

The Public Meeting of the Mount Olive Township Council was called to order at 7:12pm by President Nicastro.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT ANNOUNCEMENT

President Nicastro: In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by sending timely notice to the Daily Record and the Mount Olive Chronicle and posting notice on the bulletin board of the Municipal Building, 204 Flanders Drakestown Road, Budd Lake, N.J. Additional notice has been posted on the Township website and Facebook page and on the outside front door of the Municipal Building and sent to those individuals requesting same.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mr. Aaron, Mr. Ferrante, Mrs. Labow, Mr. Mania, Mr. Roman, Mr. Stewart, and Mr. Nicastro

Absent: None

Also Present: Michelle Masser, Township Clerk; Jon Testa, Township Attorney; Rob Greenbaum, Mayor; Andrew Tatarenko, Business Administrator; and Claudia Quinn, Assistant Business Administrator

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- 1. September 5, 2023 WS & PM (Absent: C. Labow)

Mr. Aaron makes a motion to approve the September 5, 2023, WS & PM Minutes, and **Mr. Roman** seconds.

ROLL CALL: Passed with the exception of Mrs. Labow, who abstained on the September 5, 2023, WS & PM Minutes

CORRESPONDENCE

LETTERS FROM RESIDENTS/ORGANIZATIONS/OTHER TOWNS

- 1. Email received September 4, 2023, from NOFA NJ regarding NOFA NJ Weekly Email: September 4, 2023.
- 2. Email received September 5, 2023, from the Statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of NJ regarding The Pioneer Sponsorship opportunity is now available! Diversity Expo is fast approaching!
- 3. Email received September 11, 2023, from NOFA NJ regarding NOFA NJ Weekly Email: September 11, 2023.

RESOLUTIONS/ORDINANCES OTHER TOWNS – None

LEAGUE OF MUNICIPALITIES – None

STATE AGENCIES/LOI/HIGHLANDS – None

MSA/MUA – None

MORRIS COUNTY

- 4. Email received September 1, 2023, from Morris County regarding Morris County Observes International Overdose Awareness Day.
- 5. Email received September 5, 2023, from Morris County regarding This Week in Morris County: Aug. 18, 2023 Update.
- 6. Email received September 8, 2023, from Morris County regarding Charge Filed in 1984 Cold Case Homicide of "Baby Mary".

- 7. Email received September 11, 2023, from Morris County regarding This Week in Morris County: Sept. 8, 2023 Update.
- 8. Email received September 12, 2023, from Morris County regarding 22 Years Later Morris County Remembers 9/11.
- 9. Email received September 14, 2023, from Morris County regarding Morris County Presents Updated Courthouse Exterior Design.

There was no discussion on Correspondence.

President Nicastro: I open the hearing to the public on Ordinance #25-2023,

ORDINANCES FOR PUBLIC HEARING:

Ord.#25-2023 An Ordinance of the Township of Mount Olive, County of Morris, State of New Jersey, Amending Chapter 169, Dogs and Other Animals, of the Township Code to Prohibit the Feeding of Wildlife on Public and Private Property Except for Certain Limited Exceptions.

President Nicastro: Mr. Ferrante.

Mr. Ferrante: Sure, I move for adoption and final passage, Ordinance #25-2023.

Mayor Greenbaum: It should be voted down in favor of Ord. #28-2023.

Mr. Testa: That’s correct.

Mr. Roman: Second.

President Nicastro: Oh, right. The other way. I’m sorry. This was the one that was voted down, right? Any discussion? Roll Call, please.

ROLL CALL: **Defeated/voted down unanimously**

President Nicastro: Ordinance #25-2023 is defeated on second reading and I hereby direct the Clerk to forward a copy of the same to the Mayor and publish the notice of adoption as required by law. I open the hearing to the public on Ordinance #27-2023,

Ord.#27-2023 An Ordinance Amending Ordinance #32-2022 of the Township of Mount Olive Entitled Salaries of Certain Exempt Personnel.

President Nicastro: Mrs. Labow.

Mrs. Labow: Thank you, Mr. President. I move for adoption and final passage of Ordinance #27-2023.

Mr. Mania: Second.

President Nicastro: Does anyone from the public wish to be heard on this Ordinance?

Mayor Greenbaum: This Ordinance deals with the stipends for exempt employees who get CDL licenses. It’s a bonus for people to incentivize them to get their CDL licenses which benefits the Township.

President Nicastro: Seeing none from the public. Closed to the public. Roll Call, please.

ROLL CALL: **Passed unanimously**

President Nicastro: Ordinance #27-2023 is passed on second reading and I hereby direct the Clerk to forward a copy of the same to the Mayor and publish the notice of adoption as required by law.

Mrs. Labow: Joe. I just want to ask the Mayor a question.

President Nicastro: Sure.

Mrs. Labow: The CDL license. Obviously, you have for the bus drivers for school, you have to have the CDL. Would they also get a stipend in addition to their regular pay?

Mayor Greenbaum: We don’t deal with the bus drivers. They’re not Township employees.

Mrs. Labow: Okay. So, just the CDL is . . .

Mayor Greenbaum: This only deals with Township employees who are exempt employees.

Mrs. Labow: Okay. Very good. I just wanted to make sure.

Mayor Greenbaum: It allows them to drive larger vehicles. It’s an incentive for them to go ahead and get the appropriate licensing.

Mrs. Labow: Awesome. Thank you.

President Nicastro: Thank you. Okay, next item on the Agenda for first reading is Ordinance #28-2023,

ORDINANCE FOR FIRST READING: (2nd reading October 3, 2023)

Ord.#28-2023 An Ordinance of the Township of Mount Olive, County of Morris, State of New Jersey, Amending Chapter 169, Dogs and Other Animals, of the Township Code to Prohibit the Feeding of Wildlife on Public and Private Property Except for Certain Limited Exceptions.

President Nicastro: Mr. Mania.

Mr. Mania: I move that Ordinance #28-2023 be introduced by title and passed on first reading, be scheduled for public hearing, second reading, and consideration of final passage at a meeting to be held on October 3, 2023, at 7pm at the Municipal Building, 204 Flanders-Drakestown Road, Budd Lake, New Jersey, and be published, posted, and made available by the Clerk in accordance with law.

Mrs. Labow: Second.

President Nicastro: Any other Council discussion? Mr. Roman.

Mr. Roman: Generally, I’m not in favor of telling people what they can and cannot do on their property but this Ordinance, in my opinion, needs to be passed because when there is certain activity you conduct on your property that ends up harming your neighbors, I think that’s when this governing body needs to take some form of action. Whether it may seem minute, the feeding of wild animals, it does incur a hardship on other residents and neighbors and sometimes . . .

President Nicastro: Thank you, Mr. Roman. Any other comments? Seeing none. Roll Call, please.

ROLL CALL: **Defeated/voted down**

AYES: Mrs. Labow, Mr. Mania, Mr. Roman

NAYES: Mr. Aaron, Mr. Ferrante, Mr. Stewart, and Mr. Nicastro

President Nicastro: Next item on the Agenda is Ordinance #29-2023,

Ord.#29-2023 Bond Ordinance Providing For the Purchase of a Sanitation Truck in and by the Township of Mount Olive, in the County of Morris, New Jersey, Appropriating \$359,998 Therefor and Authorizing the Issuance of \$341,998 Bonds or Notes of the Township to Finance Part of the Cost Thereof.

President Nicastro: Mr. Stewart.

Mr. Stewart: Thank you, Mr. President. I move that Ordinance #29-2023 be introduced by title and passed on first reading, be scheduled for public hearing, second reading, and consideration of final passage at a meeting to be held on October 3, 2023, at 7pm at the Municipal Building, 204 Flanders-Drakestown Road, Budd Lake, New Jersey, and be published, posted, and made available by the Clerk in accordance with law.

Mr. Roman: Second.

Mayor Greenbaum explains what the money is being used for in Ordinance #29-2023.

ROLL CALL: **Passed unanimously**

CONSENT RESOLUTIONS AGENDA:

1. Resolution of the Township Council of the Township of Mount Olive waiving Fire Prevention Permit fees to the Mount Olive Board of Education related to the homecoming fireworks on September 29, 2023
2. Resolution of the Township Council of the Township of Mount Olive authorizing emergency repairs for the Carlton Hills Water Tank (Utility Service Co., Inc.)
3. Resolution of the Township Council of the Township of Mount Olive authorizing purchases off New Jersey State Contracts pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:11-12 for calendar year 2023 (Eventide)
4. Resolution of the Township Council of the Township of Mount Olive authorizing purchases off New Jersey State Contracts pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:11-12 for calendar year 2023 (PMC Associates)
5. Resolution of the Township Council of the Township of Mount Olive authorizing a one-year contract extension to ACE Healthy Vending for the concession of a vending machine at the Municipal Building
6. Resolution of the Township Council of the Township of Mount Olive authorizing a two-year contract extension to PM Enterprises, LLC for the concession of an automated teller machine (ATM) located at the Municipal Building
7. Resolution of the Township Council of the Township of Mount Olive authorizing the award of a one-year contract extension (year 2/final) to Peterson and Sons Tree Service for Bid #15-2019 Tree Removal, Tree Trimming & Stump Grinding (October 30, 2022 - October 29, 2023) *REVISED - Increasing contract amount
8. Resolution of the Township Council of the Township of Mount Olive approving a professional services agreement with RJH Law Enforcement Consultants for services of a Hearing Officer *REVISED - increasing contract amount
9. Resolution of the Township Council of the Township of Mount Olive authorizing the award of a contract for the purchase of paving materials off the MCCPC Cooperative (Tilcon New York)
10. Resolution of the Township Council of the Township of Mount Olive authorizing an amendment to the adopted capital budget section of the 2023 budget
11. Resolution of the Township Council of the Township of Mount Olive Authorizing purchases off New Jersey State Contracts pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:11-12 for calendar year 2023 (FFF Enterprises)

Mr. Roman moves for the adoption of Consent Resolutions one through eleven and **Mr. Stewart** seconds.

Regarding Resolution number two, **Mr. Roman** asks what the cost for the repairs on the water tank is. **Mr. Tatarenko** replies, “just under \$20,000.00.”

ROLL CALL: **Passed unanimously**

MOTIONS

1. Bill List

Mr. Aaron moves for approval of the Bill List and **Mrs. Labow** seconds. There was no discussion.

ROLL CALL: **Passed unanimously**

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mayor Greenbaum announces Country in the Park will be at Turkey Brook Park on Saturday, September 23, 2023, from 4:00pm to 9:00pm. He also announces fall Shred Day will be on Saturday, September 30, 2023, from 9:00am to 12:00pm at the Recycling Center. He reminds everyone that schools are open and to observe school bus safety rules. He mentions he'll be meeting with the Morris Chase HOA at the clubhouse at 7:00pm on September 26, 2023, regarding racial vandalism.

Mr. Tatarenko announces the treatment at Budd Lake has concluded for the year. He discusses the health of the Lake. He then discusses paving that will be taking place on Bartley Flanders Road and Bartley Chester Road. He gives an update on historical items from 2000 International Drive.

