

# 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, January 20, 2011.**

Present: Chief Stuart Pearson; Moderator - Raymond Fogarty, Jr.;  
Treasurer - Sandra Owens; Attorney - Fred Mason, Jr.  
Board Members - Louise Michaels, James Richards & George Kain

Absent: Tax Collector - Kimberly Barber – excused  
Board Member – Milton Huston – excused  
Association Representative – John Falco, President – excused

**I. – Meeting Called to Order: 7:12 pm** by Moderator Fogarty.

**II. - Approval of the minutes from the November 18<sup>th</sup> meeting.**

Moderator Fogarty asked the board if there were any discrepancies to note on the minutes from the November 18<sup>th</sup> meeting. Everyone was provided a copy in advance for review. If there are no corrections, 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. - Treasurer's Report:**

Sandy presented Treasurer's reports for the months of October & November. Beginning balance October 1<sup>st</sup> was \$395,105.89 and ending balance October 31<sup>st</sup> was \$512,740.39. A \$30,000 fund was created for truck replacement. A couple of CD's were also created. One gets 1.2% interest, the other 1.55%. These rates are in line with average.

Beginning balance November 1<sup>st</sup> was \$512,740.39 and ending balance November 30<sup>th</sup> was \$498,356.12.

The December reports are not available yet. Statements actually just came in about a week ago and Kim has had some time out.

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

**IV. - Tax Collector's Report:**

Due to Kim's absence there was no Tax Collector's Report available to present.

The Chief did mention however that she did attend the Open Government Summit sponsored by Attorney General Kilmartin's office and there was a meeting of the RI Tax Collector's Association. Additionally she attended a Human Resources Seminar where she obtained some

great information, particularly a set of CD's that will be very helpful in the preparation of our Policies & Procedures Manual.

#### V. - Chief's Report:

A thank you note was received from Mary Lee Partington, thanking us for allowing her to take part in our annual Christmas Tree Lighting each year. She goes on to say what a wonderful event it is, keeping the spirit of Christmas alive here in Harmony. She also sent something in to the Observer. The Chief stated that we had about 87 children came through the line to talk to Santa and receive a gift. Louise stated, "until that night my Grandson was scared on Santa. Santa did an awesome job!" Ray asked if we had sent a thank you to Mary Lee from the board. The Chief told the board that he had spoken to her personally and thank you cards are always sent out to everyone who participates. Ray wanted to make sure that she knew how much the board appreciates everything she does at this event.

Calendars for the upcoming year's board meetings are in everyone's folders.

The framing of Kevin Farley's achievement of Volunteer Firefighter of the Year is done. It is on the table for everyone to take a look at and will be hung in the station.

The night of the "blizzard" the Chief had a detail put on at the station. It worked out wonderfully, because there was a call that night and our truck was out the door in a minute. Those individuals were paid for their time out of the Call Pay budget. Individuals also volunteered to come in another time and stayed the entire night. The Chief is thinking of rewarding them for this event as well, some sort of appreciation.

The Chief has been working on the Gloucester POD MEDS Disbursement Plan. He has meet with Dr. Thomas of Fatima Hospital to discuss the plan. Dr. Thomas is currently Harmony's Medical Director.

On December 17<sup>th</sup> a fundraiser for young Charlie Vota was run by the Association here at the station. Between \$1,700 – 1,900 was raised to help him pay his medical bills. He did not have any health insurance when he got in his car accident on Thanksgiving morning. Louise stated that he is back to work now, this past Monday, and he is doing much better.

A property within the district is going for a hearing before the RI Fire Code Board of Appeal and Review. The property owners now have approximately 150 day to correct any violations and deficiencies.

On January 7<sup>th</sup> the Chief attended the swearing in ceremony for Michael Grenga at Central Falls Fire Department. He is now employed there, he started about 2-1/2 weeks ago. He was sworn in by the CFFD Deputy Chief, as everyone knows their Chief Rene Coutu passed away recently. During the swearing in ceremony they did make mention of the Harmony Fire Department and the great training that Michael had received here. The Chief thought this was a great compliment to us.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of this month there was a meeting of the three Gloucester Fire Chiefs, their secretaries and Judi Parman of VFIS. Our insurance rates are going to increase dramatically next year. Judi said to expect an increase of \$12,000 to our Accident and Sickness policy, that's a \$4,000

increase per department. Sandy asked if that would be for this fall. Chief said yes, for the next budget. Ray asked why that is. The Chief said that all three Chiefs had questioned that as well. Judi presented information regarding our medical claims, from all departments. She is going to look into streamlining our policy, switching things around a little to try and help. The Chief has taken the initiative to contact another insurance carrier to get another quote to compare to and keep our options open. Sandy and Louise agreed this would not hurt to do. Ray asked if this carrier specialized in fire as well. The Chief stated yes. George asked if the Chief thought the other two departments would come on board with a change of insurance carrier. The Chief stated that he was doing this himself to be able to answer to this board. Whatever the other two departments would like to do, he does not know. George said that he had talked to the Chief about VFIS before. Their requirements of the volunteers regarding physicals, heart conditions, pre-existing conditions or injuries, is not very stringent. Therefore the excessive medical claims, then they raise our rates. Louise asked if the other quote comes in lower, but has physical requirements such as George spoke of, would the crew members object to these changes. She stated it would be for their own best interest. The Chief said that he had asked Judi if there were any programs we could institute, such as a fitness program, that would help our rates. She had said she would look into it. She stated that we were not the only department receiving such an increase

