

The March 11, 2023 Executive Committee meeting of the New Jersey Firemen's Home Board of Managers was called to order by Chairman Wilson at 0910 hours followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Wilson provided the invocation.

Mr. Hull advised that public notice was provided in the official newspaper, the Star Ledger, and on the home's website.

Roll call was taken with all members of the Executive Board present except Mr. Apgar who was excused. Also in attendance were Mr. Dutch, Mr. Freeman, Mr. DeLaurentis, Mr. Heflich, Mr. Miller, Mr. Keyser, President Ordway, Superintendent Veras and Mr. Bell.

The minutes from the February 11, 2023 Executive Committee Meeting were approved.

**Communications:**

Mr. Hull reported no communications.

**Reports of Officers:**

**Secretary:**

Mr. Hull thanked Mr. Washer for filling in for him as secretary at the last meeting as he was out with COVID.

**Treasurer:**

Mr. Sutphen reported that there are 4 months left in the current budget and everything is going as projected. Mr. Sutphen advised that "everyone got a raise" as the mileage allowance had been increased.

**Superintendent:**

Mr. Veras reported that the new physical therapy room is complete and has a certificate of occupancy (CO). As of Monday, the therapists have put the room to use and it will be open to guests on a supervised basis by the therapist and recreation. The old PT system was a "buddy" system and had potential for injury.

Mr. Veras added that maintenance crew were on duty today in anticipation of the snow which turned out to be just rain. The floor by the dining room was replaced. Mr. Veras advised that there will be staff changes in maintenance due to retirements and other factors, describing the changes as a "revamping". Everyone else on staff is doing a fine job.

**Legal Counsel:**

Mr. Bell reported that a Clerk of the Works will be hired for the Vreeland Avenue house demolition project and the issues with adjoining neighbor and to deal with prevailing wages etc. The proposal to go out to bid will be ready for next meeting.

Mr. Bell is still working on the employee manual. Mr. Veras added that any changes to the manual will first go to the Employee Committee than the full board as this is the procedure. Mr. Bell continued that topics like fair labor standards were added to the manual,

Mr. Dutch discussed a survey of the Vreeland property as the neighbor's "lean-to" is partially on our property. Mr. Dutch added that part of the property belongs to the city and that there had previously been discussion with the city giving us the property in exchange for a library on our land, but that fell through years ago when the people working on it got voted out.

Mr. Bell continued that a title search and survey will be recommended. Mr. Keyser stated that he would bring it up under new business.

**Buildings and Grounds:**

Mr. Signorello advised that Mr. Bell gave 80% of his report as the committee had a meeting this morning. Mr. Signorello will try to e-mail out attachments to the committee as he was having computer issues. Mr. Signorello reported that the floor in the dining room was replaced and the window in the lower level of the museum will be repaired. All other items are in the written report he submitted. (See attached)

**Applications:**

Mr. Freeman provided a written report from the application committee meeting held on March 7, 2023 which is attached. The report indicated 62 guest in Long Term Care and 8 in Residential Care for a total of 70 guests. Since the last meeting there have been 3 new admissions and 1 guests answered their final alarm. The next meeting for the Applications Committee is 0900 hours on April 4, 2023 at the Home.

**Employee Committee:**

Mr. Dutch reported everything was quiet.

**Finance and Budget Committee:**

Mr. Hull provided a written report on the February 7, 2023 meeting of the Audit and Finance Committee which is attached. Bills for the month were reported in the amount of \$444,462.20. All revenue and expense vouchers were reviewed and found to be in order. The committee discussed President Ordway's concern from the February meeting with regards to the allocated reserves not being shown on the budget sheet, It has been added to the report. The next meeting for the finance committee will be at 0800 hours on Tuesday April 4, 2023 at the Home.

Mr. Freeman brought up that we need to consider canceling our contract with the lobbyist as we are spending \$5000 a month and have gotten no report. Mr. Greci advised that the lobbyist will be at our meeting in April to provide a report as he maybe working on things "he is not telling us". This prompted several remarks.

