

**BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
Montgomery Township Fire District 2
PO Box 264
Blawenburg, New Jersey 08504**

MINUTES OF MARCH 7, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Board was called to order by Chairman Mozumdar at 7:30 p.m. following proof of publication under the Open Public Meetings Law. Annual meeting notice published in the Courier News official newspaper of the district and provided to two other newspapers, filed with the municipal clerk, posted at the Montgomery Township Municipal Building, board offices and fire district web site, and provided to any person requesting same prior to the meeting.

Roll Call

Present: Commissioners Gerry Hogan, Rich Hopkins, Stephen Morrison, Andy Mozumdar and Michael Ruppert.

Also present: Chief Adam Verducci, Deputy Chief Kyle Rendell, Engineer Justin Kabis and Attorney Eric Perkins. Absent: QPA Bill Newberry.

Certification of 2024 Budget Referendum and Election

Chairman Mozumdar reported that 227 votes were cast in the February 17th election and budget referendum. There were 199 votes approving the budget and 28 votes against the budget. Richard Hopkins received 219 votes for a one-year term expiring in February of 2025; Commissioner Ruppert received 219 votes and Commissioner Mozumdar received 211 votes. Both were re-elected to a full three-year terms expiring in February 2027. There were 14 votes cast for various write-in candidates.

Commissioner Ruppert moved to certify the election results, second by Commissioner Hopkins. The Board unanimously voted to certify the election and referendum results and to forward the results to the State Department of Community Affairs and Montgomery Township Tax Collector.

Attorney Perkins administered the oath of office to Commissioners Hopkins, Ruppert and Mozumdar.

The following slate of Board Officers was presented and unanimously approved:

Andy Mozumdar, Chair

Michael Ruppert, Vice Chair
Steve Morrison, Treasurer
Gerrard Hogan, Clerk

Chair Mozumdar noted that he wanted to appoint a second individual as back-up for each responsibility. He made the following appointments:

Apparatus Officer: Commissioner Ruppert;
Budget Coordinator: Commissioner Morrison; Commissioner Hopkins
Chief Finance Officer: Commissioner Morrison; Commissioner Hopkins
EEOC Officer: Commissioner Hogan; Commissioner Ruppert
Emergency Services Committee: Commissioner Ruppert; Commissioner Hogan
Fire Company Liaison: Commissioner Ruppert; Commissioner Hopkins
Fire Prevention Committee Rep. : Commissioner Ruppert; Commissioner Hogan
Grants Coordinator: Commissioner Hogan; Commissioner Mozumdar
Insurance Coordinator: Commissioner Morrison; Commissioner Hopkins
ISO Coordinator: Commissioner Morrison;
LOSAP Administrator: Commissioner Hogan; Commissioner Morrison
Public Information Officer: Commissioner Mozumdar; Commissioner Morrison
Long Range Capital Committee: Commissioners Hogan; Commissioner Ruppert
Public Records Officer: Commissioner Hogan; Commissioner Ruppert

Chairman Mozumdar noted that he wanted to appoint a person to back-up Gene Keller Jr. who maintains the LOSAP records. It was suggested that Deputy Chief Rendall assume this responsibility. He may pass it on to Dave Van Doren.

Approval of Minutes

On the motion of Commissioner Hopkins, seconded by Chairman Mozumdar, the minutes of the meeting of February 8th, 2024 were unanimously approved.

Public Comment - None

Meetings

Emergency Services – No meeting held.

Fire Prevention – No meeting held.

Rescue Task Force- A drill is scheduled in March.

LEPC – No meeting held.

Resolution 2024-10 Appointment of Fire District Purchasing Agent

William Newberry, QPA, LLC of Wall Township, New Jersey, is appointed as Purchasing officer for a term beginning March 7th, 2024 and ending on March 13th 2025 at an annual contract fee of \$13,184.00, plus \$150.00 per meeting should extra meetings be required, plus expenses. This contract is awarded as a professional service under the provisions of N.J.S.A. 40A:11-5(1)(a) and is on file and available for public inspection at the fire district offices.

Resolution 2024-11 Appointment of Fire District Auditors

Solitario & Tierney, CPA's of Spotswood, New Jersey are retained as BOFC Auditors for the fiscal and LOSAP years ended December 31, 2023, and for financial review services, at a cost not to exceed \$13,500.00. This contract is awarded as a professional service under the provisions of N.J.S.A. 40A:11-5(1)(a) and is on file and available for public inspection at the fire district offices.

