

The Workshop Meeting for the Board of Fire Commissioners was held on February 4, 2015 in the office of the Board of Fire Commissioners. This meeting has been properly advertised according to the State of New Jersey Sunshine Law.

ROLL CALL

Commissioner Kaighn (absent) Commissioner Marsden (absent)
Commissioner Coucoules (here) Commissioner Stout (here)
Commissioner McCann (here)

Attendees: FF W. Spain, Local 3249 Shop Steward F. Reiss, FF W. Prendergast, FF D. Vannoni, M. Jones, Fire Official P. Urso, FF E. Humphries, Local 3249 President K. Kemery

The agenda of the Workshop is an open forum for suggestions in replacing FAM Jones after his retirement at the end of 2015. All speakers are limited to 6 minutes to make their presentations. Everyone interested in speaking had their name placed in a hat, and the first one drawn was W. Spain.

FF W. Spain: Mr. Spain believes the Board has quite a responsibility to replace FAM Jones, because to replace him you will need a very good mechanic. You will have to pay really good money. He thinks the Board has a lot of irons in the fire, you have Station # 2, you have Station # 1 which is going to be an expense, you have another fellow you hired a year or two ago and you have to make plans for him. He does not believe there is enough money for another mechanic. You have to decide where the money is going to come from first maybe you will tell me I'm wrong and maybe you have an extra \$100,000.00. A good mechanic makes good money and he does not think the Board can afford it. I guess you have to ship it out. He said he does not know any more than that. He said you should have made a plan for this a long while ago. You will have to train them and ship them out to school where they will have to go for the next year or two to learn how to do some of this stuff or ride on Rich Jones back to find out how to do everything.

FF D. Vannoni: He said he does not have an answer at this point, he said the only thing he asks of the Board is that before they make any decisions as to whether or not to replace the FAM's position he would hope that all avenues would be explored. Mr. Spain mentioned sending the trucks out, and he knows there are companies that come in and work on the trucks. One of the other avenues he would like to see looked into is a shared services agreement with maybe Washington Township or another Fire District that already has the facilities built, such as a garage that would be able to maintain our apparatus. He said we would need someone with knowledge of small engines, saws and such to either be maintained in house or sent out. An

idea for that would be to have a contract with Ed's rentals or someone similar to do saw maintenance. Mr. Spain suggested having our Firefighter UFD to shadow Rich and possibly expanding the responsibilities of that role in some of the smaller maintenance that could be done in house. He would just hope that the Board would explore all options that would be his recommendation. He said the Board may find that it would be cheaper to employ a FAM than it would be to do any of the other options. He said he does not know, but he would hope the Board would look into all the options before making any decisions.

M. Jones, Hillcrest Avenue: He said both speakers before him touched on some of the topics he would like to discuss as far as hiring a new FAM or sending the current staff to be trained in some of the aspects that Rich had taken care of. He is not sure what is under the current Firefighter in Civil Service job descriptions, but he believes some of this can be pushed off on to the current staff, such as Air Pack checks, as they do that already in the rig checks. It can expand further. As far as actual vehicle maintenance, Blenheim Fire Company already uses the Public Works Garage, as they do have a diesel mechanic. He talked to Chief Smith today, and if anyone would like to reach out to him, he is very happy with the service he has received from Public Works. They are currently not certified for fire pumps, they can do regular PM's and there has been talk to try to get one of the regular mechanics to be certified in pump maintenance, he is not sure how far that is going to go. Right now there is only the one Fire District that goes there. He would just like to see giving the Firefighters more responsibility, if it complies with their job description as per Civil Service and if there are no issues with the Union for them doing that.

Commissioner Stout said Chief Smith reached out to him at the West Lake fire and he explained how happy he was with Public Works. He said he said something to him about small equipment and he said they take care of it all.

M. Jones said yes they do saw repairs, they do everything in house. If it has to be sent out, well then they send it out.

Commissioner Coucoules said right now, if it is something Rich can't fix repair wise, he sends it out.

M. Jones said just like Public Works. He said he spoke to the Mechanic's Supervisor and he would be more than willing to service the trucks if need be, if an agreement could be reached between the Township and the District.

Commissioner McCann said he really anticipated more ideas and more discussions, and we have concluded rather quickly. He said he would ask Keith, who came in after the names were put in the hat, and he asked Local 3249 President Keith Kemery if he was hoping to speak. He said if someone comes in during the hour, he would be happy to let that person speak.

Local 3249 President K. Kemery: On behalf of Local 3249 and the firefighters that work here, as always, are willing to meet with the Board of Fire Commissioners and discuss some of the expanded roles that were discussed in working for the betterment of the Fire District.

Commissioner McCann read a summary of all avenues discussed.

FF D. Vannoni said he had a question for the Board or maybe Keith could answer it. Is there a position that could be hired from the outside as a FAM or is it something that the Board would have to train in house take one of the guys and make them the FAM.

