

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BARRINGTON COUNTRYSIDE FIRE  
PROTECTION DISTRICT  
MAY 16, 2022**

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Barrington Countryside Fire Protection District (BCFPD) was held on Monday, May 16, 2022 at 6:32 pm at Station #1, 22222 N Pepper Rd., Lake Barrington, Illinois.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**1) CALL TO ORDER BY PRESIDING OFFICER** –Trustee Hanson called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm, upon roll call the following answered:

Present Trustees: Hanson, Long, Hower, Hill

Absent Trustees: None

**10A) SWEARING IN OF NEW TRUSTEE MURRAY-** Trustee Murray, was sworn in as Trustee of the Barrington Countryside Fire Protection District by Rich Curran

**10B) ELECTION OF OFFICERS** – Trustee Murray moved to approve and nominate Trustee Hanson as President, Trustee Long as Vice President, Trustee Hower as Treasurer and Trustee Hill as Secretary. Second by Trustee Hill. Upon roll call the following answered:

Ayes: Trustees: Hanson, Hower, Long, Hill, Murray

Nays: None

**2) CORRESPONDENCE**

**2A) CORRESPONDENCE** – The District received several thank you letters.

**2B) LEGISLATIVE UPDATE-** Trustee Hill stated legislators are in summer session.

**3) MINUTES**

**3A) READING AND APPROVAL OF THE MEETING MINUTES FOR APRIL 22, 2022.** Trustee Long moved to approve the April 22, 2022 meeting minutes, second by Trustee Hill and approved by a voice call of all Trustees present.

Ayes: Trustees: Hanson, Hower, Long, Hill, Murray

Nays: None

**3B) READING AND APPROVAL OF THE EXECUTIVE MEETING MINUTES FOR APRIL 22, 2022.** Trustee Long moved to approve and keep closed the April 22, 2022, executive meeting minutes, second by Trustee Hill and approved by a voice call of all Trustees present.

Ayes: Trustees: Hanson, Hower, Long, Hill

Nays: None

Abstain: Trustee Murray

**3C) REPORT FROM RECORDING SECRETARY-** Nothing to Report

**4) PUBLIC COMMENT** – Jennifer Johnson, Byron Johnson's wife, gave an overview of Byron Johnson's career and described his commitment to BCFPD and his family. Mrs. Johnson gave an overview of the incident and conversation with PSI, then asked several questions which included: What are the grounds for Byron's termination? What is the status of the termination papers? Was everyone that was present at the incident interviewed? Why wasn't Byron's one-up made aware of the situation? Why did the Chief not stand up for Byron Johnson? Why was

Byron not informed of her neck injury? Why was Byron not issued a PIP or a last chance agreement? Why is Byron not allowed to view the incident report? Mrs. Johnson provided a packet which included several testimonies to Byron's character and how he has impacted their lives. Mrs. Johnson stated that the BCFPD lost a good man on April 27. Mrs. Johnson stated that this is an injustice to him, his crew, to the entire community and to the entire society that such an egregious unfair termination could have happened without a fairly vetted investigation.

Lindsay Gertz, Byron Johnson's sister, read letters from co-workers of Byron Johnson, expressing their experiences and support. Stating Byron has a self-less devotion to the department, crew and community.

Lieutenant Caleb Meyers, wrote and read a letter in support of Byron Johnson stating that he has known Byron since January 30, 2018. He was his lieutenant on black shift, he has been his friend, mentor, and officer. Mr. Meyers stated he is calm level headed and exemplary at this job. In the past four years there has not been one incident where his character has been called into question, or any form of misconduct. Even in the face of these accusations Byron has been honest and shown complete integrity. Throughout his career he has promoted a safe environment. Lieutenant Meyers stated that this decision was wrong. The investigation was not thorough. I drove the person who brought these accusation to the station after the incident, I was not contacted, or informed of this situation.

Randy Thiel, retired lieutenant from Wauconda Fire Department, with 30 years of service, stating he met Byron over 20 years ago, and that he encourage Byron to enter the Fire Service. I have watched him mentor both newbies and experienced members using a clear and concise approach. Byron has raised a loving family, which is community oriented and involved with many charitable causes. Mr. Thiel stated that for an unsubstantiated accusation, that is quantifiably out of his normal character and in direct opposition of his documented appraisals leading to his termination is a travesty. Mr. Thiel urges the board to reconsider the actions of the District and PSI. The lifelong dream and careers of a dedicated and competent first responder should not be ended without a fair thorough investigation and explanation.

