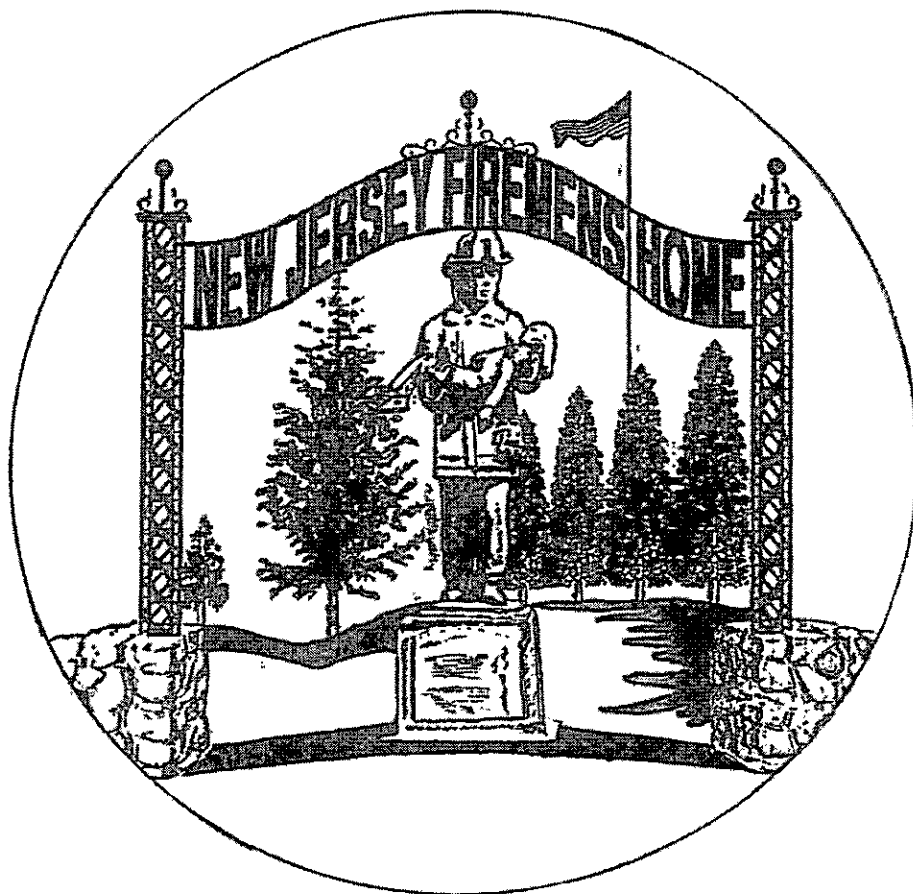


New Jersey Firemen's Home Full Board Meeting



January 11, 2025

The January 11, 2025 meeting of the New Jersey Firemen's Home Board of Managers was called to order by Chairman Washer at 0900 hours and was followed by the pledge of allegiance. A beautiful invocation was provided by Manager Dutch.

Mr. Hull advised that proper public notice had been provided

Roll call was taken with all managers present.

The minutes from the December 14, 2024 Board meetings approved.

Communications:

Secretary Hull read of a letter from New Jersey State Firemen's Association President Robert Ordway with regards to New Jersey statues pertaining to addition/ construction approval procedures for projects at the Home. (copy attached.)

Reports of Officers:

Secretary:

Mr. Hull reported that he, as requested, mailed out packages to all Managers containing a summary of minutes and proposals of the Application Committee's admission policy. Included was a proposal Mr. Hull drafted. These items were requested so they could be reviewed by the Managers for a vote in February's meeting.

Treasurer:

Mr. Sutphen reported that the IRS has increased mileage reimbursement to 70 cents a mile. This will be added to the Managers travel. If anyone has toll increases, see Mr. Sutphen.

Superintendent:

Mr. Veras reported that the Flu is in the building and thanked everyone for adhering to the mask policy. The elevator project is to begin Monday and should be complete within six weeks. There is a plan in place to utilize the memory care unit elevator to move guests around. For the first time in years, everyone in the Home has had the flu vaccines, some had additional COVID boosters as well. Mr. Veras thanked the recreation staff for activities they provided the guests who are in quarantine.

Legal Counsel:

Mr. Bell reported that he had no official report at this time.

