

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners, Fire District No. 1 was held on Wednesday, September 15, 2021 at 7:00 P.M.

Commissioner John C. Kenny called the meeting to order.

Maria Bucsanszky – All the requirements of the “Open Public Meeting Act” have been complied with by advertising in the Home News Tribune and Star Ledger. Copies of the meeting notice have been sent to the Municipal Clerk’s Office and posted on the bulletin board of the fire house and the post offices of Woodbridge and Sewaren.

Commissioner John C. Kenny led a pledge to the flag.

A moment of silence was observed for our departed members and for all those serving overseas and those fighting through this pandemic.

PRESENT: Commissioner Todd Howell, Commissioner John C. Kenny, Commissioner Robert Minkler, Sr., Commissioner Jeffrey Moran, Commissioner Patrick Kenny

ALSO PRESENT: Attorney – Christopher Howell
Chief John Golden
District Clerk - Maria Bucsanszky

Commissioner J.C.K.: On behalf of the Board of Fire Commissioners and Chief Golden and the administration I’d like to thank you for coming to this special occasion tonight for seeing our firefighters going above and beyond the call of duty. This is something that I heard over and over last week and it’s about you know as disasters happen you see people running from them. These gentlemen here and all of our First Responders are the ones that are running in to save everyone’s life because that’s what they were trained to do so it’s a very great honor here tonight to see them all here and to present them with these awards and with that I’m going to turn it over to Chief Golden who is going to present the awards.

Chief John Golden: Thank you President Kenny. On behalf of our Fire Department, the Fire Commissioners and the administration I’d like to congratulate and remember seeing them with my face this evening. There were actually three separate incidents where these gentlemen sitting before you went above and beyond the call of duty; we’re here tonight to congratulate them. I’d like to introduce to the administration Deputy Chief Paul and Deputy Chief Balog. They’ve done a tremendous amount of work with the Awards Committee along with Commissioner Moran and Chief Hapstak and I thank you for that. I have been in contact with Councilwoman Nancy Drumm. She apologizes for not being here. It’s one of the biggest awards of the fire department. She’d like everyone to know that she expresses her well wishes on a job well done. This evening’s event I have three separate incidents that we’re going to cover. I’m going to call out the names of the people receiving the awards. I’m going to read Resolution 1. The Commissioner is going to join us in handing out the awards so when I call your name please come up and stand in front of the mic. Robert Minkler, Jr., Battalion Chief; Chad Carrick, Captain; Michael Magda, Fire Department.

Audience claps.

Chief John Golden: These gentlemen are being honored with the Life Saving Award. I'd like to bring to your attention that on February 29th this fire department was called out for a cardiac arrest in the Sewaren section of our district. I understand that our department could not reply First Responder however it was realized that the address was one of our department's own. The department responded and arrived with EMS, Captain Carrick and Firefighter Magda who worked alongside the event applying lifesaving actions to the patient using their training skills of both firefighters and emergency medical techniques. Each of the gentlemen will be receiving the Life Saver Award.

Audience claps.

Chief John Golden: The next award is the Unit Citation Award for the Highview Drive call. I'm going to call up some additional firefighters that were involved in that. Battalion Chief Robert Minkler, Jr., Captain Michael Barcellona, Chief Michael Hapstak, Firefighter Chris Kenny, Firefighter Michael Magda and Commissioner Pat Kenny, Firefighter, Ex-Chief.

Audience claps.

Chief John Golden: These gentlemen are going to receive a Unit Citation Award for action that was taken on Highview Drive. On September 12th, 2020 at 12:26 PM the department received a report of a fire alarm at 70 Highview Drive. This unit called the reservists and were updated on the report of light smoke that was coming from the roof. As units arrived, they were met by members of the Woodbridge Police Department and the Woodbridge EMS. It was reported that an occupant was trapped on the second floor of the fire alert. A rope was secured to the second floor of a side bedroom window. The operator of Engine Two, Firefighter Kenny, secured the water supply and system with the deployment of the path line. Captain Barcellona, who decided to come to the office for a minute or two, and Firefighter Magda through the side as a step in on Engine One, did a search to the second floor, the location of the occupant. Captain Barcellona and Firefighter Magda entered the fire building on the side of the separate stairs of the second floor. While Captain Barcellona and Firefighter Magda conducted a search Firefighter Wagner who decided to be operator of Engine One completed the search at front door and called the person in charge. Chief Hapstak arrived and Captain Barcellona radioed that they located the victim on second floor and they were making their way down the stairs. Once Captain Barcellona and Firefighter Magda entered the building they were met by members of the Woodbridge Police and EMS and two close friends of the occupant. Captain Barcellona, Firefighter Magda and Firefighter Wagner located the fire in the rear bedroom. The fire was extinguished and ventilation completed. I'd to congratulate those (inaudible).

Audience claps.

Chief John Golden: Captain Kenny.

Audience claps.

Chief John Golden: Firefighter Chris Kenny.

Audience claps.

Chief John Golden: Battalion Chief Robert Minkler.

Audience claps.

Chief John Golden: Captain Michael Barcellona.

Audience claps.

Chief John Golden: Firefighter Michael Magda.

Audience claps.

Chief John Golden: Firefighter Brendon Wagner.

Audience claps.

Chief John Golden: Chief Michael Hapstak.

Audience claps.

Chief John Golden: I'd like to bring Captain Barcellona and Firefighter Magda back up to the podium.

Audience claps.

