

The March 9, 2024 Full Board meeting of the New Jersey Firemen's Home Board of Managers was called to order by Chairman Washer at 0900 hours and was followed by the pledge of allegiance. An invocation was provided by Manager Dutch.

Mr. Hull advised public notice was provided in the official newspaper, the Star Ledger.

Roll call was taken with all managers present with the exception of Mr. DeLaurentis, Mr. Jeffer, and Mr. Luggosy who were excused.

The minutes from the February 10, 2024 Full Board meeting approved with a correction being made to the verbatim minutes and Application Committee written report that listed Mr. Apgar as Chairman and in attendance at the February 6 2024 Application Meeting. It was actually Chairman Washer in attendance.

Communications:

None

Reports of Officers:

Secretary:

Mr. Hull advised no further report.

Treasurer:

Mr. Sutphen reported that on March 1st the tolls increased on the Garden State Parkway and New Jersey Turnpike. He will adjust the Manager's reimbursements.

Superintendent:

Mr. Veras reported that the census as of today is 78. He advised managers to walk around the building and they will see things they have been doing the past few months with the staff and nurse educator to improve morale. Decorating contests for nurse's stations with trophy or gift cards was recently done. The staff is also doing a program called "Rise Us Up" where they get to post anonymous compliments about their fellow co-workers around the building. They face the same challenges and it is pretty impressive to see what they say about each other.

Mr. Veras advised they are still having challenges with the accounting software, but he will be able to provide the financial information to those who requested it.

The mirror in the back of the meeting room that Mr. Otterbein usually hits his head on, has been moved in preparation for the display of oil paintings of the Lathrop Family that the Home will be receiving. They are of Ms. Lathrop and the children. They will be hung in the dining room and our meeting room which was previously the study. We have been working with the Boonton Historical Society and will be doing a walking tour of our building in May.

The website has been updated with information and the dates of meetings corrected. Everything except the application updates are done.

Mr. Veras reported on the Legionella situation in the building. We had trace amounts in the domestic hot water system that were thought to be from the construction a few years ago and the pipes not being properly flushed. The Home has super-chlorinated the water system and we had re-testing done at 28 sites. We should have the results in 2 weeks. We will then be required to do testing twice a month for 3 months and then once a month for 3 months. It is a six month testing period. Multiple "dead legs" were identified from old plumbing fixtures such

as water fountains had been removed and the pipes just capped. The dead legs have been removed and we are 2/3 complete with the plumbing repairs. We had one guest test positive for Legionnaires with symptoms similar to acute pneumonia. He was treated with antibiotics and recovered.

At the end of March, maintenance will begin outdoor work on the grounds such as power washing, and thatching.

Legal Counsel:

Mr. Bell reported that the Rockaway Valley Regional Sewer Authority (RVRSA) sent us the check for \$17,000 and it was received Thursday.

Buildings and Grounds:

Mr. Keyser provided a written report from Maintenance Director Hodiernne listing the status of various projects. A copy is attached. In addition Mr Keyser reported the following: Bids for the elevator project will be opened Monday at 10 AM. A pre-bid meeting for the roofing project was held and no one showed, however seven packages were sent out. Those bids will be opened March 13th at 10 AM. Buildings and Grounds Committee met this morning and are looking to have the arched entrance sign restored as well as the call boxes that are outside. Mr. Keyser stated he would check on two hydrants on the property to ascertain if they are ours of the city's and have them cleaned up as well.

Mr. Keyser added that they discussed the replacement of the dishwasher which was a topic brought up at the Budget Committee meeting. The dishwasher costs approximately \$30,000. Ours is 15 years old and has had repair issues. Mr. Veras elaborated on the high use of the dishwasher in the Home and our needs.

Mr. Keyser added that he walked the outside of the Home and found that the Home is in need of power washing and painting. Suggested we look into going out for bid on the project.