OLD BUSINESS – none

NEW BUSINESS – none

LEGAL MATTERS – none

COUNCIL REPORTS

Board of Education Liaison Report

Mr. Aaron reports the Board of Education met on Monday, September 18, 2023. He highlights a portion of the meeting involving student liaisons.

Environmental Committee – none
Lake Issues – none
Library Board Liaison

Mr. Ferrante reports Library is meeting at the same time as the Council meeting.

Open Space Committee Report – none
Board of Health Report
Senior Citizen Liaison

Mrs. Labow reports the Board of Health meets September 20, 2023, and thanks Mr. Tatarenko for explaining to the Seniors what will happen with the new addition to the Senior Center.

Legislative Committee Report – none
Planning Board Report

Mr. Mania reports the Planning Board had two applications with d variances, on which he cannot vote.

Economic Development Committee Report

Mr. Stewart reports the EDC meets next week.

Recreation Liaison Report – none

PUBLIC PORTION

Mr. Fulton: Alan Fulton, 90 Waterloo Road, Budd Lake. I kind of wanted to get out in front of the crowd, here. (Ordinance) #28-2023 was a great exercise in municipal government, I think that's fantastic. The other thing I wanted to speak about is we got our roads paved over in the Waterloo, Lozier, First, Second, Third Street, and they all came out great and I wanted to come up and say something about that because we finally had some good rain. So, now that it's running down the road, it's going down the drains, everything was fantastic. So, I just want to commend the guys that did the work. That's all.

President Nicastro: Glad to hear that. Thank you.

Mr. Fulton: And Andrew, if you had a podcast, I'd listen.

President Nicastro: Just a reminder, state your name and address for the record.

Mr. Buga: Adam Buga, 7 Meadow Lane, Budd Lake, New Jersey. Me and my wife are owners of the house which burned last Saturday. I came here not to blame anyone. I came here . . . thank you, firefighters, first responders, policemen, who came very quickly and maybe they saved my life because I was trying . . . running to the house. Policemen grabbed me. They didn't let me. So, he was my guardian angel. So, I was reading a blog about this incident and people are blaming each other and it looks like everything was okay. Everything was up to date. Regulations. Perhaps it was. So, maybe we have to change something because if everything was okay, and my house burned completely, it has no chance to survive and our street is flat, is very wide, is very close to the fire station and what prevented to be much earlier and maybe with bigger force to really stop at least . . . prevent from totally burning. So, when this happened, I was running around the house trying to find animals. I couldn't. So, I was not thinking of grabbing documents or anything. So, basically, I was outside only with t-shirts and pants and not even shoes. But I just want to open to public and maybe we can find solution because for me, I have another fight. I have insurance now. I have to rebuild house. We need your help as a Township in all permits, whatever is needed. Also, I want to thank you, neighbors, friends, even those people who maybe who were not my friends before. Now they are. Okay, sorry for my voice breaking but this is still fresh. Still fresh. Okay, thank you for your . . . for listening to me and thank you once more to all who . . . helping me in that difficult time and I hope they will be helping me to get through this. I cannot recover whatever . . . we lost everything. Memories . . . everything from pictures . . . everything we brought from Poland. Thank you.

President Nicastro: And I know I speak for Council that we're very, very sorry for your loss, as you know and Mayor or Tyler, . . . Mayor, you want to say something?

Mayor Greenbaum: Yeah, I'd like to actually set the stage and then bring up the firefighters who actually fought the fire. So, first of all, as Joe said, we're all very, very sorry for your loss. It's really heartbreaking for all of us but much more so for you guys that lost everything but thank God nobody was injured. And so that you will move on, this will be a bad memory, you will replace a lot of the lost items, not the memories, but you still have the memories to remember. I was away. I came back very late Sunday night into Town. On Monday morning, I met Tim Quinn at your house at about probably 9:30 in the morning to survey what had happened and I immediately after that, went into meetings at Town Hall to replace the police chief and went on with my business of the day. So, I wholeheartedly apologize for not reaching out to you, but your loss was on my mind from the minute I got back into Town, as I'm sure, everybody else that sits up here. My focus, immediately, was to gather the facts that I thought were critical in terms of what the Township could do better in terms of protecting the residents. We've dealt with this situation numerous times previously, where there's been a loss of a residence and immediately, people think there was some factor that led into the loss which is not really, in my mind, the cause and I'm going to let the fire department speak to that after I go through some facts that I had gathered. A couple years ago, you may recall that there was a house in Flanders where we actually lost an individual and another was very seriously injured, if not perished after the fire. It was literally across the street from the firehouse. Sometimes there are structure fires which cannot be saved. When the fire response, irrespective of what the water supply is, is only as good as the fire response that gets to the scene. So, in other words, if there is a cistern, if there is a tanker response, if there is a hydrant available, it's only as good as when the fire department gets there and what the structure is doing at the time that they get there. Unfortunately, through the years, not only in Mount Olive, but throughout the State of New Jersey, there have been residences which are built with truss systems and when the fire gets into the roof, the structure is not going to survive and in fact, based upon the information that I obtained, that's what happened here. The first thing that I wanted to look at was, was there a water issue? Was there something that the Township could have done in this particular fire, which we didn't do, which ultimately led to the structure being totaled? And I came to the conclusion after speaking to basically everyone that's standing up here, the first responders, the police officer, the fact remains that when the police officer got there, Office Rodriguez, the first to respond, and Radar, who works for the Township got there and we encourage our Township employees who are volunteer fire department members to leave their jobs and go to the scene of the fire so that they can be first responders. They were there before anyone else was at the scene. The house, according to them, was fully engulfed before even Tyler Wargo got there. Tyler works for the Town. He's my OEM Director. He was there within four minutes of the call ending. So, the first call came in I believe at 10:10am, ended at 10:12am. Tyler was at the scene at 10:26am. The fire department was there with both a truck and a tender by 10:26am. That basically is about a 14 . . . I'll let Tyler speak to it, I'm only giving you the information that was provided to me and that's what I said about doing to see whether or not there was anything else which the Township could do or could've done that we didn't do. So, when I spoke to Tyler, I spoke to Kevin Maloney, I spoke to Radar; all of them advised that this was not a water issue, that there was water, in fact, there is a fire suppression system in the neighborhood, a 10,000-gallon cistern around the corner which could've been tapped into in the event that there wasn't water present. When a

truck shows up at a fire, and I confirmed this tonight speaking to Tyler, every truck has a water supply on it, whether it's a ladder truck or a regular fire. I guess . . . what is it, a pumper? That shows up to the scene.

Mr. Wargo: That responded to this fire.

Mayor Greenbaum: That responds to the fire, and they'll get into it. They have water. At some point, it's limited. The water will run out. That's not what happened here because the tanker truck and the pumper showed up at the same time at the scene. There was never not water once the fire department arrived at the scene. So, whether you have a hydrant that's working, and we'll get into the hydrant issue afterwards, or you have a cistern or you have the tanker system, which is not unusual in Morris County; they plan for this. They knew that the hydrants were not charged in your neighborhood. They knew that they had no water. They planned for this. It was not, and Tyler will speak to it, as soon as he knew he needed the tankers, they were en route. He put in a second call. He called the County and got the system going where all of the trucks come and what they do is they deposit their load into a, for lack of a better term, a swimming pool that's created of water and then they go and refill at a spot that we designated for refill, which I guess is Indian Springs. The cistern never had to be tapped because it was never a problem with the water that was being put on the fire. The problem was that the house was so fully engulfed with the truss system, by the time anyone got there, that it was unsafe for the firefighters to go in. So, by 10:30am, all the firefighters were pulled out of the fire. So, then we looked at, I looked at, what was the time of the response? What can we do better to get a fire department there? Obviously, we're a volunteer fire department and people have to go from wherever they are, get to the firehouse, get the truck, get to the fire. I don't think, in my experience, that a 10- or 15-minute delay, although in this particular case was a lot, is unusual in terms of a response. So, what do we do about that? The only thing that we can do, and I saw this on Facebook, is have a full-time fire department where people are actually staged at the house. It's not feasible, unfortunately. For a number of different reasons. Number one. The State puts us in a situation where we have a spending cap. We would never be able to afford the millions of dollars that it would cost to ultimately have people stationed at the house and you wouldn't just need two people. You'd need five or six people, 24/7, 365 days a year. Today in the newspaper there's actually a story that Dover is having a crisis with their paid fire department because they don't have enough paid firemen through their budget to actually sustain what they need. And interestingly enough, after they were done fighting the fire on Meadow, our fire departments went down to Dover to help fight the fire in Dover because they didn't have enough manpower. We actually had a decent response. I believe that we had seven of our trucks there.

Mr. Wargo: There was a total of 21 active firefighters on scene.

Mayor Greenbaum: And seven trucks. Of our trucks.

Mr. Wargo: There was a total of three, four, five. Five of our trucks.

Mayor Greenbaum: Right. So, I'm going to turn it over at this point. My focus, and I apologize to you guys again, because I've always tried to be out there for the people. I missed this one. I didn't catch you guys. Whatever the reason is . . . I actually went to the house on Monday and then I got tied up in stuff and I did not call. You can criticize me all you want but I was focused on gathering the facts and I've apologized for not being there emotionally as a support system for you. I wasn't there. I apologize. I can't take it back. I saw the criticism. I was like "You're right. I should have somehow figured out how to reach out to you guys." I didn't but that's not really where the focus should be. It's not like . . . I can't take it back. Leaving that aside, that's not where the focus needs to be. The focus needs to be: What was the response? What could we do better? What does the Township need to do? With that, I'll turn it over to you, Tyler.

Mr. Wargo: All right, so as the Mayor said, my name is Tyler. I'm the Fire and EMS Director for Mount Olive Township. Before I begin, I just want to say it's very upsetting to me . . . I don't have Facebook; I don't have social media. I'm not tied to social media. People look at me, I am young. I'm one of the few that don't believe in it and when I sit there and I see people criticize different aspects of this call on what transpired and not even think of the humanity of somebody in our Township losing their home, it's pretty sad and I will tell you, you guys are very fortunate. Just to basically go against some of the things that were stated as far as manpower, we had a plan in place way before, yes, there was a Fire and EMS Convention in New Jersey for firefighters. We have a strategic plan that's constantly in place so that way the Town is never basically not protected. We go above and beyond. Yes, we are volunteers, but I can promise you, this Township and this department that covers both Budd Lake and Flanders is looked up to not only for Morris County, but neighboring counties, based on our ability of our training, our response, and how we constantly work and evolve on different situations on firematic scenes. With that being said, I will go into details on the actual call. So, my call sign is actually car 91. I'm Assistant Chief, Flanders Fire. Like I said, I'm also the Fire and EMS Director for the Town. So, we're dispatched. This is going to take a little bit, but I want everybody to understand what we're

