

Board of Fire Commissioners

Greenfield Fire District
P.O. Box 103
Greenfield Center, NY 12833

Meeting Minutes for January 3, 2007

Those in attendance were: Commissioners King, Kugler, Robarge, Spackmann and Waite; Chief McConkey, A/C's Gibbins, Murray, Davis, Ellsworth, Kemp and Lant; Secretary Petkus.

Meeting started 8:10 pm

Chairman Kugler stated he wanted to sit down with the officers and detail a little bit of what they are trying to accomplish this year, gather up a little better working relationship. One of the goals this year is communication, covered a little bit of it earlier tonight, and when you want to present something to the Board, please put it in writing, get the dollar amounts, etc.

The Board will be looking at the money situation this year very seriously because evidently we did get in a little trouble over it, got out to the public and had someone run for Commissioner. Next December we could be back in the same scenario. The Board will be looking at expenses throughout the year. Had too much money left over at year end, based on an audit from the Comptroller's office we could be in trouble for that. Commissioner Spackmann added that this is like a brainstorm exercise on how things need to change, and that everybody in this room has made comments to himself and the rest of the Board about the course of the District, about things that they saw, things they would like to change, and that this is a new era in this District. We are in the public spotlight; we have grown so that now we are on people's radar screens and need to start conducting ourselves accordingly. Overall, he noted, the budget went up \$200,000.00 and we all took a lot of heat for that, and yet the money left over was \$200,000.00. That does not look well in taxpayers' eyes, and he felt from a taxpayer perspective, it is more of a negative than a positive.

Commissioner Spackmann also noted a 10 page abstract in December, which to him meant that we waited until the last month to order things and then all of a sudden we find out we overspent in shipping. Regarding the rescue account, that maybe it should come out of the rescue account, but come to find out rescue was already spent. Felt these were not negative things, but opportunities that as a Board and Officers we can look at this and communicate better, and if we do that all these problems will solve themselves. Chief McConkey asked where the money went; Commissioner Spackmann explained that about \$100,000.00 went into the Equipment Reserve Fund, \$10,000.00 went into Equipment Repair Reserve and the rest went into various other accounts. Secretary Petkus noted that the Chief was not at that particular meeting and she had not attached the list of where the money went to everyone's minutes, and that she would get copies to everyone after the meeting.

Chairman Kugler added that if they have any ideas that will help the Board out or they can help the Officers, he just wanted to try to close the communication gap some more. Felt they had all done a good job on it, but there's still room for improvement. If something is decided at an Officer's meeting, asked that they come back and let the Board know and then maybe they can be more helpful. If the Board doesn't know what's going on they can't help you, any more than if you don't know what's going on with the Board, then you can't help the Board.

Chief McConkey brought up the fact that Scott had gotten prices for a saw for \$835 or something like that and the purchasing agent gets the saw back and the price was about \$1300. Felt there should have been better communication between her and Scott; doesn't know what the answer is. Chairman Kugler noted it was a learning process for everybody. Discussion followed.

Commissioner King thought that maybe it would be a good idea that as soon as the PO goes to Jill, she should contact Jean to have that money taken off the balance sheet. A/C Gibbins noted he has his own spreadsheet and that he adds approximate shipping costs to each order to help keep track of what he's spent. A/C Ellsworth noted that last month Jill had emailed him everything Jack had purchased, including dollars and shipping and everything, so he knew exactly what was spent, and maybe she could email everyone. A/C Murray said she was not doing a bad job, and Chairman Kugler noted that this was what the Board was after, maybe we can solve this.

A/C Gibbins asked what the Board was doing about sexual harassment and a set of rules about it. When it was adopted however many years ago, it was just left kind of in the air, and the problem is we don't know what to do about it. Also brought up hostile work environment policy. Commissioner Spackmann noted that the Board had gotten a good policy from the attorney but it has not been officially adopted yet. More discussion followed and it was decided that a committee would be formed to address this, and would include Commissioners King and Kugler and A/C's Gibbins and Ellsworth.

Commissioner Spackmann felt the bylaws need to be wrapped up before the sexual harassment policy was addressed. He had already taken the attorney's policy and modified it a little bit and would email it over to Commissioner King, who will distribute it as necessary. Chairman Kugler asked for a copy as well. A/C Lant noted that the Chief's Association has those books with all that information and may be something to look at.

