laine advised the board that there was a complaint that the Radio Room space heater was left on, unattended at 80 degrees. No known issues with the HVAC system in that room, P.Enea was tasked to follow up.

W. Hockin reported that the website now includes the Bureau of Fire Prevention tab. A. Buterbaugh updated all of his forms to the new district email and updated the forms. These are now uploaded to the district website. A. Buterbaugh requested that the fire company remove their Fire Prevention tab or add a hyperlink to the district website.

H.Laine advised the board that S. Phillips and A. Buterbaugh have requested to use penalty money to go to a training conference to receive continuing education credits. The cost of the event per person would be \$217 per hotel room and \$650 per attendee, totaling \$1734. A motion was made by S. Bell seconded by P. Enea. Roll call vote: P. Enea, aye; S. Bell, aye; H. Laine, aye; C. Patkochis, aye. Motion carried.

H.Laine advised the board that Ladder 91 had a ladder test completed after a report was received from Fire and Safety Services that their ladder was damaged noted on its recent service. The ladder test came back within regulations and is not a problem.

W. Hockin advised that W. Crampton was made aware of a rear intake on Engine 91 was not working appropriately. W. Crampton called Fire and Safety Services and opened a work order.

H. Laine provided an update on the Union Township Shared Services Agreement. FTFD and UT attorneys worked to create a mutually shared services contract during November and December, for FTFD provided fire protection within a defined portion of UT. Thereafter, in late December, UT officials suggested to the FTFD Attorney that they set a meeting with FTFD to discuss the agreement but have not reached out to schedule. H.Laine will follow up with the UT officials.

C. Patkochis advised he was asked by the fire company if the fire district or the fire company could bill on motor vehicle accidents with hazards. H.Laine advised that there was an ordinance with Franklin Township from 2019 but will need to do research and follow up with the board.

D. Stephens advised he is working on obtaining workers compensation insurance policies to save on costs. The current policy is for all per diems and 40 volunteers. He is working on receiving quotes prior to next meeting and will report to the board.

FIRE MARSHAL REPORT: The Fire Marshal advised the NJ Division of Fire Safety year-end report is due January 30th. Will need to work with the Clerk on revenues and expenses. Will forward the report to the commissioners to view the new year's activity. New and updated forms are on the website. We are receiving a free cradle point from First Net under a new public safety promo. Uncollected 2025 fees will be penalized and collected in 2026. First Due software is now being used for annual billing, and we are seeing many are choosing to pay electronically.

QUAKERTOWN FIRE COMPANY CHIEF'S REPORT: Chief B. patkochis reported that their ID maker is broken and too old to be fixed and asked the Fire District to replace. The board held a discussion and was unsure about the issue. W. Hockin is going to follow up and report back to the board. The chief reported the fire company needs new SCBA Mask bags for members. The board approved this and W. Crampton will follow up with pricing. The chief advised his iPad in the chief's vehicle dies overnight in the cold and requested a newer device for proper use. The board advised they would like to try to replace the battery before buying a new device. The chief reported that the fire company responded to a residential structure fire on Finn Road, Union Township with 9 pieces of apparatus staffed with 41


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members. The chief noted that the biggest issue at the fire was the lack of a fire investigation from NJ as Union Township is a state-covered municipality. The chief reported that the fire district should be proud of what was accomplished by the fire company at this fire. The chief reported that 3 members passed Firefighter I this past month, 2 being above 18. Additionally, the chief reported all paperwork should be in for new member Gary Hazard.


QUAKERTOWN FIRE COMPANY PRESIDENT'S REPORT: President R. Geib reported that they had 3 members pass Firefighter 1, have 4 members going through EMT at South Branch, and the Fire Company welcomed a return of past junior member, Courtney Shiereck, who is an EMT. She is in college at Penn State and will be available when not at school. The president also reported that the proceeds of their annual fund drive mailer are continuing to come in and the fire company is preparing for its first fundraiser of 2026, the Annual Superbowl BBQ.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business a Motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7.27PM by D.Stephens seconded by C.Patkochis. All in favor, Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Wesley Hockin, Secretary



Heikki Laine, President