

The July 13, 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.

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.

The minutes from the June 8, 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 distributed a copy of last year's Annual Report and asked managers to provide input for this year's report so it can be completed and distributed at the upcoming caucuses..

Treasurer:

Mr. Sutphen reported that we are beginning our new fiscal year. There is information on the back of Manager's checks reflecting increases in tolls and a 3% increase in travel reimbursement. Please review and contact Mr. Sutphen if changes needed to be made.

Superintendent:

Mr. Veras reported that COVID is back in the Home. If you go into the facility please wear a mask. Guests have been quarantined in their rooms. We have 17 positive results with an additional 15 guest recovered. We have to stick to the 10 day quarantine guidelines. All communal activities and dining have been canceled.

We have received more positive test results for Legionella. We are pricing out a chlorination and sanitation system for the Home. There are NO guests who have Legionella.

The golf outing was a big success and Mr. Signorello will have more on it in his committee report.

We ended the budget year with slight reserve. We did have additional unforeseen expenses that included our housekeeping and water testing.

Legal Counsel:

Mr. Bell reported that we have a new IT contract for a more sophisticated and secure system for our needs. Mr. Bell is also working on some power of attorney paperwork issues with guests.

Buildings and Grounds:

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

Mr. Keyser thanked the maintenance crew for their assistance setting up and breaking down for the Golf outing.

The elevator project is underway. The pavilion was painted and our water softener was replaced.

Applications:

Mr. Freeman provided a written report of the application committee meeting held on July 9, 2024 which is attached. The report indicated 75 guest in Long Term Care and 7 in Residential Care for a total of 82 guests. We are at full capacity. Since the last meeting there have been 2 new admissions. There are 8 pre-admission conference's for new applicants. The next meeting for the Applications Committee is 0900 hours on Tuesday August 6, 2024 at the Home.

Mr. Freeman added that applications are being downloaded from our site "furiously". One county has downloaded 40 application. Mr. Freeman added that being full, the long term planning committee should become "short term" planning for additional rooms.

Employee Committee:

Mr. Dutch reported that everything is fine.

Finance and Budget Committee:

Mr. Hull read a written report from the July 9, 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 \$471,849.16. We have completed our our 2023-24 budget and have begun our new budget period. There were discussions in regards to an invoice for our new replacement "gator" all terrain vehicle and that in the future large purchases should come before the board. Lengthy discussions were held on preparing for our next budget including review of food and cleaning contracts.

The next committee meeting will be held at 8:00 AM on August 6, 2024 at the Home.

Insurance:

Mr. Strube advised that there was nothing new.

Legislative Committee:

Mr. Lugossy reported the legislature passed and the Governor did sign on June 28th a \$56.7 billion dollar budget avoiding a July 1st shut down. The budget is largest in state history. The budget has an additional \$10 million dollars for the firefighter grant program. The budget also calls for full pension funding. There is also a bill (A4458) on the Governor's desk waiting to be signed into law which revises implementation for requirement of automatic fire sprinkler systems in townhouses.

On the Federal Government side, the Senate passed the Fire Grants and Safety Act Bill (S-870) re-authorized funding to the Assistance to Firefighter and Safer grant programs. Once signed into law they will be extended into the year 2030.

New Jersey Assembly introduced A-4523 which creates the first ever Board of Para-medicine in New Jersey. The board would oversee all clinical and education standards in EMS in New Jersey.

Lastly, bill A-4284 calls for the elimination of fees for firefighter and EMS license plates.

By-laws:

Mr. Apgar reported that the committee met this morning and they are reviewing several items. More will follow. The by-laws call for a periodic review of the by-laws and Mr. Apgar

wished to spearhead the review. He called on the committee heads to review their respective portions and bring feedback back to him on any changes. It is the goal to get the by-law book updated.

Museum:

Mr. Hull reported that he had no report.

Public Relations:

Mr. Wilson thanked Deputy Chief Dunn for bringing our convention give-aways to Wildwood for us. Mr. Dunn will bring them to the convention center when we set up. Mr. Wilson thanked the State Association for previously handling transport and delivery of our items. Mr. Wilson added that we should think about what we want to do for next year. Our table for the convention center has been reserved.