Resolution 2024-12 Appointment of Fire District Attorney

Eric M. Perkins, Esq. of Skillman, New Jersey is hereby appointed as BOFC attorney for a term beginning March 7, 2024 and ending on March 13th, 2025 at an annual contract fee of \$18,952.00 plus expenses, and to prepare Board minutes at a contract fee not to exceed \$3,100.00. This contract is awarded as a professional service under the provisions of N.J.S.A. 40A:11-5(1)(a) and is on file and available for public inspection at the fire district offices.

Resolution 2024-12 (A)

Whereas, The Board of Fire Commissioners of Montgomery Township Fire District No. 2 requires an attorney to serve as legal counsel and to provide advice to the Board for 2024; and

Whereas, the Board purchasing agent has determined that the value of services provided by said attorney will exceed \$17,500; and

Whereas, Eric M. Perkins, Esq., has not made any reportable contributions to any political committee or candidate in the Township of Montgomery, nor to any member of the Board of Fire Commissioners in the year prior to this contract, and that this contract will prohibit Eric M. Perkins, Esq., his agent and/or employees from making any reportable contributions during the term of this contract;

Now therefore be it Resolved, that the Board of Fire Commissioners of Montgomery Township Fire District No. 2 authorizes the Board Chairman to enter into a contract with Eric M. Perkins, Esq., as described hereinabove, and

Be It Further Resolved, that the Business Disclosure Entity Certification and the Determination of Value be place on File with this resolution, and

Be It Further Resolved, that this resolution and the contract itself be available for public inspection at the offices of the Board of Fire Commissioners, and

Be it Further Resolved that notice of this action shall be printed once in the Boards official newspaper the Courier News.

RESOLUTION 2024 -13 Appointment of Fire District Insurance Broker -

The fire district requires the services of knowledgeable insurance professionals to obtain insurance coverages necessary to support fire district operations. Nottingham Agency of Hamilton Square, New Jersey, a licensed broker, has demonstrated a professional relationship with specialized carriers necessary to provide the coverages required. Accordingly, Nottingham Agency is appointed broker of record for a term beginning March 7, 2024 and ending March 13, 2025, to provide insurance services to the fire district relative to all insurance coverages required in the course of fire district business. Compensation under this contract will be based on commission for services. This contract is awarded as an Extraordinary Unspecified Service pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:11-5(1)(a), 40A:11-5(1)(m) and the New Jersey Pay to Play regulations and is on file and available for public inspection at the fire district offices.

Chairman Mozumdar moved passage of Resolutions 10, 10(A), 11, 12 and 13. Commissioner Ruppert seconded the motion, and the resolutions were unanimously approved

Chiefs Report

Chief Verducci reported that there were 26 calls in the month of February. The most significant call was a solar panel fire at the Kenvue facility. The calls require 131.95 man-hours. An additional 62 man-hours were consumed in training activities

ENGINEER'S REPORT

The Engineers report which was emailed to all members contains a more detailed explanation of repair and PM activities.

U46- Engineer Kabis requested approval to purchase new Goodyear tires for the apparatus. Harlingen Garage provided a price of \$1,542.70 for the tires including mounting and alignment. It was also noted that the HVAC blower was not working. Parts are on order to repair.

R46- Waiting Four Lanes re-location of the rear differential vent. Tripod light mount parts received awaiting installation.

E-107 - Light tower stow sensor. Waiting on report from Four Lanes.

The Engineer's report contains additional detail and the PM schedule for all apparatus.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Bills

A copy of the Treasurer's Report was made available to each commissioner with a list and description of the bills to be paid. Additional detail is included in the Treasurer's report. The report was accepted as presented.

Administration: Office Expense: \$3,876.00 (FY 24); Professional Services: \$5,375.00(FY24).

Total Cost of Administration: \$9,251.00 (FY24).

Cost of Operations:

Apparatus Housing: \$16,000.00 (FY24); General Operations Medical: \$250.00 (FY24); General Operations-Other: \$2,551.85; Snow Removal: \$2,820.00 (FY24) \$878.24; Operating Insurance: \$15,848.06 (FY24); Repairs and Maintenance: \$5,250.00(FY23); \$312.40 (FY24); Utilities: \$764.15 (FY24); Supplies: \$464.25; Training and Fire Prevention:\$1,500.00(FY24).

