

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 19, 2012.**

Present: Chief Stuart Pearson; Moderator – Raymond Fogarty, Jr.
Treasurer – Sandra Owens; Tax Collector – Kimberly Barber;
Board Member – George Kain
Association Representative – Eric Palmieri, President;
Attorney – Fred Mason, Jr.

Absent: Board Members: Louise Michaels – **excused** (vacation);
Milton Huston – **excused** (business);
James Richards – **excused** (business)

I. – Meeting Called to Order: 7:08 pm by Moderator Fogarty.

The moderator announced that due to the lack of a quorum no votes will be taken at this meeting.

II. - Approval of the minutes from the November 16th meeting.

The vote was tabled for the November 16th meeting minutes.

III. – Approval of Bills:

A check register of bills to be paid was provided to all attending in their folders. Moderator Fogarty asked if there were any comments or questions for Sandy or Kim on these expenses.

The vote was tabled for the approval of bills.

IV. - Treasurer's Report:

Sandy suggested that since she was presenting such a large amount of information this month, that everyone review the reports and have any questions ready before the vote at next month's meeting.

Beginning balance September 1st \$449,291.21 and ending balance September 30th \$556,967.58.

Beginning balance October 1st \$556,967.58 and ending balance October 31st \$526,603.62. The large expense paid out in October was the annual life insurance premiums, \$14,561.00.

Ray asked if a report could be prepared to show revenue figures this year compared to the last couple of years. That way we could see if there are any drastic fluctuations due to economic issues. Sandy will create a comparison chart and Kim will generate a report from QuickBooks for the next meeting.

Beginning balance November 1st \$526,603.62 and ending balance November 30th \$508,108.76. The large expense paid out in November was the building loan payment to USDA, \$19,874.00.

Also, \$4,325.00 was posted to the capital expense – Facility Improvements (G/L 61120). Over \$3,000 of this was for partial payment of the new Promethean ActivBoard.

The vote was tabled for the Treasurer's Reports.

V. - Tax Collector's Report:

Taxes receivable balance as of today's date is \$128,304.28.

Taxes collected in the month of November were \$17,452.40.

Taxes collected in the month of December were \$9,050.23.

Third party billing in November totaled \$15,428.26.

Third party billing in December totaled \$6,705.34.

Audit reports for fiscal year end June 30, 2011 were submitted to Geoff Malo on December 27th.

The Chief and Kim met with Kim Dawson, Dawson Group CEO, regarding the third party billing. Their reporting specifics were discussed vs. our old company. Additionally, we discussed write-offs, dealing with attorneys, address identification for billing of Harmony residents, etc. A lot of good feedback came from this meeting. Dawson will now be changing some of the ways they are reporting the information to us and they will also be submitting reports to us on a quarterly basis.

Ray asked if Kim knew approximately what we net per year for our third party billing. Kim replied that as of year-end June 30, 2011 she thought the total was approximately \$80,000. Sandy agreed saying it averaged between \$70-80,000. The Chief said that this year we should see an increase in that figure, because when we switched third party billing companies we found that our fee structure was low. It has now been adjusted. Ray asked if we knew what the percentage of increase was that we could expect to see. Kim stated that Dawson would be submitting a report for the 1st quarter of the calendar year and we could do an analysis with that information. The Chief said that he thought she had said it would be somewhere between 10-15%, so approximately \$90,000 total.

Kim completed a two-day training session and received ICS 300 certification. Ray asked what this certification was. The Chief explained that Incident Command System (ICS) 300, is one of the required certifications of NIMS (National Incident Management Systems) compliance. NIMS compliance is also a requirement to receive Federal funds. In Kim's capacity, as administrative personnel she learns skills to deal with major incidents, her individual role, filing of required forms, etc. Next she will need to complete ICS 400, 700 and 800.

REMINDER: Scholarship applications are now being accepted for the public safety section.

