

EVESHAM TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT NO.1  
BOARD OF FIRE COMISSIONERS

Regular Meeting

August 13, 2024

MINUTES

Vice President Rowe 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. Vice President Rowe 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 Administer 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, Guerrini, Powers, and Rowe. Also, present: Chief Carl Bittenbender, DC Scott Freedman, Business Administrator Maureen Mitchell, and Solicitor Hodges. ABSENT: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PRIOR MEETINGS

Commissioner Powers made a motion to approve the minutes from the July 16, 2024, Regular Meeting and Executive Session. Commissioner Baugh seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the motion produced the following result: AYES, Baugh, Powers and Rowe; NAYS, None; ABSTAINED: Guerrini; ABSENT: None.

TREASURER'S REPORT

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

Treasurer's Report for the period ended:

July 31, 2024

Beginning Cash Balance	\$9,711,824.70
Cash Receipts	3,347,632.66
Cash Disbursements	<u>(1,024,335.80)</u>
Ending Cash Balance	<u>\$12,035,121.56</u>

Commissioner Guerrini 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, Guerrini, Powers and Rowe; NAYS, None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None.

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APPROVAL OF PAYMENT OF BILLS

BILL LIST  
August 13, 2024

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M&T P-Card	\$	6,628.13
Heartland	\$	563.07
Payroll #14, #15 & #16	\$	471,214.11
Payroll Deductions Payable	\$	32,929.10
NJ Pension & Benefits – SHBP	\$	68,517.33
NJ Pension & Benefits – Pension	\$	47,637.98
Bill List Dated: 8/13/24	\$	111,723.22
PSE&G	\$	8,852.73

TOTAL PAYMENTS THIS PERIOD

\$ 748,065.67

Commissioner Powers asked the Business Administrator if the Board could get a list of the recurring monthly bills.

Administrator Mitchell said she would put that together for the Board before the next meeting.

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

#### CHIEF'S REPORT

The Chief stated that July was a busy month. He mentioned that there was a notable fire in town in the early morning of July 14<sup>th</sup>, where there was a commercial structure fire and the engine from Main Street Station arrived swiftly. The quickness of the arrival and the help from the Kings Grant Station kept the fire contained to the structure of origin.

He mentioned the upcoming events this Fall for Fire Prevention where we meet up with every school with grades K-5 and review fire safety.

Harvest Fest is next month, and it is our largest public event for Evesham Fire for showcasing our station, personnel and apparatus.

On a personnel level, one of the Full Time EMTs has resigned as of September 6<sup>th</sup>. The command staff is looking to hire a full time FF/EMT from the candidate list to replace and to expedite the upcoming FF/EMT retirements, since we do not currently have an EMT candidate list after the recent testing.

Commissioner Rowe asked about Saturday and Sunday daytime coverage at Station 221. The Chief responded that the schedule was open for August, and they have had some participation but being summertime, it's always a little slow with vacations and such. The Chief is hopeful that September response is better. Chief Bittenbender mentioned that DC Freedman participated this past weekend on a duty crew to provide coverage.

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Commissioner Rowe then asked about the BLS downtime and requested a breakdown to be sent at a later date to the Board. The Chief agreed that he would do that and touched on some of the reasons why, mechanical, training, etc. Commissioner Rowe asked for an example of what kind of training we take an ambulance out of service for. The Chief explained that the semi-annual live fire training is the biggest one and if we have a unique training opportunity and the ability to send people to.

Commissioner Guerrini asked about the generator and asked the Chief for a little more information on that. The Chief responded that we are back up and running. There was a wiring fault between the generator and the building, however, it has been repaired and we are back up and running.

Commissioner Rowe asked if it was the original generator which was confirmed that it was.

Administrator Mitchell added that when the generator did go down, we had secured an emergency backup generator in its place, until the repairs could be made.

#### BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Administrator Mitchell gave a verbal summary of her report that was previously provided to the Board. There is a resolution to hire a volunteer as a per diem member. There is also a request to terminate a volunteer for lack of participation. Rescinding the Korn Ferry Study and a resolution for a Site Access agreement to perform testing on the property adjacent to Station 221 are also on the agenda tonight.

Solicitor Hodges stated that this Access Agreement is required by the DEP regulations for us to go on her property and test. We are required by the regulations to determine if there are contaminants on our property which may have migrated to the adjacent property as we would be liable for any remediation. Solicitor Hodges stated that if contaminants were found we would be required to pay to remediate it.

Commissioner Guerrini asked if we were responsible because it stems from our property. Solicitor Hodges said yes.

Vice President Rowe asked about the upcoming 2025 Budget process and if the Administrator received all her requests back and what the process was. The Administrator stated that she has consolidated the Capital request for now, which is what we will discuss this evening then an additional meeting with the command staff would be held to discuss the remaining operating requests.

Vice President Rowe asked if Administrator Mitchell could let Commissioners Rowe and Baugh know when the Budget prep meeting will be.

Administrator Mitchell agreed to notify them.

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**SOLICITOR'S REPORT**

Solicitor Hodges stated that the arbitration decision has been received and is binding. It is not eligible for appeal, so now we can move forward. Solicitor Hodges mentioned that she was unable to come to an agreement with Korn Ferry on their requested language so there is a resolution on the agenda to cancel the employee engagement study.

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

**RESOLUTIONS**

Resolution No. 2024 – 36    Resolution for Authorizing the Execution of Site Access Agreement

Commissioner Powers made a motion to approve Resolution Number 2024 – 36. Commissioner Guerrini seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Baugh, Guerrini, Powers and Rowe; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None.

