

HARMONY FIRE DISTRICT

194 Putnam Pike
Glocester, R.I. 02814

The regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board was held at the Harmony Fire Station on **Thursday, November 21, 2013.**

Present: Moderator – Raymond Fogarty, Jr.; Chief Stuart Pearson;
Treasurer – Sandra Owens; Tax Collector/Clerk – Kimberly Barber;
Board Members – Milton Huston & James Richards
Association Representative – Linda Ferragamo, President;
Attorney – Fred Mason, Jr.

Absent: Board Member – George Kain – excused
Board Member – Louise Michaels – excused

I. – Meeting Called to Order: 7:03 pm by Moderator Fogarty.

II. – Approval of the minutes from the October 17th meeting:

Moderator Fogarty asked the board if there were any discrepancies to note on the minutes from the October 17th meeting. If there are no corrections, he would like to call for a motion to accept them.

Milton made a motion to accept the minutes. Jim 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. Moderator Fogarty asked if there were any comments or questions on these expenses. If not, he would like to call for a motion to accept them as presented.

Jim made a motion to approve the bills. Milton seconded the motion.
The motion carried unanimously.

IV. – Treasurer’s Report:

Beginning balance September 1st \$586,227.08 and ending balance September 30th \$695,862.49.
The tax money is in.

In this month \$60,000 has been moved into the equipment fund - \$30,000 budget plus \$30,000 capital. Ray asked what the total was in the truck fund now. Sandy replied \$201,521 plus the transfer of \$6,789.99. Ray then asked Jim if the truck purchase price would be under this amount. Jim said it was.

Jim made a motion to accept the September Treasurer’s report as presented. Milton seconded it.
The motion carried unanimously.

V. – Tax Collector’s Report:

This report was heard out of order, before the Treasurer’s report.

The taxes receivable balance as of today’s date is \$123,374.37.

Taxes collected in the month of October totaled \$17,787.66.

Third party billing fees collected in the month of October were \$9,599.99.

The tax sale was held on October 25th. 3 properties were sold and 2 vacant parcels of land were passed on. Deeds were recorded on these so we retain our collection ability.

Past due notices were mailed out on November 1st and many payments were received in response.

The audit for fiscal year end June 30, 2013 has been received from Geoff Malo. Everyone has already received an electronic copy in their e-mail and a hard copy has been included in everyone’s folder tonight. Along with the report copies, Geoff had submitted a letter with his notes and thoughts on our Audit. Ray wanted to commend Kim, Sandy and the Chief for all of their hard work, since this letter is very complimentary.

Kim also mentioned that she had received a notice from the Attorney General’s (AG) office stating that legislation had passed in July regarding Open Meeting Act (OMA) requirements for posting our minutes on the Secretary of State’s website within 21 days of the meeting date. She has complied and posted the minutes as required.

There had been a question about the verbage of the legislation and whether or not our association would now be required to post minutes. The legislation reads, “... *all volunteer fire companies, associations, fire district companies, or any other organization ...*”. Kim called the AG’s office and posed the question to them. Their representative made the determination that since the association is not a public body, it was not subject to OMA requirements and this legislation would not apply to them either. They did suggest we run it by our solicitor also, to get his opinion as well.

Kim stated that she had also recently completed the Annual Fire District Survey which is remitted to the RI Department of Revenue - Division of Municipal Finance. This year the survey had been expanded from one page to three and had requested not only a copy of our budget, but also a copy of our Charter. Some discussion followed about watching fire district legislation diligently.

Kim also mentioned that she did get elected as Secretary of the RI Tax Collector’s Association for a 2 year term. The board congratulated her on this achievement. Ray stated that this is something that he highly encourages participation in. The knowledge gathered is very important.

Milton made a motion to accept the Tax Collector’s report. Jim seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

VI. – Chief’s Report:

This report was heard out of order, before the Treasurer’s report.

October was Fire Prevention month and presentations were done at the Fogarty and West Gloucester elementary schools. Both programs were received quite well. The Chief also

reminded everyone that with the changing of the clocks, it was also time to change the batteries in their smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

We have enrolled in a service contract with Golden Heating Service. Sandy asked if they are separate from Reichert? The Chief stated they are. We will continue to use Reichert for our fuel deliveries.

We did receive a RI State Firemen's League grant to pay for the second half of the Rapid Intervention Training (RIT) class. So this class was a zero expense for not only the Harmony people, but all whom attended. The roster totaled 27 students from around the state. A RIT team will be created with-in the town of Gloucester, when the training is complete.

A legislative grant was also submitted through Senator Fogarty's office for extrication equipment and CPR training materials.

Two dry hydrant repairs have been completed. One on Saw Mill Road and one on Snake Hill Road. Repairs were completed by Deputy Chief Segee, Captain Falco and Private Detri.