The 100 Club – due March 1st

Woonasquatucket Valley Firemen's League – due March 31st

Glocester Firefighters Scholarship – due April 30th

New magnetic district board meeting calendars for 2012 were included in everyone's folders.

The vote was tabled for the Tax Collector's Report.

VI. - Chief's Report:

Capital improvement items have been being worked on throughout the building. The plumber has been in to complete work in the conference room, bathrooms, etc. Next we will be getting a quote for painting and for a carpenter to come in and build the trophy case. We first looked for volunteers in-house, but had no luck. We will also be clearing out the weight room. Some new exercise equipment will be purchased and the TV will be replaced. Ceiling tiles in the pool room are going to be replaced by one of our volunteers who is currently out of work.

The Gloucester Public Safety Commission has started a search for a new EMA Director. Chief Pearson and Gloucester Police Chief Joseph DelPrete were asked by the Gloucester Town Council to draw up a job description for the position. The Council began to run the help wanted ad this week.

Former member Ryan McAndrews came home for the holidays from Australia where he is going to school. He has already left again to complete a couple of weeks of studies in Brazil, before returning to Australia to finish his degree.

A senate grant has been submitted through Senator Fogarty's office for \$1,500. We will be purchasing handheld student accessories and an iPad for the ActivBoard. The handheld units are wireless to enable student responses to instructors questions. The responses are automatically calculated, showing the instructor where the weaknesses in their lessons are and to target them for further review.

The AFG (Assistance to Firefighters Grant) program started awarding grants in mid-December. Unfortunately the Chief received a notice of denial just today for our application for Interoperable Communications. The grant will reopen for 2012 applications in April. Each year the federal government is cutting back more and more to this program. We only know of one AFG that was awarded in RI so far, to West Warwick. George said that this information needs to be brought to the attention of our elected officials. The Chief replied that that is why he is always sure to take part in the CFSI (Congressional Fire Services Institute) delegation to Washington DC each year, to make sure our voices are heard.

Two Gloucester Fire Chiefs meetings have been held recently. We have been discussing the radio narrow banding deadline, radio coverage and the radio tower repair. The Chiefs sat with a radio repairman to go over the items and he will be putting together a proposal. This bill will be split three ways amongst the fire districts.

Another item discussed was the volunteer response or lack of it and a plan to address it. Ray asked if the Chief could elaborate on this plan. The Chief said that there has been a problem with personnel response during the overnight hours. We are trying to design a plan to make more people active and share the responsibility more evenly. The same individuals are responding all the time and we need to correct this. We will design one plan for all districts to adopt. No blame is being placed on an individual district and there will not be any singling out of individuals for personal reasons. Ray asked if the plan the Chiefs come up with, will get feedback from the officers and crew, and have they researched how other communities are dealing with these same issues? The Chief said they have spoken with other communities.

Scituate has a great plan in place and Foster and Burrillville have adopted similar plans. Ray said he just felt the policy should be reviewed by the crew before it is adopted. The Chief said he agreed, but they are trying to implement the program as soon as possible.

George said he wanted to bring up the subject of electric use in the building. He said that we have put a lot of time and energy into trying to save electricity with upgrades, but if the lights are not shut off we are still not going to realize any savings. If crew members are here using the weight room the whole building does not have to be lit up. The Chief said he would remind everyone again. Ray suggested that we make the investment to install more automatic sensors throughout the building. Everyone agreed.

The vote was tabled for the Chief's Report.

VII. – Harmony Fire Department & Improvement Association Report:

Before Eric gave his report Ray wanted to thank him for the letters that he had sent out to the board thanking them for their support of the Christmas Tree Lighting. It was a nice touch.

Eric then gave his report. The Christmas Tree Lighting was a huge success. We put on a \$3,200 event for just under \$1,000. We received many, many donations. The Chief, Kim and the committee did a lot of work. He mentioned the article about the event that has been circulating the many local publications and Ray thanked the committee for making the effort to have that done. He went on to say that an article like that does a lot for the image of the Harmony Fire District. It gets people talking about us, but not just for in a time of crisis. We [the board] take it for granted because we come here all the time, but it gives the community a sense of pride.