faced with and what we have to do from a State standpoint. So, we're dispatched with citywide tones to 7 Meadow Lane, Budd Lake, for reported flames coming from the rear of the residence. Car 91, like I said, was myself, I'm the incident commander of the scene that day, requests an update from police who were initially arriving on scene. Police advised rear of the structure was on fire all the way up to the roof. I immediately requested dispatch to go citywide, again, which basically activates both fire departments on a re-alert, and also started our second alarm assignment which brings in mutual aid departments to our Township, letting them know that we have a significant fire. I arrived on scene and established command at 10:16am. These can all be requested by Morris County. When we communicate, everything's timestamped on when we arrive. Same with our dispatch center. So, these times are not made up. And advised flames from division one, two, and three. And what division one, two, and three, for those who don't know, that's first, second, third floor, so on and so forth. That's how we determine where a fire is and I also advised it was showing at the roof. I advised, due to the area having blacked out hydrants and as part of our strategic plan, knowing that these hydrants are blacked out in that area, we have IAR, which is IamResponding that shows a map of where we respond to, what our water sources are, so on and so forth. I immediately requested a tanker task force. With that being said, and that was at 10:18am, Budd Lake Engine 53 went in service at 10:23am and I advised the crew on arrival, to back down the driveway and pull a deuce and a half handline and stretch it to the side A front door to start aggressive attack. So, I'm going to stop there for a minute and one of the things I will state; we are aggressive. Right? At this point in time, all the residents were out of the structure, there was no jeopardy to life. I made the determination to go ahead into this house to try and actually knock down the fire that was on division one and two. Sometimes chiefs say "Hey, it's not worth it. Stand outside. Don't go in. Don't jeopardize your men and women." I thought we could make an initial push on this fire, so I advised an initial crew to actually go in with a deuce and a half which is a larger bore hose to try and knock the flames down. Budd Lake tanker 57 also went into service and I advised them to feed into 53 as a primary water source. At 10:26am, crews from engine 53 had one line stretched into the front of the structure. Flanders Engine 95 and Tower 96 responded, arrived on scene at 10:28am. At 10:30am, command pulled all firefighters from the structure due to a partial collapse located in the rear of the structure and fire fully involving divisions one, two, and three and the entire home at this point in time. The crews then deployed a deck gun from Engine 53, two handlines side A front and side C rear and deployed Tower 96 master stream side A front roof with all units fully operational and offensive attack. Netcong responded and primary for all down or injured firefighters. Command requested a fill site be set up for inbound tankers to be located at Indian Spring Road with Roxbury Engine 21 at the fill site for all inbound tankers. Chester tender, Roxbury Company 3 tender, Fairmount tender, Ralston Fire tender, and Mt. Arlington tender. Command placed the fire under control at 11:36am and advised crews still operational working small hotspots. In speaking with the resident on arrival, the resident advised he was working in the back of the structure cleaning up weeds with a potential blow torch and also had work done on the rear of his house, electrical, some time ago. This was advised to the fire marshals who were investigating the fire. This location of the residence where the primary fire was located on arrival by command. It was originally stated that command made an attempt to locate the resident's dog and cat. At 13:58, command advised unable to locate dog. All crews cleared the residence, and the scene was secured at 14:22. So, when it comes to water sources, we had 20,300 gallons of water on scene, constantly revolving at any given time and under no circumstances was there any water loss throughout the duration of this event. Like I said, all the crews that we had, we had 20 active firefighters on the scene. They all poured their heart and soul into fighting this fire because we are all residents, as we'd stated, in this Town and a lot of us have actually grown up here. It's very unfortunate. I spoke with the residents who, I mean, I feel for them. It's a tough decision to have to make from a command standpoint, to go defensive on any fire but at that point in time, I have to do what's right for the crews that are operating on scene and to protect life and property, our firefighters, and that's what was done. At this time, I'll open it up to . . .

Mayor Greenbaum: Actually, I'd like to have Joe speak and then Andrew speak, and then we can open it up for any questions that anyone has of any of the three of you.

Mr. Wargo: All right.

Mayor Greenbaum: Joe.

Chief Compano: I wasn't even there, so . . .

Mayor Greenbaum: You weren't at the fire at all?

Chief Compano: No, I was in Wildwood.

Mayor Greenbaum: Okay.

Chief Compano: Kevin.

Mayor Greenbaum: Kevin was there. Do you want to come up and speak?

Assistant Chief Maloney: Sure.

Mayor Greenbaum: What's your position with Budd Lake Fire?

Assistant Chief Maloney: So, Kevin Maloney, Assistant Chief, Budd Lake Fire Department. I've been on the Department for about 32 years. Twenty of those years as a chief officer. Sadly, I've seen . . . I was at all three fires in your neighborhood. The Anna Drive fire, which I heard a lot of comments about, that area had no water. A lot of people met in this chamber after that fire. So, this is nothing new. There are a lot, a lot of places . . . probably 40 percent of Budd Lake has no water. We plan for that. We drill for it. As a matter of fact, a month ago, we drilled, did a tanker drill. If you see us over on the Lake flowing water, we're drafting. That's what we do. As far as the fire is concerned, I was right next to Tyler. I had to come from the International Trade Zone, so it took me a little while to get there. I was on another detail and Tyler, and I worked through . . . worked through it all. My guys went in the front door, when they looked, they saw the backyard and said "There's nothing here." So, we pulled out and that was pretty much everything else that Tyler had to say. We . . . I knew exactly that there was no water. I knew exactly where the fill site would be. I had two, actually two fill sites in mind. Luckily, we only needed one. Just to address the cisterns part of that, maybe we could talk later but that's an issue that needs to be addressed.

Mayor Greenbaum: I'm happy to discuss it at any point in time.

Assistant Chief Maloney: Just . . .

Mayor Greenbaum: It was not an issue in this particular fire.

Assistant Chief Maloney: No. I wouldn't have even considered using that.

Mayor Greenbaum: Okay and in terms of water, from the time you got to the scene, to the time you left the scene, the flow of water was not an issue in terms of fighting this fire.

Assistant Chief Maloney: No. The only thing the hydrant in front of that house would've done for us is save maybe 10 pieces of apparatus which was all the tankers.

Mayor Greenbaum: Which is what you told me.

Assistant Chief Maloney: Yes.

Mayor Greenbaum: And in terms of manpower, that was not an issue in fighting this fire either, correct?

Assistant Chief Maloney: No. We, and I encourage anyone that has children, kids, or young families that want to join the Fire Department. Any Tuesday night, at 6:30pm, come on down. Learn how the system works. Help out your neighbors. It's very tough these days. We are a very busy department. Budd Lake runs 650 runs a year. Flanders runs about 500. So, we're very busy. We train a lot, and this is what we train for.

Mayor Greenbaum: Thank you. I asked Andrew to take a look at the issue in terms of the hydrants that were blacked out. How it happened, how it relates to other areas of Town and what it would cost to actually bring those hydrants online. So, we tried to gather the information so that we could present it to you in as clear a fashion as we can. We don't have all the answers, but I'll turn it over to Andrew now in terms of his research.

Mr. Tatarenko: Thank you, Mayor. So, just so everyone is aware, any . . . whenever there's a new subdivision in Town that requires 15 or more dwellings, the developer is required to either provide a public water system or have private wells. If a public water system is not available, they are required to install dry lines to be potentially added to a water system at a future time. Those dry lines also have dry fire hydrants which are connected to them in accordance with the National Fire Protection Association standards. So, I looked at a map as of 2016 and there were . . . Mount Olive has 11 developments that were constructed with drylines. There are 11 specific developments but it's really five neighborhoods throughout the Township and we're always looking to see what is needed to connect those systems into a public water system. Years ago, we did connect one of them. We are currently working on connecting two other developments in Pershing Estates, as well as down . . . what's called Mount Olive Knolls. What we're finding is that a lot of these systems, dry systems that were installed 20 plus years ago, as we're testing the lines to see if they will hold the fire . . . the water for the fire protection, a lot of the pipes and the valves need to be replaced. So, we started the process of testing several of

these neighborhoods and that is a challenge that we're finding and just so everyone else is aware, you know, it's not just as easy as connecting a pipe to a water system. Every water system that the Township has currently, there are nine water systems throughout the Township. Every water system was designed specifically for the community that it currently serves. So, every water system has a DEP allocation permit that's associated with it, which shows how much water needs to be pumped to service that community. There are wells and pumps which require a certain amount of gallons to be pumped and then there are holding tanks and capacity issues, you know, every development has a holding tank for the water that's needed. So, when we look at adding additional neighborhoods to existing water systems, that all needs to be recalculated to see if there is capacity, if we need additional wells, if there's space for additional tanks. So, there's a lot required in connecting these drylines to the existing water system. Just some other information; there are currently over 500 active fire hydrants in Mount Olive and 60 are still on the drylines. That's all that I have. At this point, it's really too preliminary to report on any costs or what would be needed but that's all that I have.

Mayor Greenbaum: Tim . . .

President Nicastro: Mr. Roman and then Mr. Mania.

Mayor Greenbaum: I'm going to call Tim up. Tim, if you want to come up. You and I had a discussion about what it would take to actually connect this particular neighborhood to . . .

Mr. Roman: Mayor, if you wouldn't mind, I have some questions for Tyler before we move on to other areas.

Mayor Greenbaum: I'd rather call Tim up and then let . . . you can ask whatever questions you want of Tyler. Tim, I reached out to you as we went to the scene of the fire on Monday and I requested from you what it would take to actually connect this particular neighborhood up for . . . potable water is probably never going to happen there but for firefighting purposes, what is your take on what it would take to actually hook this neighborhood up?

Mr. Quinn: Well, obviously everything is possible. One of the things that would have to be done is one of the near water systems, which would be the Indian Springs, we would have to run a line, eight-inch line from the Indian Spring system over to the areas with the drylines. That all is fine and that's probably the easiest part about it. What comes into play is the DEP and water allocation. We'd be pulling off a system that's already existing that has an existing water tower with a certain amount of capacity and once you start adding more and more onto the system, you're taking away the capacity and the storage that is available to the people with the water system. So, a lot of engineering has to go into it to see if we actually have the water allocation, the actual flow that we need, the pumping of water that we need that can actually supply the areas that we're currently doing and add to a new area. So, it's going to take some engineering to see what's really going to be needed. The question is, are additional wells going to be needed? Is additional storage going to be needed? There's just a whole lot of pieces for this to see that it all works. As Andrew stated, we're working on a few areas. One of them just happens to be in the middle of two water systems, so we can do an inner connection between two systems, and we have the water allocation for that. This is a smaller system by you folks and we're going to look in to see exactly what we can do and what we can't do. We are directed and guided by the DEP. We just can't drop wells into the ground and build water towers without State approval. So, that's kind of where we're going at this point and figuring out where if we can do connections, where the connections are going to go into place and how far this is going to be able to go. As the Mayor said, as for a potable water source, probably not going to happen because that most likely will need a storage tower, which you're talking several million dollars just to get the tower in place. An additional well would be a possibility at least to get fire protection into that area and over to the development across from you, over by Sandshore School, and that's kind of what we're looking at, at this point.

Mayor Greenbaum: Thank you.

President Nicastro: Thank you.

Mayor Greenbaum: I would just add one comment before I turn it over to Mr. Roman, which is that I assume, and it was done well before I was involved in government here, at the time your development was approved, that the ultimate deciding board, which would've been the Planning Board at the time, decided that the cistern system was sufficient in terms of firefighting and that's the way they went at that point in time. I don't know for sure, I haven't gone back to research. Ultimately, the approvals that were given to your development, but I can certainly say it was long before any of us sitting up here were . . . I don't know when your development was built, but it was probably in the 1970s . . . '98? So, it was even . . . I got involved in 2001. So, it was before . . . and I'm the oldest one sitting up here in terms of service. So, it was done before any of us were involved and

I'm not trying to pass the buck, I'm just saying I wasn't involved in the decision-making process. With that, I'll turn it over to Mr. Roman, who apparently wants to start with Mr. Wargo in terms of his questioning.

