

## **MINUTES - REGULAR MEETING**

**August 11, 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: Cobane, Gethins, Brunner and Cozzarelli

Absent: Cortright

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, Chief Perrello and Chairman of the Board Fred Brunner proceeded to swear in 2 new Career staff. Family members were present and everyone welcomed the two new hires. Taylor has been noted as the first female career firefighter for our district.

**Welcome to: TAYLOR LUCCARELLO and JUSTIN RICE**

### **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

Comm Cozzarelli called for the acceptance of the minutes from the last meeting. Comm. Cobane seconded the move, and it was carried by the following vote:

AYES: Cobane, Brunner, Gethins & Cozzarelli

ABSENT: Cortright

NAYS: None

### **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

The following Treasurer's report was submitted.

#### **Treasurer's Report - August 11, 2025**

**For the month of July, 2025**

#### **General Checking Account #: XXXXXX3244**

##### **TD Bank**

Balance On Hand - June 30, 2025

**\$1,610,457.23**

July checks

**(\$107,587.44)**

#### **Deposits for the Month of July, 2025**

Permits & Fees - Checks & Cash	Acct 2011 - Permits & fees	\$1,124.00
Registration fees - Checks / cash	Acct 2008	\$450.00
Tyler Payments	Registration Fees	\$1,175.00
Tyler payments	Permits / Fees	\$528.00
Whippany Fire Company	Rental Income May and June	\$21,804.00

<b><u>Balance on Hand, July 31, 2025</u></b>	<b><u>(matches Quickbooks)</u></b>	<b><u>\$1,527,950.79</u></b>
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Checks Submitted this Month's Meeting	<b><u>\$157,938.62</u></b>
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<b>Business 12 Month CD -x0575</b>	<b>Matures 12-7-25</b>	<b>%</b>	<b><u>\$229,171.68</u></b>
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<b>Business 6 Month CD - TD Bank X9425</b>	<b>Matures -3-4-25</b>	<b><u>\$229,553.02</u></b>
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<b>Penalty Checking Account # XXXX3773</b> <b>TD Bank</b>
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<b><u>Balance on Hand, July 31, 2025</u></b>	<b><u>\$14,737.07</u></b>
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A motion to accept the Treasurer's report was made by Comm. Cobane. It was seconded by Comm. Gethins and passed by the following roll call vote:

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

ABSENT – Cortright

NAYS - None

## **CHIEF'S REPORT**

### **Supplies, Equipment, and Maintenance**

- Purchases made from Amazon and Home Depot

### **Apparatus**

- Ladder Decal on Officer's door replaced
- See attached report from FF Moller

### **Training**

- Review Truck checks and new equipment on Squad 23
- Open discussion with all members of volunteer staff
- Vertical ventilation using station roof prop
- Annual / Quarterly requirements still need to be completed by some members. If not completed they will be placed on administrative leave.

### **Purchases**

Nothing at this time

### **Fire Prevention**

- **107** Inspections / re-inspections were conducted last month. **\$3,639.00** in fees were billed and being collected. Total of **\$27,111.00** for 2025.

### **EMS**

- (46) Calls were answered last month.

### **Fire**

- (65) Calls were answered last month.

111 Total calls answered

### **Other Matters and Announcements**

- Conducted Plan reviews
- Processed special event permits
- Meeting with OEM on Anex and upcoming events in community
- Meeting on Plan reviews
- Process special event permits
- New Hires are going thru orientation.
- 2 OPRA request were processed 1 we had no record of fire report from fire on roof at Tiffany's. Second was for copies of any incidents at a residential property.
- Attached to this report of the weekly reports sent over the month of July
- 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.

Attached to this report are:

- Time Sheets
- Training report
- Officer Reports
- Correspondences
- Monthly percentage sheets
- EMS monthly times and progress report

## 7/23/25 This Week

### Weekly Update

- New Hire Justin Rice and Taylor Lucarello were fitted for uniforms.
- FF Danus moved to Gagon room 334 (set down unit to get him off the ventilator. Still there, infections.

### 2. Apparatus

- S-23 new equipment stickers were ordered
- Tool mounts were ordered to mount equipment on Squad 23 (still waiting on them to arrive)

### 3. Priorities Ahead

- Administrative assistant Job interviews will be conducted today

### 4. Support Needed

- Guidance / approval needed on the changes for SOGs for PEOSH.

