

The October 14, 2023 Full Board meeting of the New Jersey Firemen's Home Board of Managers was called to order by Chairman Washer at 1030 hours.

Mr. Hull advised public notice was provided in the official newspaper, the Star Ledger, and on the home's website.

Roll call had been previously taken during the re-organization portion of the meeting.

Mr. Hull requested that the meeting go out of order from the agenda as we had guests present who wished to make a presentation to the Board.

George Janowicz from the Thrift Barn of Morris County appeared before the Board and advised that his organization is a non-profit run by volunteers. They raise funds and give them out to organizations to support their mission. Mr. Janowicz then presented the Board with a check for \$2000.00. Mr. Washer and Mr. Veras accepted the check and the Board thanked Mr. Janowicz.

The meeting then resumed the order of business.

The minutes from the September 14, 2023 Full Board Meeting were approved.

Communications:

Secretary Hull advised that there were no communications.

Reports of Officers:

Secretary:

Mr. Hull advised that he did not have a official report and he compiled a list of managers who wished to receive a hard copy of the minutes and attachments by mail.

Treasurer:

Mr. Sutphen advised that the current budget is on course. We having a meeting on Tuesday (October 17th) to work on our next budget.

Superintendent:

Mr. Veras congratulated the new managers. Mr. Veras advised that the Golf Committee had approved purchasing chairs for the guests. He had fabric samples for the chairs. These chairs will have arms on them to assist the guests get up from the chairs. Love seats and bariatric chairs will also be purchased.

Mr. Veras then spoke on how this facility must follow HIPPA guidelines. If we have a conversation about a guest it can not leave these four walls. We could be subject to \$50,000 fine for the first offense.

Mr. Veras thanked Hunterdon County for purchasing two offset umbrellas for the picnic area.

Mr. Veras advised that our lobbyist from PPAG (Princeton Public Affairs Group) had arranged a visit with Senator Bucco and Assemblywoman Dunn next week to tour the facility. PPAG also provides legislative updates on anything to do with firefighters as well as long term care facilities. Mr. Veras has put copies up front in the past and no one has read them. He suggests you take the time to read them as there are lots of matters, some coming from the federal government with regard to long term care facilities. One such requirement is the need for an LPN on all shifts, this could effect our staffing.

Mr. Veras added that we have a minor COVID outbreak in the building. Any manager going down to see a guest must wear a mask, especially if not flu vaccinated as well.

Mr. Veras added that he is updating the Manager contact information for our little booklets. See him after the meeting with any changes.

Mr. Heflich commented that the material Mr. Veras had in regards to HIPPA should be given to all managers.

Legal Counsel:

Mr. Bell Jr. congratulated the newly elected managers and officers. He then advised that they are working on a license with the Rockaway Valley Regional Sewerage Authority (RVRSA) for access to our property where their sewer pipes are. The license will indemnify and protect the Home.

Buildings and Grounds:

Mr. Signorello advised that he had provided a written report from Maintenance Director Tom Hoderene to Secretary Hull by email which provided a list of updates on current projects. See attached copy of buildings and grounds report.

Mr. Veras followed up stating that if any manager wished to go on an expedition to the area that we are negotiating with the RVRSA, it has been surveyed and staked out. The stakes are color coded to a map. The area, approximately 1.6 acres is being appraised as part of the process. It has been learned that this area was given to us by the Jersey City Water Supply and may explain the resulting bad survey that now finds the RVRSA pipes on our property. Mr. Veras added that this chamber and pipes will never be improved or expanded.

Mr. Keyser inquired about a report of chairs being discarded. Mr. Veras explained that the chairs were starting to fail and they had been provided by our food service company (Unidine) who purchased the new chairs.

Mr. Apgar asked about the Vreeland Avenue house. Mr. Veras advised that the house is gone. An oil tank was removed. The area has been graded and seeded. It is 100% done.

