



HARTSDALE FIRE DISTRICT

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS



WORK SESSION MINUTES February 26, 2026

The Work Session of the Board of Fire Commissioners of the Hartsdale Fire District was held at Fire Station 2, 300 West Hartsdale Avenue, Hartsdale, New York, on Thursday, February 26, 2026.

Members present:

Chairperson	Vallarelli	
Commissioners	Iamónico, Maguire, Muldoon (arrived at 8:13 p.m.), Nanko	
Chief	Maseda	
Secretary	Kane	
Treasurer	Barahona	

Members absent:

1. CALL TO ORDER

- Chairperson Vallarelli called the meeting to order at 7:44 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- The pledge of allegiance was previously recited during the Special Meeting which immediately proceeded the work session; therefore, it was not repeated.

3. OLD BUSINESS

- **Review of Draft Policies:**

- **Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) Policy (Draft)**

- Secretary Kane, the Records Access Officer, explained that the policy follows New York State FOIL requirements and largely incorporates language from the law and a model policy provided by the Fire Districts Association.
- Key provisions discussed in the draft policy included:
 - The Records Access Officer will acknowledge FOIL requests within five (5) business days, as required by law.
 - Records will be provided within twenty (20) business days, when possible.
 - If requested records are maintained by other District officials, such as the Treasurer or Fire Chief, the request will be forwarded to the appropriate officer to provide the records or respond directly.
 - Fiscal records may require coordination with the Treasurer, while operational and emergency service records may require coordination with the Fire Chief.
 - The draft policy also includes provisions regarding notification to public employees when requests are made for disciplinary records, as required under recent changes to State law.
- The Board also discussed the requirement that the District maintain a Subject Matter List identifying the categories of records maintained by the District that may be requested under FOIL. It was noted that:
 - The list must reflect records actually maintained by the District, and the District is not required to create new documents or analyses in response to FOIL requests.

- The Board discussed the FOIL appeals process, noting that:
 - Any denial of records must be provided in writing.
 - Appeals are made to the Board of Fire Commissioners.
 - Copies of appeals must be transmitted to the New York State Committee on Open Government, and the Board must issue a written determination within ten (10) business days.
 - Secretary Kane advised that additional time is needed to complete the Subject Matter List, which will require coordination with Treasurer Barahona and Chief Maseda to identify records maintained by the District. It was suggested that the list could be completed by April or May, depending on the time required to review existing records.
 - **Board of Fire Commissioners Policy (draft)**
 - Commissioner Vallarelli presented a draft governance document incorporating requirements from several applicable laws, including: Town Law, General Municipal Law, Local Finance Law, County Law, Retirement and Social Security Law, and Workers' Compensation Law. The document serves as a foundational reference guide outlining the powers, duties, and responsibilities of the Board of Fire Commissioners and District officers.
 - The Board discussed that some subject areas included in the draft document already exist as stand-alone District policies, such as the Travel Policy, Procurement Policy, Audit of Claims Policy, and Code of Ethics. The Board discussed the importance of avoiding conflicts between policies and ensuring that policies are not duplicated in multiple locations. It was suggested that, where appropriate, the governance document could reference or link to existing stand-alone policies, rather than repeating the full policy language.
 - Further review and refinement of the document will be required to determine:
 - Which provisions should remain within the governance document
 - Which provisions should instead reference existing stand alone policies
 - Whether additional policies may need to be created

The Board agreed that additional time would be needed to review the draft and determine appropriate cross-references to existing policies.
- **Updating Existing Policies**
 - The Chief noted that many existing policies were originally adopted several years ago and that current legal and administrative standards are more extensive than when those policies were first written. As a result, some existing policies may require significant updates or full rewrites to align with current best practices and legal requirements.
- **Timeline for Policy Development/Revision**
 - The Board discussed the timeline for completing the policy framework and indicated that the project will likely be phased over several years, with policies reviewed and adopted individually rather than attempting to approve the entire policy structure at once.
 - The Board discussed prioritizing policy areas that present the highest compliance or operational risk, including:
 - Financial controls and auditing procedures
 - Purchasing and procurement requirements
 - OSHA compliance and safety policies

- Certain policies that originate from administrative or operational initiatives, including OSHA compliance reviews, would be developed by staff and then presented to the Board for review and adoption.
 - The Board agreed to begin the policy review process by reviewing and updating existing policies before developing entirely new policies. The review process will be distributed among Commissioner committees, allowing Commissioners to review policies within their respective areas of responsibility and report back to the Board with recommendations.
 - The Board also discussed coordinating with District officers and staff members who may already be working on operational guidelines and standard operating procedures, so those documents can be reviewed before being presented to the Board for consideration.
 - The Board acknowledged that the policy development process may require significant administrative work, and additional time or resources may be needed to complete the process effectively.
 - The Board agreed that the next step will be to compile a comprehensive list of all existing policies currently being maintained by the District so the Board can begin reviewing them.
- **Treasurer Workload and Position Evaluation**
 - The Board discussed the current workload of the Treasurer and the challenges associated with completing all operational responsibilities within the existing 20-hour per week part-time schedule.
 - Treasurer Barahona explained that much of the current workload involves maintaining daily financial operations, including payroll processing, reporting requirements, audit preparation, and other compliance related responsibilities. In addition, the ongoing transition to the Aplos accounting system has required additional time to learn new processes and improve recordkeeping and reporting practices.
 - Treasurer Barahona also discussed potential efficiencies, such as utilizing software tools used by neighboring districts to automate certain tasks (e.g., preparation of Form 1095 reporting).
 - Chief Maseda noted that Treasurer Barahona has consistently been working beyond the scheduled part-time hours since June 2025 to maintain normal operations while implementing improvements.
 - The Board discussed the need to better understand:
 - The time required to complete current operational responsibilities under existing processes
 - The amount of time required if the position were expanded to full-time
 - The potential time available for special projects and operational improvements, including financial planning, process automation and compliance improvements.
 - The Board asked that Treasurer Barahona and Chief Maseda review the current job description and prepare an analysis of duties and time requirements to present at an upcoming meeting:
 - This analysis will help the Board determine:
 - Whether the position should remain part-time or transition to full time
 - How to address compensation for hours already worked beyond the scheduled part-time commitment
 - How to allocate time for future financial planning and improvement projects.
 - The analysis is to include:
 - Operational tasks required to maintain daily financial operations
 - Additional responsibilities that have emerged during the transition to the new Aplos system
 - Examples of inefficiencies or tasks that could potentially be streamlined

- **Committee Work and Responsibilities**

- The Board also discussed committee assignments and expectations for Committee activity between meetings.
- It was clarified that Committee members should meet outside of regular Board meetings to work on assigned initiatives and report progress during the Committee Reports portion of monthly meetings.
- The Board agreed that Committees should begin meeting regularly to create goals and report progress to the full Board.
- Each Committee will review the goals assigned to it and determine whether the listed objectives should be accepted as written, modified, or supplemented. Committee members will report back to the Board at the March meeting with any recommended revisions.

4. ADJOURNMENT

- There being no further items to discuss, a motion to adjourn the Work Session was made by Commissioner Iamónico and seconded by Commissioner Maguire.

All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:51 p.m.

Minutes were prepared and submitted by:

Christine K. Kane
Fire District Secretary