

Pine Hill Fire District #1  
Workshop Meeting Minutes  
January 8, 2025

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:** Meeting was called to order by Chairman Waddington at 5:30 P.M. Chairman Waddington led the salute to the flag and read a statement regarding the Open Public Meetings Act.

**ROLL CALL:** Commissioner Waddington – present, Commissioner Wakeley – present, Commissioner Harris– present, Commissioner Hagarty – present, Commissioner Briggs – present.

**OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT:** Chief Hunter, Battalion Chief Pizzo, Captain Duvall, President Ralston, Solicitor Carlamere

- **RESOLUTION 25-00: Closed Session:** Chairman Waddington said that there was a need to enter a closed session to discuss personnel issues.
  - A motion to approve resolution 25-00 was made by Commissioner Wakeley and seconded by Commissioner Harris.  
*Roll Call Vote: Commissioner Waddington – yes, Commissioner Wakeley – yes, Commissioner Hagarty – yes, Commissioner Harris – yes, Commissioner Briggs – yes. Motion passed with five yes votes.*

**MEETING CALLED BACK TO ORDER:** Chairman Waddington called the meeting back to order at 6:01 p.m. and asked for a roll call. Commissioner Waddington – present, Commissioner Wakeley – present, Commissioner Harris – present, Commissioner Hagarty – present, Commissioner Briggs – present.

**RESULTS OF CLOSED SESSION:**

Chairman Waddington said that all matters discussed in closed session remains closed.

**OPEN THE FLOOR TO THE PUBLIC:** Chairman Waddington asked for a motion to open the floor to the public. A motion to open the floor to the public was made by Commissioner Hagarty and seconded by Commissioner Harris. All were in favor. Motion passed.

- There was no public participation.

**CLOSE FLOOR TO THE PUBLIC:** Chairman Wakeley asked for a motion to close the floor to the public if there were no other questions. There were none. A motion to close the floor to the public was made by Commissioner Hagarty and seconded by Commissioner Harris. All were in favor. Motion passed.

Pine Hill Fire District #1  
Workshop Meeting Minutes  
January 8, 2025

**WORKSHOP:** Chairman Waddington invited President Ralston to speak about the Commission office door lock. President Ralston stepped up to the podium and introduced himself as DeAndre Ralston whose address is 26 Bromley Drive, Sicklerville, NJ 08081 and stated he is representing Pine Hill Fire Department. President Ralston said the Commission is moving forward with leaving the office door locked and wants to discuss what the lease states for equal rights for the Commission office. President Ralston said that his interpretation of the lease is that the Fire District has contractual rights, and that the Commission office is not a government room but just a room the Fire District is leasing from the Fire Department. He suggested rewriting the lease so there is no confusion. He said it is a disservice to have locks installed on the door without permission. President Ralston requested to either have his own key to the Commission office or to have the Sonitrol system hooked back up.

Chairman Waddington asked if any of the Commissioners would like to comment. Chairman Waddington said he was speaking for himself when he stated that the Commission office door needs to be locked, and President Ralston does still have access because he can call any of the Commissioners or Chief Hunter for access. Chairman Waddington asked President Ralston if he had a reason to be in the Commission office. President Ralston said the lease is his reason to have access to the office. Chairman Waddington said the lease is not reason to have access to the office because there are personnel files stored there, which are Pine Hill Fire District property and not Pine Hill Fire Department property.

Commissioner Briggs asked if President Ralston had a key to the Commission office prior to the personnel files being moved there. President Ralston said no. Commissioner Briggs asked why President Ralston needs a key to the Commission office if he does not have access to Chief Hunter's office. President Ralston said he always had spare keys to the offices. He clarified by saying he had Sonitrol access but no key access. Battalion Chief Pizzo said that they have access to the his office, Chief Hunter's office and Captain Duvall's office. President Ralston said they have a master key and the keys are stored in Captain Duvall's office.

Chairman Waddington said that the Commission paid for the Sonitrol system, and they no longer want to use the Sonitrol system. President Ralston asked if Sonitrol was installed on all doors. Chairman Waddington said it was placed on the exterior doors of the Fire Department and the Commission office door. President Ralston said the Sonitrol system is being upkept by the Fire Department. Chairman Waddington said the Commission does not want Sonitrol on the Commission office door and that is the reason it was disconnected.

Solicitor Carlamere said since the District leases the entire building, the Commissioners should have access to any office but that is not the case. Solicitor Carlamere maintained that the Commission office is a government office because it contains personnel files and that

Pine Hill Fire District #1  
Workshop Meeting Minutes  
January 8, 2025

government offices should not be open access. Solicitor Carlamere said that President Ralston has access to the Commission office through the Commissioners and Chief Hunter. He advised the Commissioners that giving President Ralston open access to the office would be inappropriate. President Ralston said that would only make sense if the Fire District owned the building. He referred to the lease agreement and said it currently states that the Fire Department has equal rights and access to the building. He said if that is no longer the case then a new lease agreement needs to be written. Solicitor Carlamere said that the issue is to open a new lease, which will be addressed.

