



## **MINUTES FOR APPROVAL**

**Date Taken: September 8, 2026**

### **Commissioner's Present**

- Bobby Bass
- Ben Bell
- Hazel Alexander
- Patricia Woods

### **Commissioner Absent**

- Eddie Nunnery

### **Call to Order and Quorum Verified**

Vice Chair Hazel Alexander called the General Board Meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Vice Chair Alexander verified that four members of the Chester Fire District Board of Commissioners were present and confirmed that a quorum was established.

### **Invocation / Prayer**

Invocation and prayer were conducted.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was conducted.

### **Approval of Agenda**

Commissioner Patricia Woods made a motion to approve the agenda as written.

The motion was seconded.

A Call for Vote by Vice Chair Alexander and the Motion carried 4-0.

### **Approval of Minutes – Date Correction**

Commissioner Bobby Bass made a motion to correct the date associated with the approval of the previous meeting minutes.

The agenda contained a typographical error referencing July 27, 2026. The correct meeting date was August 27, 2026.

The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Hazel Alexander.

A Call for Vote by Vice Chair Alexander and the Motion carried 4-0.

### **Chief's Report / Update**

Chief of Operations Grafton presented the Chief's Report and provided copies of the report to the Board.

Chief Grafton reported an incident involving Engine 113. While the apparatus was being moved from the station, the steamer valve area of the apparatus struck the station wall, resulting in damage.

The full extent of the damage had not yet been determined because the affected valve and associated plumbing connect into the pump system. Further inspection and repair estimates were needed before the total scope and cost of repairs could be determined.

### **Fire Marshal's Report / Update**

Fire Marshal Ashley Herndon presented her monthly report to the Board and had previously provided copies electronically to Board members.

The Fire Marshal reviewed her activities for the month, including updates related to inspections, fire prevention activities, community engagement, and preparations for the October 10, 2026 Fire Prevention event.

### **Treasurer's Report / Update**

Treasurer Ben Bell provided the Treasurer's Report and financial update to the Board.

### **Information Technology Report / Update**

Commissioner Bobby Bass presented the Information Technology update.

The District continues to work with Epic Business Solutions on development and governance of the Chester Fire District Microsoft tenant and related technology services.

The Board was updated on the age and condition of District computers and on the work completed to improve existing workstations while limiting unnecessary replacement costs.

Most District PCs have been upgraded as far as practical. The following systems still require additional work or accessories:

- Spare workstation – requires a memory upgrade.
- Old radio room PC – requires a memory upgrade, speakers, and a webcam with an integrated microphone.
- Administrative Assistant Debbie Williams' PC at Station 10 – requires a webcam with an integrated microphone and a set of speakers.
- Spare PC at Station 1, located at the former receptionist desk – requires a webcam with an integrated microphone.

Recent memory upgrades have improved the performance and stability of several existing District computers and have allowed the District to continue extending the useful life of older equipment while the overall IT modernization project continues.

### **First Due / Southern Software Connection**

The Board discussed the District's First Due communications integration.

The existing Southern Software / E911 connection to First Due is functioning and provides CAD incident data and associated incident times.

The First Due Responder module, however, has shown approximately a 5-to-30-second delay in initial alerting when compared with Active911.

Commissioner Bass reported that discussions had been held with Southern Software and First Due concerning development of a second, simplified email-based connection from the 911 console to First Due. The purpose of the proposed secondary connection is to reduce the initial Responder alert delay while retaining the existing detailed CAD data connection.

Southern Software agreed to build the connection for testing. If the connection performs as intended, the proposed one-time cost would be approximately \$1,250.

This was presented to the Board as a potential future cost so the technology work could continue with Board awareness.

### **IT Equipment Purchase**

Commissioner Bobby Bass made a motion to authorize Treasurer Ben Bell to order through the District's Amazon account:

- Two sets of computer memory consistent with the memory previously purchased;
- Three webcams with integrated microphones; and
- Two sets of computer speakers.

The motion was seconded.

A Call for Vote by Vice Chair Alexander and the Motion carried 4-0.

### **Consultant Report / Update**

District consultant Sean Nelson presented his report to the Board.

The report included discussion of the recent reporting period and financial and administrative matters, including:

- Approximately \$184,000 in payroll;
- Approximately 70% full-time and 30% part-time payroll distribution;
- Accounts payable processes;
- Development of a more formal administrative/accounting process for presentation to the Board at the October meeting; and
- Vacation-time administration and related financial matters.

### **Emergency Supplemental Budget Amendment Update**

Treasurer Ben Bell reported that the Chester Fire District's Emergency Supplemental Budget Amendment, in the approximate amount of \$1.15 million, had been submitted to Donnie Wade as previously approved by the Board.

Consultant/accountant Sean Nelson also followed up regarding the supplemental budget and reported that the submission appeared to be in order.

The District's stated objective remained to accomplish the supplemental budget requirements without increasing the District's millage rate.

### **Independent Audit – Fiscal Year 2025–2026**

Treasurer Ben Bell reported that he had been in communication with Victor at Bernard Robinson & Company, LLP (BRC).

Work on the District's independent audit had begun.

### **Fire Prevention Week / Open House – October 10, 2026**

Fire Marshal Ashley Herndon provided an additional update regarding preparations for the October 10, 2026 Fire Prevention event, including planned activities, school contacts, community outreach, and other fire-safety initiatives.

### **Future Fire Station / Property and Temporary Facility Planning**

The Board received an update regarding the potential future fire-station property and temporary facility planning.

The property appraisal had been completed.

The next phase of due diligence included additional communication with Chester County building and zoning officials and appropriate State agencies concerning property access and development considerations before proceeding further.

Commissioner Bobby Bass made a motion to authorize the Property Committee, consisting of Bobby Bass and Patricia Woods, to proceed with the next steps of the property due-diligence process, including:

- Negotiating property pricing;
- Communicating with building and zoning officials; and
- Communicating with the appropriate State agencies regarding proposed egress/access to J.A. Cochran Bypass and Ashford Road.

The motion was seconded.

A Call for Vote by Vice Chair Alexander and the Motion carried 4-0.

### **Executive Session**

Commissioner Bobby Bass made a motion to enter Executive Session.

The motion was seconded.

A Call for Vote by Vice Chair Alexander and the Motion carried 4-0.

The Board entered Executive Session at 9:08 PM for discussion concerning:

- Legal and contractual matters involving the City of Chester and Chester Fire District;
- Legal matters concerning Board compliance with the Chester Fire District bylaws; and
- Chester Fire District personnel matters.

**Return to General Session**

Commissioner Bobby Bass made a motion to return to General Session.

The motion was seconded.

A Call for Vote by Vice Chair Alexander and the Motion carried 4-0.

The Board returned to General Session at 11:00 PM.

**Board Action Following Executive Session**

Commissioner Ben Bell made a motion to advertise for the Chief Officer position.

The motion was seconded.

A Call for Vote by Vice Chair Alexander and the Motion carried 4-0.

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**Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the General Board Meeting was adjourned at 11:03 PM.