

**EAST CLINTON FIRE DISTRICT**

March 16, 2022

**COMMISSIONERS MEETING – FINAL**

Regular Meeting 7:00

**COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Stephen Forschler, Chairman  
Michael DiGiacomio  
Kevin Fierro  
Howard Shapiro  
Russell Tompkins

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:**

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

Robert Simon, Treasurer  
Jim Passikoff, Accountant, left at 7:30 p.m.  
Roderick MacLeod, Attorney for the Board was not present.

Chairman Forschler called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and the board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

- From M&T Bank dated March 1, 2022, Month-End Collateral Statement – to Mr. Simon
- From Marshall & Sterling dated February 28, 2022, Endorsement amending insurance policy VFNUTR000511902 – This document is affirming rental for the ambulance and first engine out.
- Two documents from Utica National Insurance Group, both dated February 14, 2022, Unclaimed checks. - \$3,150 / \$122 - to Mr. Simon  
Commissioner Shapiro said he will check the Office of Unclaimed Funds to see if there is anything there.
- RBC Statement through February 28, 2022 - Commissioners copied.
- Note from RBC – Prospectus – to Commissioner Shapiro

**MINUTES:**

A motion was made by Chairman Forschler and seconded by Commissioner Tompkins to approve the regular meeting minutes of February 16, 2022 as amended.

Commissioner Fierro	Aye	Commissioner DiGiacomio	Aye
Commissioner Tompkins	Aye	Chairman Forschler	Aye
Commissioner Shapiro	Aye		

Motion carried 5-0.

**FINANCIALS:**

A motion was made by Commissioner DiGiacomo and seconded by Commissioner Shapiro to pay the bills per the abstract dated February 28, 2022 with the following modification: Check no. 3468 to 911 Uniforms includes stripes for \$25 at the option of the company so Mr. Simon will submit a voucher to the company for reimbursement; check no. 3476 included tax so check no. 3488 will replace that check and check no. 3479 to Ready Refresh included a late charge which we won't pay so check no. 3489 replaces 3479.

Commissioner Tompkins	Aye	Commissioner Fierro	Aye
Commissioner Shapiro	Aye	Chairman Forschler	Aye
Commissioner DiGiacomo	Aye		

Motion carried 5-0.

Chairman Forschler said as a point of interest, Mr. Whitton handed him the tax check in the amount of \$539,872. The check was given to Mr. Simon and needs to be deposited within 10 days.

A motion was made by Chairman Forschler and seconded by Commissioner Fierro to accept the bank statement for the period ending on February 28, 2022 and in agreement with that noted on the balance sheet as put forward by Mr. Passikoff.

Commissioner Shapiro	Aye	Commissioner Tompkins	Aye
Commissioner DiGiacomo	Aye	Chairman Forschler	Aye
Commissioner Fierro	Aye		

Motion carried 5-0.

Mr. Passikoff submitted the year end statement for 2021 and said a couple of years ago we got dinged by the auditor because the previous year's budget did not align with the current year end balance sheet. This year, the equipment was \$5,440 over budget and insurance was \$15,000 under budget so a motion is needed to align this.

A motion was made by Chairman Forschler and seconded by Commissioner DiGiacomo to align the budget by increasing the equipment budget by \$5,440 and decreasing the insurance budget by \$5,440. Mr. Passikoff said we are aligning the major categories in the budget - personnel, equipment, contracted expenses, benefits, and debt service. By taking money out of the benefits line where insurance is and putting it into the equipment line where the purchase of the ambulance was puts the macro categories more aligned. We can underspend but not overspend. Commissioner Shapiro asked if the fire department has done a three or five year plan. Mr. Passikoff said the fire department is not mandated to do a five year plan. The major expenditures are equipment and buildings. Most fire departments have an equipment plan so that would be your five year plan.

Commissioner DiGiacomo	Aye	Commissioner Fierro	Aye
Commissioner Shapiro	Aye	Chairman Forschler	Aye
Commissioner Tompkins	Aye		

Motion carried 5-0. The board directed Mr. Simon to publish the financials on the district website.

**AUD** – Mr. Passikoff is putting the numbers together. He said we take the December numbers and add to them. The extension has been filed. Next month the board should be able to review the AUD and the fixed asset schedule.

**Independent audit** – Mr. Simon has sent over some information and said he will send the list to the secretary of what she needs to provide. The other piece is quick books which Mr. Passikoff will send then we need to wait for the AUD.