Kim mentioned that the articles incorrectly stated that she had written it, when in fact it was written by Harmony resident and Christmas Tree Lighting Committee member, Mary Lee Partington. Kim had only submitted the article for publication with hers and Lt. Kevin Farley's photos. She said Mary Lee did a wonderful job and deserved all the credit.

Sandy asked if there could be ways to get teenagers more involved, give them something to do. Finding something for that age bracket is hard, especially in Gloucester. Ray thought this was a great suggestion. It can't be fun night at the fire department, but something more productive. Eric said when he took his office in September his goal was to hold at least two events for the community before his term expired in June and he has already accomplished that. In the future he thinks it would be doable to have four. Ray thought even utilizing the new ActivBoard for a movie night or a sports game would be great to get people in the station. Eric said just last week a group of members got together to watch the football game here in the TV room. They plan to do it again for the Super Bowl.

On March 11th the Association is trying to plan a Bingo Night and Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner Fundraiser here at the station. He asked for the board's approval to use the building. Sandy thought this was a good idea. Kim said you will be surprised at the turn out. She has attended bingos herself at the Foster Center and Chopmist Fire Departments and was amazed at the number of people. George mentioned that they would need to contact the State Police for a license. Eric said he had sent an application to the State Police, but he has not heard back from

them yet. He said at the last Association meeting there was a lot of interest and many crew members volunteered to help.

Eric also noted that at the last Association meeting, which was quite lengthy, a vote was taken to leave Citizens Bank and find another financial institution. No decision as to which one yet. He also mentioned that when the By-Law changes have been voted on and approved, he will make sure that they are signed and dated and that the District Board gets a copy.

The date has been set for the Banquet. It will be held Saturday, April 7th, at Crystal Lake Golf Club. Sandy commented that it was being held a month earlier than usual. The Chief said that with it only being us and West Gloucester Fire District, Chepachet is having a separate banquet for their 100th Anniversary, we are going to a smaller venue. Eric said he believes that this was the best date available at that smaller venue. When announced at the Association meeting, no one seemed to have an issue that it was the night before Easter, so we went with it.

Ray asked if there were any other issues from the volunteers perspective that he would like to discuss with the board. Eric stated that when he was voted into office it was September, the Association's annual meeting is supposed to be held in May, but it was delayed this long due to a lack of a quorum at the meetings. Therefore one thing he has tried to change is the attendance at the meetings. By better communications, e-mail, FaceBook, etc., just constant reminders, it has been much improved. Overall participation is improved.

The vote was tabled for the Association Report.

VIII. - Committee Reports:

- a. Policies & Procedures Manual – Milton, Chair
Due to Milt's absence there was no update available.
- b. Broadband Work Team – Milton & Stephen Kut, Co-Chairs
Due to scheduling issues Steve Kut and Chris Fusaro made an ActivBoard presentation of the GIS portion of the Broadband Project at the start of tonight's meeting. Steve brought Pictometry software with mapping information for the Town of Gloucester, as well as neighboring communities. The hour long presentation was very informative and led to much discussion about the many ways it could be an asset to us.
- c. Property Review Work Team – George Kain & Louise Michaels, Co-Chairs
No new information.

IX. - Old Business:

- a. Update on RIDOT proposed Roadwork in Harmony.
No new information.
- b. Pathway to Net Zero – Heat & Electricity
No new information.

X. - New Business: Addressed throughout the report.

XI. - Public Input: No audience.

XII. – Executive Session: None called.

XIII. – Adjournment:

The January meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board was **recessed at 8:50 pm.** The meeting will resume and votes will be taken at the next regular monthly meeting.

The next meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board
is scheduled for **Thursday, 7:00 pm, February 16, 2012** at the Harmony Fire Department.

Respectfully Submitted,

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

Kimberly S. Barber
Tax Collector/Secretary