

Fly Creek Board of Fire Commissioners Monthly Meeting  
Date: December 8, 2022

Present: Pam Deane (PD) (Treasurer), Joan Kegelman (JK) (Chairperson), Vincent Ruggiero (VR) (Vice Chairperson), Betty Staffin (BS), Christine Voulo (CV)

Absent: Cassidy Lent (CL) (Secretary), Gary Wehner (GW)

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comments

Claire Kepner read the statement below, please see Appendix A

Ed Kukenberger stated that the snow plow was a frivolous purchase

Connie Hobbie asked if comments could be at the end of the meeting. It was explained that the agenda was already set, but that the next chairperson may change the order.

BS doesn't like the treatment she has received from the other commissioners. JK apologized to her and explained certain concerns of hers as did CV. BS was reminded that the lawyer also called her.

Reminder: Voting next Tuesday, December 13, from 6:00-9:00pm. Many in attendance want to be present at the time of counting the votes. JK invited everyone who wanted to come after the polls are closed.

Reading of November Minutes: Cassidy Lent

Minutes are online and won't be read at meetings anymore.

Correspondence:

None to report

Treasurer's Report: Pam Deane

Chris Kegelman's name is still on the statement. PD and Mary Earl of the Cooperstown branch of NBT Bank are taking care of removing his name. PD enrolled in e-statements and hard copies to be sent to district's PO Box.

Bills & Transfers

Copies of the bills to be sent to the commissioners before the monthly meeting.

Fire District Association (dues)	\$375.00
Spectrum (cable)	\$137.97
<i>The Daily Star</i> (legal notices)	\$165.60
A to Z Heating (furnance maintainence)	\$335.00
Hummels (office supplies)	\$38.17
JPJ Electronic (radio antennas)	\$62.85
Fly Creek Post Office (stamps)	\$58.00
The Copy Shop (copies)	\$12.44
New Hartford Sale & Lock (doors)	\$2,039.45
Putnam Pest Control (pest control)	\$35.00
Kelly Steele (cleaning)	\$175.00
Cassidy Lent (stipend)	\$600.00
Pamela Deane (stipend)	\$1,200.00
Firematic Supply Comp (truck repair)	\$1,983.73
<u>AIS Administrator (cancer insurance)</u>	<u>\$1,955.70</u>
Total	\$9,173.91

Pam re-negotiated independently of the board the contract stipend for the secretary position and was corrected at the board meeting that that is not under the purview of her job and that the board changed the secretary stipend back to \$900.

Motion to approve report made by CV, seconded by VR, approved and passed.

Resolutions:

*Resolution to establish a capital reserve fund for capital improvements*

This resolution is to establish a separate bank account for the purpose of accumulating capital reserves for acquiring, maintaining, repairing, improving, and replacing the buildings and land of the Fly Creek Fire District.

Motion made by JK, seconded by VR, approved and passed, 3-1 (Aye: JK, CV, VR; Nay: BS)

*Resolution to establish a capital reserve fund for equipment repair and replacement*

This resolution is to establish a separate bank account for the purpose of accumulating capital reserves for acquiring, maintaining, repairing, improving, and replacing the equipment of the Fly Creek Fire District.

Motion made by JK, seconded by VR, approved and passed, 3-1 (Aye: JK, CV, VR; Nay: BS)

*Resolution to establish a repair reserve fund*

This resolution is to establish a separate bank account to provide funds for the cost of non-routine or emergency repairs to property, equipment, and apparatus owned, operated or leased by the Fly Creek Fire District.

Motion made by JK, seconded by CV, approved and passed, 3-1 (Aye: JK, CV, VR; Nay: BS)

*Resolution to establish a capital reserve fund for apparatus repair and replacement*

This resolution is to establish a separate bank account for the purpose of accumulating capital reserves for acquiring, maintaining, repairing, improving, and replacing the fire apparatus of the Fly Creek Fire District.

Motion made by JK, seconded by CV, approved and passed, 3-1 (Aye: JK, CV, VR; Nay: BS)

All four resolutions will be on the ballot on December 13<sup>th</sup>.

Chief's Report: Adam Kantor for Chief Voulo

1. November calls: Fire 4, EMS 8 toned (4 Fly Creek, 2 Cooperstown, 1 Richfield).  
Responded to 1 in Fly Creek, 1 in Cooperstown
2. Fire Company medicals on January 10, 2023
3. Fire Company sexual harassment training on December 14<sup>th</sup>
4. 0512 – Repaired again, on board charging system
5. Christmas tree setup and decoration on December 9<sup>th</sup>, Santa fire truck parade on December 10<sup>th</sup>, using 0514. Have 25 kids signed up for delivery of goodie bags from Santa.
6. UTV to be used by Fire and EMS ordered from raffle fund proceeds. Obtained three prices. Currently getting prices on a trailer. This has been a four year process from selling raffle tickets and private donations. NO taxpayer money was used to purchase this. Need to have maintenance and insurance coverage by the district.
  - a. Motion made to cover maintenance and insurance. Accepted. BS voted no.

