

EVESHAM TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT NO.1  
BOARD OF FIRE COMISSIONERS  
Regular Meeting  
May 13, 2021  
MINUTES

Commissioner John Behnke called the regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners of Evesham Township Fire District No. 1 to order at 7:30 PM. President Behnke welcomed all in attendance and thanked everyone for joining us tonight. 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 15, 2020, 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.”

ROLL CALL - The following individuals were present at the roll call, Commissioners: Baugh, Behnke, Guerrini, Powers and Smith. Also present were: Chief Bittenbender, Deputy Chiefs Donnelly & Freedman, Solicitor Saginario and Business Manager Maureen Mitchell.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PRIOR MEETINGS

Commissioner Smith made a motion that the minutes of the February 25, 2021 Executive Session and April 8, 2021 Regular Meeting be approved. Commissioner Baugh seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the motion produced the following result: AYES, Baugh, Behnke, Guerrini, Powers and Smith; NAYS, none; ABSTAINED: none; ABSENT, none.

TREASURER’S REPORT

The following report for the month of April 2021 was submitted by the Treasurer for approval:

Treasurer's Report for the period ended:  
April 30, 2021

Beginning Cash Balance	\$ 6,083,601.04
Cash Receipts	2,314,351.11
Cash Disbursements	<u>(1,655,402.80)</u>
Ending Cash Balance	<u>\$ 6,742,549.35</u>

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

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BILL LIST  
May 13, 2021

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ELAN (P-CARD)	\$ 9,172.24
HEARTLAND	458.65
STATE OF NJ	243.00
STATE OF NJ-DEP	885.00
Atlantic Tactical	26,573.78
Bill List Dated: 5/13/21	1,357,638.07

TOTAL PAYMENTS THIS PERIOD

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\$ 1,394,970.74

Commissioner Smith 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 all members present.

CHIEF'S REPORT - Chief Bittenbender recapped his written report that was previously provided to the Board of Fire Commissioners. Chief updated the Board on the new swearing in procedures, status of COVID restrictions and the status of our hiring process. He also updated the Board on the upcoming Department meeting on Monday May 17<sup>th</sup>.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT – Solicitor Saginario mentioned that he had provided the Board with updates on a few personnel matters that were referred to him.

BUSINESS MANAGER REPORT - Ms. Mitchell gave a verbal summary of her report that was previously provided to the Board of Fire Commissioners. Ms. Mitchell touched on the Capital Projects and the upcoming bid acceptance for the Old Firehouse. Commissioner Powers mentioned he thought that the initial quote was high. Ms. Mitchell advised him she agreed which was why the District was going out for formal advertised bids on the project.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

President Behnke opened the Public Comment section for the agenda items only.

There were no comments from any members of the public so President Behnke closed the public portion on agenda items only.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 2021 – 26 Resolution Authorizing the Hiring of Full Time EMTs

Commissioner Powers made a motion to approve Resolution Number 2021 – 26. Commissioner Baugh seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Baugh, Behnke, Guerrini, Powers and Smith; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None.

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Resolution No. 2021 – 27 Resolution Authorizing an Agreement with Virtua Health,  
Inc. for Advanced Life Support Services

Commissioner Guerrini made a motion to approve Resolution Number 2021 – 27. Commissioner Powers seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Baugh, Behnke, Guerrini, Powers and Smith; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None.

Resolution No. 2021 – 28 Resolution Amending Contract for Professional Services –  
Engineer

Commissioner Baugh made a motion to approve Resolution Number 2021 – 28. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Baugh, Behnke, Guerrini, Powers and Smith; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Standard of Cover –Chief Bittenbender advised the Board that a draft was provided to Deputy Chiefs Collins and Zane as well as Captain Cappetta and he was working to incorporate their feedback for final presentation to the Board for adoption at an upcoming meeting.
2. Expanded In-House Duty Crew hours – Chief Bittenbender presented a PowerPoint presentation on the proposed coverage. He stressed that there are two complimentary programs that need to be done jointly between the Volunteer and the Career Firefighters. At this point we can't afford not to address the overnight in-house coverage. In order to accomplish the staffing of one engine and one BLS unit 24/7 we will need to hire four additional FT EMT's to free up career staff for redeployment. Commissioner Powers questioned why there can't be a standalone volunteer model. Chief Bittenbender indicated that our volunteer numbers are not enough to provide consistent standalone coverage. Chief Bittenbender indicated that he was working to bring on those volunteers who applied under the Per Diem model that was paused to bring them into this model. Commissioner Powers requested that this proposal be looked into further before the Board takes action. President Behnke publicly thanked Lieutenant Young and Captain Cappetta for all their time they put into this program. President Behnke indicated that he believed this proposal will enhance service delivery to the community. Chief Bittenbender concurred and indicated that this will increase our inhouse coverage on the fire side to help us meet the Board's objective of a response time goal of 9 minutes 90% of the time. President Behnke asked the Business Manager if this proposed program was financially sustainable with the current budget. Business Manager Mitchell indicated that it was due to the savings from programs we have not yet implemented, and she projected the effect through 2022 and 2023 and with some belt tightening it was sustainable. President Behnke also mentioned that these complimentary programs will allow the District to move towards a one department training model with everyone working alongside each other on unison
  - a. President Behnke made a motion to approve the hiring of four (4) FT