### 5. Notes / Other Updates

- Working on with Fire Company Donations for Danus Family (both monetary and household)
- On Saturday 7/12/25 @ (5:22 am) in 23 mins no apparatus responded is concerning.
- On Saturday 7/12/25 @ (10:16am) 18 mins for apparatus to arrive with 2
- On Saturday 7/12/25 @ (12:56pm) 15 mins for apparatus to arrive with 2
- On Saturday 7/12/25 @ (17:13 ) 15 mins No apparatus responded
- On Saturday 7/12/25 @ (1:43 ) 28 mins No apparatus responded
- On Tuesday 7/16/25 @ (1:48) 11 Mins no apparatus responded
- On Thursday 7/20/25 @ (1:31) 10 Mins no apparatus responded

### 6. Personnel

- Working with new hires on hiring process / paperwork

### 7. Budget

- General Spending is in line with budget
- No Unexpected expenses at this time

7/30/25  
Weekly  
Update

## 1. This Week

- New Hire Justin Rice and Taylor Lucarello are working with Janet and Rob to get in enrolled into pension and health benefit systems.
- FF Danus moved to Gagon room 334 Still there, was some talks on moving him again, but will let you know as soon as I know

## 2. Apparatus

- S-23 new equipment stickers were ordered
- Tool mounts were ordered to mount equipment on Squad 23 (still waiting on them to arrive)
- L-22 officer door decal was replaced.

## 3. Priorities Ahead

- Administrative assistant Job interviews completed. Moving forward with Hiring Cathrine Atwood. I put Janet and Cathrine in touch (via email) so they can start the transitions process.

## 4. Support Needed

- Guidance / approval needed on the changes for SOGs for PEOSH.

## 5. Notes / Other Updates

- Working on with Fire Company Donations for Danus Family (both monetary and household items ongoing)
- 7/26/2025 868 7:11 7:25 14 mins Yes
- 7/27/2025 869 5:43 5:53 10 Mins NO

## 6. Personnel

- Working with new hires on hiring process / paperwork

## 7. Budget

- General Spending is in line with budget
- No Unexpected expenses at this time

Dear Board of Fire Commissioner's

I am writing to formally express serious concern regarding the response by our department to a fire incident that occurred at Care One Nursing Home, located at 101 Whippany, on 8/2/25 @ 6:16. To make this even more concerning, **just 30 minutes prior to the fire**, a fire alarm was triggered at the same facility. Only **one officer responded**, and he did so **in his personal vehicle**. There was no fire apparatus. No crew. No professional show of readiness. This should serve as a wake-up call to the department and command structure that something is wrong.

According to reports, flames were clearly visible in a hallway of the facility, and the fire was promptly reported to your department by staff on-site. Despite the urgency of the situation and the vulnerable population involved, there appears to have been a significant delay in response. The facility houses elderly residents, many with limited mobility, making any fire hazard an immediate and severe threat to life.

Disturbingly, mutual aid companies from neighboring towns arrived on scene before our own department. This is not only a matter of embarrassment but also reflects a growing concern from surrounding communities regarding our reliability. It is incidents like this that contribute directly to why other towns are reluctant—or outright unwilling—to depend on us for mutual aid. Our credibility and trust with other departments is being damaged.

Equally concerning is that conversations with the board on this very topic have yielded no meaningful progress. When questioned about the state of readiness and these types of failures, the response has simply been: *"We aren't there yet."* This raises a critical question: **What exactly quantifies "being there"?** Is it when we completely lose the trust of every neighboring jurisdiction? When a preventable tragedy finally pushes the issue into public outrage?

If we are not "there" now—after a fire in a hallway of a nursing home where mutual aid had to step in first—then when?

**This July, ten people died in a tragic nursing home fire in Massachusetts.** That facility, like ours, housed elderly and immobile residents who could not easily evacuate on their own. That tragedy was a harsh reminder of what's at stake when fire response systems fail. Are we waiting for a similar catastrophe to occur here before "there" becomes "now"?

This delay in emergency response is deeply troubling. A swift reaction is critical in these scenarios, not only to ensure the safety of the residents and staff but also to uphold public trust in emergency services. The staff at the nursing home were forced to take immediate action without apparent support from fire services during the critical early minutes of the incident.

The safety of our most vulnerable citizens should never be compromised. I appreciate your prompt attention to this matter and look forward to your response.

