

EVESHAM TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT NO.1  
BOARD OF FIRE COMISSIONERS  
Regular Meeting  
January 16, 2024  
MINUTES

President Behnke called the regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners of Evesham Township Fire District No. 1 to order at 7:01 PM at Station 221. President Behnke welcomed all in attendance. He opened the meeting with a flag salute and Pledge of Allegiance and a traditional moment of silence for those that have gone before us. The following statement of compliance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act was given by Business Manager Maureen Mitchell: “This meeting is being held in compliance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act. Notice of this meeting was transmitted to the Burlington County Times and Central Record on December 8, 2023, filed with the Township Clerk of the Township of Evesham, posted on the bulletin board in the Fire Administration Office that is customarily used for the posting of such notices and mailed to all persons requesting that they receive such notice.”

ROLL CALL - The following individuals were present at the roll call, Commissioners: Behnke, Guerrini, Powers, and Rowe. Also, present: Chief Carl Bittenbender, DC Scott Freedman, Business Manager Maureen Mitchell, and Solicitor Hodges. ABSENT: Commissioner Baugh, DC Donnelly

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PRIOR MEETINGS

Commissioner Powers made a motion that the minutes as amended including a summary of action items of the December 21, 2023, Regular Meeting be approved. Commissioner Rowe seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the motion produced the following result: AYES, Behnke, Guerrini, Powers and Rowe; NAYS, none; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT, Baugh.

TREASURER’S REPORT

The following report for the month of December 2023 was read by Manager Mitchell for approval:

Treasurer's Report for the period ended:  
December 31, 2023

Beginning Cash Balance	\$9,702,670.76
Cash Receipts	2,766,849.41
Cash Disbursements	<u>(1,038,274.56)</u>
Ending Cash Balance	<u><u>\$11,431,245.61</u></u>

Commissioner Guerrini made a motion accepting the Treasurer’s Report as presented. Commissioner Powers seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a unanimous roll call vote of the members present.

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APPROVAL OF PAYMENT OF BILLS

BILL LIST

January 16, 2024

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ELAN (P-CARD)	\$	697.67
Heartland	\$	789.81
Payroll #26 & #1	\$	456,331.53
Payroll Deductions Payable	\$	19,555.83
NJ Pension & Benefits – SHBP	\$	65,053.58
NJ Pension & Benefits–Pension Deductions	\$	46,953.97
Bill List Dated: 1/16/24	\$	206,042.11
TD Bank Debt Service	\$	252,952.98
PSE&G	\$	11,768.09

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TOTAL PAYMENTS THIS PERIOD

\$ 1,060,145.57

Commissioner Powers made a motion to approve the payment of bills as contained on the Bill List Report. Commissioner Guerrini seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a unanimous roll call vote of the members present.

CHIEF’S REPORT

Chief Bittenbender gave a verbal summary of his report that was previously provided to the Board. He reviewed the response numbers for 2023. He stated that the 4<sup>th</sup> ambulance remount is complete and that will go into service at 221 after the State Department of Health inspection. He followed saying that the 5<sup>th</sup> remount will be going out for update soon. President Behnke asked the Chief about getting in touch with Mr. Palumbo, to which the Chief confirmed that he hadn’t gotten a chance to yet. President Behnke informed the Chief that he had seen a man-lift at the station within the last week and was wondering what that was for. The Chief explained that the lift was used to correct the gutter heating system that was taken out of service when the roof & soffits were being worked on, and that project is now complete. Commissioner Powers asked about getting a breakdown for the fire calls and Chief Bittenbender told him that he would get it for him.

BUSINESS MANAGER REPORT

Ms. Mitchell gave a verbal summary of her report that was previously provided to the Board. She noted that the Resolution to award the Occupational Health services for employee’s physicals is on tonight’s agenda. This is the second year of using this company.

Commissioner Rowe asked who was covered by the annual physical this year.

Chief Bittenbender indicated that All Full Time Firefighters, EMT’s, and a rotation of volunteer members were scheduled this year. He confirmed that currently Per Diems are not in the rotation for inclusion.

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Manager Mitchell also mentioned training opportunities which are available to our members and pending legislation to extend the time a Fire District can bond apparatus from 10 years to 20 years.

