

Blue Hills Fire District
Board of Commissioner Meeting
Date: Wednesday, November 13, 2019
Location: Blue Hills Fire Department
Time: 7pm

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai at 7:00pm.

Opening Statement

Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai stated that we've missed a couple of meetings due to scheduling, but we're here today and happy we are.

Observance of a Moment of Silence

Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai asked that we observe a moment of Silence.

Roll Call

Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai, Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene, Commissioner Mark Manson. Also present were: Fire Chief Willie Jones and Errol Bartley Director of Finance and Administration.

Absent

Fire Marshall, Bill Lewis

Audience Present

Nelson K. Carter, Sr., Marva Greenfield, Vincent Jaunai, Edith Fein, Joan Gamble, Len Besthoff-NBC, Barbara Bagnall, Kesone Telfer, Beverly Salmon and Steven Goode, Hartford Courant.

Discussion and Anticipated with regard to the approval of minutes from Commissioner's meeting held on September 4, 2019 and Special Meeting held on September 25, 2019

A motion to approve the meeting minutes held on September 4, 2019 and the Special Meeting held on September 25, 2019 was made by Commissioner Jacqueline Massey Greene and was seconded by Commissioner Mark Manson. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote with no further discussion.

Chief Report

Fire Chief Willie Jones reported that since the last meeting a month ago, there were a total of 110 incidents, which included 7 dual response calls to Bloomfield Center, 9 storm related calls between November 1st and November 2nd and the 3 incidents that highlighted those 110 incidents were, a tractor trailer truck fire fully engulfed. Chief Willie Jones also stated that they activated the task force number 52 for an aircraft fire up at Bradley International Airport. In addition, a chimney fireplace fire occurred that was stubborn to contain. Chief Willie Jones also stated that the new radio system is coming along well, there was a problem with Frontier running cable lines up as Station 4 that caused a slight delay, but hoping to get things back on

target for that. Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai asked if there were any questions. There were no questions for the Chief.

Fire Marshal Report

No Report

Training

Fire Chief Willie Jones stated that we are getting really close to getting an online training program with Target Solutions. He also stated other area Fire Departments have latched on to this as well, and stated it is a good program. Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai asked if there were any questions for the Chief. Commissioner Mark Manson asked, what is Target Solutions? Chief Jones stated that it is an online training program with different topics where firefighters are able to get certificates for completing certain courses. Commissioner Mark Manson also asked; does this pertain to the fire fighter certification or is this just extra training? Chief Jones stated that this is just extra training. Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene asked; is there a fee for this? Chief Jones stated that, yes, there is a fee, but it's real reasonable. Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene also asked; who pays for it? Chief Jones stated that the Department pays for it and it's relatively inexpensive and it covers a lot of different topics pertaining to the job and it's a real good program. There were no further questions for the Chief.

Director of Finance and Administration Report

Director of Finance Errol Bartley stated that our Financials are in good standing. To date we have 1.2 million in our account, with 43 thousand in investments and government agency bonds. We have also collected approximately 1.6 million out of the 1.7 million that we projected for collections. Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai asked if there were any questions for the Finance Director. There were no questions for the Finance Director.

Community Outreach Report

Lt Vincent Jaunai, Community Outreach Director stated that the Community Outreach Department was very busy the last couple of months by participating in the following events; October 5, 2019, Home Depot Community Day. Approximately 60 kids participated in the build work shop, the fire engine was on location where the children had the chance to sit in and take picture, October 6, 2019, Blue Hills Fire Department hosted the Fire Department Annual Five-year Reunion, approximated 100 guests attended, we also handed out 5th reunion hats to all that attended, October 7, 2019, Blue Hills Fire Department conducted a Fire Extinguisher Training with the Employees of I.T.W, approximately 40 employees participated, October 10, 2019, Blue Hills Fire Department participated in Lowes Community Day, the fire engine was on site and the kids took pictures as well, October 13, 2019, Bethel A.M. E. Church hosted Fire Fighters Sunday, several awards were given out and LT. Vincent Jaunai was presented with the Bill Butler award for his dedicated service to the community, October 15, 2019, Blue Hills Fire Department conducted a Fire Drill at ABB Phoenix Crossing, October 23, 2019, Blue Hills Fire Department partake in a field trip along with the Bloomfield Police Department to the Autism School, November 5, 2019, Blue Hills Fire Department participated in a Disaster Drill at 355 Park Avenue Nursing Home, November 5, 2019, the Blue Hills Fire Department hosted a