Ethics and Code of Conduct:

Mr. Sutphen advised no report.

Pension:

Mr. Washer reported that there must be no issues because no one has contacted him. He asked the floor if anyone had any issues with their pensions. (No responses)

Inventory:

Mr. Wilson reported that all is in order with no new major additions.

Golf Committee:

Mr. Signorello thanked everyone who came out to help at the event. The golfers liked the course; the weather was perfect and the food was good. It was great to bring the golfers back to the home. We had 138 golfers, slightly less than our average of 145. Due to planning and cost savings we made and extra \$3000 this year. Our total net was \$15,720. We will look into next year's event after the re-organization meeting. Mr. Signorello added that "Prince knocked it out of the park with the food", adding how he personally ate 6 corn muffins.

Mr. Keyser thanked Mr. Signorello and Mr. Veras for their work on the outing. "Word on the street" is the golfers like the course and we will have more participants next year. Mr. Keyser added that there should possibly be a manager assigned to the Home during the event to give tours etc.

Mr. Sutphen added that even the Somerset County guys liked the new course better. (*previous outing were held in Somerset)

Mr. Miller suggested looking into securing a date before the re-org meeting.

Liaison to the State Association:

Mr. Hull reported that he distributes the legislative reports from the State Association. Some managers had questions about the list labeled for the Firemen's Home. Mr. Hull explained that we piggy backed on the State's subscription for searching bills. The list for the Home includes any bill that deals with long term care, nursing homes etc. They are not bills specifically for the Firemen's Home but any bill that could effect us. Mr. Hull thanked the State and Secretary Brian Martone for the co-operative effort with the legislative information.

Inspections:

Mr. Lugossy advised that due to the COVID restrictions the monthly inspection was canceled.

Long Term Planning:

Mr. Sutphen reported that due to the Home being full we need to think about short term planning.

Mr. Hull inquired about a rumor of a sub committee being formed to look for a second Home in Ocean County, specifically the Toms River area, and if there was any truth to this.

Mr. Dutch responded that this was most likely a result of a statement he made at his county meeting where he commented about the Home being full and we should consider looking for beds in other locations such as in the Ocean County area.

There is no sub-committee.

State Firemen's Association:

President Ordway advised that the caucuses begin July 25th and to get our annual report in so it can be put out in the information packets. Mr. Hull gives a good report after our (State's) meetings and he has nothing to add.

Unfinished Business:

Mr. Hull requested that the topic of the changes to the admission policy be "un-tabled" so we can resume discussions. Mr. Hull said he did not wish to have a vote, but believed that is needed to be un-table to be discussed. A hand vote passed the un-tabling of the topic for discussion.

Mr. Hull spoke on how it was his personal feeling that the qualifications to the Home should be an earned benefit. We need to close loopholes in our process. He felt that the qualifications should be 7 years verified by certificate from State Association of affidavit from municipality. Mr. Hull felt the wording from the applications committee was too vague and didn't define membership. Mr. Hull advised he had a proposal that would be sent for review, but he wished the topic un-tables so we can resume discussions ideas. The proposal had exceptions for any active firefighter who gets injured or sick while active being qualified. Mr. Hull reiterated that this was only his suggestion.

A very lengthy discussion and debate followed that was at times terse. Managers presented various scenarios and "what if" situations that should be considered before changing the admission criteria. Those included if a member has life changing event or had to leave fire service for reasons out of their control would they be denied? Multiple suggestions were discussed including making the criteria 3 or 4 years of service.

Ms. DeVirgilio discussed that the applications committee had discussed a lot of the options discussed when they came up with the suggestion of making the April 1st effect date for new firefighters in their proposed new admission policy.

There was much debate and it was suggested that anyone having input to forward it to the applications committee. Mr. Hull thanked everyone for having a discussion about the topic.

Mr. Keyser asked Mr. Veras about the old gator. Mr. Veras advised it is still on site but the four-wheel drive and differential are both shot.