Applications:

Mr. Freeman provided a written report from the application committee meeting held on March 5, 2024 which is attached. The report indicated 71 guest in Long Term Care and 7 in Residential Care for a total of 78 guests. Since the last meeting there have been 6 new admissions. The committee is reviewing 4 applications which are all pending pre-admission interviews. If these four applications are approved and we have no passings, we will be at capacity and a waiting list will be created. The next meeting for the Applications Committee is 0900 hours on Tuesday April 9, 2024 at the Home.

Mr. Freeman discussed the capacity of the Home being 82. 3 empty beds are required for isolation needs. There are 14 beds in residential (separate license) for a total of 96.

Mr. Sutphen inquired if we could make some residential beds long term care. Mr. Veras responded that we can not.

There are a number of inquires for applications out there (8 out currently).

Mr. Sutphen asked about the waiting list procedures and how long someone stays on the list.

Mr. Veras responded they stay on the list until they come in or decide not to. They may have to re-do medical exams if they “time out”, but they would not lose their spot. Residential applicants will be on the list as well, as guests are evaluated/ observed first in long term care. NO ONE goes to residential as soon as they come in.

Employee Committee:

Mr. Dutch reported that everything is “quiet”.

Finance and Budget Committee:

Mr. Hull provided a written report on the March 5, 2024 meeting of the Audit and Finance Committee which is attached. The committee reviewed revenue and expense reports for the period of July 1 to February 29, 2024 as well as vouchers for the period. All items were found to be in order. Bills were reported in the amount of \$350,713.12. The committee further examined our credit card statement as it was carrying a large balance and had incurred a late fee. Ms. Sharon Wagner from our finance department provided further documents and the balance which was previously approved for payment was for the Wonder Guard security system for the memory care unit. The late fee was due to the billing cycle and Ms. Wagner will be disputing the charge on our behalf.

The next meeting for the Applications Committee is 0800 hours on Tuesday April 9, 2024 at the Home.

Insurance:

Mr. Strube reported there was nothing new and everything was in order.

Legislative Committee:

Mr. Lugossy was excused from the meeting but had provided a report to Secretary Hull by phone. Mr. Lugossy advised that the Legislature will be busy reviewing the budget that the Governor had submitted. He expects them to be busy until end of July. The budget included 10 million dollars for firefighter grants as well as a 4th consecutive full pension payment of 7.1 billion dollars.

By-laws:

Mr. Apgar advised no report.

Museum:

Mr. Hull thanked Mr. Heflich for handling the tire issues on the trucks. They have been inflated and holding air. Trucks will be jacked off the ground this afternoon. Mr. Cash from Elizabeth Fire Department donated two small painted ceramic statues that were received before the meeting. They are on the fireplace mantle. The South Orange hand cart will be received next week, Mr. Cunningham will coordinate its delivery. The Museum committee will have brief meeting after this meeting.

Public Relations:

Mr. Wilson reported that the Public Relations Committee has met during the past two months and they are closing in on ideas for the give away items in Wildwood. They will make presentation to the Board in April.

Ethics and Code of Conduct:

Mr. Sutphen advised no report.

Pension:

Mr. Washer reported that he had met with Mr. Veras and had a phone conversation with Mr. Klien. Everything is in order. If anyone has any questions about the plan and how it works, contact Chairman Washer.

Mr. Veras added that the members going to direct deposit for the pension was very helpful to our finance staff.

Mr. Sutphen advised that Mr. Jeffer had emailed him asking about his eligibility. The Pension Committee will handle getting him the information.

Inventory:

Mr. Wilson reported our inventory is an ongoing animal taken care of by the Superintendent with notification to the committee. Everything is in order.

Golf Committee:

Mr. Signorello reported that everything is going good with plans and he has heard good things about the event due to the new location and also being a little later in the year. (June 27th) Breakfast has been set up and lunch will be at the Home.

