

Montauk Fire District
October 10, 2025
Commissioners Regular Meeting 18:30 hours

MINUTES

Commissioners Present: James Wright
Richard Schoen
Charles “Chip” McLean
Michael Mirras
Carmine Marino

Also Present: Chief Peter Joyce, Jr., 2nd Asst. Chief Joseph McDonald, Treasurer Robert Hauser and Secretary-Deputy Treasurer Dawn E. Lucas

Call Meeting to Order:

Chairman Wright called the regular Commissioner Meeting to order at 18:30 hours and we all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

Secretary's Report:

Approval of Minutes: Commissioner McLean motioned to approve the minutes of the September 17, 2025 Workshop Meeting with said corrections, seconded by Commissioner Mirras; motioned/passed/carried.

Purchase Requisitions:

- A purchase requisition for Boundtree for medical supplies totaling \$1,216.04, Commissioner Mirras motioned to approve, seconded by Commissioner Marino; motioned/passed/carried.

Audit of Bills:

Treasurer's Report: September 2025- Robert Hauser presented the Treasurer's Report, noted we should keep an eye on three accounts, capital items, building repair and association dues but otherwise all looks good. Robert does want to let the board know he finally spoke with Cullen and Danowski, they are finalizing the 2022 financial's and was able to complete the AFR (Annual Financial Report) for 2022 and upload to the state comptrollers website. He was also able to confirm that Cullen and Danowski will come to the district office to complete 2023, 2024 and 2025 financial's. They will coordinate with Ms. Lucas. Vice-Chairman Schoen noted that himself and Ms. Lucas met with 2 gentleman from the state comptrollers office about the four recommendations that were given to us which we fulfilled. They were very receptive of all the answers we gave them, because we did everything they asked us to do. Ms. Lucas had everything ready that they were asking for from a list of about 8-10 items. A huge stack that they only made copies of a few things. They also thanked Ms.

Lucas for being organized with all her paperwork. We were not the only ones audited, 20 other Fire Districts were too. Commissioner Mirras and Commissioner Marino noted they were called too. Chairman Wright stated he was available by phone which Vice-Chairman Schoen noted and gave them Chairman Wright's phone number. Vice-Chairman Schoen noted the gentlemen did recommend an in-house audit at the end of each year, and we did note, we do one each month. One more thing to add, Vice-Chairman did note regarding LOSAP, that the board was not in agreement with the percentage requirement Commissioner Mirras motioned to approve treasurer's report, seconded by Commissioner Marino; motioned/passed/carried,

Ms. Lucas presented the invoices for payment totaling \$41,247.33, Commissioner McLean motioned to approve, seconded by Commissioner Mirras; motioned/passed/carried. Ms. Lucas has two more bills to add, one for disability insurance from Hartford for \$754.88 and one for Zoro for a mirror all totaling \$1,196.87, Commissioner Mirras motioned to approve, seconded by Chairman Wright; motioned/passed/carried.

Committee Reports:

Apparatus: Commissioner McLean gave his report;

