

# 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, March 19, 2015.**

Present: Chief Stuart Pearson; Treasurer – Sandra Owens;  
Tax Collector/Clerk – Kimberly Barber;  
Board Members – George Kain, Louise Michaels,  
James Richards & Raymond Fogarty;  
Association Representative – Joseph Webster, Vice President

Absent: Moderator – Milton Huston, Jr. – excused (work)  
Attorney – Fred Mason, Jr. – excused (death in family)

Audience: Deputy Chief Jeff Muto, Private Robert Waterman

**I. – Meeting Called to Order:** Due to Milton's absence, Ray Fogarty stood in as Moderator. The meeting was called to order at **7:02 pm** by Acting Moderator Fogarty.

**II. – Approval of the minutes from the February 19<sup>th</sup> meeting:**

The Moderator asked the board if there were any discrepancies to note on the minutes from the February 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. 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. – 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 Fogarty 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:**

Beginning balance February 1<sup>st</sup> \$387,641.53 and ending balance February 28<sup>th</sup> \$363,807.96.

Taxes and third party were a little on the low side, it was a short month. Bills were routine. Ray asked where we stood year-to-date with third party billing. Sandy noted that third party billing had already reached its proposed budgeted amount of \$80,000 as of February and would well exceed that amount by year end. She said we should reach the \$100,000 mark.

She also had some questions about overages, for example the Insurance accounts being over budget. She would look into these accounts with Kim before the next meeting.

Jim made a motion to accept the February Treasurer's report as presented. Louise seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

**V. – Tax Collector's Report:**

The taxes receivable balance as of today's date is \$93,702.84.

Taxes collected in the month of February totaled \$9,236.50.

Third party billing fees collected in the month of February were \$4,579.36. As Sandy had noted this amount is less than usual.

There are Paw Sox tickets available for the *Police and Fire Opening Night Celebration* at McCoy stadium if anyone is interested. Unfortunately the game falls on the same night as next month's meeting.

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

#### VI. – Chief's Report:

CPR recertification was instructed in-house by Private Amy Bettencourt and has been completed.

Glocester Communications Project bid has been awarded and the contract is ready to be signed. The total cost will be \$259,552.46 at 4.125% interest divided by the 3 fire districts equals \$90,086.33 to be paid over 3 yrs with payments being \$30,028.78. This is something that will need to be taken into consideration during the new fiscal year's budget preparation.

The Chief traveled to MHQ in Massachusetts today to drop off radio equipment for the new Car 1. It will be ready for delivery in 1 or 2 weeks.

The RI Association of Fire Chiefs and the RI Department of Administration met to discuss legislative issues. They discussed reporting and who is to be reported too. The proposal from the Auditor General to change to a semi-annual reporting schedule to the state and the submittal of an annual audit, depending on what tier your district falls into, and eliminating the requirement for reporting to the towns. Information submitted would be posted on the states website. We will know within the next few weeks what their final decision will be.

He said he did throw the question out there again about the Block Grants, but he never really got a firm answer. But we know that there isn't that much money available here in the State of Rhode Island right now. He believes we will still be eligible to apply for funding though, whether it be energy or whatever.

Ray said he believes there is tons of money still available for putting up solar and those types of things. We will have to see if we are eligible. If we are this is a great time for this type of technology. In states like RI use is supposed to double within the next couple of years. The Chief said he completely agrees with that, the problem is this is all totally new to him and he doesn't really know where to begin with looking for that type of assistance. The state says they will help us. Ray asked if one of these people could attend a meeting to go over what is out there for us as an informational only type of thing. The Chief said he would contact either Kim Prasinis or Susannah to see if they would be interested.

The other legislation that was submitted involving the 4% cap and the number of residents required for a meeting, he was told these items didn't have any "legs".

George commented that the "Block Grant" money was federally funded, so the money would be there. The Chief said again that he didn't know enough about it and he needed to be educated. Money for this fiscal year had already been allocated, so we would have to wait for the state's new fiscal year to begin. George said EMS would definitely qualify us for it and applying directly would be better than having to split the pot. He said he would also like to talk to the state about the pilot money from Harmony Hill School.

The Chief said that at our last meeting we had discussed the fire districts getting together for a meeting. When he met with the fire chiefs they agreed, and decided Chief and a representative from each board should attend. The date has been tentatively scheduled for Thursday March 26<sup>th</sup>. Now we need to decide who the district representative will be to attend. George volunteered to attend.

A motion made by Louise to send George as Harmony's representative to meet with the other 2 Gloucester Fire Districts. Jim seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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

#### VII. – Harmony Fire Department & Improvement Association Report:

Association Vice President Joe Webster presented the report in President Vota's absence.

Joe read notes from a recent association meeting.