Applications:

Mr. Freeman provided a written report from the application committee meeting held on October 10, 2023 which is attached. The report indicated 68 guest in Long Term Care and 8 in Residential Care for a total of 76 guests. Since the last meeting there have been 1 new admission, and 1 applicant withdrew his application. The committee is reviewing 5 applications: three have a pre-admission interview scheduled. The next meeting for the Applications Committee is 0900 hours on Tuesday November 7, 2023 at the Home.

Employee Committee:

Mr. Dutch reported that everything was good.

Finance and Budget Committee:

Mr. Hull provided a written report on the October 10, 2023 meeting of the Audit and Finance Committee which is attached. Bills for the month were reported in the amount of \$518,829.23. All revenue and expense vouchers were reviewed and found to be in order.

The committee also discussed a records request that was received and will be handled by Mr. Veras. Our monthly revenue and expense report will be labeled "Un-audited" Information Report and will be provided to managers and the State Association's Chairman of Firemen Home Committee. The committee discussed the upcoming budget preparation and a meeting is set with our auditor for October

17, 2023 at 9 AM at the Home. Mr. Hull added that we had a few big expenses this month which were \$20,000 for the removal of the Vreeland House and \$5000 for tree removal and stump grinding. Additionally, we are looking at an approximate 7-8 percent increase in our State Health Benefits which would be about \$90,000 a year increase.

The next meeting of the finance committee will be held on Tuesday, November 7, 2023 at 8:00 AM at the Home.

Insurance:

Mr. Strube reported that all of our policies renewals keep coming in. Nothing further to report.

Legislative Committee:

Mr. Lugossy reported that October is first responder month and that we are also coming off of fire prevention week. He hoped fire safety is something practiced every hour. Mr. Lugossy advised that there are still two bills awaiting action from the Governor. Bill A5179 which deals with fire life safe dampers and S861 which allow municipalities to have annual Christmas tree burning.

Mr. Lugossy also reported on information that he found in the FMBA bulletin with regard to peer support for firefighters with mental health issues such as PTSD and addiction. The information was from Penn Medicine and Mr. Lugossy gave the information to President Ordway.

By-laws:

Mr. Jeffer reported progress.

Museum:

Mr. Hull advised he had no report.

Public Relations:

Mr. Wilson thanked everyone who helped out with the convention in Wildwood. He thanked President Ordway and Vice President Hankins for arranging the transport of the boxes of our items. Mr. Wilson also thanked Cape May Executive Committeeman Dan Speigal for helping get us our table and television in the convention center.

Ethics and Code of Conduct:

Mr. Sutphen advised no report.

Pension:

Mr. Signorello advised he had no report.

Inventory:

Mr. Wilson reported no change since the Wildwood meeting.

Golf Committee:

Mr. Hull advised he had no report and he will contact former Manager Grecni for info and we will decide if we wish to have the event in the future.

Liaison to the State Association:

Mr. Lugossy advised that he had a phone conversation with Mr. Ordway and he relayed the mental health information from Penn Medicine. "It was a good conversation."

Inspections:

Mr. Miller reported that he conducted the inspection on October 10th with Mr. Signorello. They noted three items that need to be addressed. A heater cover that need to be secured; a number of storage boxes that fell over in the paint room; and a downspout outside that needs to be reattached.

Mr. Veras addressed the storage boxes advising that they belonged to a gentleman that passed away 30 years ago. The items will be shredded.

State Firemen's Association:

President Ordway congratulated the elected officers and managers. He advised that reports are coming in and they are moving forward.

AD Hock Committee:

Mr. Wilson reported that the committee has not met since our Wildwood meeting. He proposed the new chairman combine the Ad Hock and Liaison Committees so everyone is on the same page.

Unfinished Business:

Mr. Keyser commented on the information Mr. Veras provided earlier about reports from PPAG on lists of bills dealing with firefighters. Mr. Keyser stated that all those bills get re-introduced every year and ask the floor "do we really need a lobbyist" Mr Keyser added that we get a legislative report and why do we need to pay \$5000.00 a month to get information we already receive.

Mr. Wilson concurred adding that we tabled this in July to discuss it at this meeting. We are paying \$5000.00 a month and we get little info. The State pays \$4000.00 a month and gets a lot of info.