- 9-3-2- Dash board screen message has been corrected and functional
- 9-3-8- Emergency Mechanical found a transfer case, once received it will be installed in rig. And back on the road.
- 9-3-3- check engine light on, Fully Involved notified and will be out to check.
- 9-3-80- had a check engine light, resolved, it was an anti pollution filter.
- 9-3-16- returned from shop, cable issue with mirrors, waiting on mirrors. It also developed an issue with the drug safe ounce it was returned. The drug safe can not be opened, waiting to hear back from the company to troubleshoot. A question arose did we loose a lot of narcotics. No. Commissioner McLean stated it wasn't narcotics, it was the fact that not all drugs were removed. Commissioner McLean asked the paid paramedic supervisor to create a check list for the on duty person if asked to removed drugs. Procedure for removing drugs, if the occasion arises that a rig has to go out of service is that the board goes to the paid provider on duty and they remove the ALS drugs and any other ALS Equipment and store in firehouse. 9-3-16 hasn't been returned to full service but could be used if we have a paid paramedic on duty because the paid person would have narcotics on them. So right now it is last to go out. Back to check list, Commissioner McLean was told there is already a checklist and has been for 2 years. The mirror has a 6-8 week backlog, once in VCI will come out and fix.
- 9-3-31- ignition issue- resolved
- Vice-Chairman Schoen spoke with Ray Muller of Firematic, he will be going to factory around the 20th of this month and expects to have engines delivered to Yaphank first week of November. Vice-Chairman Schoen noted once in Yaphank we will have a team go and inspect them before we take delivery.
- Old 9-3-16 was sold and we received the money. It was picked up on Wednesday morning by two young individuals with no plates. They said it's the fourth time they have done this and will be driving it back to Oregon. It sold for \$14,400.00.
- In the near future we will be getting 2 new engines and old 9-3-1 back. The old pieces of equipment will need to be listed for sale, which means we need to come up with a dollar amount for them. 9-3-1, 9-3-1A, 9-3-4, we were told could sell for about \$20-30,000. Tanker could sell for \$30- \$40,000. We can list these with an availability date. Chairman Wright

asked if we have the money to pay for all of them, thought we wanted to wait till new year. No, money is available, there is \$2,932,984.46 available in the Apparatus and Equipment.

Equipment:

- NO REPORT

Buildings & Grounds: Commissioner Marino gave his report;

- Houseman is back, he came back Wednesday. Luke Stein and Jimmy Angelidis did a great job taking care of everything.
- Masonry company was suppose to be back September 23rd but haven't seen them. Commissioner Marino finally spoke to John Tanzi and arranging for them to finish and put letters back on building.
- Kitchen Project will start 1/13/2025 because of Pasta Dinner for School fundraiser. John Tanzi spoke with the contractor and they are fine with that.
- Commissioner Dinner will need to be switched since our month to host is January.
- Entry box by the bay doors is working now. Control room has an issue with bay doors, will be addressed with Brent.
- G&M Diege who does our pump maintenance sent us an estimate for the tank replacements of \$245,000. We can't go bigger on the tanks because we are in a ground water recharge district. There will be a push with the town to provide a great deal of that cost. Chairman Wright stated this will need to go out to bid, but G&M Diege handles all our maintenance. They also supplied us with three engineers that specialize in this. Commissioner Marino motioned to contact an engineering firm for tank replacement and get this out to bid, seconded by Commissioner Mirras; motioned/passed/carried.
- Chief noticed in front of bay 1 or 2 the asphalt is lifting and making a pothole. Chairman Wright noted the Town usually takes care of that for us in the spring, but Chief is concerned about the winter. Carmine will talk with Brent about.
- Carmine noted we talked about extending the the lines longer, adding lines for backing vehicle in, those lines are complete. Chief McDonald stated the membership is very happy with them and it seems to help.
- Chairman Wright noted gas pumps keep doing down. Ms Lucas has been in contact with vendor and repair guy We have been resetting it manually. The repair guy will call Brent next week to discuss.

Budget and Capital Reserves:

- Commissioner Mirras asked Ms. Lucas if 2026 Budget was submitted to the Town, YES it was.
- Capital Reserves- Equipment- \$2,932,984.46 and Building Reserves- \$443,394.14. Once Audits are done hopefully there will be a surplus to put into the Reserve accounts.
- Budget Hearing Notice is on website and the date is October 21, 2025.

Insurance: Commissioner McLean gave his report;

- Pending claims were settled, received money for them and working on repairs from those designated claims.
- Vice-Chairman Schoen noted we received a Notice of Claim from the Supreme Court of the State of New York involving the accident with the parked car, a Tesla. Approximately \$16,000 worth of damage in the Gosman's parking lot. The information was sent to our insurance company.

Communications:

- NO REPORT

Paid Personal:

- Chairman Wright noted he has been on texts back and forth with Commissioner McLean and Chris Boccabella, paid ALS supervisor and they seem to be getting a long much better these days.
- Chairman Wright also noted everyone was happy with our backup houseman, do we want to work in a third. Answer was NO.