There was also a letter received, addressed to the board, from David Smith, Executive Director of RI All Hazard Incident Management Team. It is to thank you for allowing the Chief to participate in the program.

A letter was also received from Ginny Peters, Gloucester Director of Human Services, thanking us for the delivery of canned good donations received at the Christmas Tree Lighting.

The new heating system has been installed. There were quite a few hiccups that came along during the process due to corrosion and water issues within the building (calcium) issues in the pipes. Larry Gemma was here again and resolved a lot of the smaller issues, but there are other things that still need to be done. Replacement of pipes, venting, valves, etc. We will be receiving another estimate to finish up the work and get the heating system working correctly. Ray asked what our budget was and what the actual cost is so far. The Chief said he thought the budget was about \$57,000 and the cost is \$28,000. Sandy said the expense isn't recorded in her reports yet so she isn't sure. She stated that we only have \$30,000 in the Efficiency Improvements budget item though. Ray and Louise seemed to recall that we had budgeted more than \$30,000, but couldn't remember how it had been done. The Chief said that he thought it had been stated that the monies appropriated for the Truck Fund had been left open to use if needed. Sandy said she would look into it.

Jim asked the Chief about the water issue. The Chief said it has been 6 months since the last test and we are due to have the water retested. George asked the Chief what the findings were at the last test. He said high levels of potassium and calcium. At that time we had made adjustments to the additives in the water softener. There is quite a bit of water contamination within the village of Harmony due to road salt issues. Therefore this may end up being a state issue. Ray and George will try to get further information on this issue.

A grant has been received through the RI Urban Search and Rescue for \$57,000. The purpose of this grant is to buy thermal imaging cameras. The Chief's goal is to get four thermal imaging

cameras for our department and two night vision units for the search vehicle. This is a 100% grant paid directly by RIUSR, with no reimbursements or district match required.

Geoff Malo, district auditor, has also been in touch. He thinks our reports look very good and he should have his report ready to present at next month's meeting

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

**VI. – Harmony Fire Department & Improvement Association Report:**

John Falco, Association President, has taken a short leave of absence from the department. Due to his absence there was no Association Report available to present. Ray asked if there would be anyone filling in for John during his absence. The Chief stated that since it was going to be such a short term leave, there would not be.

**VII. - Committee Reports:**

a. Policies & Procedures Manual – Milton, Chair

Due to Milt's absence there was no report available to present.

The Chief just restated that the information Kim has ordered at the Human Resources Seminar that she attended will have everything that is needed for our manual. It would just be a sort of fill in the blanks type of thing with all of the work already being done for us. Ray asked if it was specific to fire districts. The Chief said it was.

b. Charter & By-Laws Review – George, Chair

*Vote on proposed Charter Revisions*

A draft was enclosed in everyone's folder. Ray stated that we would still get another chance to look at the document, when the draft document is returned to us from legislation. George noted that there was a correction to be made on page one, the name of Central Avenue has been changed to Chestnut Oak Road. George thought that we had voted on this at the August meeting. The board granted George the authority to work with the Chief and Kim to finalize the document and forward it to the legislators.

Louise made a motion to accept the proposed Charter Revisions, with noted correction. Jim seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

**VIII. - Old Business:**

a. Review of Boiler Replacement project.  
Addressed in Chief's Report.

George asked for an update on correspondence with the legislators about the proposed roadwork in Harmony. The Chief asked George if he would be willing to draft a copy of a letter to be sent. He agreed. Ray asked, depending on our findings, if we could ask our representatives to come to one of our board meetings and discuss the project with us. Louise mentioned that we had discussed this issue at our last meeting and we had talked about having a RIDOT representative come to speak here, to our tax payers. Some discussion followed about RIDOT projects within the town of Gloucester.

**IX. - New Business:** Addressed throughout report.

X. - Public Input: No audience.

XI. – Executive Session: None called.

XII. – Adjournment:

Jim made a motion to adjourn the meeting. George seconded it. The motion carried unanimously. The January meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board was adjourned at **7:46 pm**.

The next meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board is scheduled for **Thursday, 7:00 pm, February 17, 2011** at the Harmony Fire Department.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kimberly S. Barber".

Kimberly S. Barber  
Tax Collector/Secretary