

Fire District #3 Minutes

1/17/2024

Meeting called to order 7:00 pm by Vice Chairman Commissioner Holzer

Roll Call:

Commissioner Avin - Absent

Commissioner Larson - Present

Commissioner Holtz - Present

Commissioner Holzer –Present

Commissioner Milton - Present

Commissioner Holzer advised that the certification of the public meeting law was met and confirmed by Commissioner Milton.

Commissioner Holtz made a motion to approve the December minutes, seconded by Commissioner Larson, and all in attendance voted to approve the minutes.

Commissioner Holtz gave his Treasurer's report. There was a discussion of the bills from Stryker, the bill for struts for North Branch FD and media bills for ads placed in the newspapers. Commissioner Milton made a motion to approve the Treasurer's report and to pay the bills, seconded by Commissioner Larson and passed by all in attendance.

CHIEF REPORTS

Bradley Gardens: Chief Jeff Taylor advised that there were 53 total calls for the month with 537 for the year. Chief Taylor sent in a quote for 6 new tires for the ambulance and requested a current insurance card for it. Commissioner Holtz made a motion to pay for 6 new tires, seconded by Commissioner Larson and passed by all in attendance.

Green Knoll: Chief Jim Driscoll advised 36 calls for the month and 474 for the year. The crosslay work is getting done on Engine 109.

North Branch: Chief Dan Russoniello advised 31 calls for the month with 13 in District 3, and 431 for the year. He advised that the boats and crews were ready for the last big rain storm in case of flooding. Fortunately, the public heeded all the warnings and no water rescues were needed.

Country Hills: Chief Pat Dougherty reported 26 calls for the month, 8 in District 3, and 408 for the year. He also requested an insurance card for the engine. The Tesla course will be held February 17th starting at 9 am at RVCC for classes and the cars will be located at North Branch's engine bay and the class will run until noon. North Branch also voted on adding one new member.

All chiefs said their manpower was good.

OLD BUSINESS:

Commissioner Larson discussed LOSAP and is waiting for New Jersey to publish what the cost of living increase will be for LOSAP. Chief Russoniello requested updated rules for LOSAP.

Commissioner Milton read off the list of updated 2024 Resolutions and Commissioner Holtz made a motion to cast one ballot for all the resolutions. Commissioner Milton seconded the motion and all in attendance voted to approve the motion. All of the approved resolutions can be seen at this link: <https://bridgewaterfiredistrict3.com/2024-Resolutions/2024-Resolutions-Passed.pdf>

Commissioner Larson will follow up with Richard Braslow on the By-Laws. A discussion of policies followed, but each chief has their own set of policies for their respective departments. Commissioner Holzer requested receiving policies from each chief. Commissioner Larson will get direction from Braslow as to what to ask for from the chiefs as far as developing our policies for the By-Laws. Commissioner Holzer and Commissioner Larson will handle the By-Laws.

Commissioner Larson asked the Chiefs for their last quarter financial reports for 2023.

Commissioner Milton advised that required election notices have been sent to the newspapers for publication.

Commissioner Holtz advised that he sent in the budget numbers to the printer for the mail-in ballots, and also requested an extra 200 ballots for in-person voting at Green Knoll's fire house. Commissioner Holtz will copy Commissioner Milton on the election emails. Commissioner Holtz discussed the budget and will confirm the numbers with the accountants. Commissioner Larson estimated that 3500 mail-in ballots will be sent out. Commissioner Holtz also discussed election coverage and will find people to handle the election duties.

Commissioner Holtz commended the fire departments in the handling of the chimney Fire on Regan Drive and for the response for the motor vehicle crash near the temple close to Green Knoll's FD that required a a Medi-Vac landing.

NEW BUSINESS: None

OPEN TO PUBLIC: Commissioner Holtz discussed his running for another term as Fire Commissioner as this would be his 7th term if elected. He advised he was proud to be a part of the fire commission and hopes people will come out and vote for the District 3 budget. Commissioner Larson advised that the budget will cost about \$3 more per household per year.