Resolution No. 2024 – 37    Resolution Authorizing the Hiring of Per Diem EMT

Commissioner Guerrini made a motion to approve Resolution Number 2024 – 37. Commissioner Powers seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Baugh, Guerrini, Powers, and Rowe; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None.

Resolution No. 2024 – 38    Resolution to Rescind Employee Engagement Study with Korn Ferry

Commissioner Powers asked if the money from the contract could be earmarked for next year's budget.

Administrator Mithcell indicated that if the money isn't spent in 2024 then it can be reappropriated from Surplus as a Revenue with an Appropriation for the study with no impact on the budget.

Vice President Rowe indicated that he wanted to make sure on the record that the monies would be dedicated to the 2025 Budget.

Commissioner Guerrini made a motion to approve Resolution Number 2024 – 38. Commissioner Powers seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Baugh, Guerrini, Powers, and Rowe; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. 2025 Capital Budget – Discussion on the proposed Capital Projects to be included in the 2025 Fire District Budget

Administrator Mitchell explained the items listed on the proposed 2025 Capital Projects list which includes: an engine replacement, PPE, fire hose, AEDs, gas detectors, suction

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units, and replacing overhead doors at 221 and a shed at 223. She advised that the figures are estimates and may be on the higher side but for advertising purposes, we need to show the maximum we would authorize to be included in the 2025 Budget. The total proposed Capital Budget would be advertised at one million seven hundred fifty thousand (\$1,750,000).

Administrator Mitchell mentioned that there were other smaller projects that were requested through the Budget process like replacement gym equipment, which would be handled in the Other Assets non bondable section of the budget under new equipment as in the past.

Commissioner Rowe asked about the engine replacement plan and whether it was one per year. Chief Bittenbender reminded the Board that when we looked at replacing the aerial in early 2024, that it was discussed that we would be replacing one engine per year starting in 2025 and continuing for the next three (3) years.

Commissioner Rowe asked about bunks at 223 and the discussion about the sleeping quarters. Chief Bittenbender stated that the facilities committee will look at all of our facilities and then determine the direction that is needed. Once that is determined, we would investigate a contract with an architect to start new concepts but would be more likely to be in the 2025 operating rather than Capital. Commissioner Powers indicated that the first facilities meeting to discuss ideas had some great conversations.

The question was raised about adding Audio/Visual for the Board meetings and what it would cost. Administrator Mitchell said that it would be approximately \$130,000 but could be placed on the advertisement and removed prior to adoption if so requested. Commissioner Rowe stated that he didn't want to spend that kind of money. Commissioner Powers stated that he did. Commissioner Guerrini agreed with Rowe that there are other higher priorities. There was much discussion, and it was determined that Vice President Rowe would agree with Commissioners Powers and Baugh to add the \$130,000 to the Capital Budget plan for advertising and more information would be gathered for further discussion prior to Budget adoption in October.

The Board asked Administrator Mitchell to check with the Township to see about the possibility of live streaming our meetings through a Shared Service since the Township has access to a Public Access TV Station through the cable providers.

2. Approval of participation in the upcoming Hearts of Heroes TV show opportunity

DC Freedman stated that the District was contacted by the ABC show Hearts of Heroes to highlight the events that occurred on Sagemore Drive. The show focuses on heroic acts. DC Freedman feels that it would be beneficial as it will publicly promote the District through the Fire and EMS side of things. The producers reached out to us and the police department about filming, as the police officer's body camera captured some excellent video of the event. There are a few access and liability release agreements that would need to be signed to authorize ABC to film on our property.

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Commissioner Powers made a motion to approve participation in the upcoming Hearts of Heroes TV show. Commissioner Rowe seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Baugh, Guerrini, Powers, and Rowe; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None.

3. Hiring of new FF/EMT

The Chief requested that District move forward with hiring a Firefighter/EMT to replace the FT EMT who has resigned.

Commissioner Powers made a motion to authorize the hiring process to commence for a new Firefighter/EMT to replace the EMT resignation. Commissioner Guerrini seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Baugh, Guerrini, Powers, and Rowe; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None.

OLD BUSINESS: None

MEMBERSHIP

1. Terminate Membership: Epifanio Santa-Teresa

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

GOOD & WELFARE

Commissioner Guerrini read a prepared statement regarding the passing of his mother. He shared that the outpouring of love and support during that difficult time has been overwhelmingly remarkable. He stated that this was his first time being on the receiving side of the support and he was humbled. He thanked the entire Evesham Fire District family for all their support.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bruce Albright came to address the board and asked about the bunks and upgrades discussed for 225. He asked if that meant that they were going to staff Station 225. Commissioner Powers stated that is the ultimate goal for Station 225. Mr. Albright then reviewed calls from April to July of this year and response times. He stated that the call times are unacceptable. He also informed the board of the influx of 5,000-8,000 residents that will be moving into the Black Run Preserve area once developed and suggested that station 225 be opened.

ADJOURNMENT TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution No. 2024 – 39      Executive Session – Litigation, Contract Negotiations &  
Attorney Client Privilege

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Vice President Rowe indicated that the Board anticipates going into executive session for approximately 60 minutes. The Board will not take any action when we reconvene in public session.

Commissioner Guerrini made a motion to approve Resolution Number 2024 – 39. Commissioner Powers seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the foregoing motion produced the following result: AYES: Baugh, Guerrini, Powers, and Rowe; NAYS: None; ABSTAINED: None; ABSENT: None.

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

RETURN TO PUBLIC – Vice President Rowe reconvened the public portion of the meeting at 9:02 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 of the members present.

Vice President Rowe adjourned the meeting at 9:03 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Maureen Mitchell  
Business Administrator