

**BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS**  
**Montgomery Township Fire District No. 2**  
**PO Box 264**  
**Blawenburg, New Jersey 08504**

MINUTES OF APRIL 5, 2012

**CALL TO ORDER**

The scheduled meeting of the Board was called to order by Commissioner Laughlin at 7:44 pm, following proof of publication under the Open Public Meetings Law (Annual Meeting Notice published in the official newspaper of the district, posted at the Montgomery Township Municipal Building and the Board offices).

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Commissioners L. Laughlin, C. Lewis, C. Kabis, D. Cummings and D. Davis. Also present: Chief Ballinger, Fire Company President Keller, Attorney Griswold and T. Stys.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Board reviewed and discussed the minutes of the March 1, 2012 meeting.

*A motion was made to accept the minutes of the March 1, 2012 meeting as presented.*

*Motion made by Kabis.*

*2<sup>nd</sup> by Davis.*

*Motion passed without objection.*

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

**BILLS**

A copy of the Treasurer's Report (attached) was made available to each commissioner with a list and description of the bills to be paid. The Chief Financial Officer certified that there were sufficient unencumbered funds to pay the bills and designated the accounts to which each would be charged. Three additional bills were presented for payment this evening: \$1485.00 to Signal Control for Opticom (Rts. 206 & 518) repair; \$191.29 to M&W Communications for repair of 46-108 radio headset; and \$105.00 to M&W Communications for a service call for headset system, all chargeable to the 2012 General Operations appropriation. In addition, a replacement check will be issued to M&W Communications for a lost Dec.15, 2011 check in the amount of \$210.00.

*A motion was passed to accept the Treasurer's Report .and to approve payment of the bills.*

*Motion made by Kabis.*

*2<sup>nd</sup> by Lewis.*

*Motion passed without objection.*

***RESOLUTION 2012-21 Payment of Bills.*** *Approval to pay the bills as presented, in the total amount of \$56,828.62 (\$12.07 from 2010 encumbered funds, \$3041.36 from 2011 encumbered funds and \$53,775.19 from the 2012 budget), which include the payments to Signal Control of \$1485.00 and to M&W Communications of \$191.29 and \$105.00, all 3 chargeable to the 2012 General Operations appropriation..*

*Resolution Ayes: Laughlin, Lewis, Kabis, Cummings, Davis. Nays: None Absent: None.*

The 2011 FEMA emergency reimbursement of \$11,154.69 was received and deposited in the TD Bank checking account. Chairman Laughlin will contact the state to determine whether the 25% it withholds from FEMA reimbursements will be returned to the fire district.

**CHIEF'S REPORT**

The fire company responded to 36 calls during March, 2012, including three structure fires at the Princeton Hills Apartments. There was one minor injury to a firefighter at one of these fires, two of which have been attributed to electrical faults in bathroom fan vents. The cause of the third fire is under investigation. These fires could have been catastrophic, as the buildings are heavily occupied. Prior to the fires Chief Ballinger had contacted the state to request an inspection of the premises. Since the fires a team of state

inspectors has thoroughly inspected the apartment buildings and cited numerous violations. This is Year 4 of the 5-year inspection cycle for the complex pursuant to the Hotel & Multiple Dwelling Law.

- American Test Centers conducted ladder testing. All ground ladders passed. Minor issues found on 46-126 were addressed and the aerial ladder passed inspection. The cost was \$41 per ladder. Eight ladders were tested for Rocky Hill Hook and Ladder and they will reimburse the board for the cost of testing their ladders.

- Hose testing will be done in May.

- Pump testing will be done in June by a new company at the same cost as last year but will also include testing the CAFS system.

FCC mandated narrow-banding of radio frequencies is scheduled to go into effect in January 2013. There are three VHF mobile radios that will need to be replaced at a cost of about \$3000 each and six VHF portables that can't be narrow-banded. It appears that all other radio equipment can be retrofitted to comply, hopefully with the labor being done in-house. A second aspect of narrow-banding which will affect the speed of the radios is scheduled to go into effect in 2023. This will require upgrades to most equipment – 24 portables and 6 mobiles at a cost of about \$300 each (at this time). The timing of the upgrades will be in conjunction with Somerset County. The board will need to address the source of funding for these mandates.

The Opticom at Routes 206 and 518 has been repaired. The chief's negotiation skills resulted in a full reimbursement by the insurance company which had wanted to depreciate the equipment and reduce the award. The board should receive a check for \$5868.40, covering the repair costs in full, along with a letter for signature releasing the insurance company from any further liability with regard to the repairs.