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

## **COMMUNICATIONS -**

- Dated August 9<sup>th</sup>, a letter was received by the Board from Commissioner Joseph Cortright. He has resigned as Commissioner effective immediately.
- A letter (attached) from Anchor Golf Center praising FF Cowley for his guidance through his inspection process.
- A letter from the Hanover Recreation Department thanking the District for supporting their annual patriotic celebration.
- A letter from the Daily Record stating that all their billing will now be paperless. We need to sign in and create and update our account for e-billing.

- From TD Bank, our 6 month CD is maturing on 9-4-25.

\*A motion was made by Comm Brunner that the Board accept Commissioner Cortright's resignation with regrets. It was seconded by Commissioner Cobane and passed unanimously.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**PERSONNEL** – Two new firefighters were sworn in earlier tonight – Taylor Lucarello and Justin Rice. A welcome extended to both of them as well as Catherine Atwood who will be taking over as Board Assistant due to Janet's retirement.

Comm Cozzarelli also stated that he went to the last company meeting. He said we need to discuss responsiveness and would like to reach out to the volunteers and a leadership team. He proposed a plan of "R's".

Recruit, Retain, Recognize and leave out Retaliation (tit for tat). We are going to need to work on that. He said that FF Jack Koba has come up with a plan for a weekend monitoring system and how to recognize that work. He went on to say that the first step in the right direction is to acknowledge the volunteers' contributions. They are essential to our success. He is personally committed to show them how much they are appreciated.

**BUILDING** - There was an issue with the computer used for key fobs. Chief went to a new company and they had an upgraded program that works much better. The cost was about \$990 but had to be done.

**APPARATUS** – Should we still have an ISO report done on old 82, as Comm Cortright suggested? It is a good idea to still do it and then we can make a recommendation as to what to do.

**INSURANCE** – Nothing at this time.

**TOWNSHIP** – Nothing at this time.

**FIRE COMPANY** – Joe Mihalko asked for permission to use an apparatus for the Boonton parade. A \*motion was made to allow the use of an apparatus that day by Comm. Cobane. It was seconded by Comm. Cozzarelli and passed unanimously by all commissioners present.  
Nothing at this time.

**FIRST AID** – 56 EMS calls this month

**OLD BUSINESS** – There is a clock in the Commissioners' room.

The Chief read a letter to the Board (attached) outlining his displeasure with the unavailability of responses to calls. In a recent call, mutual aid responded before our own guys. It leads to credibility and other towns may question our reliability when they need us. He has made multiple reports to the Board regarding these incidents and is still being told "We're not there yet". When are we there? He thinks this is a catastrophe waiting to happen. He is deeply troubled and said it deteriorates the public trust in our emergency services.

Comm Cozzarelli responded as he was the person who said "We're not there yet" at a previous meeting. He explained that the comment was in reference to having 24 x 6 coverage or becoming something like a paid department. If we went 24 x 7, it would mean our volunteers are being pushed aside. He is not at that point.

He went on to say that we do have to work on issues with the volunteers. Are they done? We will go to them and say that we need help. Are they willing to step up? At the point when they say no, we're done, then we will have exhausted everything and will be there.

Chairman Brunner said that the volunteer officers are working on a plan. We are in negotiations now with the FMBA and trying to get Saturday coverage. It's one of the last sticking points in our contract negotiations. We also need to get rid of the "When available" clause.

Chief went on to say that it's not just Saturdays – it's happening more.

Brunner – Need to find out why this is happening. We never had these problems before.

Cozzarelli – He will call on the leaders of the volunteers in a closed session meeting and see where the breakdown is. There HAS to be better communication between the volunteers and the Chief, as he is the leader of all.

As for recruitment, to get more people involved, where are we with a sign out front? We have some extra money put aside for recruitment – we're good at spending money. We just need to put it in the right place. There should also be more recognition for both volunteers AND career staff.

If, after all that, the volunteers say they are done, then it's time.

### **NEW BUSINESS –**

\*Comm. Cobane asked the board for permission to use an apparatus for the High School football team's car wash this Saturday, with the permission of the Chief. A motion was made by Comm. Cobane to allow it. The motion was seconded by Comm. Cozzarelli and passed unanimously by all commissioners present.

### **PUBLIC PART OF THE MEETING**    13 Members of the public attended.

Gary Keyser – Academy Drive – Whippany: Just an FYI, the governor signed a bill about advertising meetings in the paper. It had been thought that this wasn't necessary anymore but the bill doesn't take effect until March 1, 2026. So, we still have to advertise to the public that way for now. He said there are also guidelines as to what does and doesn't get posted to your website.