Mr. Passikoff said in the December report, second page, under general fund, we cleared expenses by \$77,609.40. Chairman Forschler said per Mr. Passikoff's recommendation to keep \$100,000 in the general fund to maintain January, February and March of the coming year, we have a surplus of \$114,374.38 which we should allocate to a reserve fund. As of the current bank statements, the capital fund has a balance of \$489,000 and the equipment purchase fund \$367,000. We are seriously considering investment in a facility. What do we need for seed money for engineering, architect, environmental assessments, upfront costs before we get a bond. Mr. Passikoff said all of those costs you could include in the bond but you should have a half million which would be a good start and more than enough so that if you have any contingencies in the construction phase, you would have some money for that.

A motion was made by Chairman Forschler that of the \$114,374 of surplus, the board move \$14,374 to the capital improvement fund and \$100,000 to the equipment purchase fund. Mr. Passikoff suggested holding off transferring money until the next meeting. That would give us just over \$500,000 in the capital improvement fund and \$467,000 in the equipment purchase fund which is way better than we have ever been. We did great on the ambulance. Commissioner Shapiro said by allocating that money to the capital improvement fund, it gives us more money up front for unforeseen expenses rather than rolling it into the bond and having a bigger debt. The board agreed to table the allocations until April. Chairman Forschler said we bought an ambulance out of the fund and have a \$77,000 surplus plus the last truck payment was made of about \$33,000.

**Facilities** – Keith from Mike McCormack's office was present to advise the board on the next steps for a new facility. As of December, up for consideration was construction of a new building or refurbishing the existing building or putting the apparatus bay on the other property and continue using the existing refurbished facility. At this point, we would look for the district to get a proposal from our firm to further develop the design concept and either choose a direction or see how the two options play out. We would provide a proposal for design services. We could give it to the contractor which would be a fee in the proposal and the contractor would do a more accurate square footage calculation broken down by plumbing, electrical, mechanical, etc. providing the overall cost and dollar per square foot calculation. Then the district would go for a referendum. If you pass that, we will develop the drawings into construction documents and go out for a full bid.

Chairman Forschler said at some point, we need a meeting of the minds as to the facility and a realistic budget. Keith said the request for proposals should be for architectural design services to get us to a point where we can establish a budget number for your referendum. They would be conceptual drawings which could be used for the public. We will know if we are on the right track or way overbudget. The contractor provides the estimate and you could start cutting if need be. Chairman Forschler said we are trying to be transparent. We need to find an effective way to actively keep the public informed. We have had open houses and ice cream socials to try to get people in for membership and to see the facility but they don't bring in many people. Keith provided a good report on deficiencies in the facilities. We need to get the information out to the public so that district residents are well informed which will prevent naysayers who are uninformed. Keith said we can have marketers help with presentation.

Chairman Forschler said a company member came up with the idea to do a video which would address the deficiencies brought forth in the preliminary report which can be aired on U-tube, Clinton's municipal channel, and on our Facebook page and website. Ideally, we couple the video with recruitment issues. Heather got a cost of \$5,000 to \$6,000 to produce the video. Chairman Forschler said he saw a similar video and said it was extremely well done. He floated the idea at a department meeting to see how it went over and if the department would chip in on the cost and people were receptive. Basically, the presentation we need to make is that we need a new firehouse because there are glaring deficiencies in the current facility so the video would support a new facility. The first step is to point out the need and the deficiencies such as show a tanker pulling out or trying to get a wheelchair in the restroom. We don't have to offer solutions at this time. Commissioner Tompkins said you need to present enough evidence of the deficiencies and that it is not practical to modify what is existing. The video needs to be a convincing presentation of facts. Chairman Forschler said once the video is out there and depending on the feedback, we will follow it up with a mailer and we will meet back with Keith's firm. We need to be proactive with a professional presentation. Keith said his firm can provide documentation, images, or help the filmers point out the deficiencies and suggested accompanying the video with a copy of the report. Commissioner DiGiacomio asked what happened to the possibility of putting the apparatus in a new building and use the existing facility refurbished. There was some discussion on whether the board should define intent before the video. Commissioner Shapiro suggested showing the problems and ask residents for feedback and suggestions. The important thing is to get the residents on board first. Keith said refurbishing the existing building could be opening up a can of worms and you will still have a 1950's building. A new facility is the most economical direction to go in. Chief Estes pointed out there is no storage in this building. Commissioner Tompkins said and the district has the property available to locate a new firehouse. Commissioner DiGiacomio asked how do we deal with the volatility of the building materials with the bond? Do you go with a bond higher than you need just in case. Keith said you need to add a certain percentage for contingencies.