Image Trend, the new computer software we will be implementing for our EMS reporting, conducted an on-line walk through for the administration portion. This meeting was attended by the Chief, Kim, Captain Falco and Lieutenant Farley.

The Chief took part in a Flu and Whooping Cough vaccination clinic at the Ponaganset High School. About 135 people were vaccinated.

November 13th through the 15th the Chief attended the International Conference for Fire and Rescue Executives in Boston, MA. The Chief was asked to speak as past president of the New England Association of Fire Chiefs. He stated the event was a great success. He was able to speak with people from 15 countries throughout the world about situations and problems within the fire service. He said that no matter how big or small the departments were it seemed that all of the problems were on the same playing field. It was very interesting.

The Chief and Ray attended the Northern RI Chamber of Commerce's Eggs & Issues presentation by RI Department of Transportation Director Michael Lewis. Discussed was the upcoming fiscal year and federal funding for the state of RI roadwork. Ray said they did bring up the condition of Route 44 here in Harmony. The Chief will be drafting a letter to send directly to Mr. Lewis. Some discussion followed.

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

VII. – Harmony Fire Department & Improvement Association Report:

Linda reported that the annual Christmas Tree Lighting is coming up on Sunday, December 1st. She also stated that there is an issue with the booking date for the Gloucester Firefighters Banquet this year. We may be having it separately this year. The date was not booked far enough in advance, so the committee is having trouble finding a venue.

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

VIII. – Committee Reports:

- a. Broadband Work Team – Milton Huston, Chair
Milton would like to start looking for available grant monies.

- b. Apparatus Review Work Team – Jim Richards, Chair
Work Team: Jim, George, Chief, Deputy Chief Segee & Capt. John Falco

Jim reported that the Chief is waiting to get the contract back from Tri-Star. Other than that there will be one more meeting with Tri-Star to go over the final touches. Ray asked when the expected delivery date is. The Chief said it should definitely be by June. Sandy said that she will make sure she has the funds available for that date.

Ray said that means we will have the \$30,000 available in a new truck fund in next year's budget. That is good because we need to start thinking about a new vehicle for the Chief. The Chief said his current vehicle has about 80,000 miles on it. Ray said that we should not keep it beyond 100,000 miles, because the value then diminishes significantly. So with that in mind we need to start thinking about what kind of vehicle to replace it with about a year from now. He asked the Chief if he could have a recommendation ready for next year's budget discussions.

IX. – Old Business:

George had asked Kim if she could really his update on the property to the East side of the station in his absence. She stated that he had spoken with the property owner, Mrs. Ethier. He said it was not a negative conversation, but he has not heard back from her yet.

The board had asked Kim to type up the By-Law change proposed last month and forward it to Attorney Mason. She had e-mailed it to him and included a hard copy in everyone's folder tonight. The change only deletes a line and adds a line. It changes the Special Meeting guidelines to 15 days, instead of following the Annual meeting rules of 30 days. This enables the board to call a Special Meeting at their next monthly meeting date. Attorney Mason said he had not been able to review the e-mail yet and asked to table the vote until the next meeting.

X. – New Business:

Ray brought up the subject of our meeting calendar. He stated that two other boards that he sits on have changed their meeting calendars to bi-monthly. The reason being, the odd month is used for sub-committee work to take place. In reality the change would eliminate three meetings per year. Kim had prepared the proposed change to the By-Laws in advance for everyone to review, hard copies were distributed. Sandy stated that on the odd months a report could be e-mailed to the district board as an interim financial update. This proposal will be voted on as presented at the next meeting.

The Chief also notified the board that the Snow Plowing bid will be advertised, with the bid to be reviewed and awarded at the January meeting.

Kim also brought up the fact that our Strategic Plan has expired and the board will need to consider putting together a committee next year to renew it. Ray said that he had already spoken with John Visich at Bryant and he is very enthusiastic about helping us again with this project. He enjoyed working with us and is willing to donate his time to the district again. The Chief and

Kim both expressed their appreciation for all of John's hard work with the last document and were both looking forward to working with him again.

Ray initiated a brief discussion about openness amongst the crew and board. He wanted to state the fact that the board is available to the crew at any time to discuss any issues that they may feel are pertinent to the good of the department. Working together as a cohesive team is critical to our success. The entire board was in agreement.

XI. – Public Input: No audience.

XII. – Executive Session: None called

XIII. – Adjournment:

Milton made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jim seconded it. The motion carried unanimously. The November meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board was adjourned at **7:40 pm**.

The next meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board is scheduled for **Thursday, 7:00 pm, January 16, 2014** at the Harmony Fire Station.

Respectfully Submitted,

Handwritten signature of Kimberly S. Barber in cursive script.

Kimberly S. Barber
Tax Collector/Clerk