

**HOPE VALLEY/WYOMING FIRE DISTRICT  
996 MAIN STREET  
HOPE VALLEY, RI 02832**

**MONTHLY BOARD MEETING  
DECEMBER 10, 2015  
7:00 P.M.**

**Those present:** Board Members: Chairperson, Pasquale DeBernardo, Georgia Ure, Paul Schaarschmidt, John Weeden; Chief, Justin Lee; Treasurer, Deborah Nicotra; Tax Collector, Sue Bok; District Clerk, Julie Kelley

**Those not present:** Board Member: Vice-Chairperson, Elwood Johnson

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting commenced and was called to order by Chairperson, Pasquale DeBernardo at 7:00 p.m. with a salute to the flag and a moment of silence.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The Open Session minutes of the November 12<sup>th</sup> Monthly Board Meeting were presented. Ms. Ure motioned to accept the minutes as presented and Mr. Weeden seconded the motion. Discussion: Chairperson DeBernardo informed the board that he tried to contact Mr. Lenihan in reference to the Tax Sale but was unsuccessful and will try contacting him again. With no further discussion, all in favor, all aye, motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Mr. DeBernardo-yes; Ms. Ure-yes; Mr. Schaarschmidt-yes; Mr. Weeden-yes

**3. TAX COLLECTOR'S REPORT – COLLECTED AND OUTSTANDING TAXES**

The Tax Collector's report was presented for November 2015 reflecting all collected and outstanding taxes. Ms. Bok reported that as of today, the district has collected \$681,446.59 to date. The total budget for this year is \$766,606.00, at this time we have collected approximately 89% of our budget. Ms. Bok reported that as compared to last year we have collected about the same or close to it. Ms. Ure motioned to accept the Tax Collector's report and Mr. Schaarschmidt seconded the motion. With no further discussion, all in favor, all aye, motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Mr. DeBernardo-yes; Ms. Ure-yes; Mr. Schaarschmidt-yes; Mr. Weeden-yes

**4. TREASURER'S REPORT – MONTHLY BILLS & EXPENDITURES**

The Treasurer's Report was presented for November 2015. The board reviewed Acct. # 6110 – Truck and Acct. # 6120 – New Equipment that are both over budget. Chief Lee commented that this was due to the purchase of new tires and an alternator that was required to get the trucks ready for inspection. The board also discussed Acct. # 6140 – Chief's Auto that was a stipend account for previous Chief Stanley's vehicle. The board recommended keeping this line item until review of the budget for next year.

By refinancing and combining our two loans, it has saved the district \$20,500.00.

Fuel costs have been down as well as electricity costs. The district's propane use is for the generator, the cook top at Station 2, and for use by the women's auxiliary.

Ms. Ure motioned to accept the September Treasurer's Report as presented and Mr. Weeden seconded the motion. With no further discussion, all in favor, all aye, motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Mr. DeBernardo-yes; Ms. Ure-yes; Mr. Schaarschmidt-yes; Mr. Weeden-yes

Ms. Nicotra commented that she is still having problems with QuickBooks and the reports. She also indicated that she is having issues with payroll as well where it is not calculating correctly. The program is ready for an update but she would like to do this later in fear that the information may be compromised and didn't want this done at this time while working on the audit.

Ms. Nicotra also requested a letter be written to the banks in order for the banks to accept and authorize the new signature requirements.

Ms. Ure motioned to have a letter written from the District Clerk to remove Mr. David C. Holt from all accounts and replace it with authorized signatures from the Chair, Mr. Pasquale F. DeBernardo and Vice-Chair, Mr. Elwood M. Johnson. Mr. Schaarschmidt and Mr. Weeden seconded the motion. With no further discussion, all in favor, all aye, motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Mr. DeBernardo-yes; Ms. Ure-yes; Mr. Schaarschmidt-yes; Mr. Weeden-yes

The Audit is about 75% complete at this time. Ms. Nicotra indicated that she would be meeting with the Auditor next week. The Consultant is done and the Auditor has indicated that they are pleased with his submissions.