Total Cost of Operations: \$5,250.00 (FY23); \$40,510.71 (FY24)

Total Cost of Administration and Operations : \$55,011.71

[\$5,250.00(FY23) and \$49,761.71 (FY24)].

Resolution 2024-14 Payment of Bills

*The Chief Financial Officer having certified there are sufficient unencumbered funds in the 2023 and 2024 budgets to pay the bills as presented and having designated the accounts to which each should be charged, the Board authorizes the Chief Financial Officer to pay the Administration and Operations bills in the total amount of **\$55,011.71.***

On Motion of Commissioner Hopkins, 2nd by Commissioner Morrison the BOFC unanimously approved payment of the bills.

Purchasing

Requisitions: Commissioner Ruppert moved approval of the Engineer's request to purchase tires for U46. Commissioner Mozumdar seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Agreement with Fire District #1 - Somerset County is following up with all fire districts to verify compliance with the Fire Service Emergency Deployment Act, N.J.S.A. 52:14E-14, which requires Local Fire Mutual Aid agreements. Attorney Perkins has prepared a draft agreement and provided a copy to both Chiefs and Board chairs for consideration. Chief Verducci will provide comments on the draft in the coming week.

American Rescue Plan Grant – Chief Verducci reported that the grant writer has advised that the BOFC has been awarded a grant in the amount of \$75,000.00 for the purchase of PPE. The amount of the grant match is unknown at this time. The BOFC discussed the increasing cost of PPE and the need to have spare PPE available. It will be important to prepare an inventory of the PPE and its expiration dates as it is received so that replacement can be correctly budgeted.

PHONE LINES – Fire Company President Kabis reviewed the various phone lines now servicing the firehouse. He proposed to deactivate four lines which do not appear to be used to reduce costs. He will work with Mr. Newberry to complete the line review and deactivation.

OLD BUSINESS

2024 Budget – Commissioner Morrison will upload the budget referendum results to the DCA FAST website.

AFG/FEMA Grant – Some of the equipment order is being delivered. The plan is to outfit one truck at a time and then wait three weeks to outfit the next apparatus to ensure that the programming is working correctly. The project will not likely be completed until the fall.

State Radio Grant – Montgomery township continues to review options for the use of the funds.

ISO Evaluation – No follow-up has been received from ISO.

Tower Replacement – Noting the approval of the additional \$169,867.00 “Material Cost Increase” at the budget referendum Chief Verducci has requested that Seagrave provide an appropriate contract addendum. The addendum will be executed by the Board chair when it is received. Chief Verducci noted that he will also request additional warranties from Seagraves. Seagraves has been unable to provide any further information on a delivery date but has confirmed that the apparatus is under construction. Chairman Mozumdar moved a resolution approving the execution of the appropriate contract addendum. Commissioner Ruppert seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Sale Of T-46 – In view of the uncertain delivery date for the new apparatus it would be inappropriate to sell the current T-46. Chief Verducci will continue to prepare descriptive specifications and take pictures so that the apparatus can be marketed as soon as confirmation of a delivery date for the new apparatus is received.

Brush Truck Replacement – Chief Verducci reported that he has received a state contract quote for the lighting from East Coast in the amount of \$14,651.82. He has received a quote from A & K Equipment for the mounting of the pump and skid in the amount of \$39,833.00. He requested a quote from Hunter Ford, but they did not respond.

Commissioner Ruppert moved approval of a resolution awarding the lighting contract to East Coast and the installation contract to A & K Equipment pursuant to their quotes. Commissioner Hopkins seconded the motion, and it was approved by unanimous vote.

MOU – Mr. Perkins noted that he had received a copy of the old MOU with the State Emergency Services which lists Toby Laughlin as Chair of the BOFC and Barb Griswold as the Board attorney. He indicated that he could not modify it in the format in which it was received. Deputy Chief Rendall and Engineer Kabis will attempt to convert the document so that it can be modified.

Banking – No update.

Firehouse Generator – The generator delivery has been delivered and installed. It will continue to operate on propane as the cost of extending a natural gas line to the pad is unreasonably expensive.

Long Term Capital Plan - Commissioner Hopkins noted that the plan will be reviewed again in May. The plan will use an annual \$405,000 capital contribution. It was suggested that it might be appropriate to add the cost of PPE to the plan.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on April 11th, 2024.
Motion by Mozumdar, 2nd by Hogan. Motion passed without objection.