

BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP

FIRE DISTRICT NO. 3

BRIDGEWATER, NEW JERSEY

BY LAWS

Approved December 18, 2024

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THE BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS OF BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP
FIRE DISTRICT No. 3
BRIDGEWATER, NEW JERSEY

ARTICLE I: NAME & SEAL

(1) The official name is The Board of Fire Commissioners of Fire District No. 3 in the Township of Bridgewater, Somerset County New Jersey (hereinafter referred to as BOFC) shall consist of an embossed impression on a circular metal disc containing, in the outer rim, the words "BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS- BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP". In the inner body of the disc, the words "DISTRICT No.3 BRIDGEWATER, N.J."

ARTICLE II: GENERAL POWERS

(1) The BOFC is created by township ordinance in accordance with N.J.S.A.40A: 14-70. The general powers of the BOFC are specifically set forth in N.J.S.A.40A: 14-81 and supplemented by various statutory sections N.J.S.A.40A: 14-70, et seq., which are incorporated herein by reference.

(2) The Fire District has the statutory obligation to provide fire protection to the residents and taxpayers of the district. The members of the volunteer companies providing services within the district are under the control and supervision of the BOFC and in performing these duties are deemed to be exercising a government function.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERS

(1) The BOFC shall consist of five members elected by the residents of Fire District No. 3 at the annual election, which takes place on the 3rd Saturday in February. Any candidates for Commissioner vacancies must submit a verified petition to the Clerk or Secretary of the Commissioners, and such petition must be filed at least 29 days prior to the date of the election.

(2) There are certain notices which must be undertaken prior to the election, and in this regard, an initial notice must be published at least once in a newspaper circulated in the fire district at least six weeks prior to the date of the election. In addition, at least 55 days prior to the date of the election, a notice relative to mail-in ballots must be published in a newspaper which is also circulated within the fire district. A subsequent notice of the election must be undertaken at least once, not later than one week prior to the fire district election, again, in a newspaper circulated within said fire district. The term of office is three years as follows:

Election Date (all in February)	Number of Three-Year Seats
2023	2
2024	1
2025	2
2026	2
2027	1
2028	2
Etc.	

If a vacancy shall occur in the membership of the BOFC, said vacancy shall be filled by a resident of Fire District No.3, by appointment of the BOFC, until the next succeeding annual election.

(3) Board Members are prohibited from holding an executive or line position chief's position in any volunteer fire company or rescue squad servicing all or a portion of Fire District No. 3.

ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS

(1) The officers of the BOFC shall be a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer. These officers shall be elected by the BOFC from its members at the annual organizational meeting in March. The BOFC reserves the right to merge officer positions or to leave positions vacant. The said officers shall be elected to and hold office for one year.

(2) In the case of anticipated prolonged absence of any officer, the Commissioners may, by majority vote of the members present, delegate the powers and duties of that officer to any other officer or member during the period of such absence.

(3) In the event of the absence of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson from any meeting, the senior member present (said seniority to be determined by the terms of continuous service) shall preside at said meeting.

ARTICLE A: CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON

(1) The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the BOFC and shall have general supervision, direction, and control of the affairs of the BOFC and shall sign all contracts, drafts, and checks relative to the BOFC's general accounts. Said checks shall be countersigned by such other official or officials as designated by resolution.

(2) The Vice Chairperson shall, in the absence or incapacity of the Chairperson, assume all duties and powers of the Chairperson.

(3) The Chairperson or a designate shall approve all press release matters concerning Fire District No. 3.

(4) The Chairperson will conduct all meetings using [Robert's Rules of Order](#) as the Guiding principle and will be responsible for resolving all procedural issues.

(5) The Chairperson shall appoint such subcommittees as are necessary or desirable to fulfill the Commission responsibilities.

ARTICLE B: SECRETARY

(1) The Secretary shall keep the minutes and records of the BOFC, prepare an agenda of all the meetings in cooperation with the Chairperson, provide notice of the meetings to members, arrange proper and legal notice of meetings and hearings as provided by law, attending to correspondence and perform such other duties as are necessary and incidental to the office of Secretary.

(2) In addition, the secretary shall be the custodian of the official seal of the BOFC and shall attest to all documents, resolutions, agreements, and obligations.

(3) The Secretary shall serve as the Clerk of the BOFC and perform all formal duties of such office.

(4) The Secretary shall render a written report of the meeting minutes to the BOFC members at or before each regular or special meeting and at such other times as requested. The written reports will be a part of the permanent files of the BOFC.

ARTICLE C: TREASURER

(1) The Treasurer shall have care and custody of and be responsible for all funds of the BOFC and shall deposit the same, in the name of the BOFC, in such bank or banks as the BOFC may designate by resolution.

(2) The Treasurer shall, subject to the direction of the BOFC and in accordance with such requirements for countersignatures as the BOFC may provide, sign, make and endorse in the name of the BOFC, all checks, drafts and orders for payment of money. All requests for payments submitted by suppliers of goods or services shall be by invoice properly countersigned by the person having knowledge and authority, the goods or services were delivered or rendered as ordered and that the invoiced amount is correct.

(3) The Treasurer shall pay all vouchers, approve such requisitions, and purchase orders, properly countersigned, as may be authorized by the BOFC.

(4) The Treasurer shall render a report of the finances of the BOFC at each regular meeting and at such other times as may be requested.

(5) The Treasurer shall keep accurate and correct books of account of all business transactions, requisitions, purchase orders, vouchers, and invoices as necessary and incidental to the operations of business of the BOFC. The Treasurer shall do and perform all duties incidental to said office, including the timely surrender of all financial data necessary for the annual audit and submit a copy of same to authorized public officials in the manner and in accordance with the schedules as prescribed by law.

