

EVESHAM TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT NO.1  
BOARD OF FIRE COMISSIONERS  
Regular Meeting  
February 13, 2024  
MINUTES

President Behnke called the regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners of Evesham Township Fire District No. 1 to order at 7:00 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: Baugh (arrived 7:08PM), Behnke, Guerrini, Powers, and Rowe. Also, present: Chief Carl Bittenbender, DC Ryan Donnelly, DC Scott Freedman, Business Manager Maureen Mitchell, and Solicitor Hodges. ABSENT: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PRIOR MEETINGS

Commissioner Guerrini made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 16, 2024, Regular and Executive Session Meeting be approved. Commissioner Powers 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 January 2024 was read by Manager Mitchell for acceptance:

Treasurer's Report for the period ended:  
January 31, 2024

Beginning Cash Balance	\$11,431,245.61
Cash Receipts	325,110.23
Cash Disbursements	<u>(1,144,190.47)</u>
Ending Cash Balance	<u><u>\$10,612,165.37</u></u>

Commissioner Rowe made a motion accepting the Treasurer’s Report as presented. Commissioner Powers 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.

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APPROVAL OF PAYMENT OF BILLS

BILL LIST  
February 13, 2024

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ELAN (P-CARD)	\$ 3,472.01
Heartland	\$ 1,685.92
Payroll #2 & #3	\$ 465,514.08
Payroll Deductions Payable	\$ 29,973.41
NJ Pension & Benefits – SHBP	\$ 72,351.09
NJ Pension & Benefits–Pension Deductions	\$ 48,203.80
Bill List Dated: 2/13/24	\$ 134,697.67
PSE&G	\$ 6,835.66
Treasurer State NJ - Elevator	\$ 258.00
Evesham MUA	\$ 45,131.10
941 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	\$ 64.81
State of NJ – Annual Reports	\$ 61.00

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TOTAL PAYMENTS THIS PERIOD \$ 808,248.55

Commissioner Powers asked about the payment for Dell, Atlantic Tactical, and T-Mobile which Manager Mitchell answered. Being no further comment Commissioner Powers made a motion to approve the payment of bills as contained on the Bill List Report. 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.

CHIEF'S REPORT

Chief Bittenbender gave a verbal summary of his report that was previously provided to the Board. Commissioner Rowe thanked the Chief for breaking fire response times out on the statistic report. Commissioner Rowe asked the Chief for clarification on some of the stats which the Chief provided. Commissioner Rowe stated he was proud that for the month the “hot responses” met the 9 minutes 100% of the time. The Chief indicated that if you look at the number for fire investigations that was a good indicator of “actual fires” in town. Commissioner Rowe asked the Chiefs about the status of surplus equipment at 225 which DC Donnelly indicated where being inventoried for preparation for Board action to dispose of at hopefully the March meeting.

Commissioner Rowe asked if the forcible entry training door was in use and Chief Bittenbender indicated it was in service.

Commissioner Powers asked the Chief what involvement the volunteer Deputy Chiefs have with new volunteers. Chief Bittenbender indicated that there were still 9 new active volunteers working to get certified.

President Behnke thanked DC Freedman for all the data he provided the Board for the Chief's report.

The Chief indicated he had requests for travel on the agenda under New Business.

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**SOLICITOR’S REPORT**

Solicitor Hodges indicated that she met with the IAFF Union for negotiations, and we will discuss more in Executive Session.

**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 a window contract for Blaze Emergency Equipment Company is on the agenda tonight for consideration. This is the company we awarded the quotes for preventative maintenance, and this will allow us to solicit quotes for any repair work. Manager Mitchell notified the Board that the SAFER and AFG grant applications are due in March.

Commissioner Rowe asked when we were moving away from Google Drive for the Board files. Manager Mitchell indicated that the Board folders have been duplicated on the SharePoint currently and as soon as everyone confirms they can access the new folders we will cancel the Board’s monthly licenses with Google. Commissioner Rowe asked about the Districts policy on password changes and Manger Mitchell indicated that IT Coordinator Mullen was working to roll out Multi-factor authentication and password polices that will comply with the next phase of Cyber Insurance requirements. Commissioner Rowe asked for a timeline for the roll out and Manager Mitchell indicated she would have Mr. Mullen prepare it. Commissioner Rowe asked about the timeline for the website revamp. Manager Mitchell indicated it was ongoing, but she anticipated it being completed by the end of Quarter 2.

President Behnke asked out the up coming grant deadlines and Chief Bittenbender indicated DC Donnelly would be preparing the applications. Chief indicated that the SAFER grant currently has no matching portion which is excellent news.

Commissioner Guerrini asked Commissioner Powers why he requested resolution 2024-3 to be tabled last meeting. Commissioner Powers indicated that he wanted to see what the normal range of compensation for surrounding entities was. Commissioner Powers indicated that he felt the President was usually compensated higher that other members.

