

North Hudson Fire Fighters Newsletter

5-1-2010

Volume 4 Issue 1

President: Dominick Marino
Vice President: James Corso



Upcoming Events

- ◆ June 1-4, 2010
PFANJ
Convention and
Golf outing
- ◆ June 16, 2010
Wednesday-
FMBA Picnic
- ◆ Every 2nd wed.
of the month are
the PFANJ and
FMBA state
meeting
- ◆ July 23 Blue
Claws contact E3
grp. 4 Chip
- ◆ Monthly
Regional
meeting posted
website

Don't forget we are on the WEB!
www.nhfirefighters.org

Recent News

It has been a real long while since our last issue. And during the past few months a lot has gone on. From the house closings, to a number of fires, to a new Governor who is attacking all UNIONS! It was a rough winter with a lot of snow. And I am sure everyone is eagerly awaiting some sunshine, literally and figuratively.

Our insurance is now Cigna as of 4-1-2010. The change is supposed to be equal to our old insurance. Any problems should be brought to the attention of the Union and Department immediately so we can try to resolve any issues. While the vision, dental, and prescription plans remain the same.

The PFANJ and FMBA along with NJEA, PBA, FOP, CWA, and other unions have been working together against the Governors new bills that adversely affect Our NHFA membership.



Last year the NHFA successfully contributed to various organizations and fundraisers and will be looking to do the same this year. So please be aware the boot drive should be sometime before the end of summer, followed by our holiday events.

Our Union has been busy preparing for contract negotiations, dealing with the change in insurance carriers, and trying to update the by-laws.

Our President and Treasurer have had there hands full this year. Our Treasurer R. Wefer has done a phenomenal job making policy on how we pay out monies owed, making sure we catch up on all of our fiscal responsibilities, ALL THE WHILE SAVING MONEY! It should be pointed out our President D. Marino serves us tirelessly. And we reap the benefits in many ways especially because of his position of President for the PFANJ.

Captain Sean Mick
& Firefighter Henry Ruiz was honored by the
Edward McDowell VFW Ladies
Auxiliary #2468, on Sunday, May 2nd,
for actions taken on May 25, 2009
at 75th Street & Boulevard East.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING 2-18-10

ROLL CALL: President Marino, Secretary Voicu, Treasurer Weefer, Delegates Dempsey and Bodega, Union Council Leader

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Marino- Pres. Marino opened the meeting by welcoming all members and apologized for being late.

Topics to Follow:

1. Spoke briefly on changes Gov. Christie is proposing, but noted that Union Council Leader will touch on topics in detail a bit later. One proposal that affects us directly is paying 1.5% of our base salary towards health care. Also of note: If all proposals are accepted the state will pay their full share towards pensions within 7 years.
2. Mannion case still pending.
3. NHRF&R still denying union time allotment.
4. Currently fighting prorating of vacation time upon retirement.

In closing, Pres. Marino stated to please be patient and "hang in there" with all the bull.... That is being directed towards us, as we continue to stand up for our rights and our community as we always have and will. Be Safe.

Vice Presidents report: Voicu (in Corso's absence while on duty)

1. New insurance: Equal or better, network of doctors, if not in plan please contact James ASAP
2. Constitution bylaws: being reworked
3. Regional meeting: Union always represented
4. Recent contract negotiation meeting with NHRF&R cancelled by management
5. Update on our website for house closing each month "once elections are done, Marino feels permanent house closings are eminent."

Conversation followed on concerns of manning on apparatus.

Treasurer's REPORT: R. Wefer

The balances for general checking, savings account, charity account, and holiday account, health & welfare 1, health & welfare 2.

Note \$19,000.00 Emergency relief lay-off fund mailed (190 members at \$100 each)

Secretary Report: M. Voicu

1. Attended FMBA Convention: #1 topic "pension funding"
2. Westfield FF Dan Maglione Fund Raiser: 100.00 donations by our union to theirs.
3. Personal exposure reports: Please use if needed.

Union Council: Leader

1. Bruce addressed union on a few proposed bills that would impact us all.
 - a. Bill S2: This will affect new hires, "not us." Highest pension qualification will be 106K.
 - b. Bill S3: All members will pay 1.5% of base salary towards health benefits. This amount will be in addition to any other amount that may be required through collective negotiation process.

Delegate Report: Dempsey and Bodega

1. convention at Harrahs: June 1st-4th
2. Pension elections: We are backing George Boreck: Please vote
3. FMBA dues: Proposed increase

4. NEW BUSINESS:

Vote of No Confidence against Chief of Dept. proposed "Motion Passed" - vote to follow

MOTION TO CLOSE



Top: FMBA Valor Awards
Bottom : PFANJ Valor Awards



12-3-09 General Membership Meeting Minutes

By M. Gerrity.

Roll call: President Marino, V.P. Corso, Secretary Voicu, Treasurer Wefer, State delegate Bodega.

President Report: Marino opened meeting by thanking all in attendance despite a brief delay.

