

New Jersey Firemen's Home Full Board Meeting



February 8, 2025

The February 8, 2025 meeting of the New Jersey Firemen's Home Board of Managers was called to order by Vice-Chairman Apgar at 0900 hours and was followed by the pledge of allegiance. An invocation was provided by Manager Dutch.

Mr. Hull advised that proper public notice had been provided

Roll call was taken with managers DeVirgilio, Mitch, and Washer being excused. *Salem and Hudson county positions currently vacant.

The minutes from the January 11, 2025 Board meeting was approved.

Vice-Chairman Apgar asked that the application policy proposal on the agenda be tabled as we now have two counties without managers and three managers absent today. Discussion followed about the filling of vacant manager positions. Mr. Ordway advised that Hudson County should be filled by March 5th. No one in Salem is interested in the Home as they use the State's Program. The matter is tabled until April's meeting.

Communications:

Secretary Hull advised that he had received three letters via email from Managers expressing concern for the exchange that took place between Hudson County Executive Committeeman Larry Handlin and Mr. Hull after the last board meeting. Mr. Hull advised that he spoke with Mr. Handlin, he apologized and he did not mean his comment as a threat. Mr. Hull advised that he accepted the apology at face value and as far as he (Hull) is concern the matter is over. Mr. Hull advised he sent an email to the Board stating it had been resolved.

Reports of Officers:

Secretary:

Mr. Hull advised that there were petitions for re-election on the front table for the five managers that are up this year. Those are Hull, Giglio, Washer, Dutch and Strube. Fill it out so we do not have another Somerset County "incident". President Ordway added that the forms had been revised to have spaces for four endorsements. Only two are required but four spots were added in the event someone signs who isn't with the Association like what occurred last caucus season (Somerset). Mr. Hull will get the new forms out before end of meeting.

Treasurer:

Mr. Sutphen asked Managers to let him know if they experience a toll increase. All else is fine.

Superintendent:

Mr. Veras reported that the ongoing saga with water testing continues. We have a new consultant assigned to us. Slight changes were made to the water system for a hot water bypass that allows us to flush the whole system with 140 degree water. Our new consultant plans to speak with the Department of Health as the type of legionella that had been detected in our system does not cause Legionnaire's disease.

We are prepared for the snow and have plenty of salt on hand.

The Department of Health infection control did an inspection and the certificates are up front. They found "no need for improvement".

Please get your NJFH.org email up and running. Once everyone is online we can send out notices about guests as we will be HIPPA compliant. Forwarding the Home email to your personal email is not legal.

Mr. Signorello inquired if we were permitted to put the email on our phones and desktop computers. Mr. Veras replied you can access it from anywhere.

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 Hodiernie listing the status of various projects. A copy is attached. He added that he met with Tom Hodiernie on February 3rd and the elevator project is moving along, right on schedule. After last month's meeting some Managers approached him about renovating the restrooms outside of the auditorium. There is no money in the budget for it at this time, but can be a future project. Managers also asked for softer chairs for the auditorium. Mr. Veras commented that the chairs used for the meeting/ hearing are not commonly used for extended periods like we had done last meeting. Guests don't use those chairs.

Applications:

Mr. Freeman provided a written report of the application committee meeting held on February 4, 2025 which is attached. The report indicated 75 guest in Long Term Care and 5 in Residential Care for a total of 80 guests. Since the last meeting, there was three admissions to the Home and one application was denied as the applicant was beyond our scope of care at the Home. One resident answered their final alarm this month. There are 10 applications on the waiting list as of January 31, 2025. The next meeting for the Applications Committee is 0900 hours on Tuesday, March 4, 2025 at the Home.

Employee Committee:

Mr. Dutch advised that the committee will be meeting soon to discuss vacation time, leave of absences and family leave time.

Finance and Budget Committee:

Mr. Hull read a written report from the February 4, 2025 meeting of the Audit and Finance Committee which is attached. The committee reviewed revenue and expense reports from July 1, 2024 to January 31, 2025, as well as vouchers for the period of January 7th through February 4th. Bills were reported in the amount of \$482,952.70.

The committee reviewed and discussed a bill for the elevator project in the amount of \$101,430.00 which will come from the property account as funds were allocated and transferred there last budget.

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

Insurance:

Mr. Strube advised that everything is in order and there is nothing new report at this time.

Legislative Committee:

Mr. Lugosy reported on two laws, one federal and one state. Federally HR82- the Social Security Fairness Act passed. Starting in 2024 you will get full earned benefit, even if you have a public pension. Your benefits will not be cut.

