



BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

FIRE DISTRICT #9 ISELIN, NJ

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March 10, 2026

The combined monthly Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioner of District 9, 1222 Green Street, Iselin, New Jersey, was called to order at 7:02p.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 D. DiYanni and Fire Company President K. Wertz

This is a regular monthly meeting.

The previous minutes were provided in advance and reviewed by commissioners. A motion was made M. Rudy and seconded by D. Thaker with everyone in favor (E.A. Mullen, S. Burrows and K. Williams) to accept the minutes and submit them to the record.

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 February in the amount of \$148,929.36.

Reports of Committees:

Engineer Presentation:

Nelson Guzman and Rachel are from CME to address any concerns and answer any questions. What needs to be done to prepare to go out for bid? Need to prepare the proposal so that it can be authorized by the board, then prepare bid documents and plan specs for advertisement. How quickly can the proposal go to Maria? In two weeks. With that timeline it can be approved at the April meeting and in the next month, it can

be advertised. And that's the proposal to do the bid documents? Correct. Was that part of the original contract? No, it was not.

How long do you think the entire project is going to take, based on your experience? Based on what we saw with the repairs required downstairs, a good contractor can come in and out, I think, within a week. Just because it's falls repairs, crack repairs, we decided to stay away from the slab replacement for now. You'd need a separate contractor, unless the same contractor has a good mason to do the brickwork outside. That may take another week or so, depending on the weather. That's going to be a little more weather-dependent instead of the interior of the building.

Steel repairs, you might add another week or so. So, you're looking at possibly up to a month in total. Do you think it would be best to have two separate bids, one for the masonry and one for the concrete, or what do you think would be the best bet? I think your best bet for a competitive price would be all-in-one.

We could put it in there, like A and B. We can't lose two bays at once. We could actually definitely prepare the bid specifications in a way that is not going to limit us in case one option is not feasible for whatever reason. So, we don't have to cancel the entire bid application.

That's a good point, though. Do you have options to park your trucks in the parking lot? That, yes. The reason I say is, if that spot, if I remember correctly, does go from one bay to another, you don't want to introduce a joint from one to the next if you don't have to.

You can do it all in one shot and just have a score line where the other slab may have a preexisting expansion joint. But to have continuity across the repair, you may need to take both bays out of commission for that time. So, from the moment you're pouring a wet product, how long does it need to cure before we can drive over it? Depends on the product that the contractor uses.

Some have high early strength. A lot of DOT contracts have, within a couple of hours, they can have traffic back on there because they need a lane open on the highway. But you're going to pay for it.

You're going to pay for it, absolutely. Those are very, very expensive items. So, I would recommend following the specs, following the products that they choose to use based on our specifications.

We have options. Different materials on our typical concrete repair detailed drawings. It could be a couple of weeks from demo, clearing it out, cleaning it out, preparing it, pouring it, curing it, and then sealing it.

Okay, so when you demo it, is it going to be too large of a gap to drive over? Yes. Okay, so once you begin work, we can't get back in until you complete it? Correct. Okay.

I'm not asking you to marry a timeline here. Is it a week, a month, or what? If you plan for at least two weeks, I think you'll be covered a little bit more just to be on the safe side. And I don't know if you have to use your experience in this area.

I did a lot of work similar to this in New York City. They had cages for the apparatus rig to protect it from vandalism. Would you need that here? We could probably park around back and just have somebody on an overnight standby.

Okay. As long as the weather breaks and we don't have to worry about freezing. That's the most important thing. And now that we're heading into that time of the year, we've got security here tonight behind you. We just had a fire company put somebody on standby. We have cameras everywhere. I would weigh the cost between having any type of cage versus alternative security.

Well, you could put just a fence around it, too, in theory. Just see which is the better option. Yeah, it depends on your level of comfort. Because in the city, they had full cages. You couldn't get anywhere near it. We'll get a parking spot now.

Are they using the pipe or cement? We have regular concrete as one option. Other Sika products that are a little more synthetic, a lot more usable for heavier loads. And some of them may have fiber reinforced, yes.

So, there are various options that we list for the contractors to weigh. And that's something else that we would need is the latest information from this firehouse as to the equipment, the apparatus, the loads and the axle loads. So that we can make sure that the products are correct.

Because we have a typical concrete repair detail sheet that we use for a lot of different products. We'll cater it for this particular use for the heavy axle loads. And those will be different and more suitable products that we have on the list. Good. And we definitely need to stay away from trying to bring any vehicle or anything inside the bay until the project is completed for liability reasons.

