

**Upper Pottsgrove Township
Fire Committee Meeting
April 19, 2012**

Members in attendance were Chairman Pete Dolan, Vice Chairman Robert Sloss, Renee Spaide, Keith Kachel, President Bill Marsden and Stanley Hildenbrand, Fire Chief. Also in attendance were Jeff Levensgood, Erin Flanagan, Jay Young, Henry Bealer, John West, Jeremy Wozniak and Jack Layne, Township Manager.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Dolan called the meeting to order at 7:04 P.M.

II. Approval of Minutes

Vice Chairman Sloss moved that the March 15, 2012 meeting minutes be approved as submitted. Ms. Spaide seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

III. Report

A. Operational Report

Chief Hildenbrand provided the March 2012 Operational Report.

Highlights of this Report included the following:

- There were 9 calls in March and 40 calls for the year to date
- There were 0 structure fires
- There were 3 accidents with injuries
- There was 1 trash fire
- There was 1 automatic fire alarms
- There were 2 Fire Police only calls
- There was 0 vehicle fires
- Mutual aid was given 1 time
- Mutual aid was received 6 times
- There were 3 Fire Police scratched calls

Two municipalities were serviced. Time in service was 8 hours 6 minutes and the total man hours were 40 hours. Monthly training included Continued Driver/Pump Training and Individual MCFA Courses. In-House training and driver/pumper/tanker training were also provided. Ms. Spaide requested that a listing of automatic false alarms over the past year be provided to the Committee. Chairman Dolan reiterated the need for a listing of automatic false alarms for the past year. Chief Hildenbrand stated that the automatic false alarms did occur most often at the Pottsgrove Middle School and at four Ken-Crest properties. He added that the Ken-Crest property on Lotus is the location where the most false alarms have occurred for the Ken-Crest facilities. Chief Hildenbrand noted that all the emergency calls go through Montgomery County but they do not determine at that location if it is or is not a false alarm. Chief Hildenbrand added that he would have to go in and research the data base in order to identify the false alarms. Chief Hildenbrand stated that the scratched Fire Police calls were a direct result of there being a manpower shortage. He stated that they have six to seven Fire Police members but stated that they all work during the day when some Fire Police calls

are made. President Marsden added that additional Fire Police members came on board in April. There followed a brief discussion on the number of firefighters who were trained to drive the Fire Company's vehicles. Mr. Kachel emphasized that there is a lot more to properly operating and utilizing a fire vehicle than simply being able to drive it. Chief Hildenbrand stated that the Traffic Unit has 8 trained drivers, Engine 3 has 6 trained drivers, the Tanker has 6 trained drivers and Engine 2 has 4 trained drivers. Chairman Dolan stated that perhaps there was a better way of capturing the incidents that occur in the Township by reviewing the total man hours and the time in service from the data base, etc.

B. Membership Report

President Marsden reported that three new members were approved. He added that there were 24 active members – who were firefighters, 28 non-active members and 25 inactive members. Chairman Dolan inquired as to how many firefighters actually come to fire emergencies. Chief Hildenbrand read from a recent report that stated that the number of firefighters for calls were 4, 4, 4, 12, 3, 10, 3 and 1. He added that the calls that had 12 and 10 firefighters might have occurred at night. He further stated that there was only one inactive member that was a firefighter. Mr. Wozniak stated that there were 38 pagers provided to the firefighters. Mr. Wozniak added that the Fire Police keep their vest.

C. Treasurer's Report

President Marsden reported that the month end balance for March 31, 2012 for the Fire Company's Savings Account was \$2,549.70, the Checking Account was \$29,194.53, the Truck Fund was \$28,490.49 and the Property Fund was \$10,015.85. Mr. Wozniak stated that the paying down on the amount of the principal remaining on the new fire truck loan with the PEMA funds would shorten the period of the loan. Mr. Wozniak stated that he would provide information on the total amount of money collected by the Fire Company this year. His preliminary estimate was that approximately \$11,000 to \$12,000 had been received to-date. The Auxiliary Report for March 2012 had a Savings Account balance of \$408.77 and a Checking Account balance of \$456.87. Mr. Marsden stated that he had requested the annual report from the Auxiliary but that it had not been provided. Mr. Wozniak stated that he was having some difficulty in completing the tax forms for the Auxiliary but stated that he felt that he was making some progress. The problem stemmed from the Auxiliary holding their own assets and their not filing the proper documentation. Ms. Flanagan emphasized that this was a problem that had been ongoing over an extended period of time. Chairman Dolan read from the Fire Company By-Laws that the Auxiliary's By-Laws had to be approved by the Fire Committee and that the Auxiliary had to comply with these By-Laws. Vice Chairman Sloss emphasized that the Auxiliary must account for the money that they receive. Chairman Dolan requested that the Fire Company provide these directives to the Auxiliary at the next Fire Company meeting. President Marsden stated that he would do so.

D. Fire Fund Budget Update

Mr. Layne distributed copies of the March 31, 2012 Fire Fund Report. He stated that the tax revenue received to-date totaled \$41,857.41 of the budgeted amount of \$101,182. Vice Chairman Sloss stated that costs must be closely monitored due to the increasing fire hydrant rental costs.

E. Fire Relief Fund

The Fire Relief Report for March 2012 showed that the checking account had an ending balance of \$12,020.00, a Money Market closing balance of \$119,216.12, a total CD Account balance of \$53,268.44 and total assets of \$184,504.56. Mr. Wozniak stated that the proper tax information for the Fire Relief Fund would be provided to the Federal government by the time period specified.

