



LAGRANGE FIRE DISTRICT

504 Freedom Plains Rd • Poughkeepsie, NY 12603



MINUTES BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS Regular Meeting – December 3, 2024

ATTENDEES: Chairman Marc Komorsky
Commissioner Robert Taft
Commissioner Anthony Pignataro
Treasurer Mark Pozniak
Michael Hekle (*via Teams*)
Commissioner Barry Ward
Commissioner Richard Sassi
Deputy Chief Scott Merritt (*arrived 6:33PM*)
Secretary Bria Le

At 6:00m, Chairman Marc Komorsky called the Board of Fire Commissioners Regular Meeting to order for Tuesday, December 3rd, 2024, and led the Pledge of Allegiance. He welcomed everyone to the meeting.

MINUTES:

None

CORRESPONDENCE:

None.

ROOM USE REQUESTS:

None.

OLD BUSINESS/UNRESOLVED ITEMS:

- Station 1 Building Update – Commissioner Ward stated Station 1 had the bid walk through today. There were eight contractors there. The bid closes on the 19th of December. Commissioner Pignataro asked if it was eight contractors for the whole bid and Commissioner Ward stated that was for the walk through. Commissioner Ward asked Mr. Bolner to pull together a rough estimate for the long-range plan for the concrete work at Station 1. It will probably be about \$150,000. The big unknown are the trench drains that are in the floor. DEC no longer allows you run them to a sanitary sewer or a storm sewer. He believes in some places they have had to go into large tanks to have the water reclaimed and taken to a waste management facility that can process it. Commissioner Pignataro asked if these were ballpark numbers and Commissioner Ward said yes. It was just conceptual with estimates on the concrete amounts at the current prices, the trench footage, etc. Chairman Komorsky asked if there was any cost for this estimate and Commissioner Ward said no. Chairman Komorsky stated he has been told that Mr. Bolner is retiring at the end of this year. Commissioner Ward stated he spoke to Mr. Bolner about that and he is going to be working part-time. It should be fine. Chairman Komorsky stated they should have some other engineers look at this as well. Commissioner Ward said they can when they are ready to move forward with it. He is just looking towards future budgets to see where it will fit.
- Station 3 Storage Room – Commissioner Ward stated there is no update at this time.
- Station 2 Brick Pointing – Commissioner Ward stated there is no update at this time.

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- Staffing Community Events – Chief Champion was not present to give a report.
 - ESO Reporting status update – No report at this time.
 - Grant update – No report at this time.
 - Diesel Tank Accessories – No report at this time.
 - HIPAA Compliance – No report at this time.
 - Overhead Doors Painting – No report at this time.
 - Policy Manual/Software Review – Commissioner Sassi stated they are supposed to meet with the project manager. They are looking for mid-December to see if that works for the Chief.
 - Commissioner Election – Secretary Le stated elections are next Tuesday from 5:30 PM – 9:00 PM. Chairman Komorsky stated Commissioner Sassi is up for re-election and he is running again. Elections are only at Station 2 this year. Commissioner Pignataro asked if they could add “only here” to the signboard outside. Secretary Le said she will check to see if they have enough letters for that. It is on the website and the Town’s website. It is also on the bulletin board at the Town Hall and there are signs for outside of the other stations. Commissioner Taft stated they should probably state which station is Station 2 because most people do not know that. Secretary Le stated there are signs that have the actual address on them. Treasurer Pozniak stated they only hear about the election from the Fire District, so they are getting the information from that.
 - Building Repairs/Repair Requests – Chairman Komorsky asked if anybody had anything that they had not already spoken about. There was nothing.

NEW BUSINESS: -

Review of Organizational Meeting Items – Chairman Komorsky stated the packets contained the review for the Organizational Meeting items.

- Appointments/Designations
- Purchasing Policy
- Fixed Asset Capitalization Policy
- Investment Policy
- Credit Card Policy
- Fund Balance Policy
- Indemnification Policy
- Monthly Meeting Schedule
- Commissioner Committee Assignments

Chairman Komorsky asked if there was any discussion about any items. Commissioner Sassi stated on resolution 1.11 that discusses the Treasurer being able to pay certain things prior to the audit. He asked if there was anything they could do about the credit card as they are incurring late fees due to

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the timing of the bill and the meetings. He would rather see the bill get paid and then deal with any issues after the fact to keep from paying the late fees. Treasurer Pozniak stated New York State defines what can be paid in advance and it is only the things listed in the packet. Commissioner Sassi asked if there was something internal, they could do to avoid paying late fees and Treasurer Pozniak stated he will look into seeing if there is a way to get the bill before it is mailed as that seems to take a lot of time and then there are only 20 days to pay it. They may be able to receive it one meeting sooner so it is not getting paid and submitted too late. Commissioner Sassi asked if they could change the due date of the credit card. Commissioner Taft asked if they could schedule a minimum payment each month, but Treasurer Pozniak stated they could not do that. By law, the Board has to approve these payments, and they can't approve what they don't know about. He will look into the possibility of changing the due date, paying electronically, and getting the invoice sooner.