He said Comm Cortright was part of the Consolidation Committee and was assured that Comm Gethins has stepped up to take his place.

He had asked Mr. Hark to speak to attorney Braslow about EMS questions. At the joint meeting on September 4<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Braslow will be available to speak to both boards. Mr. Cahill was going to also set up a meeting between Township attorney Fred Semerow, Braslow and all involved.

At this time, Commissioners Keyser & Dugan from District 3 presented a beautiful plaque to Janet Hammond for her 21 years of service to the Joint Board.

Mary Beth Cowley – 22 Troy Hills Rd – Whippany: Reiterated mention of the article in the paper about new housing being built in town. More calls will be coming, with 360 more units. Are we prepared when they move in?

Comm Cozzarelli responded that we are working to provide the best service we can. We understand the problems and are on a logical path to fix things.

Chief mentioned that he will be off from 8-14 to 8-25 to take his 2 sons to college.

Asked about our injured firefighter and his improvement. The Board answered that he is improving and working toward going to a rehab center. She also brought in a newspaper article pointing out that there are more units being built in our town.



## **BILLS**

Comm. Cobane 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.

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

ABSENT – Cortright

NAYS – None

07/01/2025	14277	Verizon 838	6013 Bldg - Cable /VOIP/Verizon	-142.54
07/01/2025	14278	Verizon Wireless 884	6013 Bldg - Cable /VOIP/Verizon	-152.04
07/01/2025	14279	Township of Hanover	-SPLIT-	-1,375.34
07/01/2025	14280	Fire and Safety Services, LTD	21 / 81	-1,801.51
07/01/2025	14281	AC Drywall & Painting, Inc.	6012 - Bldg/Grounds Maintenance	-133.44
07/01/2025	14282	Braslow, Richard M. Esq	5006 Legal Expense	-60.00
07/01/2025	14283	Home Depot Credit Services	7017 Misc Maintenance Supplies	-389.44
07/03/2025	eft	NJ Division of Pensions & Benefits Health	4001 Medical Insurance	-11,970.03
07/03/2025	eft	NJ Division of Pension & Benefits- Pension	3007 Payroll Deductions	-7,591.54
07/03/2025	eft	NJ Division of Pension & Benefits- Pension	3007 Payroll Deductions	-483.93
07/11/2025	14284	SMCMUA 10 Troy	-SPLIT-	-624.40
07/11/2025	14285	Police & Firemen's Insurance Association	4010 Police & Fire Insurance	-345.78
07/11/2025	14286	Optimum 10 Troy	6013 Bldg - Cable /VOIP/Verizon	-414.98
07/11/2025	14287	Nielsen Ford	C-2 Deputy Chief car	-232.18
07/11/2025	14288	Morristown Medical Group	8401 Physicals - New Members	-595.00
07/11/2025	14289	JCP&L 10 Troy	6001 Building - Gas & Electric	-2,806.39
07/11/2025	14290	First Due Fabrication	9002 Rescue Equip-(non bond)	-1,759.95
07/11/2025	14291	Finish Line Car Wash	7005 Vehicle Maint Pumpers/Resc	-14.00
07/11/2025	14292	Buy Wise	7005 Vehicle Maint Pumpers/Resc	-27.98
07/11/2025	14293	Amtrust Financial Services, Inc.	4009 Workers Comp	-6,264.00
07/11/2025	14294	Amazon Business	-SPLIT-	-1,425.36
07/11/2025	TXFR	To Penalty Account	TD - Penalty Account 212-212A	-200.00
07/14/2025	14295	Janet Hammond	5013 Office Supplies	-9.35
07/14/2025	14296	Morris County Public Safety Training Acad	-SPLIT-	-1,600.00
07/14/2025	14297	PSE&G 10 Troy	6001 Building - Gas & Electric	-805.00
07/15/2025	eft	Board of Fire Commissioners	Employee Payroll	-23,421.35
07/18/2025	14298	Gannett Daily Record	8206 Advertising	-85.19
07/18/2025	14299	Hanover Sewerage Authority 10 Troy Hills	6002 Building - Water/Sewerage	-780.64
07/18/2025	14300	CF Services	-SPLIT-	-5,802.81
07/18/2025	14301	Morristown Medical Group	8401 Physicals - New Members	-595.00
07/18/2025	14302	US Bank Equipment Finance	5012 OfficeEqpt Rental (copier)	-392.91
07/18/2025	14303	Matthew Letizia, DO	8207 Professional Services	-3,000.00
07/18/2025	14304	AC Drywall & Painting, Inc.	6012 - Bldg/Grounds Maintenance	-954.14
07/18/2025	14305	Fast Signs	5013 Office Supplies	-72.82
07/18/2025	14306	Nielsen Ford	C-2 Deputy Chief car	-232.18
07/18/2025	14307	Turnout Fire & Safety - Little Falls	-SPLIT-	-1,564.88
07/18/2025	14308	Alfred's Landscape Design	-SPLIT-	-800.00
07/18/2025	14309	Eastern Janitorial	6008 Bldg - Cleaning Services	-1,210.00