IV. Old Business

A. Discussion on False Alarm penalties

Chairman Dolan stated that he would like to proceed forward in having fees approved for false alarms. Chief Hildenbrand suggested that the penalty cost would be \$100 for a second false alarm, \$250 for the third, \$500 for the fourth, \$750 for the fifth and \$1,000 for the six or more. There was discussion as to whether the Township should send out a letter to those who were guilty of causing false alarms. Mr. West recommended that there should be an established time frame regarding when the Township letter alerting the resident of being guilty of a false alarm should be sent out. Chairman Dolan agreed in concept with Mr. West but did not support any notion of this time frame for a Township letter being mailed being inserted into an ordinance or resolution regarding this matter. Mr. Young suggested that a letter should be provided to those guilty of causing a false alarm by the firefighters responding to the false alarm. He added that perhaps copies of this letter could be kept on the fire trucks. Chairman Dolan stated that the basis for this endeavor was to attempt to prevent false alarms. It was noted that Chief Hildenbrand would have to determine if the alarm was or was not a false alarm.

B. Discussion on a proposal to access fees to insurance firms for responding to accidents in the Township

Chairman Dolan stated that he, Township Solicitor Charles Garner and Chief Hildenbrand had recently met to discuss the proposal to access fees to insurance firms for responding to accidents in the Township. He briefly summarized their meeting by stating that they recommended that fees should be charged for responding to hazardous waste accidents that were caused by the individual cited in the Police Report on that incident. Chairman Dolan stated that a viable fee schedule needed to be provided. Chief Hildenbrand suggested that one could take the budget and divide it by the number of calls per year. Chief Hildenbrand stated that the Police usually contact the County when there is an emergency. Chairman Dolan stated we need to determine how North Coventry did their cost breakdown for assessing their charges for services provided. Chairman Dolan suggested the following listing of charges: \$25.00 to \$50.00 per vehicle;

Level 1 charges - \$130.00, Level 2 charges - \$250.00 and Level 3 charges - \$375.00. Ms. Flanagan stated that North Coventry had more rescue capability. There was a brief discussion regarding the fact that Upper Pottsgrove Township did provide EMS assistance. It was suggested that that Level 1 charges be \$180.00, Level 2 \$300.00 and Level 3 \$425.00. It was noted that the Fire Chief would determine if the emergency responded to was a hazardous waste incident. Mr. Young stated that the Police Report would determine who caused the accident. There was a consensus that the billing company would send out a letter to the guilty party. Ms. Flanagan recommended that the funds would go into the Fire Fund. There was discussion as to whether the Township or a collection agency would collect the funds from the guilty party's insurance agency. Chairman Dolan stated that the Fire Committee might recommend that a collection agency collect the funds for both the false fire alarms and for the hazardous waste calls.

C. Superior Update

Chairman Dolan stated that there had been problems in the past with the Superior fire hydrants that are located within the Township. He noted that he and other Township representatives had met with Representative Quigley regarding this matter and other concerns with the services provided by Superior for the Township. Chairman Dolan stated that the major issue was the availability of water at the Superior fire hydrants. Chairman Dolan noted that during his recent meeting with Superior's Louise Knight that she admitted that the fire hydrants located at Maugers Mill Estates and at Heather Place had a water pressure problem. He added that Ms. Knight stated that Superior would flush the fire hydrants once in the spring and once in the fall but due to the potential drought in the spring and summer of this year, the flushing of fire hydrants would be delayed. He stated that Superior would like to be notified by the Fire Company prior to them using them for training or exercise purposes. He stated that the use of Superior's water by the Township is regulated by the Tariff. Chairman Dolan emphasized that if the Fire Company had not been properly communicating with Superior that they begin to do so. Ms. Flanagan asked how the Township could insure that Superior was also compliant with the Tariff. Commissioner Spaide stated that she had never seen Superior flushing the fire hydrants in the Township. Chairman Dolan asked why the Township had a bad relationship with Superior. Chairman Dolan stated that Superior could not comply with the request for a copy of the water main map because this was confidential information. He added that the fire hydrants were attached to the water mains and that each housing development had a main.

V. New Business

There was no new business.

VI. Public Comment

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the fire training that had occurred last Thursday and Friday in the Township Administrative Office

parking lot where a trailer was burned. There was a consensus that this should not occur again on this site because of the uproar and problems caused by the fire from the burning trailer on Friday night. Mr. Bealer commented how the residents living adjacent to the Township building were not notified that the trailer would be burned that evening and that one of these residents utilizes oxygen. Chairman Dolan stated that another problem with this incident was that the burning of the trailer occurred during the same time period that the Fire Company had instituted a non-burning policy for the Township. Mr. Wozniak stated that the basis for the need to train by fighting a burning trailer was that the amount of training that Township fire fighters normally receive for fighting structural fires is not adequate. Mr. Bealer reiterated that no more burning should be done on this site. Commissioner Dolan stated that no more trailers should be burned on this site. Ms. Flanagan stated that she had taken pictures while the trailer was burning and that people could see to drive because the fire was controlled. Mr. West commented that the Fire Company could have placed a notice of the burning of the trailer on the sign that is located directly outside of the Fire Company's building. Chief Hildenbrand stated that the trailer had been provided for training but that the Fire Company would cease doing any future firefighting training on this site. Chief Hildenbrand noted that the Fire Company would have to identify someplace to train. Commissioner Dolan summarized the discussion on this matter by stating that there would be no more firefighting training in the parking lot but that the Township needed to identify another training site and suggested that perhaps Exelon or Waste Management properties might be possible training locations.

VII. Executive Session

There was no Executive Session.

VIII. Adjournment

Ms. Spaide moved that the meeting be adjourned at 9:54 P.M. Mr. Kachel seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Submitted by Jack Layne, Township Manager

**The next Fire Committee meeting is scheduled for 7:00 P.M. Thursday,
May 17, 2012**