North Hudson Fire Fighters Newsletter

The North Hudson Firefighters Association was established to promote just and reasonable working conditions and strive constantly for our improvement; to improve the efficiency of its members; and to cultivate friendship and fellowship among its members.

Presidents Report cont:

Topics to Follow:

1. still waiting on decision from hearing officer with respect to Dorman and Peralta
2. Dean Mannion case (March date still intact)
3. retirement procedures concerning Ray D'Ambrosio
4. Negotiation meeting held on 11/24/2009 with next to follow on 12/21/2009
5. PERC hearing held on 11/4/2009 with respect to allotment of vacation days in final year of employment, not much accomplished although next meeting set for 12/4/09
6. Negotiating with Regional concerning if a FF loses their Driver License
7. Negotiating with Regional in respect to Union Leave
8. President Marino also spoke about past regional meetings which were attended by himself, Corso, and Wefer (main issues: closing fire apparatus, lack of promotions, hiring and the violations of our collective bargaining agreement)
9. Rules of Retirement: "know them"

Treasurer's Report: Wefer

An exact value was given for our accounts including: General, Savings, Charity, Holiday, health & Welfare, and Yearbook account. These amounts can be obtained by contacting R. Wefer.

Secretary Voicu hit on a few items including: 1. East Coast fitness membership of \$499 a Yr. and 2. X-MAS Parade 12/17/2009.

State Delegate Report: Bodega

Delegate Bodega spoke about 2 very important topics which could directly influence us. One, being the intentions of our new Governor concerning caps, pensions, etc. Second, many Mayors have expressed wanting to disband binding arbitration because of the negative effects on towns.

VP. Report: Corso reiterated points of interest made by prior Executive Board members:

1. Xmas parade particulars- handing out flyers
2. League of Municipality meetings
3. Contract Negotiations- how prepared the Union was at our 1st negotiating meeting.
4. In closing made it known that we did have 4 NHFA meeting in 2009

Health & Safety: Wefer

1. Grants-Bunker Gear/spring 2010
2. received grant for Marine 1 accessories(ex: Zodiac)
3. Safe Grants: now being applied for
4. 43rd ST. fire house update 1/10
5. Sq 10 asbestos problem- contractors have been there. Reports to follow
6. P.A. Systems not working properly. Regional looking into the problem
7. Mattress replacements
8. Cleaning of Bunker Gear: Contact Capt. Reed(3-4day turn around)
9. PAC trackers on all rigs
10. Titus testing-HEP-B procedures if vaccine didn't work
11. ladder testing in spring 2010

Motion to Close

Executive Board Reports

Treasurer Rich Wefer: Looks like we got through another winter and unfortunately another ski season ends for us skiers. Speaking of skiing, we did enter one team into this years annual NJ FF Ski Race. We finished 22nd out of 38 with a time of 29.14 seconds. JCFD finished 1st with a time of 21.03 seconds.

As I have mentioned at the past few meetings, I have been working with the IRS concerning the late filing of our 2007 taxes. I am happy to announce, That just the other day we received a ruling that there will be no penalties. I am now working with our accountant on filing our 2009 taxes on time by October.

The PFANJ & FMBA recently held their Valor events where we had members honored. I worked with the Valor Committee and the NHFO to support these events through journal ads and ticket purchases. See our website gallery for pictures.

We were thrown a curve ball by the FMBA with their "Per Capita Crisis Increase," and I have put out three memos concerning how we are handling it until we can meet as a group and discuss it. If you are on our email list you received these memo's on 3/28, 3/30 & 4/24. If you are not, to date we have posted the first two memos in the firehouses, and all three can be viewed on the secure section of our website.

On another note completely different, I recently joined Facebook and see that many other NHFA members also have a page. I also see lots of pictures posted. Apparently we are very photogenic, send me one or two to post on our site! And be careful what you post about our jobs, some of you have hundreds of "friends" viewing your posts. Much of the public does not realize that we work 42 hours per week, weekends, major holidays, day and night, in storms, blizzards, below zero temperatures and in oppressive heat. I have heard reports of posts being used against members throughout the country by management. Think before you post.

We are in the planning stages of our second MDA "Fill-the-Boot" fundraiser, contact me or James Corso if you would like to assist. And finally, after missing 2009, we would like to possibly hold a dinner/dance this fall. Contact me if you would like to help with this event.

State Delegates: Bodega- 1. The Governor wants to cap local budget at 2.5% with harder restriction than what is in place now at 4 % with leaner restriction.

2. Still looking for cities, town and counties to opt of civil service.

3. Fox and Fox stated they maybe loop hole in the new Pension Reforms Bill
Will be looking to see lawsuit can be filed against the state.

4. New 1.5% goes into effect May 21, 2010 unknown about us when we will
Start paying. A good amount stated they will begin on July 1, 2010.