Mr. Roman: Tyler, if you wouldn't mind. We're talking about the dry hydrants and functioning hydrants. What amount of time would you have saved were there operational hydrants in that area?

Mr. Wargo: You wouldn't have saved any time because at the end of the day, we respond with water on all our apparatus and in some instances, you have to keep in mind, depending on the location and road size, when you drop any kind of LDG, the LDH actually limits your ability to function. In this particular instance, if we dropped LDH at the hydrant that was directly across, it would've blocked off the whole entire front of the house and we wouldn't have been able to get the tower up and operational and that played a significant part in knocking down this particular fire. So, it's all a play by play but in this instance, it wouldn't have helped.

Mr. Roman: So, there is no time savings . . .

Mr. Wargo: No.

Mr. Roman: Thank you very much.

Mr. Wargo: Large diameter hose. Five-inch hose is what we typically roll on our apparatus. It's unique. So, one side of the Town, Flanders, is primarily hydrants. So, Flanders operates with five-inch LDH. It's different in Budd Lake. They have tankers. We all operate together. We all practice and train together. So, everybody's proficient at it but there's different dynamics to every fire and different ways to approach every fire, depending on your location.

Mr. Roman: Thank you.

President Nicastro: Thank you.

Mr. Mania: Joe.

President Nicastro: Yes, Mr. Mania.

Mr. Mania: I have a question for Andrew.

President Nicastro: Mr. Mania.

Mr. Mania: I have a question for Andrew.

Mrs. Labow: That lady's waiting.

Mr. Mania: Andrew, what is the life expectancy of drylines?

Mr. Tatarenko: That's a good question. I'd have to pose that to the engineer but a lot of the ones that we're testing now were over 20 years, so, I'm assuming . . .

Mr. Mania: They're probably no good.

Mr. Tatarenko: Correct. A lot . . .

Mrs. Altamura: Donna Altamura, 5 Meadow Lane. So, I make a request to you guys. However, the five neighborhoods that need the fire hydrants . . . now knowing that our homes have those truss roofs, which we had no idea what our builder was going to do, I do ask that you prioritize our neighborhood high knowing that we have those kind of homes and that's all I wanted to say.

Mayor Greenbaum: Yeah, and I appreciate that, and we are looking at that issue. You know, obviously it's easier to be a Monday morning quarterback and not as satisfactory as actually having dealt with it in advance but let me pose two things to you to consider. And I'm not saying that in every particular fire situation, as in this fire situation, the lack of the hydrants was not an issue from my perspective, from the facts that I gathered, which is what I tried to do. But number one, the cost of the whatever we're going to do there, and assuming that we can get the lines in there and get the system working, get these hydrants charged, will be passed along to the

taxpayers who benefit from the system. It's no different than a sewer system that goes in. I just want you to understand that.

Mrs. Altamura: We expected that.

Mayor Greenbaum: I understand.

Mrs. Altamura: But our taxes are astronomical as they are, right?

Mayor Greenbaum: They're all school taxes, to start with.

Mrs. Altamura: Right.

Mayor Greenbaum: Seventy percent of what you pay in taxes . . . so, let's assume that you pay \$18,000.00 in there in taxes. I don't know what the number is but let's assume it's \$18,000.00. We control \$3,600.00 of that \$18,000.00. We're subject to a spending cap and the law requires, so when we do a sewer system in Flanders, the people who benefit from the sewer system, have to pick up the cost to a certain extent of the sewer system. So, we'll look at the issue. We'll get the engineers involved. I'd be happy to have water in that area. I wish we had water in that area in the beginning but as you heard from Tyler, it may not have been a benefit in this particular case, the way that the lines would have had to have been run. I'd still rather have the hydrants, as I'm sure you would too.

Mrs. Altamura: Yes. So, we can be forward looking, right?

Mayor Greenbaum: Yes, but at the end of the day, it may not be a benefit. It may be a peace of mind and it may be a benefit. It's worth the risk. We're looking at it.

Mrs. Altamura: Well, thank you.

Mr. Tatarenko: Something else that I failed to mention. We can't forget about the Highlands. In preservation areas, you can't extend water and sewer lines. So, I'm not exactly sure where these areas fall in relation to that . . .

Mrs. Labow: That's preservation.

Mr. Tatarenko: . . . but that's a consideration which the State also might not allow us to . . .

President Nicastro: Well, we're 80 percent Highlands, aren't we?

Mayor Greenbaum: So, again, what he's saying is, we're looking at the issue. We have to deal with . . . the hardest thing about running a municipality is the State of New Jersey, oftentimes. So, they limit the water that we can pull; they limit the areas that we can provide water to and sewer service to. So, we'll look at those issues and we'll report back to everybody. This is the issues that are involved in terms of running fire suppression water to your area. This is what the State will allow. This is the issues that we have with respect to our current systems and whether or not the capacity is able to handle it. This is our issue with respect to allocation and whether or not the State will allow allocation, and this is the issue with respect to the Highlands and whether or not the State will ultimately, notwithstanding capacity and not withstanding allocation, will allow us to run additional lines into your area. It just may not be feasible based upon State regulations. But we're going to look at all the issues and we will report back to you in terms of . . . we think we can do it. This is what we think the cost is going to be, you guys decide whether or not it's something you want to actually have happen based upon what it's going to . . . our forecast as to what it's going to cost you. Personally . . . personally, I think that the tender system generally works pretty well. These guys are really good at what they do. I'm on IamResponding. I see all the calls that come in and all the mutual aid calls that our guys go out on as part of the system where people come in with their tankers, and generally water is not an issue. Tyler, you can speak to that as well, if you'd like.

Mr. Wargo: Yeah, and I just want to tie in one other thing too. So, as the Mayor stated, the State is really hard on us with water and that involves us even training with water. So, we actually have to limit our water usage to train and when you think about that, that's kind of crazy, right? But our Administration allows us to do such and we take the bullet from the State based off us being proficient at what we do. And one other thing I want to tie into that people don't realize is this Town is very busy. So, during this call, not many people knew there was a

serious accident on Route 46 at the same time, about five to eight minutes after the initial dispatch for this fire went out. So, not only did we have a fire in Town that we covered, we had a three car motor vehicle accident. Those that live in Town, you've seen the motor vehicle accidents that we've been responding to quite often. Some instances are pretty serious in nature or fatal. So, we also had that. So, I want to assure everybody in this room, when it comes to proficiency, yes, we are volunteers, I get it. People think volunteer and are like "Whoa." Okay. I can promise you the men and women . . . the guys sitting here, are more decorated than some of the paid fireman in Newark, Jersey City. You have two guys sitting in front of you that have valor awards. Pulling people out of structure fires, saving lives, myself included. So, we pride ourselves on what we do day in and day out and like I said, we live in this Town. If it's a paid fire department, you might get people that don't live in this Town, don't know the Town, and just come for a paycheck. These guys and girls live for what they do day in and day out. I'm extremely proud to lead the group of men and women that we have in Mount Olive Township when it comes to our Emergency Service. I can guarantee you and I'd put any ounce of money that I own that the people in this Town that come out to serve and protect our community are 110 percent day in and day out and you guys should be thankful for that. And the one thing I will . . . and I'll leave on this note, it's very disheartening, just to see the different Facebook posts. I mean, we need to remember somebody lost their home. Not only did they lose their home, they lost a dog, a cat, they're like loved ones to everybody else and if it were me, I'd be devastated. All right. As they should be, and we need to remember that. This is a community. We rebound together constantly and it's great and I promote it day in and day out. I could tell you, I'm not a politician. I say it how it is. Sometimes it gets me in trouble. It is what it is but that's what Mount Olive stands for. What's in this room and that's what we need to continue to do, and people lose sight of that. They really do. So, again, thank you guys for having us up here. If there's any questions that you guys . . .

President Nicastro: You've got to come up if you have a question. I'm sorry. You do have to come up.

Mr. Wargo: Hold on, I just want to say one thing . . .

President Nicastro: You have to still come up.

Mr. Wargo: If you . . .

President Nicastro: You can't speak from there. I'm sorry.

Mr. Wargo: Yeah, hold on one minute. If you do have any questions, by all means, you can email me directly or call my office. I'm here every day. Monday to Friday. You can come down; I have an open-door policy. I'm willing to talk . . . talk about different things. I can tell you the Council up here, we come up with different ideas all the time. We're here for the community. That's what we're here for. That's all I have.

President Nicastro: If you have to say something, you have to come up here to say it, please. And you have to state your name and address for the record.

Mr. Altamura: My name is Frank Altamura; I live at 5 Meadow Lane. I'm a neighbor of the Bugas. First thing I want to say is I don't blame the fire department or the police department. I thank them. Especially what they're going through in today's day and age. And I donate to the Fire Department, the First Aid, and the Police Department. I have a couple of questions. A few questions. First, I want to talk . . . well, I want to talk about the black fire hydrants, but we'll hold off on that for now. Someone forwarded me a posting on Facebook because I don't have Facebook and I saw some misrepresentation in that posting. First, I saw we got a call, and it was responded to in minutes. Minutes could be two minutes . . . there could be 102 minutes. That's number one. A disclaimer in my opinion. Then, I'd like to know what the definition of "respond" is. Is it the two cops that pulled up in SUV patrol cars when I saw Mr. Buga coming out of the house? Or was it 15 minutes later when a fire SUV pulled up with two firefighters putting on their gear? Or was it 15 minutes after that when the fire trucks arrived? Okay. I don't know stamps. I know what my watch said, and I know I was suffering out there with Mr. Buga while he kept saying "Where are they? Why aren't they here yet? It's right around the corner. Why aren't they here yet?" The cat and the dog . . . I wanted to go in there with him. And like you said, the one patrolman pulled him . . . grabbed him by the arm because he wanted to go back in the house while he's waiting for the firefighters. Okay. I don't know . . . I know it was a skeleton crew, I understand that and like I said, the water . . . okay. So, I work for the government too. Okay. So, I know how hard it is to get a permit, even from the DEP. Okay. But 28 years, you couldn't get a permit to hook up water to our fire hydrants? And maybe the plumbing is no good anymore because we waited 28 years. Okay. What were we doing for 28 years? And don't tell me that there was sufficient water because I can tell you a number of times, I saw the hook and ladder and I saw the firemen on the ground with water dribbling out of the hoses while the fire was blazing. So, I'd like somebody to answer those questions for me. That neighborhood is neglected. I invite every one of you to come

up to that neighborhood, okay, and look at the sewer plates that are collapsing. The roads are collapsing. There's potholes in the roads. I emailed the Department of Public Works twice. Never got an answer. Does a car have to go in there and then say "Well, we're going to have to raise your taxes."? I mean . . . what does it take to get service? The taxes aren't cheap. The neighborhood's been there 28 years. It's neglected. Come down Meadow Lane, there's weeds coming into the middle of the road. The detention basin has trees growing in it because it's never cut. You can't walk down the sidewalk because of the overgrowth. The neighborhood is neglected. Do you want to have another fire? Another family lose their whole life? Yes, they lost their dog, their cat, we all are sorry about that. I was in pain with Mr. Buga. There's no resolution. There's no . . . again, it's not the fire department, it's not the police department, it's the leadership. That's all I got to say.