Fire Police: John Phillips

Good response to fire after Thanksgiving. Thanks for the food, CV.  
Training held on electric vehicles and solar panels.

Old Business

CL did not send final budget to the Town Clerk. PD did send budget.  
CL to receive full \$900.00 of stipend.

New Business

JK made a motion for a \$10,000.00 forensic audit from the state. VR seconded motion. BS opposed. Motion approved and passed. PD to transfer money to checking account.

John Phillips stated that the salt and snow from the plowing of the fire house. JK to write a letter to the Town Highway Department.

Dates of future meetings

January 12, 2023

VR thanked everyone as his term is ending and thanked the board.

Statement from JK, please see Appendix B

Meeting adjourned at 8:20pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Elizabeth Susman  
Substitute Secretary

APPENDIX A: Comments from Claire Kepner, read during the public comments section.

I read with interest a letter in this morning's newspaper.

I first want to say that the prior Board of Commissioners of the Fly Creek Fire District were and are still proud of the Firefighters, Emergency responders, Fire police and Auxiliary members. They work very hard and are dedicated to helping this community.

There is a discrepancy in the letter that needs to be cleared up regarding to the needs of the district. The commissioners, since the Fire District reorganized into a Fire Company, have been very supportive of the needs EXPRESSED to them at the commissioners meetings by the FIRE CHIEF. Never once did they not support and finance a need. Equipment and vehicles were purchased according to the PRIORITIES expressed by the Fire Chiefs.

The commissioners did not change or refuse needs.

The need for a fire truck was not only acknowledged but money was put aside for such a purchase. If the budget for the district that was approved for 2022 was followed there should be 100,678.00 dollars available for such a purchase. This budget and all purchases of equipment and vehicles were approved unanimously by prior Board of Commissioners; two of who voted are on the current board.

Thank you for letting me address this assembly and I respectfully request that these comments be included in the minutes.

APPENDIX B: Statement by JK, read right before adjournment

Before we adjourn, I would like to thank Vinny Ruggerio for his time and commitment to the fcd board over the years and we wish him well as his term ends, and to thank the board for their work this past year.

Managed funding is a key aspect of the training provided in the Association of Fire Districts of the state of NY commissioner training and I am pleased that all commissioners participated in the training and that they now have the reference manual, so that everyone can follow proper procedures and rules.

The lack of compliance of the state mandated guidelines and the disregard of Chief Voulo's recommendations will hopefully be resolved with the enactment of the resolutions on the December 13 ballot. A well funded capital reserve fund will allow the district to properly plan for the maintenance and replacement of critical equipment.

The lack of an appropriately funded capital reserve has resulted in trucks that need to be constantly repaired and do not pump to NFPA standards. This head in the sand approach to proper budgeting cannot be fully rectified by the capital reserve. Therefore, this administration is currently researching federal grant resources including FEMA, possible NY state grants and is reaching out to local foundations to finance the much needed replacements.

Mutual aid means assisting each other, not depending on our mutual aid companies to our job.

Volunteering for a role with the district takes a real commitment, which is important to emphasize as we have experienced what the risk of an underrepresented board presents. In 2021, three commissioners resigned in a six week period, effectively leaving the board powerless, regardless of the advice from counsel. It is the responsibility of each commissioner to ensure that the district business is conducted properly and bring to the boards attention should a step be missed in error.

We welcome active participants, but we hope that every potential board member recruited has been advised of the time commitment they need to make to be effective commissioners.

We have the ramifications of a current board member's philosophy of "we do things differently in Fly Creek" and our philosophy should be "we do everything we can to keep Fly Creek safe." Mutual aid means assisting each other, not to depend on our mutual aid departments to do our job.

Finally, a new board cannot gain the public's trust if absentee ballots do not adhere to state requirements, and as the statute of limitations has not expired, an inquiry will be sent to the states attorney general regarding last years election process and handling of required paperwork and the knowledge that personnel records were removed without permission from the chief's office, and an individual maliciously posed as a board member seeking to undermine the chief by attempting to fraudulently obtain his personal records from his previous district.

I think the community should be aware of all the facts regarding the FD board and the importance of their vote on Dec 13<sup>th</sup>.

It has been an honor to serve as a substitute board member and I welcome the opportunity to continue serving the district.

Thank you.