

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF FIRE
COMMISSIONERS**

of the

LIME ROCK FIRE DISTRICT, INC.,

Held September 30, 2010

**at the Lincoln Town Hall, Council Chambers, 100 Old River Road,
Lincoln RI 02865**

CALL OF THE MEETING:

**Mr. Ronald E. Rivet, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:00
p.m., September 30, 2010.**

**Present: Mr. Ronald E. Rivet, Mr. Charles N. Turner, Jr., Mr. Mark
Krieger, Mr. Paul Harrison, Mr. James A. Fredrikson, Chief Frank M.
Sylvester, Office Manager/Tax Collector Ms. Lesley A. Heaton,
Treasurer Ms. Christine E. Wood, and approximately forty other
attendees.**

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 14, 2010 MEETING:

**Mr. Mark Krieger made a motion to accept the Minutes of the
September 14, 2010 meeting. Mr. Charles N. Turner, Jr. seconded the**

motion, which passed with all Commissioners in agreement.

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 14, 2010 EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Mr. Mark Krieger made a motion to accept the Executive Session Minutes and for them to remain sealed. Mr. Charles N. Turner, Jr. seconded the motion, which passed with all Commissioners in agreement.

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION REGARDING FISCAL YEAR 2010-2011 BUDGET:

Mr. Robert Lawton stated it was a good idea to hold the meeting and preferred to have all meetings at 7:00 p.m. He asked why Lime Rock Fire District was not involved in the fire department merger talks. Mr. Ronald Rivet explained that he and other Board members initially attended, but at some point were no longer invited. He advised that Albion, Lonsdale, and Saylesville had a combined debt of over \$2 mil. while Lime Rock essentially has none due to a lease/purchase agreement. Chief Sylvester added that he had been to a merger meeting and was told that only Albion, Lonsdale, and Saylesville representatives could talk. He noted that he had been in favor of merging for years, and that it made no sense to have departments on either side of Lime Rock merging without including Lime Rock.

Mr. Michael OConnell estimated that by the end of the fiscal year the total expenses would be approximately \$2 mil. He questioned why the new budget couldn't be for that amount. He was advised that

some line items had decreased, but that increases included funding for the accrued benefits sinking fund on the advice of the auditor. Mr. John Skorupski added that there should be some cushion built in for unexpected expenses. Deputy Chief Todd Tucker advised that the Department had been operating with only two firefighters per engine, but that that was not a safe practice. Mr. Mark Krieger stated it had been heard loud and clear that the taxpayers wanted a lower budget. The firefighters' hours consequently were cut. He said huge cuts could have been made, but it would not have been in the best interest of the taxpayers and firefighters.

Mr. OConnell stated that the fact there had been no overtime usually indicates overstaffing. Mr. Rivet explained the practice of "call back" and how it creates overtime when none truly exists. He noted that those practices did not take place in Lime Rock due to the dedication of the firefighters.

Mr. OConnell stated that several line items could be cut. He said #4400 Equipment Maintenance had not been fully expended in FY 09-10. The Deputy Chief explained that minor repairs had been done by the firefighters and that the warrantee was now done on one of the engines. Mr. Charles Turner explained that gas and diesel could no longer be purchased through the Town so costs were going higher.

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Mr. Paul Harrison said there are certain challenges to making a

budget. Some items are a shot in the dark, and others, like health care, are made with educated guesses.

Mr. Skorupski said he had concerns with deferred expenses and that most people do not understand what has been done in the past or currently. He noted that the answers given explained a great deal. He suggested only discussing the big ticket items and for the people to decide a basic: what type of service did they want?

Ms. Barbara Cullen stated that she wanted the budget in the newspaper with an explanation of each line item. She wanted to eliminate #1115 Administrative Contingency Fund, and #3301 Communications Reserve. She wanted to lower #4402 General Supplies to \$6,000, and #5509 Office Supplies...Postage to be lower. She also stated her concern with supplemental tax bills for motor vehicles. Further, she was concerned with the fairness of running the department: lack of advertisements for open positions and no females on the department.

Mr. Skorupski agreed it would be good to have the budget in the paper, but advised that meetings were open all year.

Mr. Rivet addressed Ms. Cullen's concerns: #1115 is used when no funds are available for unexpected expenses; #3301 would be used for an unexpected expense on the Vision21 at dispatch (for which the District had no control); #4402 would be used for turnout gear if

needed and to replace supplies that were let slide in FY 09-10; and #5509 was for other items that had been by-passed and would now have to be attended to. In response to questions about use of the website, Mr. Rivet stated that the website had been put into place at the request of the taxpayers, but there was no funding available for training the office staff to use it. Mr. Rivet stated that the car taxes would reduce real estate taxes. He realized it was confusing due to revaluation. In addressing her concerns about advertising, Mr. Rivet said it was expensive to advertise for open positions. He noted there was a drawer full of applications on file. He advised Ms. Cullen that the Act to Incorporate allowed the Board of Fire Commissioners to appoint interim Commissioners until the next Annual Meeting.