Mayor Greenbaum: Tyler, do you want to respond to the time? Do you want to respond to the timeframe again in terms of . . . I've asked Tyler . . . these mics are not necessarily . . . they don't . . . no, no, no, they record. They don't necessarily amplify. So, I will try and speak louder, but I've asked Tyler to respond to the timeframe. You gave us the timeframe before. How long after the call were you at the scene?

Mr. Wargo: I was on scene at 10:16am and the initial call came in at 10:11am with it being stated that there were flames showing from the rear of a residence. So, it was unconfirmed that an actual house was on fire. When I signed on, I requested an update and that's when PD arrived on scene, stating that flames were showing on the first, second, all the way up to the roof of the structure.

Mayor Greenbaum: At 10:26am, 10 minutes later, you indicated that a truck and tanker actually . . .

President Nicastro: You can't speak . . .

Mayor Greenbaum: Please . . .

President Nicastro: You can't . . .

Mayor Greenbaum: Excuse me . . .

President Nicastro: . . . speak from out there, I'm sorry.

Mayor Greenbaum: Excuse me. I'm just trying . . . I wasn't there. I understand . . . I understand you have different . . . I understand you have different . . . I'm trying to get to the facts, which is what I've tried to do from the beginning. What time did the firetrucks, in your records, . . .

Mr. Wargo: 10:26am the initial hose line was stretched into the structure.

Mayor Greenbaum: And what . . . what . . .

Mr. Wargo: I have . . .

Mayor Greenbaum: . . . what . . .

Mr. Wargo: . . . video of it.

Mayor Greenbaum: . . . fact led to that entry, that the fire line was stretched at 10:26am.?

Mr. Wargo: I made that recommendation to have initial crews try an advanced attack on this structure because it is somebody's house. I probably shouldn't have but I did out of protection of property for our residents.

Mayor Greenbaum: How do you document the time?

Mr. Wargo: Through radio transmissions.

Mayor Greenbaum: So, there would be a record . . .

Mr. Wargo: That is correct.

Mayor Greenbaum: . . . of the transmission that the line is being stretched at 10:26am.

Mr. Wargo: That is correct.

Mayor Greenbaum: Kevin, what time did you show up at the scene? You have to come up. You don't know what time you got there? Would you have called in a radio transmission also upon arriving?

Assistant Chief Maloney: Yes, I don't know what the time was.

Mayor Greenbaum: Okay.

Assistant Chief Maloney: I mean, I'd have to look it up.

Mayor Greenbaum: Tyler, there seems to be some difference of opinion from the people in the audience in terms of the response. So, I'd like to hear from them in terms of what they have to say because we'd like to get to the bottom of the facts.

Assistant Chief Maloney: When I got there, the engine was just pulling up.

Mayor Greenbaum: Okay.

Assistant Chief Maloney: Like I said, I had to come from BASF.

Mayor Greenbaum: So, you left BASF upon what? Hearing the call come in?

Assistant Chief Maloney: Yes, I was doing a fire watch over there and waited a couple of minutes until I could get out of there and respond.

Mayor Greenbaum: Then the call would've been the dispatch call at 10:10am/10:12am? So, at that point, you would've left BASF and driven up Route 46 to the fire scene?

Assistant Chief Maloney: Mhm.

Mayor Greenbaum: So, you would've been there within 10-15 minutes of the dispatch.

Assistant Chief Maloney: Yes, I called . . . the first new engine was pulling in as I was getting there. So, . . .

Mayor Greenbaum: So, if Tyler is saying . . . if Tyler is saying that the records confirm that they were stretching a hose at 10:26am, you would have no reason to disbelieve that as being true based upon your timeline?

Assistant Chief Maloney: No, and if someone doesn't believe us, they could absolutely do an OPRA request and the police department would have to provide that information.

Mayor Greenbaum: It's all documented.

Assistant Chief Maloney: Yes.

Mayor Greenbaum: Okay. So, I'd like to hear from the audience. They obviously have a different set of facts and let's find out what they have to say. Thank you. I don't know. I wasn't there. I just take the information. I just take the information and, so, we'll get to the bottom of it.

President Nicastro: Remember to please state your name and address for the record, unless you're exempt from Daniel's law.

Mrs. Altamura: I am Donna Altamura. I live at 5 Meadow Lane, and I was not home on Saturday morning. So, . . . I was in a bridal salon in Englewood and my husband was calling me and he was texting us. So, I have it on my phone. He texted that the Bugas' house was on fire at 10:14am and that's when he was there, and he saw Adam run out of the house. I don't know when the original phone call was made but Adam ran out of the house at 10:14am and 17 minutes went by and he called again and I said, "Where are the firetrucks?" and he said, "They're not here yet. I can hear sirens but they're not here yet." I'm screaming in the bridal salon. My daughter's like "Mom. Calm down." He sent me a picture at 10:42am. The first truck was there, and we have the picture. There was no water being put on the house at 10:42am. That is 28 minutes response time for the water. I understand that there were nice gentlemen assessing the situation, you know, in an SUV. I understand that they helped Mr. Buga to not run back into the house but we have the picture that it was 28 minutes for the truck to get there and the water was not being put on the house yet. We also have other pictures that, yes, the

house was probably irreparable, but the garage could have been saved and at least the cars or that third of the house. It wasn't . . . if the response time was quicker than 28 minutes, part could have been salvaged. So, that is all I want to say.

Mayor Greenbaum: I appreciate that, and if you could send to us, whatever you have . . .

Mrs. Altamura: I will.

Mayor Greenbaum: . . . and we will provide you with the calls that the police department would have documented in terms of dispatch, in terms of the communications.

Mrs. Altamura: Thank you. Thank you very much.

Mayor Greenbaum: You're welcome.

Mrs. Sundstrom Smith: Gretchen Sundstrom Smith, 19 Woodcrest Avenue, Budd Lake. I've been in Mount Olive since 1990. I've been in that development; we had our house built in 1998. Part of that street's older than our development that we're all from here. On my pictures, and these are videos, I'd be happy to share them with you, it clearly shows that it's 10:49am . . . first off, let me thank the fire department. I do applaud your service. This is not an attack on you. This is not an attack on you, Rob. You weren't even in place back then but 25 years ago, we were told we were putting the sewers in. Then the house burned down 10 years later. We were told that again. It never got revisited. Every time we hear the same story. Can't accommodate it. We were told that 25 years ago. I think it was the Raritan Valley . . . whatever it was, couldn't accommodate us. So, right now, I think something needs to be done like Frank Altamura said but these are time stamped. This is 10:49am and there's one truck with water trickling down. There is none of the pumper or whatever those are called yet and they just kept coming. It took all day to put this fire out. I felt like . . . I'm just kind of curious because I'm not a firefighter and again, I thank you for all the hard work you do. I don't doubt that you go above and beyond, and we appreciate that but what I don't understand, there was only one big ladder truck there and they were waiting for tanker trucks to come. Why weren't there at least two big ladder trucks there on each side of the house with the big hoses, trying to go for the roof? You possibly could've saved half the stuff on the bottom, at least, or the garage, like they're saying and I just don't understand why that is not happening.

Mayor Greenbaum: If you could send to me . . .

Mrs. Sundstrom Smith: I can.

Mayor Greenbaum: Well, first of all, the municipality does not run the fire departments. We provide the fire departments with the materials that they need to fight the fires. Ultimately, when the fire department gets to the scene, there is a person who's in charge of the fires who makes the determination in terms of how this fire is going to be fought. They're all elected by their firehouses. They're all seasoned firefighters and I would appreciate if you could send me whatever you have, so that we can include it in our investigation in terms of what happened, what your evidence shows, as I said, we'll pull all of the records from dispatch and communications and take a look and see what we have, and we'll make it available to everybody.

Mrs. Sundstrom Smith: We just don't want this to happen again. Something has to be done at this point. This is three houses . . . this is two houses on the same street.

Mayor Greenbaum: Nobody wants it to happen again but again, the only thing I can say about your comments, leaving aside the apparent conflict between what I'm hearing from the fire department and what I'm hearing from the residents is that it was a response issue, rather than necessarily a water issue. What I'm hearing is, that the residents feel that the response was too slow or not enough equipment going to the fire at the time. I'll take a look at . . . we'll take a look at all of that and evaluate it.

Mrs. Sundstrom Smith: Yeah.

Mayor Greenbaum: Nobody wants it to happen again, so, I think it's important to get me or to get it to Andrew, the information, and we'll put together a . . . take a look at where we are. As I've already said, we're already looking at the issue of connecting to the hydrants and what can be done but I'm not sure, even if you had been connected to the hydrants, that we still wouldn't be here today arguing about the issues which you're raising.

Mrs. Sundstrom Smith: Maybe, maybe not and our home insurance would be lower because when they found out we all have black hydrants, it went up. So, . . .

Mayor Greenbaum: Back to the hydrants. You certainly would have lower insurance rates if you have active hydrants. There's no question about that.

Mrs. Sundstrom Smith: And then I was told . . . where is the cistern? Is that the one on the corner of Meadow Lane where that big pipe is that comes out?

Mayor Greenbaum: It's on a cul-de-sac, right?

Mr. Tatarenko: Woodcrest.

Mrs. Sundstrom Smith: Okay because I was just confused about that retention basin because the fire company does come out and they do drills there too. So, I don't know if that was to drill out water. I mean, what was that for? Because a few times I would drive down my street and couldn't get around because they were doing a drill.

Assistant Chief Maloney: So, the problem with the cistern, and there are at least five or six scattered around by first . . . area, so, the problem is that they hold anywhere from five to ten thousand gallons of water which is really not a lot of water. I have to hook up to it. I have to pump it and when I'm all done, I have to put that water back into the cistern because the Town is not going to hire a water boy to fill the cistern. So, I have to do it. So, therefore, it's not . . . if the fire was across the street and I had somebody hanging out the windows, absolutely, I'd use whatever source I could but in this particular case, using that cistern would've just made it just longer. Plus, I would've had to lay about probably five or six thousand feet of hose, which . . . and as far as the pools were concerned, I had a resident come up to me towards the end of the fire and asked if they could go around and get permission for use their pools. That's awesome, the only problem is it makes it extremely hard for us to get to it. I'm not going to take a fire truck and drive through your lawn and then if I damage your lawn, that's another issue. It puts a strain on us and your pool, if it has 8,000 gallons of water . . . God bless you. It's not . . . unless it's absolutely 100 percent I could drive to the edge and do it right away, otherwise it's not feasible. Like I said, we train to do this. We do this on a regular basis, and you are not the only ones in Mount Olive that don't have water and all across the County. All across the State there are people that have the same issues. That's why we train for this.

Mayor Greenbaum: Did the system work in your opinion?

