

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS DISTRICT NO.9
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April 1, 2025

The combined monthly Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioner of District 9, 1222 Green Street, Iselin, New Jersey, was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by the Chairman under Chapter 231 of the Laws of 1975 with notices posted in the Home News Tribune, on the bulletin board at Fire Company #1 and #2, and at Town Hall as prescribed by law. A salute to the flag was led by the Fire Commissioner followed by a moment of silence.

Roll Call of Commissioners: E.A. Mullen, S. Burrows, M. Rudy, K. Williams and D. Thaker. Also in attendance were W. Kenney, Fire Official S. Schmalenberger, Fire Chief M. Wertz, Board Attorney P. George and Fire Company President E.R. Mullen

This is a regular monthly meeting

Presentation from Lincoln Financial:

Bruce Linger, a representative for Lincoln Financial presented to the board based on a previously provided proposal for LOSAP. There are three providers including themselves. They handle LOSAP well in excess of 300. LOSAP was created by congress in 1997. The department established theirs in 1999. Mr. Linger advised the department was grandfathered in by the state. There were certain plans that were grandfathered because of existing plans and other had to start fresh. Lincoln Financial created a document and filed it with the IRS. They are the only company that got private letter ruling, it says your plan is legal. Filing with the state is the next step. LOSAP's started taking off in New Jersey around 2001. Some interesting things that occurred in the beginning when Trenton wrote rules, one rule was that no volunteer firefighter was allowed to die. The rule was later amended. Another thing was that there had to be five consecutive years of contribution. Lincoln Financial argued that was an unreasonable practice and the state rules were modified to be an accumulation of 5 years to be vested. As a plan they are not involved in a point system or choosing how eligibility is determined. They are involved in the administration of the plan and providing the platform. A participant will have access to their account and can change investments. There are 57 investment choices and there is a default if none is selected. They are located locally for any questions. They service close to 30,000 participants. Distributions are decided by the board, and who qualifies for that disbursement. An interesting situation occurred recently, a 99 year old was still active and Lincoln Financial was still

able to keep him on. Their job is to make the program affective. There is no charge to the administration for distributions, reports or tax reporting. By IRS standard, distributions are W2 and rollover is not permissible per IRS code. There are designated beneficiaries, proof of being vested is required before payout. The cost for each participant is \$25. Statements are provided quarterly for both administrator and participants and can be printed on demand. Mr. E.A. Mullen asked what would be needed from the fire district. Once the district has met the state standard for the number of companies to look at, a sample resolution will be given. When it is adopted, pass the resolution and file with the state and the state will send a letter saying they are approved. Once everything is complete, Lincoln Financial will meet with members to do sign up, talk to members about how the plan works, give login information, beneficiaries and three pages are signed. The default setting for investment choice is 50% S&P 500 and 50% fixed. This follows the fiduciary guideline of being balanced, it can be changed by the participant at a later time. Based on investment, gross investment minus 1%, last year did 44% gross. Money market and fixed is net. Adopting the resolution will be roughly 2-3 months. Data and member information will need to be obtained. Members who are vested and long gone, will need to be transferred over. For those that have college kids, it is considered an invisible asset because it is considered the district's asset.

The board thanked Mr. Linger for his time.

A motion was made by K. Williams and seconded by D. Thaker with everyone in favor (E.A. Mullen, S. Burrows and M. Rudy) to pay the bills for the month of March 2025 in the amount of \$120,723.07.

Business Administration Report:

Equipment & Apparatus:

ES checked the check engine light on 9-2. 9-2 is also going to Salzman for repair after Easter. ES was in to repair 9-2-4's officer side window. 9-3-8 body damage is complete and needs striping. ES repaired the air leaks on 9-5. SCBA compressor at House 2 was serviced. Ladder testing was completed and there are no major issues. Hose testing to be determined. 9-3-4 has been painted, however there are questions about lighting. Mr. Kenney spoke to the insurance company and explained to them that the body was changed from the old chassis to the new one and the insurance has changed coverage for replacement cost. The new chassis is insured at \$500,000 and the old one to \$100,000. Mr. E.A. Mullen advised there are no plans for old chassis and it can be sold in Alabama to keep from having to transport it. The board is in agreement and a resolution will be drafted.

Facilities.

The weather striping on bay doors will be done when there is warm weather. The boiler and air compressor passed inspection. The auditors are due in after Easter.

A motion was made by D. Thaker and seconded by M. Rudy with everyone in favor (E.A. Mullen, S. Burrows, K. Williams) to accept the business administration report.

Rutgers Health sent renewal for annual EAP. It is \$1400 for the year. The chairman will sign off.

