

**BOROUGH OF LAKEHURST
SPECIAL MEETING
JUNE 25, 2015
MINUTES**

MEETING OPENED AT 7:30 P.M. BY MAYOR HARRY ROBBINS.

ALL STOOD FOR PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE.

PUBLIC MEETINGS STATEMENT READ INTO RECORD BY MUNICIPAL CLERK DUGAN:

“IN COMPLIANCE WITH N.J.S.A. 10:4, OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT, NOTICE WAS GIVEN TO TWO NEWSPAPERS, AND POSTED, THAT A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL IS SCHEDULED FOR THE TWENTY-FIFTH DAY OF JUNE, 2015, TO BEGIN AT THE HOUR OF 6:00 P.M. AT THE LAKEHURST COMMUNITY CENTER, 207 CENTER STREET, LAKEHURST, NEW JERSEY, AT WHICH TIME, THE BUSINESS OF THE BOROUGH WILL BE CONDUCTED. THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING IS A DISCUSSION WITH THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE LAKEHURST VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT.

ROLL CALL:

ROBIN BUSCH: PRESENT

GARY LOWE: PRESENT

JAMES DAVIS: PRESENT

GLENN MCCOMAS: PRESENT

PATRICIA HODGES: PRESENT

STEVEN OGLESBY: PRESENT

MAYOR HARRY ROBBINS: PRESENT

DISCUSSION WITH MEMBERSHIP OF THE LAKEHURST VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT:

Mayor Robbins apologized that he had to leave last week's meeting due to a work commitment and added that he thought it was a better idea to meet with the fire company membership at a special meeting. Mayor Robbins added that the meeting can dispel any rumors which may be circulating and added that he had heard a rumor that the Borough would not pay for diesel fuel.

Fire Chief Seaman stated that he had read in the minutes that the Borough was asking the fire company to take care of their own diesel fuel.

Fire Chief Seaman stated last week he had provided members of the governing body with an email detailing fuel usage, vehicle information and other items.

Councilman Lowe stated that the fire chief's vehicle uses much fuel.

Councilwoman Hodges stated she had received the 41 page email before the council meeting which contained “a lot of information without context” and asked Fire Chief Seaman to “lay the groundwork as to why it is being discussed.”

Fire Chief Seaman stated that he forwarded the documentation last week to answer questions posed at the council meeting last week. He added that the fire company is “down two vehicles” and just have the van and Tahoe which utilize gasoline.

Councilman McComas stated that he noticed there were a lot of purchases for gas cans and asked the purpose of the purchases.

Chief Seaman replied that the deuce and a half has a gas tank which is used during drills and chain saw operations.

Council President Oglesby stated that certain vehicles are deemed necessary for firefighting purposes and suggested not funding fuel for non-essential vehicles. Mr. Oglesby stressed the need to prioritize where money is being spent as the Governing Body is aware that a new fire truck will be needed and money must be saved. Mr. Oglesby added that the Borough will pay for repairs for essential Borough-owned vehicles.

Fire Chief Seaman stated that the Humvee will be used in inclement weather.

Mr. Oglesby stated that the Governing Body will not tell the fire department what they can have.

Councilman Lowe stated that the fire department has two vehicles owned by the New Jersey State Forest Fire Service and they should get rid of one.

Chief Seaman stated that 6223 and 6203 were removed from the fleet in 2010.

Councilman Lowe stated that the fire department needs to get the pumps tested.

Mayor Robbins asked if there is a violation if the pumps are not tested. Chief Seaman replied in the affirmative.

Chief Seaman stated that they don't have to follow the NFPA standards but must have minimum standards and added that the company has thirteen sets of new SCBA which should be good for ten years, with their five year goals being met.

Chief Seaman stated that they can't afford a new truck as they are down thirty thousand dollars due to inability to schedule coin tosses.

Councilman Lowe stated that the main concern is safe fire fighting and added that everyone has to work together.

Councilwoman Hodges asked when the last audit was conducted and if there is a plan to have an audit.

Chief Seaman answered yes there is a plan for an audit with the last one conducted in 2011.

Mrs. Hodges asked why there is no plan in place to replace vehicles.

Chief Seaman replied that a new pumper was placed on a “wish list” of capital items in 2010 and 2011.

Councilman McComas stressed the need to work together with the Borough to meet goals.

Fire Chief Seaman stated that each grant that is received is for a specific item or purpose such as SCBA and is not in the general operating account.

Councilman McComas asked the amount of discretionary funding.

Chief Seaman replied that approximately \$2,500 is received from fund drive mailings, \$1,400 for the circus, and approximately \$700 from dances and added that the fire company is fortunate to receive grants.

Councilwoman Hodges stated that when you have no plan in place you need some guiding principles for operation of the department.

Chief Seaman stated that every year the department submits a budget and proposed a “wish list” of capital items four years ago.

Council President Oglesby stated that the Borough has bonded for fire trucks previously but the problem is the Borough is maxed out in capital debt and added that hopefully rateables are increasing. Mr. Oglesby added the Borough must be “really careful.”

Mayor Robbins asked about the daily operations of the department.

Chief Seaman replied the department responds to all calls with full crews.

Councilwoman Busch asked about training.

Chief Seaman replied that the department trains with other fire departments at the fire academy and added there are minimum training standards.

Mayor Robbins asked about the certificate for operation of the forklift of which only part A was submitted.

Stevie Ray Butler replied that he had received forty hours of supervised operation.

Councilman McComas asked if the fire department was current with all required filings.

Chief Seaman replied if they were not in compliance, they would not received grants.

Borough attorney Sean Gertner asked if the franchise fee “was taken care of.”

Chief Seaman replied that they are “working on it.”

Council President Oglesby referred to the most recent ISO rating and asked if training had improved.

Chief Seaman replied that the individual who conducted the rating did not check the files of all the volunteers to check training certificates.

Councilwoman Hodges stated that the fire department should be commended for obtaining grant funding but added that due to the “nature of the times” everyone must be “fiscally conscious” and prioritize with regard to funding which can only happen if communication continues.

Chief Seaman stated that quarterly committee meetings should be scheduled.

Councilman Davis stated that monthly meetings can be scheduled if desired.

Councilwoman Hodges asked Fire Chief Seaman if all items of concern were addressed.

Chief Seaman stated that seven out of eight goals were achieved with only the siren at Public Works being incomplete.

Chief Seaman added that the department would like to conduct coin tosses as in previous years.

Councilman Davis stated that coin tosses cannot be conducted with obstructions in the roadway and suggested that a proposal be presented for coin tosses without personnel in the roadway.

Chief Seaman stated that the State had approved the coin tosses for the last five years.

Council President Oglesby stated that it is against the law to have coin tosses with personnel on the roadway and the Police Chief will not sign a permit due to violations of traffic laws which would pose a liability issue for the Borough.

Chief Seaman stated that the New Jersey Department of Transportation issues guidelines for coin tosses.

Councilman Davis requested that Borough Attorney Sean Gertner research the matter and provide a legal opinion concerning coin tosses.

Chief Seaman stated that the new Fire Chief's vehicle was "funded on their own."

Councilwoman Hodges asked the uses of the chief's vehicle.

Chief Seaman replied that the vehicle is used for training and emergency response.

Councilman McComas asked if a log of chief vehicle usage is kept.

Chief Seaman replied in the negative.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Time opened: 7:00 p.m.

NO PUBLIC COMMENTS

Time closed: 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by: Steven Oglesby

Seconded by: Glenn McComas

To adjourn meeting. Roll call vote held. All votes affirmative. Time: 7:01 p.m.

Bernadette Dugan, RMC/CPM
Municipal Clerk