

Hamden Fire Retirees' Association, Inc.
Minutes – June 8, 2021

President Bob Mordecai called the 47th regular meeting of the Hamden Fire Retirees' Association, Inc. to order at 5:08 p.m. on Tuesday, June 8, 2021, at the Hamden Elks' Hall and was also carried on the ZOOM platform, our first attempt at a combination in-person/Zoom meeting.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the Chair reviewed "Zoom etiquette" that requests that members whose microphones are not muted to please remain silent when others have the floor. The smallest noises can make it difficult for everyone to hear whoever is speaking.

The Chair welcomed member Ralph Dievert, who has recovered nicely and is present with us today at the Elks. The Secretary noted the members attending on Zoom include Gil Spencer, Ray Dobbs, Ed Badamo, Tom Hart, Bob Kenney, Jeff Stoehr, and Honorary Member Shirley Mangler. (Sec'y Note: Technical difficulties prevented Mark Pratt and Bob Slater from signing in, but they later sent their regards to the group.)

MINUTES – The secretary read the minutes of the February 10th meeting. A motion was made by Harold Mangler and seconded by Jim Leddy to accept the minutes as read. Motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS – The secretary reported that Jim Dunlop and his wife Debbie have moved to South Carolina as of early last month. Inasmuch as distance precludes any opportunity to chair a meeting in the absence of the Chair, Jim resigned as vice president, a position he has held since elected in 2014. In Jim's email to the secretary, he nominated William Fitzmaurice as a possible replacement.

COMMUNICATIONS – Treasurer Bill Fitzmaurice read the reports for the first quarter.

2021 First Quarter - January 1, 2021 – March 31, 2021

Checking balance as of January 1, 2021	\$ 505.94
Shares balance as of January 1, 2021	<u>2,973.28</u>
Total balance as of January 1, 2021	\$ 3,479.22

Income:

Dues: 2020	\$ 15.00
Dues: 2021	495.00
Dues: 2022	30.00
Donation: Richard Carroll	<u>50.00</u>
TOTAL income this quarter	\$ 590.00

Expenses

PayPal – (Dues)	\$ 2.96
U.S.P.S. (P.O. Box 185605 – 12 mo.)	<u>162.00</u>
TOTAL expenses this quarter	\$ (- 164.96)

Transfers from Checking to Savings	None
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Checking balance as of March 31, 2021	\$ 930.98
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Shares balance as of March 31, 2021	<u>2,973.65</u>
Total balance as of March 31, 2021	\$ 3,904.63

A motion was made by Chick Manware, seconded by Jim Koutsopolos, to accept the first quarter report. Passed unanimously.

The Treasurer then presented the report of the second quarter thus far:

2021 Second Quarter (to date) - April 1, 2021 – June 8, 2021

Checking balance as of April 1, 2021	\$ 930.98
Shares balance as of April 1, 2021	<u>2,973.65</u>
Total balance as of April 1, 2021	\$ 3,904.63

Income:

Dues: 2020	\$ 15.00
Dues: 2021	\$ 90.00
Subscription	<u>10.00</u>
TOTAL income this quarter (to date)	\$ 115.00

Expenses

PayPal – (Dues)	\$ 0.74
PayPal (Subscription)	0.59
U.S.P.S. (200 postcard stamps @ 36-cents ea.)	<u>72.00</u>
TOTAL expenses this quarter (to date)	\$ (- 73.33)

Transfers from Checking to Savings	None
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Checking balance as of June 8, 2021	\$ 972.65
Shares balance as of June 8, 2021	<u>2,973.65</u>
Total balance as of June 8, 2021	\$ 3,946.30

There was a question on the subscriptions. The secretary noted that they are voluntary and cited a recent scam where an offshore group tried to coerce the Association into paying a licensing fee for having used an allegedly copyrighted photo in a 2016 tribute to the late astronaut, Sen. John Glenn. The scammers claimed the Association was a “business” (vs. a “non-profit”) because it was charging a fee for subscriptions to its archives. However, the Association was able to prove that at the time the photo was published on the HFRA website in December 2016 the Association was not yet charging for access to its archives. After the scam was neutralized with pro-bono help from local Attorney Ned Burt, the HFRA started requesting donations instead of fees for subscriptions to the website to avoid similar problems in the future.

A motion was made by Kevin Shields, seconded by Harold Mangler, to accept the treasurer’s second quarter report. Passed unanimously.

COMMITTEES – Benefits Committee – The Chair urged members to attend by Zoom the June meeting of the Hamden Employees Retirement Board tomorrow at 3 p.m. The secretary will be sending the Zoom link to all HGSRA members and clients later today.

The Chair then reported on the recent meeting of the HGSRA, when the attorney for that organization reported on the progress of the lawsuit against the Town of Hamden.

Sunshine Committee – The secretary reported that he is in contact with member Gil Spencer, who is still recuperating at home and who is attending today by Zoom. Gil has a significant department milestone coming up soon, but no details were revealed at this time.

Tom Doherty reported on a recent visit that he and the secretary paid to John O’Hare at his home in Orange. John has slowed down a bit due to knee problems, but he is as sharp as ever. The three enjoyed sharing many department memories, especially about our late brother Art Heriot who, in addition to his being an outstanding firefighter, was an amazing natural wit.