Ms. Nicotra reported to the board that payroll has become quite extensive with more reporting requirements. She would like the board to explore the possibility of going to an outside payroll company. The board discussed that hiring a person on a part-time basis would be cheaper than hiring a company. Ms. Nicotra indicated that payroll has become so detailed with a lot of reporting and deadlines to meet that very few businesses are doing it in-house. The board would like to discuss this issue again at the next board meeting.

Ms. Ure motioned to accept the November Treasurer's Report as presented and Mr. Schaarschmidt and Mr. Weeden seconded the motion. With no further discussion, all in favor, all aye, motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Mr. DeBernardo-yes; Ms. Ure-yes; Mr. Schaarschmidt-yes; Mr. Weeden-yes

#### **5. CHIEF'S REPORT – EQUIPMENT, BUILDING, SEMINARS**

Chief Justin W. Lee's monthly report was presented for November 2015.

The board members commented that they felt the Tree Lighting Ceremony was done in good taste. The board thanked Chief Lee for coordinating this event with the Baptist Church and St. Joseph's Parish. A total of eighty-five (85) people were in attendance.

#### **Personnel**

The district received a letter of accolades for our Hazmat Team for doing an excellent job on a drill conducted in Sterling, CT.

Chief Lee has signed up for an Assistant State Deputy Fire Marshal class to commence on January 6<sup>th</sup> through March 11<sup>th</sup>. Our current Fire Marshall is doing an excellent job but it is important to have other options. The class is three (3) days a week from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm. The Chief will not receive any additional compensation for attending this course. Chief Lee will be putting in extra hours to ensure everything continues to run smoothly at the station.

The board discussed that when our current Fire Marshall retires, that the district would be replacing this position with someone within the department.

#### **Incidents**

A letter was recently sent to Canonchet Cliffs I & II as a reminder of a past incident in support of the facilities no smoking policy.

A letter was sent out at the request of the Chair, as a reminder to local business owners for a few safety reminders during the holiday season and to remind them that the district is here to help keep them safe and healthy during the holiday season.

For some of the businesses that have not met these requirements, the Fire Marshall has provided a verbal warning and many times spot checks are done in the evening.

#### **Meetings/Seminars**

The RI Chief's Association has met with Gene Valicenti in hopes of changing the image of past situations in districts like Central Coventry and Anthony Fire Districts. We are looking for positive media to educate the public so that they become aware that we are not like these fire districts. Ms. Ure suggested the letter we received in recognition of the great job done by our HazMat team would be a great opportunity to get good publicity for the district.

### Retirement System

Chief Lee had a conversation with the Retirement board Financial Director. The recommendation from the Financial Director would be for the district to pay what would have been paid into the system plus interest for previous Chief Stanley since he is retired. A letter can then be written to protect us legally. The district, as recently informed, should have been paying into TIA CREF, but at that time Chief Stanley and Captain Dumsar were exempt. We now have back payments to be paid as well as a percentage to be paid by the district. Chief Lee worked out some figures based on a report from the state of what the total amounts would have been. He then worked it out with an interest calculator to come up with the employee portions, which need to be paid back as mandated by the state. The board was in agreement that the district may need to seek the advise of a layer to assist with this difficult situation.

### Verizon Tower

The checks for Verizon tower should be coming soon. We will probably see the October and November payments combined.

Ms. Ure motioned to accept the Chief's report for November 2015 and Mr. Schaarschmidt seconded the motion. With no further discussion, all in favor, all aye, motioned passed unanimously (4-0).

Mr. DeBernardo-yes; Ms. Ure-yes; Mr. Schaarschmidt-yes; Mr. Weeden-yes

## **6. CORRESPONDENCE – INCOMING & OUTGOING**

### Incoming:

1. Email addressed to Mr. Justin W. Lee, Chief, Hope Valley/Wyoming Fire District, from Ms. Margaret Standish, Account Manager, VFIS, regarding Outside Vendor Insurance Amounts.
2. Email addressed to Mr. Justin W. Lee, Chief, Hope Valley/Wyoming Fire District, from Ms. Michelle Adesman, Office Manager, E-Z Waste Systems, Inc., regarding 4 yard Dumpster Pricing.
3. Email addressed to Mr. Justin Lee, Chief, Hope Valley/Wyoming Fire District, from Mr. James Ball, Emergency Response Administrator Chief, Office of Emergency Response, offering accolades to the Hazmat Team for their excellent job.

