

## NEW JEREYS STATE ASSOCIATION OF FIRE DISTRICTS

### Agenda

1. Flag salute
2. Roll call of Officers
3. Election of Officers
4. Legislative report
5. Braslow report
6. Old business
7. New business
8. Treasures report
9. Secretary report
10. Next meeting date – September 14 or 15 T/B/A

Here is the zoom link:

**Topic: NJ State Association of Fire Districts - June 2023 meeting**

**Time: Jun 3, 2023 09:30 AM Eastern Time**

**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82691797993?pwd=d2M4dUt1WjlBZXkwTFhVd0p0T2hXUT09>

**Meeting ID: 826 9179 7993**

**Passcode: 784771**

**Dial by your location**

**+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)**

**One tap mobile**

**+19292056099,,82691797993#,,,,\*784771# US (New York)**



New Jersey State Association of Fire Districts Meeting was held at the Adelphia Fire Station, 993 Route 33, Freehold NJ on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 AM by President Craig Aumack with a salute to the flag and Moment of Silence for our past members.

Roll Call President Craig Aumack, Vice President Robert Donahue & Secretary Artie Hayducka, Absent was Treasure Edward McDermott

Lynn Nowak gave the Legislative report – See Attached

Artie Hayducka gave the Secretary report.

We did some research and found that we had 428,876.82 in our money market account and \$51, 229.14 in our checking account. Artie Hayducka made a motion to move \$20,000.00 from our checking into our money market account. Motion was 2<sup>nd</sup> by Frank Biddle. This was to take place over the next few months.

We sent out 163 Emails with copies of the minutes, 156 were delivered successfully & 53 were not open yet.

Cash out of pocket: \$5.97 for website updates / Frank Biddle \$43.25 for coffee & donuts,

Motion to pay bills was seconded George Patten & James Donahue

Adjournment

Our next Quarter Meeting will be held at the Adelphia Fire Station on June 3rd at 9:30 hours the address is 993 Route 33 in Freehold NJ 07728

**NEW JERSEY STATE ASSOCIATION OF FIRE DISTRICTS**  
**QUARTERLY REPORT**  
**BY LYNN NOWAK- Porzio Governmental Affairs**  
**MARCH 4, 2023**

**GOVERNOR MURPHY'S FY24 PROPOSED BUDGET - AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN (ARP)  
FIREFIGHTER GRANT PROGRAM**

In the Governor's proposed Budget for the coming fiscal year, unveiled on Feb 28, he proposes \$10 million more in funds to the ARP Firefighter Grant Program. Previously, this program provided funds to 293 fire departments for "proper protective, cleaning and sanitizing equipment during a time of community need."

As you may recall, I previously researched fire district eligibility for ARP funds. Per a May 2021 Q & A from the Federal Department of the Treasury, fire districts fall under the definition of "special purpose units of local government." "Special purpose units of government perform specific functions in the community such as fire...." and are not eligible for direct funding allocations. However, "**a state and .... may transfer funds to a special purpose unit of local government.**" Regarding for what purposes a fire district could make the case for fund eligibility: funds can be utilized for "reduction of revenue for ....and FIRE and other public safety services." As these monies would be a grant from the State, they would ostensibly be "transferring" the funds.

I believe that I should reach out to the Governor's office (we did have one previous call with them) and find out the process for fire districts to apply for these grants.

**CYBERSECURITY INCIDENT REPORTING**

**S297, Greenstein /A493, Murphy** - Requires public agencies and government contractors to report cybersecurity incidents to New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness within 72 hours of the incident. Public agency of the State is defined as any public agency of the State or political subdivision thereof.

***This bill passed both houses on Jan 26 and is on the Governor's desk.***

**FIRST RESPONDERS PTSD PROTECTION ACT**

**A2886, Moen/S703, Beach** - Provides employment protections for paid first responders diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder under certain conditions.