Chief John Golden: For their actions at this incident, they will also be receiving the Life Saving Award.

Audience claps.

Chief John Golden: Firefighter Corey Snyder; Captain Corey Moran; Captain Chad Carrick; Firefighter Jeff Golden; Firefighter Wendy York.

Audience claps.

Chief John Golden: Ex-Chief Bruce Horvath.

Audience claps.

Chief John Golden: Firefighter Chris Kenny; Ex-Chief Jason Ring; Firefighter Jayson Bullock; Firefighter Jeff Golden; Firefighter Wendy York; Firefighter Mark Repace.

Audience claps.

Chief John Golden: Chief Hapstak.

Audience claps.

Chief John Golden: Firefighter Robert Ford; Firefighter Ryan Horvath.

Audience claps.

Chief John Golden: There are two gentlemen that will be receiving this award are Battalion Chief Mark Minkler and Firefighter Thomas Kane.

Audience claps.

Chief John Golden: Okay, on August 13th we got seventeen at 17:31 hours. Members of the Woodbridge Fire Department, Dispatch and Municipal Boat Launch at 1 Ferry Street for a report of a vessel in distress. The units around the vessel in the middle of the Arthur Kill had run aground with multiple injuries to the passengers on board. Lieutenant Mark Minkler at the time established command and started the coordination of units for the operation. With quick thinking and actions of the Woodbridge Fire Department the Commander commandeered a private vessel to transport three members with medical supplies to the distressed vessel who was requesting a Marine response from the Perth Amboy Fire Department. At that time Chief Bruce Horvath arrived and members aboard the unstable stressed vessel, trained personal risk and triage who initiated treatment of multiple injuries sustained by the passengers. While treatment was initiated aboard the vessel and members of the Woodbridge Fire Department additional members on land were assisting responding personnel from the Woodbridge Township Ambulance and Rescue Squad, Avenel and Colonia First Aid Rescue Squad, Raritan Bay Medical Center paramedics and the Woodbridge Police Department to set up two areas for the treatment of the injured passengers. The south intake area was established by the 2nd Assistant Chief Cory Snyder, Captain Corey Moran, Firefighter Chad Carrick, Firefighter Jeff Golden, Firefighter Wendy York and members of the Raritan Bay Medical Center and ICU and Woodbridge Township Squad Unit. The north intake area was established by Assistant Chief Chris Kenny, Firefighter Jason Ring, Firefighter Michael Hapstak, Firefighter Robert Ford, Firefighter Mark Repace and Firefighter Jayson Bullock. Members aboard this distressed vehicle were then assisted by Perth Amboy Fire Department Marine Division Five, New York City Fire Department Marine Units and the New York Police Department Marine Unit of the injured personnel to the units on land. Once received by land units all six injured persons were quickly removed to the dock freely and transported from the scene. Due to the quick thinking and actions taken by all members including saving the lives of others under unusual and hazardous conditions all the patients were treated and removed from the scene this giving all patients a greater chance of survival. I'd like to congratulate these gentlemen. Firefighter Mark Repace.

Audience claps.

Chief John Golden: Firefighter Chris Knight.

Audience claps.

Chief John Golden: Chief Mike Hapstak.

Audience claps.

Chief John Golden: Firefighter Ryan Horvath.

Audience claps.

Chief John Golden: Firefighter Jeff Golden.

Audience claps.

Chief John Golden: Captain Chad Carrick.

Audience claps.

Chief John Golden: Chief Bruce Horvath.

Audience claps.

Chief John Golden: Firefighter Chris Kenny.

Audience claps.

Chief John Golden: Again, I'd like to congratulate everyone that received awards tonight. It's just another example of dedicated service these gentlemen have for their job and to the community of Woodbridge and their fine example of what we have to provide and the services that we do so I'd like to give them a round of applause.

Audience claps.

Commissioner J.C.K.: Does anyone from the public like to make a statement or like to present anything?

(?): On behalf of the IFS, BFA, and (inaudible) and firefighters I'd like to congratulate everybody. As the Chief has said this is something that everybody stands ready to do here. This is an example of what the Woodbridge Fire Department is about and we're here to serve the community. Congratulation again.

Audience claps.

(?): I'd just like to say thank you. I am the person who went into cardiac arrest on February 20th and I'm just so very grateful to Mike Walsh so thank you.

Audience claps.

Commissioner J.M.: I'd like to say this is the first awards program we've had department wide and it was the input of Ex-Chief Bruce Horvath. He came up with this idea before I became a commissioner. He came to me with it and I worked with Bruce, Chief Golden, Deputy Paul, Deputy Balog put it together and COVID gave us a trip wire for a little bit so that's why some of the awards were from back incidents but this is something that we are looking forward to having as the need arises but on a more or less an annual basis. Again, thanks to Bruce Horvath for having this idea and bringing it out and pursuing it. Bruck, thank you.

Audience claps.

Commissioner J.M.: Congratulations to all of the recipients.

Commissioner J.C.K.: There are going to be refreshments in the back and before I ask to close the meeting it would not be fair not to thank someone who really organizes all this. Probably does the work about thirty people. You may think I'm kidding but watch for a day and see what she does. I'd like to thank Lisa Lanza in the back.

Audience claps.

Commissioner J.C.K.: Alright, motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Todd Howell made a motion to adjourn the Special Meeting at 7:25 P.M. which was seconded by Commissioner Jeffrey Moran and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Maria Bucsanszky
District Clerk