

MINUTES - REGULAR MEETING

May 12, 2025

Chairman Brunner called the meeting to order on the above-mentioned date at 7:30 pm, at 10 Troy Hills Road, Whippany, NJ

Commissioners present: Brunner, Gethins, Cortright and Cozzarelli

Absent: Cobane

At this time Chairman Brunner read the following: Pursuant to statutes made and provided, let the minutes show that notice of this meeting was transmitted to the following newspapers: the Daily Record; and filed with the clerk of the Township of Hanover and the Clerk of this Board.

At this time, the Chairman called for a moment of silence in honor of one of our firefighters seriously injured on a training drill this month. He asked everyone to send prayers and good thoughts to him, and his family. And also, to those who were at the scene due to the horrific nature of the incident.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Comm Cortright called for the acceptance of the minutes from the last meeting. One typo was pointed out. Comm. Cozzarelli seconded the move, and it was carried by the following vote:

AYES: Gethins, Brunner, Cortright, & Cozzarelli

ABSENT: Cobane

NAYS: None

(The official minutes have since been corrected & filed)

TREASURER'S REPORT:

The following Treasurer's report was submitted.

Treasurer's Report - May 12, 2025

For the month of April, 2025

General Checking Account #: XXXXXX3244

TD Bank

Balance On Hand - March 31, 2025	\$1,551,529.18
April Checks	(\$473,469.39)

Deposits for the Month of April 2025

Permits & Fees - Checks & Cash	Acct 2011 - Permits & fees	\$810.00
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Registration fees - Checks / cash	Acct 2008	\$1,735.00
Whippanny Fire Company	Rental Income	\$10,902.00
Tyler Payments	Registration Fees	\$375.00
Tyler payments	Permits / Fees	\$162.00
District Taxes		\$356,764.00
Whippanny Fire Company	1st Qtr utilities	\$1,966.65

Balance on Hand, April 30, 2025 (matches Quickbooks) \$1,450,774.44

Checks Submitted this Month's Meeting \$512,735.45

Business 12 Month CD -x0575 **Matures 12-7-25** **%** **\$227,076.23**

Business 6 Month CD - TD Bank X9425 **Matures -3-4-25** **\$227,295.87**

Penalty Checking Account # XXXX3773
TD Bank

Balance on Hand, April 30, 2025 \$14,537.07

A motion to accept the Treasurer's report was made by Comm. Cozzarelli. It was seconded by Comm. Gethins and passed by the following roll call vote:

ROLL CALL: Cortright – AYE; Cozzarelli– AYE; Brunner -Aye, Gethins – AYE

ABSENT – Cobane

NAYS - None

CHIEF'S REPORT

Supplies, Equipment, and Maintenance

- Purchases made from Amazon and Home Depot

Apparatus

- New Ladder is in and training ongoing.
- New Foam Controller was ordered for E-21

Training

- Ladder Truck training
- Annual requirements still need to be completed by some members.

Purchases

Nothing at this time

Fire Prevention

- 83 Inspections / re-inspections were conducted last month. **\$5,706.00** in fees were billed and being collected. Total of **\$19,307.00** for 2025.

EMS

- (55) Calls were answered last month.

Fire

- (61) Calls were answered last month.

116 Total calls answered

Other Matters and Announcements

- Conducted Plan reviews
- Processed special event permits
- Conducted Spec reviews
- Process special event permits
- New Hire / Job Posting under way and testing will be May 18th @ Fire academy 8:00am
- Provided information to auditor for annual audit
- Emergency Action Plan for River Clean up Events
- DCA Minimum Mandatory Qualifications (on going)
- Proposed new Chief's contract (on going since 2021), Also two would like to discuss where we stand with 2 issues. 1. Payout of unused sick time and 2. Pay out of accumulated over time (on going since Oct 2024)
- Incentive program for crew calls / new Strategic Plan

Chief said that the carpets have been cleaned with the offices still to be done at a later time. The KME is still waiting for installation.

*A motion was made to accept the Chief's report by Comm. Cozzarelli. It was seconded by Comm. Gethins and passed unanimously by all Commissioners present.

COMMUNICATIONS -

1. The audit representation letter from Nisivoccia was presented and signed. Janet will send it back to Man Lee.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

PERSONNEL – Job Description for Janet's position – Janet will edit for approval. The number of hours per week will be increased.

Career candidates – Interviews and tests are under way – some are this week. Afterwards, the scores will be obtained; they will be sent for physicals, etc. All those things take time.

The board would like to start its interviews the week after Memorial Day, the 27th, 28th, 29th so we can move forward. Then we will look at all the recommendations. Chief will throw out dates to the interviewees and the Board.

