

# New Jersey Firemen's Home Full Board Meeting



September 11, 2025

The September 11, 2025, meeting of the New Jersey Firemen's Home Board of Managers was called to order by Acting Chairman Apgar at 1500 hours and was followed by the pledge of allegiance. The invocation was provided by Manager Dutch. A moment of silence was observed in honor and memory of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and all those lost on that fateful day.

Mr. Apgar advised that proper public notice had been provided

Roll call was taken with 17 managers present. Mr. Lugossy (resigned), Mr. Jeffer, and Mr. Freeman were all excused. \*The Salem County manager position remains vacant. Mr. Apgar welcomed all of the past managers present at the meeting, Bergen County Manager-Elect Roy DeYoung Jr., and the NJSFA Executive Committeemen and Officers present.

Mr. Apgar received a few concerns regarding the minutes from the August 9, 2025, meeting. It is stated in the minutes in regard to the email that Mr. Hull read from his phone on page 7. The minutes from the August 9, 2025, Board meeting were then approved. Mr. Keyser abstained from voting as he was absent from the August meeting.

#### **Communications:**

Acting Secretary Dunn reported that he received two letters and one email that were as follows:

1. Letter from NJFH Resident Mr. Samuel A. Henderson (A-169) requesting That the NJFH Resident Council President or duly authorized agent, reach out to the Board of Managers before the 9/11/25 meeting in Wildwood to let them know that the residents of the home fully support and believe it is in the best interest of the residents and future residents to have single occupancy rooms. Attached were the 5 pillars of high-quality care for the elderly over 65, according to the American Academy of Family Physicians.
2. Letter from the NJFH Resident Council addressed to Acting Chairman Apgar advising of a motion that was approved by an overwhelming majority to inform the Board of Managers that the NJFH Resident Council advised their state representatives that they fully support and believe it is in the best interest of the residents and future residents of the home to have single room occupancy for all residents.
3. Email from the Office of Governor Phil Murphy thanking the board for the invitation to the meeting but with regrets that the Governor is unable to attend.

Copies of all correspondence are attached.

#### **Reports of Officers:**

##### **Secretary:**

Mr. Apgar advised that since we have no active Secretary there is no report. A new Secretary will be elected at the October reorganization meeting. If anyone is interested in the position, please reach out to Mr. Apgar.

**Treasurer:**

Mr. Sutphen advised that we are beginning to work on our next budget numbers for the November Board meeting. All else is well.

**Superintendent:**

Mr. Veras reported that we continue to deal with the ongoing water issues and legionella program. We are getting less and less positives, so we are making progress. Legionella is the latest thing. If you listen to the news, it is all over the place.

The call bell system did go down for a number of days. We have been informed that the system is just outdated. New control equipment has been ordered. The system was previously running on Windows 7, so we got our monies worth out of the system.

The Home will be hosting an Antique Muster on Saturday September 20, 2025. The rain date for the event is Sunday September 21, 2025.

There are three more BBQ's scheduled for the season with the last one scheduled for October 4<sup>th</sup>. To accommodate the BBQ's, through a very generous donation through the Lacey Township Elks, we have ordered a sun setter awning for on top of the pavilion to cover the outdoor kitchen. It is 17'x10' and scheduled to be in before the next BBQ.

The in-house CNA school is progressing. The Department of Health has completely approved the lesson plans. They will be coming out to look at the training lab in the next 6-8 weeks.

COVID boosters are available at the Home. Families are made aware that they are available and it is up to the family to decide if their loved one will receive it. It is not mandatory. Flu shots will be available to all at the October 11, 2025, Board meeting for anyone who wishes to be vaccinated.

As Mr. Sutphen reported, we are in preliminary budget planning sessions with the auditor. The auditor is going to get pencil copies of the audit this week in order to begin reviewing it.

**Legal Counsel:**

Mr. Bell reported that he is dealing with a few personnel issues with FMLA and ADA issues. We are in the process of receiving some equipment from Warren County through Mr. Wilson and Superintendent Veras. These include chairs, tables, and wheelchairs and Mr. Bell is preparing the agreement to accept the equipment. Mr. Keyser raised an issue about employee records and medical records and how long we can keep them. Mr. Bell will have an answer next meeting but normally with physician records it is 7 years, nursing home records are 10 years, and employee records are 30 years.

