**EAST CLINTON FIRE DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS MEETING – FINAL**

September 15, 2021 Regular Meeting 7:00

COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE: COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Stephen Forschler, Chairman Russell Tompkins

Michael DiGiacomio

Kevin Fierro

Robert Trzcinski

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Robert Simon, Treasurer

Jim Passikoff, Accountant, left at 7:20 p.m.

Roderick MacLeod, Attorney for the Board, arrived at 7:55 p.m.

Chairman Forschler called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

* RBC Portfolio Reviews for periods ending July 31 and August 31, 2020 – Commissioners copied
* Wilmington Statements for 6/1/2018 through 7/31/2021 and 6/1/2018 through 8/31/2021 – Commissioners copied.

**MINUTES:**

A motion was made by Commissioner Trzcinski and seconded by Commissioner Fierro to approve the regular meeting minutes of August 11, 2021 as presented.

Commissioner Fierro Aye Commissioner Trzcinski Aye

Commissioner DiGiacomio Aye Chairman Forschler Aye

Motion carried 4-0

**FINANCIALS:**

A motion was made by Commissioner DiGiacomio and seconded by Commissioner Fierro to pay the bills per the abstract dated August 31, 2021.

Commissioner Trzcinski Aye Commissioner Fierro Aye

Commissioner DiGiacomio Aye Chairman Forschler Aye

Motion carried 4-0

A motion was made by Chairman Forschler and seconded by Commissioner Trzcinski to accept the bank statement for the period ending on August 31, 2021 and in agreement with that noted on the balance sheet as put forward by Mr. Passikoff.

Commissioner DiGiacomio Aye Commissioner Trzcinski Aye

Commissioner Fierro Aye Chairman Forschler Aye

Motion carried 4-0

**Independent audit status** – Chairman Forschler said Page 5 of the report to the Board of Directors noted a control deficiency – two vouchers were only signed by two commissioners as opposed to three per our policy. Does the policy require three signatures? Commissioner Trzcinski thinks it does. Mr. Passikoff said he would recommend getting the third commissioner to sign if possible but the board may want to look into amending the policy in a case where you don’t have five commissioners. Commissioner DiGiacomio thought it would be best to have three signatures most of the time and allow less only when necessary. Chairman Forschler said under management suggestion it was noted that the fixed asset values in quick books and on the schedules did not agree with the values in the audit. Mr. Passikoff said the auditors looked at it in December of last year and the board reviewed it in February of this year. Quick books is now the same as the fixed assets in the audit. RBT recommends the district provide the audit documentation in a timely manner. Mr. Passikoff said we can’t provide the information until the middle to end of February once the draft is approved and the representation letter is signed.

A motion was made by Chairman Forschler and seconded by Commissioner Trzcinski that the board accept the financial audit and report as presented by RBT in a report dated September 1, 2021 and authorize Chairman Forschler to sign the representation letter. Chairman Forschler asked if the board has to send a response letter to these items. Mr. Passikoff said you can send a letter stating you received the comments and will take them under advisement or send no response as there are no corrections to be made. The board agreed no response was necessary.

Commissioner Trzcinski Aye Commissioner Fierro Aye

Commissioner DiGiacomio Aye Chairman Forschler Aye

Motion carried 4-0

Mr. Passikoff will send the letter to Mr. Simon and Chairman Forschler who both need to sign it. One copy will go to the town and one is for district records. Mr. Simon can put the audit on the website. RBT should provide bound copies for each commissioner.

**2022 budget** – There was a discrepancy between Chairman Forschler’s worksheet and Mr. Passikoff’s worksheet in the first category under expenses, other, the line item for technology had $3,000 but that was already covered under another line item called computer support. The $3,000 was moved temporarily to the building reserve fund to keep the numbers the same. Chairman Forschler asked the commissioners where they would like to put that $3,000. Commissioner Trzcinski suggested covering the insurance increase for the ambulance rental in case our ambulance goes down. Add another line under insurance on page 5 called rental coverage ambulance for $500 which brings the total insurance up to $19,500 and adjust the self-insurance by $2,500 which brings the total self-insurance to $3,500 which brings the total insurance sub-category to $22,000. The $3,000 that was in personal services for technology has been removed bringing that sub-category to $40,200. Mr. Passikoff agreed. The total budget total is $539,972 which is $3.00 less than last year. From three years ago, the net tax change is about -1.5%. The rate is about 1.46 down from 1.58.