Department Personal:

- Chief noted Catherine LeFevre transferred from Juniors to the the Department.
- Chairman Wright noted the email that Vice-Chairman Schoen received from Donna Hitscherich should NOT be discussed in Executive Session but read in open session. Vice-Chairman Schoen read the email from Donna Hitscherich that was addressed to him, it read; Thank you for agreeing to follow up on the criteria used by the Chiefs and the Board of Fire Commissioners in it's determination not to host at the Montauk Fire Department, the EMT original class, core sponsor Hunter EMS. Last year I understand a similar class I proposed had no fee other than books and equipment for each student. On the REMSCO website Hunter EMS is listed as a core sponsor. I have confirmed with Suffolk County that members attended classes where Suffolk County was not the core sponsor. There are no insurance implications that they are aware of on the BLS level. As indicated to you, I (Donna) was advised by phone on September 15, 2025 by Ellen Cook that the Chiefs and the Board of Fire Commissioners made the determination not to host the class. Ellen said she could provide no further information because she was not at the meeting where the determination was made. This was a follow up letter to a discussion one morning with Vice-Chairman Schoen and Donna Hitscherich. Chairman Wright gave his opinion; This person was told over 20 times not to go outside the change of command. He will give her that she is a dual member so her chain of command is both company 4 and company 3. Her (Donna) talking to you on a regular basis is not right. It's not correct, you (Vice-Chairman) should not be speaking with her, she (Donna) is nothing but a member, she is not even a company 4 member. The officer said they do not want her class, that is enough for us. We are the Commissioners, if the officers tell us they don't want the class that she is selling, that's enough. This is a person who's husband is suing three fire departments at the moment and has sued Rockville Center. If we do not want to use her person we don't have to. She (Donna) can not text you (Vice-Chairman Schoen), email, speak to you personally and try to change that. It's incorrect, he thinks it's a reason for suspension again. He (Chairman Wright) thought she (Donna) should have been suspended a long time ago because she does not understand the chain of command. She (Donna) is suppose to go to her officers, not directly to a Commissioner. Yes, we all talk to members and get opinions, but she does this on a regular basis and it's incorrect. She (Donna) has been warned not to do it. That was Chairman Wright's opinion. Vice-Chairman Schoen wanted to generally respond to that. Are you (Chairman Wright) suggesting, which I (Vice-Chairman Schoen) think I heard, that she (Donna) should be singled out as not to be able to talk to any of the Commissioners or send any of the Commissioners emails. We all know there are many members of this department that talk to each of on a routine basis and bitch and moan and complain. But don't try to start classes. Vice-Chairman Schoen noted, so it's specifically the difference of starting a