Mr. Sutphen then asked Superintendent Veras how much stuff do we get that helps him and his staff.

Mr. Veras then commented that he refers to our lobbyist as a Government Relations Firm and he suggested that we retain our lobbyist as he feels things are going to get a "little" crazy when all of our information is circulated throughout the State and then it will be exaggerated. Mr. Veras brought up example of a recent issue with a guest and a bill for care above what we offer. Mr. Veras added that PPAG has provided him with the opportunity to have meet and greets with members of the legislature if he wanted to do so. We are in a much more litigious situation that the State Association. Having people in Trenton helps us.

Mr. Veras added that PPAG only did tasks that we asked and it is not fair to make a judgement call. If we want them to do more we can ask.

PPAG was retained originally when we were sabering with the State Association.

Mr. Heflich asked Mr. Veras if there are State law and policy changes, aren't we required to be notified? Mr. Veras advised yes and that he does get that info from our involvement with the Leading Age Agency but we get a bigger picture from Kevin (PPAG).

Mr. Keyser commented that if there is ever a problem ALL managers should know their assembly and senators and talk to them. (Comment from floor that it is not our job as manager to do so.)

Mr. Lugossy commented on his experience in Trenton and that PPAG is a leading organization. They represent both parties, republican and democrat. They give great representation and we should keep them for the health of the Home

Mr. Mitch added that having a lobbyist helps get us through closed doors. If the concern is money, maybe we can discuss a per diem or hourly rate. Where is the firm deficient? They get our concerns heard. This agency (the Home) doesn't have the "push" we think we do.

Mr Hagan (PPAG) commented at this time that he is present and could answer questions if appropriate.

Mr. Heflich spoke on politics and that politicians don't work for the firemen's home. What do we elect them for? They are supposed to work for us.

Mr. Hull then commented that we hired a lobbyist as a result of what we did as managers. This was a result of the A5210 bill and we have been paying for it since. Mr. Hull added that it appears Mr. Hagan only comes to our meeting when his job is in jeopardy. We do not need a lobbyist at this time, and we should terminate our contract with PPAG. We can hire a lobbying firm if the need arises. This was put forth as a motion and seconded. Roll call vote taken and the Board voted in favor of terminating our lobbyist 12-9.

New Business:

Mr. Heflich comment on the current one year of service requirement to be eligible for admission to the Firemen's Home. He feels it should be changed to 7 years and he gave his reason as to why.

Mr. Washer commented that this is something that will be addressed with the By Laws Committee.

Payment of Bills:

Mr. Hull reported the total bills in the amount of \$518,829.23. Upon motion, a roll call vote was taken and the bills payment was approved.

Motions and Resolutions:

None.

Public Participation:

Mr. Hagan (PPAG) addressed the Board as our "former lobbyist" and that he was proud of the work that he accomplished. Mr. Hagan agreed with why he was originally hired and cited the good things that came from those discussions and negotiations. Mr. Hagan stated that our budgeting cycle has been calm despite the efforts of the State Association. The suspension of guest fees was a result of those discussions and the larger benefits through the State also came from those negotiations.

State Vice President Hankins disagreed and commented during Mr. Hagan's statements. This led to an exchange between Mr. Hagan and Mr. Hankins. Mr. Hagan continued about how he was proud to serve the Home and regardless of Mr. Hankins comments he is thankful for the opportunity and wishes the Home nothing but the best.

Vice President Joseph Hankins (NJSFA) congratulated the new managers and everyone else elected. He then disputed Mr. Hagan's comments about when the Health Care program went into effect citing it did so before Mr. Hagan was hired. Mr. Hankins commented that PPAG was hired to defend what the field had overwhelmingly voted in with regards to the managers. We have moved forward together. Mr. Hagan and Mr. Hankins argued again briefly.

Mr. Richard Otterbein- Essex County Committeeman (NJSFA) congratulated the new managers especially Ms. DeVirgilio who is the first female manager. Mr. Otterbein added that the Ad Hock Committee has a meeting set for October 24th and asked Mr. Washer to let him know who is on the committee.