- 9-10 new members have been added and a Probie class has started.
- Christmas decorations will be coming down soon, when the weather finally breaks.
- Captain Mike Segee brought back information from the Northern RI Firemen's League meeting regarding changes to the annual *Firemen's Memorial Service and Parade*. Discussion involved a 10am start to the event, with the parade portion to be held at the host companies discretion. They also discussed shorten the list of memorial names to be read.
- Citizens account now officially closed and they are with Navigant exclusively with all current officers named. So all issues have now been resolved.

Deputy Chief Muto addressed the board at this time with some crew updates.

- 11 new members in total - of these 3 were no shows for the introductory meeting
- Probationary Class has started – introduction to department rules and regulation
- 3 Probies are currently attending EMT Basic class - with 2 to immediately continue into EMT Cardiac upon graduation in June/July
- 3 Probies are currently in the National Guard
- 2 Privates have enrolled in Firefighter I certification

The Deputy Chief also provided an update at this time on board member Michaels request to check into possibilities of veterans being interested in volunteering. He said he had e-mailed the VA. They said they would pass the word around. He let them know that if anyone had National EMT certification already, those credentials are accepted in RI.

He reported that they were also going to be extending the drivers training program to some of the new people. One new member in particular comes around quite often during the day. He is a homeowner and he is self-employed owning a landscaping business. He has impressed the Deputy and even though he doesn't have a lot of experience in the back of the truck yet he feels it is appropriate to get him behind the wheel. This will free up some of the other people.

Sandy asked if the new people were allowed to go out on the truck while they were learning to observe. He said one of the first things he'd done when he became Deputy was to tell new people to get on that truck. Sit on your hands, but get on the truck. And that has taken place. There is a young lady in the station right now that just joined. She came here to study, but if a call comes in she's getting on the truck. She has already been on a couple of runs. He feels this is important two-fold. One it lets them see what goes on. Two, and most importantly, they didn't join to be told to sit here while everyone else is out having fun. Get on the truck, get excited, want to come back and do it again.

The Chief added that a resident had come in the other day. He talked about his experience with the Harmony rescue showing at his house and a job being well done by the crew. According to the ER Doctor his wife would not be alive today if it wasn't for job that the rescue had done on this call. The man was very, very, teary eyed and expressed heartfelt thanks. He said if we ever need anything he would give his right arm to help out the Harmony Fire District, for what they did for him.

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

**VIII. – Committee Reports:**

- a. Property Review Work Team – George Kain & Louise Michaels, Co-Chairs  
The Moderator stated that this topic would be discussed during Executive Session.

**IX. – Old Business:** None.

**X. – New Business:**

Louise brought up a new program to save money on our electric bill. She said she didn't know if everyone was aware, but there has been a deregularization of energy. You don't have to get your electricity through National Grid. She has been using Ambit Energy for a year now and she just recently became a consultant. She said she quickly ran the numbers for our usage here at the station. This past month we paid a rate of 15.95¢ with a total bill of \$472.15. Ambit has a rate of 10.99¢, which is a savings of \$146.85, just this month. You would have to sign-up to lock in at a rate for 1 year. There are no fees to enroll or drop and the program also provides other perks and incentives.

George said we couldn't take any votes on the subject tonight, but we could add it to the agenda for next month. Kim stated that Louise would have to abstain from any vote however to avoid an ethics violation. Kim will provide Louise with our kilowatt usage so she can compile a savings analysis for presentation at the next meeting.

**XI. – Public Input:** No audience.

**XII. – Executive Session:**

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

The Board recessed for Executive Session at 7:34 pm.

Ray had to leave the meeting before reconvening.

A motion was made by Louise to reconvene the regular meeting at 8:23 pm. The motion was seconded by Jim. The motion carried unanimously.

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

George disclosed a vote taken during the Executive Session. He had made a motion to add Per/Diem shifts on Saturday and Sundays, 8am - 4pm, starting April 1st. This is subject to change after 30 days if necessary and will be readdressed for fiscal year 2015-2016. Louise had seconded the motion. The motion had carried unanimously.

Chief Pearson also announced at this time that he would be going out on medical leave beginning Tuesday (March 24th) for a duration of approximately 6-8 weeks. During his absence he had asked the board's permission to grant Deputy Chief Muto the authority to assume his duties. George added that permission was granted, with no vote necessary.

George also stated during Executive Session when discussing the proposed property acquisition it was decided to invite realtor Nathan Clark to next month's meeting. This will take place during public session. We are going to ask him to work with us again on the evaluation of the house and possibly serve as a liaison of some sort.

**XIII. – Adjournment:**

Louise made a motion to adjourn the meeting. George seconded it. The motion carried unanimously. The March meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board was adjourned at **8:25 pm**.

The next meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board is scheduled for **Thursday, 7:00 pm, April 16, 2015** at the Harmony Fire Station.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kimberly S. Barber  
Tax Collector/Clerk