Commissioner Pignataro stated that Secretary Le and Treasurer Pozniak should leave the room if they discuss 1.1 and 1.2 and Treasurer Pozniak stated he would request that the Board consider increases to the mechanic and bookkeeper as well as they are not part of the appointments/designations.

Chairman Komorsky stated that should be done in Executive Session.

Commissioner Pignataro asked about the mileage rate and Secretary Le stated it is the 2024 rate as the 2025 rate has not been published yet.

Commissioner Pignataro asked about the use of the "class account." Treasurer Pozniak stated he believes that is covered in the Investment Policy. He stated in Resolution 1.6 they could add a secondary deposit account for NYClass. They have not used it yet, but they have the option if the interest rates go up. He will work on the wording with Secretary Le.

- Purchasing Policy – Chairman Komorsky stated he has been reviewing the purchase orders and noticed the purchasing of items from the career staff has gone up as well as purchases of uniform items. He would like to put some sort of restriction on that or have someone else take it over. It seems like there should be some more control. Commissioner Pignataro asked what line uniforms fall into, and Chairman Komorsky stated that is the issue; it's not on there. Lieutenant Zittel has been doing it. Treasurer Pozniak stated it would be on the next line down for the Chief, Deputy Chief, and EMS Administrator. Commissioner Sassi stated he would suggest removing the EMS Administrator and lieutenants from there if they have a Deputy Chief or hire another Deputy Chief. That way everything should go through the Chief or Deputy Chief and not a lieutenant. Chairman Komorsky stated the lieutenants, and the Union stated they do not want to do this. Commissioner Sassi stated by giving it to the Chief or Deputy Chief it removes the issue. Commissioner Pignataro stated he did not see anything that gives Lieutenant Zittel the authority to do this. Treasurer Pozniak stated Brian may be going to Chief Champion and asking if he is ok with an order before it is placed. Chairman Komorsky stated its Lieutenant Zittel's name on the purchase orders as the approver. The costs are becoming exorbitant. Commissioner Sassi stated his suggestion is to remove the EMS Administrator and lieutenants from the policy and have the Chief and Deputy Chief and administration have the oversight. Commissioner Pignataro asked if there was an allocated amount for clothing or do they just have to demonstrate a need. Chairman Komorsky stated the contract states one pair of boots a year and then on a need basis. They used to have to turn in ripped pants to get new ones and now they seem to be ordering new pants and shirts each year. The boots do not have to be from a specific vendor. No one had an issue with the removal of EMS Administrator and

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Lieutenants. Treasurer Pozniak reviewed the bid threshold. They discussed adding a second amount from \$5,000 to \$9,999.99 as to who can approve things. He stated they have overwritten the policy a few times over the years, so maybe they should revamp the entire policy. Chairman Komorsky stated he still wanted the quote amount at what it is at now. Treasurer Pozniak stated they could change the policy and still request quotes on each item they want to. That is better than having a policy and not following it. The only thing they cannot exceed is the \$35,000.00 quote requirement. Chairman Komorsky would like more oversight and to keep the quote in there. Commissioner Sassi asked if they override that if there is a timing issue and Treasurer Pozniak said yes. Commissioner Sassi would like the same deletions on the authorized signer for the EMS Administrator and lieutenants. The Board was fine with that. There was discussion regarding the State bid limits. Commissioner Sassi brought the Deputy Chief current on the prior discussions. Chairman Komorsky reviewed the remainder of the Purchasing Policy and there were no other changes.