President Ralston asked what makes the Commission office a government office. Solicitor Carlamere said that it is a government office because the Commissioners are elected officials and there are tax payer records in the office. President Ralston said that it is not a government office because it is a leased office. Solicitor Carlamere said that if the lease is for a government building, then it is a government office. President Ralston asked for documented proof. Solicitor Carlamere said that he would not debate the matter any further. President Ralston asked if the Fire District is okay with being in opposition of what the the current lease states until the new agreement is drawn up, instead of just giving him a key to the Commission office.

Chairman Waddington said that is President Ralston's interpretation of the matter. President Ralston stated that when the lease was signed, the Fire District agreed it was equal access, and that is no longer the case. Chairman Waddington and Commission Wakeley were not in favor of assigning President Ralston a key to the Commission office. President Ralston thanked the Commission for their time.

Commissioner Harris said he wanted to talk about what Battalion Chief Pizzo had prepared. Commissioner Harris said Battalion Chief Pizzo provided a list of volunteers. Commissioner Harris said that if the Fire District is paying for kids to go to fire and EMT school, he believes they owe an allegiance to the District for a certain amount of time. Battalion Chief Pizzo and Commission Harris talked about what they can do to retain volunteers.

Battalion Chief Pizzo said that some of the volunteers want to move on. He also said that they want fire training classes and if they do not pass the class, they will have to pay the District back. He said they agreed to put one to two volunteers through EMT classes per year. They will not pay for them to go through the class, but if they pass the District will reimburse them. Battalion Chief Pizzo suggested reimbursing them for the class one year after they pass, so they will have the incentive to stay on board. Commissioner Harris said he loved that idea.

Commissioner Wakeley asked how much Firefighter 1 costs. Battalion Chief Pizzo said it costs around \$250.00. He said it is not very expensive but that they send a lot of people so it adds up.

Pine Hill Fire District #1  
Workshop Meeting Minutes  
January 8, 2025

He said the EMT class is around \$1,900.00. Commissioner Hagarty agreed that they should reimburse the volunteers for the class one year after they pass. Commissioner Hagarty also said that it would encourage training, which is a good thing to promote. He said they do not want to set a process that defeats that purpose. Battalion Chief Pizzo claimed that Pine Hill Fire Department trains more than anyone. Chairman Waddington clarified that the student will pay for their course, and after a year they will be reimbursed. Battalion Chief Pizzo said yes. Battalion Chief Pizzo said that they are not losing a lot of people after fire school because they must pay for it. Chief Hunter said they try to discourage people from joining just as an EMT because it is costly and does not benefit the Department as much.

Commissioner Harris said it looks like the Department is in good shape with volunteers. Chief Hunter and Battalion Chief Pizzo agreed. There was a discussion on what else could be done differently to retain volunteers. Battalion Chief Pizzo suggested it might help if the Board of Commissioners hosted an event for the volunteers. Chief Hunter said it is a good problem to have, but one issue is that they are taking on volunteers but do not have enough space or gear for them.

There was a discussion between Commissioners Wakeley and Hagarty, Chief Hunter and Battalion Chief Pizzo regarding the bylaws and the number of members the Department can have. Commissioner Wakeley thanked Chief Hunter and Battalion Chief Pizzo. Chairman Waddington asked if Battalion Chief Pizzo had anything else to discuss regarding the volunteers. Battalion Chief Pizzo said no. Chairman Waddington and Commission Hagarty thanked Battalion Chief Pizzo for the data he came up with.

Chairman Waddington asked if anyone wanted to bring anything else up. Battalion Chief Pizzo wanted to discuss a schedule for workshop meetings. He said we can eliminate longer regular meetings if we have more workshop meetings. He said it would be okay if not everyone can make the workshop meetings because they will be so frequent. Chairman Waddington said it is tough for him to schedule workshops, but he is not against having more of them. Battalion Chief Pizzo said that as time goes on, we won't need to have many workshop meetings. Chairman Waddington suggested we cover one subject per work session.

Chairman Waddington said the Commission's investigation into FLSA had the same findings as Battalion Chief Pizzo. Chairman Waddington said he was under the opinion that the cost of hiring a new career firefighter would be first step salary. Battalion Chief Pizzo agreed. He also said that they will need to hire another career firefighter eventually. There was a discussion on the salary. Battalion Chief Pizzo said that with minimum wage being as low as it is, it will be hard to keep volunteers. He said having another career firefighter would eliminate that problem. Chief Hunter said they need people with certain certifications to drive and ride in the firetrucks,

Pine Hill Fire District #1  
Workshop Meeting Minutes  
January 8, 2025

which takes time and classes. Commissioner Wakeley said they could pull volunteers from Winslow due to their contract. Chief Hunter said Winslow does not have any volunteers as they just closed three firehouses. Chairman Waddington said the Commission still needs to discuss the issue, are looking into it and will need to create a policy for it. Chairman Waddington said they do not want to lose volunteers. Battalion Chief Pizzo said he is trying to keep the volunteers to under \$1,000.00 per month. Commissioner Wakeley asked if Pine Hill shares volunteers with Lambs Terrace. Battalion Chief Pizzo said yes. Commissioner Wakeley asked if they could all train and certify together. Battalion Chief Pizzo said yes but getting certified on driving the trucks can not be completed together. Solicitor Carlamere then exited the meeting. Chief Hunter said all the trucks are different sizes and have different operations. Battalion Chief Pizzo said Pine Hill and Lambs Terrace do a lot of training together. Commissioner Hagarty said Battalion Chief Pizzo provided a lot of good information and analysis. Chief Hunter said if they Fire District creates a policy, they will follow it. Battalion Chief Pizzo requested that the policy be reasonable, and that his opinion was that \$10,000.00 is reasonable at the lowest. Battalion Chief Pizzo said that the fill-in firefighter line item is underdeveloped and that they need more money in that line item.