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Made by Commissioner Milton, seconded by Commissioner Larson, and all passed by those in attendance. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.

Fire District #3 Minutes

2/21/2024

Meeting called to order 7:00 pm by Chairman Commissioner Avin

Roll Call:

Commissioner Avin - Present

Commissioner Larson - Present

Commissioner Holtz - Present

Commissioner Holzer – Absent

Commissioner Milton - Present

Commissioner Avin advised that the certification of the public meeting law was met and confirmed by Commissioner Milton.

Commissioner Holtz made a motion to approve the January minutes, seconded by Commissioner Larson, and all in attendance voted to approve the minutes.

Commissioner Holtz gave his Treasurer's report. There were only a few bills to pay this month. Commissioner Milton made a motion to approve the Treasurer's report and to pay the bills, seconded by Commissioner Larson and passed by all in attendance. A discussion of how the Commissioners would be paid and it was agreed there would be no changes in the monthly payment method.

CHIEF REPORTS

Bradley Gardens: Chief Jeff Taylor advised that there were 39 total calls for the month with 23 in District 3. Chief Taylor advised that new tires are on order for the ambulance and it will also get a wheel alignment. Preventative maintenance will be done and the cost will be higher with a new company as the last company that was used was not good.

Green Knoll: Chief Jim Driscoll advised 31 calls for the month. All apparatus is running good. The crosslay work will be finished soon on Engine 109.

North Branch: Assistant Chief Zois Pournaras advised 32 calls for the month with 11 in District 3.

Country Hills: Assistant Chief Ryan Sullivan reported 29 calls for the month, 8 in District 3. Squad 24 will have preventative maintenance done in March.

All chiefs said their manpower was good.

OLD BUSINESS:

Commissioner Larson discussed LOSAP and has received all the 2023 LOSAP from the Chiefs. A total of 48 and ½ members will receive LOSAP. ½ members are Probationary and Junior members. It is intended that funding for LOSAP will be done in March but the expected annual increase will be small. It was also discussed that upon payout of LOSAP monies, Lincoln Financial will withhold 20% for taxes.

Commissioner Larson discussed By-Laws changes regarding Chief's getting approval from the Commissioners. It was requested that the policies of the fire departments be sent to all the Commissioners for review.

Commissioner Avin advised will work on getting LOSAP information with telephone numbers and guidelines from Lincoln Financial.

NEW BUSINESS: Commissioner Avin advised that the unofficial election results for the fire district show that Commissioner Holtz won and the budget passed. Most votes were mail-in and she would like to see more voters respond in future elections.

A discussion regarding requested SCBA face masks from North Branch followed. North Branch advised that they needed 10 masks to replace masks that failed testing or were no longer compliant. Commissioner Milton suggested the commission pay the entire bill whereas Commissioner Holtz requested that the commission pay for ½. Commissioner Milton made a motion to pay the entire bill and asked Commissioner Larson if he would second it. Commissioner Larson said no. Commissioner Larson then made a motion to pay ½ the bill, seconded by Commissioner Holtz. The motion passed with 3 votes with Commissioner Avin abstaining.

Commissioner Holtz advised that the budget will have \$200,000 for SCBA and the equipment needed will need to be determined by the Chiefs. Commissioner Avin advised that \$100,000 in the budget is for radios. A discussion of mobile radios for the apparatus followed.

Chief Driscoll wants a total of 35 airpacks to be purchased over 3 years. The Chiefs will need to determine how many airpacks each department will get as well as bottles. Air packs are estimated to cost \$10,000 each without a bottle. Green Knoll needs 5 new air bottles now.

A discussion followed regarding the purchase of a new Chief's vehicle for Green Knoll. There is only one Chevrolet dealer in NJ that is authorized to sell a Chief's vehicle. Chief Driscoll wants a Tahoe.