**Insurance:**

Mr. Strube not in attendance, no report. Mr. Keyser inquired as to when our policies are up for renewal.

**Legislative Committee:**

Mr. Lugossy was excused but provided a brief report to Secretary Hull advising that he spoke to President Ordway about the cancer screening bill for volunteer firefighters (S3405) and the funding portion that effected the 2% fund has been removed.

Discussion was had on bill ACR171 that would be a constitution change to allow municipalities provide up to 100% property tax credit to volunteers. Mr. Heflich comment that he worked on a similar bill 8 years ago and it fell through due to the lack of unity amongst firefighters. It is doubtful this will pass.

Mr. Hull talked added that the Legislative committee had 154 bills that were being tracked that deal with emergency services and pension. A copy is available if anyone would like.

Mr. Freeman had questions about the cancer bill for career firefighters and was advised those had already passed. Mr. Veras commented that Senator Gopal's wife works for PPAG (Princeton Public Affairs Group, which is our lobbyist's firm).



**By-laws:**

Mr. Jeffer reported that the committee has been working "their fingers to the bone." The By-laws committee met on February 21, 2023. Mr. Jeffer then posed questions to the floor about the differences between the full board and the executive board and what powers does the full board possess. Much discussion ensued as Mr. Jeffer explained that he is trying to make things understandable. Mr. Jeffer asked who sets policy, the full board of executive? Mr. Jeffer provided example of Treasurer's duties and that report should include statement that bills paid are budget items and not outside of budget. Mr. Sutphen responded that is what the Audit and Finance Committee does when they review bills.

Mr. Jeffer then spoke on making more Executive Board meetings, or having Full Board meeting every other month, so 6 Executive and 6 Full Board meetings a year. President Ordway commented that more Executive Meetings was the opposite of what people are saying. Mr. Keyser added that he believed the By-laws Committee was to look into eliminating the Executive Board and having one Full Board.

Much debate ensued from the floor. Mr. Freeman added why add more Executive Board meetings when they can't do anything. Mr. Miller commented on who is running the place and that it is the full 21 Managers not just 9 Executive Board members.

Mr. Greci then spoke on the matter stating as Chairman of the Full Board his first directive to the By-laws Committee was to have it changed to eliminate the Executive Board, the second was to clarify when a Manager takes office, and then to look at other changes little by little. He requested this be completed and voted on by July so if changes are made, Managers who are up for re-election can decide if they want to run or not if there are more meetings.

With regards to when Managers take office, Mr. Bell commented that Statue governs, not by-laws.

Mr. Signorello remarked that the By-law committee is working towards the goals and doing a good job. He thanked Mr. DeLaurentis for his guidance and input based on his years of experience.

Mr. Keyser asked Mr. Jeffer how many people are on the committee and how many show up. Mr. Jeffer responded 3 out of 6.

Mr. Greci continued that he wants the By-Laws Committee to have the changes (eliminating Executive Board and Manager term start date) for April's meeting so the 1st reading could take place and be effective October 1st. Mr. Signorello asked about the voting procedure if we do 1st reading at April meeting, will 2nd reading be at the May Executive Board? Voting on any By-Law changes will be done by the full board meetings.

Mr. Freeman commented that he needed to stick up for the Southern guys as it is an inconvenience to travel each month as the Executive Board just pays the bills. Mr. Wilson disagreed stating that the Executive Board has exceeded its authority at times.

**Museum:**

Mr. Hull advised that he received a book for the museum from the Van Sickle family whose father is a guest in the home. They also have some small items to donate to the museum. Mr. Hull thanked Mr. Heflich personally for coordinating the delivery of the hose cart from the North

Valle Fire Department. Mr. Veras added that the laptop for the museum committee has been set up and is now available to for use.

**Public Relations:**

Mr. Wilson reported progress.

