

The August 10, 2024 Full Board 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. An invocation was provided by Manager Dutch.

Chairman Washer then addressed the managers advising that the stenographer has a hard enough job, so anyone who wants to have side bar discussions can take them out of the room. Additionally we need to respect the home, the Staff and each other.

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

Roll call was taken with all managers present except Ms. DeVirgilio and Mr. Jeffer who were both excused.

The minutes from the July 13, 2024 Full Board meeting approved.

Communications:

Secretary Hull reported that there were no communications received.

Reports of Officers:

Secretary:

Mr. Hull advised that he had sent our Annual Report to the State Association to be included in the information packets for the caucuses. Any Manager who wants a copy in a word document to edit as needed should contact Secretary Hull. Invitations for the Wildwood dinner and events were mail to former managers and emailed to current managers. Hard copies are up front for those who want them. Mr. Hull thanked Mr. Dunn for setting up the events in Wildwood this year.

Treasurer:

Mr. Sutphen reported that we will be using the delegate convention allowances plus a meeting allowance for managers pay in Wildwood. Mr. Ordway added that the delegate allowances are posted on the State's website and they are the same as last year.

Superintendent:

Mr. Veras reported that our annual Memorial Services will be following our meeting at 11 AM in the auditorium.

We received two positive tests for Legionella in our water system and we will be moving forward with a chlorination system installation starting next week.

The Department of Health visited the Home as part of an invited visit as well as it was triggered by our recent COVID outbreak. Their review found that we could be doing nothing better with regards to infection control. Mr. Veras added that he is proud of his staff.

The Bergen County BBQ recognized a 101 year old guest. We have some issues with BBQs because of the heat, we are playing them by ear.

Mr. Veras appreciated Mr. Dunn for his work on setting up the meeting and event venues in Wildwood.

Mr. Wilson inquired if the chlorination system; needed to go out to bid.

Mr. Veras responded that it was under the threshold. It is estimated to cost us \$6,000. Our water specialist quoted us \$36,000 to do the job.

Legal Counsel:

Mr. Bell reported that he has been handling an "HR matter" with John and Sharon. Nothing else to report.

Buildings and Grounds:

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

Mr. Keyser commented that the felt the chlorination system is a great idea. The elevator project is in the works and we are looking to replace the outdoor ramp which has a heating element in it. Mr. Keyser thanked the maintenance crew for the great job they have been doing. He inspected the Home on Thursday and found everything to be good, again thanking John and his staff.

Applications:

Mr. Freeman provided a written report of the application committee meeting held on August 6, 2024 which is attached. The report indicated 75 guest in Long Term Care and 7 in Residential Care for a total of 82 guests. There are 15 on the waiting list. Because of the waiting list, pre-admission conferences have been put on hold. We are at full capacity and there have been no new admissions. The next meeting for the Applications Committee is 0900 hours on Tuesday September 3, 2024 at the Home.

Employee Committee:

Mr. Dutch reported that there was a resolution distributed this morning and it is the first time he saw. No further report.

Finance and Budget Committee:

Mr. Hull read a written report from the August 6, 2024 meeting of the Audit and Finance Committee which is attached. The committee reviewed revenue and expense reports as well as vouchers for the period. Bills were reported in the amount of \$605,129.20. \$133,010.39 of which is for the full payment of our insurance renewal instead of making a payment plan. The committee held discussions in regards to planning our next budget as well as unanticipated expenses that are ongoing occurring after our current budget was approved. Those were the ongoing water testing at \$12,000 a month; the potential cost of a chlorination system; the pension "buy back" which we were short \$248,000 this year. We will be meeting with our auditors in September, TBD, to work on the next budget. The next meeting of the committee will be at 0800 hours on Tuesday, September 3, 2024 at the Home.

Mr. Miller inquired if we would be required to still have water testing after the chlorination system is installed. Mr. Veras responded that we would have to test until we had a certain number of negative results.

Insurance:

Mr. Strube advised that all was in order and there was nothing new to report.

Legislative Committee:

Mr. Lugossy reported that there is no Senate or Assembly activity this month as they are on summer break. July 1st began the State of New Jersey's 56.6 **Billion** dollar budget. He advised that bill S2435 revises the requirements for reimbursement from the EMS training fund. It has passed both houses and is on the Governor's desk.

Mr. Lugossy reported that there have been 8,868 bills introduced this session. 147 of those are Fire and EMS related

71 under Firemen's Home
48 involve the pension systems
There are 35 bills on the Governor's desk awaiting to be signed into law.

