

**TOWNSHIP OF EDGEWATER PARK
MINUTES-NOVEMBER 30, 2011**

Mayor Booker called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM

FLAG SALUTE

Open Public Meetings Act Statement

IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT, CHAPTER 231,
P.L. 1975 THE CLERK READ THE STATEMENT:

Public Notice of this meeting pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act has been given by the Township Committee in the following manner:

- A. By posting written notice on the Official Bulletin Board at the Municipal Building 400 Delanco Road Edgewater Park, New Jersey on November 28, 2011.
- B. By e-mailing written notice to the Burlington County Times and Courier Post on November 28, 2011.
- C. By filing written notice with the Clerk of the Township of Edgewater Park on November 28, 2011.

Present: Mrs. Aimee Belgard, Mr. Scott Kercher, Mr. John McElwee, Mr. Joseph Pullion arrived, Mayor Darrell Booker (Committee Members)

Also present: Mr. Robert Brian, Chief of Police and Linda M. Dougherty, Clerk/Administrator

DISCUSSION

Mayor Booker discussed that Township Committee invited members of the Beverly Edgewater Park Emergency Squad Board of Trustees to a special meeting to address questions and concerns regarding operations and actions of the squad. Invitees:

Andrew Baldinger – President

John Fine – Treasurer

M. Lou Garty, Esquire of the firm Vassallo & Garty, Cherry Hill, NJ.

Also present Cindy Bordon, Captain, Beverly Edgewater Park Emergency Squad Member

Lou Garty, attorney for Squad, reviewed that the squad will re-organize from top to bottom and there is a temporary break in service by the Beverly Edgewater Park squad. The plan is to make the squad better, more responsive by upgrading technologies, use of equipment, policies and procedures, training and operations within the next 6 weeks. The Trustees are present to answer any questions as well as Cindy Borden, Captain of the squad to review operations. Endeavor Emergency Squad, Burlington City, is providing service until the squad is fully functional which they anticipate will be on or about January 2, 2012; there was no interruption in service.

THE MAYOR OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: The Mayor opened this portion of the meeting to public comment.

Judith Hall, 6 Johnson Place, Edgewater Park, Chairperson of the Edgewater Park Senior Advisory Committee and former Mayor of Edgewater Park.

Mrs. Hall advised that she will discuss her interaction with Mr. Dillwyn Stevenson, former Treasurer of the Squad, while she sat on Township Committee and the impact of the disruption regarding your cease of operation and bringing in of Endeavor.

Mr. Stevenson discussed with her the problems with utilizing a volunteer only base to service the communities. He further discussed that the squad is considering going to career service personnel which would require an increase of donations to the squad; Edgewater Park also contributes gasoline service and permits the squad to fundraise in Edgewater Park. Mr. Stevenson advised her that at that time Endeavor Emergency Squad answered most of the calls during the day with volunteers providing service for the remainder.

Mrs. Hall further discussed that once the squad converted to paid positions the service and response times have been wonderful. The squad also served the community by attending sporting and other events.

Unfortunately Mr. Stevenson was sick for several months and passed away in September 2011. Mrs. Hall questioned why the Board of Trustees choose not to appoint an interim treasurer during this period and what input Mr. Stevenson had in the actions that the Trustees are now taking.

She further discussed that Board of Trustees showed lack of courtesy to Township Committee and the residents of our community by the way in which we were notified and lack of communication. She further discussed that she did not approve of the way the squad handled publications in the newspapers; personnel issues should not be discussed in the newspapers.

Lou Garty, Esquire discussed that the squads purpose was to not degenerate anyone or Mr. Stevenson legacy. It is not unusual for an organization to review internal policies and procedures. The decision was made after careful consideration; it was done to improve service.

Cindy Borden, Captain, and member of the squad for over 10 years. She discussed that she was also devastated by the passing of Mr. Stevenson.

