

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

Members in attendance were Chairman Pete Dolan, Vice Chairman Robert Sloss, Renee Spaide, Keith Kachel, and Stanley Hildenbrand, Fire Chief. President Bill Marsden was absent. Also in attendance was Matthew Galamba, Jeremy Wozniak, T.J. Wojton, Erin Flanagan and Jack Layne, Township Manager.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Dolan called the meeting to order at 7:03 P.M.

II. Approval of Minutes

There was a motion by Ms. Spaide, which was seconded by Mr. Kachel that the June 21, 2012 meeting minutes be approved as submitted. The motion was approved.

III. Report

A. Operational Report

Chief Hildenbrand provided the June 2012 Operational Report.

Highlights of this Report included the following:

- There were 19 calls in May and 84 calls for the year to date
- There were 2 structure fires
- There were 2 accidents with injuries
- There were 0 trash fires
- There was 1 automatic fire alarm
- There were 7 Fire Police only calls
- There were 2 vehicle fires
- Mutual aid was given 7 times
- Mutual aid was received 1 time
- There was 1 Fire Police scratched calls

Six municipalities were serviced. Time in service was 18 hours 14 minutes and the total man hours were 79 hours. Monthly training included Continued Driver/Pump Training, In House training, driver/pumper/tanker training and Individual Fire Academy Courses were also provided. Chief Hildenbrand noted that a burn ban was presently in place.

B. Membership Report

The Membership Report noted that there were no new applicants, no one being investigated and no memberships approved in June.

C. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report noted that the month end balance for June 30, 2012 for the Fire Company's Savings Account was \$2,550.34, the Checking Account was \$11,896.48, the Truck Fund was \$33,803.53 and the Property Fund was \$10,020.79. The Auxiliary Savings Account month end balance was \$333.86 and the Auxiliary Checking Account month end balance was \$868.19. Mr. Wozniak stated that the \$125 deposit for the Auxiliary was a funding donation for food. He also stated that one half of

the \$606 donation from the Fund Drive Checks would be forwarded to the Truck Fund at the end of the year when there would be a larger deposit to provide. He added that all the funds donated to the Fire Company were being tracked on a spread sheet.

D. Fire Fund Budget Update

Mr. Layne distributed copies of the June 30, 2012 Fire Fund Report. He stated that the Operating Expenses line items still appeared to be sound. He stated that the insurance costs to date were under the approved budgeted amount and that the gasoline/diesel expenses were under the budgeted amount to date as well. Vice Chairman Sloss asked what the Liens (Fire Fund Re-Delinquent) line item represented. Mr. Layne stated that he would identify this line item and report back to the Committee.

E. Fire Relief Fund

Amended Fire Relief Reports were provided for January to June 2012. The June closing balance for the Checking Account was \$9,567.43, the Money Market Account closing balance was \$119,260.59, the CD balance was \$53,345.91 and the total Relief Assets totaled \$182,173.93.

IV. Old Business

A. By-Laws Amendments

Assistant Fire Chief Galamba stated that Chairman Dolan would be invited to the next Fire Company By-Laws Committee meeting. Chairman Dolan noted that terms needed to be provided to the Membership Secretary. Chief Hildenbrand stated that if the Membership Secretary would resign in the middle of their term then their responsibilities would be passed onto the President. Chairman Dolan requested that the Fire Company further review and submit these proposed By-Laws Amendments to the Fire Committee so that they could be recommended for approval by the Board of Commissioners.

B. Discussion on Physical Exam specifications

Following discussion on physical exam specifications and requirements for Township fire fighters, Chairman Dolan requested that Mr. Layne coordinate discussion with representatives of the Township's workers' compensation provider due to the fact that additional clarity is needed regarding the physical exam this matter. Also, there was a question as to whether members of the Fire Company's Auxiliary would be covered by the workers' compensation provider if they were injured at a program or event that the Fire Company was authorized to participate in.

C. Superior Fire Hydrants

Chairman Dolan stated that he had contacted the Superior Water Company regarding the status of the flushing and testing of the fire hydrants located in the Township. They responded that there would be no fire hydrant flushing at the present time due to the existing drought conditions and also that they presently had very limited staff to provide this service.

D. Training area

Chief Hildenbrand inquired as to the status of the effort to locate a new Township firefighting training location. Chairman Dolan stated that he would insure that this matter would be further investigated.

V. New Business

- Mr. Layne stated that the Township Public Works Department would soon be conducting liquid smoke testing to check for sewer I&I on Farmington Avenue. He stated that Township public safety personnel would be notified when specific times are identified.
- Chairman Dolan began discussion on a proposal to provide a peer review study on the Fire Company. He stated that this study would be provided by the well-known and respected Dr. William Jenaway who would identify Fire Company problems and provide recommendations as to how to fix them. Assistant Chief Galamba stated that he felt that the Fire Company was attempting to improve and build up its reputation. He added that the Fire Company had not scratched a call in more than four years. Chairman Dolan asked how was the Fire Company's moral and Assistant Chief Galamba responded that he felt that it was OK. Chairman Dolan stated that the cost of this study would be from \$7,500 to \$9,500. Mr. Kachel stated that he felt that this amount of money could be spent more wisely. Chairman Dolan stated that based on the some of the feedback that he had received from surrounding fire companies the primary reason why the Fire Company had no scratched calls was that Chief Hildenbrand showed up in his car at the emergency calls. He added that the surrounding fire companies were not very favorable towards the Township's Fire Company. He further stated that there had been a number of mistakes, concerns with leadership and moral problems with the Fire Company and that there was a need to improve the Fire Company's image. Mr. Kachel stated that it should be noted that the donations by the public to the Fire Company have remained consistent. He further stated that there is not the same level of volunteer support as there used to be in the past. Mr. Kachel cited the fact that 190 hours of training are now required for being a fire fighter. Assistant Chief Galamba stated that the Fire Company had done a lot for him. Chairman Dolan requested that the Fire Company get the By-Laws straightened out. Assistant Chief Galamba stated that the Fire Company had recently taken a trip to New York City to see the new 911 Center. Mr. Kachel requested reference information on Dr. Jenaway and reiterated that \$8,500 was too much money for this endeavor. Chief Hildenbrand stated that one of the reasons that the moral could be lower than desired was that the Township did not have that many fire calls, which is negative in the opinion of new and younger fire fighters

who are looking for more action. Mr. Wojton stated that today the Fire Company had their first fire call in 12 days. Assistant Chief Galamba emphasized that there would always be room for improvement by the Fire Company and suggested that an anonymous survey be done by the Fire Company regarding this matter. Chairman Dolan recommended that the Fire Company begin to ask pertinent questions to the members regarding how the Fire Company could improve. A Suggestion Box for the fire fighters was also recommended. Chief Hildenbrand stated that there were members of the Fire Company who do what is good for the Fire Company and others who do what is good for themselves.

VI. Public Comment

Assistant Chief Galamba recommended that there should be a Fire Committee meeting in August. There was a consensus that there should be an August Fire Committee meeting.

VII. Executive Session

There was no Executive Session.

VIII. Adjournment

Ms. Spaide moved that the meeting be adjourned at 8:45 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,
August 16, 2012**