Presentation facilitated by the Bloomfield Police Department on Human Trafficking, event was well attended; November 14, 2019, the Blue Hills Fire Department participated in a Fire Extinguisher Training with the employees of Pratt & Whitney. Lt. Jaunai also stated that on November 18, 2019, he was honored with an award from the 100 Men of Color (which has no affiliation with the Blue Hills Fire Department) for his personal achievements. The event was held at the Bushnell. Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai asked if there were any questions for Lt. Jaunai. There was no question for Lt. Jaunai. He was congratulated for being recognized by the 100 Men of Color and the Bill Butler Award.

House Captain Report

No Report

Department Concerns/Good and Welfare

Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai asked if there were any Department Concerns/Good and Welfare and the following items were discussed.

Holiday Party Invitations: Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene stated that she received an invitation in the mail for the Christmas Party and stated that she did not know that we were doing invitations, number 1 and number 2 she also didn't know that it was voted on that it would be at the Windsor/Marriott and wanted to know how much it will cost and that this had not been discussed as well. Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai responded by asking Clerk Banks to read the September 4th meeting minutes stating where the Christmas party will be held and that the backroom will pay half the cost. Commissioner Jacqueline Massey Green stated that she forgot. Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai stated that we do invitations yearly and we normally create our own invitations and hand them out to the members for either Thanksgiving or Christmas, and in addition to thank you cards. Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene stated that since she became a member she only knows of a sign-up sheet and stated that she was shocked when she received an invitation in the mail. Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai reminded Commissioner Massey-Greene of the discussion in reference to taking the Holiday Party off grounds. Commissioner Marzouca-Jaunai discussed that we searched around Bloomfield to figure out if we are able to find a decent place that could accommodate a small group, we said to Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene; Clerk Banks was there, we stated that we could not find a place in Bloomfield and the one place we were thinking of went out of business. Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene stated that she did not remember that conversation being part of the meeting. Clerk Banks stated that Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene mentioned that her Church usually goes to the Marriott Hotel at the Airport to have their Banquet. Clerk Banks stated that they do not accommodate small groups, the minimum is 175 people and we only have 35 people, so why would we pay for a larger room with our small party. Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene also asked what the cost will be; it was stated that the backroom will pay half of what the cost that will be approximately \$50 per person. Commissioner Mark Mansion was not at the meeting.

Holiday Gift Cards: Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene asked; have the gift cards been done yet? Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai stated that the item is on her agenda

and that every single year, we used to buy turkeys every thanksgiving for each member whether they are paid firefighters or volunteers so each member can have thanksgiving dinner with their families. At some point we were not able to accommodate the turkeys, there were no freezer, so we changed it over to gift cards and we gave the gift cards to volunteers, paid staff and to everyone who's an active member in the Fire District, so this is what's been going on every year since she joined 9 years ago and way prior to that. Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai also stated that it is now that time of year again where we must give out the gift card to members, whether they are paid firefighters, volunteers or active members in the district. Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai also stated that this is already voted for in the budget because we make sure all these items are in the budget in May, so this is nothing new we are talking about. Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai asked the Commissioner's for a vote on getting gift cards for the members, paid firefighters, volunteers and all active members in the district? Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene said "No "and that she would only vote on giving the volunteers a gift card, but not the paid staff, "No" she stated again. Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai asked Commissioner Massey-Greene, Why is that? Commissioner Massey-Greene stated, because they are paid.

Audience/Taxpayers Comments Regarding the \$50 Gift Card

Barbara Salmon stated even though they are paid firefighters they are still firefighters and they go out on dangerous calls and do a lot of dangerous things – what happens if one of them don't return so why wouldn't one show some appreciation for the work they do. Commissioner Massey-Greene stated that the paid firefighters also get bonuses during the year as well and that this is her opinion that just the volunteers should receive a gift card as some things need to be cut out.