Commissioner Milton brought up a discussion on fine money from Bridgewater Township. He reported that both Richard Braslow and Bridgewater's Fire Official Tom Scalera advised that fine money can be distributed at the discretion of the commissioners. Commissioner Milton made a motion that fine money received from Bridgewater Township be distributed at the discretion of the Commissioners. This was seconded by Commissioner Holtz and passed by all in attendance.

Assistant Chief Sullivan discussed emergency ESO reporting and that Country Hills was shifting from Emergency Reporting to ESO. While North Branch is already on ESO, both Green Knoll and Country Hills need to shift over to ESO. It was advised that it will be easier if all three fire departments were included in one account. Sullivan advised this needs to be done by April 1st.

OPEN TO PUBLIC: North Branch President Tom McCartney complained about disputes between the District 3 Commissioners and Branchburg Township and mentioned that he was disappointed the commissioners would only pay for half the cost of the replacement air masks. He advised that Branchburg complies with requests for their needs for equipment and turnout gear when made. A heated discussion followed whereby Commissioner Holtz feels that District 3 should only pay for half.

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Made by Commissioner Milton, seconded by Commissioner Larson, and all passed by those in attendance. Meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm.

Fire District #3 Minutes

3/20/2024

Meeting called to order 7:00 pm by Chairman Commissioner Avin

Roll Call:

Commissioner Avin - Present

Commissioner Larson - Present

Commissioner Holtz - Present

Commissioner Holzer – Present

Commissioner Milton - Present

Commissioner Avin advised that the certification of the public meeting law was met and confirmed by Commissioner Milton.

Jeff Holtz was sworn in as he was re-elected as a Commissioner following the results of the February election.

Commissioner Avin requested to be a signatory on checks. Commissioner Holtz will arrange for Commissioner Avin to go to TD Bank to be a signatory.

A discussion of the reorganization of roles each Commissioner would have and it was agreed to keep them the same as before. As such, no new resolution was needed.

Commissioner Larson made a motion to accept the February minutes with a slight change about election ballots going from write-in to mail-in. Commissioner Holtz seconded the motion and all voted yes to accept the minutes.

Commissioner Holtz discussed the Treasurer's report. While the email with the Treasurer's report wasn't received by the Commissioners prior to the meeting, Commissioner Holtz discussed all of the bills to be paid in detail along with a receipt of \$1,125. in fine money from Bridgewater Township. Commissioner Larson advised that \$59,633 will be needed for 2023 LOSAP. Commissioner Milton made a motion to pay the bills and was seconded by Commissioner Holzer , and all voted yes on the motion.

CHIEF REPORTS

Bradley Gardens: Chief Jeff Taylor advised that there were 30 total calls for the month with 20 in District 3.

Green Knoll: Chief Jim Driscoll advised the tanker is out of service with an engine issue and Engine 34-9 is out with a tire issue. A discussion on getting tires followed. He advised that Goodyear is only supplying the needed tires to the military. He advised that manpower is good.

North Branch: Assistant Chief Zois Pournaras advised 29 calls for the month with 15 in District 3. He advised that all is good with apparatus and manpower.

Country Hills: Chief Pat Doherty reported 29 calls for the month, 10 in District 3, and 74 calls year to date. Preventative maintenance will be done in April. He is looking to lock down a date to meet with

the ESO representative as they handle all three fire departments for emergency reporting. He requested that two Commissioners be on the call with ESO as he expects there will be a price increase. He advised their manpower was good.

OLD BUSINESS:

Commissioner Larson discussed COLA (cost of living increase) for LOSAP. Last year had approximately a 7% increase for the 2024 payment resulting in \$1,217. for full members, and Junior and Probationary members getting \$608.50. Commissioner Larson explained that some members directly submitted paperwork to Lincoln Financial but the Chiefs may not have copies. Maria Palmirri is the contact at Lincoln Financial and he will follow up with Lincoln Financial on LOSAP issues.