class. He just wants to know and not trying to cause trouble but when he gets for example another member of the department coming to me and says, do you know the chiefs aren't doing this and they are not following the bylaws, do I (Vice-Chairman) just say talk to the Chief, I am not allowed to talk to you. Chairman Wright said, honestly, yeah that is the rule. They are suppose to go to their company officers first, they are not suppose to come directly to the Commissioners. Chairman Wright does understand we all do hear stuff from members, but this is different because she went way outside the chain of command and tried to create a class that the officers of the fire department don't want. That is reason enough for her not to get what she's asking. Vice-Chairman Schoen suggested that if we are telling her your not allowed to teach a class because this is what the Chiefs don't want you to do, she should be informed of that. She (Donna) was asking Vice-Chairman Schoen why and wanted an explanation. So the explanation to be given to her, your not teaching the class because the chiefs don't want it. Chairman Wright thinks the response should not be from Vice-Chairman Schoen and he said the response will certainly not come from him. Chairman Wright asked the chiefs if they agree. Chief McDonald said they had a conversation with her (Donna) and told her its our (Chiefs) decision that we do not want to allow the class for no real reason other than, they didn't feel comfortable with it. Chairman Wright understands them not feeling comfortable is reason enough. As stated earlier there are five lawsuits, he gets it. He (Chairman Wright) is saying that on record. Chairman Wright asked the chiefs if they could tell Donna that we are not interested in her class or does the board need to do it. Chief Joyce stated they are more than capable of letting her know. Chairman Wright asked if anyone has a disagreement with that. Commissioner McLean first wanted to get the paperwork on the three departments she has a lawsuit with, Chairman Wright said NO, he said her husband has lawsuits with Springs, East Hampton and he believes Bridgehampton as well as the county. She was also involved in a lawsuit with Rockville Center, which she lost. Between the two of them five lawsuits with fire departments. Chairman Wright is saying this on the record because they are lawsuits, that is why we keep having to talk to our lawyers about what she (Donna) does and what she (Donna) says. Chairman Wright understands Commissioner McLean likes her (Donna) and Commissioner McLean noted Chairman Wright always deteriorates to that and throws it in his face. Chairman Wright apologized. Commissioner McLean stated she (Donna) is a constituent whether we want to admit it or not. Commissioner McLean states as professionals, board members and even chief officers, he is not suggesting how to speak, but at some point as professionals and dedicated emergency service providers we have to rise above the hatred and disdain that we obviously have for this particular person and spouse too. We are here to serve the community, the members of this department and if it's something that would properly well serve the members of this department, an EMT course in Montauk, is something we should be proud of. It would be provided for the community in general, the fire department community, who knows you could get firefighters that would be interested and they didn't have to travel to Southampton. Chairman Wright stated it could be done through another mechanism. Having additional EMT's on the fire ground is always a good thing. Commissioner McLean stated why can't we make this an opportunity like we have done in the past. We have brought in an instructor that was paid and the schedule mirrored the schedule for this course. Commissioner McLean on the record, as servants of this community we owe it to the community to rise above this and maintain professionalism and objectivity when it comes time to providing the services that we are charged to provide. Chief Joyce just wanted to make sure this was 100% explained. Turning down this proposed class has nothing to do with the instructor specifically. Chief does not care if Donna Hitscherich would like to teach a class, no problem. His issue is

that the class it is modeled after, which we partook in and had EMT's produced with passing grades because of it, were all at the end of their training feeling inadequate in their skills and abilities and it was reflected back to him by the officers, that sentiment was carried through in their observations of them when they first finished their class. So in the Chiefs opinion, the hybridized class for EMT produced us with lesser quality EMT's at the end of their schooling than the traditional classes we have pursued in years previously. The Chief is not required to give that explanation to Donna , he does it to the board as a further explanation to understand his reasoning. If the Chief says he doesn't want to have it, He is not obligated to explain his reasoning just because they want to hear it. Chairman Wright noted the board of fire commissioners can not command the Chief to do it. The question arose, where does that leave us at this point? Commissioner McLean noted we will not have an EMT class in Montauk, we could have one. Chief stated if she (Donna) is requesting a reiteration of why the class didn't happen or why I didn't approve it, the Chief will then tell her. Vice-Chairman Schoen stated not for nothing this is all public knowledge and she can read the minutes either way because it's out there. Vice-Chairman Schoen noted Chairman Wright raised a question about members of the department speaking with the Board of Fire Commissioners and quite frankly he has an issue with that. He is going to talk with anybody who wants to talk to him. He is not giving them permission or decisions or anything only the board can give. He is receptive to learning things. Chairman Wright stated we can all get information from members but members do not make district decisions, of course not. The Board members and the chief's make the decisions. Some decisions are the chiefs and this particular one id definitely a chief's decision. Chairman Wright noted her (Donna) email was very lawyer email and he was offended. Chairman Wright doesn't think Vice-Chairman Schoen should be having weekly conversations with her (Donna). Vice-Chairman Schoen said he doesn't, he does not reach out to her in any shape , matter or form. He is approached because he happens to be here every morning. It's not only her (Donna), but by a host of other people. Vice-Chairman Schoen does not see anything wrong with that. Chairman Wright noted this has been cleared up, she is going to be told by the chief they do not want her class. Vice-Chairman Schoen noted that is why he brought it up here, he is not going to relay to her his opinion because his opinion doesn't count for crap. It's the board's opinion. Chairman Wright asked the board, if it should be up to the Chiefs to make this decision, the board agreed. Commissioner McLean is not objecting just wanted to make sure it was done on a professional level, beyond the deceit and hatred that is apparently obvious, in existence. Chairman Wright noted the chief explained that very well, which he actually didn't know. That class is a lesser class then what is usually taught. Just for a point of clarification, it isn't as per Commissioner McLean. The chief said it's not lesser material but when the individuals were finished, they were not as confident in their skills and required quite a bit of remediation. Chief asked Sal if he would like to comment (Captain of CO1) as a member who took that class. Sal doesn't want to disparage someone on record that he didn't feel trained properly but just like commissioners talk with members, chiefs do too and the conversation he had with the chiefs was the students from previous classes may have been more trained and equipped on the traditional way the department has been doing classes verse the hybrid. Since Sal had the floor, he also wanted to summarize what Jim was trying to say, is that if I talk to you that is a back channel for you to force the chief to try and make a different decision. He is not trying to get involved with the board. Sal does understand the idea if I (Sal) was going to the board beseeching you to try and have the chiefs make a new decision that is a form of manipulation which may not be acceptable. If you are trying to play the chief, then I would talk to a board member, send an email to try and sway your opinion where you are forced to talk to