Barbara Bagnall stated that when she was Commissioner and what they had done just like Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai stated that we did have freezer space and it was easier, but we ran out of space and it was easier as years progressed to do the gift cards and we did a nominal amount and the gift cards went to everyone, even the Commissioners, the clerk, the volunteers and the paid guys as well received a gift card, Barbara also stated that this is thanksgiving, a time for giving and thanks for these guys. We are not talking about hundreds of dollars going to an individual, just a gift card to buy a turkey.

Former Fire Chief Nelson K. Carter, Sr. stated that he did not see why every single paid firefighter can't get a turkey, because the fire is just as hot for a volunteer as it is for a paid firefighter, everyone responds to the same fire and we hope everyone returns safely from these fires and as a community taxpayer he did not see what the big deal is if everyone gets a turkey or gift card like they been getting.

Commissioner Mark Manson stated that he kind of agrees with Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene that only the volunteers should receive a \$50.00 gift card.

Joan Gamble asked how many volunteers the station has. Fire Chief Willie stated that there are 30 volunteers with different level of participation and 6 staff members.

Former Chief Nelson Carter, Sr. stated that you get a quicker response from paid firefighters than from volunteers and the fire is just as hot.

Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai stated that these firefighters go out in the rain, the snow, the heat, they are out there not just fighting fires but responding to all kinds of situations, they leave their families and so to give a \$50.00 gift card for thanksgiving it's shouldn't be debated. Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai also stated that if Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Green and Commissioner Mark Manson do not want LT. Vincent Jaunai to have a gift card, he does not need it. Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene asked Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai, why did she say that, Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai stated that she wants to make it clear that LT. Vincent Jaunai, he doesn't need the \$50.00 gift card, but all the other firefighters, they are going to get that \$50.00 gift card.

Edith Fein asked, what about the Commissioners, getting a gift card? Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai stated that she did not want one and Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene stated, no, we do not get one, the Commissioners are not included. Commissioner Ariel Mazouca-Jaunai stated that the Commissioners used to get one, Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene stated, when? Barbara Bagnall stated that yes, the Commissioners did once receive gift cards, Commissioner Massey-Greene stated that since she was a Commissioner, she never got one. Barbara Bagnall stated that back then instead of a gift card everyone received a turkey.

LT. Vincent Jaunai stated that he has been with the department for 23 years and for every year, yes, we all were given a turkey for thanksgiving. LT. Vincent Jaunai also stated that Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene and Commissioner Mark Manson could have his turkey, as he does not need it as he has rendered his service to the department for 23 years not for getting a turkey so it is not a problem for him.

Commissioner Ariel Mazouca-Jaunai asked if the Commissioners were ready to vote; Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene stated "No". Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai once again asked for a motion to give a \$50.00 gift card to all the volunteers and the paid staff for Thanksgiving. Commissioner Mark Manson asked Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene if she was going to make the motion; Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene stated "No" and stated that she made the motion and said "No"., Motion was seconded by Commissioner Mark Manson. Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai "overruled" the motion and stated that this is one time a motion must be overruled.

Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene stated that Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai cannot “Overrule” the motion. Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai stated that the gift cards were already voted on in the budget in May, therefore, any motion can be “overruled” if it’s part of the budget that was voted on in May. Commissioner Jaqueline Massey-Greene kept insisting that she already said “No” and Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai along with Barbara Bagnall stated that it is in the Budget. Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai stated that she was going to exclude LT. Vincent Jaunai from getting a gift card.

Fire Fighter Elvis Best stated that he has been with the department for almost 30 years and this is ridiculous arguing over a \$50.00 gift card for firefighters, you can keep it, stated Firefighter Best. Finance Director Errol Bartley stated that he can be excluded as well, he does not need it, as the firefighters put their lives in danger not knowing what they are up against when they arrive on a scene, let the Commissioner put themselves in the firefighters shoes and let us see how they will feel. Fire Fighter Justin Cusson stated that he can be excluded as well.

Barbara Salmon stated that the firefighters walk into people’s homes not knowing what they are up against putting out fires and we’re sitting here arguing about a turkey, who should or and who shouldn’t get one.