Commissioner Larson reported that there seems to be numerous issues with Lincoln and their process to add new members. They have indicated to him that certain new members have not submitted applications yet those members had indeed sent in their applications, and even got read receipts indicating Lincoln received them. Commissioner Larson asked for approval to fund LOSAP if these issues are corrected before the April meeting.

Commissioner Holzer advised that they are 97% complete. She reported Attorney Richard Braslow advised he wants policies to be separated out. She will send out a draft to the Commissioners in the next 2 weeks for review and suggested a Robert's Rules list be added.

Commissioner Avin wants a timeline/guidelines for elections, notices, etc. and wants to start a spreadsheet action list.

NEW BUSINESS: Commissioner Avin discussed her email with quotes for purchasing equipment. North Branch has requested 8 air bottles for \$11,788.; Country Hills has requested 5 sets of turnout gear; and Green Knoll has requested 12 airpacks plus 5 air bottles for \$122,123. Chief Doherty requests 2 airpacks and North Branch has requested 2 airpacks.

The Green Knoll tanker repair is estimated at \$5,000.

Commissioner Holtz advised that we have budgeted \$200,000 for airpacks and bottles.

Commissioner Milton made a motion to purchase 16 airpacks and 13 air bottles not to exceed a cost of \$200,000. and that was seconded by Commissioner Holtz, and all voted yes on the motion.

Chief Doherty advised he will get a quote for the 5 sets of turnout he is requesting for the next commission meeting.

Commissioner Holtz advised that there is an outstanding balance of \$8,700. owed for last year's audit work. The audit work was for 2022 and 2023. Commissioner Larson made a motion to pay the bill and was seconded by Commissioner Holtz and all voted yes on the motion.

OPEN TO PUBLIC: None

Commissioner Milton advised that Artie Sutton, a long time Life Member of North Branch FD, recently passed away at the age of 83. North Branch FD will provide details for his funeral and the Commissioners agreed to send something for the funeral.

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Made by Commissioner Larson, seconded by Commissioner Milton, and all passed by those in attendance. Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.

Fire District #3 Minutes

4/17/2024

Meeting called to order 7:00 pm by Chairman Commissioner Avin

Roll Call:

Commissioner Avin - Present

Commissioner Larson - Present

Commissioner Holtz - Present

Commissioner Holzer – Present

Commissioner Milton - Present

Commissioner Avin advised that the certification of the public meeting law was met and confirmed by Commissioner Milton.

Commissioner Holzer advised that the meeting was being recorded and transcribed by AI. Commissioner Larson had asked to get confirmation from Richard Braslow if this is okay. Commissioner Avin will reach out to Richard Braslow with a quick email to get confirmation and clarification. Today's session was recorded with no objections.

Commissioner Avin stated that we all need to be respectful to each other.

There was a discussion regarding LOSAP funding and issues of reporting information to the Breeze publicizing information about the fire district. A discussion of the March minutes regarding the reporting of LOSAP issues followed. A vote to approve the minutes with changes requested by Commissioner Larson was 4-1 to approve the minutes with his requested changes. Commissioner Milton voted no.

Commissioner Holtz gave the Treasurer's report and advised it was a light month for bills. Included in the report was that the quarterly checks for the fire departments will be distributed. He advised he is working with Bridgewater Township on payments and that the 2% increase has gone through. Commissioner Larson made a motion to pay the bills, seconded by Commissioner Holzer and passed by all Commissioners.

Commissioner Larson reported the problems with Lincoln Financial and explained that some members who submitted their LOSAP applications to Lincoln Financial did not receive confirmation or had their names misspelled, causing delays in funding. He asks for approval to fund LOSAP if the issues are resolved before the next meeting. It was agreed that members have until Friday, 4/19, to fix any Lincoln Financial issues. After that date, the process to issue a check to fund LOSAP will start. A new policy was discussed to advise members that 3/1 will be the deadline for new applications to be sent in to Lincoln Financial

CHIEF REPORTS

Bradley Gardens: President Brandon Brygier advised that there were 37 total calls for the month with 25 in District 3. He advised that the air compressor that powers the air horns and chains in the rig needs to be replaced. The cost is approximately \$2,000. Commissioner Milton made a motion to

replace the compressor at a cost not to exceed \$2,000, seconded by Commissioner Holzer and passed by all Commissioners.