(6) Prepare the annual budget and submit it for approval in the manner and in accordance with the schedules as prescribed by law.

ARTICLE V: ATTORNEY, AUDITOR

(1) The BOFC shall appoint, by resolution, an attorney, and an auditor, as appropriate, who shall be paid reasonable fees as the BOFC may establish, by annual contract.

(2) The attorney shall represent the BOFC on all legal matters that come before them.

(3) The auditor shall be a registered municipal accountant or a certified public accountant and shall render such auditing or accounting services as may be required by the BOFC and by law.

ARTICLE VI: MEETINGS AND QUORUM

(1) The annual organizational meeting of the BOFC for the election of the officers and for the transaction of such other business that may come before the BOFC shall be held at 7:00pm on the third Wednesday in March following the regular election in each year.

(2) The regular meetings of the BOFC for the transaction of business shall be held at a location designated by the BOFC and with appropriate public notice by statute.

(3) All regular or special meetings held by the BOFC shall be held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act of the State of New Jersey (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6).

(4) A Majority of the entire authorization membership (three members) of the BOFC shall constitute a quorum. Action may be taken by the BOFC by a vote of a majority of the authorized membership present at a meeting.

ARTICLE VII: HEARINGS

(1) In addition to those meetings required by the law, the BOFC may, at their discretion, hold public hearings, which they deem to be in the public interest.

(2) Notice of such hearings shall be published in one or more newspapers of general circulation in the district as required by statute and such notice shall also be posted in a prominent place in the Municipal Building.

(3) A permanent record of these proceedings shall be kept.

ARTICLE VIII: MEMBER CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

(1) A BOFC member shall not have any direct pecuniary interest in a contract with the fire district nor shall they directly furnish any labor, equipment or supplies to the fire district in exchange for any monetary compensation.

(2) If a BOFC member is employed by a corporation or a business or has a secondary interest in a corporation or a business which furnishes goods or services to the fire district, the BOFC member shall declare their interest and refrain from bidding or voting upon the question of contracting with that company.

(3) It is not the intent of this policy to prevent this fire district from contracting with corporations or businesses where a BOFC member is an employee of it. This policy is designed to prevent placing a BOFC member in a position where his interest in the fire district and his place of employment or other indirect interest may conflict, and to avoid appearances of conflicts of interest even though such conflict may not exist.

(4) All BOFC members shall be required to complete a Local Government Ethics Law Financial Statement in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A: 9-22.1 et seq.

ARTICLE IX: VOTING METHOD

(1) Votes on all motions or resolutions shall be by voice vote of öyes, no or abstainö and all votes shall be recorded in the minutes. Absentee voting is not permitted. Resolutions are to be made by roll call vote and a record of that vote is to be noted on the resolution.

ARTICLE X: COMMITTEES

(1) It shall be the policy of the BOFC to operate as a committee of the whole on matters of policy decisions and expenditures. However, since the details of the BOFC are sometimes voluminous in nature, it will be the BOFCö policy to have members assigned to committees so concentrated efforts may be spent on a particular segment of Commissioners business.

(2) The Chairperson, during their term of office, may appoint permanent and/or special committees at his direction for determined periods of time. These appointments shall not exceed the term of office by any member.

(3) The function and formation of said committees shall be as established by the Chairperson.

ARTICLE XI: COMPENSATION FOR BOFC MEMBERS

(1) N.J.S.A. 40A: 14-88 provides for compensation for BOFC members in such amounts, as the BOFC shall fix pursuant to statute. Such members shall receive compensation in accordance with said statutory section.

ARTICLE XII: HIRING OF EMPLOYEES

(1) N.J.S.A. 40A: 81.1 et seq. authorizes the BOFC to hire various employees in compliance with that procedure as set forth in said statutes. The BOFC may hire employees in compliance with said statute.

ARTICLE XIII: AMENDMENTS

(1) These Bylaws may be changed at a regular meeting by a four-fifths vote of the BOFC membership upon 14 daysö notice to all BOFC members of such desired alteration, amendments or repeal. Said alteration, amendment or repeal will not be effective until it has been voted upon at two consecutive regular meetings by the BOFC members and subsequently adopted by said BOFC.

ARTICLE XIV: APPOINTMENT AND/OR REVIEW OF APPOINTED AND/OR ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

(1) The BOFC, pursuant to New Jersey statutory law, do hereby retain the right to review the qualifications of a candidate for any line officer position. This right to review by the BOFC shall include the right to reject an applicant if they are deemed to be unqualified by the majority of the commission at an open public meeting.

ARTICLE XV: REQUIRED RESPONSIBILITIES AT MEETINGS OF THE BOFC OF FIRE CHIEF OR THEIR DULY AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE.

(1) It is hereby required by the BOFC that the Chiefs of Fire District No.3 or their duly authorized representative attend all BOFC meetings as specified in ARTICLE VI: Section (2).

(2) It is further specifically determined by the BOFC that the said Fire Chiefs, or their duly authorized representative, shall be required to attend all postponed or special meetings of the BOFC, if their attendance is deemed necessary and they are notified within a reasonable time by the BOFC.

(3) The Fire Chief(s) shall be responsible for being the liaison between their company and the BOFC and shall report all concerns of any group.

ARTICLE XVIII: ORDER OF BUSINESS

- (1) Call to Order
- (2) Salute to flag
- (3) Roll Call
- (4) Certification of Public Meeting Law
- (5) Secretaries Report and Adoption of Minutes
- (6) Treasurer's Report
- (7) Emergency Service Reports
- (8) Commissioner Items / Issues
- (9) Standing Committee Reports
- (10) Old business
- (11) New business
- (12) Meeting open to public
- (13) Adjournment

The order of business is subject to change at any time prior to said meeting by order of the Chairperson or the Presiding officer.

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