

**PALOS FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 11, 2019**

CALL TO ORDER: A regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners of the Palos Fire Protection District was called to order on Thursday, April 11, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. by President James Staszczuk at Station #1, 8815 W. 123rd Street, Palos Park, Illinois.

ROLL CALL: On the call of the roll, the following Commissioners responded as present: Commissioners James Staszczuk, Commissioner Robert Stevens and Commissioner Tom Crowhurst.

OTHERS PRESENT: Chief Mike McDonald and fire station personnel.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of the March 7, 2019 meeting have yet to be prepared and they will be approved at the May 2, 2019 Commissioners' meeting.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: Chief mentioned to the Commissioners that he wanted to make them aware of a potential issue. The employee Steven Hanley, who was recently hired, had gotten into a small accident with the ambulance taking out the left rear plastic piece. Chief stated that he discussed post-accident with Steven Hanley. Steven Hanley stated that he did not remember anything about an accident. Chief stated that they talked about how the accident occurred. Chief stated that Steven Hanley lied about how the accident occurred and Chief reiterated that he gave Steven four opportunities to say something. It was really insignificant about what Steven Hanley lied about. Chief stated what actually transpired was that in the early morning hours Steven Hanley was going to Christ Hospital and he missed the entrance to the hospital. He went passed the entrance and went to the parking lot and came in contact with a pole (video shows him rubbing against the pole). Steven then proceeded to the ER. Steven failed to mention this. When he exited Christ Hospital, Steven Hanley said he turned right out of ER and when headed North he saw the tracks were being worked on. He then stated that was when he went into the parking lot and the accident may have happened then and then he went the opposite way. When looking at the video, Chief stated that you can see that the opposite occurred. Chief stated that maybe he was nervous and insisted to him that he wasn't in any trouble. Chief said that everyone who is on the streets as much as firemen are, is exposed to the possibility of getting into an accident. Chief said for Steven it happened sooner than later. Chief said that Steven should write what occurred and it would be put in his file; there would be no discipline. Chief will put in a written warning for this accident report and

it comes out of Steven's file in one year. Chief McDonald told Steven Hanley that he knows he is on probation and this accident would have a negative impact on him. Chief stated that he is not the kind of guy that tells you everything is fine and when you admit to doing something wrong, he would jump all over you. Chief reiterated that this is not going to happen. Chief told Steven Hanley that he would give him until the end of the day (4:00 pm) and if anything regarding the accident came to mind, Hanley should come and see the Chief. Chief gave Steven every opportunity to rehash this incident and tell him what actually did occur. The Chief stated that another problem is Lieutenant Lenzen is all over Hanley and honestly, after the Chief did some homework, he talked to Captain Gozdal, who is Joe Lenzen's superior, and told him that he had to calm Joe down a bit. Chief then explained about Joe Lenzen and a prior incident where Joe caught firefighter Hanley lying and chastised him in front of other firefighters. This invoked a decision for Steven Hanley to think about quitting the Department because he is getting browbeaten. Chief then told Steven Hanley that he is off the hook regarding the ambulance accident but if he ever lied to him again, he would be terminated because trust is everything in this Fire Department. The other firefighter in the ambulance stated, in his report, that he never felt or heard anything regarding an accident and the Chief believed him and said he was a "straight shooter." Chief explained to Commissioners that the only reason he is bringing this issue up is that he is concerned on both ends of the spectrum; the issue with Steven Hanley and the problem with how Joe Lenzen is handling these issues. Chief stated that he told Dave Gozdal to talk to Joe Lenzen and tell him to throttle back a bit. Chief stated that he will talk to Hanley and was thinking about giving him a day off. The other guys are a bit leery of Steven Hanley and Chief McDonald admitted that Steven Hanley will have to earn the firefighters' respect back.

Commissioner Staszczuk, at this point, stated that the only way the Commissioners can get involved is if the Chief writes up charges for Steven Hanley and gives them to the Commissioners. Then the Commissioners must make a decision. Chief stated that he wanted the Commissioners to be kept abreast about this issue so it wouldn't surprise them if some action were to be taken.

The Commissioners asked if this incident (or the outcome) would have some effect on rank and file. Commissioner Stevens stated that it is the Chief's option as to what decision has to be made about Hanley and Lenzen. Chief agreed that this is what needed to be done and if he didn't deal with it, then he, Chief McDonald, would be remiss.

Commissioners asked questions about the Union and negotiations. Chief stated that it didn't go well and explained to the Commissioners some of the issues that were proposed. He explained about hiring six additional firefighters, capping sick days, dealing with problems and multiple issues, etc. Chief spoke a little about worker's compensation and injuries that could be avoided. Chief explained about the sport doctors' exam and method of treatment for worker's comp injuries and the training program that is being researched. Commissioner Staszczuk inquired about this program and where it is based, etc. Chief answered questions and explained about this service a bit further. All the Commissioners gave their input on this subject.

Commissioner Crowhurst asked if there will be a need for another house in the future because of the expansion of the Village. Chief replied “No” and explained why. Chief stated that he is using the District’s present manpower more efficiently and more effectively. Commissioners asked numerous questions of the Chief and he responded satisfactorily.

Chief summarized that everyone must work together to resolve these issues and not look the other way.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to conduct, Commissioner Staszczuk made a Motion to Adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners and Commissioner Stevens seconded. By call of the roll, the Motion passed. The next scheduled regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners will be Thursday, May 2, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.
