



SHOHOLA TOWNSHIP

Board of Supervisors

George C. Fluhr, Gregory P. Hoyer, Keith W. Raser
Municipal Building
159 Twin Lakes Road
Shohola PA 18458

January 18, 2024
Special Meeting

ATTENDANCE:

- Supervisors; Chairman, Gregory P. Hoyer, Vice-Chair, Keith Raser, Supervisor, George C. Fluhr, Solicitor, Jason Ohliger, and Secretary, Diana Blume and all others on the attached list.

Please of Allegiance recited

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER at 4:00pm

Board of Supervisors called the meeting to discuss the Fire Department Ordinance compliance as well as other concerns, with the members of the Executive Board as well as all other members of the Fire Department in attendance.

Chairman Hoyer opened the meeting by discussing the latest incident that occurred on 12/29/2023 involving the Asst. Chief Charles Kaese Jr., and the Shohola Township Ambulance personnel. Chairman Hoyer further stated that his concern was with the demeanor of the Asst. Chief towards the ambulance personnel. Chairman Hoyer told the Fire Department that owner of the home said that the everything was going perfectly until the Asst. Chief arrived on scene and the shouting began between the Asst. Chief and the members of the ambulance personnel that quickly escalated to a swearing match.

Asst. Chief Kaese responded by saying that the he was pulling up to an active working chimney fire and the ambulance was blocking the road. He said he had to raise his voice to communicate because of the distance between him and ambulance personnel. He further stated that the ambulance was blocking the scene and if there was an emergency, they would be blocked in. He said he was not rude towards the ambulance personnel.

Solicitor Ohliger advised that the Township has an obligation to provide fire service to the residents in Shohola and it is the Fire Department's responsibility to provide that service professionally. The Fire Department and the Ambulance personnel need to find a way to coexist in a way that doesn't show a resident that there is a cause for concern between the first responders. If there is a tension that exists to a point to where there is this interaction where an unbiased resident asks "what's going on" then that is a problem. The big picture is that if the Fire Department and the Ambulance personnel are barking at each other at a scene, it doesn't serve the residents well. The goal is to provide professional services to residents and not making them question the quality of service they are getting. This behavior reflects poorly all the way around.

Kyle Mihalic the owner of CMG advised the public that the ambulance was under the direction of the fire personnel that was on scene before the Asst. Chief arrived and they were not instructed to move their vehicle because the incident was under control and the ambulance personnel was not instructed to move. He further stated that the Chief, Clint Malzhan, has advised them in other incidents to get as close to the scene as possible. Mr. Mihalic believes that they are receiving two different types of information.

Chairman Hoyer stated that the Asst. Chief should have handled the incident differently and that he should have approached the situation in a better manner. He further stated that the people who arrived on scene prior to the Asst. Chief had everything under control and the Asst. Chief should have consulted with the fire personnel already on scene first before making the request that the Ambulance move their vehicle and there was no need for loud vocabulary that escalated quickly.

Chief Malzhan advised the Board that he made several calls about this incident to get to the bottom of it. He did advise that there are times when they need to speak over top of fire truck engines and voices can get loud. He also stated that he believes everyone is on the same page and willing to move forward.

Vice-Chair Raser spoke to the Chief about an altercation between a Board Supervisor and the Chief following the meeting of the Board of Supervisors on January 11, 2024 and an apology was made to the Supervisor. Raser continued to advise that this behavior will not be tolerated.

Solicitor Ohliger brought up the outstanding items that needs to be provided to the Board under the Ordinance enacted in September of 2023. 1. Copies of all drivers' licenses; 2. Background checks; and 3. drug test to all members who are operating an insured fire vehicle.

Erica Winterbottom asked various questions with regards to the drug testing and where it can be performed. Gregory Protsko asks if the Township will be paying for the drug tests and background checks. Secretary Blume advised that the Township will reimburse the Fire Department for any of the expenses.

Brad Dellert made the comment that it was his understanding that the only financials needed to be provided was the tax money, not the money received by fundraisers. Solicitor Ohliger advised that all monies being spent or coming into all accounts are a concern for the Board.

Chairman Hoyer advised the Fire Department that the Boat obtained by the Fire Department does not have liability insurance nor will any staff who gets in that boat will be covered by Workers' Compensation. His personal opinion is that there is no need for that boat since there is only one spot to use the boat on the Delaware.

Mike Bushy advised the Board that there are several bodies of water in Shohola that the boat can be utilized. Chairman Hoyer advised that the likelihood of saving anyone, by the time they respond, is slim.

Secretary Blume advised the Fire Department that the Board will require extensive diver, water rescue and scuba training in order to ensure the boat, if, in fact, the boat can be insured by our insurance company and our Workers' Comp company. Solicitor Ohliger advised the Fire Department that they can ensure the boat under their private liability insurance but they need to know that the Township Workers' Comp company made reject our request to cover the Fire Department in the boat, all together.

Charles Kaese asked when they will have a list of training required in order to start training on the boat. Solicitor Ohliger advised that we would first need to reach out to Workers' Comp to find out if they will cover it under any circumstances.

Erica Winterbottom asked if the Fire Department was now in compliance after acknowledging the outstanding documents needed to be provided. Secretary Blume confirmed that once all outstanding documents are received by the Board, the Fire Department will be in compliance.

Secretary Blume advised that the Fire Department was in compliance for their January 2024 disbursement.

Chief Malzhan talked to the board about doing lock boxes to the homes that have large gates in front of their homes.

Motion to adjourn at 6:30pm made by Chairman Hoyer, second by Vice-Chair Raser, motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Diana Blume
Township Secretary