Mr. Veras added that fliers have been printed, please take and distribute. There is some excitement because the event is being held close to here and we will come back to the Home afterwards for lunch. This gives a chance for the attendees to meet with guests and staff. Catering will be done by Unidine. Our resident "leg breaker", Mr. Apgar secured the donation of a 20 X 20 tent that will be used at our events. Working on him for possibly supplying the shirts we give away at the event. One other big change is the event is an 8 AM shotgun start. Previous years it was at noon.

Liaison to the State Association:

Mr. Keyser presented a written report on the February 24, 2024 New Jersey State Firemen's Association meeting that he attended with Mr. Miller and Mr. Dunn. Mr. Keyser read portions of the report which is attached.

Chairman Washer advised that Mr. Dunn has been added to the committee.

Inspections:

Mr. Heflich advised he submitted a report to the Superintendent and he will be having a discussion with him about the items.

Long Term Planning:

Mr. Sutphen reported that the actuarial study has begun and they are looking forward to the results so we can prepare for the future.

State Firemen's Association:

President Ordway advised that they have completed the major report season with 100% of Associations reporting. One association did not file their financials and as a result they are not being seated at the Convention. Issues were found and their books are being picked up this week.

Unfinished Business:

None.

New Business:

Superintendent Veras advised under new business to “make sure everyone was clear” the new admission qualification for 7 years in the fire service through the state, exempt or fire department is for members who join after April 1, 2024.

President Ordway responded that this was just “Dumb”. There was no words about anyone being grandfathered and now low and behold it was changed. Mr. Ordway described our previous motion on this policy as worthless and a “paper motion” that doesn’t do anything. Adding it ‘changed nothing’ with admissions.

At this time a lengthy discussion took place with several managers and our attorney, Mr. Bell giving their interpretations on the new admission policy. The discussion included the history of this change being brought up by Mr. Heflich several times over the past months, it going to the by-law committee and then to applications committee as it is a policy change, not a by law change. After no resolution or agreeable grounds, Mr. Hull suggested that he put together what was exactly said in the verbatim minutes and distribute it for the managers to re-review.

It is a policy that always can be changed.

Mr. Apgar advised that he was able to get 200 shirts (100 short sleeve and 100 long sleeve) donated from Hunterdon and Somerset Counties. Mr. Veras displayed one of each for the group.

Payment of Bills:

Mr. Hull reported the total bills in the amount of \$350,713.12. Upon motion, a roll call vote was taken and the bills payment was approved.

Motions and Resolutions:

None.

Public Participation:

Mr. Otterbein, Essex County Executive Committeeman inquired about the capacity of the home. Mr. Veras responded that we have room for a total of 96 guests. This is 82 in long term care and 14 in residential. The memory care unit is included in long term care.

Mr. Otterbein suggested we review what was sent out and approved regarding the admissions policy. It says nothing about being grandfathered. No mention of it. It was suggested as a bylaw change but went to application committee because it is a policy. Go with what was approved. There was no mention of one year after April 1st. There are exceptions such as line of duty injury and legitimate exceptions.

Executive Session:

None had.

Good and Welfare:

Mr. Heflich advised that the trucks in the museum were finally off the ground. The project is done after all these years.

Managers inquired about Mr. Jeffer's recovery. Mr. Hull advised he had a text conversation with him prior to the meeting and Mr. Jeffer has 5 fractures to his neck that require surgery. Mr. Jeffer anticipates losing mobility in his neck due to the injuries.

Mr. Keyser reported that the Morris Plains Fire Department held a chili cook off to raise funds for the Home. They raised \$430.00 which he turned in to the treasurer. Mr. Keyser added that Chairman Washer won the cook off with his "moose meat chili".

Mr. Freeman reminded everyone to turn their clocks ahead tomorrow.
Mr. Wilson added to also change your smoke detector batteries.

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 1006 hours.

Respectfully submitted,



Roger Hull
Secretary