As soon as you get that proposal, send it over to Maria. And then we'll get the ball rolling. Hopefully the second Tuesday in April. What are the details of the proposal? Everything will be catered to your needs. We typically follow DOT specifications, which has all the standard items and standard units of measurement. We try not to stray from that.

Thank you for your time.

Township Director of IT:

We brought up moving towards township IT services for our computer and whatever we do in our phone system here. And if Scott could give just a little overview on what they would be able to provide pretty much at no cost to the fire district and would be tied to

their fiber network. In the past all buildings had their own IT and phone services, etc. Now, all are fiber interconnected. It would be a brand-new top of the line network so there is no reason to the replicate cost. All the wiring has been completed.

The township can provide the internet, IT, and phones. It's a big cost savings across the board. That's in place with the existing shared service with the township? Yes. What is the cost to us? If you don't have any computers that are upgraded to Windows 11, that's all the hardware you'd have to purchase. There's a proposal right now that Bill has for two ringers that we don't have extras of. So, one ringer would come into this building and the other ringer right now we have slated for West Cali. It's a couple hundred bucks. The only other thing that would be a purchase would be the access points and those haven't been counted at this time. The wiring for the wi-fi access points was already completed.

So, here's the work we need from you guys. When ready, I will need someone who knows your phone system that can talk about what extensions you want. If you want to do an auto attendant, right, to thank you for calling, press 1 for this, 2 for this. I'm going to need whatever layout that you want. And then the same thing, just somebody to work with Brian and give him access when he brings the team in to do the computers and the other stuff. I think we were talking. I said probably 3636, which is the board number. That would probably be the auto answer. Because you could hit 1 for Bill, 2 for Maria. And then you could also add 3 for fire prevention, in case that's the number you called, and 4 for the fire company. But, 0308 is the fire company number. That would just be a dedicated number. Put a ring downstairs, and the Bureau would still maintain their number. As long as we formalize it, I can get it to our phone carrier. Once the phones are in place, working on the computer connection and wi-fi is next. The email can be left as is.

The next step would be to consolidate phones numbers to only what's necessary. Everything is included in the shared services agreement, nothing needs to be added. There will be an email help desk for requests. Existing contract for phone, internet and IT will be reviewed so as to terminate within the proper time frame.

Thank you for your time.

Business Administrator:

Brindlee Mountain is sending someone out to take care of the training that was done by Aaron Gass. There is no update on the exhaust hatch for 9-5. EES is working on that. 9-2-4 had the same issue. Mr. Kenney will work with Lunder on the air truck. It will be up to the chief if she would like to put it in service. More people will need to grow accustomed to operating. There's a quote from Magnum Electronics for two radio chargers. Once programmed, they will need to be wired to the tool box. There's one hand truck mounted. The assortment for straps is on the order list. There are instructions on the

panels that will need to be gone through a couple times. Only air truck listed in county for assets list.

Don Draper will be contacted about the lettering.

There was a letter from the water company about their rate increase. It came out to about \$48,000-\$49,000, which is 20%. The cost of a fire hydrant is \$1000, whether or not used and is roughly \$380,00 per hydrant.

Facilities:

Working with the township about the phone bill and alarms for truck house.

Pagers were ordered and working on programming

Joint boards held March 9th.

EES will take 9-6 to their location as soon as parts arrive. They will take care of fabrication for the outlet and everything will be taken down. See if they can do the rotation of chair in 9-5.

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

Fire Official:

The report was provided in advance. report. On Thursday, CBS is going to shoot news series on Southwood Ave. In coordination with the building department, we will be providing a two-man fire watch during the shooting, which is about 12- 16 hours, the full day. They're using 186 Wood Avenue and 99 Wood Avenue as the staging point for the cast. They will have food trucks because they put in a request for fire permits for food trucks.

Flyers were drafted for the inspector positions. It was shared on the Middlesex County Fire Protection Association email chain. The deadline is March 20th.

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

Fire Chief Report:

Two firefighters are registered at Middlesex. One has already started and the 2nd will start at the end of the month. It will be put on the report.

All Knox boxes are synced automatically to site. 9-5 is synced to system, if not it is an easy fix. All updates are done through the cloud. Extinguisher mount in 3-1 and 3-2,

pictures will be taken and emailed. There's an updated list for gear and boots and the gear vendor also does boots. Some items are on back order, helmet decals, helmet bags.