Buildings and Grounds:

Mr. Keyser provided a written report from Maintenance Director Hodierne listing the status of various projects. A copy is attached.

Mr. Keyser added that water testing is still ongoing and he thanked the maintenance crew for being here at 6 AM today to clear the snow for the meeting.

Applications:

Mr. Freeman provided a written report of the application committee meeting held on January 7, 2025 which is attached. The report indicated 72 guest in Long Term Care and 5 in Residential Care for a total of 77 guests. Since the last meeting, there was one admission to the Home and one is scheduled for January 22, 2025. Two residents answered their final alarm this month. There are 14 applications on the waiting list as of December 31, 2024. The next meeting for the Applications Committee is 0900 hours on Tuesday February 4, 2025 at the Home.

Employee Committee:

Mr. Dutch advised that there is one case under litigation that he can not report on at this time..

Finance and Budget Committee:

Mr. Hull read a written report from the January 7, 2025 meeting of the Audit and Finance Committee which is attached. The committee reviewed revenue and expense reports from July 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024, as well as vouchers for the period of December 10th through January 7th. Bills were reported in the amount of \$370,618.22.

The committee is happy to report that the Governor signed our 2025-26 budget.

The next meeting of the committee will be at 0800 hours on Tuesday, February 4, 2025 at the Home.

Insurance:

Mr. Strube advised no new report at this time.

Legislative Committee:

Mr. Lugossy reported that there are several bills on the Governor's desk awaiting signature. The Governor did sign our budget.

By-laws:

Mr. Apgar advised that he had no report but would be speaking with the Committee after today's meeting about a few items.

Museum:

Mr. Hull thanked the maintenance crew for trying to keep up on the leaves that blow into the downstairs each time the bay door is open. Committee-person Heflich had made note of this several times, and the crew is now doing best to blow them out often. We also received an item from Cape May which will be placed in the museum.

Public Relations:

Mr. Wilson reported that the committee met after December's meeting and started to go over a few ideas. The Committee will be meeting after February's Board meeting to continue discussions.

Ethics and Code of Conduct:

Mr. Sutphen advised no report at this time.

Pension:

Mr. Washer advised nothing new.

Inventory:

Mr. Wilson advised no report.

Golf Committee:

Mr. Signorello stated "progress"

Liaison to the State Association:

Mr. Hull reported that he plans on speaking with Mr. Otterbein soon to keep open communication between the Home and Association.

Inspections:

Mr. Freeman advised that the inspection was done this Tuesday and no deficiencies were found.

Long Term Planning/Addition Committee:

Mr. Mitch reported the committee met this morning prior to the meeting and they discussed the proposal from KDA. The proposal is the first step in the planning, conceptual design process of an addition to the Home. The committee recommended moving forward with KDA and approving the funds to do so.

Mr. Hull inquired if this would be contrary to the letter from President Ordway that was read in the beginning of the meeting regarding additions to the Home.

Mr. Sutphen responded that it is not bypassing any statue, it is to gather information so we have an idea of what to do. We are not building at this time, just getting information and that we did similar when the memory care unit was planned.

Mr. Keyser agreed with Mr. Sutphen that we are not building anything at this time.

Mr. Dunn inquired as to where we are getting the \$18,000 from.

Mr. Sutphen responded that we can take it from buildings and grounds. There are some maintenance items that we can forgo.

A motion was made to approve \$18,000 to move forward with the proposal from KDA and a roll call vote was taken. 16 Managers voted in favor, Mr. Hull and Mr. Ordway voted NO, Mr. Dunn and Mr. Heflich abstained. Motion passed.

** At 0923 hours the meeting was paused for a disciplinary hearing involving a complaint made by a guest against a manager. The hearing Judge had arrived at this time. The proceedings were documented by a special court stenographer.*

*** At approximately 1015 hours Manager Stuphen was excused and left the meeting/ hearing for a family matter.*

**** At 1141 hours the hearing concluded and the Board meeting re-convened so that the regular business could be finished while the judge and legal counsel discussed the matter.*

State Firemen's Association:

President Ordway advised that it is the State's "heavy report" period. Any officers having issues should not wait and should call immediately. Do NOT wait until the last minute to try to do reports by the due date.

Unfinished Business:

Mr. Keyser thanked Mr. Veras for sending out the information on the length of fire service for the guests at the Home. The average length of service is approximately 24 years.