Commissioner Fierro asked so what are the next steps? Chairman Forschler will talk to Heather and pursue the video idea and get the people who will be making the video to give the board a presentation. Everyone was on board with the video idea. Keith will get with Mike McCormack

to discuss various fund raising situations. The board agreed that it is important to be proactive to get public support. Commissioner Shapiro said the school district hired a firm for drawings prior to going to bond. He added that the point you are saving people's lives has to be brought across. Chairman Forschler said in order to spend the \$500,000 in the capital fund, we need to have a permissive referendum. The district would sell the existing building if a new facility is built. Commissioner Tompkins asked if the new piece of property is conducive to building the new building and Keith said it's a no brainer.

**FIRE POLICE:** No representative present.

**DEPARTMENT:**

Cars 1 – Don Estes      Monthly Calls:      6      Year to Date:      11

- The burn ban starts today and goes until May 14<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Simon was directed to put that notice on the district website and Chief Estes said it will go on the billboard when there is room. Chief Estes added because someone is burning illegally, it does not require calling the DEC. If they didn't realize it was burning illegally, incident command has the jurisdiction to educate, inform and extinguish.
- Properties with Ag exemptions can burn any time.
- The drill will be on March 22<sup>nd</sup> and will be on auto extrication.
- All are complete with apparatus recertifications on the larger rigs. The smaller rigs did not get out every time so we still have a few pick ups to complete all driver recertifications.
- We will be moving forward with pump certifications.
- Cleaning the vehicles is a good segway into the inspection which is April 30 at 8:30 a.m.
- We are trying to fill in the gap without some members.
- Chairman Forschler signed the letter to Brandon Maisonet and gave to the secretary to mail.
- Chief Estes needs Kevin's paper for the truck vehicle maintenance schedule.
- Salt Point parade – We agreed at the company meeting we would be doing the Salt Point parade on Saturday, June 11<sup>th</sup>. We would be in service and not taking district equipment.
- Street addresses for West Clinton mutual aid – Chief Estes did some driving and figured out the five mile limit which is right before Commissioner Tompkins' house going the long way. He gave that information to Dave and has not heard back yet. Chairman Forschler said the ISO process is up to date – that is the missing piece of the puzzle which will hopefully get our ISO rating down. Russ Craven helped us with vehicle survey and said we were in good shape. Both vehicles should attain the level we needed for one vehicle and plenty of water getting there.

Car 2 – Jim Bathrick – Not present.

Car 3 – Kevin Russell - Not present.

**Support:** Not present.

**Membership** – Maryann Thompsett, Acting President

- The fish fry is doing well.
- The blood drive is on April 30<sup>th</sup>.
- We are preparing for the Easter Egg hunt at the park.
- The elections are on April 7.
- Chairman Forschler referenced the new adopted policy on election procedures for chiefs and the secretary gave Ms. Tompsett and Chief Estes a copy.
- We have not heard back on the background check for Chris Burns.
- Company meetings will start at 7 not 7:30.

**EMS** - Susan deHaan            Monthly Calls:    12    Year To Date:    26

- The monthly calls included three mutual aids to Stanford.
- We had a meeting with West Clinton which included Steve, Russ, Don and Susan, and their solution is they have a full shift now at least through the end of the month and they have an EMS supervisor. It might be working. We have not been called to their calls this month. Both Steve and Russ left the meeting encouraged. However, they don't have a back up if someone calls in. Chief Estes said we have to wait and see. Chairman Forschler said it is a better situation than it was two months ago. Ms. deHaan said the communication was positive and we have not been to Cornerstone this month.
- We did the CPR training for the company. Almost everyone was there and is now certified for two years.
- The drill will be on the 29<sup>th</sup> and will go hand and hand with the extrication drill with our focus on crush injuries.

Chairman Forschler said we have received a communication from Penflex and nine people will be getting \$20 more per month and retroactive payments.

There was no new business.

**Public Comment:** None

A motion was made by Commissioner DiGiacomio and seconded by Chairman Forschler to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 p.m.

Commissioner Tompkins	Aye	Commissioner DiGiacomio	Aye
Commissioner Shapiro	Aye	Chairman Forschler	Aye
Commissioner Fierro	Aye		

Motion carried 5-0.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners will be held on Wednesday, April 13, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. at the firehouse.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Buechele, Secretary  
East Clinton Fire District