Ms. Ann Moskol expressed her concern with the behavior of the audience at the 2009 Annual Meeting and the lack of control by the Moderator. She asked to have the upcoming meeting follow Robert's Rules and to have a copy on hand. Mr. Rivet said he had spoken to the issue of interruptions and behavior. Ms. Moskol asked if the issue of secret ballots had been addressed. Mr. Rivet said it was up to the Moderator to determine the need. She also wanted to be sure that non-residents would be kept separate. Mr. Rivet said they would be in the library until the meeting started and then directed to a restricted area in the auditorium. Ms. Moskol offered her expertise with the website as she would like to have explanations of the line items listed there. She expressed her concern with the perception of not being wanted. She asked for the meetings to be held at a later time.

Mr. Rivet replied more leeway would be given for Public Input sign in, but that due to scheduling limitations on the part of Board members, the meetings would have to remain at 5:00 p.m.

Mr. Joseph Nadro addressed Ms. Cullen's inquiry about the hiring of female firefighters. He stated that when an individual takes the physical agility test through the State Fire Marshal's office Lime Rock Fire District is listed as a potential employer. He stated that the agility test is very rigorous.

Mr. John Cullen spoke to an earlier statement by Mr. Rivet about line item approval of the budget. He did not feel that the Acts or By-laws prohibited voting on the bottom line. He further noted that budget increases were due to the full-time firefighters. He recommended cutting the administrative salaries and the commissioners' compensation.

Mr. Rivet responded that it was a legacy to approve the budget line by line. If a line was objected to then it was discussed, if not, it passed. He made reference to "any appropriation" perhaps meaning each line item. He said it was no longer possible to operate as a call department due to the growth of the District and the giant influx of people during the day with venues like Twin River, the industrial park, and schools. Fifty fires during the year didn't make it into the paper he said because due to good staff they were quelled quickly. Mr. Rivet added that with the

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Wilbur Road bridge out for the next year any house on fire would burn waiting for Station #2 to take an alternate route. Chief Sylvester added that since 1988 over thirty new subdivisions had been built.

Mr. Lawton commented that the Board had been more open than in the last ten years. He complimented Mr. Rivet for his candidness, honesty, and straightforward answers to questions. He suggested having a similar meeting a month earlier in 2011.

Mr. Robert Ericson stated that he would have liked a sheet explaining why different line items had gone up or down compared to the previous fiscal year. He would like to see more information on the web-site. He stated that it was not up to the Moderator to control the voting. Mr. Ericson suggested introducing the counters at the Annual Meeting. He recommended having all the districts get together for a town-wide department. It was his opinion that the financial issues were still actually management issues.

Mr. Rivet noted that the insurance line items had been reallocated within the budget to be in a more logical placement. Mr. Turner added that the amounts had been nearly halved to realign renewal periods with the fiscal year. He advised that the following budget would revert to representing a full premium/year.

In response to her question, Mr. Rivet advised Ms. Moskol that the travel allowance was to reimburse the Chief, Tax Collector, and Treasurer for the use of their personal cars. He answered her question about expenses under training for college courses explaining that several of the firefighters were taking fire science courses at CCRI. Each one being limited to a \$1,500 reimbursement per year.

Mr. Harrison likened the fire department to an insurance policy; people do not ever want to have to use it, but are very thankful it is there when needed.

ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Mr. Charles N. Turner, Jr. made Mr. Rivet's requested motion to adjourn to Executive Session in accordance with Section 42-46-5 of the Exemptions of Chapter 46 of the General Laws pursuant to Section 42-46-5(a)(2) to discuss anticipated litigation. Mr. Mark Krieger seconded the motion. In a roll call vote, Mr. Fredrikson, Mr. Turner, Mr. Krieger, Mr. Harrison, and Mr. Rivet agreed to adjourn to Executive Session for the stated purpose at 9:10 p.m.

ADJOURN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Mr. Paul Harrison made a motion to adjourn from Executive Session. Mr. Mark Krieger seconded the motion. In a roll call vote, Mr. Krieger, Mr. Turner, Mr. Harrison, Mr. Fredrikson, and also Mr. Rivet agreed to

adjourn from Executive Session at 9:55 p.m.

Mr. Paul Harrison made a motion in open session to seal the Minutes of the Executive Session. Mr. Mark Krieger seconded the motion. In a roll call vote, Mr. Krieger, Mr. Turner, Mr. Harrison, Mr. Fredrikson, and also Mr. Rivet agreed to seal the Minutes of the Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Mark Krieger made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Paul Harrison seconded the motion, which passed with all Commissioners in agreement. The meeting adjourned at 9:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronald E. Rivet

Christine E. Wood

Recording Secretaries

cc: R. Rivet, M. Krieger, C. Turner, P. Harrison, J. Fredrikson, file

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