

EVESHAM TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT NO.1
BOARD OF FIRE COMISSIONERS
Regular Meeting
February 27, 2024
MINUTES

President Behnke called the regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners of Evesham Township Fire District No. 1 to order at 7:03 PM at Station 221. President Behnke welcomed all in attendance. He opened the meeting with a flag salute and Pledge of Allegiance. 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 (via phone @7:26), 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

MEMBER AND CIVILIAN RECOGNITION

President Behnke read a statement where he welcomed everyone to celebrate a ceremony that embodies the essence of courage, compassion, and swift action. He stated that we would be honoring members of Evesham Fire Rescue, as well as civilians, of the community whose quick thinking saved lives. He said that each person recognized showed bravery and courage when faced with a life-threatening situation. He continued to say that their actions are an inspiration and remind us of what a difference we can make in someone else’s life. He then turned things over to Chief Bittenbender for the presentation of the certificates of recognition.

Chief Bittenbender brought Jill Evans and Karen Hengst to the front of the room to present them with their Civilian Life Saving Award. Ms. Evans and Ms. Hengst, alongside Mr. Scott Agnew (who was unable to attend) responded to a spectator having a sudden cardiac arrest while attending a basketball game at Cherokee High School on December 19, 2023. Without hesitation, they immediately responded, initiated 9-1-1, and started cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) efforts. An automated external defibrillator (AED) was applied which delivered one successful shock to the patient. Their quick thinking and fast efforts on delivering a successful shock to the individual, likely saved that person’s life. The Chief presented them with their Civilian Life Saving Award and thanked them for their quick response as time was of the essence. He stated that this is an award that is not given often and is pleased to present it.

Chief Bittenbender then asked Firefighter/EMT/Inspector Heston and Firefighter/EMT/Inspector Lang to come forward as they were also being presented with a Unit Citation for their quick action that saved the life of a motorist on November 30,

Evesham Township Fire District No. 1
Minutes – February 27, 2024

2023. Firefighter/EMT Matthew Heston and Firefighter/EMT Jonathan Lang responded to State Highway Route 73 and Evesham Road in Evesham Township for a report of a motor vehicle accident. Arriving within minutes after the dispatch they found a truck which had collided with a tree. Surveying the scene, they observed an occupant in a locked cab of a tractor trailer, unconscious and unresponsive. With little protection from the flow of traffic along State Highway Route 73, Heston and Lang forced entry through the driver’s door of the vehicle and rapidly extricated the driver from the vehicle. Upon extracting the driver from the vehicle, they delivered a successful AED shock and were able to transport the patient to an area hospital with pulses. The Chief thanked Heston and Lang for their timely actions to save this person’s life and awarded them a Unit Citation – CPR Save.

President Behnke authorized a brief 10-minute recess before continuing the meeting.

President Behnke reconvened the meeting at 7:26 pm where Commissioner Baugh joined the meeting via telephone.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PRIOR MEETINGS

Commissioner Powers made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 13, 2024, Regular and Executive Session Meeting. Commissioner Rowe seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the motion produced the following result: AYES, Baugh, Behnke, Guerrini (Regular), Powers and Rowe; NAYS, None; ABSTAINED: Guerrini (Executive); ABSENT, None.

APPROVAL OF PAYMENT OF BILLS

BILL LIST
February 27, 2024

Payroll #4	\$	238,288.31
Payroll Deductions Payable	\$	103,840.01
Bill List Dated: 2/17/24	\$	81,945.57

TOTAL PAYMENTS THIS PERIOD

\$ 424,073.89

Manager Mitchell read the bill list. Commissioner Guerrini made a motion to approve the payment of bills as contained on the Bill List Report. Commissioner Powers seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the motion produced the following result: AYES, Baugh, Behnke, Guerrini, Powers and Rowe; NAYS, None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT, None.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY – None

NEW BUSINESS

1. Budget and purchasing process overview.
President Behnke asked Manager Mitchell to give an overview of the budget and purchasing process.

Evesham Township Fire District No. 1
Minutes – February 27, 2024

Manager Mitchell explained how the budget timeline worked and how the process starts months prior to being brought before the board. She explained the different aspects and timeline that is required when preparing the budget. She explained the statutory regulations that govern the Fire District's budget which is established and controlled by the State.