Commissioner Rowe asked if we receive any compensation from the Township for providing UCC inspection and Sub Code services. Business Manager Mitchell indicated that currently we do not, but she would be talking to the new CFO who started with the Township today about our rent and the services we provide since we are currently not receiving any services back from the Township after we took over our own Payroll and HR functions in 2023.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY – None

CONSENT AGENDA – RESOLUTIONS 2024-1 to 2024-8

- Resolution No. 2024 - 1      Establishing a Petty Cash Fund
- Resolution No. 2024 - 2      Establishing a Cash Management Plan
- Resolution No. 2024 - 3      Providing for Compensation of Board Members - TABLED
- Resolution No. 2024 - 4      Enforcement of Uniform Fire Safety Act
- Resolution No. 2024 - 5      Appointment of Fire Sub-Code Official
- Resolution No. 2024 - 6      Appointment of Public Agency Compliance Officer
- Resolution No. 2024 - 7      Authorizing Contracts with Certain Approved State of New Jersey Cooperative Purchasing Program
- Resolution No. 2024 – 8      Authorizing the Business Manager to Approve Payment of Certain Bills Between Meetings

Commissioner Powers made a motion to table Resolution 2024 – 3. President Behnke seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Behnke, Guerrini, Powers, and Rowe; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: Baugh

Commissioner Powers asked if the current Petty Cash system was working. Business Manager Mitchell indicated that it was working with DC Freedman confirming that he has never had a problem with the system as we hardly use it.

President Behnke made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda (2024-1 thru 2024-8 except for Resolution 2024 – 3). Commissioner Rowe seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Behnke, Guerrini, Powers, and Rowe; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: Baugh

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RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 2024 – 9      Resolution Authorizing the Award of a Contract for Occupational Health Services

Commissioner Powers made a motion to approve Resolution Number 2024 – 9. Commissioner Guerrini seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Behnke, Guerrini, Powers, and Rowe; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: Baugh

Resolution No. 2024 – 10      Authorizing Contract for Professional Services – Fire District General Counsel, amending 2023-84 to consolidate Solicitor and Labor Counsel

Commissioner Powers made a motion to approve Resolution Number 2024 – 10. Commissioner Rowe seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Behnke, Guerrini, Powers, and Rowe; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: Baugh

Resolution No. 2024 – 11      Awarding Contract for Professional Services – Conflict Labor Counsel

Business Manager Mitchell indicated that this was the firm previously used by the District but with a different attorney named.

Commissioner Rowe made a motion to approve Resolution Number 2024 – 11. Commissioner Powers seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Behnke, Guerrini, Powers, and Rowe; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: Baugh

NEW BUSINESS –

1. Adoption of revised Job Descriptions

Commissioner Rowe indicated that he did not see redlined versions of the job descriptions, so he was unsure for what the Chief was requested to be changed. He stated that he would like Labor Counsel to review the redline changes and the Chief's justification for the requested changes.

Commissioner Rowe made a motion to table the adoption of the revised job descriptions for Lieutenant, Captain and Battalion Chief, and revisit next month. Commissioner Powers seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the motion produced the following result: AYES, Behnke, Powers, and Rowe; NAYS, Guerrini; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT, Baugh.

Chief Bittenbender indicated that the changes were to seek clarity on the years of service, to include Hazmat and Fire Officer I requirements that are now being enforced by the State. Chief indicated he would get the redlines and justification to the Board.

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2. Approval of 2024 Fire Line Officers

- Bob Zane Deputy Chief
- Matt Collins Deputy Chief
- Anthony Cappetta Captain
- Jimmy Cummings Captain
- Todd Young Lieutenant
- Dave Fell Lieutenant
- Bryan Lindh Lieutenant
- Keith Harrison Lieutenant

Commissioner Guerrini made a motion to approve the 2024 Fire Line Officers. Commissioner Powers seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Behnke, Guerrini, Powers, and Rowe; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: Baugh

Commissioner Powers asked if these were promotions of new ranks. The Chief indicated that they were existing ranks. Commissioner Powers asked that he be sure that they all receive the applicable uniform components to reflect their current rank. Chief Bittenbender agreed to check on this.