North Branch: Chief Dan Russoniello advised 38 calls for the month and 99 year to date. He advised that Engine 108 driver's seat has been fixed. He advised that the warranty for Engine 108 is up.

Green Knoll: Chief Jim Driscoll advised 39 calls for the month and 102 calls year to date. He advised that new tires were installed on Engine 109 and that the tanker is back in service.

Country Hills: Chief Pat Doherty reported 26 calls for the month, 9 in District 3, and 17 in non-District 3. Preventative maintenance was done on Squad 24.

NEW BUSINESS: Dougherty says that he has spent most of his gear budget for the year and needs more funds to buy five sets of gear for new members. He also asks for three RIT packs, one for each department, from the capital budget. Commissioner Milton made a motion to purchase the turnout gear, seconded by Commissioner Holzer and passed by all Commissioners.

Commissioner Avin discussed getting additional quotes vs. accepting state contract pricing to see if we can get better pricing.

Chief Driscoll mentioned that he will need 6 sets of turnout gear for his members within the next few months.

Chief Russoniello requested 6 air bottles. He advised they don't have a need for a RIT pack as they have one, but requests the air bottles in exchange for that purchase. Commissioner Larson makes a motion to purchase RIT packs for 24 and 34, and 6 air bottles for 49 and is seconded by Commissioner Holtz and passed by all Commissioners.

Commissioner Avin asked that all fire departments report crew sizes when responding. Commissioner Milton advised that this requirement is in the current By-Laws.

OLD BUSINESS: LOSAP is done and there was a discussion of changing Lincoln Financial representatives for our account.

Commissioner Holzer advised the new By-Laws are pretty much completed and will have Richard Braslow review them. A draft of the Operating Policy was given to the Commissioners to review. Commissioner Holzer wants a clause for a drug policy and all the Chiefs confirmed they each have a drug policy. Commissioner Larson complimented Commissioner Holzer on her work on the By-Laws and Operating Policy.

Commissioner Holtz advised the amount of money that each department will receive for 2024 and 2025.

Green Knoll will receive \$249,275.64 for 2024; \$254,261.15 for 2025.

Country Hills and North Branch each will receive \$113,505.75 for 2024; 115,775.86 for 2025.

Bradley Gardens Rescue will receive: \$34,242.00 for 2025; \$34,992.85 for 2025.

Commissioner Larson discussed LOSAP directions that may be needed for any person to take over LOSAP in the future. Commissioner Holtz discussed information on Quickbooks passwords.

A discussion on keys for the Commission office located at 34's building on Dow Road followed.

A discussion on disaster preparedness and planning and the need for a plan in case of a mass event such as multiple incidents like earthquake's breaking gas lines and water mains. All the Chiefs advised they have a plan.

A brief discussion followed on the NIMS class requirement. Commissioner Milton advised he took the class.

Commissioner Avin mentioned a concern for personnel and staffing throughout the summer. Chief Russoniello commented that summer is not an issue with the college students coming back for the summer.

A discussion followed regarding the storage of digital files and where to store digital files for the Commission, such as using a cloud service or the server of the email company. Commissioner Milton advised he will look into using the existing website/email hosting company to store digital files on their servers.

Chief Russoniello asked about stipends for chiefs and suggests that the chiefs should receive some kind of stipend for their time and effort, as other fire districts do. He says that it would be a motivation and a reward for the chiefs. The commissioners agree to consider the idea and asked Chief Russoniello to provide more information.

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Made by Commissioner Holtz, seconded by Commissioner Milton, and all passed by those in attendance. Meeting adjourned at 8:33pm.