the chiefs and put them back into a decision process, which they already made. Vice-Chairman Schoen in that case would agree but nothing has been said to the chief. There is no influence certainly not on his part to the chief to have him change his mind or anything else. That would never be because that is not how Vice-Chairman Schoen operates. This was mentioned to the board and it's a board decision. Commissioner McLean noted there is a difference between the guys sitting at this table and the guys sitting over there. We are all public elected officials held directly responsible to the public, the taxpayer, where you gentlemen are not, you are not publicly elected, you are responsible to the members of the Montauk Fire Department, which is a basic legal issue also. We are based in different arenas and hopefully have the same goals. Chairman Wright asked the chiefs to contact the officers of company 4 and have them try and work on a real course out here in Montauk. Chief said sure. Chief said at this time all newly probationary EMT's are assigned to a class. I don't think this will be ongoing issue for this round of students. Sag Harbor doesn't do classes? NO, the closest is Southampton. During this whole process the County did reach out to Chief Joyce to find out exactly how many people and what can be done to move a class further east. Chief has looked at it already. Commissioner McLean wanted to clarify he is not in disagreement. He believes it is the Chiefs decision and just wanted to make sure he was fully aware of all the facts surrounding his decision. Chairman appreciates the chief taking care of that problem, his response, no problem.

Law:

- Vice-Chairman Schoen noted a couple of meetings ago a member approached the board to put a public ad out about clearance and driveways. Vice-Chairman Schoen spoke with Tom Flight and he said he would take care of it. In the paper, ad about driveway requirements and access. So the public has been notified.
- 10 members are still in need of a physicals as of yesterday. They have till November 1 and if they don't get one as per District policy, they will be suspended. Their suspension will be lifted once they receive said physical. They have till December 31, 2025. if they have not gotten one by this date they will be removed from the rolls of the department.

Old Business:

- **Hoses-** Ms. Lucas noted at the last meeting we approved the purchase of all the hoses for the new fire trucks. In that meeting it was said a public referendum need to be put out to expend the money out of the reserve account. Ms. Lucas went back to the notes and folder and realized we do not have to that because in our original resolution we wrote in there to include 2 engines expenses for such project, incidental expenses, furnishing and equipment. So Ms. Lucas brought it to Vice-Chairman Schoen's attention and he said Ms Lucas could send over the PO to the vendor. Ms. Lucas sent the PO and spoke to the vendor directly, everything was taken care of. She also let the chief's know.
- **EEFG- Ernie Vorpahl-** Ernie Vorpahl from East End Financial Group talked about our portfolio. As of September 30, 2025 the portfolio is \$7,339,265 plus and a year-to-date gain of about 12% or approximately \$797,000. The S&P 500 Index, which is used to track everything was up about 15% and the Bond Index up about 6%. So year to date we have captured about 80% of the markets return with about half the risk. We are trying to cut risk but keep pace with the overall market. Last year, the portfolio was up about 10% or around \$600,000. Since EEFG (East End Financial Group) started managing the portfolio in 2016 the portfolio had an average rate of return of about 7% for a cumulative gain of \$3.29 million. The assumed rate of