**Buildings and Grounds:**

Mr. Keyser reported that we are looking to replace the chiller. Tom is working on obtaining a specification book for the chiller, so the piping is the same. That is cooling and heating, and we would like to have the piping the same, so we do not have to do a lot of piping work. At the cemetery, trees and branches were removed. A 20' of 2" pipe was replaced for heating and cooling near the elevator. The sprinkler system passed the annual inspection. The boilers were cleaned by a contractor. They were inspected by the State and found to be compliant.

**Applications:**

Mr. Cunningham provided a written report of the application committee meeting held on September 9, 2025, which is attached. The committee signed one application. The report indicated 67 guests in Long Term Care (6 in Lathrop Station) and 5 in Residential Care for a total of 72 guests. Since the last meeting, there was one admission to the Home. One resident answered their final alarm this month. There are four applications with pre-admission meetings to be scheduled. Six applicants are awaiting pre-admission meetings- seven are still in review

by staff and four applications were incomplete. One applicant passed away before admission. The next meeting for the Applications Committee is 0900 hours on Tuesday, October 7, 2025, at the Home.

**Employee Committee:**

Mr. Dutch reported he is aware of one that is being handled by Mr. Bell and Superintendent Veras in the Nursing Dept. Otherwise, all is quiet.

**Finance and Budget Committee:**

Mr. Keyser reported that the monthly meeting was held on Tuesday September 9, 2025 at 0800. The committee reviewed the revenue and expenses report for August 1-August 31, 2025. The vouchers totaling \$531,790.05 were approved by the committee in compliance with section 2, Article 5 of the By-Laws.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday October 7, 2025, at 0800 at the Home.

**Insurance:**

Mr. Strube advised he had nothing new to report.

**Legislative Committee:**

Mr. Miller advised that there are 11,377 bills introduced in this legislative session. We have 335 tracked bills with 198 in fire and emergency services, 61 in pensions, 76 for the Firemen's Home. There are 40 bills currently waiting to be signed by the Governor. One of those bills is A-5049 which removes certain limitations of receipt of retirement or death benefits under PFRS under certain circumstances. The Governor has signed 262 bills into law to date. 9 of our tracked bills have been signed by the Governor.

**By-laws:**

Mr. Apgar advised no report.

**Museum:**

Mr. Hull reported that he received an email from Jenine Maslin, her husband Timothy did the life size sculpture for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Firemen's Home. She noticed we did not have a bronze study of the sculpture, and she would like to donate it to the Home. Mr. Hull will coordinate with her on this.

**Public Relations:**

Mr. Wilson reported and thanked Superintendent Veras, Mr. Giglio, Mr. Hull, and Mr. Washer for getting everything set up for tomorrow morning at the Convention Center. We will be there tomorrow morning beginning at 0700. This is an all-hands-on deck to help and pitch in a little bit. The more help available the easier it is.

**Ethics and Code of Conduct:**

Mr. Sutphen advised that he had no report.

**Pension:**

Mr. Washer had no report.

**Inventory:**

Mr. Wilson advised he had no report.

**Golf Committee:**

Mr. Signorello reported progress until next year.

**Liaison to the State Association:**

Mr. Hull advised that he was unable to attend the last NSJFA meeting on 9/6/25 due to work obligations and has no formal report. He has had informal conversations with several NJSFA Committeemen and executives about the ongoing working relationship with the NJFH.

**Inspections:**

Mr. Giglio reported that since the Firemen's Home is a little far from Wildwood, they inspected the firehouse instead and found everything to appear in order.

**Long Term Planning/Addition Committee:**

Mr. Sutphen reported that all Managers have received the current KDA report in their mailboxes at the Home. If you have any questions, we can discuss them in October.

**State Firemen's Association:**

President Ordway advised that they have prepared everything as well as they can for tomorrow and Saturday for the Convention.

**Unfinished Business:**

Mr. Keyser brought up that back on July 19<sup>th</sup> he attended the NJSFA as part of the Liaison Committee where President Ordway spoke about the Home and was responding to two different reports about the Home. Mr. Keyser reported he did not get involved in the conversation because he didn't know exactly what was going on. Other Managers present were upset that he did not rebuttal President Ordway. That was the reason I did not rebuttal, because I did not know enough about what was going on and what President Ordway was speaking about.