Mr. Otterbein then asked questions of Mr Veras about the number of rooms in the home and how many guest in each room. Mr. Veras responded (39 rooms in long term care; 10 in memory care; and 7 in residential) Not all rooms are occupied as there are some reserved for potential female guest and or if negative pressure room is required.

Mr. Otterbein also asked about items that are not paid for by the Home. Mr. Veras explained that they try to offer the most for the guests but their are things "outside of the norm". The resident and family agree to pay for the equipment and this contract is in our admission packet. We try to have as much as possible, but how much can we prepare for?

Mr. Otterbein asked about how medications are handled by the Home. Mr. Veras explained our pharmacy policies and in house supply.

Mr. Larry Handlin- Hudson County Executive Committeeman (NJSFA) stated that he had the opportunity to attend our last meeting and wished to comment on Mr. Matthews negativity at the end of the meeting towards the State Association. We do a lot of great things and so does the Home. It was inappropriate calling out people by name for attending, particularly those who are on the liaison to the Home committee and it is their duty. Mr. Handlin advised that our former lobbyist made false accusations and that the facts should be the facts.

Mr. Handlin went into detail on how his manager in Hudson County resigned and they moved forward with replacing him, "all hell broke lose" at the Home and he amazingly withdrew his resignation. Mr. Handlin added that he had correspondence from Mr. DeLaurentis indicating the he retired, but the Board never accepted it. These need to be addressed in our By laws as we move forward.

Mr. Handlin congratulated the Home for arraigning for Senator Bucco to visit. Mr. Handlin went over Senator Bucco's political and fire service career and asked if Senator Bucco had been to the Home before (response from floor, acknowledged by Mr. Handlin "he has"). We need to be in contact with our politicians. The career firefighters can move things forward with the assistance of the FMBA. Going forward we must work together. Mr. Handlin advised that as a liaison committee member, he requests a bill list. If he has a question he can then asked the Finance Chairman of Mr. Veras.

Vice President Hankins addressed the Board advising that the cancer screening bill and the income tax deduction bill have had two hearings in the assembly. We should all come together on these bills and get them passed. State Secretary Brian Martone puts out a legislative report and if anyone wants it, they can request it and he would gladly email it to them. President Ordway added that it is also on the State Association's website.

Executive Session:

None had.

Good and Welfare:

Mr. Washer stated that he will be appointing committees by next month. He appointed Mr. Wilson Chairman of the By-Law committee and asked that the Board present ideas to him so we can move forward.

Mr. Wilson stated that he had three items he wished to accomplish: Doing away with the Executive Committee; Revamping the 1 year admission criteria; and establishing a number of meetings that managers would be required to attend. Please send suggestions to Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Veras inquired with the Board if we would like to have lunch after our meetings. The Board suggested to only have lunch on the day of the Memorial Service as Managers remain on site late into the afternoon. Discussion followed about lunch after re-organization meeting due to length of today's meeting.

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 1143 hours.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RH', written in a cursive style.

Roger Hall
Secretary

***APPROVED BY FULL BOARD NOVEMBER 11, 2023**

The October 14, 2023 Re-organization Meeting of the Full Board of the New Jersey Firemen's Home Board of Managers was called to order by Vice Chairman Signorello at 0930 hours followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Signorello asked for a moment of silence and provided the invocation.

Mr. Hull advised that public notice was provided in the official newspaper, the Star Ledger, and on the home's website.

Roll call was taken with all members of the Board of Managers present.

Mr. Signorello asked that everyone speak clearly and identify themselves when speaking so they can be properly recorded.

Attorney, Mr. Bell Jr. who is filling in for his father, Mr. Bell Sr., administered the oath of office to the following newly elected and re-elected managers for a four year term commencing October 1, 2023:

Albert E. Freeman II	Burlington County
Joseph Signorello Jr.	Union County
George H. Heflich Sr.	Hudson County
Amy M. DeVirgilio	Passaic County
Bernard J. Cunningham	Essex County
Daniel M. Dunn	Cape May County

Mr. Signorello congratulated the re-elected managers and welcomed the new managers to the board, adding "we are all here to help."

