

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, January 15, 2015.**

Present: Moderator – Milton Huston; Chief Stuart Pearson;
Attorney – Fred Mason, Jr.; Treasurer – Sandra Owens;
Tax Collector/Clerk – Kimberly Barber;
Board Members – Louise Michaels, George Kain,
James Richards & Raymond Fogarty

Absent: Association Representative – William Vota, President

Audience: Deputy Chief Jeff Muto, Capt. Mike Segee, Capt. Kevin Farley,
Paul Perreault, Linda Ferragamo, Rob Waterman

I. – Meeting Called to Order: Moderator Huston called the meeting to order at **7:11 pm.**

II. – Approval of the minutes from the November 20th regular meeting and the December 18th special meeting:

Moderator Huston asked the board if there were any discrepancies to note on the minutes from the November 20th regular meeting and the December 18th special meeting. If there are no corrections, he would like to call for a motion to accept them.

Ray made a motion to accept both sets of minutes. Jim seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

III. – Review of Bills:

A check register of bills paid since the last meeting until today's date was provided to all board members in their folder. Moderator Huston asked if there were any comments or questions on these expenses. There were none. He also stated that this is an informational report only and no vote is necessary.

IV. – Treasurer's Report:

Sandy then presented the Treasurer's Reports for the months of October and November.

Beginning balance October 1st \$491,179.59 and ending balance October 31st \$513,472.19. There were routine expenses during the month of October.

Beginning balance November 1st \$513,472.19 and ending balance November 30th \$503,084.59. Third party billing is looking really good. Sandy expects that we will exceed our anticipated revenue figure of \$100,000 since we are already at about \$56,000. She said that may expect to be over in several categories this year due to the fact that we changed a lot. Particularly under personnel, such as grant proposals and vacation/sick time. She also thinks that she underestimated fringe benefits. With oil and fuel prices being lower, she hopes it may even out overall.

George asked Sandy where the balance of the truck fund was shown in her report. She said on page 3 and there is only about \$5,000 in it now.

Sandy also wanted to mention that due to the new state requirements Geoff Malo has let her know that his price will go up to approximately \$4,500 next year. We have been solicited by an outside company to come in and give us a quote. Sandy and Kim both commended Geoff on his work and said that he would be doing double the work.

Sandy also stated that Geoff Malo has submitted the completed Audit for fiscal year end June 30, 2014 and there were copies for everyone's review in their folders. The Moderator stated that review and approval of the Audit should be added to the agenda for next month to be voted on.

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

V. – Tax Collector's Report:

Taxes Receivable balance as of today's date is \$108,937.42.

Taxes collected in November totaled \$11,027.08 and in December \$18,604.62.

Third party billing collected in November totaled \$12,833.84 and in December \$14,640.04.

Kim stated that the Tax Sale list would be prepared shortly and forwarded to Attorney Glenn Carlson's office for the 90 day notices to be sent out.

The annual meeting notice has been submitted electronically to the Secretary of State. Our calendar has also been forwarded to the Town Clerk for inclusion on the calendar on Gloucester's website.

Kim had placed a handout in everyone's folders about the upcoming convention of the RI League of Cities and Towns. She said there are several items being discussed at this event that are of interest to us. She thought perhaps one of the board members would like to attend. Ray asked if there was a fee to attend. Kim said that it was free and the registration information was included in the handout.

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

VI. – Chief's Report:

Our Annual Tree Lighting was Sunday, November 30th. The Shriners Clowns were here again making their balloon creations. We also brought back the Magician we used a couple years ago and the kids just love him! The crowd seemed down a bit this year, but it did appear that we had more children from our own community, which is a good thing. The Chief offered a special thanks to the Tree Lighting Committee: Ruth Pearson, Kim Barber, Kacey Richards and Elaine Muto. They did a wonderful job!

As I had discussed back in November we were working on an application for an Assistance to Firefighters Grant. The total grant submitted on December 5th was \$48,754. It was for a Chest Compression Unit and Large Diameter Hose.

Fogarty Elementary School had their annual Breakfast with Santa and we provided a detail for the event.

Squad 2 had repairs and maintenance performed.

We have purchased (3) new CO meters and a calibration unit. The meters have been put in service and training has been done.

On December 11th the 3 Gloucester Fire Chiefs had another meeting to go over the proposals for the new communications system. The other Chiefs wanted to look into it a little bit further. They will be meeting again next week. The Chief is hoping they will be able to move ahead with the project at that time. As the board is aware he has been pushing for this project for over 2 years now. Ray asked what the cost was for us? The Chief said that we had allocated about \$35,000 in this year's budget for this project. He didn't know the exact total off the top of his head. But it was a 3 year purchase at \$35,000 per year. The total project was about \$300,000 split between the 3 fire districts. Further discussion followed to refresh everyone's memory about the project.

The Chief attended the Southern RI Firefighters League meeting, which addressed the APRA request of Ken Block to all Fire Departments/Districts statewide. There were about 9 Fire Chiefs present discussing the particulars of his request. It was an educational meeting only. Ray said he had seen an article by Lincoln Almond, who defended the fire districts and chastised Ken Block for his criticism due to a lack of knowledge. Sandy said she had seen it too and she thought it was great because he explained all of the challenges the different fire districts face with water resources, geography, etc.