Mr. Keyser also stated that he missed the August meeting. He had phone calls with managers about a lengthy meeting. A rice notice was given to one of our employees which are for public employees which we are. The employee brought an attorney to the meeting which is a normal thing to do. The individual chose to have it discussed in public session and some managers were upset about that, but that is how it goes. When a rice notice is given to someone, they have the option for representation.

Mr. Hull stated that he was at the Home yesterday and picked up revised schemes 2 and 2A of the KDA report that was in his mailbox for 96 residents. Mr. Hull stated that there was a report given to the committee several months ago that was reported on. He questioned how come the managers did not receive this report and what was this report revised from. How come we don't have the original copy? Also, who authorized the revisions when revisions get made? Mr. Sutphen replied that the first report wasn't much of a report. KDA came back to the committee and asked a bunch of questions as to how we wanted to proceed. The committee answered the questions and that is where this report came from. Mr. Hull stated that there was one that was distributed and then collected. Mr. Hull requested a copy of the original copy. Superintendent Veras reported that they proposed five different concepts. They narrowed it down to a concept where they could add an additional building that would cause the least amount of disturbance to the residents. Some of the concepts involved knocking down the current dorms. A new building that can accommodate a large portion of the dorms at a time is preferred. That is where the concept came from. The latest addition is in this report with our input moving the front entrance. Mr. Hull replied that this is all centered around an actuary study that is still in question and an ongoing issue. Mr. Hull continued that Managers on the committee have reported since October and November of last year that there was going to be

an expansion. The committee presented the report on November 9, 2024. Mr. Sutphen reported in the minutes that everyone should receive a copy of it. Mr. Hull was given the report on November 10<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Hull stated that some people on the committee had the report before he had it. He scanned it and sent it out. At the Atlantic County Caucus there was an accusation made that "maybe Roger changed it because he was the only one that handled it". However, if you look at the minutes the committee reported on it before I even had hands on it. The narrative has now changed that we have never looked for an expansion. People sitting right in front of me have reported on expansion, expansion, and expansion. We have heard that we can't do it because of our license, but in November and December it was reported that we can just apply to the State and show a certificate of need and it can be changed. Mr. Hull stated that Mr. Veras talked about adding a license. Mr. Veras replied that he said changing a license to assisted living not adding. Mr. Hull stated that it seems we are changing things. We all want the best for all firefighters in NJ. I am tired of hearing that if you don't support a grand addition that you don't care about the firefighters in the State of NJ. I know that I am a "double agent" but there is a program that the NJSFA funds that takes care of our firefighters all over the country. We have a Firemen's Home in Boonton, let's take care of what we have. I don't know if we can afford this because there are no numbers on it, but we throw out there that if you question anything about spending money that you are heartless and don't care. Looking back, I think COVID was mismanagement from our old Superintendent. I think we failed our infection control policies at that time and now we are making up for it with this grand scheme. So, what do we do. Single rooms would be great. I'd love to give everyone a unicorn but there is only so much money to go around. Does this solve the problem. Are we going to stop recreation where guys cannot sit and have communal dining because they can't breathe on each other? It was reported at the FMBA Conference that we have to support a certain career chief because the volunteers control the narrative and we can't have that. We have competing interests in funding, but we are supposed to work together. Every time you try to work with the other side you are called names and accused of stuff. This actuary study does not sit well with me and never has. To say that I changed the report, absolutely not. I did have words with that Manager. I stand by what I say. I don't change minutes; the facts are the facts. If we were focused on single rooms, what did we do the actuary study for if we knew the number of beds we were allowed to have.

Mr. Apgar requested that the KDA report be distributed to all managers via email next week, so that it can be properly discussed at the October meeting.

#### **New Business:**

Mr. Keyser reported that he attended the NJSFA Executive Committee meeting on September 6<sup>th</sup> in Wall Township and would like to thank Executive Committeeman Gerry Naylis on the way he spoke about the home and how well it is run and that he supports Resolution #4 which is the Point Pleasant Beach. Several others in the room countered that he spoke against Resolution # 4 and Mr. Keyers retracted that part of his comment. Mr. Naylis asked to speak and was advised he could speak during public participation.

Mr. Apgar reported that he dropped the ball on getting the information ready for today but will have the resolutions ready for the October meeting for Manager Pete Jeffer and Manager Gil Lugossy.