A motion was made by Chairman Forschler and seconded by Commissioner Trzcinski to approve a preliminary expense budget of $539,972 of which $539,872 will be collected from real estate taxes and direct the secretary to file with the town clerk prior to September 26, 2021 and direct Mr. Simon to post on the website.

Commissioner Fierro Aye Commissioner Trzcinski Aye

Commissioner DiGiacomio Aye Chairman Forschler Aye

Motion carried 4-0

Mr. Passikoff will send the secretary to budget to send to the town clerk.

**FIRE POLICE:** Tim Odell – Not present.

**DEPARTMENT**:

Car 1 – Chief Don Estes Monthly Calls: 10 Year to Date: 73

* 38-38 and 38-12 have new batteries. Both batteries were shot. In the future, Chief Estes will have the batteries checked as part of the annual vehicle service. Every Monday night the vehicles will be pulled out and taken down the road as a precautionary measure.
* Response is 100%.
* Sign up sheets and a list of eligible members will be posted. TEK will supply the sign-up sheets.
* There will be one make up for missed modules for everyone. There will not be one on one sessions. The date has not yet been determined but it is usually in December. We do accept a certificate if anyone gets training from their jobs but there will be no points awarded. If anyone gets training at work, the district secretary needs to have a copy of the certificate.
* Bail out will be done before the end of the year using the old system.
* Numerous fire classes have opened up.
* We are about a month out before the new ambulance is in service. The pick-up will be next week. The battery will be checked.

Car 2 – Jim Bathrick – Not present.

Car 3 – Kevin Russell – Not present.

**Support:** Not present**.**

**EMS** - Susan deHaan Monthly Calls: 14 Year To Date: 125

* One EMT may be going to Bard for the September 27 class.
* We have five active EMT’s with the potential for seven.
* Sharon has received the delivery of their new ambulance and is transferring things over. Next week should be the pick up. We have the title. The bill of sale is in our name. It will take a couple of weeks to get it into service. The state will probably do an inspection prior to and there needs to be a changeover with insurance.

**Membership –** Maryann Thompsett

* Jeannette Bagnasco submitted her resignation which was handed to the district secretary.

**Physicals** – TEK has confirmed October 5th and October 20th for the physical dates. They will be sending a sign up sheet. Chief Estes and Chairman Forschler will review who is eligible according to points accumulated and the eligibility sheet will be posted with the sign-up sheet.

**LOSAP**

Chairman Forschler said New York State has approved the ability for active firefighters to accrue LOSAP points for a longer period of time - from 40 years to 50 years. If the board is interested in doing this, it would need to go to referendum. There was no interest.

The board approved the modification of the defined contribution plan. This will be a referendum for the voters to vote on in the December election. What do we want to do for further publicity efforts and allow the public to ask questions? The board agreed to have a question and answer open forum at the November meeting. Comments will be able to be made in person or via zoom. The notice should be posted on the district and town website, on Facebook, on the sign at the rec park and posted on the bulletin board at the post office, Stewarts and the firehouse.

**Facilities committee update** – Commissioner Fierro said Keith from Mike McCormack’s office will be out in October. He will present to the board his findings on the existing building and what is needed to move ahead on a new building and what it would take to upgrade the existing building.

**Mutual Aid Letters** - Chairman Forschler had a great discussion with a representative from Stanford who called him. They are having an emergency meeting of the Board of Commissioners tomorrow night to discuss the situation at hand. He had specific remedies that sounded very productive for solutions. The same commissioner met with Chief Estes on Monday. We received a letter from West Clinton dated September 1, 2021. Chairman Forschler read the letter and said that based on last weekend’s responses, they are making an effort. Commissioner Trzcinski said it appears they still don’t have enough coverage. Commissioner Fierro asked since this letter was sent, how many calls has East Clinton covered? Chairman Forschler said we were enroute to a West Clinton call and got an in district call with a child with a head injury and Chief Estes redirected and went to the more urgent call. If we are out of service responding to Stanford and West Clinton, our taxpayers could suffer. Commissioner DiGiacomio asked how valid is it that NDP is primary for cornerstone. Chairman Forschler said they only have a hand shake agreement with NDP, not a contractual agreement. Commissioner DiGiacomio said it seems like they have EMT’s available but no drivers. Mr. Simon said of primary concern is the shifts with no coverage. However, Chief Estes and Mr. Simon both think things are getting better on both fronts. They will continue to monitor but the letters seem to have made an impact. Chairman Forschler said Stanford is going to get back to him after their meeting. We will re-visit this.

