

TOBYHANNA TOWNSHIP FIRE COMMISSION
SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETING
OCTOBER 28, 2019

The October 2019 Special Business Meeting of the Tobyhanna Township Fire Commission (“Commission”) was held on October 28, 2019, at the Tobyhanna Township Government Center Building, 105 Government Center Way, Pocono Pines, Pennsylvania, 18350.

Present are John Kerrick, David Carbone, Mike Erlsten, and Rich Luthcke. John Holahan, III, and Jonathan Reiss, Esq. is present by phone.

1. John Holahan calls the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. A quorum is present.
2. The Pledge of Allegiance is recited.
3. Appointment of a Chairman and Secretary
 - a. John Kerrick motions to appoint John Holahan as Chairman of the Fire Commission, Mike Erlsten seconds. Vote: John Kerrick, David Carbone, Mike Erlsten, and Richard Luthcke vote in favor. John Holahan is opposed; motion carries.
 - b. John Kerrick motions to appoint David Carbone as Vice Chairman of the Fire Commission, Rich Luthcke seconds. Vote: all in favor; motions carries.
 - c. David Carbone motions to appoint Mike Erlsten as Secretary of the Fire Commission, John Kerrick seconds. Vote: all in favor; motions carries.

4. OLD BUSINESS

- a. **COVERAGE FOR POCONO SUMMIT AREA DISCUSSION:** John Kerrick asks if the Firefighter Credit and Allowance Program has been started. Troy Counterman replies that paperwork has been submitted and FCAP has been initiated with the help of Julia Heilakka.

David Carbone recommends a one-year probation for PSVFC with quarterly reports to ensure compliance with township code. He is in receipt of an updated roster, vehicle inspections, and insurance policies. Mike Erlsten asks about the past due financial statements. John Kerrick and David Carbone explain they were deactivated and did not have financials to turn in. Patrick Timothy explains that PSVFC did not receive money directly for them to audit. The company turned in invoices for the township to approve and pay. David Carbone states the Board of Supervisors has received the Attorney General’s inspection report and found no problems. Troy Counterman and Ed Tutrone state all money needs to be accounted for whether or not the fire company physically received the money from the township; that it is in the ordinance. Jonathan Reiss states he is not aware that the ordinance requires the full financial audit but mentions Autumn Canfield’s memo stating the second class township code requires a reporting of tax payers’ dollars received by the fire companies. Autumn Canfield states she will check the ordinance to see if the township requires audited financial statements.

CJ Dickinson asks if the Commission is looking for the 9-90 forms. Mike Erlsten replies he’d like to see those forms for accountability. David Carbone states if the invoice is being submitted to the township, then the money is accounted for. Ed Tutrone states the confusion is on the Fire Tax Fund that the township collects on a non-binding referendum. The Fire Fund Tax money is the fire

company's money and it still needs to be accounted for even if the township pays the invoice. Jonathan Reiss states it wouldn't hurt to ask for the 9-90 forms moving forward.

David Carbone motions to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that PSVFC be reinstated with a one-year probation, to include quarterly reports and 9-90 forms. Troy Counterman asks if the fire companies only have to report the tax dollars spent going forward. Patrick Timothy asks about past tax money reimbursement for the portion of 2015 and 2016 that PSVFC had not received. Jonathan Reiss states that if the township is not going to ask for the past financial audits there was no need to reimburse the tax money already distributed to other fire companies. Autumn Canfield asks about the Foreign Fire Relief money already disbursed. Ed Tutrone states the Foreign Fire Relief money was for 2018. Jonathan Reiss states 2019 money would need to be prorated if PSVFC gets reinstated before January 1, 2020. John Kerrick seconds. Vote: all in favor; motion carries.

b. DISCUSSION OF FIRE COMMISSION MINUTES ON THE TOWNSHIP WEBSITE: Crystal Butler states after a phone call received by the township, John Jablowski, the previous Township Manager and Secretary of the Fire Commission, directed her to postpone posting the minutes on the township website. David Carbone motions to post the Fire Commission Minutes on the website, Mike Erlsten seconds. Vote: all in favor; motion carries.

5. NEW BUSINESS

a. CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF MAY 9, 2019 REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING: John Kerrick motions to approve and dispense with the reading of the minutes; David Carbone seconds. Vote: all in favor; motion carries.

b. DISCUSSION ON THE 2020 FIRE PORTION OF THE GENERAL FUND BUDGET: David Carbone recommends tabling this topic to see if PSVFC is reinstated. John Kerrick asks if the fire companies have had a chance to review the budget. Both companies state they have not. Crystal Butler is directed to send a copy of the proposed 2020 Fire Portion of the budget to the fire companies. Mike Erlsten asks about splitting the money between the two fire companies based on the percentage and not seeing that on the budget. Autumn Canfield explains the presented budget is out of the General Fund and is not the tax money that gets split between the fire companies.

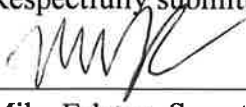
6. FIRE COMMISSION REPORT: David Carbone states he would like to move forward on planning for fire services for the township; the commission should consider how Pocono Springs Project will affect fire service coverage. John Kerrick states he would also like to include the fire companies in that discussion. Mike Erlsten asks about the need for regionalization and if the amount of fire calls justifies regionalizing the fire companies in the area. John Kerrick states the companies respond similarly to the way a regionalized fire company would. David Carbone states possibly incorporating paid staff into the fire companies might be a solution to the lack of volunteers. CJ Dickinson states there is legislation passed by states for tuition reimbursement and asks if the Commission has considered a third party conducting an assessment on emergency services capability on a township level. Chestnut Hill Township recently did an assessment with JNL Associates to determine their capabilities. The Commission agrees by consensus to reach out to JNL Associates to inquire about an assessment.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT: John Holahan is pleased to see movement on the coverage area in Pocono Summit.

8. Meeting adjourned at 6:41 PM.

Minutes recorded by Crystal Butler

Respectfully submitted:



Mike Erlsten, Secretary