

**MOUNT LAUREL FIRE DISTRICT #1**  
**BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS**  
**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
January 16, 2017  
Fire Department Headquarters Station  
Meeting Minutes #1

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

1. Commissioner DiPietrantonio
2. Commissioner Ridenour
3. Commissioner Roura
4. Commissioner Shestack
5. Commissioner Hamilton
6. Chief of Department Colucci
7. Deputy Chief Burnett
8. Administrator Jones
9. Solicitor Braslow

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Ridenour at 8:02 PM.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence observed.

Public announcements were read by Commissioner Hamilton.

Commissioner Roura made a motion at 8:03 PM to open the Public Hearing on the 2017 Budget that was seconded by Commissioner Shestack. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

**ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION:**

Resolution #2017-01 "Authorization for the Board of Fire Commissioner to read Budget by Title". Commissioner Roura made a motion to approve the resolution that was seconded by Commissioner Hamilton. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

Commissioner Ridenour asked the members of the Board if they had any questions or comments regarding the 2017 Budget and there were none.

Commissioner Ridenour asked the public if anyone had any comments or questions and there were none.

Commissioner Roura made a motion at 8:05 PM to close the Public Hearing on the 2017 Budget that was seconded by Commissioner Shestack. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

**ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS:**

Resolution #2017-02 "Resolution to Amend the 2017 Budget Pursuant to N.J.S.A.40A:14-78.3, Fiscal Year: From January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017". Commissioner Hamilton read the resolution by title.

Commissioner Roura commented that the DCA had some questions about the 2017 Budget that they worked with Administrator Jones over a couple of days to resolve. He worked out several minor revenue line item changes that satisfied them, but the changes required that the Board adopt this budget amendment resolution before they voted on the adoption of the 2017 Budget tonight. The total expenditures and total revenue figures have not changed, nor has the tax rate. Administrator Jones added that he had to balance the revenue amount raised by the Bureau of Fire Prevention with their expenditures, which required him to reduce their anticipated state/local registration fee income by \$37,113 and increase the amount of surplus being used by \$37,113 from \$650,000 to \$687,113. Bottom line is that they were now happy with our budget as presented and we still anticipate collecting the same amount of registration fees that we originally planned for. He noted that they required us to balance these expenditures last year for the 1<sup>st</sup> time even though this requirement is not called for anywhere in the statutes or their guidelines. Commissioner Roura made a motion to approve the resolution that was seconded by Commissioner Shestack. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

- Resolution #2017-03 “2017 Adopted Budget Resolution Mount Laurel Fire District #1, Fiscal Year: From January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017”. Commissioner Roura made a motion to approve the resolution that was seconded by Commissioner Hamilton. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.
- Resolution #2017-04 “Authorized Signatories for Bank Accounts”. Commissioner Roura made a motion to approve the resolution that was seconded by Commissioner Hamilton. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.
- Resolution #2017-05 “Resolution to Approve the 2016 LOSAP Program Final Certified List of Eligible Volunteer Members”. Commissioner Shestack made a motion to approved the resolution that was seconded by Commissioner DiPietrantonio. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.
- Resolution #2017-06 “Approval & Authorizing Execution of an Employment Contract Covering 2017 – 2019 for Secretarial Assistant Marjorie A. Richardson”. Commissioner Shestack made a motion to approve the resolution that was seconded by Commissioner Roura. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

**FINANCIAL MATTERS:**

Commissioner Roura reported that he had reviewed the monthly bills for December 2016 and January 2017 and that everything was in order. He explained that the January 2017 bills included insurance policy premiums and some other costs that always occur at the beginning of the year. He made a motion to approve December 2016 bills totaling \$272,739.78 that was seconded by Commissioner Shestack. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board. He then made a motion to approve January 2017 bills totaling \$442,394.94 that was seconded by Commissioner Hamilton. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

**MONTHLY REPORT BY ADMINISTRATOR:**

The Administrator had submitted his monthly report to the Board for their review prior to the meeting. There were no questions or comments from the Board on his report.

**BOARD QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT:**

Chief of Department Colucci had submitted his monthly report to the Board for their review prior to the meeting. There were no questions or comments.

**STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

None.

**OTHER MATTERS:**

None.

**COMMENTS OF FIRE DISTRICT PROFESSIONALS:**

Solicitor Braslow reported that the DCA has backed off on several interpretations that he had reported on in November. They have backed off their interpretation that the voting hours at the annual special capital improvement meeting election be from 2 PM to 9 PM. They have also determined that any vehicle purchase, whether an SUV command vehicle or a ladder truck will be considered to be a capital expenditure and required voter approval at an election. Commissioner Shestack added that this didn't effect us because Administrator Jones has always advised us to take the position that all vehicles are considered capital expenditures and we have always had the public vote on them at either the annual election, the special capital improvements meeting election or at a special election.

Solicitor Braslow provided an update on his Cherry Hill battles with DCA and the Local Finance Board, stating that he has filed 2 separate appeals of their denials and will keep the Board abreast of the outcome. He added that although an Assembly Committee has released the permissive election date change bill without comment, they referred it to another Assembly Committee for deliberation and Senator Turner has introduced her own bill with modifications that were never discussed or endorsed. One of the modifications was removal of the language deleting the requirement for voters to approve capital improvement expenditures and the addition of a provision that in multiple Fire District towns, the County Board of Elections would be empowered to either consolidate the Fire Districts or alter the boundary lines, neither of which the State Association of Fire Districts had agreed to or was in favor of. He added that the DCA continues to change their interpretations of the statutes almost day by day citing Attorney General guidance that is not in writing nor

available for review. He advised them that Fire District attorneys cannot keep up with the pace of the rules changes and can't keep their clients properly advised about what they are legally able to do, which really concerned him. For some reason the DCA is getting increasingly difficult to deal with and he believes that it has to do with the politics of the people in power, which for some reason is extremely negative towards the fire service. Administrator Jones added that our interpretation of vehicles being capital expenditures is based on a section of Title 40/40A that clearly states that vehicles are considered capital expenditures based on their life expectancy.

**COMMENTS OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS:**

None.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

None.

Resolution #2017-07 "Closing of Meeting Pursuant to Open Public Meetings Act". Commissioner Shestack made a motion to approve the resolution that was seconded by Commissioner Roura. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

**THE OPEN SESSION ENDED AT 8:21 PM.  
A CLOSED SESSION BEGAN AT 8:22 PM.  
THE CLOSED SESSION ENDED AT 11:21 PM.**

The minutes of Receptionist Hoffman's Disciplinary Hearing that began at 8:49 PM and concluded at 10:40 PM will be a separate document, reviewed by Chief of Department Colucci and attached when they are available.

Commissioner Roura made a motion to approve Chief of Department Colucci's recommendation to extend an offer of conditional employment to Firefighter Peter Toso that was seconded by Commissioner Hamilton. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

Commissioner Hamilton made a motion to adjourn the meeting that was seconded by Commissioner Roura. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

**THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 11:22 PM.**