



BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS MEETING TRANSCRIPT
(AS REQUIRED BY NYS GOVERNOR CUOMO'S EXECUTIVE ORDER 202.1)

APRIL 20, 2020 - 7:00 p.m.

Chief Steenbergh: Mr. Chairman, I've started the recording. So whenever you're ready, uh, uh, I believe it's seven o'clock.

Commissioner Chiumento: Yeah, my phone says seven, so we'll start. So, I'll call the meeting to order. Uh, roll call.

Commissioner Chiumento: Commissioner Longi?

Commissioner Longi: Here.

Commissioner Chiumento: Commissioner Valdez? (silence) Commissioner Valdez?

Commissioner Valdez: Here.

Commissioner Chiumento: Commissioner Griffing?

Commissioner Griffing: Commissioner Griffing's here.

Commissioner Chiumento: Commissioner Adams?

Commissioner Adams: Jon Adams here.

Commissioner Chiumento: And I am present. Umm, Chief Steenbergh?

Chief Steenbergh: Present.

Commissioner Chiumento: Assistant Chief Philipp?

Assistant Chief Philipp: Here.

Commissioner Chiumento: EMS Director Violante?

Director of EMS Violante: Here.

Commissioner Chiumento: Secretary O'Neill?

District Secretary O'Neill: Here.

Commissioner Chiumento: And Treasurer Passikoff.

Treasurer Passikoff: Here.

Commissioner Chiumento: Okay, thank you very much. Um, at this time, I just like to uh, to do uh, a moment of silence, uh, for our past Assistant Chief, umm, Frank Carlon who, uh, passed away from our last meeting. (inaudible) spent in District office. (pause) He's been in the District for 18 years, was past Assistant Chief and held numerous company uh, both firematic and civil offices. So, if you would just pause for a moment for Frank.

(MOMENT OF SILENCE)

Commissioner Chiumento: Thank you very much. Umm, next are "Public Comments" and we did have some, if my phone will open up, I'll see them again. So I'll read into what, uh, some questions were asked. Uh, "What is the selection process to fill the newly created Personnel Administrator position?", "How does somebody become a candidate for the position?", "Will the opening be advertised?" and "Is that position funded in the 2020 budget?" Okay, uh, "Comments from the Board"? Anybody wishing to comment? I'll do a little bit on the uh, position on the questions that were just asked. Umm, the selection process would be similar to that of a firefighter. Um, it is a civil service position. They would either come off of a civil service list, a transfer or resignation reinstate to my knowledge is the only way that uh, a person could be put into the position and it was funded in the 2020 budget. So, uh, there are funds that were, um, earmarked for that position in this year's budget. Chief, am I correct on that or do you have any other comments?

Chief Steenbergh: Uh, just, just to say that, uh, we're waiting for civil service to approve the position. Uh, there's no point in advertising, uh, or pulling a list or soliciting, uh, resumes from anybody until civil service allows us, uh, officially to create the position and with their workforce reductions and people working from home, uh, things are taking longer than normal.

Commissioner Chiumento: Okay, thank you Chief. Anyone else have anything? Hearing none, um, do I have a motion for the Abstract?

Commissioner Longi: I'll make a motion to accept.

Commissioner Chiumento: I need the numbers. Who reviewed the Abstract?

Commissioner Griffing: Commissioner Griffing and Valdez, uh, reviewed the Abstract. Uh, motion to approve Abstract 20-4B. This consists of um, let's see what I got here. Zero, uh, checks um, and uh, excuse me, 24, umm, unpaid bills with a value of \$267,880.71 for a total of 24 checks, \$267,880.71 cents.

Commissioner Chiumento: That was the motion. Is there a second?

Commissioner Valdez: Commissioner Valdez second.

Commissioner Chiumento: Motion made and seconded. Um, Renee, you want to do a roll call?

District Secretary O'Neill: Sure. Commissioner Chiumento?

Commissioner Chiumento: Aye.

District Secretary O'Neill: Commissioner Longi?

Commissioner Longi: Aye.

