

EVESHAM TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT NO.1
BOARD OF FIRE COMISSIONERS
Regular Meeting
March 12, 2024
MINUTES

President Behnke called the regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners of Evesham Township Fire District No. 1 to order at 7:08 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, Behnke, Powers, and Rowe. Also, present: Chief Carl Bittenbender, DC Ryan Donnelly, Business Manager Maureen Mitchell, and Solicitor Hodges. ABSENT: Guerrini

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PRIOR MEETINGS

Commissioner Powers made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 27, 2024, Regular Meeting. Commissioner Baugh seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the motion produced the following result: AYES, Baugh, Behnke, Powers and Rowe; NAYS, none; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT, Guerrini.

TREASURER’S REPORT

The following report for the month of February 2024 was read for acceptance:

Treasurer's Report for the period ended:
February 29, 2024

Beginning Cash Balance	\$10,612,165.37
Cash Receipts	256,598.29
Cash Disbursements	<u>(747,588.21)</u>
Ending Cash Balance	<u><u>\$10,121,175.45</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, Baugh, Behnke, Powers and Rowe; NAYS, none; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT, Guerrini.

Evesham Township Fire District No. 1
Minutes – March 12, 2024

APPROVAL OF PAYMENT OF BILLS

BILL LIST
March 12, 2024

ELAN (P-CARD)	\$	5,117.52
M&T P-Card	\$	4,615.55
Heartland	\$	2,958.76
Payroll #5	\$	229,518.76
Payroll Deductions Payable	\$	11,653.39
NJ Pension & Benefits – SHBP	\$	69,301.08
NJ Pension & Benefits–Annual ER Bill	\$	1,349,484.00
Bill List Dated: 3/12/24	\$	66,618.65

TOTAL PAYMENTS THIS PERIOD \$ 1,739,267.71

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, Baugh, Behnke, Powers and Rowe; NAYS, none; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT, Guerrini.

CHIEF’S REPORT

Chief Bittenbender gave a verbal summary of his report that was previously provided to the Board. He reviewed the calls for service information for the month. He mentioned that the most recent BLS remount has been placed in service. He stated that the drainage project at 221 will start once the weather breaks and that the Bay doors project at 223 has started. He also mentioned that there are several Lexipol policies on the agenda for tonight for consideration as we are moving along with the adoption of all policies into Lexipol.

Commissioner Powers referenced the drainage project, he said that he hasn’t seen the plans but wondered if there was a plan for temporary handicap spots since the area to be addressed is right there. The Chief confirmed that, yes, there will be new handicap compliant spaces once the project is finished. Commissioner Powers asked if there would be in the interim and Manager Mitchell explained that they would be temporarily relocated as the lower-level door will be inaccessible for handicapped access during construction.

Commissioner Rowe asked about the SAFER grant, asking if it would go toward hiring 24-hour coverage at Station 225. The Chief said that he had heard from the Board that it is a priority to staff 225, so that is what he is looking towards. Commissioner Rowe asked what the total amount available for the grant was and Chief Bittenbender responded that it is \$360 million. Commissioner Rowe asked what we could get and the Chief informed him that there is no limit to what we can be awarded. The notice of award would be late Fall 2024 or Spring 2025 and it would be received in 2025 and would be available for 36 months from date of hire. Commissioner Rowe asked what staffing looked like for 225. Chief Bittenbender replied that he would mirror the schedule at 223. Approximately 24 firefighters and 2 Lieutenants. After the grant is awarded, the board would determine how much to accept.

SOLICITOR’S REPORT

Solicitor Hodges stated that she had nothing to report at this time.

BUSINESS MANAGER REPORT

Manager Mitchell gave a verbal summary of her report that was previously provided to the Board. Manager Mitchell advised the Board that we received notice of a \$75,000 PPE grant from DCA but we have not received the formal award yet. Commissioner Rowe asked if it could be used to free up money that was budgeted in the 2024 budget for PPE. Manager Mitchell advised it would depend on the grant terms which we do not yet have, on whether you could supplant your budget or whether there was a matching portion as there was in the 2022 PPE Grant.

Commissioner Rowe asked about the Credit Card fees we are currently paying and what they were related to. Manager Mitchell indicated that we receive credit card & ACH payments for fire prevention registrations, smoke detection inspections and some EMS fees. Commissioner Rowe asked Manager Mitchell to investigate the number of EMS fees processed and whether they are from companies that we can require checks from. She indicated she would prepare that breakdown for him.

Commissioner Rowe asked about the status of the surplus equipment at Station 225 and DC Donnelly indicated that he was working on it but prioritized the grant applications since they had upcoming deadlines. Commissioner Rowe demanded a hard date for those assets to come before the Board for disposal.