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

Purchase Agent:

Ethos system is up and running, Edmunds is parent company and Ethos is new product. Heads coming together. Purchase needs will be gone over with the chief. Any invoices can be given to the purchase agent (PA) and she will prepare requisitions in the computer, they will need to be authorized/ approved before cutting checks. The steps will be to enter the quote or invoice, PA will enter into the system, business administrator will do the 1st approval, commissioner next, then reviewed. Should be a simple process with 4 levels of approval. If it's time sensitive it, send a message, etc. If under the thresholds, things can be addressed quickly.

Fire Company President: All good.

Discussion:

Does anyone have any questions or objections about formally switching over to the township IT? No objections to leaving All Covered.

A motion was made by S. Burrows and seconded by D. Thaker with everyone in favor (E.A. Mullen, M. Rudy and K. Williams) to formally move to the township IT services.

The next topic is the information the engineers provided. There is a clear path forward, the crews will be coordinated similar to what was done at House 2. Floor epoxy will need to be done at a later time to match.

Next up was the part-time inspector posting. That was discussed. Information for Lincoln Financial LOSAP is being compiled. Once that information is received they will set everything up.

Commissioner Burrows would like to consider a 5-year plan for facilities, this building will be or has been past the end of its life. So, versus doing the entire major repairs of the bays downstairs, hold off on that with the potential for rebuilding a new fire station next door. Just to the chief, to everybody here that has a stake, but I think we're due to replace it in the next five to ten years. This is a whole process. DCA approvals and beyond. The process will also need money built into budget. If a new building is built it will be ADA compliant. The 1st step would be a feasibility study, 100% DCA voter

approval is required, etc. Bond counsel would be recommended for limited use. Legal counsel that does bonding, specifically as a whole package.

Woodbridge Auxiliary Police does free checks. Insurance will need to be notified for the period the trucks are out the bay.

Need quotes for the replacement of 3-3 and 3-5 and information for reimbursement from the township. Money will be put into the budget to use for apparatus. DCA wants to know what was approved and what was voter percentage. See if township will just buy them.

Bloodmobile change of dates, will notify chief.

Legal:

There is a new law as of March 1, 2026. All published notices have to be on the website. Have to advertise in the newspaper twice a month to refer to website. Everyone who gets paid needs a 1099 designation, attorney will make one. Because everyone who gets paid \$600 and above needs SSC or EIN numbers.

Communications:

A response from Fire Official Schmalenberger in regards to 55 Brookside Condos because Fire watch is asking for payment.

Open request from Gabriel Lopez in regard to a call back on 2024, the information was provided.

Water company rate increase, annual fire protection charge effective February 23, 2026 would be \$384,088.32. So, a monthly charge is going to be \$32,007.36. Detail of rate scale was issued June 30th 2025, just getting notified. The charge per hydrant is \$1,085. Each, .475 per inch foot of distribution.

Open request to the Bureau in regards to 15 Gil Lane., Sunnymart.

Communications from CBS Studios and their food truck fire official for their upcoming filming.

Communications from Commissioner Mullen in response to an open request on a fatal MVA accident.

Posting of part-time inspector position.

Results of the fire election, the totals were: Edward A. Mullen 234 total votes. Kevin Williams 223 total votes. 12 write-in votes. Public question number one. 183 yes, 74 no. Public questions two. 750,00 add on 200 yes, 44 no total 271.

Open request in regard to carbon monoxide on Gill Lane. Bureau is handing.

The minutes from the joint board meeting, chief's report, financial report and the fire officials 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.

Public Discussion: None at this time.

Resolutions:

1. Approving and adopting the Fire District Employee Handbook.
2. Continue agreement with Rutgers Behavioral Health to continue as our Employee Assistance Program in the amount of \$2,040.

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

Joint board meeting was last night. Topics included the water company, the township drill that might be coming up and the trailer.

Reports are available for balances on accounts, purchase orders are going to have more details, summaries, etc.

Wex gas cards: for the duration of 90 days there is a \$1,500 credit limit with a \$1,000 cushion. The gas cards were working until limit was reached. An email is sent when the balance is low. To increase the credit limit, you pay as you go. 12 vehicles were added.

A motion was made by S. Burrows and 2nd by K. Williams with everyone in favor (E. Mullen, M, Rudy and D. Thaker) to go into a closed session.

The closed session was adjourned at 8:37pm.

Secretary

Board of Fire Commissioners, District #9

Minutes taken by:

R. Jimenez