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EMT's to effectuate the Chief's proposed deployment. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Baugh, Behnke, Guerrini, Powers and Smith; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None.

- b. President Behnke made a motion to approve the redeployment of the career staff to provide in house nighttime coverage. Guerrini seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Baugh, Behnke, Guerrini, and Smith; NAYS: Powers; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None.

#### NEW BUSINESS

1. Permission to travel for Chief Bittenbender and Deputy Chief Freedman to Thomasville, NC for the final inspection of the Technical Rescue Truck, federally funded through Burlington County but stationed at EFD. Commissioner Powers questioned why the Districts would be sending 2 Chiefs out of the District to review a County Asset. Chief Bittenbender indicated that both Chiefs have been intimately involved in the process from the start. Commissioner Powers made a motion to send one Chief and one career member involved in the build of the truck. Guerrini seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Baugh, Behnke, Guerrini, Powers and Smith; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None.
2. Adoption of SOP 101.04 Participation Requirements and Volunteer Stipend Program - Commissioner Powers made a motion to approve the SOP as amended. Guerrini seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Baugh, Behnke, Guerrini, Powers and Smith; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None.
3. Modification of EMT pay scale – Chief Bittenbender reviewed his proposed pay model he was recommending after consultation with the surrounding communities. Some discussion ensued. Commissioner Powers made a motion to approve the proposed EMT pay scale of \$16-25/hr. Smith seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Baugh, Behnke, Powers and Smith; NAYS: Guerrini; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None

#### MEMBERSHIP – Termination – Erik Priggemeier and Jessica Aboloff.

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

#### GOOD & WELFARE –

Commissioner Smith wanted to extend a thank you to FF/EMT Denelsbeck on behalf of a friend whose mother he provided aid to. Commissioner Smith also indicated that at the Farmers Market there is the ability to do some recruitment, he would forward the information to the Chief.

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Chief Bittenbender reminded the public and the District Staff that there is a mechanism to report complaints through the chain of command or anonymously however sufficient details related to the incident's timing, affected parties, etc needs to be provided so a proper investigation into the complaint can be performed.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

President Behnke opened the Public comment portion of the meeting by asking the public to please raise their hand, stand up at their seat, state your name and address for the record and address the Board. Comments are limited to five minutes per speaker.

1. Bob Costello, 321 Cloverdale Avenue, Villas asked if the Board was going to do anything to recognize Paul Pultrone, a long-time volunteer who resigned from the organization. Bob asked the Board when the program approved tonight will be implemented. Chief Bittenbender indicated that the programs will be implemented within the next few months. Bob asked why it wasn't done sooner and what happened to the Per Diem program. Solicitor Saginario explained the legal challenges that the Union brought to the District, so the Board opted to suspend implementation.
2. Robert McDonough, 12 Foxton Drive, Atco commended the Board and the staff on actions taken tonight and he looks forward to coming to the table to have a cohesive District.
3. Todd Young, 222 Woodbine Drive, Marlton wanted to thank Deputy Chief Freedman for his work in setting up the volunteer committee to help repair the old firehouse. He also indicated that looking at the PowerPoint presentation tonight that is looking at a proposed cost of approximately \$700,000 and he doesn't believe the numbers. Young feels that this a bad management of the District and the Board should be asking more questions.

Seeing no public comments President Behnke closed the public comment section.

President Behnke addressed the audience to say that certain Board members spent many hours meeting with the Chief and the Business Manager to review our comments and concerns. Through those countless hours we reviewed our questions and were provided with ample information to make an informed decision in the best interest of the taxpayers we serve.

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

President Behnke adjourned the meeting at 9:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen P. Mitchell  
Business Manager