President Behnke asked at what point is the Board involved in the Budget preparation process. Solicitor Hodges stated that the Board's responsibility is to approve or deny the budget as presented by the Business Manager and the Chief at the budget introduction. The Board then can ask questions between introduction and final adoption, but the Board does not prepare the budget.

Manager Mitchell stated that the Board adopts the resolution to introduce the budget as the legislative body setting the total budget and the amount to be raised by taxation. Manager Mitchell continued to explain how adding line items or modifications over 10% require a justification to be included in the narrative section of the budget. She also explained that items such as commissioner's stipend must first be approved by the Township Council prior to inclusion in a budget. Manager Mitchell explained the timeline and statutory requirements for the Capital Budget.

Commissioner Rowe asked about the history of the movement to a November election from a February election. Chief Bittenbender and Manager Mitchell indicated that it was done to improve voter turnout which was historically low when there was a February election.

Commissioner Rowe asked for clarification of the Capital Asset purchase process and the two mechanisms to fund small capital assets either through the Capital Budget which is excluded from the Levy CAPs and the operating budget which operates within the Levy CAP. Much discussion ensued with Commissioner Rowe, President Behnke, DC Donnelly, and Manager Mitchell to try and reconcile Commissioner Rowes queries.

Ms. Mitchell stated that when creating a new position, the position must be approved by the Board, a public hearing must be held and then it can be included in a Budget and then it can be filled. Commissioner Rowe asked if there was a list of all the titles within the district and when they were created. Manager Mitchell explained that there was not a comprehensive list of titles but that all titles should be documented throughout the years in the minutes of the Board when the position was created if that was required at the time according to the statutes.

The Board asked Manager Mitchell to research the establishment of the current approved positions within the Fire District.

2. AFG Grant

Chief Bittenbender requested authorization to apply for the AFG Grant. He stated that the grant would be used for equipment.

Commissioner Powers asked when specifications were prepared for the Rescue truck a cascade system was not included. The Chief confirmed that a cascade was not included

Evesham Township Fire District No. 1
Minutes – February 27, 2024

on the truck as the District purchased a new cascade system that would handle the proposed larger Air packs and moved the existing system to a different station. With the recent new purchase of Air packs and 2 cylinders for each position the cascade system was not needed on the truck as our supply was sufficient until a mutual aid cascade system arrives.

Commissioner Guerrini made a motion to apply for the AFG Grant for hose replacement. Commissioner Powers seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the motion produced the following result: AYES, Baugh, Behnke, Guerrini, Powers and Rowe; NAYS, None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT, None.

OLD BUSINESS

1. CFSI Dinner

Chief Bittenbender stated that he wanted to discuss the CFSI dinner with the Board and suggested that Deputy Chiefs Donnelly, Freedman, Zane and Lieutenant Brinker attend. He explained that is good to get face time in and beneficial to the department. President Behnke stated that no board members planned on attending as some had conflicting schedules but didn't see an issue with four members going.

Commissioner Powers made a motion to approve the four members to attend the CFSI Dinner and travel. Commissioner Guerrini seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the motion produced the following result: AYES, Baugh, Behnke, Guerrini, Powers and Rowe; NAYS, None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT, None.

GOOD & WELFARE

Chief Bittenbender stated that the Burlington County 200 Club contacted him, and the District would be receiving a \$1,500 training grant. He also said that he had sent email correspondence but wanted to formally invite the members of the board to attend the 200 Club dinner on March 8, 2024. President Behnke encouraged members to the board to attend if they were able to as it is a great event.

Commissioner Powers wanted to thank all our members, in light of the awards handed out tonight.

Commissioner Guerrini extended congratulations to Firefighter Borgstrom in his recent promotion to Sergeant with the NJ Army National Guard. President Behnke noted that we have several members that also have military affiliation, to which Deputy Chief Freedman confirmed, that yes, we have 4 members currently serving.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

The Board documented the follow Action Items:

1. List of Current Titles
2. Compensation of Commissioner salaries from neighboring communities

Evesham Township Fire District No. 1
Minutes – February 27, 2024

ADJOURNMENT

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

President Behnke adjourned the meeting at 8:36 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Mitchell
Business Manager