Commissioner Cozzarelli and the Chief have met and gone over how many personnel we may need over the next five years time. They looked at the cost. How it will increase over time and how it will affect the budget. There is the base salary, but that's just one factor. There's pension, health deductions, overtime and more to be considered. Taxes will always go up. Just how much is what we really need to know. Say, if we raise the salary base until 2030. how does that affect our taxes? And what does it bring to the township?

We also have to look at shifts and our coverage in different ways. And EMT versus firefighter. Commissioner Cozzarelli said he worked well with the chief. They both have a better understanding of what's coming up.

APPARATUS – We had to order a foam controller for 21. It is not covered by warranty. The cost will be \$1200 or so. It shouldn't be a lot to install.

The ladder involved in the training drill accident has been taken out of service. We have a spare that has been tested, and that will replace it for now. The original will eventually be returned to us and subsequently destroyed.

Chief said regarding the ladder truck - in the next week or two, we should be able to use it. We need to get more experience with it.

BUILDING - The rug cleaning is being re-scheduled.

TOWNSHIP – Nothing at this time.

FIRE COMPANY – Jesse Graziano reported members were a little upset about the lack of representation from the board after the accident. We've never dealt with something like this before. And he would like to see everyone coming together. He gave a thank you to the chief who has been up there, every day, trying to help the family. . In the future, there will be softball and fundraisers coming up and he would like to see the board attend more of these events. Once we start doing these events, he would like to see a lot more participation.

He also thanked the career staff for sitting down with the younger guys. They walked them through a lot of things. It's not just grief, it's trauma.

At this time, the Board also thanked the career staff for their help.

Chief Perrello addressed the members present. He wanted to say how proud he was of everyone and told them they did nothing wrong and did everything right that night.

The chairman echoed his thanks also and said that he can imagine it was not easy to come to grips with everything afterwards and that the Chief will set up counseling if anyone needs it. He also thanked the chief for keeping the whole board in the loop as everything was taking place, especially because he had his regular job to do also.

OLD BUSINESS – Nothing at this time.

NEW BUSINESS –

Commissioner Cortright stated that from now on there will be an agenda available to the public at the Commissioner's meetings. The Board has to approve the actual minutes and reports before they are presented to the public in case of any corrections or mistakes. This also keeps our meetings in line with the Township meetings.

*He made a motion that we go forward with this procedure in the future. The motion was seconded by Comm. Cozzarelli and passed unanimously by all Commissioners present.

*Comm Cortright also entered a motion regarding the public portion of the meetings. He presented a statement that would also be in line with the township meetings. Any person wanting to make a public comment will stand up, give their name and address, address the Board and have 4 minutes to speak. This motion was seconded by Comm. Gethins and passed unanimously by all Commissioners present.

PUBLIC PART OF THE MEETING 25 Members of the public attended.

Commissioner Cozzarelli made a motion to open the meeting to the public. It was seconded by Comm. Cortright and passed unanimously.

If anyone from the public would like to speak to the governing body, please step up to the podium, state your name and address and you have four minutes.

Dina Atkinson from Cedar Knolls - asked if the new firefighter to be hired is also an EMT. The answer was yes .

She also asked if there were any changes to be made to make training safer.

The Chief replied that he is working on a full administrative review to try to prevent things like this from happening again.

Commissioner Cozzarelli said that he was present and sat down with the chief when PYOSH (Public Employee Safety and Health) was here. They will do extremely thorough questioning of the entire incident. They will go through everything. They will collect all that information and maybe recommend something that could have been done better.

Commissioner Cortright added that they will have a report with corrections or recommendations. But it could take a few years for them to do the full investigation.

Chief Perrello said that we are being proactive ourselves and looking at everything.

Mary Beth Cowley – 22 Troy Hills Rd – Whippny - How many firefighters are you looking to hire?

Commissioner Cozzarelli replied to her. We are looking at what the impact would be to add more people? We have 6 weeks to decide and have an open conversation about it as we interview these candidates. There will definitely be one as a replacement this year versus three in total.

We need to look at all the shifts. 14? 24? It's a combination of looking at the shifts and hiring people.

He wants a figure to report back to the taxpayers. We want the best for the town. We need to look at that as we interview. We have 10 candidates so that's where the line starts. We will hire Candidate One. But our list may not expire. Candidate 6 may still be in the running at a later date.

Mary, Beth replied, The more you hire, the less overtime you'll have.

Cozzarelli said that we have models for all of that to look at.

Melissa Santini - 5 Crescent - Whippny: She expressed how upset she was that the board had none of the kids' backs. How does the Board know how they're feeling mentally? Where were you guys? It's disgusting. The chief needs your support. Have any of you been to the hospital? Living in this town, you should have been there.