Commissioner Powers asked the Chief how the EMT rates on the agenda tonight were set. Chief Bittenbender indicated that they were set based on time in grade, time as an EMT, and compliance with the SOP. Those not in compliance were not making the highest eligible rate until that time in which they become compliant.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY – None**

**RESOLUTIONS**

Resolution No. 2024 – 3      Providing Compensation of Board Members

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

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Resolution No. 2024 – 13 Resolution Ratifying EMT's Rate of Pay

Commissioner Guerrini made a motion to approve Resolution Number 2024 – 13. Commissioner Rowe seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Baugh, Behnke, Guerrini, Powers, and Rowe; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None

Resolution No. 2024 – 14 Resolution to Award Window Contract for Blaze  
Emergency Equipment Company

Commissioner Powers made a motion to approve Resolution Number 2024 – 14. Commissioner Guerrini seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Baugh, Behnke, Guerrini, Powers, and Rowe; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None

NEW BUSINESS –

1. Approval for travel:
  - a. DC Freedman to attend the IAFC Community Risk Reduction Leadership Conference in May.

President Behnke asked DC Freedman to explain his request for travel.

DC Freedman indicated that the District struggles with community outreach and Community Risk Reduction, so he wants to try and hit new target groups. He mentioned changes to a Junior Fire Academy model instead of a kid's safety camp. He will also be rolling out the Seton Hall fire program for the High School this year. DC Freedman indicated that the District does a good job with Code Enforcement for businesses through inspections and other outreach, so he is looking to see how other agencies that he is not usually exposed to do it.

Commissioner Powers asked if we will be including new outreach on our new website and DC Freedman indicated that yes, we are trying to expand our social media and website information. The District participates monthly in the Township's email newsletter where the Fire Marshal and the Chief alternate writing content to give the community timely information on prevention and services.

The Board requested that the process to subscribe to the newsletter go out to the District Membership.

Commissioner Powers made a motion to approve the travel for DC Freedman to attend the IAFC Community Risk Reduction Leadership Conference. Commissioner Guerrini seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Baugh, Behnke, Guerrini, Powers, and Rowe; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None

- b. Travel and expenses, Donnelly, Bittenbender, Freedman, Congressional Fire Service Institute Dinner April 29 & 30, 2 nights hotel, travel, dinner.

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Chief Bittenbender indicated that it was Dinner followed the next day by meetings with the local legislators to discuss any local issues. The big issues to discuss are AFG, SAFER and other issues important to the Fire and Emergency Services.

President Behnke asked the Chiefs if any of them had attended the Congressional event prior. Chief Bittenbender indicated that he has not attended in several years. DC Donnelly indicated that he had attended in the past outside of our organization. He indicated that it is important to have facetime with the legislators especially when it comes to grant applications and changes to all aspects of our business like Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement changes which affect our business.

President Behnke indicated that he assumed there is also a value for a Board member to attend.

Commissioner Powers indicated that he was not comfortable with all 3 Chiefs out of town at the same time. I would like to see a volunteer Deputy Chief attend in place of one of the career Chiefs.

Commissioner Guerrini made a motion to approve the request as presented. There was not a second to the motion, so the motion died.

Commissioner Powers made a motion to approve travel for up to four (4) people to travel with no more than 2 of the Chiefs and one (1) Board Member to attend the Congressional Fire Service Institute Dinner. Commissioner Guerrini seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Baugh, Behnke, Guerrini, Powers, and Rowe; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None

## 2. EMS Billing renewal

Manager Mitchell indicated to the Board that the current one year extension on the EMS billing contract is expiring on July 31, 2024 and if we are not exercising the last one (1) year extension at 3.09% we have to give notice by May 31<sup>st</sup> and prepare a new RFP for EMS billing services to be able to receive and evaluate them in a timely manner for a new contract to start on August 1, 2024. We are currently receiving the lowest rates around with some neighboring communities paying almost double.

Commissioner Rowe indicated that he has a few compliance issues he would like to see addressed before deciding to renew or bid.

President Behnke asked Commissioner Rowe and Manager Mitchell to meet and come up with a recommendation for the March meeting.

3. President Behnke mentioned the Burlington County 200 club dinner is coming up and in the past the District has participated by purchasing a table for \$1,300 and some of our providers have been nominated for recognition. President Behnke asked the Board if they were all in favor of supporting this event and there was an affirmation from all members.

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OLD BUSINESS – None

MEMBERSHIP

1. New member: Alissa Hough & Joseph Hough – Vol EMT candidate
2. Terminate Member: Alexandria Falivene

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

GOOD & WELFARE – Commissioner Guerrini congratulated Chief Bittenbender on his election as Vice President of the Burlington County Chiefs Association.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

The Board documented the follow Action Items:

1. Newsletter
2. Compensation of Commissioner salaries from neighboring communities
3. Project plan for JIF Cyber compliance phases
4. Commissioner Rowe and Manager Mitchell to meet about EMS billing contract

ADJOURNMENT TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution No. 2024 – 15 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 Baugh made a motion to approve Resolution Number 2024 – 15. Commissioner Powers seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Baugh, Behnke, Guerrini, Powers, and Rowe; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None.

President Behnke adjourned the public portion of the meeting at 7:57 PM.

RETURN TO PUBLIC – President Behnke reconvened the public portion of the meeting at 8:35 PM.

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

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President Behnke adjourned the meeting at 8:36 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Mitchell  
Business Manager