

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS,
TOWNSHIP OF UPPER; DISTRICT #3**

December 2, 2024

A meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners of the Township of Upper, District #3 was held on December 2, 2024, at 5:15 p.m. at the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company on Old Tuckahoe Road in Marmora, NJ. Commissioners **Paul Hoster, Kurt Austin, Sean Whelan, Edwin Kooker Jr., and Jeff Pierson, Jr.**, were present. Also present were **Tonya DeVita** representative for **Cheryl Sayers, CPA**, Accountant and Recording Secretary to the Board along with **Jon Batastini, Esq.** Counsel to the Board, **Jay Newman**, Chief of the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company, and **Mark Newman**, Deputy Chief of the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company and **Marc Hemby**, Marmora Volunteer Fire Company member.

The meeting was opened by **Jon Batastini** who read the appropriate notice in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act of the State of New Jersey.

As the first order of regular business, the Board reviewed and approved the minutes of the prior meeting, held October 21, 2024.

Ms. DeVita presented a financial report, including a list of checks to be approved, signed, and distributed. The checks were approved as presented. **Ms. DeVita** reviewed the 2024 year-to-date expenses relative to the budget. A few line items are over-expensed. The Board will do a Budget Transfer Resolution in the new year once the final invoices for 2024 have been paid. There was a discussion about the You Tube invoice. The Board will be responsible for the balance of 2024 due to the changes made to the existing Comcast services. In 2025 the Fire Company will then pay the You Tube bills.

The meeting then turned toward the 2025 approved budget. **Ms. DeVita** introduced the 2025 Budget per the workshop discussion had in October. **Mr. Batastini** led a lengthy discussion on the apparatus purchase that the taxpayers approved at the February 2024 election. The appropriate committee has met to discuss specifications. Once the truck is picked out, these specifications will go out to bid for the financing of the purchase. Once complete, **Mr. Batastini** will send the application packet to the Local Finance Board and await their findings. In 2025, the Board feels that the introduced Budget (with increased professional fees) will cover the costs of the attorney, advertising, and approvals to acquire the truck and financing. The Board approved the introduced 2025 Budget as presented. The approved budget will be submitted to the appropriate state agency.

With equipment prices and lead times increasing, there needs to be a better long-range plan. The "apparatus (or truck) committee" will focus on short-, medium- and long-term goals. There was discussion about putting a tower truck on this coming February's ballot as the one in service is almost 25 years old. More discussion on this will be coming in the next months.

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(continued)**

Mr. Newman presented the chief's report where he touched on the Fire Company's Constitution of By-Laws and amendments that may be needed. He spoke on the "Apparatus Committee," along with the mortgage of the building being satisfied in the next couple of years freeing up funds for the new purchases. Continuing the generator discussion from last month, the Chief received information and estimates of \$150,000-175,000. The Board decided not to include the generator on the ballot for February 15, 2025 as a 2026 capital purchase as the truck need is much greater.

Mr. Newman, wrapped up by advising that next Monday, December 9, 2024 at 5:30 at the Township Hall, there will be a ceremony to honor residents (including fire fighters) that have gone over and above the line of duty.

The Board reviewed the Building Lease and Fire Fighting Agreement and unanimously approved a motion to contract with the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company. The agreements were then given to the Chief to present to the Marmora Volunteer Fire Company.

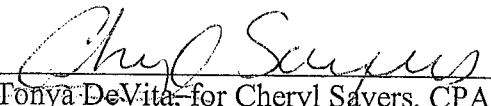
The Board made a motion to pass Resolution 24-6 without exception to allow the Shared Services Agreement with Upper Township for website services at no charge. This Resolution will be forwarded to the Township of Upper.

The Board made a motion to pass Resolution 24-7 without exception to allow for a Temporary Budget to provide for the period between the beginning of the fiscal year, January 1, 2025 and the adoption of the budget by the legal voters of the fire district, which election is scheduled for February 15, 2025.

Ms. DeVita presented proposals for professional services. The first, for accounting services for the 2025 calendar year by **Cheryl Sayers CPA PC** and the second, a retainer agreement with **Loveland Garrett & Batastini** for legal services for 2025. The Board reviewed the proposals and unanimously approved a motion to retain the accounting services of Cheryl Sayers CPA PC along with the legal service of Jon Batastini for the 2025 calendar year.


There being no further business for the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Tonya DeVita, for Cheryl Sayers, CPA PC
Recording Secretary

Approved and Submitted,



Paul Hoster, Chairperson