07/18/2025	14310	Turnout Fire & Safety - Little Falls	-SPLIT-	-3,016.72
07/28/2025	14311	Turnout Fire & Safety - Little Falls	8001 Uniforms - Class B	-251.96
07/28/2025	14312	Institute for Forensic Psychology	8401 Physicals - New Members	-550.00
07/28/2025	14313	Division of Fire Safety	8601 Admin Code / Statutes	-150.00
07/28/2025	14314	Verizon 838	6013 Bldg - Cable /VOIP/Verizon	-86.00
07/28/2025	14315	Witmer Associates, Inc	8001 Uniforms - Class B	-1,365.53
07/30/2025	eft	Board of Fire Commissioners NJ Division of Pension & Benefits- Pension	Employee Payroll	-22,031.13
08/05/2025	eft		3007 Payroll Deductions 7005 Vehicle Maint Pumpers/Resc	-4,800.00
08/05/2025	14316	Mount Freedom Printing		-326.00
08/05/2025	14317	Braslow, Richard M. Esq	5006 Legal Expense	-1,290.00
08/05/2025	14318	Amtrust Financial Services, Inc.	4009 Workers Comp	-6,264.00
08/05/2025	14319	Amazon Business NJ Division of Pension & Benefits- Pension	-SPLIT-	-1,099.76
08/06/2025	eft		3007 Payroll Deductions	-1,000.00
08/06/2025	14320	Ciullo, Michael 1	5004 Clothing Allowance / Reim	-250.00
08/06/2025	14321	Lane Biviano, Esq.	5006 Legal Expense	-2,301.00
08/06/2025	14322	Braviak, Thomas	5004 Clothing Allowance / Reim	-184.13
08/06/2025	14323	Home Depot Credit Services	5013 Office Supplies	-145.93
08/06/2025	14324	Fire and Safety Services, LTD	7004 Vehicle Maint. LadderTruck	-7,163.16
08/06/2025	14325	Standard Insurance Co	4003 Life Insurance	-1,770.50
08/06/2025	14326	Verizon Wireless 884	6013 Bldg - Cable /VOIP/Verizon	-152.04
08/06/2025	14327	JCP&L 10 Troy	6001 Building - Gas & Electric	-3,631.50
08/06/2025	14328	Optimum 10 Troy	6013 Bldg - Cable /VOIP/Verizon	-414.98
08/06/2025	14329	Township of Hanover	-SPLIT-	-633.33
08/06/2025	14330	Turnout Fire & Safety - Little Falls	8001 Uniforms - Class B	-419.90
08/06/2025	EFT	Cusmano, Gaetano	4012 Fuel Vouchers	-15.00
08/08/2025	EFT	NJ Division of Pensions & Benefits Health	4001 Medical Insurance	-13,408.22
08/11/2025	14332	Stewart & Stevenson Power Products	6011 Bldg - Station Generator	-2,224.00
08/11/2025	14333	Santini, Anthony	8201 Training - Classes	-1,500.00
08/11/2025	14334	PSE&G 10 Troy	6001 Building - Gas & Electric 7005 Vehicle Maint Pumpers/Resc	-805.00
08/11/2025	14335	Finish Line Car Wash		-42.00
08/11/2025	14336	Township of Hanover	-SPLIT-	-164.95
08/11/2025	14337	Police & Firemen's Insurance Association	4010 Police & Fire Insurance	-345.78
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				<u>157,938.62</u>
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				<u><b>157,938.62</b></u>

At 8:16, Comm Cobane made a motion to enter into Closed Session for personnel matters. The motion was seconded by Comm. Cozzarelli and passed unanimously.

At 10:02, the Board came out of Closed session.

A motion was made by Comm. Gethins to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Comm. Brunner and passed unanimously by all Commissioners present.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:03

Respectfully submitted,  
Janet Hammond, Assistant to the Board