

HARMONY FIRE DISTRICT

P.O. Box 360 – 194 Putnam Pike
Harmony, R.I. 02829

The regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board was held at the Harmony Fire Station on **Thursday, August 18, 2011.**

Present: Chief Stuart Pearson; Moderator - Raymond Fogarty, Jr.;
Treasurer - Sandra Owens; Tax Collector - Kimberly Barber;
Attorney - Fred Mason, Jr.;
Board Members - Louise Michaels & George Kain;
Association Representative – John Falco, President

Absent: Board Member – James Richards – excused;
Board Member – Milton Huston – excused

I. – Meeting Called to Order: 7:08 pm by Moderator Fogarty. Ray reported that Milt was not here tonight since he was becoming a Grandfather for the first time.

II. - Approval of the minutes from the May 19th meeting.

Moderator Fogarty asked the board if there were any discrepancies to note on the minutes from the May 19th meeting. If everyone has had a chance to review the minutes, he would like to call for a motion to accept them.

Louise made a motion to accept the minutes. George seconded the motion.
The motion carried unanimously.

III. – Approval of Bills:

A check register of bills to be paid was provided to all board members in their folder.

George made a motion to approve the bills. Louise seconded the motion.
The motion carried unanimously.

IV. - Treasurer's Report:

Sandy presented Treasurer's reports for the months of **May & June.**

Beginning balance May 1st was \$327,972.91 and ending balance May 31st was \$312,203.00.
May was a pretty quiet month.

Beginning balance June 1st was \$312,203.00 and ending balance June 30th was \$259,628.57. The largest purchase was the Jaws of Life equipment. It was paid for through the equipment and capital expense items as voted on last month. June figures are not final for year-end purposes, however Sandy noted that as a whole we will be under budget as of year-end. There are some adjustments that will need to be made before the reports are submitted to Geoff Malo for the audit to be completed.

Louise made a motion to accept the Treasurer's reports for May and June. George seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

V. - Tax Collector's Report:

Taxes receivable balance as of today's date is \$466,582.69. This balance includes the new tax bills that were mailed 8/1/11, with the net tax levy being \$441,703.69. The tax rate was calculated at \$1.48 per/thousand, which it had been voted on not to exceed. Last fiscal year's net tax levy was \$446,182.96.

Taxes collected in the month of May were \$6,137.01. Taxes collected in the month of June were net <-\$6,683.30>, due to the reclassification of tax sale items at year-end. Taxes collected in the month of July were \$9,286.02. Total taxes collected for fiscal year-end 6/30/11 were \$454,794.15.

Third party in May totaled \$102.50, June \$7,999.84 and July \$13,341.24. Gross third party billing revenue for fiscal year end 6/30/11 was \$85,451.93 less billing expense of \$4,932.78 equals net amount of \$80,519.15.

Tax sale accounts have been coming in slowly. The tax sale list started with 43 parcels and as of today we are down to 25. The first advertisement goes in the paper 9/6. Kim has received quite a few phone calls and thinks a lot of people may be waiting until the last minute to pay. Let's hope so. Not many are paying in full, most are going with payment plans. Fred elaborated some on the tax sale process for the board.

George made a motion to accept the Tax Collector's report. Louise seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

VI. - Chief's Report:

At the end of May we started with the Patient Tracking System (PTS). With this system the RI Department of Health provides each fire department with a new Toughbook laptop at \$0 cost. However we will need to pay for wireless data service for the mobile internet connection. PTS enables the rescue service provider to contact the hospitals electronically to inform them of their pending arrival the type of patient they are transporting.

May 23rd through 26th the Chief attended Incident Management Team (IMT) training. He has now been trained as a Planning Section Chief. The good part of this is that we are obtaining NIMS (National Incident Management System) compliance. This compliance enables our district to qualify for federal relief in the future.

Many crew members attended the Memorial Day Parade in Chepachet as well as the Gloucester Honor Guard. It was a nice day!

On the subject of the honor guard, the three Gloucester fire departments are all involved with it and they have designed a new patch for their group. The Chief had one to display for the board and Lt. Falco also had one of the new honor guard uniforms to show to the board. Currently there are 5 members from HFD 2 or 3 from CFD and 4 or 5 from WGFD. All Chiefs have

commended their efforts. They will be attending a 9/11 10th Anniversary Memorial Service at St. Eugene's Church in Chepachet on Sunday, September 11th. All are invited to attend. On June 3rd the Special Olympics Torch Run took place. The Chief, his daughter Heather and Grandson Brady, as well as retired Glocester Police Chief Jamie Hainsworth all participated. Chief Hainsworth did his usual run backwards and made all of the runners drop and do pushups on the HFD ramp. It was a fun event for a very worthwhile cause.