Assistant Chief Maloney: Yes, and as far as the ladder truck is concerned, I could've had a second ladder. The problem is and if I had a hydrant and I had a ton of water, I could've flowed two tower ladders. Absolutely. But I have to work with what I have to work with. So, therefore, one tower ladder, two hand lines, one large diameter hose, because at this point, honestly there was really nothing to save. I know everybody says we could've saved the garage . . . I don't think anybody walked around to the back of the garage. The roof had collapsed, the car was on fire inside the garage. Both cars were on fire inside the garage. So, . . .

Mayor Greenbaum: But you've actually just presented a situation where having the hydrants would have been a benefit in some fire. Not this fire. In terms of being able to hook up a second ladder truck to get a second ladder truck in there and we do have two ladder trucks in Town. They're very expensive. One's in Flanders and one's in Budd Lake. Tyler, did you have something you wanted to add?

Mr. Wargo: Yeah, so, just to tie in and we could go back and forth all you want, right? I'm happy to do so. That's fine. At 10:28am, and you can pass this down, that's two trucks on scene with water going directly into the structure. Okay? We're not here to make up fabricated timeframes and we can't. It's time stamped. All right? I understand under the circumstance's tensions are hot. We did everything in our power to try and save what we could of this home. I made a call, myself, being the incident commander, to put a hose line in this house in that picture at 10:28am, fully involved. No life was in that structure. People look at me out in the fire world and are like "This guy's crazy." I am. I'll be the first to say it. We are aggressive. If we can save property, we will do so with respect to safety. At 10:30am, I made the call to pull everybody out of this house and to Chief Maloney's point, would or could we have put more water on the fire with another stick in the air? Yeah, you could've. What's the point of putting somebody else in a ladder when you know definitively it's a total loss? And putting somebody in harm's way and then to tie into that, there was no room to put a ladder with scrub and scrub is the diameter of how a ladder can go, right? You wouldn't have made access to the structure at all. Our 105-foot ladder just got over the peak of the front of that house from about five and a half feet from the curb line. So, we were maxed out and when it comes to fire suppression, we did everything in our power that we feasibly could have done on this day to try and save the residents that are sitting four rows back, any

kind of property that we could've saved for them and unfortunately, we couldn't. All right? And it goes back to earlier. We had a fire right on Main Street. Right? Right down the road from the firehouse. Fatality. All right. We had guys and girls pull out a whole family. We saved one of them. The other two perished. There was a hydrant literally 250 feet away from the house. All right? That house was a total loss. It's how construction is built and in that instance in Flanders, it's older construction so there's larger timber. Newer construction, your time frame to get in, actually make a quick attack, if somebody's actually in a structure, you physically only have ten minutes to get to the person and out. Otherwise, you have collapse zones and that's something that people don't understand, and you could watch the . . . I laugh at TV, at these fire shows and when you see firefighters going and doing whatever. It's, excuse my French, bull shit. All right. You have to physically follow criteria. There's firematic science. I don't know if anybody's been through firematic science. I have. There's a criteria to fighting fires and that's what we do, and I can tell you definitively, there's neighboring towns that don't do what we do. All right. So, when it comes to time, we can sit here and argue time day in, day out. We have our police CAD that you can OPRA request. You have Morris County's CAD that you can OPRA request. Both of them mirror our timeframes on our arrivals . . . what was called, and I take it a step further, all right, as Incident Commander. Our dispatch center's a little bit different than Morris County. Morris County has a sole provider for fire and police. Our dispatch center does both. So, in this instance, when we have serious incidents, I also make notification to County because it's real time document of the facts on when I'm requesting and what I'm requesting, and we have a step above here because we have our own dispatch center, but they have to type everything. So, it's covered twice and it's imperative because at the end of the day, there's incidents like this. We're here to do what we can. Could we have had more people? I would've loved to have had more people. We had 20 active firefighters, like I said, that day, on that scene. We also had to divert men and women to a motor vehicle accident on Route 46 at the same time. Had to cover that. That was two transports, mechanism injury, not substantial. Then, after that, as the Mayor has stated and some of the Council, Mount Olive Township was requested to cover a paid fire department after this fire because the paid fire department didn't have adequate resources to fight a fire. Put that in perspective. And these guys and girls do this for free, day in and day out and they love what they do. There's points here because people were talking about times, this, that, everything else. The times are the times. All right. If we could've done something differently, and we evaluate every call, my guys and girls, the chiefs that are underneath me, they evaluate every call. After every call, we do a post-accident investigation review of what we can do better because that's how we learn, and I drive that. There's other chiefs out there that "Oh, no. It's this way. This is how we've got to do it." No, we always have to learn and advance our technologies and if we're wrong, we're the first to say, "Hey. Why didn't we pull this person out through this window?" or "Why didn't we go to division two?", so on, and so forth. We evaluate that and we hold ourselves to a very high standard and I can honestly say more so than most people out there within Morris County. So, keep that in mind. Like I said, I don't know if you want to keep going back and forth or if there's any more questions. I'd be more than happy to . . .

Mr. Testa: Comments and questions should be posed to the Board specifically . . . governing body specifically . . .

Mrs. Sundstrom Smith: My other question was how many tanker trucks do we have in the Budd Lake Firehouse that's full and ready to go?

Mr. Wargo: They have one tanker.

Mrs. Sundstrom Smith: And we only have one ladder truck.

Mr. Wargo: One ladder truck in Budd Lake and one in Flanders.

Mrs. Sundstrom Smith: Maybe we should look into getting more. I mean, I feel that if there . . . I'll send you everything I have. If there were two big tanker trucks . . . I mean ladder trucks on each side of that roof; I think they could've saved more than what was saved. And again, I am not attacking you. You work with the resources you have but at this point, we need to do something about it and make it better, so it doesn't happen like this again. That's why we're here. We're not here to attack. This has been going on for too long. I've seen three houses burn down since I've been here in my development and the one across from Sandshore School. Thank you.

Mr. Altamura: I'm Frank Altamura. I'm still at 5 Meadow Lane. I want to make sure that it's clear on the record. It's not only response time and there's a disagreement there. I got it. It was a water issue. Okay. I saw the trucks with water dribbling out of the hose because there were 10 towns, I think I counted. Tankers from 10 towns that came there. I mean, that's a pretty good plan B, in my opinion. The fire hydrants need to be hooked up. Enough with excuses. Enough with blaming the State. I got it. The State's got a lot of problems. I got it. Twenty-eight years. Why make a builder put fire hydrants in and plumbing in if you're not going to hook them

up? There was a water issue. I saw it with my own eyes. I didn't film it. Anybody wants to call me a liar, let's go at it, but I saw hoses with no water coming out. That's a water issue. And I didn't get answers to my question too, I want a definition of "respond" too, by the way.

Mr. Delrusso: I'm Andrew Delrusso, I live at 10 Meadow Lane. I just moved in and honestly, my wife has had a fear of dying in a fire her whole life. So, one of the houses we picked had a fire hydrant on the front lawn. We picked the house with one right at the corner and we found the other day, when a house was burning in our neighborhood, that it didn't work. So, we're already looking at moving but I really don't want to because I picked this Township because I trusted it. I used to work here as a kid in the schools as an after-school teacher and I really think that this is where I want to raise my kids. So, I really think that we don't blame you guys because you weren't even here when this all happened. The fire department's doing a fantastic job. If anything, . . . I work in a Township, I'm in law enforcement. Where I work, there's a paid fire department and I don't want to take that away from these guys. I would never ask to go to that. The only thing I think I could possibly fix here is . . . how long does a fire take to fully consume a house? About five minutes, right? Are there guys fully manning the firehouse when . . . no, right? You guys have to come . . . is there a way, instead of doing an actual paid fire department, you could do per diem? Have a few guys at the house, they're getting paid \$30/hour, whatever it is. They are the ones manning the house and they actually get . . . they're the first ones there. I don't think any resident in this Township . . . every single resident would benefit from it. It would actually help them as well because these guys are heroes in our Township. They're doing everything they can but here, they have to come all the way from home just to come in and then go to the house.

Mayor Greenbaum: We'd have to discuss it.

Mr. Delrusso: Okay. I think that would be a great thing. I mean, because right now, obviously . . . how are we going to solve the water issue tomorrow? We can't. We can't solve that, right? The only thing we can get is maybe a better response, quicker and these guys are doing a fantastic job. We can't take that away from . . . it's nothing on them. I mean, they can't just evaporate from home and get into the firehouse and then come in.

Mayor Greenbaum: Your suggestion is noted.

Mr. Delrusso: Okay. Thank you. There's other things too. I just . . . with the fire hydrants, I think maybe . . . I think this Town . . . I think you guys could easily come up with a solution. The DEP and everything. Maybe the cistern . . . I think there's certain private in each neighborhood, like you said, it would have to be tax assessed to certain people. Each neighborhood . . .

Mayor Greenbaum: Just raising that, we're prepared to do whatever we can do . . .

Mr. Derusso: Perfect.

Mayor Greenbaum: . . . within the bounds of what's . . . what we can do.

Mr. Delrusso: Good.

Mayor Greenbaum: So, leaving that aside, today in the Daily Record, there's an article about the Dover Fire Department. I would just ask you to go read that. It's a paid fire department. They're having major problems in a paid fire department with staffing. So, when you look at the per diem issue, . . .

Mr. Derusso: Are they per diem or just paid?

Mayor Greenbaum: They're paid.

Mr. Delrusso: Fully paid, yeah.

Mayor Greenbaum: But they don't have enough people to cover the fires as paid firemen or their volunteers. Look at the article. It's not quite that easy an answer but your suggestion is noted and if we can improve, and this goes back to the question that you raised, if we can improve and I don't know what an acceptable response is. I think it's circumstantial on a number of different issues. If there's life involved, what's acceptable as compared to a fully engulfed fire but I think the answer to your question is we need to get there as quickly as possible. Whatever that takes. Whatever that takes within the bounds of what we can provide, so, I like your suggestion, . . .

Mr. Delrusso: I think it's better than the fully paid, too.

Mayor Greenbaum: Yeah, no, I agree.

Mr. Delrusso: Because otherwise it would take the guys away that have been here forever.

Mayor Greenbaum: We can't pay . . . have a paid fire department. I can tell you that having done the budgets here and knowing what our cap is in terms of what we can spend. There's no way that . . . our police department is about an eight million dollar a year . . .

Mr. Delrusso: Right.

Mayor Greenbaum: . . . expenditure.

Mr. Delrusso: The manpower would be extremely expensive. Yeah, it would be impossible. That's why I thought about the per diem. Not to mention I wouldn't even want to take away the . . . the guys that have done it for so long all of a sudden would be bumped out. Then there would be no volunteers.

Mayor Greenbaum: Well, you know what we would do is work through the different associations to hire the people. What we have done in Town is we have encouraged our employees who are fire department members to run. When it goes, they run. They drop whatever they're doing.

Mr. Delrusso: I could tell you they do because I know from working in this Township, I remember meeting them years ago. They were awesome.

Mayor Greenbaum: If Kevin's at the school, he goes.

Mr. Delrusso: Yeah. They're all awesome.

Mayor Greenbaum: And ultimately, I'm not sure having two people at the firehouse on a per diem, 24/7, 365 days cures the problem because you still need probably more people than that to actually get the equipment out on the road and start to a successful fire but having said what you've said, I think that it behooves all of us sitting up here to take a look at the issue to give it a try and see if that improves the time response to fires. I have no criticism from the numbers that I saw, knowing where people are coming from and it's unfortunate, yes. You know what . . . sometimes you can have a smoke condition and 10 minutes doesn't make a difference. You get there . . .