***A2886 passed the full Assembly unanimously on Nov 21. It was received in the Senate on Dec 1 and its next step will be consideration on the floor. The Senate has not considered it yet.***



## **WATER COMPANY MANDATES**

**A1345**, Mosquera/Murphy – Prohibits water companies from assessing more than one charge per fire hydrant to fire departments, fire districts or volunteer fire companies for use of fire hydrants.

*A1345 was introduced on Jan 11, 2022 and referred to the Assembly Law and Public Safety Committee.*

*The NJ State Association of Fire Districts has proposed amendments to this bill that would also place a limit on rate increases to no more than two percent per year and prevent an effective date for a rate increase prior to the first date of the ensuing fiscal year.*

**A1346**, Mosquera/Murphy– Requires water companies to provide representative of fire department, fire district or volunteer fire company access fire hydrants for water flow rate testing purposes.

*A1346 was introduced on Jan 11, 2022 and referred to the Assembly Law and Public Safety Committee.*

***I have again spoken with the Asw Mosquera's COS, John Saben, and they have not heard back regarding getting the bills on the Assembly Law and Public Safety agenda. I spoke with the chair of committee, Asm Bill Spearman and it appears that the water companies have weighed in with serious concerns. He suggested that we perhaps sit down with the representatives of the water companies, with assistance from his office, to discuss our main issue: raising the rates in the middle of a fiscal year. However, limiting the increase to 2% is something that they probably will not consider.***

## **CAPITAL PURCHASES**

**A2715**, Dancer, Murphy – Permits fire districts to undertake capital projects upon resolution of board of fire commissioners. (Removes the voter approval mandate for fire district capital purchases and debt issuances.)

*Introduced on Feb 14, 2022 and referred to the Assembly State and Local Government Committee.*

***At our Sept 2022 meeting with her, Asw Murphy agreed to work with us on language that will accomplish the fire districts' needs and pass legislative muster. This bill is another even more difficult lift. I think we need to regroup on this one particularly with the death of Assemblyman Dancer. It may be something we can pursue in the new session after the election.***

## **FIRE SAFETY/FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEMS/FIRE EXTINGUISHERS /SMOKE ALARMS**

**S3516** , Cruz Perez/**A5179**, Verrilli - "**Smoke Control System Act**;" Requires routine maintenance and operational testing of smoke control systems in certain buildings by certain qualified personnel.

**S3516 was heard and released by the Senate Economic Growth Committee on Jan 26. NJ State Association of Fire Districts support was registered. It next needs to be considered by the Senate Budget Committee. It has not yet moved in the Assembly.**

**A1673**, Quijano/**S996**, Ruiz – Requires **fire suppression systems** in new single and two-family homes.

*A1673 was introduced on Jan 11, 2022 and referred to the Assembly Housing Committee. It has not yet received a hearing in committee. S996 was introduced on Jan 31, 2022 and referred to the Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee.*

**S281**, Greenstein/**A3791**, Sumter – "**New Townhouse Fire Safety Act**"; requires automatic fire suppression systems in new townhomes.

*S281 was introduced on Jan 11, 2022 and referred to the Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee. A3791 was introduced on May 2 and referred to the Assembly Housing Committee.*

## **RAISING ALLOWABLE AGE OF SERVICE FOR FIRE CHIEFS**

**A2158**, Verrelli/**S1367**, Scutari - Allows police chief and fire department chief members of PFRS to serve until age 67.

**Signed into law by Governor Murphy, April 12, P.L. 2022, c. 9**

## **CANCER SCREENING EXAMINATIONS FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS**

**S3405**, Gopal/**A5081**, Stanley - Mandates access to periodic cancer screening examinations for volunteer firefighters; increases tax on fire insurance premiums.

**S3405 was heard and released by the Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee on Feb 9. NJ State Association of Fire Districts support was registered. Note that the tax on the fire insurance premiums to fund this initiative was amended out so it is unclear how this will be funded. Hence, it was referred to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee for additional review. A5081 has not yet been considered by the Assembly.**

## **FIREFIGHTER EXEMPTION**

**A377**, Danielsen - **Exempts experienced firefighters from certain requirements.** It states that a "fire department or force" shall not prohibit a firefighter who has five or more years of experience in fire suppression, fire fighting or fire rescue from engaging in these activities because the firefighter is uncertified or does not meet a requirement imposed by statute or regulation.



