

Hamden Fire Retirees' Association, Inc.  
Minutes – April 12, 2023

Vice President Bill Fitzmaurice called the 53<sup>rd</sup> regular meeting of the Hamden Fire Retirees' Association, Inc. to order at 12:18 p.m. on Wednesday, April 12, 2023, at the Hamden Elks' Hall.

The Chair opened the meeting by having members stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. Prior to the start of the meeting, the Chair presented a new 4' x 6' "indoor" U.S. Flag to Elks member Fred Romano. The flag purchase was authorized at the October meeting so that the Elks would have a flag in the small meeting room where our Associations meets.

**MINUTES** – The Secretary read the minutes of the January meeting. A motion was made by Harold Mangler, seconded by Chick Manware, and passed to accept the minutes as corrected.

**COMMUNICATIONS** – The Secretary reported that he acknowledged a \$25 donation from Dick Carney in memory of John O'Hare, which was also acknowledged to John's widow, Rita.

**TREASURER'S REPORT** – The Secretary-Treasurer read the report for the first quarter of 2023.

**TREASURER'S QUARTERLY REPORT**

January 1, 2023 – March 31, 2023

Checking balance as of January 1, 2023	\$ 519.53
Shares balance as of January 1, 2023	<u>3,523.74</u>
Total balance as of January 1, 2023	\$ 4,043.27
Income:	
Donation (D. Carney i.m.o. J. O'Hare)	\$ 25.00
Dues (2022)	15.00
Dues (2023)	795.00
Dues (2024)	<u>15.00</u>
TOTAL 1st quarter income	\$ 850.00
Expenses	
PayPal Fees (Dues)	\$ 7.07
U.S.P.S. – (Check #200 – 100 postcard stamps)	44.00
U.S.P.S. – (Check #202 – P.O. Box Rental)	216.00
Bob Mordecai – (Check #201 – Refreshments)	<u>79.52</u>
TOTAL 1st quarter expenses	\$ (- 346.59)
Transfers from Checking to Savings	<u>500.00</u>
TOTAL 1st quarter Checking payouts	\$ (- 846.59)
Checking balance as of March 31, 2023	\$ 522.94

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Shares balance as of January 1, 2023	\$ 3,523.74
Transfer from Checking	500.00
Dividend (1 <sup>st</sup> quarter - Shares Account)	<u>0.48</u>
Shares balance as of March 31, 2023	\$ 4,024.22

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Checking balance as of March 31, 2023	\$ 522.94
Shares balance as of March 31, 2023	<u>4,024.22</u>
Total balance as of March 31, 2023	\$ 4,547.16

Income since March 31, 2023: None

Expenses since 3/31/2023	
4/10/2023 - The Flag Store – 4’ x 6’ Indoor Flag (Fringed)	\$ 100.00

Checking balance as of 4/12/2023	\$ 422.94
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A motion was made by Harold Mangler, seconded by Carl Backus, to accept the first quarter treasurer’s report. Passed unanimously.

**COMMITTEES – Benefits Committee** – The Secretary reported that since the settlement with the Town, he has discontinued sending out Retirement Board monthly meeting notifications to all members of the HGSRA. Members can determine Retirement Board meeting dates and times – second Wednesdays at 3 - by simply going to the Town’s website.

**Sunshine Committee** – The Secretary reported that the card signed by all members present at the January meeting, with the group photo of those in attendance, was sent to Paul Turner and was acknowledged by his wife Mary, who expressed Paul’s sincere thanks for the card.

There was a discussion on the need for more volunteers for the Sunshine Committee.

**History Committee** – The Secretary asked Vic Mitchell to report on anything new on the old schoolhouse/museum project. Vic reported that a meeting with representatives from our association and the volunteers with the Mayor’s executive assistant was scheduled in early February, but the Mayor’s executive assistant did not show. When a new date was arranged, the committee met with the Town Engineer, Fire Chief, Fire Marshal, and the Building Inspector. Some minor damage was noted and will be investigated by the Building Inspector.