Chief McConkey brought up the issue of the bylaws and they need a couple of months to go through them. Discussion followed regarding the process. It was decided that each company would have meetings and make changes, additions, deletions, etc. It would then go to the Chief and Assistant Chiefs for compilation and a plan, and then present that one finalized copy to the Commissioners by April 1st.

Commissioner King brought up the issue of 5013C and that other companies are working on it. He noted that with Co #3, the federal government had to approve their bylaws and they now have a Board of Directors as a result of that. 2nd A/C Davis asked how that works and Commissioner King said it was a real pain and will take a while. Commissioner Spackmann noted it would have to be done after the bylaws. Discussion followed regarding this issue. Commissioner Spackmann advised against it because the logistics and overhead of doing it is ridiculous, and if the district does it, which he felt they needed to do, then the companies fall under that.

Spoke about NIMS, Commissioner Spackmann noted that if we are not NIMS compliant we are out of the running for certain grants. Commissioner King is an instructor for NIMS and he explained that certain people have to take certain classes, the federal government sends a guideline and says who needs to take certain courses, but the state is saying that not everyone needs to take certain courses if they are never going to be in the situation where they need that training. Further discussion followed. Commissioner Robarge said he spoke to Andrea Mann and as far as criteria for the grants, we are NIMS compliant.

Commissioner Spackmann brought up the resolution regarding waiting 30 days regarding purchases brought before the Board, and why that is important to him is to rationalize the decisions to the taxpayers and the need to substantiate requests. Once that request is substantiated, he does not see how anybody could complain about why we chose to purchase that truck, thermal

imaging camera or trailer, for example. A/C Lant added that all 4 companies have wasted a lot of money over the years and that's a good point.

Chairman Kugler explained the CPA who is going to be doing the audit of our books, that when they come in to audit, they look at everything, not just the books. They look at our minutes, resolutions, what we are buying, inventories, etc. This audit has to be done by June 30th and then they have to file a report to the Comptroller's office as well. If there are any red flags then we might get a visit from the Comptroller's office. But they will also help us by pointing out things that are costly or something we are doing wrong and how to correct it. Commissioner Spackmann added that by law we will have to publish those results.

Chairman Kugler noted he will be doing something different with fire prevention this year. He will be sitting down with A/C Gibbins, Duane and the other A/C's to discuss it. He felt it was necessary to start incorporating fire prevention into the whole District. Wants to have this taken care of by June. Wants to get a little better scope on fire prevention and get everyone involved. Commissioner King noted we are going to have to do that with all the programs, not just fire prevention.

Commissioner Spackmann noted in the spirit of communication that the Board has discussed a little bit the possibility of allotments going away next year. Jack was not Commissioner then, but in discussion, the Chief was in favor of getting rid of the allotments last year, but Commissioner Spackmann was in favor of keeping them, and in fact bumped Middle Grove and Porters a grand. But he thinks in discussion with the Board, and he cannot speak for them, there has been discussion of allotments disappearing in lieu of each A/C or company submitting a budget of how much they want and what it's for. He felt that it could be a positive thing and it's about rationalizing what you want and why you want it. More discussion followed. A/C Murray asked what happens if you see something at the Chief's show, does that mean you have to wait until next year to purchase it? Chairman Kugler said they would work something like that out. A/C Lant explained that every January he asks his company what they want, they comes to him with ideas, makes them feel good. Felt that taking something away from the men is just showing your power again, in his opinion. Commissioner Robarge felt that is was not a power issue, but a public issue. Commissioner Spackmann wanted to know how this was flexing muscle; he felt it gives the companies more authority. More discussion followed.

Secretary Petkus brought up the uniform issue and explained that she was going to try something new with uniforms. She explained that what she would like the officers to do is get together and decide who in the District needed uniforms. She asked for a list of 25 members. Once she got that list she and Jill would then start outfitting each member, beginning at #1 on the list and working their way down until they had no more money in the uniform account. Those still on the list would be moved to the top for the following year. Chief McConkey thought it would be a good idea to get together and go over what was needed for the uniforms, and Secretary Petkus agreed that that was a great idea. She would get in touch with the Chief to set up a meeting. It was also requested that maybe the Board could pick up the tab for the dry cleaning; which Chairman Kugler said they would think about. He asked Secretary Petkus to call Cudneys and find out how much it would be to clean each uniform.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully,

Joyce Petkus
District Secretary