*A Motion was made to accept payment from the insurance company in the amount of \$5868.40 as full reimbursement for damages to the Opticom at Routes 206 and 518; to deposit the check into the TD Bank checking account; to authorize the chairman to execute the Release once it is approved by Attorney Griswold; and thanking Chief Ballinger for his diligence in bringing the matter to a favorable conclusion..*

*Motion made by Laughlin.*

*2<sup>nd</sup> by Kabis.*

*Motion passed without objection.*

## **OLD BUSINESS**

The training room is in use. To date all members using the room have been through an equipment training session. As others express interest in using the equipment, with Board permission future training sessions will be conducted.

Mr. Keller is still working on securing comparable telephone system quotes. He hopes to have discrepancies resolved in time to present firm options to the board at its next meeting. Chairman Laughlin suggested that Grasshopper.com might be worthy of a look as an alternative.

Two people will definitely attend the FDIC Convention – one full-time and another part-time, with perhaps a second person also attending part-time. There were a number of work conflicts that prevented members who intended to go from doing so. A suggestion was made that the IAFC in Denver in July is tailored to officer training and could provide beneficial training for some of those who cannot attend FDIC. Mr. Keller will report back to the board on this.

The truck committee is scheduling visits to further investigate truck options.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

1. A medium expansion foam nozzle for the brush truck is needed. Quotes were secured from National Firefighter Corp. \$148.90; Supply Cache \$150.00; and Heiman Fire Equipment \$149.90.
2. The I Am Responding annual contract is up for renewal. It is an extremely useful tool for outbound communications as well as response identification. The cost is \$800.00.
3. The 3 fire police radios need cases and straps to protect them. Quotes were secured from West Coast 911 \$192.97; Motorola \$199.20; and The Fire Store \$240.00.

4. The Fire Program software annual renewal will cost \$895.00. This is for the basic computer-based software used to input NFIRS reports. There is now a more flexible web-based option available that allows log on from anywhere there is an internet site and provides off-site data center back-up. There is a Risk Manager Module that will allow the township's pre-fire planning information to be loaded into the system, to be updated as necessary and to be accessed from anywhere, even at a fire scene. Access can be provided to mutual aid companies if necessary. It can accommodate diagrams of buildings which the township's system can't. Upgrading from the basic software to these options for one year, with a special pre-pay discount, will cost \$1665.84. Thereafter, annual renewals will be \$120 per month. If the choice is made not to renew all the information the company has stored for the subscriber will be returned.

5. The fire company responded to an extrication call with Princeton Rescue. They had fabricated lexan plastic protective screens to protect the victims from extrication equipment injury that worked very well. The device was created and made by a company in Whitehouse Station. The cost is \$593.00 for 2 teardrop, 2 square and 2 rectangular shaped screens

*A Motion passed to move forward with the foregoing expenditures (no. 1-5 above)*

*Motion made by Laughlin.*

*2<sup>nd</sup> by Cummings.*

*Motion passed without objection.*

**Resolution 2012-22 Authorizing expenditures.**

*A Resolution passed authorizing the following expenditures:*

- 1. Purchase one (1) expansion foam nozzle pursuant to lowest quote from National Firefighter Corp. at a cost of \$148.90, chargeable to the 2012 Supplies appropriation.*
- 2. Renew the sole supplier I Am Responding contract for one year at a cost of \$800.00, chargeable to the 2012 General Operating appropriation, and add to the bills approved for payment tonight.*
- 3. Purchase three (3) cases and straps for portable radios pursuant to lowest quote from West Coast 911 at a cost not to exceed \$192.97, chargeable to the 2012 Supplies appropriation.*
- 4. Renew the sole supplier Fire Program software and upgrade it to include the web-based option and the Risk Manager Module at a cost of \$1665.84, chargeable to the 2012 General Operating appropriation, and add to the bills approved for payment tonight.*
- 5. Purchase one (1) set of Lexan plastic extrication protective devices from sole supplier Palumbo Associates, Inc., at a cost of \$593.00, chargeable to the 2012 Supplies appropriation.*

*Resolution Ayes: Laughlin, Lewis, Kabis, Cummings, Davis. Nays: None. Absent: None.*

The chief presented the final draft of a food policy prepared in accordance with feedback from board members for approval.