Kesone Tefler stated that it’s Thanksgiving – we’re giving thanks and as a member of the community when her alarm goes off, she knows who will respond, it’s \$50.00, it just showing appreciation and understood everyone been getting a turkey for years, why are things changing now, if it was good for those of the past, why isn’t it for those now. Kesone Tefler asked Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene is there something more going on under the carpet that’s bigger than just a turkey, because if we give a turkey every year why is it a problem this year and why are we taking this out. Kesone Tefler stated that she wanted to know because if there is something else going on, can we address that and not put it on the turkey. Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai stated that Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene has voted on that gift card for two years and Kesone Tefler asked; so, what happen, can we settle this and allow the guys to have the gift card if it’s already voted for. Kesone Tefler asked Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene what was going on; as it seems that there is a little disconnect. Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene stated that she made her decision and that is it and she don’t have to explain anything.

Barbara Bagnall stated that the budget was voted on by the Commissioners and the taxpayers and it was approved by the Commissioners and the taxpayers, this motion that is being presented should just be a motion for (a.) who goes to purchase the cards, when they go get it and what process will be used to hand them out, whether they are handed out on

drill night or whatever, that's it, as everything has been voted for and allocated in the budget, so there is no re-hatching it, this was part of it, so if it was voted and agreed upon and everything, there just should be a motion on the floor, ok who wants the reasonability of going to the store to get the gift cards and getting a list together from the Chief and to make sure everyone have enough time to get their holiday meal as there is only 2 weeks before thanksgiving for them to get their turkeys.

Commissioner Mark Manson stated that he did not know that this was part of the budget. Barbara stated to Commissioner Mark Manson that it is his ignorance (and she don't mean to be rude) but it's his job to know what he's voting on in your budget, that's why's she's a pain to Finance Director Errol Bartley to ask questions, what is inclusive in the line items and what the line items mean, so she understands. Barbara Bagnall also stated that as an outsiders she asked what's included and when she was a Commissioner some line items have changed over the years, so you will need to check with the Finance Director to see what's going on and to see if something was moved to another section.

Edith Fein asked which line item included the gift cards? Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai called on Finance Director Errol Bartley and he stated that, the line item is listed under the Fire Department Group Expense, he also stated that we went through the budget line by line as we do every year, so this should come as no surprise to most of us. Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene stated that she did not know it was in the budget already. Finance Director Errol Bartley stated that we have spent almost an hour discussing a turkey, it's Thanksgiving and this just does not make sense, because it's oblivious and even if this was not in the budget, \$50.00 to give a worker, especially people who put themselves in the line of danger, it's just ridiculous and there is something else going on.

Commissioner Mark Manson stated that Barbara Bagnall explained the gift card situation to him more clearly. Finance Director Errol Bartley stated that we were all at the budget meeting and Commissioner Mark Manson need to pay attention so he knows what he is voting for so that afterwards he cannot say that he do not know. Finance Director Errol Bartley also stated that this is included in the Fire Department Group Expense. After the lengthy discussion, Commissioners Mark Manson and Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene agreed to give the gift cards to all active members. There was no further discussion.

Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai stated that we are all set with the gift card and each member will receive a gift card for Thanksgiving. There was no further discussion.

Adopt-A-Family/Thanksgiving Basket Donation

Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai stated that every year Bloomfield Social and Youth Services sends the Department a letter requesting a donation of a Thanksgiving Basket and an Adopt-A-Family Toy Drive donation to donate to those in need, the basket consist of non-perishable food items, we go out, shop and make a

basket to give to them so they can give to a family in need, normally it's a \$250.00 donation, we will find out what is needed and have the clerk go out and get the items, make a Thanksgiving Basket and take it over to them. The Toy Drive Donation we are given the name, age and wish list of a child and we go out and purchase that gift. Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai stated that a letter was sent over a couple of months ago, we did not have any meetings the past 2 months. Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai called for a motion to donate a Thanksgiving Basket in the amount up to \$250.00 to the Bloomfield Social and Youth Services so they can donate to a family in need for their Adopt-A-Family/Thanksgiving Basket Season of Giving Event. Motion made by Commissioner Mark Manson. Motion seconded by Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene. Motion carried by unanimous voice votes with no further discussion.

Computer Upgrades

Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai stated that 99.99% of our computers are upgraded - what that means is that we are now in the "Cloud" we no longer have a server where information is backed up, so we are now in the "Cloud" as it's called. Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai stated she just wanted to cautioned everyone that the moment you hit any key; or if you're searching for example "s" that's saved immediately, whatever you're searching on the Blue Hills Fire District website, cell phone, desktop, whatever, it's saved immediately.