Charlie Buschick, retired from Wauconda Fire Department with 45 years of service. Mr. Buschick has worked with Byron many times and Byron has always been a gentlemen, a professional firefighter, excellent and proud leader. Mr. Buschick does not believe these accusations are true and everyone here needs a full explanation of what happened.

Joe Biasi, has known Byron since 2014, Byron as a firefighter and a lieutenant, in both roles he went above and beyond. He was always working on being the best version of himself. Byron helped everyone and was one of the guys you wanted on your shift. Mr. Biasi feels BCFPD made a wrong decision terminating Byron and feels he should be re-instated and he supports Byron Johnson.

Dan Johnson, Byron Johnson's brother, read letters supporting Byron Johnson, stating he is the most professional, motivated, dedicated, compassionate level headed and patient person he has known. Byron's family always came first and he had a knack for getting the best out of the individuals around him. Byron's leadership leads to a strong work place where individuals could come to work and feel safe, respected and learn something new each day.

Danielle Villaraza, stated that she worked for PSI at BCFPD from Dec 2016 through Jan 2019. She has worked with Byron on many occasions throughout her 2 years, Danielle read a letter stating that Byron conveys an infectious calm confidence, his knowledge and abilities cannot

easily be replaced. He was always welcoming and cultivated a good work atmosphere. The letter continued, for PSI to haphazardly terminate a leader of Byron's caliber is alarming. While terminating Byron is concerning, for those who understand the culture it is par for the course, the work atmosphere that PSI creates is hush is the word and don't ask questions, that is the policy. The Board of Trustees turns a blind eye to many of the problems that are consistently brought to them, describing the moral as toxic would be putting it kindly. These Firefighter/paramedics show up to work every day with an employer who underpays and under delivers and does the bare minimum for its employees. This is evident by the high turnover. Unfortunately these employees are afforded next to zero protection in situations like this.

Madison Moon, Byron Johnson's Daughter, stating that each of the statements read hear tonight reflect the man that Byron Johnson truly is, all the noble words that our highlighted thru all of them one theme arises, inspiring. He has inspired me, he is selfless, while family comes first the department was a close 2<sup>nd</sup>. He is dedicated knowledgeable and compassionate. My heart breaks for my dad as the career that he has found family within has been uprooted from him for unfounded over emphasized accusations of a new employee. A new employee who he was only trying to get to know better so she too could feel part of the community. To let a playful shoulder nudge be the end of a 20 year career and everything a man has worked for is baffling. My heart breaks for those who had the privilege to learn and work beside him, and have lost an exemplary teacher. How unsettling for each employee to watch the ease at which their Chiefs and PSI had at giving up such an exemplary employee.

Jim Goodwin, 914 Barrington Hills, former battalion chief and Byron's direct supervisor at that time, stating when he found out Byron was let go he was upset, appalled and embarrassed. You just opened every door in this building and everyone is going to run. Byron was the roots that held the place together, he was heart and soul. The Board needs to pay more attention and not let this happen ever again.

President Hanson, thanked everyone for those that spoke this evening, and it is appreciated and wished everyone the best.

The Meeting recessed at 7:10 PM

The Meeting resumed at 7:16, Trustees, Hill, Hanson, Long, Hower and Murray are present.

**5) ATTORNEY REPORT** – A written report was provided, stating that the notification documents from the McHenry County Assessor's office and McHenry County Clerk's office were completed, the Cook County tax bills are delayed till late 2022 or 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2023 and the Cook County tax levy documents are approved and will be sent back. Trustee Hower stated Wintrust Bank is have a seminar on the tax delay.

