

Board of Fire Commissioners

Greenfield Fire District
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A Special Meeting of the Greenfield Fire District Board of Fire Commissioners was called to order at Co #1 by Chairman Kugler at 6:49 pm on September 4, 2008.

Present were:

Commissioners: B. Bishop, Kugler, Spackmann, Waite; Secretary Petkus, A/C's G. Gibbins, M. Chandler, J. Ellsworth; 2nd A/C J. King. Also present, District Physician, Dr. Jama Peacock.

Chairman Kugler began the meeting by explaining that if anybody wants to talk they need to raise their hand so as not to talk over each other. He then gave the floor to Dr. Peacock.

She wanted to make it clear to everyone that she appreciates everything they have done and is very respectful of the honor she has been given by being the District Physician. It is a commitment which she takes very seriously, but today was the final straw, as she personally witnessed yet again her staff taking some serious attitude on the phone by a firefighter. She has had to deal with a few of these conversations herself, but when she gets on the phone with the firefighter the tone changes. She brought with her a documented conversation, but she does not want any one individual singled out because this is not just one person; but for every one person who does this there are many others who are great. She felt today was just unacceptable.

She also explained that the girls are taking a lot of flak because of the cut off date and they are getting inundated with calls. She reiterated the proper phone number as 893-8011, not the other numbers that may come up if you call information. Sometimes the number is forwarded to her service, and she is not open Wednesday afternoons, as she needs to get paperwork done. When someone calls, the number logs in and she can see it on two separate computers, and if they leave a message she has date and time and the number, so people who have been saying they have been calling for 2-3 weeks or can't get through, it is not true. She personally looks at each call and if there is a name attached to the number she has advised her staff to return the call, whether or not they have left a message. Those who leave messages get a return call, but if you leave a message at night/after hours/weekends do not expect a return phone call immediately. She will bend over backwards to help, but at the same time this is a normal office and the girls need to do their jobs and no phone call goes unanswered if a message is left. She is getting tired of hearing through the grapevine that they are not doing their job. Her private cell phone number is well known to many individuals, and has been used, and in an emergency she expects it to be used.

Regarding clearances, she has had several individuals she has not cleared, and she is not being mean. She is just saying it is not a safe situation and she needs to know that their primary is taking care of the situation or is going to clear them for firefighting duties. There are certain things she expects regarding clearance and going forward she will make it perfectly clear that each firefighter knows what she needs to clear them. She is not being a pain, but she needs to know they are okay to do the job, and they are not going to go down, have a heart attack or put somebody else in danger. She is not looking to put people out or be mean,

she is trying to make sure they are where they need to be because we need the volunteers and she understands that.

She can handle it, but when her staff takes the level of attitude, mouthing off, heat and back talk that they have taken it is just unforgivable and she is tired of it.

She also wanted to address a particular situation with a certain firefighter; Secretary Petkus noted that the Board would need to go into executive session for that.

Commissioner B. Bishop noted that if there are members of this organization who are acting in an unprofessional way, he doesn't care that she wants to be nice, but we need to know that, because this is what eventually happens. He then asked Dr. Peacock, if her staff was comfortable with this, he would like to know who the offending individuals are. These people have known for quite a while that this had to be done and so the fact that they are in panic mode, he doesn't care about that and that shouldn't make more work for you and she shouldn't have to have more hours or anything like that because of their irresponsibility. And if they are harassing her about it, then it becomes their conduct as a member of this organization and is something we can address. He also noted that he has heard some frustration at getting a hold of her, but that is usually at the 11th hour, when there is a deadline and accountability if they do not get it done right away. There were also the phone issues at the beginning, but when it comes to the point where people are acting in a rude and malicious way, the Board needs to know about it.

Commissioner Spackmann noted that several times while she was talking she said that if she had more time, she wishes she could do more, etc.; he is getting the impression that she feels that she is somehow responsible for the behavior that our people have displayed. He wanted to make it very clear from his perspective that she owes us no apologies and it is us who should be apologizing for the conduct of our members. Dr. Peacock noted she does feel a sense of responsibility because of what occurred down at the other building, which was beyond her control, and it threw everything in the air for the District, and were very patient to wait for her and she appreciates that. But there are things where she feels she did drop the ball and she is trying to make up for it. Commissioner Spackmann noted that was fine and probably a little bit fair, but there is something being overshadowed here and that is members of the District taking responsibility for their actions and part of that is to fulfill their responsibility to get their physical scheduled. He noted he had a conversation with a fireman today, who said he had been calling all August; Commissioner Spackmann then asked if he had left any messages, and the answer was no; the impression he got from that was that this was somehow her fault and the Commissioners' faults. A/C Gibbins noted that he has not had any problems with his people getting appointments for physicals. Dr. Peacock also wanted to commend the Assistant Chiefs who were proactive in getting their guys to make appointments. A/C Ellsworth noted he works with one of his firefighters and explained one day he probably called 3-4 times to make an appointment; A/C Ellsworth asked if he had left any messages, and the answer was no. When he finally did leave a message he got a return call within 20 minutes. Dr. Peacock noted she can not track down everybody because if they are wireless or anonymous, she can not return those calls due to HIPAA constraints. A/C Chandler also noted he has not had any of his people complain to him. 2nd A/C King said the only thing that came up was the fax machine. Dr. Peacock did apologize, as there has been an issue recently with the fax and the number to use is 893-6346. She stressed that this is only a temporary number until it is straightened out.