On the State level, S684 was signed into law 2025 Chapter 3. This allows for telecommunications, cable and internet service to be canceled or suspended if a person goes into long term care.

Mr. Signorello added that there is law being passed that change certifications for Fire Official, Fire Inspector and Fire Sub-Code from certifications to licensing.

Mr. Ordway added that this has passed both houses and went to the Governor for signature.

By-laws:

Mr. Apgar advised that he had no report.

Museum:

Mr. Hull advised he had nothing to report this month.

Public Relations:

Mr. Wilson reported that the committee will be meeting after March's Board meeting to continue discussions. Nothing further.

Ethics and Code of Conduct:

Mr. Sutphen asked managers to complete their ethics disclosure forms and return them.

Pension:

Mr. Veras advised that an audit was completed of our house pension system with no issues.

Inventory:

Mr. Wilson advised no report.

Golf Committee:

Mr. Signorello advised that the date of the Golf Outing is set for June 16, 2025, a Monday this year. The set up for the event will be the same as last year.

Liaison to the State Association:

Mr. Hull that he had no report.

Inspections:

Mr. Keyser advised he completed the inspection and found a few minor issues such as light bulbs out in the museum. Tom was notified to replace. No other deficiencies were found.

Long Term Planning/Addition Committee:

Mr. Sutphen reported that they met with KDA last month and did a walk through of our building. We will continue to meet to discuss plans and look for ways to pay for the project the best way without an impact on our budget or the State Association budget.

State Firemen's Association:

President Ordway advised that it is report season. He asked if any Manager knew anyone from Salem County who might be interested in the Manager position. Call Mr. Ordway and he will appoint them at this point.

Mr. Apgar asked the Managers in the counties that touch Salem County to reach out.

Unfinished Business:

None

New Business:

Mr. Wilson advised that he volunteers to cover March inspection with Chief Hull.

Mr. Veras reported on working with our food vendor, Unidine, for them to provide an outdoor kitchen. They would fund the project as part of a two year contract extension. The project would be amortized over two years. The outdoor kitchen would include a grill, flat top, steam table, refrigeration and would be nice addition to our BBQ events.

Mr. Keyser inquired if this would be considered "pay to play".

Mr. Veras responded no as they are providing equipment to provide their services.

Mr. Dutch asked how we would protect it from the weather. Mr Veras advised that a cover would be made by one of our staff member's husband.

Mr. Hull asked what it is going to cost. Mr. Veras advised that the project is estimated to cost \$50,000- \$60,000 but there would be zero out of pocket expense the Home.

Mr. Ordway asked about Unidine's history of doing such projects. Mr. Veras advised that they refinished our dining room and that was amortized over five years.

Upon motion and roll call voted the project was approved.

Mr. Signorello advised that he wished to discuss the incident with Hudson County Executive Committeeman Handlin after the last board meeting and hearing. Mr. Signorello advised that he was one of the Managers that wrote one of the communications about the incident. He advised he was appalled by what happened. He was right there. He understands that firemen fight, but this was out of line for an executive committeeman. He feels this should not be swept under the rug. Mr. Signorello added that before encountering Mr. Hull, Mr. Handlin's remarks were made in the direction of him and other Managers (Cunningham and Joas). Mr. Signorello asked Mr. Handlin, "are you threatening us" and Larry replied "take it what it is". Mr. Signorello added he thought about calling Boonton Police, but he didn't. Mr. Handlin's actions were uncalled for.

Mr. Hull spoke on the matter and said tempers were elevated and that he felt Mr. Handlin was looking for a fight. Mr. Hull said he would oblige him and they got in each others face. Mr. Hull said they talked later and he accepted the apology.

Mr. Signorello and Mr. Joas expressed unhappiness with the events. A discussion followed with regards to removing Mr. Handlin from the State Association's Firemen Home Committee. Mr. Ordway advised "send a letter". Mr. Signorello advised he would consider accepting an apology. After there was discussion about the incident, Mr. Apgar advised he would contact Mr. Handlin to speak with him in attempt to resolve the matter.

Payment of Bills:

Mr. Hull reported the total bills in the amount of \$482,952.70. Upon motion, a roll call vote was taken and the bills payment was approved.

Motions and Resolutions:

None

Public Participation:

None

Executive Session:

None had.

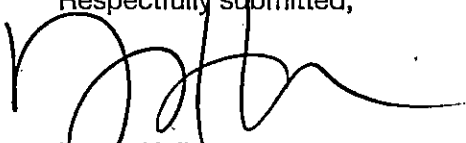
Good and Welfare:

None

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 0944 hours.

Respectfully submitted,



Roger Hull
Secretary