History Committee – The secretary displayed a framed letter dated October 23, 1964 (attached to these minutes), which was donated to the Association archives at today’s meeting by Kevin Shields. It was from his father, our late brother Ff. Joe Shields (ret. 1980, passed 2008), who was then secretary of the Hamden Paid Firemen’s Sick Benefit Association. It is a letter of thanks to the Board of Fire Commissioners for approving additional vacation time for veteran department members. This was before collective bargaining was allowed for municipal firefighters and the HPFSBA had to periodically request additional benefits from the fire commission and hope they would approve.

NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS – The Chair noted the resignation of vice president Jim Dunlop, due to his recent move out of state. The secretary made a motion, seconded by Ralph Dievert, to accept Jim’s resignation with the thanks of the Association for his six years’ service as our V.P. Motion passed unanimously.

The Chair noted Jim Dunlop’s email nomination of Bill Fitzmaurice to succeed him as vice president. Jim Leddy seconded the nomination. The Chair then asked three times if there were any other nominations from the floor. There being none, the Chair declared the nominations for vice president closed, whereupon Don LaBanca made a motion, seconded by Chick Manware, to have the Secretary cast one ballot to elect Bill Fitzmaurice vice president of the Association until the term expires at the end of 2022. Motion passed unanimously.

Bill offered his resignation as treasurer. The Secretary noted that Bill Fitzmaurice had taken on the job of treasurer, effective January 1, as his request. However, the two jobs really ought to be performed by the same person, mainly because of tasks related to the collection of dues and the subsequent distribution of dues cards.

The Chair requested nominations for treasurer. Chick Manware nominated Dave Johnson, seconded by Jim Leddy. The Chair asked three more times if there were any nominations for treasurer. There being none, the Chair declared nominations for treasurer to be closed and the members presented unanimously voted Johnson to complete Bill Fitzmaurice’s term as treasurer.

OLD BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS – The secretary noted that when we amended the by-laws in 2019 to reduce the number of meetings from four to three annually, it was before the COVID pandemic greatly interfered with our ability to meet and socialize. This had a very negative affect on our Association despite the later ability to meet on Zoom. He acknowledged that it was his idea, and it was a bad idea. Therefore, the secretary offered a motion to the following change to Article 3, Section 1 of the Association’s by-laws, **“Section 1: Regular meetings of the Association shall be held four times annually, during the second week of the months of January, April, July and October, on either a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday on a rotating basis. Meetings**

may be held either in person, on Zoom, or both, depending on circumstances.” The motion was seconded by Don LaBanca. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously. The amendment will be sent to all members and will have to receive a favorable vote at the October meeting to become effective.

GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION – Dennis Baker asked if there was anything new of the museum. The secretary reported that there is nothing being done at the present time.

The secretary asked the Zoom attendees whose video components were off to say a few words. However, apparently none of the four non-video Zoom attendees could “unmute.”

The Chair noted that the next meeting is scheduled for an afternoon in the second week on October. The exact date and location will be announced as the date nears.

The Chair thanked the in-person and Zoom attendees and requested a motion to adjourn so that the members present could enjoy the pizza that was just delivered from Tonino’s by the secretary’s wife. Motion by Jim Koutsopolos, seconded by Jim Leddy, to adjourn at 5:45 p.m. Passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

David G. Johnson
Secretary

17 members at the Elks: Baker, Buechele, Dievert, Doherty, Fitzmaurice, Frodel, Johnson, Koutsopolos, Leddy, LaBanca, Mangler, Manware, R. Mordecai, Shields, Strawhince, Surprise, Williams. 7 on Zoom: Badamo, Dobbs, Hart, Kenney, Mangler, S. (Honorary), Spencer, and Stoehr. 2 Guests: Niki Dobbs (Zoom) and Barb Johnson – Total of 26 in attendance

SECRETARY’S NOTE: Despite the fact that we were successful in this first attempt to use Zoom technology to include remote members with the in-person meeting, the Zoom video playback the next day revealed significant problems with audio.

In the future, it will be necessary to improve the microphones used by the Chair and members attending in person. In a regular Zoom meeting each of these individuals is facing his computer’s microphone. At today’s in-person meeting, only the secretary was directly in front of his computer.

Also, there has to be a better way for Zoom attendees to get the attention of whoever is monitoring the Zoom screen at in-person meetings if they want to offer any comments. During playback the next day, I noticed at least one member who had wanted to be recognized when the by-law amendment was discussed, but I did not notice his raised hand. Zoom does provide for an electronic hand raise, but we have yet to learn how that works. We have to work on this.

Finally, I suggest that for future combo in-person/Zoom meetings that someone other than the secretary be exclusively responsible for monitoring the Zoom screen to ensure that Zoom attendees are able to fully participate in Association meetings. DGJ

HAMDEN PAID FIREMEN'S SICK BENEFIT ASSOCIATION

FIRE HEADQUARTERS

HAMDEN 18, CONNECTICUT



October 15, 1964

Board of Fire Commissioners
Memorial Town Hall
Hamden, Conn.

Dear Sirs:

At our meeting held Tuesday October 13, 1964
it was voted to send this letter to express our appreciation
in obtaining for the men of the Department three weeks
vacation after ten years of service and four weeks vacation
after twenty years of service.

We also want to thank you for your thoughtful
consideration of all our Budget Requests and any other
effort made by you on our behalf.

Very truly yours,
Joseph F. Shields
Secretary

COPY:

Hon. John DeNicola, Chairman
Mr. George Hindinger, President
Mr. Michael Sullivan
Mr. Ted Baboncini