Mr. Signorello then selected from the floor Mr. Jeffer, Mr. DeLaurentis and Mr. Gigilio to serve as election judges. Mr. Sutphen commented that is positions are unopposed the Secretary shall cast the ballot.

Mr. Bell Jr. was appointed Chairman Protem and he opened the floor for nominations for Chairman of the Full Board of Managers. Mr. Signorello and Mr. Washer were both nominated. Ballots were cast in favor of Mr. Washer.

Mr. Washer then took over the meeting as Chairman. He stated that he considered it an honor to be selected Chairman and thanked everyone. He hopes to continue moving the Home in the right direction. Mr. Washer advised that his father always told him it was better to try and fail than to not try at all. Mr. Washer concluded stating he looking forward to working with everyone and he is here to help.

At this time Mr. Washer opened the floor up for nominations for Vice- Chairman of the Full Board of Managers. Mr. Signorello and Mr. Apgar were both nominated. Ballots were cast resulting in a tie vote. It was found that Chairman Washer had inadvertently voted. The Chair does not vote unless it was a tie. The ballots were re-cast and Mr. Apgar was selected as Vice-Chairman.

Nominations were opened for the position of Secretary. Mr. Hull was nominated, unopposed.

Nominations were opened for the position of Treasurer. Mr Sutphen was nominated, unopposed.

Nominations were opened for members to serve as part of the Executive Committee. Five members needed to be selected. Seven members (Mr. Freeman, Mr. Mitch, Mr. Jeffer, Mr. Miller, Mr. Giglio, Mr. Signorello and Mr. Wilson) expressed interested and they were placed on the ballot. Ballots were cast

and the five members selected were Mr. Freeman, Mr. Miller, Mr. Mitch, Mr. Giglio and Mr. Signorello. The Executive Committee will re-organize following today's Full Board Meeting.

Nomination and approval of Professional/ Misc. Appointments for a one (1) year term were made. Mr. Hull commented that our attorney, Mr. Bell, was not on the agenda as he is under contract until December 31, 2023. When we negotiate his new contract, we will recommend getting him on the same cycle as our other professional appointments so in the future he would be renewed at the Re-organizaition meeting as well, if approved.

The following appointments were approved:

Pension Actuary	David E. Klein
Insurance Broker	Hughes-Plumer Associates
Medical Director	Dr. Jay Meyerowitz
Consulting Psychiatric Physician	Dr. Julie Tropeano
Portable X-Rays	Specialty Portable X-Ray Inc.
Stenographer	Mary Ann Sager
Official Newspaper	Star Ledger
Auditors	Yodice & Company

The 2023-2024 meeting dates (attached) for the Full Board and Executive Board were approved.

The Re-organization Meeting was adjourned at 1024 hours.

A five minute recess was called before the commencement Full Board Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



Roger Hull
Secretary

***APPROVED BY FULL BOARD NOVEMBER 11, 2023**

The October 14, 2023 Re-organization Meeting of the Executive Board of the New Jersey Firemen's Home Board of Managers was called to order at 1152 hours.

Public notice was previously provided in the official newspaper, the Star Ledger, and on the home's website.

Roll call was taken with all members of the Executive Board present. Also in attendance were Managers DeLaurentis, Heflich, and President Ordway.

Nominations were opened for Chairman of the Executive Board. Mr. Signorello and Mr. Giglio were both nominated. Mr. Signorello declined the nomination and Mr. Giglio was selected, unopposed as Chairman of the Executive Board.

Nominations were opened for Vice- Chairman of the Executive Board. Mr. Signorello was nominated, unopposed.

*The Secretary cast the ballots for unopposed positions.

The Re-organization Meeting of the Executive Committee was adjourned at 1157 hours.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roger Hull', written over a horizontal line.

Roger Hull
Secretary

***APPROVED BY FULL BOARD NOVEMBER 11, 2023**