The RIAFC sponsored a seminar, *Fire Alarm Leadership* by Chief Rick Lasky & Battalion Chief John Salka, which was attended by Deputy Chief Muto, Capt. Rick Waterman and Lt. John Detri. The cost for this day long educational event was \$25 per person, which included lunch.

On Sunday, January 11th an Ice Rescue Drill was coordinated by Deputy Chief Muto at Coomer's Pond / Marion Irons Beach on Snake Hill Road. The new rescue sled was utilized and photos of the drill were posted on our FaceBook page. The purchase price of the rescue sled was offset with funds from the Fogarty Legislative grant and the Kilmartin grant. The net cost to the district was about \$300.

Also, on a nice note, we had 911 call on New Year's Day for an Ice Rescue out on Waterman Lake of 2 dogs. Deputy Chief Muto handled the call. The owners of the animals are from Narragansett, but their parents who live on the lake had been watching the dogs. The couple was extremely appreciative and came in to the station during a Monday night drill to meet with the crew and thank them personally. They brought in sandwiches and a cake and posed for photos with the dogs.

Next the Chief brought to the board's attention a hand-crafted model of a fire station. He said it was made by a Harmony resident, Ray Sherman. Ray is one of Harmony Fire's biggest fans, donning an HFD ball cap wherever he goes. A photo taken of him with the station has been posted on our FaceBook page. He is extremely proud of the recognition.

This past Monday Deputy Chief Muto, along with Capt. Segee, Capt. Farley, Capt. Waterman and Lt. Vota, conducted an Introductory meeting for new prospective members. 6 attended, including 2 probies already on the roster, to learn a little bit more about the district and the upcoming Probationary Class.

On January 5th there was an Association meeting.

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

VII. – Harmony Fire Department & Improvement Association Report:

In Willy's absence Deputy Chief Muto submitted a check from the Association Treasurer, John Detri. The check is to reimburse the district for expenses paid for the Tree Lighting. John had wanted to attend tonight to explain this issue to the board, but he had to work, so he texted the Deputy Chief to please present the check for him. The Chief said OK, but he had asked the President to include a letter of explanation with the check. He is aware that the Association had been having some financial issues and hopes they have finally been resolved. Expenses had to be paid and reimbursement had to be made to the tree lighting committee members for expenses paid out of pocket, because they could not get funds from the Association. This money came from the district's budget, where there were no funds appropriated for this event. The Chief asked the Deputy Chief to make sure the President still submits the letter of explanation.

VIII. – Committee Reports:

- a. Property Review Work Team – George Kain & Louise Michaels, Co-Chairs
George said that the property owner had contacted him again. We had told her in our last letter that we weren't ready at that time. He said he felt that we need to give her some sort of a definite answer within the next couple of months. Ray felt that this issue needed to be decided at either the annual meeting or at a special meeting. He added that this opportunity may never come up again in the future. Some discussion followed about loan types. Ray also stated that wanted to check the open meeting law to see if this should be discussed in public session or executive session. Kim stated that executive session should be called for purpose of property acquisition and the contract negotiation of the proposed purchase. George wanted to know if the board wished to go ahead with a Purchase Agreement? It was agreed "not yet".

Louise asked Sandy if she could compile the information she had gathered from the USDA for the board to review again at next month's meeting. Sandy said that wouldn't be a problem. The Chief said he would contact Senator Reed's office and ask about assistance with the USDA. The board agreed that they would go into executive session during February's meeting to go over all of this information. George said he would call the owner to give her an update.

IX. – Old Business:

- a. Access to Public Records Act (APRA) Certification
Sandy has completed the requirements for APRA certification. The board thanked Sandy for volunteering for this additional duty. She said that she just still had to sit with Kim to go over how to access everything. The Moderator stated that this item can now be removed from future agendas.

b. By-Law Changes

Kim stated that last month this item was tabled pending Attorney Mason's review. The only thing he suggested was that he preferred a general wording change of "according to RIGL" versus a change quoting section and line.

Kim had also checked the wording of the District By-Laws to be sure no change was necessary for the date of the tax sale and found no change was necessary. There is no date listed, the by-laws just simply state that it is our policy to utilize the tax sale procedure established by RIGL.

Louise made a motion to accept the By-Laws changes as proposed at the October 23rd meeting with the exception of the wording changes noted by Attorney Mason. George seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

X. – New Business: None

XI. – Public Input:

Paul Perreault presented a letter from his wife Kim requesting a hearing regarding her recent termination and that her termination be put on hold. This letter needed to be opened by the board in executive session.

XII. – Executive Session:

Louise made a motion to go into Executive Session regarding personnel pursuant to *RIGL 42-46-5(a)(1)*. George seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The Board recessed for Executive Session at 7:47 pm and the regular meeting reconvened at 8:19 pm.

The Moderator disclosed that there would be no action taken on the letter received from Kimberly Perreault at this time. It would be forwarded to Attorney Mason's office for review.

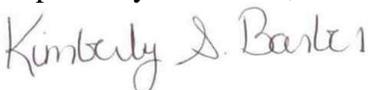
A motion was then made by Louise to seal the minutes of the Executive Session. Jim seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

XIII. – Adjournment:

George made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jim seconded it. The motion carried unanimously. The January meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board was adjourned at **8:21 pm**.

The next meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board is scheduled for **Thursday, 7:00 pm, February 19, 2015** at the Harmony Fire Station.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kimberly S. Barber
Tax Collector / Clerk