

New Jersey Firemen's Home Full Board Meeting



November 8, 2025

Date: Saturday, November 8, 2025
Location: New Jersey Firemen's Home
Called to Order: 9:01 AM

Roll Call:

Managers present 19, (Managers Strube and De Young excused); Superintendent John Veras; Legal Counsel Mr. Bell.

Presentations:

- Robert Toole sworn in as Mercer County Manager
- KDA Associates (See attachments of presentation summary for key points)
 - Managers to email questions/concerns to the committee within 30 days (by ~Dec 8, 2025).
 - Committee to work with KDA and CM to bring refined scope & tighter estimate to December meeting.

Approval of Prior Minutes:

- **October 11, 2025 Minutes** — approved

Communications:

- Chair and Secretary reported no new written communications received.

Chair's Remarks:

- Committee assignments distributed; chairs to "get the ground running."
 - Responsibilities per bylaws to be emailed to each chair upon review by Mr. Bell.
- Reminder: professional conduct in meetings.
- Actuarial study: Ethics & Code Committee + Employees Committee asked to review matters around the study and any Attorney General report implications; coordinate with Counsel.

Officers' Reports:

Secretary: Will send approved minutes (without "DRAFT" watermark) to managers and requested individuals monthly after approval at monthly meeting.

Treasurer:

- County base stipend increase of \$250 begins January 2026 pay period (as approved last month).
- Check-signing: Secretary (DeVirgilio) to co-sign with Treasurer per precedent.

Superintendent:

- Water management: Engaging independent lab to verify results; considering point-of-use filters in limited locations; NJDOH case lead changed; water hygiene specialist joining calls.
- NJDOH survey (Oct 11–15): 11 surveyors; four minor deficiencies (examples: diet thickening level note; dated spice labeling; exit light out; sprinkler gauges). Plan of Correction submitted; overall care/infection control commended (notably wound care observation). Copies to be emailed to managers.
- Facilities: Outdoor kitchen now covered for winter.

Legal Counsel (Mr. Bell):

- Health benefits: Exited NJ State Health Benefits Plan (announced +37% Jan 1 increase). Moved to NJ Solutions (HIF) based on favorable utilization; projected ~14% increase instead, no reduction in benefits (same BCBS network).
- Ongoing: By-laws update work with Chair Joas
- Community gardens coordination to be reviewed.
- One pending employee termination matter (evidence in review).

Committee Reports:**Buildings & Grounds (Keyser):**

- Water conditioning items ongoing.
- Chiller specs pending.
- Winter equipment serviced

Applications (Freeman):

- Census (as of 10/31/25): Total 69 residents (breakdown read into record). One resident answered there final alarm since prior meeting.
 - Clarification: Monthly “status report” is **not** a “waiting list.” Several open beds exist; some rooms constrained (roommate compatibility, infection control).
 - Applicants contacted get 2-week response window; non-responses move to bottom of list.
 - Spreadsheet of applications downloaded and pending applications to be distributed to the managers monthly after the Applications meeting committee meets in order for the managers to be informed on current status.

Employees (Miller):

- Update on bills (PFAS gear notice; water charges to fire districts; nursing home assessment); 26 bills on Governor’s desk; Senate not in session.

Finance & Budget (Keyser):

- Reviewed 10/1–10/31 operating expenses; \$475,313.83 approved in committee.
- 2026–2027 Proposed Budget: \$14,223,950 recommended for approval.

Insurance (Strube):

- Manager Strube excused, but Mr. Veras stated that it was already discussed under report given on changes for new plan.

Legislative (Miller):

- 26 bills currently on Governor’s desk; A-5792 signed 8/21/2025

Bi-Laws (Joas):

- Working with Mr. Bell on reviewing the bi-laws and set to meet this week.

Museum (Hull):

- Coordinating receipt of statue relief.
- History of firefighting print received.

Public Relations (Wilson):

- Convention ideas are welcomed, please contact Manager Wilson with ideas.

Ethics & Code of Conduct (Dunn):

- Exploring **online** Financial Disclosure Statement filing with State for better compliance tracking; will coordinate with Counsel.

Pension (Apgar):

- No report; will be reviewing report from Manager Sutpen.

Inventory (Wilson):

- Nothing new to report.

Golf (Signorello):

- Planning to return to same venue.
- Cap teams to improve pace
- Increase diligence on sponsorships

Liaison to State Association (Hull):

- Continuing coordination toward joint committee session.

Inspection (Mitch):

- Inspection to be completed after meeting and findings to be sent out with meeting minutes.

Long-Term Planning (Sutphen):

- Thanks for KDA briefing.

State Firemen's Association (Ordway):

- Special caucuses elected Robert Toole (Mercer Manager) and George Show (Burlington Exec).

Unfinished Business:

- None.

New Business:

- Ethics & Employees Joint Work Session clarification asked by Manager Signorello to avoid Open Public Meetings Act issues, chairs and vice-chairs of Ethics/Code and Employees will meet with Counsel first, then brief full committees.
- Budget of \$14,223,950 approval by vote completed
 - Suggestion made by President Ordway to utilize \$600,000 from surplus and reduce insurance line by same amount; counterpoint: maintain six-months operating reserve; committee opted not to apply surplus.
 - Roll call vote taken and approved.

Payment of Bills:

- \$475,313.83 — Motion to approve; roll call approved.

Motions & Resolutions:

- None beyond items noted above.

Public Participation:

- Vice President Hankins commented regarding consistent communication on “waiting list” vs “status report.” Request that Home distribute a single, uniform monthly statement to avoid conflicting numbers.

Good & Welfare:

- Recognition for Gil Lagosi: Dec 3, 7:30 p.m., Union Fire Company, Titusville (Hopewell Twp.) Invitation to be distributed to managers.
- Ombudsman program presentation today at 11:00 a.m. in the auditorium.

Executive Session:

- None.

Adjournment:

- Meeting was adjourned 10:47 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy DeVirgilio
Secretary