Battalion Chief Pizzo then wanted to discuss overtime. He said they had not held a staff meeting yet regarding assignments, but he put together some research. Battalion Chief Pizzo requested \$20,000.00 in the chief's line item for them to manage for the five career firefighters. He said that he did find some areas they can improve on regarding overtime. Battalion Chief Pizzo said that the average amount other fire companies are spending on overtime is \$25,000.00. Chairman Waddington said that the budget was already done and can't be changed now. Battalion Chief Pizzo said they have been running a very successful program. He said last year the overtime was a little high and he is finding ways to cut back this year. Battalion Chief Pizzo said they should bring the career firefighters on shift if people are out operating and this would help them cut back on overtime. Chairman Waddington said that is what they were looking for but he is still not in favor of hiring two new career firefighters. There was a discussion on the parameters of allowing the career firefighters to come back for calls in town. Chairman Waddington said we need to save money. Chief Hunter said we need to save the residents. Chairman Waddington clarified that they need to spend money efficiently and said he appreciated everything Battalion Chief Pizzo is doing. Chief Hunter said he thinks we are putting a dollar amount on peoples' lives and mutual aid is not coming together in the way the Commission thinks they are. Commissioner Wakeley said they would have to explain to the residents that they are a volunteer fire department. Chief Hunter said they are a combination fire department. Chief Hunter said they will improve by not keeping the career firefighters on calls for too long if unnecessary. Chief Hunter said he is comfortable as long as the Commissioners put it in writing that they are comfortable not having the overtime. Commissioner Wakeley said he is comfortable with doing hybrid like they are already doing.

Pine Hill Fire District #1  
Workshop Meeting Minutes  
January 8, 2025

Battalion Chief Pizzo said he wants a compromise and that they need to do everything to keep the public safe. He said they need to continue running a successful operation like they have been doing. There was a discussion on limiting travel distance and responding to calls in other towns. Chief Hunter said Pine Hill has more volunteers than all other counties.

Commissioner Hagarty thanked Battalion Chief Pizzo for putting everything together. He said it was very comprehensive, and it sparked a good dialogue regarding a subject that is worthwhile. Commissioner Hagarty said he wants to give the chiefs the tools they need to manage the department effectively. Commissioner Briggs agreed. Commissioner Wakeley said he appreciates everything the chiefs do.

Chairman Waddington said they want to continue this conversation at the next meeting and he will look into scheduling the work sessions the same day as the regular meetings. Commissioner Wakeley made a motion to approve the monthly workshop meetings which was seconded by Commissioner Hagarty. Motion passed with five yes votes.

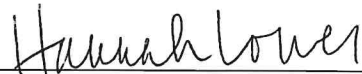
**ADJOURNMENT:** Chairman Waddington asked if there were any other issues that needed to be addressed. There were none. A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Hagarty and seconded by Commissioner Wakeley. All were in favor. Motion passed.

The workshop meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.



---

Christopher Harris  
Commission Secretary



---

Hannah Lower  
Fire District Business Administrator

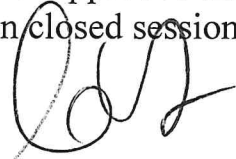
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS  
FIRE DISTRICT #1  
BOROUGH OF PINE HILL

**CLOSED SESSION**  
**Resolution 25-00**

WHEREAS: The Open Public Meetings Act of the State of New Jersey permits certain conditions and situations when a Public Body as the Board of Fire Commissioners may exclude the public and discuss certain matters in closed session, and

WHEREAS: The Board of Fire Commissioners has determined that there does exist a need to discuss matters of Personnel, Litigation, Collective Bargaining/Contract Negotiation, Purchase or Sale of Real Estate, Law Enforcement Techniques or Investigation of Violation of Law, matters of Attorney Client Privilege, matters of Employment, The Board of Fire Commissioners.

NOW THEREFORE, It is herein Resolved and Approved that the Board of Fire Commissioners shall discuss personnel matters in closed session.



Christopher Harris, Secretary

Date: January 8, 2025

Record of Vote:

Commissioner	Motion	2nd	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Hagarty	✓		✓			
Harris			✓			
Briggs			✓			
Wakeley		✓	✓			
Waddington			✓			

I, Hannah Lower, Business Administrator of the Board of Fire Commissioners, Fire District #1, Borough of Pine Hill, County of Camden, State of New Jersey, hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly adopted by the Commissioners at the workshop meeting held on December 8, 2025.



Hannah Lower, Administrator