District Secretary O'Neill: Commissioner Valdez?

Commissioner Valdez: Aye.

District Secretary O'Neill: Commissioner Griffing?

Commissioner Griffing: Aye.

District Secretary O'Neill: And Commissioner Adams.

Commissioner Adams: Aye.

Commissioner Chiumento: Thank you. And next is the, uh, minutes from April 6, 2020 Board of Fire Commissioners. Is there a motion?

Commissioner Adams: Commissioner Adams moves to approve the minutes of the April 6, 2020 Board of Fire Commissioner meeting.

Commissioner Chiumento: Is their second?

Commissioner Longi: Longi second.

Commissioner Chiumento: Motion made and seconded. Could I have a roll call?

Chief Steenbergh: Mr. Chairman, just a question, please.

Commissioner Chiumento: Of course.

Chief Steenbergh: Umm, just a clarification as to whether the minutes uh, separately or the minutes and the full transcript, uh, were included in that motion. Uh, we're required to approve the transcript that was posted, uh, uh, as posted by the Secretary.

Commissioner Adams: My, Commissioner Adams, my motion was limited to the uh, usual, uh, summary of the meeting that was circulated by the District Secretary. I have not seen the transcript.

Commissioner Chiumento: Okay, so let's vote on that. So, Renee, if you want to do a roll call on the actual written minutes.

District Secretary O'Neill: Okay. Commissioner Chiumento?

Commissioner Chiumento: Aye.

District Secretary O'Neill: Commissioner Longi?

Commissioner Longi: Commissioner Longi, Aye.

District Secretary O'Neill: Commissioner Valdez?

Commissioner Valdez: Commissioner Valdez, Aye.

District Secretary O'Neill: Commissioner Griffing?

Commissioner Griffing: Commissioner Griffing, Aye.

District Secretary O'Neill: Commissioner Adams.

Commissioner Adams: Commissioner Adams, yes.

Commissioner Chiumento: Okay. So next, if we have to approve the transcript as well. Umm..

Commissioner Adams: I don't think we have to approve the transcript. I think we just approve the minutes (inaudible) since we do customarily.

Commissioner Chiumento: Well, the Chief was saying under this new version that, that transcript must also be approved.

Chief Steenbergh: So, just as a, as a point, uh, in the conversations that we had with the Committee on Open Government, uh, they did not specifically say that the transcript had to be voted on or posted. Uh, we made a kind of an administrative decision to circulate the transcript, uh, to the members of the Board in advance. Uh, and, uh, we'll leave it up to the discretion of the Board as to whether you want to do an actual vote on it or not or just let it be posted as is.

Commissioner Chiumento: Okay, let's say we acknowledge receipt of the transcript, like we do the Treasurer's Report. That seem equitable? Anybody want to agree or disagree with that?

Commissioner Longi: Sounds good to me.

Commissioner Chiumento: Okay. Then we acknowledge receipt of the transcript. Umm..

Chief Steenbergh: We'll make changes to the agenda in the future to uh, avoid any confusion on that as well.

Commissioner Chiumento: Thanks. Umm, any "Monthly Committee Reports"? Does anyone have any reports for this month?

Commissioner Valdez: Commissioner Valdez, no.

Commissioner Chiumento: That's fine. If no one has any we'll go on to um, "Correspondence". E-mail dated April 5th from Jim Beretta to the Board of Fire Commissioners regarding the Open Meetings Law and the meeting minutes from March 16, 2020. An e-mail dated April 7, 2020 from Fire District Affairs. Umm, no action needed on those. Okay, so we're down to, uh, "Staff Items". Chief Steenbergh. Go ahead.