return is 5.25 % so we are way past the assumed interest rate, which is what we are trying to do. We can't be too aggressive or too conservative because the taxpayers have to make up for the difference if we go too crazy one way or another. The portfolio is being managed with allocation of 50% stock, 50% bonds. Equity holdings are 71% large cap stocks, 17% mid cap stocks and 12% small cap stocks. International stocks make up 14% of the portfolio. The beta or risk of the portfolio is .55 verse the markets beta of 1.00. The average credit quality of the bonds are investment grade, which mean Triple B or better. The bonds have an average maturity of 4 years and average duration of 4.2 years. Cash holding total \$171,000 as of September 30, 2025 which includes \$23,814 in actual cash and \$147,270 in a high yielding money market within the portfolio. That will be replenished once portfolio is re-balanced. When stocks experience a 10% decline EEFG will automatically moved bonds to stocks. Commissioner Mirras asked if Ernie Vorpahl was aware we switched to a different administrator, which is Firefly. Question arose what prompted that, better service for a cheaper price. Stocks will continue to do double digits in 2026 and 2027. The AI momentum is real, a ton of money is being spent on it. The 2025 program contribution was \$393,946 and the 2026 program contribution is \$423,133. Ms. Lucas noted that will actually be \$500,000 as per Tony at Firefly. EEFG has always attempted to match the emerging liabilities with the maturities of the bond portfolio top have that cash stashed away for at least two years. The scholarship program this year was awarded to Mackenzie Lenahan.

Chiefs Report:

- Chief McDonald gave an update on new engines. 1st one is done, little hiccup on graphics. Ray Muller of Firematic is flying out to the factory to inspect. Hopefully tanker will be done around same time.
- Chief presented a purchase requisition for 2 sets of turnout gear totaling \$6,901.50 and the members old sets will be used for the probies. Commissioner Mirras motioned to approve, seconded by Vice-Chairman Schoen; motioned/passed/carried.
- Chief presented a purchase requisition for 20 NOMAX hoods totaling \$797.60, Commissioner Marino motioned to approve, seconded by Commissioner Mirras; motioned/passed/carried.
- Chief presented a purchase requisition for 5 SCBA masks (M) totaling \$2,007.20 and the . Commissioner Mirras motioned to approve, seconded by Commissioner Marino; motioned/passed/carried.
- Chief presented a purchase requisition for 10 Minitor VI chargers and 10 Minitor 7 pagers and chargers totaling \$5,631.50 Commissioner Mirras motioned to approve, seconded by Commissioner McLean motioned/passed/carried.
- Training started with the new members and they all seem pretty motivated.
- Chief Joyce discussed awhile ago there was a request to add air tanks and a hose reel to 9-3-2, it revolved around the hydro testing of these tanks, which was done. Was there any follow up? The old truck utilized air tanks and a hose reel and they really need that for the air tools. Chairman Wright remembers this, a compressor was going to be twice as much. He motioned to approve, seconded by Commissioner Mirras; motioned/passed/carried.
- Open house and pancake breakfast this weekend. Fireworks Saturday night. Amagansett is loaning us their brush truck with chauffeur.
- FYI, don't be alarmed if you see a young girl doing a 88 mile endurance run for an FDNY charity. She is running from Islip to the lighthouse

- Commissioner Mirras spoke with Tim Treadwell, Town of East Hampton Marine Patrol Commanding Officer about storing the East Hampton Town boat at the firehouse because of the storm coming. Commissioner Mirras spoke with the Chief and he said it was fine.

Vice-Chairman Schoen motioned to adjourn @ 20:02 hours, seconded by Commissioner Mirras; motioned/passed/carried.

Adjourned 20:02 hours