Commissioner McCann said he thinks one of the steps the Board needs to take, and he said he has not taken it, he is totally unaware of the job categories. If they are listed by Civil Service, and what the roles are when it comes to mechanic. We now have a FAM, but we need to seek help with finding. Is that what you are asking?

FF D. Vannoni said he is not questioning anyone's ability, and as Mike Jones said Diesel Mechanic, in of itself is a study. He said he is sure people have gone to school and had a lot of training for it. Is it practical to train one of our current employees to do that? If not, is it an option to hire someone to that position? If that financially is the answer, if that is most cost effective.

Commissioner McCann said let me turn to the Local 3249 President and asked if we were going to take a current employee and start to train him to be a FAM are there a series of titles or steps they have to move through?

Local 3249 President K. Kemery said Civil Service, as you are aware, you currently have the positions in the Fire District right now, what you have and had. Obviously Firefighter , Captain , Fire Official, Fire Official UFD and currently you have a FAM. Civil Service does provide for the classification of a mechanic position with fire suppression duties, the UFD. If you are a Fire Official UFD, it means ok you perform Fire Official duties, and when the alarm sounds you respond and perform fire suppression duties. The same could be done with the mechanics position. So those provisions are available through Civil Service. You then have the other aspects of the other investigative means, whether it is expanded roles of the current personnel

or something like that. That all comes down to the Board and getting the direction where it wants to go and meeting with the Unions representatives and discussing. He said he does not know if you have received it, but if you recall the conference in Trenton, your special legal counsel was supposed to give you a memorandum concerning bargaining unit work. That also has an impact here. If you do not have that letter yet, you need to get that letter because that comes into play here too. He said you recall when we were in Trenton on the mask fit issue, part of the resolution, first it was a discussion, and then it changed and we went another direction but your special labor council, said to you he was go generate for the Board of Fire Commissioners a memorandum concerning that matter we had in Trenton, because it just doesn't not apply to mask fit testing, that applies to all bargaining unit work. The current FAM is a bargaining unit member, so the work he performs is bargaining unit work. It is not his work, it is bargaining unit work. That work, no matter who is performing it, it is bargaining unit work. That memorandum has to come, and what he understood the attorney was going to give that to you for your information.

Commissioner Stout said he thought it just applied to getting guidelines on how mask fitting would be done.

Local 3249 President K. Kemery said no it was bargaining unit work.

FF D. Vannoni asked Keith if the Board was going to hire a new FAM, is there a separate list of people who are qualified as mechanics? Or would the Board have to hire off the current firefighter list and hope we can get lucky and get someone trained like Rich is?

Local 3249 President K. Kemery said there are different avenues available, and it is all what does the Fire District want to do, what direction does it pick, if there is someone on the list that makes it easier for the Fire District. We effectively went down this road almost 25 years ago, when Mr. Jones came into the appointment of the Fire District. It is the same deal, someone to work on the trucks and keep them running and you are also looking for someone to get on the rig when the alarm came in.

Commissioner Coucoules said he would think that if we were going to hire someone, they would be fully qualified. His personal opinion a crap shoot on whoever is on the firefighter list that knows how to work on diesel engines is not a good idea.

FF W. Spain said he thinks someone on the Board get on the telephone with Trenton, and try to get answers to some of these questions.

Commissioner Coucoules said this whole thing tonight Mr. Spain is so the Board could have ideas that you the public feel should be done. It is just an informative thing and the Board will discuss everything that was brought on to them tonight and the Board will come to some type of conclusion soon. The Board has to and they will.

FF W. Spain said it seems to him you will have to call Trenton before you can even consider any of the ideas.

Commissioner Coucoules said if we decide to go that route we will call Trenton.

Commissioner McCann said you are right; we need to find classification, titles, names, and movement from one to the other. Keith has given us that and that may be 100% accurate or there may be an alternate that the Board is not aware of.

Commissioner Coucoules said someone who is not here tonight, brought the idea to him of using Rich as a consultant. Another option if he is willing to do so.

Local 3249 President K. Kemery said as per the pension requirements there needs to be a 180 day total separation from the district.

Commissioner Coucoules said yes that is true.

Local 3249 President K. Kemery said that is 180 days, and that is even if he is interested in something like that.

Commissioner McCann said without that separation, he would forfeit his pension, or has to pay back a portion that has been received.

Commissioner Coucoules said his personal opinion on this and he will go on record saying he is not opposed to the current staff working on the small, pumps, chain saws and stuff like that. He said personally coming from a mechanical background for as many years as he has done mechanical work, he would not want any of them to be doing brakes or anything like that on the trucks at this time because they are not certified. It takes years to certify guys as a diesel mechanic, as Rich was. He said he is not going to go out and hire somebody, just because we need somebody or want somebody. We do have capable guys in this fire house that work for us that can do certain parts of this.

With no further business to discuss.

Motion by Commissioner Stout, second by Commissioner Coucoules to adjourn. All in favor, motion carries.

DATED: February 4, 2015

BY: _____
Steven Marsden, Secretary