She continued that the squad had to be shut down and rebuilt from the bottom; there are serious problems and if issues were not corrected eventually the squad would be shut down. Endeavor came out and helped them. The Beverly Edgewater Park squad will continue to support events. The squad is now receiving phone calls for volunteers and all staff, paid or volunteer, will be retrained. Upon re-organization the squad will remain paid during the day and volunteers to serve anytime. Mutual Aid agreements are in place to assist coverage; she has no problem with other communities coming in to serve as back up.

Walt Krause, 29 Spring Lane questioned the members regarding their notification process to the towns and whether they think that it was the best way to proceed. He is not referring to service but lack of communication to the communities other than reading about it in the newspaper. The Mayor and Committees should have been informed.

Lou Garty, Esquire discussed that the decision was made after careful consideration; it was done to improve service.

Cindy Borden discussed that prior to making this decision they reached out to communities for assistance and Endeavor responded that they would help. Ms. Borden discussed that prior to the squad taking this action there were problems in the grid system and responses; this has now been corrected. She has no problem with Delanco, Delran, Burlington, Willingboro etc responding with a second vehicle.

John Fine, discussed that both communities were informed through the Public Safety Director and Chief of Police. They also received written approval from the Director and Chief regarding the squad's plan of action. Your questions pertaining to governing body notifications, that communications could have been better. Since this is a public safety issue they report to the Public Safety Director.

Township Committee discussed that a letter issued to Chief Brain marked as received by him on 11/5/2011 and provided to the Linda Dougherty, Clerk/Administrator on 11/7/2012 and forwarded to Committee on the same day. The letter, from the squad which was not dated, stated that there would be extensive internal review and temporary services provided by Endeavor. This is much different then what people read in the Burlington County Times a day or so later. The questions are justified because it seems that Committee is learning more through newspaper articles vs channels that should have been used.

Justus Clark, Hayes Avenue, 300 S Harrison Avenue: questioned if the police are trained in CPR. When he wife was ill the police were the first to respond.

Chief Brain discussed that Edgewater Park has 4 officers that are EMT certified.

Kevin Johnson, 307 Cardinal Road, former Mayor of Edgewater Park

Mr. Johnson discussed that on election night Mr. Fine approached him and advised that this decision was based on several complaints from members of the squad filed with State and that the State advised you to either clean house or close your doors. Is this still the case and does the State still support this initiative.

John Fine discussed that they have been in contact with the State Dept of Health. Regarding our conversation on election night the conversation was that if we do not deal with matters we could have some issues; the decision to close their doors was a decision of the Trustees.

Mr. Johnson expressed that his words were to clean house or close your doors.

John Fine discussed that the Trustees are taking a pro-active approach to ensure quality of service.

Walt Krause, 29 Spring Lane requested an update on status as of today; vehicles in use and are people going to be put back in positions and what is best for both towns. Endeavor is doing a great job for the community. He further expressed concerns regarding response times.

Cindy Borden discussed that they are here to address concerns that can be legally discussed. She is not sure how many people have been misconstrued but the target date to reopen is January 2 with a Chief in place by that date. They are working on reinstating volunteer services and Monday night will be the first duty crew served by the Beverly Edgewater Park squad with December schedules listed. Endeavor will provide service during the day and filling in on nights that they do not have a complete staff.

Ms. Borden further discussed that Endeavor personnel are on site in Beverly; the State requires response times under 9 minutes. There is one vehicle on site; then the grid system is in place for backup services.

Township Committee discussed that the reason they invited the Beverly Edgewater Park Squad to this special meeting was to inform the public.

Ms. Borden further discussed that she understands the frustration level by residents and Township Committee. She is sorry for the way everything went down but they had no choice. The discussion pursued and Ms. Borden advised that the squad called the State and advised them of many problems and questioned what they would be looking at. The State advised that if you don't handle it and the State has to come in the squad would be subject to numerous daily fines. The squad is not in the position to pay multiple fines.

Township Committee questioned what departments advised the squad that fines would be levied.

Ms. Borden discussed that it was the department of health, Office of EMS.