Fire Official Report:

For the month of March all inspections and re-inspections were completed as assigned. A \$500 fire code penalty and a permit fee of \$54 was collected bringing the year-to-date collection to \$2212. There were three fire investigations completed. There are no purchase requests for March. As far as prior requests, everything has either been ordered or delivered. Sparky the fire dog was ordered. Still in holding pattern for laptop.

A motion was made by K. Williams and seconded by D. Thaker with everyone in favor (E. A. Mullen, S. Burrows and M. Rudy) to accept the fire official report.

Fire Chief Report:

There have been multiple outstanding requests have been received. Over half have been put into service and the working on the other half. A request will be put in for a new laptop for the chief for training purposes, etc. There was discussion regarding the placement of fire extinguishers and knox boxes, however there are no mounting brackets at this time. Mr. Williams had a question in regard to gear racks and water can straps, both items have been received. Mr. Burrows asked about offering replacement for malfunctioning fire detectors. Fire Official Schmalenberger advised that every year through the State Department of Fire Prevention donations are made and smoke detectors are funneled out to each department. The fire chief advised to make a note about a liability waiver. The smoke detector will be given out for free, but no installation or if something happens, the department is not liable. Mr. Burrows main concern is that the fire department is there to help, and would prefer not to leave anyone without the protection of a fire alarm.

A motion was made by M. Rudy and seconded by D. Thaker with everyone in favor (E.A. Mullen, S. Burrows and K. Williams) to accept the fire chief report.

Fire Company President:

Volunteer Fire Company #1 under the leadership of Chief Wertz participated in the St. Patty's day parade. For the 3rd year in a row they won the 1st place for best appearing fire company. In addition they won 1st place for best appearing color guard and best appearing unit in the parade. Applause was given as congratulations.

Discussion:

The attorney was asked if he had reviewed the bond issued by Salzman, he had not. This will need to be completed before final payment is issued. Mr. Rudy spoke with an HVAC representative as they were there last week. Additional upgrading was made and they are supposed to double check the areas they gave attention to. They ran two new ducts and it was noted a difference was felt in the men's room, but the women's room was still cold. Ms. Rivera advised a punch-list is needed to identify what remains. The Edmunds needs the list of vendors and chart of accounts and access to retrieve data. The goal is to get Edmunds up and running by Jan. 2026 so that there is not two difference systems in the middle of the year. Anyone who will be requisitioning will need training.

Woodbridge building and grounds installed the key fob systems in House 2. Furniture and cabinets have been ordered, however there is no delivery date. Both keys and fobs work.

Mr. Burrows advised the district has a functioning dot gov email system. Everyone in the room. line officers and house officers have a Microsoft account. Everyone has a login and will need to meet with Mr. Burrows for their information. The accounts will have universal access, meaning Outlook can be downloaded on the phone as well. The format for the email address is: first initial dot last name at Iselin 9 fire NJ dot gov. This includes the entire Microsoft Office Suite and will have one drive and teams. The fire company website, Islenfire.com, will stay.

A resolution to authorize the fire district to send M. Wertz to the IAAI convention and a travel advance in the amount of \$945.

A motion was made by K. Williams and seconded by S. Burrows (with everyone in favor E.A. Mullen, M. Rudy and D. Thaker) to accept the resolution.

Dream Seat furniture will be purchased. No resolution needed because it's under \$17,500. Purchase order will be made for 10 pistons and 5 wheels.

Legal:

The employee handbook was sent out. Mr. Burrows pointed out a couple typos and made suggestions:

- include vehicle policy from previous, official use only
- page 25: under security and proprietary information for IT: no employee should be talking to the press and it should be routed to the commissioners
- page 27, there is no district clerk and that can be removed.

Some employees have beyond double their allotment. There will be a grace period to have time to come into compliance. There is a max of 400 hours vacation accrual. The fire official will meet with his staff and bring questions to the board. Mr. Williams

advised to keep continuity throughout with the use of fire district 9. Holidays listed based on state recognition. The attorney will review the handbook after changes are made.

Communications:

Open Public Records Request form. The property known as the Regency in Menlo Park Terrace, clarified what they were looking for. Copy of business administrator report, bureau activity report and chief's report.

A motion was made by M. Rudy and seconded by S. Burrows with all in favor (E.A. Mullen, K. Williams and D. Thaker) to accept the communications report.

The purchase agent advised the board of the time she will not be available.

At 8:04 p.m., a motion was made by M. Rudy and seconded by S. Burrows with everyone in favor (E.A. Mullen, K. Williams and D. Thaker) to adjourn the meeting.

Secretary
Board of Fire Commissioners, District #9

Minutes taken by:
R. Jimenez