New Business:

Mr. Keyser asked if we would be getting new business card since we switched over to NJFH email accounts. Mr Veras responded that all managers will be getting new cards with the new emails and their cell phones. Personal home addresses will be removed unless a manager wants to keep it on the card.

Mr. Veras advised that he was approached by our food service vendor, Unidine about doing a capital project for the Home. They have done these in the past (dining room re-finished). This time Unidine would like to build an outdoor kitchen for us that would include a grill, flat top cook surface, steam table, coolers and a hand washing station. This would involve us

amending our contract with Undine to extend it two more years to amortize the cost of the project.

Payment of Bills:

Mr. Hull reported the total bills in the amount of \$370,618.22. Upon motion, a roll call vote was taken and the bills payment was approved.

Motions and Resolutions:

None

Public Participation:

Essex County Executive Committeeman Rich Otterbein who is chairman of the State Association's Firemen Home Committee thanked Mr. Veras for providing the list of years of service for guests in the Home and on the waiting list. He asked for a count of how many rooms are available in the Home, how many are occupied and unoccupied, and if the Memory Care unit is full. Mr. Veras will provide. Mr Otterbein asked if the memory care unit could be used for quarantine purposes. Mr. Veras responded "no".

Hudson County Executive Committeeman Larry Handlin spoke on the \$18,000 the board approved for the construction proposal from KDA. He asked if an RFP was put out for it?

Mr. Cunningham responded that after speaking with an architect and other non-profits that KDA worked for, they came back to KDA. They did work in Somerset County.

Mr. Handlin felt an RFP should have went out and since it did not, is the vote null and void?

Mr. Handlin also asked about why would the Home forgo maintenance items they budgeted for to spend the money on KDA when we have funds in surplus.

Mr. Dutch responded that Mr. Veras had attended three conventions where he met them and recommended them. He also visited other places they have worked.

Mr. Keyser added that KDA could be considered a professional service and three bids would not be required.

New Jersey State Firemen's Association Vice President Joseph Hankins spoke on the State of New Jersey's task force study on nursing homes that the Board spoke about last meeting. He also received and reviewed it. Mr. Hankins advised that the report leaned towards moving away from nursing homes, yet the Managers just approved \$18,000 to look at an addition. The report prioritizes goals.

First Priority is for in home care.

Second Priority is for a group home type setting.

37 pages into the report is when nursing homes are discussed.

Mr. Hankins continued, stating that President Ordway sent a letter that is clearly something we need to talk about. Long Term Planning from the Home and Long Term Planning from the State Association should've come together and talked about this. Money looking to be spent on an addition could be used for in home care. Mr Hankins added that volunteerism in the fire service is down. The (Home's) statement that there is an increase or potential increase in demand may not accurate.

Mr. Keyser responded stating if you read page 34 you see that they (the task force report) discuss moving away from having 3 to 4 guest sharing a room.

Mr. Hankins retorted that you have to read the first 34 pages to get to that and they say in home care is the way to go.

Executive Session:

None had.

Good and Welfare:

Mr. Apgar presented a check for \$1000 from the Readington Fire Company, Hunterdon County.

Mr. Dunn thanked Mr. Cunningham for setting up the State Deputy Chief's Association holiday visit to the Home and Guests.

****At 1200 hours the normal business of the Home was concluded and a recess was taken while the hearing Judge and Legal Counsel continued to discuss the hearing. The Judge then returned his findings to the Board of Managers who deliberated on the charges and the penalty. The deliberation and penalty discussion were recorded by the special court stenographer for the hearing.*

*****At 1250 hours deliberations had concluded and the Board meeting resumed for the purpose of announcing the findings.*

Hearing Results:

The Hearing Judge found that the charges against Manager Heflich were sustained. The Board unanimously concurred with a guilty verdict.

The Board of Manages felt that Mr. Heflich should be permanently SUSPENDED from the Board of Managers and replaced by his County. Additionally, Mr. Helfich is barred from the Firemen's Home for a period of three years. This was passed by the required 2/3rds of Managers voting.

At the request of Mr. Heflich's attorney, a public roll call was taken of the Managers with regard to the penalty handed down. 16 Managers voted in favor of the penalty. Managers Wilson, Jeffer and President Ordway voted against the penalty.

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 1303 hours.

Respectfully submitted,



Roger Hull
Secretary