### Outgoing:

1. Letter from Mr. Justin W. Lee, Chief, Hope Valley/Wyoming Fire District, addressed to Ms. Carolyn Izzi, Property Manager, Canonchet Cliffs I & II, regarding support of no smoking policy and safety of other citizens residing at said facility.
2. Letter from Ms. Julie Kelley, District Clerk, Hope Valley/Wyoming Fire District, addressed to Mr. David Dumsar, regarding Open Meetings notice and whether or not they would like to conduct a meeting in Executive or Open Session.
3. Letter from Mr. Justin W. Lee, Chief, Hope Valley/Wyoming Fire District, addressed to the Business Owners within the community, regarding safety reminders during the Holiday and Winter Season.

## **7. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

### New Ladder Truck

The second meeting was held this evening at 6:00 p.m. The committee is moving forward on this.

## **8. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES**

Chairperson DeBernardo would like to appoint a committee after the 1<sup>st</sup> of the year to take a look at the Charter and change some things that may need to be changed. The board would like to include three or four people within the community to become members of the committee. The District Clerk will put together a short notice and post it on the district's website as well as posting to several public areas within the community.

## **9. OLD BUSINESS**

A motion was made by Ms. Ure to approve the Social Media and Photography Policy for the District and Mr. Weeden seconded the motion. With no further discussion, all in favor, all aye, motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Mr. DeBernardo-yes; Ms. Ure-yes; Mr. Schaarschmidt-yes; Mr. Weeden-yes

## **10. NEW BUSINESS**

No new business came before the board.

## **11. PUBLIC FORUM**

Deputy Brian Champlin had commented that if we pursued going to an outside payroll company would the district make changes and adjust the hours and pay of the Treasurer?

**12. OTHER BUSINESS**

The board commended the guys on the HazMat team for their great accomplishments. Our team is made up of volunteers and they received great accolades when going up against paid departments, this indeed is very special.

**13. EXECUTIVE SESSION UNDER RI GENERAL LAWS §42-46-5 (a)(1)**

A motion was made by Mr. Weeden to convene into Executive Session in accordance to RI General Laws §42-46-5 (a)(1) and to discuss personnel issues of an employee, of which job performance, character, or physical or mental health may be discussed while in executive session. Ms. Ure seconded the motion. The employee received a letter from the District Clerk informing them that the meeting was to convene in Executive Session unless they wished to have the meeting convene in open session. No response was received; therefore, the meeting was closed and convened in executive session. The Executive Session commenced at 8:02 p.m. With no further discussion, all in favor, all aye, motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Mr. DeBernardo-yes; Ms. Ure-yes; Mr. Schaarschmidt-yes; Mr. Weeden-yes

A motion was made by Mr. Weeden to close the Executive Session in accordance with RI General Laws §42-46-5 (a)(1) and go into Open Session and Ms. Ure seconded the motion. It was discussed to reconvene into Executive Session again after the next monthly board meeting to be held on January 14, 2016. While in Executive Session, no votes were taken. The board will look into the possibility of legal council with emphasis on Retirement planning. The minutes will remain sealed until further notice. The Executive Session closed at 8:27 p.m. With no further discussion, all in favor, all aye, motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Mr. DeBernardo-yes; Ms. Ure-yes; Mr. Schaarschmidt-yes; Mr. Weeden-yes

**14. ADJOURN**

A motion was made to adjourn at 8:30 p.m. by Mr. Schaarschmidt and seconded by Ms. Ure. With no further discussion, all in favor, all aye, motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Mr. DeBernardo-yes; Ms. Ure-yes; Mr. Schaarschmidt-yes; Mr. Weeden-yes

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Kelley  
District Clerk