Chairman Brunner replied that the Board has been in communication with the chief every day. We don't want to overwhelm the family.

Melissa. This town needs to focus on mental health. One of the young kids hit a tree on the way home because he was so upset. Did you reach out to him to see if he was okay? She is disgusted. These are young kids and they were hurting.

Anthony Santini - 5 Crescent Whippny: It was a difficult situation for those who were there and it took four days for anyone on the board to reach out to see how we were doing.

Brunner - There was room for improvement for sure, but the board was being kept informed on everything that was going on.

Linda Makowski – 44 Reynolds Ave – Whippanny -: If this happened to my husband, I would want the people who are in charge to reach out. A text or a phone call from people who ran on a volunteer platform would have been appropriate. These are kids, they are our future. She was a former EMT and saw a lot. She reached out to the young kids in the room and said to seek her out and talk to me. His (the injured firefighter) previous department reached out. We need to make sure everyone is okay. Just reach out.

Asst Chief Mihalko said that he speaks to Josh, the son of the injured firefighter every day.

Commissioner Cortright also commented that he now has Josh's number and he has spoken to him. He let him know that if he needed anything to reach out.

He also mentioned that the Chief has just been inundated with this and should be commended for the job he's doing

Assistant Chief Mihalko mentioned that the family has asked us not to visit at this time.

People asked about the status of the firefighter. He is in critical condition, with more surgeries to come in the ICU at Morristown Hospital.

Matt Gallo – 196 Bee Meadow Parkway, Whippanny - The chief has been phenomenal and he wanted to let him know that he has everyone's support.

Tom Braviak – 8 Anna Terrace – Whippanny. These kids are not our future. They are our NOW. He's very proud of them for what they did that night. Everyone knew exactly what they needed to do, and he's never been prouder. We are in a dangerous business. Out of these bad events come corrections and things that will be helpful in the future.

Commission Cortright echoed that the night of the accident, nobody spoke - everyone reacted. He said that was because of the training they received from our leadership, especially the chief. Braviak replied that it's the Board's responsibility to give the chief the tools he needs to lead.

BILLS

Comm. Cortright moved that the following bills be paid. The move was seconded by Comm. Cozzarelli and a vote was taken.

The motion passed by the following roll call vote with some Commissioners abstaining from certain checks.

ROLL CALL: Cortright – AYE; Cozzarelli– AYE; Brunner -Aye, Gethins – AYE

ABSENT – Cobane

NAYS - None

04/01/2025	eft	NJ Division of Pension & Benefits-Pension	4007 Pension Annual	-20,039.00
04/01/2025	eft	NJ Division of Pension & Benefits-Pension	4007 Pension Annual 8604 ERS /Power DMS/Mobile	149,271.00
04/02/2025	14143	ESO	EYES	0.00
04/02/2025	14144	Amazon Business	-SPLIT-	-862.29
04/02/2025	14147	When to Work, Inc	8603 Other Subscriptions	-213.00