Chairman Kugler then asked if anyone had anything else today before they went into executive session. 2nd A/C King noted he had a situation, and that a Commissioner tonight threw people

off the truck because they don't have their physicals and stuff. Is that right or not? Commissioner Spackmann noted that it wouldn't be right if a Commissioner did kick them off. A/C Ellsworth noted that his understanding from the Chief was that if they had scheduled an appointment by last Friday they would still be active, which he has the sheet in front of him. But if you didn't have an appointment scheduled by the end of the month you were inactive. This was confirmed; also members who are classified D are inactive. A/C King noted one of his guys tried to fax information to Dr. Peacock and it wouldn't go through on the fax, he already had his physical and went to his own doctor for that and they tried to fax and it wouldn't go through. Dr. Peacock noted she did receive it, although it was not from his physician's office but from the firefighter himself. She also noted that she has made it perfectly clear to the medical community the number and it would not be an issue, as that doctors office would have called to say they were trying to fax something. Unfortunately, it is still not what she needs to clear him.

2nd A/C King asked again if they were still allowing Commissioners to throw guys off the trucks, and not officers. Commissioner Spackmann noted he did not throw anybody off the truck, and A/C King needs to get his story straight before he starts making statements. He also felt this issue should be in executive session.

Secretary Petkus noted, going back to Dr. Peacock's point, that she believes these guys are not understanding this - just because a doctor sends something over doesn't automatically mean they are cleared. It takes time for that paper to get to Dr. Peacock, for her to amend the paperwork and then get it to the district office for her to send notification that a person has been cleared. Also, just because Dr. Peacock has received the paperwork, does not necessarily mean she will accept it. These guys need to give us a little bit of time to process the paperwork. A/C Ellsworth noted that until the Assistant Chief receives the paperwork, that person is inactive, like it has always been. Chairman Kugler noted that it was the same way with Wilton Medical Arts, this is nothing new.

Dr. Peacock did note that there was a problem with some cholesterol product and Jay was kind enough to understand that and there are a series of firefighters that she will need to redo, and she will be happy to bring that to the firehouse. Joyce to work out schedule with Dr. Peacock.

Joyce explained there was an issue with an officer who at the time of his appointment asked Judy to give him a list of his firefighters who did not have appointments and then proceeded to call them; she noted she had an issue with this. Commissioner B. Bishop noted this was a procedural issue; Joyce keeps the records of the fire district as to who has and has not completed physicals via the spreadsheet she hands out. They should not be bothering the doctor's staff for our paperwork. Dr. Peacock's employees are being paid to service her office, not our officers. Brief discussion continued; A/C Chandler noted the intent was good but not the way it was carried out; he would address it with the officer. Dr. Peacock did clarify that it was the last Friday to make appointments and the phones were going crazy, and Judy was extremely busy trying to get appointments scheduled, and was it an extra step that she did not need to do, yes, but she is really good about that.

RESOLUTION #270 TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION CONCERNING PERSONNEL ISSUES REGARDING FIREFIGHTERS JON JONES, MIKE SMITH, JOHN MCEACHRON AND JOHN MCEACHRON, JR. AT 7:21 PM.

MOTION: Kugler

SECOND: Waite

RESOLVED to go into executive session concerning personnel issues regarding firefighters Jon Jones, Mike Smith, John Mceachron and John Mceachron, Jr. at 7:21 pm.

VOTE: All in favor, motion carried.

RESOLUTION #271 TO RECONVENE FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 8:15 PM.

MOTION: Kugler

SECOND: Waite

RESOLVED to reconvene from executive session at 8:15 PM.

VOTE: All in favor, motion carried.

Motion was made by Commissioner Waite with a second from Commissioner Spackmann to dispense with the reading of the minutes. All in favor, motion carried.

Motion was made by Commissioner B. Bishop with a second from Commissioner Waite to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 PM. All in favor, meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce A. Petkus
District Secretary