

# **Board of Fire Commissioners**

Greenfield Fire District  
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A Special Meeting of the Greenfield Fire District was called to order at Company #1 by Chairman Richard Spackmann at 7:04 PM on March 14, 2011. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the results of the recent Insurance Services Office (ISO) review.

**Present were:** Commissioners Atwell, Barss, Chandler, Spackmann, Waite; Secretary Petkus, ISO field representative Russ Craven. Please see sign in sheet for other in attendance.

Commissioner Spackmann introduced the members of the Board and officers present, and thanked Mr. Craven for attending this meeting.

Commissioner Spackmann explained that they would go through the different sections of the document for discussion/questions/answers, with the following highlights noted:

- Receiving and Handling Fire Alarms, Section 412 Review of Telephone Directory: Mr. Craven noted that they look at how the District is listed in the phone book with both the emergency number and business number listed. It actually goes against the District if they have the individual fire companies listed. Emergency number and business number should both be listed under "Fire" and "Greenfield". Suggested removing individual stations from the phone books under the theory that it causes confusion.
- Commissioner Spackmann questioned when the District would be scored again if it put together a plan and implemented changes. Mr. Craven noted that if a letter is sent to the NJ office, and the changes are implemented over several months or a year, then the District can probably call them after the changes have been put in place to request another review.
- Commissioner Spackmann confirmed that the last time the District was surveyed was in 1994; Mr. Craven confirmed this and noted that part of the point drop is because of the huge difference in the District between then and now; improved on score with anything that has to do with equipment, up on engine companies, reserve pumpers, ladder points. What hurt the District is the Distribution section, which is the measure of how much of the hydrant district is within 1.5 miles of an engine company, and most are over that. When questioned on the District's increased ability to get water, Mr. Craven confirmed that increasing the area that you have water to can be a two edged sword, because the farther the water system expands, the farther away you are from the responding company. He also noted that regarding the dry hydrants, they are generally unrecognized unless they can get quite a bit of information on the water supply. Commissioner Spackmann commented that the distribution part is realistically out of the District's control at this point.
- Commissioner Spackmann pointed out that it looked like the District did very well regarding engine companies, better on reserve pumpers and increased ladder service company due to the new ladder.
- Commissioner Spackmann noted that regarding Credit for company personnel, there was actually a slight decrease and questioned why. Mr. Craven explained that in scoring this section, it basically takes the turnout for structure fires as an average, subtract one for a Chief, takes that number and divides it by three and then divides it by how much apparatus you have to man. Back in 1994, essentially three fire stations were ignored, and now he

had to show it as manning more equipment using an average turnout of 38.1 people vs. 19.7 in 1994, and the math of it knocked the points down. Commissioner Atwell noted that turning out 38 people for a structure fire is a lot of manpower. Mr. Craven explained that it is more than double the equipment; maxed out at twelve men per pumper and eighteen on the ladder for volunteers. Commissioner Spackmann pointed out that you can only fit six people on a truck. Commissioner Atwell noted that a full crew is 6 people whether they are paid or volunteer. It was noted that we are being penalized for being volunteers, and what ISO is saying is that you need three volunteer firefighters for every one paid firefighter. Mr. Craven noted that he looks at it more of a response time thing, rather than a training issue; volunteers do as much training as paid people.

- Brief discussion regarding using similarly rated surrounding Fire Districts with relation to fire loss and calculation of ISO rating.
- Question regarding why the District did not credit for the County drill tower; Mr. Craven noted that he needs to be put hours to the facilities; you need to not only have access but you need to use it, and the max hours is 24 hours, or eight 3 hour drills. You also score better if you have a higher percentage of personnel participating.
- Mr. Craven also noted that regarding company training, for volunteers anything over two points is good; there were a few long drills with a high turnout, and he used the eight longest drills with the highest attendance, based on the District's list of active members. Brief discussion continued.
- Discussion then turned to water sources. Chief Lant noted that along Route 50, other than Eckerd Drug store, they are all sprinkler systems with backup power. Mr. Craven noted that long term that can help the outcome. There are people that do building inspections for the owners' insurance company, and if they do a sprinkler inspection and it meets all the NFPA sprinkler requirements, ISO shows the need for fire protection as zero. What the inspectors need, but sometimes cannot get is the design flow for the sprinkler system. They need to have a plaque to show that otherwise they are rated non-sprinkler, as well as a drain test and alarm test. This is where the Town building inspector can help.
- Commissioner Spackmann noted that if they did not get the ladder truck and focus so hard investing in all the things they have gotten since 1994, which did not happen without spending a lot of money, the rating could have gone even worse, more like a six. Even though the District has been investing in their people and equipment, there is still a feeling of helplessness; the bar that has been set is so unrealistically unreachable.
- Mr. Craven explained that the only real hope is on the buildings, the sprinkler vs. not-sprinkled question. He did a flow test at Dorothy Nolan School, and made several calls to the school district and the middle school, but did not receive any return calls. Chief Lant noted that Dorothy Nolan has both the hydrant system and a cistern; Mr. Craven noted if that is true he can include that as a secondary source. He noted he also did flow tests by the storage place MorStore, the Saratoga System south of 50 and at the Paddocks. AC Moore is rated non-sprinklered and usually it is because you can't find the information needed; recommended getting all the bigger buildings sprinklered.
- Question arose as to when they would do another rating of our District. Mr. Craven noted that every two years or so the District should be getting a letter asking questions of the District, which is then compared to the last field survey, which should not be more than fifteen years old and they are trying to push it closer to ten to twelve. Mr. Craven also noted that they are revising the standards and is expecting a rash of requests.
- Mr. Craven also suggested the following:
  - Specialized training, classes for officers, the maximum score is two 6 hours days per year for each officer
  - One three hour Hazmat refresher each year
  - Will receive credit for FF1 or equivalent, but only if they take it within the first year. If they have up to two years to take it, there is no credit.

- Mr. Craven noted that he will take another look at the hydrants, including the cistern as long as it shows 30,000 gallons at Dorothy Nolan, and then forward information to the District.

Chairman Spackmann thanked Mr. Craven again for coming to the meeting and answering all their questions regarding the ISO report.

Meeting ended at 8:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce A. Petkus  
District Secretary