Lou Garty, Esquire advised that nothing has been assessed; nothing has been formalized. What they are saying is that there may be potential and may be a better way to handle certain things.

Township Committee questioned what departments advised that there may be potential violations that made the squad take action.

Mr. Fine that they reached out to, but there has been no assessment of fines no assessment of any wrong doing. We indentified possible hazards and red flags to review possible issues in the future. There were concerns about a potential surprise audit we could face fines of up to \$10,000 per day; this has not happened. They reached out to NJ Department of Health, Office of Emergency Services; this is the department which governs emergency medical services. The squad has to make sure those standards are met; they are taking a pro-active approach to correct any hazards.

Committee questioned and requested clarification that the actions taken by the squad were items indentified by them and were not recommended by the State to take action.

Lou Garty discussed that this is an organization that has been in operations since 1947. There are certain upgrades in technology, recording keeping policies and procedures that had to be done. One of the big upgrades is the web site and volunteers have the ability to sign on and choose shifts; the squad now has a lot of volunteers. Through the use of new technologies and upgrades, volunteers can be used with less reliability on paid staff and greater abilities to coordinate with other agencies.

Township Committee questioned what initialized their decision to approach the State?

Mr. Fine discussed that they reviewed the requirements under the State; as an administrative body we conducted our own internal review to determine flaws and what could make them liable for risk. We wanted to address the issues head on and make sure safe guards are in place.

Township Committee questioned if the squad had any recent inspections by the State?

Ms. Borden advised that the vehicles have been inspected but it has been several months since the last inspection; it is not just the ambulance.

Township Committee questioned what prompted this; change in personnel, a specific incident?

Lou Garty discussed that it has been a confluence of events that have occurred over the last few months as people have continued to review for compliance of reporting regulations, financial

requirements. Paid employees and volunteers brought concerns to the board; the board decided to review matters. Some things were done very well such as response times, dedication, and service. There are other areas that needed improvement and other areas of potential liability. There decision was to be pro-active and to contact the State or go to our own board for a review. This is not one event.

Township Committee questioned how long the liabilities have existed? Items or policies that have been in place for a long period tend to get looked at as standard procedure.

Lou Garty advised that it is not constructive to go there; this is something we started to look at.

Committee questioned who is the responsible person within the organization to make sure that the items are in line? Who is responsible for the paper work?

Lou Garty advised that there are various functions.

Mr. Fine continued that Executive Board oversees the Chief Executive Officer or Chief of Emergency Services. The Chief is responsible for making sure the organization is compliant and the daily operations of the organization.

Township Committee questioned how many of the non-compliant issues were in place prior to the person last holding the position, took office?

Mr. Fine advised that he does not want to talk about personnel issues.

Township Committee questioned at what in time does this Committee get to see what was reviewed from the beginning and the final outcome? Will any items that you are now advising that you cannot speak about becomes a matter of public record; specifically, actions that caused you to terminate operations of the entire organization. Most successful audits are used as a training mechanism to develop personnel and explain what needs to be corrected.

Lou Garty advised that there are matters that are privileged and confidential.

Township Committee discussed that the Township contributes a large sum of funding to the squad. If there are potential liabilities we as the contributing entity and the entity to a degree that are responsible for the health and safety of our residents should be informed about potential liabilities and if they have been resolved.

Mr. Fine discussed that they will be in conference with the governing bodies as to what has been addressed however, pertaining to a time line it is complicated because they are working with other agencies to make sure everything has been addressed. The line of communication will continue. Pertaining to personnel; volunteerism has increased since the beginning of this and changes.

Cindy Borden discussed that some volunteers are residents; they have received EMT applications even from Pennsylvania.

Township Committee requested that once they are able to inform them to please keep communications open.

Mr. Fine discussed that the Board identified flaws and communication is something they are going to rectify with governing bodies in the future.

Township Committee questioned how many of the paid staff and volunteers that were terminated how many of them will be reinstated to their positions and able to respond as a volunteer?