04/02/2025	14148	All Jersey Garage Doors	6012 - Bldg/Grounds Maintenance	-445.00
04/07/2025	14149	Air Group 1	6009 Bldg - HVAC	-4,410.00
04/07/2025	14150	Paul Perrello	5004 Clothing Allowance / Reim	-91.00
04/07/2025	14151	POSTMASTER	5013 Office Supplies	-292.00
04/09/2025	eft	NJ Division of Pensions & Benefits Health	4001 Medical Insurance	-16,284.60
04/09/2025	14152	Finish Line Car Wash	7005 Vehicle Maint. Pumpers/Resc	-28.00
04/09/2025	14153	Falkman, Ryan	8201 Training - Classes	-36.25
04/09/2025	14154	Township of Hanover	-SPLIT-	-557.08
04/09/2025	14155	Wegman's	8205 Promotions	-599.13
04/09/2025	14156	Turnout Fire & Safety - Little Falls	8001 Uniforms - Class B	-486.00
04/09/2025	14157	JCP&L 10 Troy	6001 Building - Gas & Electric	-20.00
04/09/2025	14158	Optimum 10 Troy	6013 Bldg - Cable /VOIP/Verizon	-415.22
04/09/2025	14159	PSE&G 10 Troy	6001 Building - Gas & Electric	-626.00
04/09/2025	14160	JCP&L 10 Troy	6001 Building - Gas & Electric	-1,337.48
04/09/2025	14161	Lincoln Financial	4011 LOSAP	-32,489.00
04/14/2025	14162	Police & Firemen's Insurance Association	4010 Police & Fire Insurance	-591.03
04/14/2025	14163	Auto Zone	7003 Vehicle Maintenance - Cars	-174.19
04/14/2025	14164	Gannet NJ	8206 Advertising	-137.55
04/14/2025	14165	US Bank Equipment Finance	5012 OfficeEqpt Rental (copier)	-392.91
04/15/2025	eft	Board of Fire Commissioners	Employee Payroll	-25,168.68
04/18/2025	14166	VE Ralph & Sons, Inc	7022 Medical Supplies	-45.94
04/18/2025	14167	Janet Hammond	5013 Office Supplies	-77.13
04/18/2025	14168	Nielsen Ford	7004 Vehicle Maint. LadderTruck	-67.46
04/18/2025	14169	Fast Signs	7005 Vehicle Maint. Pumpers/Resc	-156.00
04/18/2025	14170	All Jersey Garage Doors	6012 - Bldg/Grounds Maintenance	-1,300.00
04/21/2025	14171	Flagstar Public Funding Corp.	Ladder Truick payment	174,358.09
04/25/2025	14172	Electronic Measurement Labs	9002 Rescue Equip-(non bond)	-5,280.42
04/25/2025	14173	Township of Hanover	Gas / Diesel	-539.74
04/25/2025	14174	Standard Insurance Co	4003 Life Insurance	-1,772.10
04/25/2025	14175	Amtrust North America	4009 Workers Comp	-8,175.00
04/28/2025	14176	ESO	8604 ERS /Power DMS/Mobile EYES	-246.40
04/28/2025	14177	Morris County Public Safety Training Acad	8201 Training - Classes	-100.00
04/28/2025	14178	VE Ralph & Sons, Inc	7022 Medical Supplies	-5.08
04/28/2025	14179	Verizon 838	6013 Bldg - Cable /VOIP/Verizon	-153.68
04/30/2025	eft	Board of Fire Commissioners	Employee Payroll	-26,225.94
05/01/2025	14180	Verizon Wireless 884	6013 Bldg - Cable /VOIP/Verizon	-152.04
05/01/2025	14181	CPR Baltimore	7022 Medical Supplies	-430.85
05/01/2025	14182	Fire and Safety Services, LTD	21 / 81	-657.37
05/01/2025	14183	Buy Wise	7005 Vehicle Maint. Pumpers/Resc	-441.65
05/01/2025	14184	Clean Air Company	6014 Vehicle exhaust system rpr	-1,402.30
05/01/2025	14185	Braslow, Richard M. Esq	5006 Legal Expense	-1,050.00
05/01/2025	14186	Home Depot Credit Services	9002 Rescue Equip-(non bond)	-1,005.85
05/01/2025	14187	Dirk McKenney	8201 Training - Classes	-2,100.00
05/01/2025	14188	Nisivoccia, LLP	5005 Accounting (Audit)	-10,750.00
05/01/2025	14189	Joseph Alberti	5004 Clothing Allowance / Reim	-45.73
05/02/2025	14190	NJ Fire Equipment Co.	7012 Equip Maint - SCBA	-300.00
05/02/2025	14192	Janet Hammond	5013 Office Supplies	-23.10
05/05/2025	eft	NJ Division of Pension & Benefits-Pension	4007 Pension Annual	-3,800.00

05/05/2025	eft	NJ Division of Pension & Benefits-Pension	4007 Pension Annual	-1,000.00
05/05/2025	14193	Amazon Business	-SPLIT-	-1,349.62
05/09/2025	14194	JCP&L 10 Troy	6001 Building - Gas & Electric	-1,350.69
05/09/2025	14195	PSE&G 10 Troy	6001 Building - Gas & Electric	-626.00
05/09/2025	14196	Optimum 10 Troy	6013 Bldg - Cable /VOIP/Verizon	-415.22
05/09/2025	14197	Acrisure - holmes & McDowell	Insurance renewal	-10,435.00
05/09/2025	14198	Auto Zone	7003 Vehicle Maintenance - Cars	-101.35
05/09/2025	14199	Finish Line Car Wash	7005 Vehile Maint. Pumpers/Resc	-42.00
05/09/2025	14200	Jersey Mike's	8205 Promotions	-206.20
05/09/2025	14201	Nonna's Pizzeria	8205 Promotions	-475.00
05/09/2025	14202	East Hanover Diner	8205 Promotions	0.00
05/09/2025	14203	Graziano, Jesse	8205 Promotions	-515.06
05/12/2025	14204	Police & Firemen's Insurance Association	4010 Police & Fire Insurance	<u>-591.03</u>
				<u>-</u>
				<u>512,735.45</u>
				<u>-</u>
				<u>512,735.45</u>

At 8:16, Comm Cortright made a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Comm. Cozzarelli and passed unanimously by all Commissioners present.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:18

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Hammond, Assistant to the Board