The State Firemen's Association Legislative committee went on record to support 125 bills in Fire and EMS, opposes 11 and take no action on 2.
Under Fireman's Home the committee opposes 71 of the bills; and under pension the committee supported 34 bills, opposed 6 and take no action on 3 bills.

Mr. Keyser asked about the Firemen's Home bills on the State's report.
Mr. Ordway commented that they are not bills specific to the Firemen's Home. They do key word searches and list all bills for nursing homes.

By-laws:

Mr. Apgar reported that it has been productive. He received the CD with the bylaws from Mr. Hull and will be passing it along to the committee. The disc has the newest bylaws. Mr. Veras asked for a copy on a thumb drive as no computer in the Home has a CD drive anymore.

Museum:

Mr. Hull reported progress.

Public Relations:

Mr. Wilson reported that everything is set for Wildwood. Chief Spiegel has got us our table location and Chief Dunn has the handout items in Wildwood already. Please take note of any items you see in Wildwood that we could give out in future. Mr. Giglio and I (Wilson) will be there to set up Thursday morning if you can help. Come to the table to sign in for both days.

Ethics and Code of Conduct:

Mr. Sutphen advised no report.

Pension:

Mr. Washer advised no report.

Inventory:

Mr. Wilson reported that there is nothing new to add to inventory.

Golf Committee:

Mr. Signorello stated that he is still getting positive feedback. Will put the train on the tracks in January for next year's event.

Mr. Keyser advised that he got good feedback from Morris County and we can expect more golfers next year.

Liaison to the State Association:

Mr. Hull reported that he distributed a written report from the State's July 20, 2024 meeting which he attended with Mr. Miller and Mr. Dunn. With the exception of the report from the State's Home Committee Chair, Mr. Otterbein which was a summary of our meetings; there was not much specifically relevant to the Home. The meeting was information about reports and upcoming caucuses. A copy is attached.

Inspections:

Mr. Keyser came in on Thursday after lunch time. "Everything is up to par." He checked the water temperatures in several locations and all were ok.

Addition Committee:

Mr. Cunningham advised that they held their first meeting this morning. They are gathering information on which direction we may be taking.

Long Term Planning:

Mr. Sutphen reported that they received information back from the actuary and they found an enormous amount of information on nursing homes. The Federal Department of Housing and Human Services reported that New Jersey will need 70 new nursing homes and existing nursing homes will need to add an average of 29 beds by the year 2030. Our Home would need an additional 23 rooms to have single guest per room.

State Firemen's Association:

President Ordway advised that it is caucus season. There are 14 more to do over 11 nights. There is a new Middlesex County Executive-person, William Smith and they look forward to working with him,

Unfinished Business:

Mr. Freeman advised that the admission policy had been un-tabled last month and we need to vote on it today and move on. Mr. Hull commented that it was un-tabled for discussion there is no requirement to vote on it today. Discussion can continue.

Mr. Keyser commented that he didn't want to speak out of turn as part of application committee, but he felt we should vote on the admission policy change presented and that although it is something we hardly do, it should be a secret ballot.

Mr. Hull responded that we are elected to represent our Counties. We do not need to hide our votes by secret ballot. We do everything in the open. If a manager is afraid to vote, they should not take the job or maybe abstain. There was accusation that the secret ballot was because managers were mean or said nasty comments to members of the committee, Mr. Hull advised that we have an ethics committee if there is an issue with a manager's conduct. Mr. Hull reminded Managers of the names ("numnuts and Columbo") he was called by the Superintendent and that he was throw out of an executive board meeting and forced to stand outside due to differences of opinion. He didn't cry about it and try to hide his vote.

Mr. Heflich agreed with Mr. Hull that we represent our County.

Mr. Veras wished to add that the comments/ name calling to Mr. Hull were made by the former Superintendent, not by him.

Mr. Ordway commented that he has no idea what we are voting on. We have received nothing in writing. What are we voting on?

Mr. Washer advised that a voted would be a roll call vote and if you have something to hide, you can abstain.

Mr. Apgar commented that he had present the bylaws binder to Mr. Bell at last month's meeting regarding that any policy change to the admission's policy should be referred to the bylaws committee.

Mr. Bell agreed with Mr. Apgar and that it is on page 70D-1 of the bylaws adopted 4/9/2011.

Mr. Dutch asked what was the recommendation of the committee?

Mr. Freeman responded that they had put it out in writing already.

Mr. Sutphen stated we should address this next month.

Mr. Keyser stated copies should be made so they can hand them out.