Chief Steenbergh: Uh, good evening. The first thing I'd like to do is, is, uh, publicly recognize, uh, Vassar College, Sprout Brook Farms and Premier Medical, uh, for donations of, uh, PPE supplies to the Fire District. Uh, Sprout Creek and Premier Medical both, uh, donated, uh masks and or gloves, uh, for use by our crews. And, uh, Vassar College, made a, uh, substantial donation of masks, gloves, uh, Tyvex suits, uh and, uh, will very much, uh, help us get over the, the, hump with our difficulties in trying uh, to, to, find other sources to, uh, purchase from. Uh, we are, we still continue to have difficulty in, in getting PPE supplies through the uh, National Stockpile or through State means and we continue to uh, uh, look to purchase those items when we can. So these donations will go a long way towards filling in those gaps. The, uh, the other thing I wanted to mention to you, uh, you had all asked me, some

questions, uh, in the last meeting, about the prevalence of calls and things like that. So I did, uh, put some statistics together for you. And I just wanted to bring you up to date briefly on where we are in in terms of how COVID is, is impacting the, the daily operations of the, of the Fire District. The Fire District, up to this point, we've had fifteen career members, uh, impacted by COVID. Uh, four of them, uh, have gotten physically ill with symptoms. The other eleven, uh, were required to go into quarantine after being exposed to patients who, uh, were positive. Uh, one of the things that we have done in house and uh, we did this retroactively back to the first of the year from a recordkeeping standpoint, uh, the federal government came out with some new requirements and we are now, uh, required to indicate, uh, on every run report, uh, the extent to which COVID was a factor, uh, in our operations on that, on that given incident. So, uh, we were able to go back, based on information in the e-PCR system and the information that we had from the County 911 system and we've done that retroactively and now there are systems in place where every call is documented going forward. But uh, just in terms of, of, total numbers uh, year to date, uh, this is through today, uh we have had 121 calls that uh, COVID was uh, either suspected or confirmed. Now that's, that's out of a total of 1,677 calls year to date, but the distribution uh, is probably the more important thing. So when you look in the month of March, uh, COVID was suspected or confirmed in 15% of our EMS responses. Uh, however, if you look at April, and we're not all the way through the month yet, COVID is confirmed or suspected in 25%, uh, of our EMS responses. So, uh, the amount of, the amount of COVID exposure that we're seeing, is, is still rising. Uh, although, you know, the State data does make it seem like maybe New York City has reached, uh, a peak of some kind, uh I do think it's likely that the, the, Dutchess County and the Arlington area may be lagging behind that, uh, by some short amount, maybe, you know, a week or two at the most. (phone notification alert) Sorry. In terms of, in terms of manpower, uh, we have uh, we've lost 640, 640 man hours of uh, of Career staff time, uh, due to uh, the COVID either people being ill or being in quarantine. Uh, of that 640, uh, right around half, uh, has resulted in overtime. Uh, about half of those hours did not result in overtime because of our, our staffing levels. Uh, we are registered with FEMA, uh, to eventually be in the reimbursement process for, uh, all of the, uh, disaster related expenses. Uh, we, we got registered with them last week. They have not yet posted a process. Although, in the meetings that we've had so far, the video conferences that we've had with FEMA so far, they're telling us that, uh, 75% of our expenses should be reimbursable. Uh, what I don't have any idea at this point is, what the timeline for that process might be. The declaration, the disaster declaration, at this point I mentioned last time, is, is open ended, so we are continuing to track our expenditures and our, our man hours for that. Uh, we will also be able to, uh, tabulate uh, and uh, add into the FEMA reimbursement, the, uh, value of the volunteer time. So we're tracking, uh, the hours that the volunteer staff puts in on responses to calls and we can actually use the value of uh, donated time and materials like the volunteer staff, the donations from Vassar College. Those things are all offsets towards our 25% right off the top. So hopefully, uh, our, our percentage of recovery, uh, should stand to be even greater than the 75% once we do all the offsets to our share of it. Otherwise, uh, COVID is, uh, you know, the thing that, that occupies everyone's day the most in the Fire District. We continue to work, uh, diligently to disinfect and sanitize the rigs and the stations and uh, search for PPE on the internet. Currently our, our stock of PPE, uh, is sufficient. I, I don't foresee any problems and uh, but we are continuing to identify sources uh, in case, our, our levels start, uh, to get low for some reason. Uh, are there any questions that I

can answer for you about things that are going on in the Fire District, uh, COVID or otherwise. (Pause) Okay, Mr. Chairman.