3. Approval of Travel for Lt. Pierson

DC Freedman indicated that these out of area training courses provide different access to the techniques and peers than we regularly see at our local conventions. There is a value to what he will be able to bring back to the department to share with his peers.

President Behnke stated that he felt it was awesome to be able to send others outside the area to train and he is excited to see what Lieutenant Pierson gets out of this training.

Commissioner Powers asked that a summary of the classes attended and the training he brings back to the department be reported to the Board upon his return.

Commissioner Powers made a motion to approve travel for Lieutenant Pierson to attend the IAAI Conference in Las Vegas. Commissioner Rowe seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Behnke, Guerrini, Powers, and Rowe; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: Baugh

4. Commissioner Rowe referred back to the Chief's report on starting the hiring process by advertising for Firefighter/EMT positions. He asked the Chief about the status of a succession plan which was mentioned during the Budget presentation.

The Chief indicated that it was not prepared yet but he could get it for the Board.

Commissioner Rowe made a motion to halt the hiring process until the Board approves a Succession Plan for hiring and promotions. Commissioner Powers seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the motion produced the following result: AYES, Behnke, Powers, and Rowe; NAYS, Guerrini; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT, Baugh.

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5. President Behnke advised the Board that he reached out the Richard Braslow Esq. regarding providing training for the Commissioners on their roles and responsibilities which was previously discussed with Solicitor Saginario. He indicated that we could use him as a consultant as long as we stay under the pay to play limits.
6. Commissioner Powers asked the Business Manager to work with the IT coordinator to get quotes for a system to record and potentially stream the Board meetings with the open for remote meeting access. Manager Mitchell advised the Board that she would but that this purchase was not considered in the 2024 Budget so the funding would need to be addressed in the 2025 Budget process, but she would get the quotes in anticipation of that discussion later in 2024 during the budget prep.

OLD BUSINESS –

1. Action Items

Commissioner Powers asked if we have met all the actions items from the last meeting. Manager Mitchell indicated that we had addressed the Roberts Rules, and the IT reporting structure has been addressed. The only open item was the President and commissioner meeting with the chief to set the process for setting goals. All action items will be kept track of within minutes for the foreseeable future.

2. Employee Engagement Study

Manager Mitchell indicated that she would go back out to bid on 1/22/24 for opening 2/22/24. Any changes to the specifications need to be sent to Manager Mitchell by 1/20/24.

GOOD & WELFARE – Commissioner Powers thanked everyone for coming out in the not-so-great weather. He requested that everyone be safe and take your time getting home as the roads are slick.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

ADJOURNMENT TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution No. 2024 – 12 Executive Session – Contract Negotiations and Legal Advice

President Behnke indicated that the Board anticipates going into executive session for approximately 30 minutes. The board will not take action when we reconvene in public session.

Commissioner Guerrini made a motion to approve Resolution Number 2024 – 12. Commissioner Powers seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Behnke, Guerrini, Powers, and Rowe; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: Baugh.

President Behnke adjourned the public portion of the meeting at 7:51 PM.

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RETURN TO PUBLIC – President Behnke reconvened the public portion of the meeting at 8:32 PM.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Commissioner Powers made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Guerrini seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a unanimous roll call vote.

President Behnke adjourned the meeting at 8:33 pm.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

1. President Behnke and Commissioner Powers will meet with the Chief to develop worksheets or process to develop organizational and personal goals for staff.
2. Chief to speak with Mr. Palumbo
3. Chief to provide the Board with the breakdown of Fire calls for 2023.
4. Update the Volunteer officers' job description.
5. Business Manager to follow up the Township regarding the annual rent for FAO being waived in lieu of UCC Fire inspections and Subcode duties being performed by District Staff.
6. Chief to provide the Board with Red-line items listed for job descriptions.
7. Chief to provide all necessary uniform components for 2024 Fire Line Officers
8. Chief to provide an Audit of 2022/2023 report of mandatory training completed.
9. Business Manager to provide Financial report Year end 2023 and monthly reports going forward.
10. Business Manager to provide Financial report Quarter to date for 2024 monthly.
11. Business Manager to obtain proposals for recording and transmitting the Board meetings.
12. Business Manager to issue the RFP for Employee Engagement Study.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Mitchell  
Business Manager