Mr. Delrusso: Yeah.

Mayor Greenbaum: It has a . . .

Mr. Delrusso: Sometimes it doesn't matter.

Mayor Greenbaum: . . . smoke condition. You know, when a house is fully engulfed like that, every minute counts.

Mr. Derusso: Every second counts. Yeah, and like you said, maybe . . . I know where I work, there's a first aid squad. They actually make guys man the house certain hours of the day and then they all have to come in. they usually, so, certain hours . . . it would be better 24/7 but the main fact is that . . . so the two guys, let's say there's two guys actually at the firehouse all day. Those two guys take the fire engines there. The other guys get to respond directly there on scene. So, that's the way the first aid squad where I work does it. So, I think then you would basically, instead of driving all the way to headquarters, you'd be able to go directly there.

Mayor Greenbaum: We'll take a look . . .

Mr. Delrusso: Obviously just a thought.

Mayor Greenbaum: . . . at the issue. We're coming up to budget season right now.

Mr. Delrusso: Perfect.

Mayor Greenbaum: We'll address that issue.

Mr. Delrusso: Let some of the guys get paid for being on the job.

Mayor Greenbaum: Yes.

Mr. Delrusso: All right. Thank you.

Mayor Greenbaum: Thank you.

President Nicastro: Does anyone else from the public? Yup.

Mrs. Hanson: Debra Hansen, still at 6 Fieldcrest Drive. So, my son was 11 years old, and he witnessed this fire, so, I'm just up here to help support them. So, he started a GoFundMe campaign. So, for the people that don't have Facebook or social media, I have flyers. If you have a business or if you want to take one of these flyers to help the Bugas out. Sorry. I had a little boy witness this fire and I think you need to be corrected that there were two lives lost. It was a cat and a dog, and I think if your dogs perished in fire, you'd be really upset, and you would think that those were lives. Those are part of family.

Mayor Greenbaum: I don't disagree with you and I certainly . . . being a three-dog owner, I don't diminish the relationship that we have with our pets, but I differentiate between the lives of the residents and the lives of the firefighters, and the pets and I don't mean to diminish that because I would be completely devastated if anything happened to any of my three dogs.

Mrs. Hanson: That's a very political answer. So, I appreciate that.

Mayor Greenbaum: No, that is an honest answer. I distinguish, and I've had this discussion with my significant other all the time. Pets are rental. You get them for 10 years, 15 years, but you know that you're going to outlive them and . . . it's not political, that's the way that I . . .

Mrs. Hanson: Well, I appreciate your feeling on that then. That is your personal opinion.

Mayor Greenbaum: I have no reason to be political at all. I'm not running for anything, I've served this Township for 25 years, I speak what I feel and yes, that's my personal opinion. I feel horrible that you lost your pets. I would be devastated if those were my pets. I don't mean to distinguish that from . . . but I will distinguish that from the loss of life. If it had been a kid or a spouse or a firefighter. That is a different issue to me as I sit up here, and I will make a contribution to the GoFundMe page of \$250.00. I know it's a small amount but tomorrow . . . I put it up on my Facebook page and I'll make that contribution tomorrow. I feel absolutely horrible for you guys. I know it's a devastating and horrific tragedy in your lives. But, at the end of the day, no lives were lost other than the pets and that's my personal feeling. Yes. It's not political. That's my personal feeling.

Mrs. Hanson: And then to Frank's point, I encourage you all to come look at our neighborhood. I called months ago or maybe it was a year ago. I put a flowerpot in the sewer system because there was such a hole there that I was afraid that the kids riding their bikes were going to hit that hole and then, you know, have some serious damage and then where our water reserve is there, should trees and stuff be growing out of that?

Mayor Greenbaum: You're talking about the detention basin.

Mrs. Hanson: The detention, yes. Should there be stuff as high as . . .

Mayor Greenbaum: So, I'm going to tell you that Tim Quinn will go out there and take a look at it. We do prioritize roads and the fact that there are . . . I don't really want to even get into this issue today because that's not why we're here and I think it diminishes the issue that were here but I will tell you that Tim will go out there and you can call Tim and he'll tell you that he went out there and looked and then if you don't get a response, or you don't get a response that you like, you can contact me directly. Tim's got my number, or you can get my . . . personal Facebook me and I will get back involved in the issue but let's keep the focus on what we're here for.

Mrs. Hanson: Understood. I just wanted it on record for you to . . .

Mayor Greenbaum: There are many neighborhoods where the stormwater drains have collapsed because of inappropriate packing of the soil around those. They need to be fixed but again, that's not why we're here today. Yes, they need to be fixed but that's not why we're here today. Let's keep the ball . . .

Mrs. Hanson: Right. So, if anybody wants a flyer, please see me after this meeting and I will give one to you.

Mrs. Labow: I do.

President Nicastro: Thank you.

Mrs. Hader: Anna Hader, 19 Pershing Avenue.

Mrs. Labow: I can't hear you.

President Nicastro: Can you get a little closer? Thank you.

Mrs. Hader: Anna Hader, 19 Pershing Ave. Regina Buga is my aunt. Adam Buga's my uncle and I'd like to help this discussion with some data and definitions. A research paper from the US Fire Administration National Fire Data Center under Homeland Security from 2006. So, we have here the definition of a response. So, in the fire service, total response time is usually measured from the time the call is received by the emergency communications center to the arrival of the first apparatus at the scene and now, this research paper is about structure fire response times and the two major findings are, "regardless of region, season, or time of day, structure fire response times are generally less than five minutes half of the time. The nationwide 90th percentile response time to structure fires is less than 11 minutes." So, that really puts everything into context for lessons learned and the opportunity for improvements here. Thank you.

Mr. Hader: Greg Hader, 19 Pershing Ave. So, good afternoon, everybody, or good evening. Greg Hader from 19 Pershing Ave. It's my wife's aunt and uncle. I just want to let you guys know as a mechanical engineer for the US Army, Picatinny Arsenal, we have solutions, right? We have solutions. We've got to figure this out. Right. So, two things: water and time. Right? We can argue. You need water for a fire, right? That's the definition. Firefighter. He's fighting. We thank these guys. Brave. Police, EMT, everybody that was on scene, we thank them. There's no debate here. They saved his life. Police officer grabbed his arm. So, we thank them, but we need solutions, okay? So, first question I want is . . . they're with us right now at 19 Pershing Ave. Okay. And I want to know does the fire hydrant at Pershing Ave and Summit work? I want to know that. They're with me right now. They're at my house.

Assistant Chief Maloney: What color is the hydrant?

Mr. Hader: Yellow and black.

Assistant Chief Maloney: No.

Mr. Hader: So, I've lived here for . . . I was born and raised in Budd Lake. Forty-four years. Forty-four years old. Anybody else, 44 years? Forty-four years, born and raised in Budd Lake. Okay. I had no idea that a black fire hydrant is inoperable. Okay. I had no idea it does not work. Why is it even there? For a dog to pee on? So, I'm requesting . . . again, we have solutions for our soldiers, right? There's no. . . you know, our warfighter needs a solution. I want signs on there. I want a sign that says . . . for this gentleman, when he moved into that neighborhood, he knows they're out of service. Did you know they were out of service? Thank you. I thank you for your service.

President Nicastro: You have to address the Council, I'm sorry.

Mr. Hader: So, the gentleman did not know that they were out of service. They're black. Everybody . . . East Hanover has black signs for town spirit. They have black street signs with yellow for, you know, to say "Hey, we celebrate East Hanover Township." So, black doesn't mean crap. I want signage on there that says, "Out of Service." Any fire hydrant that does not work, so when somebody goes to buy a house, somebody goes to sell a house, whoever goes to that neighborhood says "Hey. That fire hydrant does not work. Maybe I won't buy this home." That's my request. Simple, low budget, throw a sign on there. Signage that is good at night, good in the day. Very visible. Is that too much to ask for the Council?

Mayor Greenbaum: Nope.

President Nicastro: Nope.

Mr. Hader: Simple . . . because I don't believe in the next ten years, we're going to have water there. It's not going to happen. I hope it does. I hope these folks here that saw that fire get some water there because water . . . how do you fight a fire? You need water. You need time. The faster you're there, the more water you got on it.

I'm not saying that this would've been saved. I saw the flames. I saw the pictures but time and water. So, that's my request. Thank you.

President Nicastro: Thank you.

Mayor Greenbaum: Certainly noted.

Mrs. Vazzano: Denise Vazzano, 13 Woodcrest Avenue. So, instead of blaming, why don't we . . . instead of the money used for the sewer, since we all live in these truss houses, what about these little things up here? Would that have helped at all? If they were put in our attics, to maybe . . .

Mayor Greenbaum: You're talking about sprinkler systems.

Mrs. Vazzano: Yeah. Not for you to pay for; for us to pay for.

Mayor Greenbaum: Not an easy solution and I'll tell you why.

Mrs. Vazzano: Okay.

Mayor Greenbaum: I've dealt with it. There are many, many issues associated with sprinkler systems. Number one, maintenance. Number two, water supply. Number three, if you actually . . . if it malfunctions, your house is going to flood. Number four, you have to put in some kind of cistern to feed. In a residential setting, . . .

Mrs. Vazzano: Our wells wouldn't . . .

Mayor Greenbaum: You can look into it.

Mrs. Vazzano: Yeah, I think we should.

Mayor Greenbaum: You can look into it, but I just dealt with a situation in Rockaway, where a builder was looking to get away from a requirement for sprinklers in a townhome community, which is different than a single-family home and he went through all of the issues associated with why you don't want sprinkler systems. And generally, in a residential setting, other than in a townhome setting or a condominium where you're really living with shared walls and roofs, they don't install sprinkler systems. Have you guys seen a lot of residential houses with sprinkler systems?

Assistant Chief Maloney: So, I'm sure that everybody's aware. This has been another topic that pops up on Facebook is the Boathouse. So, that is considered a commercial residence on the bottom with a residential use on the top. So, he had to put in a sprinkler system, but he also had to put a tank in the basement, certain gallonage, I don't know what that was, but they made him put a tank in to supply the sprinkler system for x amount of time for fire rated protection. If you go to Woodfield, all those apartments . . . all the new apartments that are across from Village Green, those are all required to have sprinklers.

Mayor Greenbaum: Because of the nature of shared walls.

Assistant Chief Maloney: Yes, because of the occupancy.

Mayor Greenbaum: But not generally in single-family residential homes.

Assistant Chief Maloney: It's not . . . the problem is it's not cost effective because in a house, you still have to have a tank. You have to have x amount of water to supply the system for x amount of time. People do it but . . .

Mrs. Vazzano: But would it have helped in the attic of that truss system?

Assistant Chief Maloney: Sure, absolutely. Absolutely that would've helped but if you're buying a \$500,000.00 or \$600,000.00 house, you know, some people don't want to spend the extra \$200,000.00 or \$300,000.00 to do that. It's a personal choice. You could have it done. It's all what you want to pay for it. If you want a 5,000-gallon pool or do you want a 30,000-gallon pool. It's all what you want to pay for. But yes, it happens. They put them in.