Cindy Borden discussed that of the paid staff, she and two other members, have been volunteering their time to put the squad back together. The squad had paid staff and volunteers. Paid squad members that were terminated who wish to be considered can apply; the squad is in the process of accepting applications. All staff members were contacted and advised of the application process.

Ann Clark, 300 Hayes Avenue discussed everyone that works in business has checks and balances. The squad has been operating for years; were there checks and balances in place? It does not make sense that all of the sudden the doors were shut and re-open in a few months. Will the squad reach out to outside service to check to make sure you are compliant?

John Fine advised that there are checks and balances that they needed to be in place to make sure that employees and volunteers are protected. There were issues concerning the checks and balances that needed to be addressed so that they would not become a major issue in the future and safe guards in place. Emergency service requirements are consistently changing and they want to make sure that are 100% compliant. Mr. Fine further discussed that the Board already reached out to outside EMS departments such as Delran and Burlington City to assist them. They also have outside audits performed for checks and balances; audits are submitted to the Township.

Bill Kearns, Township Solicitor, discussed that based on experiences is not usual for organizations with volunteer leadership to come to certain points in their careers to have to perform some reorganization and structure. On the positive side the squad they retained the services of Lou Garty who is a very competent, experienced attorney. Getting professional assistance in this process is a positive step. Edgewater Park Township Committee and probably Beverly City Council are going to want see how it has been restored, potential agreements and documents to make sure that things are being done. What has happened in the past, the squad addressed that some things are confidential; ongoing investigations he would think have to be confidential at this point. Over the next several months Committee will review contract procedures and possibly consider adopting an ordinance.

Walt Krause, 29 Spring Lane discussed that he thinks when a lot of people read the paper and looked at Endeavor they felt that everyone is coming from Burlington and the Beverly-Edgewater Park squad was shut down. When you need assistance the anxiety level is high. He requested that the squad provide a working model and coverage.

Cindy Borden, discussed that when this all happened they approached Endeavor and requested assistance. Endeavor polled their staff and they were able to provide an entire crew. Endeavor has a vehicle station in Beverly Station 24 hours a day; not interruption in service. Within the next few days, volunteers will be in place. Endeavor will be plugging in when for shifts not covered by volunteers during the month of December. Also in December they will be conducting hiring process, interviews, training etc to get everyone in place for January 2, 2012. A lot of the former employees expressed that they enjoyed working at the squad and expressed an interest in coming back. If a second vehicle is required as of Monday night volunteers will

be able to respond. In January Endeavor services will not be required and operations will be back in place. Ms. Borden further expressed that communications could have been handled better.

Judith Hall, 6 Johnson Place advised that in May she had a conversation with Dillwyn Stevenson on the status of the organization. He advised her that everything was glowing. A great percentage of the work he did for the squad was out of his office and he seemed to have a handle on matters of the squad. If everything is glowing in May then 3 months later there are all of these problems; did the problems exist before May. Mrs. Hall discussed that she played a role in increasing the amount of tax dollar donations that were provided to the squad. She did not realize that the organization was private; she wanted to attend a meeting of the squad and found out that she could not attend. She could not address the squad's board. Her faith was put in their performance but also that of Mr. Stevenson.

Ms. Borden discussed that she cannot answer all of her questions. There were limits to things that people could do and that was to be addressed. Legally she cannot address some matters.

Mr. Fine discussed that Mr. Stevenson was an icon in Edgewater Park and Beverly and an anchor for the squad. They want to make sure that traditions move forward for the next 64 years. That had to hit their obligations head on.

Joe Holmer, 311 S. Harrison Ave: Best squad ever; she used the services of the squad and police and they responded in less than 5 minutes. When you get your insurance bill there is a charge for the ambulance, gas etc, who gets that money. If a separate town responded there were different amounts assessed by who responded.