**Ethics and Code of Conduct:**

Mr. Sutphen advised no report at this time.

**Pension:**

Mr. Greci had no report.

**Inventory:**

Mr. Wilson reported no change from last report and the Superintendent has done great job.

**Golf Committee:**

Mr. Greci advised that he will have a full report in April.

**Liaison to the State Association:**

Mr. Hull discussed the written report he distributed by email after the State Association's meeting (copy attached). Those items included information about the convention; when reports are due from the locals; petitions having to be completed to be on the ballot or you would be a write in candidate; field exam dates.

Mr. Hull discussed that the resolution passed to bring the Board of Managers under control of the State Association was discussed and that there is no bill written. Sen. Bucco is not going to move on anything as the two organizations work together. Mr. Hull deferred to President Ordway who confirmed that there is no bill and no one else will touch it due to Senatorial Courtesy.

Mr. Hull continued to report that changes were approved to the Compendium that included removal from the Association for sex offense and offenses of moral turpitude; issues concerning per diem firefighters among other items that were in his written report.

Mr. Hull added that a concern was brought up at the State meeting about an applicant that was rejected due to being violent. Mr. Freeman commented that the person should have been directed to call the Home and the applications committee would have handled it. Mr. Freeman added that discussing applications in public meeting could be a HIPPA violation.

Mr. Heflich added that the resolution with Sen Bucco will not go through and that it is a "dead issue".

**Inspections:**

Mr. Heflich reported a few issues that were brought to Mr. Veras. Mr. Heflich suggested changing the inspection report to list items you should look for, an outline of sorts. Mr. Freeman cautioned Managers talking to Employees during inspections. Mr. Heflich disagreed asking what is wrong with a manager asking a staff member "how things are". Mr. DeLaurentis commented that he has never agreed with Mr. Heflich, but agreed with him on this point. The inquiry was put to Mr. Bell who advised that Managers have the right to speak with the staff, however and problems or follow up should go to Mr. Veras.

**State Firemen's Association:**

President Ordway advised "ditto" to what Mr. Hull had previously reported under liaison committee.

**AD Hock Committee:**

No report, the committees have a meeting Tuesday depending on the weather.

**Unfinished Business:**

Mr. Keyser recommended obtaining a title company and a survey for the Vreeland property. Mr. Bell will have a proposal for the full board in April. Mr. Veras added that there is an updated survey on file from the memory care addition project.

**New Business:**

Mr. Keyser asked why do we have to motion and second committee reports that have "no report". Chairman Wilson took it under advice and will look into.

Mr. Signorello asked for clarification on who can vote and make motions at an Executive Committee meeting. It is the Executive Committee. Mr. Signorello reminded that we needed to adhere to this.

Mr. Bell spoke on why he believed an Executive Committee may have been created years ago, which would be for payment of bills due to the "prompt payment act" which he described as a quirk in the law which required payment in 30 days or we could face fees and double damages".

Mr. Bell added that we need to consider a Code of Conduct in our by-laws. Mr. Jeffer will look into.

**Payment of Bills:**

Mr. Hull reported the total bills in the amount of \$444,462.02 Upon motion, a roll call vote was taken and the bills payment was approved.

**Resolutions:**

None.

**Executive Session:**

None had.

**Public Participation:**

None.

**Good and Welfare:**

Mr. Wilson congratulated Mr. Bell on becoming a grandfather.

Mr. Washer commented that the meetings are too long.

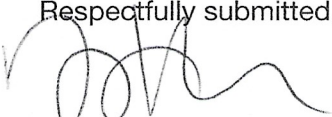
Mr. Hull wished to congratulate Mr. Lugossy was attending Hamilton Township's St. Patricks Day Parade where he would be receiving their newly instituted "Community Service Award" for all of his service in his many roles.

**Adjournment:**

Meeting was adjourned at 1025 AM

**APPROVED AT FULL BOARD MEETING APRIL 8, 2023**

Respectfully submitted,



Roger Hull  
Secretary