#### **Payment of Bills:**

Mr. Keyser reported the total bills in the amount of \$531,790.05. Upon motion, a roll call vote was taken, and the bills payment was approved.

**Motions and Resolutions: None**

**Public Participation:**

Mr. Gerard Naylis, NJSFA Bergen County Executive Committeeman, stated that he did speak at the NJSFA Executive Meeting on 9/6/25 in reference to Resolution # 4 that is being presented at this year's Convention. He also spoke about this at the Bergen County Caucus. This resolution, which is a non-binding resolution, strongly encourages the NJSFA to take a position to not support or endorse any additions, expansion of programs or basically anything that would support the mission of the Firemen's Home. He is absolutely opposed to that resolution. He does not think it is in the best interest of the fire service or the firefighters in the State of New Jersey. The commentary he made was that nobody can tell him in 5, 10, or 20 years what will be needed to take care of the firefighters in New Jersey. Do we know what kind of medical conditions, what types of infectious strains may come about, what type of improvements can be made to address maladies affecting firefighters? If the Firemen's Home is in a position to help and aid the fire service, my belief is they should be allowed to do that. He spoke very strongly that the Firemen's Home Board of Managers and NJSFA Executive Committee should work together collaboratively at advancing the best care possible and interests of all firefighters in New Jersey.

Former Camden County Manager Sonny DeLaurentis inquired to Mr. Apgar if the By-Laws are done yet and advised he wants a copy. Mr. Apgar advised that they will be, and he will be the first one to get a copy.

Bergen County Manager-Elect Roy DeYoung Jr. introduced himself. He is the Maywood, NJ Fire Chief and he is very proud to be part of this organization and board next month. I take a lot of pride in the home. He is the Vice-President of the Bergen County Firemen's Home Association and Vice-President of Bergen & Passaic Exempts, Past-President NJ/NY Exempts, and Bergen County Executive Committeeman for the NJ Exempts. and take honor in all these things and cannot wait to volunteer for this. The home is very important to him because Maywood Firefighter George Steger, who just turned 102 years old, is there and he loves that guy and has taken care of him for a number of years. He doesn't play politics. He is not here just for Bergen County but for all firefighters in the State of New Jersey.

Mr. Paul McDougall, retired Morris County Manager, stated that when he was a new manager he spent at least three days a week at the Home during COVID. The Firemen's Home was no different from any other nursing home in New Jersey. Nobody was prepared for what we faced. It was not a very pleasant time at the Home. They were doing the best they could. He spoke about a discussion with Roger about the need for a private room. The firemen deserve the best and their own room. He supports this concept and supports the Board of Managers going to the Governor's office or whoever they need to obtain funding, aside from the NJSFA funding, to pursue this. The Firemen's Home has been in Boonton for a long time, it is a fine place and should apply for single occupancy rooms.

Mr. Jim Foran, retired Hunterdon County Manager, stated that he asked for a full copy of the minutes for several years including the attachments. He asked who makes that decision that they cannot have a full set of minutes. Mr. Bell stated that he has no issue with that. Mr. Apgar stated the adjustment will be made. Mr. Foran also asked about what was going on with the Attorney General's Office. Mr. Apgar advised that there is an investigation, and we are awaiting a report from the Attorney General's office.

Mr. Veras advised that all minutes with attachments are on the NJFH website.

Mr. Hull also addressed that he was not sending out draft copies. The draft copies only go to current managers until they are approved. He apologized if there was any confusion on his part. Mr. Hull also reported that as per an August 25, 2025, email he received from the AG, it is still under investigation, they still recommend we conduct an internal investigation, and they confirm that the error did not come from BPAS.

**Good and Welfare:**

Mr. Apgar reported that Manager Strube was struck by a vehicle recently but is ok and he is here.

Mr. Apgar stated that we need a secretary. If anyone is interested, please let him know. Mr. Apgar plans on running from Chairman of the Board and has asked Mr. Garrick Miller to run as Vice-Chair. Mr. Sutphen is running for Treasurer again.

Mr. Jim Feran reported that Mr. Don Weesener is not doing well. Please keep him in our prayers.

Mr. Dunn provided parking information for dinner at the Beach Creek tonight.

**Adjournment:**

Meeting was adjourned at 16:00

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Dunn', with a stylized, cursive script.

Daniel Dunn  
Acting Secretary