On June 10th the Chief attended an Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) application workshop at the Providence Public Safety Complex. The speaker was David Parr a Regional Fire Program Specialist for AFG. Additionally we have found out that we were denied for the 2010 AFG application we submitted. Louise asked if we were given a reason. The Chief said from what he gathered the grant did not encompass a large enough demographic. Ray asked if he thought we would have had a better chance if the 3 fire districts had submitted it together, the Chief said yes. The other reason the Chief said we did not receive it was that we are financially solid. The board said agreed that this is not a bad thing, but it is in effect rewarding departments that have not operated as efficiently. The need basis of awarding grants is not fair. The Chief went on to say that he is applying for funds for communications because it is a need that he can justify. With that said he feels he will just redesign the grant he had done last year, changing the key elements they had suggested and resubmit it. That will be our best shot to get funding.

On June 11th we participated in a Foam/Tanker Shuttle Drill hosted by Smithfield Fire Department. The objective was to flow 1,000 gallons of water per/minute for 1 hour. It was a successful coordinated drill with several other area departments participating as well.

Crew members attended the Northern RI Firemen's League Memorial Parade and Service on June 12th in Douglas, MA.

The Chief attended Bryant University's Annual World Trade Day event on June 15th. Ray Fogarty is the director for this event. It was a great networking event.

The annual Harmony Fire Department Golf Tournament was held on June 18th at Crystal Lake Golf Course in Burrillville. The Chief said he had a blast. It was not overly attended, but every there had a great time. It was coordinated by Deputy Chief Mike Segee and Private Linda Ferragamo and they both did an excellent job.

June 22nd through 26th the New England Association of Fire Chiefs 89th Annual Exposition was held at the Big E Fairgrounds in Springfield, MA. In addition to the Chief who was there for the events entirety, crew members attending were Deputy Chief Segee, Lt. DeConte and Lt. Falco.

We are working on upgrading the department's website. The website address will be changed to www.harmonyfd.com and we are using Go Daddy as the website host. We had been paying about \$20 a month to Jumpline, the former host, plus an annual fee. Go Daddy is only charging us \$8.99 per month and it is much more user friendly. The Chief's Daughter Heather is putting a lot of work into its creation. After it is set up she will show Kim how to maintain it and insert update. Jim was working on the old website up until his computer crashed. The board asked if a laptop could be brought in to the next meeting to show them a live update on the progress. The Chief said that would not be a problem. Harmony Fire is also live on Facebook. It is a new

account, but it is another dimension for the department to enter social networking in the 21st century.

Another technology item we are still waiting to get written confirmation for is the RI State Firemen's League (RISFL) grant we applied for to get the Promethean ActivBoard. We were verbally told that we were awarded \$2,000 of the \$5,300 project cost. This is a type of white board that functions interactively. The Chief first saw one in use at the school when he was doing an inspection. Its applications are limitless for training presentations. It functions with individual "notepads" for students to use. The program tallies questions answered by students to figure what materials were understood and what needs to be gone over again. It then presents the material in a different way to increase retention of the lesson in its entirety. The ActivBoard unit is between 60" & 72" wide. The board agreed to table the vote to appropriate funds until we have definite written confirmation of the RISFL grant award.

Ray brought up the subject of the broadband project that himself and the Chief have been looking into. He suggested that a "Broadband Work Team" be put together, chaired by Milton since this is his field, that would include Harmony resident Steve Kut who works for RI DOT and is the number one GIS person in the state and 5 or 6 other computer literate individuals. We have an opportunity for a planner from the state to come out here and put together a broad plan for all of these technology items, instead of doing one small thing at a time. It would be a plan where the dollar amount is not as much of a factor as having everything necessary to make us the leader in the country, if not the world, and a model for other people to follow. Training for everyone from the crew to the district board would be included in the plan and the technology would not need a separate IT employee to run. The plan would include anything and everything to do with computers, from Fire to Rescue to training to administration to entertainment, everything. Much discussion followed regarding broadband opportunities.