*A Motion was made to adopt the food guidelines as presented as a formal board policy.*

*Motion made by Laughlin.*

*2<sup>nd</sup> by Davis.*

*Motion passed without objection.*

**RESOLUTION 2012-23 Disaster Food Policy.**

*A Resolution passed adopting the following guidelines as board policy:*

*Policy for Feeding Firefighters Involved in Disasters*

*The Fire Chief shall provide appropriate food and beverage to firefighters as necessary during preparation for a disaster, operations during a disaster or post-disaster clean up. The following criteria shall be used in the chief's consideration:*

- Any time firefighters are asked to participate in preparation or clean up that may last in excess of 3 hours.*
- Any in-station standby lasting more than 3 hours.*
- Any call or series of calls, where in the chief's best judgment, the time of participation by the firefighters will exceed 3 hours.*
- Or, a combination of the above events.*

*Appropriate food and beverage shall be in the best judgment of the chief based on weather conditions, time of day, ongoing operations, etc. At no time shall it include alcoholic beverages.*

*In preparation for an imminent disaster, the chief has the authority to stockpile food and beverage based on National Weather Service or recognized government agency's predictions of the size, scale and length of the event.*

*A disaster is defined as a natural or man-made event, or series of events, that result in the commitment of Montgomery Township Volunteer Fire Co. #2 firefighting and rescue resources.*

*Resolution Ayes: Laughlin, Lewis, Kabis, Cummings, Davis. Nays: None. Absent: None.*

A lengthy discussion took place over alternatives available to protect the safety of residents at Princeton Hills and other rental properties in the township. The issue has been addressed at Emergency Services Meetings and the Fire Prevention Bureau and Building and Health Departments of the township are researching viable methods of securing some sort of safety inspections in addition to the five-year cycle designated by current state law. The chief requested that any proposal promulgated by the board be consistent in message with that of township officials already working toward a solution. Chairman Laughlin is in favor of promoting a township ordinance requiring a Certificate of Occupancy (or Continuing Certificate if appropriate) be issued on a change of residency in rental units. He stated that Princeton Borough and East Windsor Township have similar ordinances. Mr. Keller stated that Princeton Township does regularly scheduled inspections of rental units every two years. Chairman Laughlin recalled similar discussions by township officials in the past but noted that nothing has come of them and he feels this is an immediate life safety issue that needs appropriate attention. He proposed a letter from the Board of Fire Commissioners urging immediate attention and formal action by the township and distributed a draft copy for board consideration.

*A Motion was made to approve the letter from the board to the Emergency Services Committee, Fire Prevention Bureau and Montgomery Township Committee recommending the adoption of an ordinance requiring a Certificate of Occupancy be secured upon a change of occupancy or other transfer of rental units in the township, provided however, that the letter will first be submitted to the fire official and the township administrator for their review and approval before being delivered to the addressees to ensure the letter is not in conflict or competition with any actions already underway. If a significant issue arises from the initial review by the fire official and the township administrator the letter will not be sent and will be presented to the board, the fire company and the chief again for comment and/or revision. Chairman Laughlin will see this process through.*

*Motion made by Laughlin. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Cummings. Motion passed without objection.*

There has been no word yet on when the OSHA inspection will take place.

The headlamps on 46-108 were replaced last year and are far superior to those on the other trucks. The chief recommends replacing the lights on 46-126 and 156 with similar ones. The vendor will be Brite Headlights. Two (2) sets of headlights and two (2) installation kits will cost \$2457.80.

*A Motion was made to replace the headlights on 46-126 and 156 to bring them to the same caliber as those on 46-108.*

*Motion made by Laughlin. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Kabis. Motion passed without objection.*

**RESOLUTION 2012-24 – Authorizing purchase of headlights.**

*A Resolution passed authorizing the purchase of two (2) sets of headlights and (2) installation kits from Brite Headlights, pending receipt of the company's NJ Business Registration, at a cost of \$2457.80, chargeable to the 2012 General Operating appropriation.*

*Resolution Ayes: Laughlin, Lewis, Kabis, Cummings, Davis. Nays: None. Absent: None.*

The board will be required by law to establish an internet website of its own, or a webpage on another government entity's website, to post information related to its mission, finances, meeting and employees, effective February 1, 2013. A Local Finance Notice to be issued in the future will detail what information must be posted.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on May 3, 2012.

*Motion made by Lewis. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Kabis. Motion passed without objection.*