5. Gov wants teacher to freeze their salary for 1 or 2 years, are we next?

6. Rally in Trenton May 22, 2010.

7. Dates to remember: Union Fire Dept Golf Outing FMBA Local 46/246

New Jersey Metro Fire Photographers Assoc. May 15, 2010

NJSFMBA Foundation Golf Classic May 17, 2010

Dover Goes to Dover Sept 26, 2010

Fallen Heroes 5K Memorial Run September 18, 2010

State delegate Dempsey: **P.F.A.N.J. Meeting April 14, 2010**

Attended by William Dempsey

President Marino thanked everyone who attended and helped with the Valor Awards Brunch. Everything went well and over 250 people were in attendance.

He also spoke on the pension election and sent a message to the locals how important it was to make sure their members voted. The PFANJ endorses George Borek.

He spoke to Law firm to see if there was an Avenue to fight the bills that were passed.

Attorney Jim Metz was present and has been researching the bills that were passed. The attorneys are still looking at what actions should be taken. They should be file within a week or so and is not sure if it is going to Appellate or Supreme Court.

The PFANJ web site has an overview of the four bills that were passed.

A number of districts throughout the state spoke on the problems that they were having. Most are all having the same problems with contracts and promotions. A number of cities have givens layoff notices to their employees. Irvington and Atlantic City were among them.

Some dates to remember:

May 2nd St. Florian Mass at The Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Newark.

June 1st Golf Outing at Harbor Pines \$175.00 8:00am shotgun start

June 1st – 4th PFANJ convention at Harrah's Casino Atlantic City

Aug 22nd – 28th IAFF Convention in San Diego

Overtime Chairman: Al Sal Thanks for making summer OT process easy. The OT committee will be meeting soon to discuss policy and issues. Updated OT list and Platoon seniority ranking is back in the secured section of the NHFA website. Overtime has been almost non existent.

Secretary: M. Voicu

If you moved or have a new phone number and email address please let us know about it so we can update it. This way you can be informed of current NHFA issues. Thanks to all who help me maintain a neat and presentable Union Board in the firehouses for postings.

Asst. Secretary: Gerrity – Twenty six years from my hire date, I have witnessed the best and worst. In these tough economic times let's not forget, we are fortunate to experience one of the best careers of all. Also I have reviewed tapes and notes from last 2 general membership meeting and submitted minutes to VP.

Presidents Report

There are many challenges ahead of us! Our fire fighter ranks continue to decline to dangerously low levels, and more of our senior members have chosen to retire. These retirements continue to reduce our membership even further and the ability of the regional to properly man all fire apparatus. The regional since May of 2009 have continually closed two fire companies per day because (as Turner and Welz state) they are prohibited to hire because of the NAACP lawsuit. Well, the regional won their appeal, BUT still are not hiring. Turners excuse now is the economy.

The regional still refuses to promote our members even though some of our members have been in an acting company officer position for MONTHS! We continue to work on getting our members promoted and at the very least the firefighters who are in acting positions compensated for the blatant violation of our CBA by the regional department.

The management committee, directors and the chief of the department are more concerned with cost rather than safety when it comes to the citizens of our region and the firefighters. Again I MUST stress that a proper number of firefighters are required to perform all the necessary tasks at an incident. Be safe and responsible on any incident you respond to. Be mindful of what companies are CLOSED!

As far as what is happening on the state level, Unions in general are under attack by the Governor. The Governor continues to find more ways to dismantle collective bargaining agreements throughout the state. Lawsuits have been filed against the Governor, Senate President, Assembly Speaker, State Treasurer and both houses of the Legislature.

The health insurance carrier, over our concerns, changed on April 1st. Some members did not receive their new cards and this was mainly due to incorrect addresses. If you still have not received your cards, let us know. If your level of re-imbusement has changed, let us know.

Negotiations have not moved as we would have hoped. We have had two meetings but the third meeting has not been scheduled by the regional. We have been working without a contract since July 1st 2009. Since the regional has failed to give us a third meeting or any of the financial information we have asked for over the last four months we filed for arbitration.

Your executive board continues to work tirelessly to keep all members informed on every aspect of all issues. We continue to send out emails and phone messages. If you are not receiving any of the messages, let us know.

There are many open issues with the department that are either in PERC, OAL or just within the department. It appears that the Chief and Director's are not in favor of settling anything. The chief and directors continue to force every issue to PERC or OAL. Unfortunately the department "heads" are not capable to resolve anything.

I cannot stress enough how important it is for all members to lookout for each other. I still hear "after" the fact that a member had an issue with the department and may not have been treated fairly. I must stress to everyone – ASK AN ASSOCIATION OFFICIAL when it happens! Don't take managements word; they do not have your best interest in mind.

I encourage all members to visit the website regularly. www.nhfirefighters.org
"IN UNITY THERE IS STRENGTH"

The Last Word

Do not forget about our website: www.nhfirefighters.org it has come a long way. Our photo albums are growing and there are numerous photos to be checked out , the articles are very informative, and the coming events are just a few of the very useful aspects of our website that many of our members have given input to.

Don't forget are welcome to write something for the news letter, share opinions, or make recommendations so we can make this a very useful medium. The purpose of a newsletter is to provide specialized information to a targeted audience, OUR UNION.

[North Hudson Firefighters Assoc. Newsletter](#)

[NHFA Editorial Staff](#)

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