Bob Mordecai suggested that help from students at Eli Whitney might be enlisted to make whatever building improvements and renovations may be needed. A follow-up meeting has yet to take place.

Tom Doherty commented that when it comes to the old schoolhouse it seems like every town department wants a piece of the pie and he expressed annoyance at how we have been consistently ignored by the Town. (After the meeting, someone – the secretary does not recall who – suggested that the museum be dedicated to all first responders, including the police and EMS. However, this was not the intention of Chief Berardesca or this association when we first approached the Town. Only at the start of this project did the Hamden Historical Society also request space to commemorate the town’s last one-room schoolhouse.)

Also, despite what we had been assured prior to said meeting, the building had not been cleared of all items from other departments. Vic also reported that apparently the \$50,000 capital improvement, included in the budget a few years back by Chief Berardesca to repair the building for a museum, is no longer in the budget.

The Secretary noted that Vic has informed him of the excellent fire museum of the Ansonia Fire Department. We hope to visit it soon. He also mentioned a visit to the Bristol fire museum a few years ago, where he took many photos to get an idea of what we might want to include in our museum. Company 7 has already offered to donate their 1918 Brockway chemical truck to our museum if it ever becomes a reality.

Clark Hurlburt mentioned that two retired Waterbury fire officers have assembled an excellent fire museum in Waterbury's old Burton Street fire station and suggested that we might want to arrange a visit by members of our association. Ironically, this fire station is also the site of Waterbury's first LODD. The Chair, who is also the president of the New Haven County Fire Emergency Plan, will reach out to these individuals to see if we might be able to arrange a visit.

Regarding the website, the Secretary noted that there had been no updates due to a recent health issue that requires that he relinquish a number of commitments, but the website will not be one of them. He hopes to get the website fully updated soon.

#### **NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS** – None

**OLD BUSINESS** – There was a final vote to change the by-laws to increase annual dues from the present \$15 to \$20, effective with the 2024 calendar year. The Chair noted that there was a motion on the floor from the last meeting to make the change. There are a couple of members who had prepaid their dues for 2024 before the increase was proposed last meeting, and they will not be dunned for the additional five dollars. The Chair called for a vote, which was unanimous.

The Chair noted that as per the vote at the October meeting, the secretary purchased a new U.S. flag for the Elks' downstairs meeting room. The flag was presented to a representative from the Elks before the start of this meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS** – The Secretary proposed a by-law change to Article 6, Section 1, that would create two positions from the present position of Secretary, those of Recording Secretary and Corresponding Secretary, the duties of which are already spelled out in our by-laws. New Section 1a would allow one individual to perform both duties in a given term if he/she so desires. The Secretary noted that if the change passes, he would be happy to continue as Corresponding Secretary, but after having taken the minutes of every meeting and doing meeting prep for the past fourteen years, the role of Recording Secretary will have to be done by someone else.

The proposed change is as follows (new provisions in red):

#### **ARTICLE 6 – OFFICERS**

**Section 1:** The elected officers of the Association shall consist of a President, Vice President, **Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary**, Treasurer, and three (3) Trustees, all of whom shall comprise the Executive Board.

**Section 1a:** **In any given election cycle, the jobs of Recording and Corresponding Secretaries may be combined for the duration of the term.**

These changes will also be reflected in any other relevant sections of the by-laws.

There was a discussion on reaching out to possible candidates, especially to our more recently retired members.

A motion was made by Carl Backus and seconded by the Secretary to adopted these changes to the by-laws. Motion passed unanimously.

There was a discussion on a donation to the Turner Family to help with the expenses related to Paul's recovery therapies, which have severely impacted the family. Elizabeth Beaton has started a GoFundMe page to help with these expenses and so far it has garnered more than \$30,000.

Tom Doherty spoke in favor of donating to help the Turner family. He noted that as a "fraternal organization" our association should be able to help those of our members who are in need.