**Policy** - Chairman Forschler asked Mr. MacLeod to look at the policy for signatures. We don’t want to weaken the policy but modify it if we should only have four commissioners. Currently, three commissioners sign vouchers and the other two sign checks. Mr. MacLeod said the state requirement is that all board members approve all vouchers. For the board to approve a voucher, it has to be signed by three commissioners. It doesn’t matter how many are sitting. Check signing is separate from voucher approval. The same commissioners who sign the vouchers can sign the checks. If we have a vacancy, one commissioner will sign both voucher and checks.

**Radio tower proposal** – We have received a proposal from the town to share the cost of a radio tower. Commissioner Trzcinski went to the meeting. Dana Smith from 911 was there along with a communications person and a company representative. This is a private tower on the West Clinton side and will push frequency that is line of sight. Commissioner Trzcinski said he thinks it needs to be tested prior to committing. The company representative said we can do that. They can put up a simulator and drive around town and see if we can talk. Chairman Forschler read the letter. It would be $129 per month from the Town, East Clinton, and West Clinton to rent the tower. The Town would be responsible for maintenance and equipment. Chief Estes thinks it is definitely a tool we could use. Commissioner Trzcinski asked if it works properly, is it worth $129. Chief Estes said he thinks so if we can program it into all radios (about 30). We need to find out if it will work effectively in all areas of our district. The repeater is scene only. We would have to ensure the frequency they use is within the broadband they are going to use. Commissioner Trzcinski will talk to NYCOMCO and will report back. Chief Estes will find out what the radios are capable of when Commissioner Trzcinski provides that information.

Commissioner Trzcinski had a question for Mr. MacLeod. At the monthly commissioner meetings, Dana Smith has been saying all radios need to be changed as they are going all digital. Mr. MacLeod said this will not be an issue for this year. The county is not funding it. However, the system will require every district to replace all radios. They will get some pushback. Commissioner Trzcinski thought there was a grant for the fire districts. Mr. MacLeod said that may come but it won’t be as soon as Mr. Smith thinks. It is not on the horizon.

**Hero Act update** – Mr. MacLeod said the Hero Act does not apply to us. It does not apply to any political subdivision. The Hero Act requires every employer with more than x amount of employees to have an emergency health plan in place so that if the governor declared a health emergency, you would have a plan in place.

**Cot Bid** – One bid was received from Efva Omega for $2,111.11. Chairman Forschler will contact the individual and let him know his bid was accepted.

**Future meetings** –

Chairman Forschler said we need to find a new place for meetings starting November. The board has to meet in person but we can utilize a zoom format for the public if the board wants to allow that. The Town Hall was suggested – Commissioner Trzcinski will ask and get back to the board.

Chairman Forschler said the public hearing for the budget can now be held any day of the week that has the third Tuesday in it. We have published it as the 19th for the last 10 months so we should maintain that and the board agreed so the budget public hearing will be on Tuesday, October 19th from 7:00 to 8:00 at the firehouse.

Wifi will be necessary for the November 10th meeting for the public forum. Commissioner Trzcinski will make sure the Town Hall can accommodate that.

**Election Inspectors Stipend –** Mr. MacLeod said the stipend for election inspectors who work more than three hours has been raised to $100. The district can leave it at $50 as it has been or can choose to raise it to $100.

A motion was made by Chairman Forschler and seconded by Commissioner Trzcinski to pay the three election inspectors a stipend of $100 each for the December election.

Commissioner DiGiacomio Aye Commissioner Trzcinski Aye

Commissioner Fierro Aye Chairman Forschler Aye

Motion carried 4-0

**Public Comment:** None

**Adjourn:**

A motion was made by Commissioner DiGiacomio and seconded by Chairman Forschler to

adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Commissioner Fierro Aye Commissioner Trzcinski Aye

Commissioner DiGiacomio Aye Chairman Forschler Aye

Motion carried 4-0

The next regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners will be held on Wednesday, October 13, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. at the firehouse.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Buechele, Secretary

East Clinton Fire District