Mr. Keyser than inquired that with the amount of money we are spending on water testing, could it be coming from the township water, can we get it tested at the street?

Mr. Veras responded that one of the test sites is right at the meter. There are 11 test sites including at the meter and only once did we have a very small amount at the meter. Mr. Veras explained the differences in testing done in New York compared to New Jersey. In NJ the only acceptable result is "0". The State of New Jersey has also provided conflicting advice to the Home. They advised to "keep flushing, chlorination not needed", which the Home did. They then asked "why was there no disinfecting or chlorination?" The Home is looking at a chlorination system (initial estimates \$6-7000). We also have a consultant who has facilities that have been testing for over three years. We will be chasing this around the building because of our hot water recirculation.

New Business:

Mr. Heflich read a prepared statement addressing Mr. Dutch, (copy attached). Mr. Heflich's statement advises that there is only one NJ Firemen's Home and it is in Boonton. Mr. Heflich questioned Mr. Dutch's statements made at the June 20, 2024 meeting of the Atlantic County Association regarding the policy change for admission into the home. Mr. Heflich's statement addresses ACTIVE members with regards to eligibility to the Home.

Chairman Washer asked Mr. Dunn about the venue for this year's adjourned meeting in Wildwood. Mr. Dunn advised that the venue will be at the Beach Creek Oyster Bar and Grill. They have room for our meeting and are close to our previous location. Mr. Dunn is also working on an activity for spouses to participate in during our meeting.

Mr. Keyser reported that the Morris County ambulance service is up and running out of our building. They thank us for allowing them to be here.

Mr. Veras added that they had four 9-1-1 calls in our building since being here and responded in less than a minute.

Mr. Ordway if there was any cost to the Home for housing the ambulance service. Mr. Veras responded it cost us two lounge chairs and a gallon of paint to fix up the room.

Mr. Apgar presented a copy of the current by-laws to Mr. Bell to review and read to the group which advised that any changes to the application process would be done through the by-law committee.

Payment of Bills:

Mr. Hull reported the total bills in the amount of \$471,849.16 Upon motion, a roll call vote was taken and the bills payment was approved.

Motions and Resolutions:

None.

Public Participation:

Larry Handlin, Hudson County Executive- Committeeman, thanked Mr. Hull for opening discussion about the admission policy and that it is an earned benefit. Mr. Handlin discussed how a pension is earned after 40 years for example, not 1 year and 1 day. This is how our benefit should be. Things do change in peoples lives, as it was brought up, things changed in his life but he choose to stay in the fire service.

Mr. Handlin then inquired with Mr. Veras if the Home considered a UV system instead of a chlorination system. Mr. Handlin spoke on his experiences as a plumber with over-chlorination deteriorating water heating systems.

Mr. Veras responded that the Department of Health prefers a chlorination system.

Mr. Handlin then addressed Mr. Dutch, through the chair, in regards to Mr. Dutch's report to Atlantic County about an additional facility in Toms River, 40 rooms on Route 72. Mr. Handlin stated that this was done without approval of this board (Board of Managers). Mr. Handlin called Mr. Dutch's comments in that report "BS", that they were "false statements" to accuse the State Association of "not caring about firefighters" and that the "Home is full because of the State cutting programs" Mr. Handlin stated the State Association promotes the Home. "We fill a gap, we promote this Home, your report is BS".

Rich Otterbein, Essex County Executive-Committeeman, advised that the golf outing was a fabulous and the venue was great. It was much better than the former venue and he hoped it stayed here. Mr. Otterbein added that he finished in second place.

Executive Session:

None had.

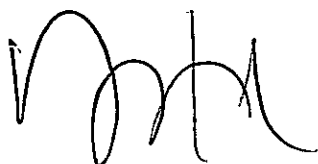
Good and Welfare:

Mr Keyser asked that any manager having input on policy change to please forward them to Mr. Freeman. Last time, we only received two replies.

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 1022 hours.

Respectfully submitted,



Roger Hull
Secretary