Mr. Fine discussed that whoever provided the service would be the billing party. The Beverly-Edgewater park squad has a third party billing company. Pertaining to funding, this is how the squad pays for their staff; when volunteers are not available paid staff is there to provide the service.

Charlene Rogers, 510 Melbourne Ave, Beverly, Kenny Roger's daughter. She discussed that her father had a horrible year; he was the last founding member and active since 1947. This is not something her father wanted to do. We all read the papers, many organizations crash and burn that look wonderful on paper. She does not understand why people object to any organization that is doing their due diligence. Sometimes there are things that they legally cannot divulge. When people press for answers they interfere with the process. The squad did a lot of work to make sure that there was coverage and continue to work to have coverage. No one can control what the newspapers right. For many members this was a life of work. They are trying to fix problems and not be shut down.

Bonnie Phillips, 224 Ivy Road discussed that she was a former newspaper editor and writer. She is also a recipient of the squad's services. She worked for the City of Beverly as a grant writer and administrator of funds. The squad is not making her feel much better because of the state of the squad. How long will it take for you to have program where you want it to be; it will probably take years. She recommended that there are local newspapers – keep people informed.

Mr. Fine discussed that have a good solid core of volunteers and EMT's; same familiar faces will be back. Everyone who responds to treat someone has an emergency medical technician license. It is their responsibility to make sure licenses are secured and protected for the staff

and residents. Policies are put in place, this will not take a year. Policies will be in place so that when operations resume on Monday night safe guards will be in place with the same quality of service.

Al Desjardins, 511 Lee Avenue, Beverly discussed that he is the Emergency Management Coordinator for Edgewater Park and Beverly City and a 38 year member of the fire department. He was a member of the squad in 1983 and is now back as a member. The last thing the squad wanted to do was to shut down but they asked for help and Endeavor assisted. Things eventually come out. These folks are working hard to make things better. Issues were discovered and re-acted upon. They sought the advice of the attorney and other EMS squads.

Pat Nevesall, 415 Farnum Avenue questioned who is paying for Endeavor's services.

Cindy Borden discussed that services are billed; Endeavor's policy is the same as Beverly-Edgewater Park squad and "soft billing" is their policy.

John Fine discussed that the Beverly-Edgewater Park squad entered into an agreement with Endeavor; there will be no bill issued to Edgewater Park Township.

Judy Hall 6 Johnson Place discussed that she heard a lot from the senior community. What is the difference between a private vs municipal squad. Does funding such as taxes or contributions come into play?

Bill Kearns discussed that is not unusual in this area to have mainly volunteer squads; declining volunteerism forced volunteer squads to have partially paid employees. The township can adopt an ordinance or enter into an agreement with an organization to provide emergency medical services with certain provisions. Municipalities can have volunteer, paid or private emergency medical services.

Fran Wilkins, 96 N Garden Blvd discussed that the squad should put an article in the newspaper that they are open and providing services 24/7.

Al Desjardins, 511 Lee Avenue, Beverly discussed that his career job is with the County 911 Center and dispatches for Burlington County. Since this has started there have been 85 calls of service for Beverly and Edgewater Park; no calls were missed. There was a lot of thought that went into this process. Volunteers help keep taxes down.

John Fine discussed that their objective was to protect integrity of the department. Communications yes will be improved. They want to move forward and address things that need to be fixed to ensure quality of services.

Hearing no one else wishing to speak the Mayor closed this portion of the meeting to public comment.

Township Community thanked the members of the squad, community and residents for coming out this evening. The answers and feedback will be taken under consideration to ensure the safety of our residents. Township Committee still has answers that they would like to obtain. All options will be considered prior to entering into any agreements.

ADJOURN

Mr. McElwee moved to adjourn; seconded by Mrs. Belgard at 8:47PM.

Roll Call: Mrs. Belgard-yes, Mr. Kercher-yes, Mr. McElwee-yes, Mr. Pullion-yes, Mayor Booker-yes

John McElwee, Mayor

Linda M. Dougherty, RMC/Administrator

Dated: March 20, 2012