Safety Officer, Martin Serignese

Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai stated that she also wanted Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Green and Commissioner Mark Manson to know that Safety Officer Martin Serignese, have requested his (LOSAP) benefits that he is eligible for. He has been with the department for over 20 years, so we do not need to vote, we only vote when they are not eligible, Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai stated that she just wanted the Commissioner to know that the paperwork for withdrawal is in process.

Edith Fein

Edith Fein asked Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai what benefits she was talking about; Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai stated that every year we vote in a certain dollar amount for the volunteers to be investment program for them. The programed is called, Length of Service Award Program. After 20 years of service to the district, they are eligible to receive the award. There are times they may need it before the 20 years and that is where the Commissioners will get involved and vote to say yes or no. Finance Director, Errol Bartley stated that's part of the service award line item 5972 and this is only for the volunteers, however, they need to meet

certain criteria before the money is distributed amongst the volunteers. There was no further discussion regarding this item.

Citizens Statement/Comments

Joan Gamble stated that she has been hearing rumors that when the paid department members are off duty, that we are being covered by Bloomfield Center Fire Department, because there are no volunteers. Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai asked Joan Gamble to repeat herself, Joan stated again that when the paid fire fighters go home, there's no one to cover the calls, the Center Fire is brought in, is that true? Chief Willie Jones stated that this does not happen very often unless it's a dual response where if it's a structure fire they will automatically respond over here as well and we do the same thing with them. Joan Gamble asked, but it does happen on occasion? Chief Willie Jones stated that's the dual response, if it's a structure fire (Joan stated- when there's no volunteers) volunteers respond. LT. Vincent Jaunai stated that he guesses that what Joan Gamble is trying to say is that all calls that goes un-answered by the Blue Hills Fire Department and wherever she may have gotten that information from it is not true. Chief Willie Jones stated he couldn't recall. Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai stated that this is fabrication of stories. Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene stated that she knows personally that 10-12 calls in the middle of the night and their response time is very quick. Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai stated that this is very sad for her because we went 20 steps forward and now we are going 25 steps backwards, this is sad!

Edith Fein

Edith Fein wanted to know if anyone was maintaining the gas allowance that was voted down? Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai stated that we no longer do gas allowances. Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene stated that we do not have credit cards or gas, none of that. Finance Director Errol Bartley stated that there is no need to monitor it. Edith Fein also wanted to know who monitors the credit card. Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai stated that we do not have gas; we do not have credit cards. If the department needs to purchase an item, the Chief is allowed to spend up to \$5,000. Chief Jones will approve the item. The Clerk purchase the item and file the receipt. If the amount exceeds \$5,000 then it is brought to the Commissioners attention for discussion and possible action. Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai also stated to Edith Fein that the Commissioners gets to view the receipts and ask questions if they like before we sign off on the vouchers. There was no more discussion.

Payment of Invoices and Vouchers

Motion made by Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene, seconded by Commissioner Mark Manson. Motion carried by unanimous voice votes.

Executive Session: Personnel Matter-Clerk Donna Banks Hours Worked

Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai entertained a motion to go into Executive Session at 7:45pm to discuss a Personnel Matter regarding Clerk Donna Banks hours worked. The motion was made by Jacqueline Massey-Green, seconded by Commissioner Mark Manson. Motion approved by unanimous voice vote. Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai also called on Finance Director Errol Bartley and LT. Vincent Jaunai to attend the Executive Session.

Executive Session: Personnel Matter-Clerk Donna Banks Hours Worked - END

Executive Session ended at 7:50pm and Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai called the meeting back to order. Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai called for a motion to pay Clerk Donna Banks hours work, 25 hours or more where she worked from April 16th, 2019 to June 28th, 2019. Motion made by Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene, seconded by Commissioner Mark Manson. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote. There was no further discussion.

Adjournment

Commissioner Ariel Marzouca-Jaunai entertained a motion to adjourn. Motion made by Commissioner Jacqueline Massey-Greene, seconded by Commissioner Mark Manson. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55pm

Respectfully Submitted

Donna Banks
District Clerk/Treasurer