Commissioner Rowe notified the Manager that he needed the full details of the Microsoft 365 licensing that is set to renew in September before the next Board meeting. Manager Mitchell indicated that she would get that from the IT Coordinator who was working on determining what level of licensing would satisfy the new requirements of our cyber security insurance and the existing requirements of OPRA.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY – None

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 2024 – 16 Resolution Authorizing the Hiring of Per Diem EMT

Commissioner Powers made a motion to approve Resolution Number 2024 – 16. Commissioner Rowe seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Baugh, Behnke, Powers, and Rowe; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: Guerrini

NEW BUSINESS –

1. Policy review and approval:
 - a. 105 Introduction
 - b. 309 On-Duty Voting in Statewide Elections
 - c. 310 Non-Disclosure of Confidential Information
 - d. 315 Grocery Shopping On-Duty
 - e. 320 Smoking and Tobacco Use
 - f. 703 District Policy, Procedure, Guideline, and Directive Adoption

Evesham Township Fire District No. 1
Minutes – March 12, 2024

- g. 704 Open Public Meetings Act – Personnel Matters
- h. 1200 Use of District Facilities

A question was raised as to the titles in the proposed policies. President Behnke stated that he would like to change Business Manager and Deputy Business Manager titles from Manager to Administrator for consistency with the prior approved policies. Manager Mitchell indicated that since the job descriptions weren't changing and it was just a nomenclature change it would just require a motion and second to change, which Solicitor Hodges confirmed. President Behnke then made a motion to amend Business Manager title to Business Administrator and Deputy Business Manager title to Deputy Business Administrator. Commissioner Powers seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Baugh, Behnke, Powers, and Rowe; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: Guerrini

Commissioner Powers then made a motion to accept policies A through H as presented. Commissioner Baugh seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Baugh, Behnke, Powers, and Rowe; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: Guerrini

2. Application for SAFER grant

President Behnke said that he would like to see a motion for the application of the SAFER grant. Commissioner Baugh made a motion to approve the District to apply for the SAFER grant. Commissioner Rowe seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Baugh, Behnke, Powers, and Rowe; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: Guerrini

3. Committees

President Behnke stated that he had put in the Board packet a listing of his proposed committees that he would like to see established.

- a. Finance Committee: Commissioners Baugh and Rowe
- b. Fixed Assets and Equipment: Commissioners Powers and Behnke
- c. Personnel and HR Committee: Commissioners Powers and Guerrini
- d. Governance Committee: Commissioners Behnke and Rowe

Commissioner Powers made a motion to establish the four committees as presented. Commissioner Rowe seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Baugh, Behnke, Powers, and Rowe; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: Guerrini

OLD BUSINESS

- 1. EMS Billing renewal – Administrator Mitchell indicated that Commissioner Rowe and herself have not yet met to discuss that so we will hold that as old business for a future meeting as we still had time before the renewal deadline.
- 2. Job Descriptions - _President Behnke indicated that the new Personnel

Evesham Township Fire District No. 1
Minutes – March 12, 2024

Committee can take a look at these so they will remain old business.

3. Employee Engagement Study – Administrator Mitchell indicated that we have 60 days to award or reject and since this was not budgeted in the 2024 Budget. She is currently unable to certify funds to award any proposal, but we can take the next month to review the Board’s priorities and see if funds can be reallocated.

MEMBERSHIP

1. New member: Dillon Smith Vol FF & Robert Catapano Vol EMT candidates

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

GOOD & WELFARE

Commissioner Rowe stated that he had the opportunity to work alongside one of our newer Per Diem EMTs recently and the employee showed great care and he appreciated the quality of service.

Commissioner Powers brought up that former member and Commissioner Tom Conkey is on hospice and some of the members have visited him. He asked to keep the Conkey family in our thoughts and prayers. Mr. Clay Brunges commented that he had been to see Mr. Conkey and that he was doing good and was holding his own.

ACTION ITEMS

The Board documented the follow Action Items:

1. Microsoft 365 license details
2. Share the proposal received for Employee Engagement with the membership
3. Analyze the breakdown of credit card payments to see how much accounts for EMS virtual card payments, business registration fees, smoke inspections, patient payments for copays, etc.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Greg Huber addressed the Board in regard to the Employee Engagement Study covered under old business. He asked what exactly the Board was looking to get out of it. He asked how much the RFP is costing and if it is fiscally responsible.

President Behnke stated that the cost is about \$35,000 and then additionally \$3,000 for software for the study to take a pulse of the organization to estimate and execute what we do well, what we need to improve, what we could do better. The company would provide tools and recommendations to go further and reassess down the road.

Mr. Huber responded by offering a recommendation that since the District already has Microsoft 365 the District can do a form asking the same questions that the survey would ask and save the taxpayers money.

Evesham Township Fire District No. 1
Minutes – March 12, 2024

Commissioner Powers commented that he had come into his current position with this Employee Engagement Study already on the table and that he had the same questions and concerns. He said that questions are being raised now so we aren't wasting funds. It will be a big-ticket item and your concern is being addressed.

Commissioner Rowe added that there is one thing that a company can provide the organization is in designing the survey. We do not have a dedicated HR professional, which would cost the District more than \$75,000 so through this survey he is looking at it as a fractional HR person and to address areas that can be improved in the organization.

Mr. Huber mentioned the study done by Volunteer Workforce Solutions, which already solicited the members, and it was essentially thrown in the "recycling bin"

President Behnke further stated that the study that is on the table is being commissioned by the board and will be managed by the board and further that it will be used by the board to better the department.

ADJOURNMENT

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

President Behnke adjourned the meeting at 7:53 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Mitchell
Business Manager