Mr. Dunn asked if there would be a counter proposal or we just voting on one proposal.

Mr. Strube commented that the application committee should send out the proposal so we have it in black and white, and we vote on it in Wildwood. If it passes it does, if not we come up with a second proposal.

Mr. Freeman responded that's no problem, but it goes through bylaws first.

Mr. Bell responded that bylaws determine the rules of an organization. A policy is more flexible and deals with day to day and what's allowed.

Mr. Freeman added that maybe we try the new policy for a year.

Mr. Mitch asked that we present alternate changes. If one fails , we can vote on the second.

Mr. Ordway added to that each should be voted on separately, not one ballot with both proposals on it.

Mr. Dunn commented that there were two counter proposals so far from the Secretary and from President Ordway that should be sent out.

Mr. DeLaurentis then commented that there were changes to the application in 2022 dated 9/30/2022. When were they adopted? (No response)

Mr. Keyser advised the committee will send out the proposals to be voted on next month.

New Business:

Mr. Heflich commented on his involvement with the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) and how the newly proposed OSHA regulations would hurt the fire service specifically in New Jersey. He wished to submit for the record a copy of the letter he wrote to OSHA. Hopefully these proposals get "knocked out of the box" as they will hurt the fire service.

Mr. Dutch commented that he agrees with Mr. Heflich and reported on a visit his fire department had with the bureau of fire safety and they made the remarked we follow half NFPA and half PEOSHA.

Mr. Signorello asked if the Fire Safety Commission commented on the OSHA changes.

Mr. Heflich responded that every Mayor ad Council should respond to them (OSHA).

Payment of Bills:

Mr. Hull reported the total bills in the amount of \$605,129.20 Upon motion, a roll call vote was taken and the bills payment was approved.

Motions and Resolutions:

Resolution 01-2024 was presented to the floor.

Mr. Apgar commented that the resolution was distributed this morning and no one had a chance to read it. Questions were asked about the salary ranges.

Mr. Heflich commented that it should be voted on next month.

Mr. Veras advised that the establishment of the salary ranges are a requirement of the Division of Pensions. We must adopt a range to show that we are not "padding" someone's pension when they retire.

Mr. Dunn commented that this is done in municipalities as an ordinance and is required.

Mr. Hull commented on the salary ranges as the resolution states it was done by the Finance Committee along with the Employee committee. This was not the case. The top end of the salary chart was very high and represent 35% increase in some cases.

It was asked who created the salary ranges, Mr. Veras responded that Sharon in finance put the list together. We last did it in 2022. This list provides for ranges **NOT** establishing the salaries of employees. The salaries are given out on "merit base", but if the managers want to go and approve the salary of every employee they can. The average annual salary increase is between 2.5% to 5%. We can not exceed 5 %.

Mr. Hull commented that the Superintendent's salary was increased over 5% and stated that the ranges are too high. If passed, in a year or so from now, we will have huge increases and will be told that the "managers approved this in August of 2024". This was not discussed with budget committee.

Mr. Apgar asked who gives the raises. Mr. Veras responded that they are merit based.

Mr. Heflich asked that the Superintendent provide a list of all employees salaries.

After some discussion, a roll call vote was taken with 13 in favor of the salary resolution, 5 against, and 2 abstained.

Public Participation:

None

Executive Session:

None had.

Good and Welfare:

Mr. Dunn reported on where managers should park for the Wildwood meeting.

Mr. Hull congratulated Mr. Dunn for being on the cover of Firehouse magazine this month, presenting a copy, jokingly asking for his autograph. Strong work Chief Dunn!

Mr. Wilson commented that Mr. Sutphen is in a contested election for his position on the board. He asked managers to come to Mr. Sutphen's caucus to show support for Tom.

Mr. Sutphen thanked everyone for their support.

Mr. Washer asked if the State could look into changing the petition policy so if a petition is incorrect it could be returned to the individual to be corrected and re-submitted.

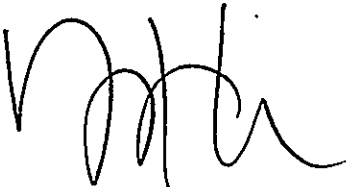
Mr. Wilson added that Mr. Washer is 100% correct, it is done that way in municipal elections. The person is notified of the error. The State Association should adhere to that procedure as well as the other election laws they follow.

Mr. Freeman commented that you DO NOT have to be a member of the State Association to come to the Home or be a Manager, so it should not matter if they are in Association if they sign a Manager's petition.

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 1005 hours.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RH', written in a cursive style.

Roger Hull
Secretary