***It was heard and released by the Assembly Homeland Security Committee on Jan 19. There is no Senate companion.***

## **ELECTION-RELATED LEGISLATION**

**A5260, Atkins - Requires availability of outside voting process for elderly or voters with disabilities when their assigned polling place does not meet accessibility requirements. Introduced on Feb 28 and referred to Assembly State and Local Government Committee.**

**A4299, Danielsen/S3324, Zwicker - Permits county boards of elections to open certain ballot drop boxes for fire district elections**

*A4299 was introduced on June 20 and referred to the Assembly State and Local Government Committee. S3324 was introduced on Nov 14 and referred to the Senate State Government Committee.*

**A4948, Greenwald /S3365, Stack- Requires mail-in ballot applications to include prepaid postage. The cost of the postage is to be covered by the State.**

***A4948 was heard and released by the Assembly State and Local Government Committee on Dec 8. It was referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee for further consideration. The Senate bill was heard and released by the Senate State Government Committee on Feb 2 and referred to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee.***

**A3818, Haider/Rooney – Designates specific dates for fire district “special elections.”**  
***Fortunately, this bill appears to be on the way-back burner. I think that the Association along with Woodbridge fire commissioners and the two fire unions helped to do this. There is still no Senate companion which is also a good signal.***

*This bill was heard by the Assembly State and Local Government Committee on May 12 along with a variety of bills, supported by the Speaker, to expand voting access. Prior to the hearing, Craig and I had a Zoom meeting with the sponsor, Asw Haider, to discuss the impetus for the bill and the problems it presents to fire districts.*

*I testified in opposition to the bill at the hearing, explaining how the selected dates are arbitrary and do not work with the existing calendar of dates for districts who still hold elections in February and submission of budgets to DCA. The bill was released from the Committee. Subsequently, I discovered that the designated dates are the ones set in law for school district special elections. Please note that the two firefighter unions submitted slips in opposition to the bill. The lobbyist for the PFANJ has told me that they will provide further support in opposition if needed.*

*I also spoke with the Chief of Staff in the Assembly Majority Office and Rich, Craig and I met with the aide in in the Majority Office who is handling the bill. The bill was heard and released by the Assembly Judiciary Committee on June 9 and I again testified in opposition. It then received a highly unusual third committee reference to Assembly Appropriations which has not considered it. There is no companion bill in the Senate. WHILE SEVERAL OTHER BILLS IN THE SPEAKER'S PACKAGE MOVED IN THE SPRING, THIS ONE DID NOT.*

#### **USE OF CANNABIS BY FIREFIGHTERS**

**A3868, Mosquera/S2723, Beach** – Prohibits PAID first responders from use of recreational cannabis.

*A3868 was introduced on May 9 and referred to the Assembly Law and Public Safety Committee. The Senate bill was introduced on May 26 and referred to the Senate Law and Public Safety Committee.*

***The Cannabis Regulatory Commission issued a Guidance for Workplace back in Sept. I need to connect with Rich Braslow on this.***

#### **E-PROCUREMENT**

**P.L. 2018, c. 156** – I just became aware that this law allows for e-procurement by “local units of government” and thus fire districts. What brought it to my attention is a more recent Department of Community Affairs Rule Adoption (March 2022) on the topic. 5:34-5.9 and 5.10, regarding sale or lease of real property, which specifically includes fire districts in the final adoption.

[https://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dlgs/resources/rules\\_docs/R.2021%20d.031%20\(53%20N.J.R.%20501\(a\)\).pdf](https://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dlgs/resources/rules_docs/R.2021%20d.031%20(53%20N.J.R.%20501(a)).pdf)