- Fixed Asset Capitalization Policy - Secretary Le stated unless the Board proposes changes on this item tonight, there will be no update made at the Re-organizational meeting. There were no changes proposed.
- Investment Policy - Chairman Komorsky stated this is a straightforward policy. Commissioner Pignataro asked if NYClass should be added here. Attorney Hekle stated the entity has to be identified. They should provide a little more detail than just the name "NYClass." Treasurer Pozniak will do this.
- Credit Card Policy – Chairman Komorsky reviewed the existing credit cards and asked if there were any changes that needed to be made. Commissioner Pignataro stated Lieutenant - Training needed to be removed.
- Fund Balance Policy – Chairman Komorsky asked if there were any comments or changes. Treasurer Pozniak stated it all looks good.
- Indemnification Policy – Commissioner Sassi asked Attorney Hekle if they could change the wording "fire district" to "the Board of Fire Commissioners." Attorney Hekle stated if there is something that requires immediate action, it should be done quickly, so maybe 3 to 5 days should be the maximum. Chairman Komorsky stated he would like it to be three days. Commissioner Pignataro asked if the wording of "summons, petition, etc." is as it relates to Fire District business. It does not specify that. He asked if it means if he is served for something personally does he have to let everyone know. Attorney Hekle stated it is written in tandem with the first paragraph, which is talking about their official capacity. He does not feel it needs to be changed. Commissioner Sassi stated he feels the entire process should be through the District Secretary and not through the Chairman, who does not work out of the office full time. Commissioner Pignataro stated he was fine with that. Commissioner Sassi asked if the wording "intentionally harmful conduct" will not cover them in the case of neglectful, egregious, or criminal conduct. Attorney Hekle stated the language that is there is in line with the Public Officers Law. He stated they want a broader clause. He stated they could remove "intentionally" but putting in "the result of reckless or intentionally harmful conduct" may be better. It will come down to if it falls in Section 18. That wording may cover more issues. Commissioner Pignataro stated reckless can cover more than criminal issues. Attorney Hekle stated the Board can make the decision to

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indemnify someone if they choose. There were different scenarios discussed for issues that may or may not want to be covered by the Board. Attorney Hekle provided the legal definition. The bottom line was that Attorney Hekle stated his recommendation is that the wording stay the way it is. There is concern for setting a precedent. They can exempt an individual to be indemnified on a case-by-case basis.

- **Monthly Meeting Schedule** - Chairman Komorsky stated in December they leave the last meeting date open as it is close to Christmas so they will determine that closer to the time. Commissioner Pignataro asked if they should schedule the early meeting date for December now, since they seem to do it the same time each year. Secretary Le made a change in the October meetings due to the Budget Hearing being on the 21st. After some discussion, the October meetings will be the 7th and 28th with the Budget Hearing on the 21st.
- **Commissioner Committee Assignments** - Chairman Komorsky asked if everyone was all right with the assignments the way there are, and everyone was fine. Secretary Le asked if there were any additions or deletions to the Committee List. It was decided they are fine the way they are.

REPORTS: (by officers present)

- **Treasurer Pozniak** - Treasurer Pozniak stated he had no report at this time but will have a Budget vs. Actual for the next meeting.
- **Chief Anthony Champion** – No report in his absence.
- **Deputy Chief Merritt** – He submitted the agency’s annual Ambulance Recertification Application to the State, so he’s waiting to hear back from them. Chairman Komorsky asked what the timeline was for this. Deputy Chief Merritt stated the recertification for personnel is approximately 45 days and he does not know how long the agency recertification will take. Chairman Komorsky asked if he had a calendar date for follow up and the Deputy Chief said yes.
- **Department** – Chairman Komorsky stated there was nothing to report.
- **Union** – There was nothing to report.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

At 7:09 PM, Chairman Komorsky opened the meeting to public comments. There were none.

At 7:09 PM, Chairman Komorsky closed the public comment section of the meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

At 7:10 PM, upon a MOTION made by Commissioner Pignataro and SECONDED by Commissioner Sassi, the Board RESOLVED to go into Executive Session to discuss one personnel issue from Commissioner Ward, one pay rate discussion and personnel from Commissioner Pignataro, one personnel reorganizational issue from Commissioner Sassi, and one Legal item from Secretary Le. Sassi – Aye, Pignataro – Aye, Ward – Aye, Taft – Aye, Komorsky – Aye. **Motion carried.**

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OPEN SESSION:

At 7:34 PM, the Board resumed Open Session.

Upon a MOTION made by Commissioner Pignataro and SECONDED by Commissioner Taft, the Board RESOLVED that the Board will grant a 3% increase in salary for 2025 to Bria Le, Mark Pozniak, Jenn Kaiser, and Sean Brandt. Pignataro – Aye, Sassi – Aye, Ward -Aye, Taft –Aye, Komorsky - Aye. **Motion Carried.**

Chairman Komorsky stated there is an issue with the 12/17 meeting date as several commissioners are unable to attend. Secretary Le stated she needs three commissioners to approve POs for the payment of bills. There are three available on the 17th to come in and sign the abstracts and bill payments. It was decided to stay with that. They will inform the Chief. Chairman Komorsky stated it should be a very abbreviated meeting.

PREPARE 12/17/24 MEETING AGENDA: Secretary Le will prepare this.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 7:38 PM, upon a Motion made by Commissioner Pignataro and SECONDED by Commissioner Taft, the Board RESOLVED to adjourn the meeting. Pignataro – Aye, Sassi – Aye, Ward – Aye, Taft – Aye, Komorsky – Aye. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted by Julie Beyer
on behalf of Bria Le – District Secretary
Approved by the Board of Fire Commissioners on 1/14/25

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