In anticipation of a possible vote to donate to the Turner Family, HFRA President Bob Mordecai, who was unable to attend today's meeting due to a long-standing commitment, sent an email to Vice President Bill Fitzmaurice and the Secretary. He asked to be read at this meeting. The complete text is as follows:

"I feel I must make a comment on the proposal for the go fund me donation to the Turner family. I just want to be sure that what we do for one of our members we should be in the position to do the same for any member who incurs a life changing situation.

"We started our HFRA as a fraternal & social organization and would not like to see us become a benevolent group that could hurt our objective.

"I certainly want to show care to a brother or sister in times of need but think as a whole it may not be the correct way to address this?

"Please see to it that this statement is read at the meeting prior to taking a vote on this proposal.

"Despite the tragic Paul Turner situation, and being a worthy cause, maybe it being addressed as an individual personal monetary contribution rather than an association donation would be more appropriate?

"Thank you  
Respectfully  
Robert Mordecai  
President

"P.S. I don't know what a substantial or sizeable. Also can this please be sent to each of the executive board members that I do not have email addresses for."

Speaking in favor of a donation in a reply to Bob, the Secretary wrote, "In our fourteen years of existence this is the only such time this kind of situation has befallen one of our members. In my opinion we are not carrying out our mission as a fraternal group by ignoring an opportunity to help. Many of our members have donated, some of them quite generously. But the HFRA as an organization has done nothing.

“Hopefully this type of situation will not happen to one of our own ever again. But if it did, given our resources [presently over \$4,500 and growing each year], I would hope that we would be prepared to assist in a similar manner.

“Also, it is impossible to fully quantify the additional positive moral support provided by such a donation, beyond the obvious financial support that it provides.”

Jim Koutsopolos remarked that with \$4,500 in our treasury why can't we donate \$500 to help the Turner family? Tom Doherty echoed Jim's thought. The Chair noted that in a phone conversation after sending his email, Bob's concern was for our organization to not put itself in the position of being a financial assistance group and that we should be prepared to act in a similar manner in an subsequent similar situation.

The Chair asked if anyone wanted to put a donation into the form of a motion. Accordingly, Jim Koutsopolos made a motion to make a direct donation of \$500 to the Turner Family, which was seconded by Tom Doherty. (Note: GoFundMe gets a percentage of each donation, so a direct donation to the family would avoid any deduction from the amount donated.) Under discussion, Dennis Baker asked if Tony Melillo had had a stroke and did we do anything to assist him? The Secretary noted that he only learned of Tony's health situation from his wife the day before he died. Jim Leddy asked if we knew what financial assistance was being provided through the military (Paul being a veteran). The vote to make a \$500 direct donation to the Turner family was unanimous.

The Chair noted that he has been in touch with the Turner family and Paul is making very good progress toward his recovery. There are been several events recently to assist the family. The Secretary asked the Chair to see what can be done to advise us of any future events.

**GOOD OF THE ASSOCIATION** – Vic Mitchell noted that Bob Anthony was inducted into the Connecticut Firefighter Hall of Fame last week at a dinner at Aquaturf. Bob was the local's second president and served for many years as the department's representative on the Retirement Board. The Secretary noted that there is a “heavily edited” video of his entire crew at Station 4 taken on New Year's Eve 1992-93, when Bob was about to take over as Local 2687 president. A link to it is on the HFRA website.

The next meeting will be scheduled for Thursday evening, July 13<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m.

A motion was made by Jim Leddy, seconded by the Chair, to adjourn at 1:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



David G. Johnson  
Secretary

Members: (17): B. Amatrudo, C. Backus, D. Baker, R. Chase, T. Doherty, W. Fitzmaurice, D. Harrison, C. Hurlburt, D. Johnson, J. Koutopolos, J. Leddy, H. Mangler, F. Manware, V. Mitchell (H), D. Murphy, J. Spencer, A. Williams.