Mrs. Vazzano: Thank you.

Mr. Buga: Once more, Adam Buga. At the beginning of my previous speech, I thanked you all for what you did and I want to thank you once more. There's no reason that you are feeling like you have to defend yourself. Because what I'm hearing, everything was done, whatever could be done. Yes, we did everything. From the Mayor, I'm hearing timing was perfect. All the resources, whatever we have. So, is this enough? If house, during the day, 10:00am, okay, where there is enough light, people are not sleeping, and my house burned completely. And when the first truck came, the garage was still not in the flame. When I see water coming, for a moment I was hoping there would be more, and it would not be spreading. I've seen . . .for me, it was not enough power. Not enough water. Not enough resources and once more, I'm not blaming anyone and please don't feel . . . you don't have to defend yourself because that's what you are doing. Next day, I went there with my friends to try and you know, secure the area. Then I've seen, I think it was you or somebody else, yes, so he came. He looked at this, there was still smoke. Moments later, there were two trucks with that ladder, and momentarily they were fighting with this smoke. I wish a similar amount of water and fight would be on that day when it was fire. I didn't see that. I was running away, and I was saying, where is the firefighters? Where are the trucks? Okay. So, this timeline is not real, what you have.

Mayor Greenbaum: I can only go by what was provided to me.

Mr. Buga: And what is my conclusion? Did we . . . we want to learn from that. We want to find a solution. I think we don't have a solution. The community is hopeless. We are telling them that are living in this area, in those houses, they have no chance because if everything was perfect and my house didn't survive during the day, this will happen during different times. Every single house is down. Also, my house is far from other houses. It's closest to Frank. His deck was hot. Can you imagine those houses closer to each other? There'd be no one house in the entire neighborhood down. So, why even we have a fire department at all? If those resources we have are not enough to put fire out during the day, when street is very wide, very flat, there's room for many trucks, there's room for everything and we couldn't do it. So, that's what I was expecting. I was hoping that during that meeting there would be a solution. Not just everyone is . . . I'm not a politician but it's not my fault. No. Let's assume it's nobody's fault. Something is not set up right. It's not for me. My house is out. I lost everything and but for those people who are still living there. What solution we have for them? Thank you.

President Nicastro: Does anyone else from the public at this time wish to be heard? Not seeing anyone else from the public. I would like to . . .

Mrs. Sundstrom Smith: Gretchen Sundstrom Smith. The tanker that is in the garage, is that full of water? Is that kept full of water all the time? That's what I want to know. Thank you.

Mayor Greenbaum: Each of the trucks that shows up also has a water supply. So, the initial truck that came . . . what was it, a pumper? What was the first truck that came with the tender?

Mr. Wargo: Seven hundred and fifty gallons of water.

Mayor Greenbaum: Right. It's got water. Not enough to . . . and then as the other tankers come and refill, they create a water supply through a shared water area. It looks like a swimming pool that they set up and everyone dumps into. But every truck . . . the ladder truck has got water. The first fire truck that shows up has got water. Not a significant amount to ultimately fight a fire but to start the water supply.

President Nicastro: Thank you. Does anyone else from the public wish to be heard at this time? Seeing none then I will close it to the public and thank everyone for their comments and I know we will get more done on this and the Mayor and Administrator will look into this as well and inform us all of what was going on we'll . . . we thank the firemen. Our sympathies, again, for your loss. We said that multiple times and we do really feel for you guys, and we'll see what we can do for the rest of the residents as well. At this point, we have Council Comments at this time, so, I will start with Mr. Aaron.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mr. Aaron: It's always tough going first. My heart goes out to you. I watched my in-laws' family house burn to the ground and there was a fire hydrant on the house. The construction we learned later was ballooned, so the fire shot from the basement, right through the house and there was water right there. My father-in-law was pulled out of the house, just like you. I don't think anyone should live in fear of whether their house is going to be there today or tomorrow because of a fire. I did hear the question, "Why do we have a fire department?" I've had the honor to know these guys for a long time. I actually have one of their firefighters working at my

business. At a moment's notice, he's gone. We have an agreement. You get a call; you leave and the stories I hear about what our fire department does do is exceptional and they're trained quite well. Every Tuesday night, they're doing drills, but I think we do, as a Town Council, need to hear what the community says, and I believe we firmly need to explore this more deeply to look at . . . are there opportunities to help the Budd Lake Fire Department provide better or other solutions to fire issues that could destroy houses? I live on a block, and I have a fire hydrant right across the street and it is jet black. My neighborhood's bone dry. I think of the same thing because my house was built in '86 and it's drying up. The wood is drying out. I always wonder . . . am I going to come home one day . . . is it gone? It's not for the lack of our Budd Lake Fire Department. It's not for the lack of anybody's heart or effort. Whether it's Budd Lake or Flanders, and I don't distinguish because I think they interchange ladder trucks. We have two ladder trucks in Town. One on the Flanders side; one on the Budd Lake side, and when necessary, both of them do show up. I think that's part of the shared resources we have in Town. But the construction of the house is what ultimately took out my, you know, their house. If you as homeowners, and I heard the idea come up, sprinkler systems or whatever you want to do in your house and like Kevin mentioned, some costs, if you want to explore that I would until it happens, but I think we do need to, as we go through Budget, as the Mayor said, we need to look at this. Because I don't want to go home and my house be gone.

President Nicastro: Mr. Ferrante.

Mr. Ferrante: I know there's not much that we can say tonight that will make it better. I'm truly sorry for what you had to go through this past weekend. I'm hopeful that something can change in the future. I think we need to do better and not just in your neighborhood but throughout Budd Lake and Flanders. I'm confident that the Administration will give us some options that we could achieve to make . . . just make it safer for everybody. Again, I'm truly sorry for what you had to go through.

President Nicastro: Mrs. Labow.

Mrs. Labow: Again, I want to repeat what everybody's saying. It's really horrible that what you're going through and there's not enough "I'm sorrys" to really make it any better. I would like to say, we're all talking about the water, and a few years ago, when I was on the Library Board and we were building the library, Gerry Sheard, you guys know Gerry, he was a fireman in Town and he was on the Library Board and he was explaining about getting the best roof you can. He said whatever we do, don't use those truss roofs. They're horrible. What it is, is there's a bracket and they . . . there are 2x4s or 3x5s and they slide into those brackets and when it gets . . . as they get old, they start to shrink and so they're not a tight fit in the brackets and sometimes the builders use a lesser quality grade of the wood but what I would do if my house had a truss, oh the other thing too, if you notice on the street signs on the houses that have a truss roof, there should be a triangle. Do they have those? A triangle. It's an "R" for truss roof and "RF" if it's a roof and a floor. That's truss. Yeah, I know, and I bet you never saw those on your . . . that's what they mean. So, the firefighters, when they come, they know what they're going to be dealing with when they come down the street. Well, if I was all of you guys and I had a truss roof, what I would do right away is to figure out how to reinforce that roof. And I don't know if that's even possible or . . . he's saying no. No? Well, that's what I would, you know, because I would think that that might help but the professionals are telling me no. So, there goes my idea but definitely just we all have to try and do the best we can, and I hope nobody else's houses burn down. That's enough. Thank you.

President Nicastro: Mr. Mania.

Mr. Mania: Thank you, Mr. President. First of all, I want to thank our fire departments, Flanders and Budd Lake. They do an outstanding job. Thank you for your service. Secondly, my condolences for the loss of your pets. I know what it is to lose a pet. And God bless.

President Nicastro: Mr. Stewart.

Mr. Stewart: I can't say enough of the condolences and also, the thanks for our fire and rescue squads and our police departments. I'm also, as Mr. Aaron's, my neighborhood is also one of those black fire hydrants in ours too and I've been there 37 years with the same thing. So, I know our system wouldn't work when it's hooked up. Again, thanks and condolences to you guys and thanks to everybody, though, for showing up tonight and also sharing your opinions. It really is important, and we really do appreciate that effort by everybody here. Seriously, thank you.

President Nicastro: Mr. Roman.

Mr. Roman: Tyler, Kevin, Joe, thank you, very much for everything that you guys do; what the men and women under you do. I see them throughout the Township, not only on this structure fire but performing all their duties throughout the year. Whether it be minor accidents or major accidents, the stuff you guys have to deal with . . . I know I couldn't do it. Mr. and Mrs. Buga, I am so sorry for what happened to you. The one thing I am grateful for is that there was no loss of human life. I'm a pet owner. My dog recently passed away last year. I was devastated and I echo the Mayor's sentiment that I value human life above all other life. I am grateful that you are still here to not only bring this to our attention but to rally your neighbors around. So, for that, I am grateful. We have some of the best trained and funded fire and EMS personnel in New Jersey. During my tenure on the dais, we have made sure that our police and first responders have had all the tools necessary to protect our residents but with that being said, I know there's always room for improvement. It's no one's fault, what happened, but there is room for solutions and I look forward to working with the Administration to find those solutions and I hope to present those to you and the residents within due time. Thank you.

President Nicastro: Yes, and with that, the same. We're going to do everything we can to find the improvements. As the Mayor and the Administration said as well, we're going to make sure we work with them. Find out what we need to do if we can and keep the residents informed. I think it's important, as someone mentioned, a lot of people don't know what these hydrants are. I never knew when I came to Town, what they meant, because most people don't know what they mean. And I think we need to do some communication with people that live in those areas, just so they know what it actually means. It doesn't mean they wouldn't purchase or not, that's their choice, but they should know, and a lot of people don't understand why it is the way it is and why it was set up and I think there needs to be more, in that sense, especially after something so devastating. Neighbors need to know the reasons, you know, what that was. So, they're not all guessing and as we said, on Facebook, putting up all these things that may not be true. We need to let them know what's going on. So, I think a little bit more communication when it comes to those fire hydrants. We will work with the Administration, 100 percent, to see what we can do to solve these problems and make things better so there are no more losses anywhere, if possible, we can help it in Town. Not just your development but everywhere. So, again, sorry for your loss again. We are pet owners as well and I know it's not easy. I know that. So, we'll be here. Whatever you need, the Township is here for you. We'll help you through the process. Whatever you need. Our Administrator, everyone is here. So, I know it's going to be challenging, the next few months to get everything in place and work, as you mentioned. But we'll help you anyway we can, and you can reach out to any of us for anything that you might need at any time. So, and thank you all for coming out again, as Greg said. It's important, not only for the support but also to get feedback from everybody because we can't see every single neighborhood and we don't know what everyone's, you know, in those areas, so it's good to get the feedback from everybody. So, thank you all for coming out again and I'm sure we'll be in touch with some updates and things as we go along and anything you need again, make sure you get in touch with us. At this time, do we have a motion to adjourn?

ADJOURNMENT - Motion made and seconded. All in favor, none opposed, the meeting was adjourned at 9:14pm.

Joe Nicastro, Council President

I, Susan Gouveia, Deputy Township Clerk of Mount Olive do hereby certify that the foregoing Minutes are a true and correct copy of the Minutes approved at a legally convened meeting of the Mount Olive Township Council duly held on October 3, 2023.

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Susan Gouveia, Deputy Township Clerk