Commissioner Chiumento: Okay, thank you. Assistant Chief.

Assistant Chief Philipp: Uh, only, uh, two things, uh, with this COVID still going on, we're still getting fires also. Uh, last week there was two in the same day. Umm, both, uh, one was a garage fire so, uh, there was no, uh, houses that were involved. And then the other one was uh, uh, a barbecue grill that was close to the house so there was some damage to the house on that and uh, then, that's all that's going on right now.

Commissioner Chiumento: Okay, thank you. Uh, Director of EMS Violante.

Director of EMS Violante: uh, good evening, everyone. Uh, as the Chief Steenbergh related, there's a lot of moving parts and complexity to what's going on. Uh, each day is a different challenge to overcome and we're all working together to do that. Umm, personnel here uh, and all of our stations, career and volunteers and everyone are doing a great job. Uh, you know, the situation is still pretty fluid. Uh, the State and the Region, send out updated policies, sometimes weekly and our staff are maneuvering through that as well. Uh, so, uh, we're continuing to stay on top of things and uh, work together to (inaudible) through this everyone's doing a great job. Uh, you'll see information coming out from, from the Chief and, and me about a variety of things as time goes on, as we're just trying to keep everybody updated and uh, of course, uh, as we get new information, uh and adjust (inaudible) to keep sending that out. So that's all I have, uh, unless anyone has any questions for me as well.

Commissioner Chiumento: Anybody for Dave?

Commissioner Longi: Just one comment. You're doing an awesome job Dave. Keep up the good work. Thanks a lot.

Director of EMS Violante: That's 'cuz I'm surrounded by great people here.

Commissioner Chiumento: Okay. Uh, I did skip over "Commissioner Items". Is there anybody out there with any particular item, "Commissioner Item" that needs to be addressed? (Pause) No. Okay, then there's no "School Requests", either. So unless, umm, somebody else has anything, do I hear a motion to adjourn?

District Secretary O'Neill: Ralph, you need..

Treasurer Passikoff: Yeah. You want the Treasurer's Report?

Commissioner Chiumento: Oh, yeah. Forgot Jim. Go ahead Treasurer.

Treasurer Passikoff: Okay, I sent out the March report today. Uh, after you've had a chance to look at it, if you have any questions, you can, uh, give me a call and we can go over whatever you have. Umm, the one thing to remember about the Fire District is, uh, and we complain about this all the time when we do our budgeting, we get literally 100% of our budget from real estate taxes. So we don't have an income problem with this, with this budget. We've gotten our real estate taxes. We don't have to worry about sales taxes. We don't have to worry about mortgage taxes. So we're, we're good on the income side and it's too early to really tell on the expense side. That's it.

Commissioner Chiumento: With the exception of interest income, but there isn't much there.

Treasurer Passikoff: I, I can't help it if you cut the interest to what? Point 9%?

Commissioner Chiumento: Okay, so, um, we do acknowledge the receipt of the report. So, that was in our email as well, so, anything else that anyone has? If not, do I hear a motion to adjourn?

Commissioner Longi: So moved.

Commissioner Chiumento: Commissioner Longi moves, is there a second?

Commissioner Adams: Second.

Commissioner Chiumento: Okay, uh, I guess we'll do a roll call, just to be consistent.

District Secretary O'Neill: Commissioner Chiumento?

Commissioner Chiumento: Aye.

District Secretary O'Neill: Commissioner Longi?

Commissioner Longi: Aye.

District Secretary O'Neill: Commissioner Valdez?

Commissioner Valdez: Aye.

District Secretary O'Neill: Commissioner Griffing?

Commissioner Griffing: Aye.

District Secretary O'Neill: Commissioner Adams.

Commissioner Adams: Aye.

Commissioner Chiumento: Okay, thank you all and have a good night. Be safe.

Commissioner Valdez: Bye, Bye.

Commissioner Longi: Good night everybody.

Transcribed and respectfully submitted by,

Renee O'Neill
District Secretary