## **6) FINANCIAL REPORT**

**6A) PURCHASE REQUISITIONS FROM 4/18/22-5/16/2022** – Trustee Hower moved to approve the purchase requisitions from 4/18/2022-5/16/2022 for \$142,000.00. Trustee Long second. Upon roll call the following answered:

Ayes: Trustees: Hanson, Hower, Long, Hill, Murray

Nays: None

**6B) TREASURERS REPORT AND FUND TRANSFER:** Trustee Hill moved to approve the May Treasurers Report, with receipts of \$202,442.32, disbursements of \$1,008,254.73, leaving a negative balance of \$805,812.41. ACH payments are scheduled for \$682,188.15 and

\$9,699.27 will be coming out of the utility account. Trustee Long second. Upon roll call the following answered:

Ayes: Trustees: Hanson, Hower, Long, Hill, Murray

Nays: None

**6C) TREASURERS REPORT AND FUND TRANSFER** - Trustee Hower moved to transfer \$855,000 from the money market account to the checking account, \$54,000 from the ambulance account to the money market account, \$9,388.63 from the money market account to the utility account and \$140.00 from the checking account to petty cash . Trustee Long second. Upon roll call the following answered

Ayes: Trustees: Hanson, Hower, Long, Hill, Murray

Nays: None

Trustee Hower stated they are doing the landscaping at Station 3 and there will be approximately \$200,000 to \$300,000 still left to be paid. Trustee Hower is working with the bank regarding the delay of tax from Cook County.

**7A) PUBLIC INFORMATION REPORT** –A written report was provided.

**8) REPORT BY CHIEF AND ASST. CHIEFS** – A written report was provided. Trustee Long asked about the strategic planning committee meetings. Chief Kreher stated he will follow-up on the meetings reports which were supposed to be completed and submitted by April 30<sup>th</sup>. Trustee Murray will replace Trustee Struck on the Technology Strategic Planning meeting. There are delays on the batteries for defibrillators, and repairs on vehicles, the Trustees would like a report on how these delays will be addressed. Trustee Long suggested resuming the staff meetings with the Trustees.

**9) UNFINISHED BUSINESS** - None

**10) NEW BUSINESS**

**10C) APPOINTMENT OF ATTORNEY AND AUDITOR.** – Trustee Long moved to reappoint Rich Curran as the BCFPD council and reappoint Eder Casella as auditor for the next 12 months . Trustee Hill second. Upon roll call the following answered:

Ayes: Trustees: Hanson, Hower, Long, Hill, Murray

Nays: None

**10D) CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION SETTING THE DATE FOR THE PUBLIC HEARING ON THE COMBINED ANNUAL BUDGET AND APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE FOR 2022-2023.** – Trustee Long moved to approve the

resolution 2022-2, setting the date for the public hearing on the Combined Budget and appropriation meeting for July 18, 2022 at 6:30 pm. A Draft will be posted for inspection. Trustee Hill second. Upon roll call the following answered

Ayes: Trustees: Hanson, Hower, Long, Hill, Murray

Nays: None

**10E) CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION RATIFYING THE SECOND AMENDMENT TO THE JANUARY 1, 2020 AGREEMENT BETWEEN BCFPD AND PARAMEDIC SERVICES OF ILLINOIS, INC.** – Trustee Long moved to approve the resolution , ratifying the second amendment to the January 1, 2020 agreement between BCFPD and Paramedic Services of Illinois, Inc. to incorporate all the salary increases for all the members effective April 27, 2022 Trustee Hill second. Upon roll call the following answered

Ayes: Trustees: Hanson, Hower, Long, Hill, Murray  
Nays: None

**11) EXECUTIVE SESSION-** Trustee Hill moved to recess to closed session at 7:29 pm for the purposes of personnel issues. Second by Trustee Long. Upon roll call the following answered:  
Ayes: Trustees: Hanson, Hower, Long, Hill, Hanson, Murray  
Nays: None

The regular session resumed at 9:08pm. In attendance Trustees: Hill, Long, Hanson, Hower, Murray

Trustee Hanson thanked everyone for attending the meeting, stating the Board has learned a lot and appreciates your passion and insights. The Board will not make any decisions this evening.

**12) ADJOURNMENT** – Upon the motion by Trustee Long second by Trustee Hill and approved unanimously by a voice call of all Trustees present, the meeting was adjourned at 9:09pm

Respectfully submitted

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read 'Murray Hill', is written over the typed name.

Trustee Hill  
Secretary