Louise made a motion to name Milton as the head of a "Broadband Work Team." He will report the other team members names by the next district board meeting, have a scope at the following meeting and will present a report at the meeting before our next annual meeting. George seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

We have completed a project putting safety messages on the hold line of our phone system. It came out very nice. We will be able to change it out with seasonal safety messages.

Louise asked about Safer Grants, is this something we have applied for? The Chief replied that Safer Grants are for employment. She asked if that was how Scituate was doing their television commercials. The Chief said he was approached by a Scituate Fire Department, Hope-Jackson, to take part in the grant that they received for "Recruitment and Retention." It involves a 401(k) program for the crew members. The Chief is going to look into it, to see if it would be something that would fit our department.

George made a motion to accept the Chief's report. Louise seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

VII. – Harmony Fire Department & Improvement Association Report:

John reiterated what the Chief had said about the Golf Tournament previously. It was smaller than usual, but all who attended had a good time.

He went on to let the board know that several members of the crew, as well as himself, had been working on painting and updating the crew TV room. They are trying to make it more comfortable for people to spend time together, create more of a family atmosphere within the department. There are quite a few new young people and we are trying to get them all involved together as a group. Ray stated if there was anything the board could do to help with his efforts, be it a deck area out back or whatever they come up with, please come forward and ask. John said it would be his goal to have the Association help the District with Recruitment and Retention from a social aspect. Making this a place where people want to come and be a part of.

Louise asked about how individuals find out about the department. How would they know how to come and join, or when there was a class starting. The board discussed advertising and some discussion followed about methods used in the past. It was suggested that perhaps annually we run an ad in a local paper looking for volunteers. Ray suggested we put the sign out that we use for the annual meeting. The Chief said our other issue is that volunteers must live within 5 miles of the station to be eligible to become a member. Louise asked why that rule existed? George said it was for response time. The Chief asked if George knew where this rule was written, because it had just been relayed to him verbally when he became Chief. George stated that it is not written anywhere. The board then agreed that it should be at the Chief's discretion if a potential volunteer was appropriate for membership. Ray said we should not stop anyone from joining. The Chief stated he would look into creating some sort of a policy for duty nights, so all members could give time to the district and make calls.

VIII. - Committee Reports:

- a. Policies & Procedures Manual – Milton, Chair
Due to Milt's absence there was no report available.
- b. Charter & By-Laws Review – George, Chair
An official copy of the approved charter changes has still not been received from the state. An e-mail and phone call was made to Senator Fogarty's office to try and obtain the document. No response has been received. Ray said that he would obtain a copy of the document for our records.

IX. - Old Business:

- a. Update of RIDOT road work in Harmony.
A letter should be sent by the Chief on behalf of the board regarding the temporary needs of the district that have not been addressed by RIDOT. It should be sent to the RIDOT representatives and the elected officials that attended our meeting in May.
 1. Crosswalk needs to be repainted
 2. Assessment of drainage issue in the area of the intersection of Valley Road and Route 44
 3. Sidewalk cleaning along Route 44
 4. Raising and/or patching manhole/utility covers on Route 44
 5. Status of the Phase 4 engineering design
- b. Gloucester Public Safety Commission "Speed Tables"
A follow-up letter should be sent by the Chief to the GPSC, copying the Gloucester Town Council, on behalf of our tax payers and the district board.

X. - New Business:

George brought up the subject of the Harmony Hill School tax exempt status. He questioned the fact that through the "Pilot Program", payment in lieu of taxes, the Town of Glocester receives money from the State of RI. In all actuality the Harmony Fire District should be receiving 1/3 of this money for the fire and emergency medical services we provide. The town provides police and public works services. Ray asked Kim to find out how much money the Town of Glocester actually receives from the state for Harmony Hill School. We can then put in a request for 1/3 of those monies. Ray commented that Harmony Hill School is the major employer in the Town of Glocester, even more than Factory Mutual.

The Chief said that the only contractual program we do have with the Harmony Hill School is the Fire Starter Program. With this program Captain David Plante teaches students from the school a specific number of lessons per year and we receive quarterly payments of \$400. The payment is split with \$200 being paid to Capt. Plante and \$200 going to the district.

XI. - Public Input: No audience.

XII. – Executive Session: None called.

XIII. – Adjournment:

George made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Louise seconded it. The motion carried unanimously. The August meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board was adjourned at **8:42 pm**.

The next meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board is scheduled for **Thursday, 7:00 pm, September 15, 2011** at the Harmony Fire Department.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kimberly S. Barber
Tax Collector/Secretary