

# Atlantic County Firefighters' Association

*"In Union For The Safety Of All"*

President  
Amor "Skip" Portale  
Vice President  
Ellsworth Ott  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
Charles "Chick" Kisby



Secretary  
Robert A. Mellon  
Treasurer  
Jaime C. Mellon  
Asst. Sect./Treasurer  
Cindy L. Badger

April 20, 2011

## **Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the Atlantic County Firefighters' Association was called to order at 20:00 on April 20, 2011 at the Atlantic County Anthony "Tony" Canale Training Center by President Amor "Skip" Portale. The meeting was opened with a flag salute followed by an Invocation by the Chaplain of the Association, Reverend Thomas Sweeny. President Portale then pointed out the fire exits and asked that all electronic devices be silenced. President Portale welcomed all to the meeting which serves as the twentieth annual Valor Awards presentation and the second annual recognition of firefighters with fifty or more years of active service.

## **Opening Remarks and Introduction of Host Chief**

The meeting is being hosted by the Margate City Fire Department in cooperation with FMBA Local 41. President Portale introduced Chief Anthony Tabasso who welcomed everyone to the annual valor awards and expressed the gratitude that the Margate City Fire Department and FMBA Local 41 for the opportunity to host the meeting and awards after a long period since last hosting a meeting.

## **In Attendance**

Roll call was taken by Secretary Robert A. Mellon who reported a quorum was present. Total attendance was over one hundred and sixty when including delegates and all guests.

## **Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the minutes of the Mar. 16, 2011 meeting, as sent to the member companies.

## **Bills**

The bills, totaling \$3,686.47, were read by Treasurer Jaime C. Mellon. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to pay the bills from the proper funds.

Bills --- Modern Gas - \$405.19 (propane) / South Jersey Welding - \$203.60 (Tools of Rescue Class supplies) / Staples - \$448.77 (PR, Admin, & Training office supplies) / Home Depot - \$41.47 (Flash Over Class supplies) / Butterhof's - \$1,018.77 (straw) / Shield Solutions - \$60.43 (equipment maintenance) / Levon Clayton - \$81.27 (reimburse for ICS Class forms) / EHT High School - \$684.25 (Ex. Comm. & Officer shirts - paid for by Ex. Comm. & Officers) / ACCC Academy of Culinary Arts - \$742.72 - (ACFFA Dinner - paid for by attendees)

## **Dispensing of Business**

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to dispense with the remainder of regular business for the evening.

## **Introduction of Awards**

President Portale welcomed all to the awards presentation and "50" year service recognitions. President Portale introduced the guests; Atlantic County Executive: Dennis Levinson, Mr. Levinson thanked all in the fire service for their commitment to Atlantic County residents and commented on the pride that he has for being a part of this county as well as the extreme honor that comes for those that

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are receiving valor awards. Atlantic County Director of the Office of Emergency Preparedness: Vincent J. Jones III. Congressman Frank Lobiando's representative: Robert Geist, Mr. Geist read a letter from the Congressman offering his thanks and congratulations to those being honored with valor awards and those being recognized for 50+ years of service. NJ Senator: James Whelan, Mr. Whelan reported that he is honored to be in attendance with those receiving valor awards and being recognized for 50+ years of service as well as all of the dedicated fire service members also in attendance tonight. Atlantic County Freeholder Chairman: Frank Formica, Mr. Formica remarked on all that makes Atlantic County great including the fire service and the individuals being recognized tonight. Atlantic County Freeholders: Alisa Cooper and Frank Sutton, Mr. Sutton reported that he is honored to be here to recognize the heroes and dedicated 50+ year members of the fire service and thanked the Atlantic County Firefighters' Association for hosting the awards and recognition every year, Ms. Cooper also reported that she is honored to be in attendance to recognize individual with valor awards and 50+ years of service recognition and wished everyone a blessed holiday and beautiful spring. Atlantic County Sheriff: Frank Balles, Sheriff Balles offered congratulations to all valor award recipients and a special thanks to one recipient who was a visitor to Atlantic County. Atlantic County Firefighters' Association Executive Committee Chairman: Howard Berchtold Jr., Mr. Berchtold offered thanks to all members of the firefighters' association, the association officers and executive committee, and Atlantic County government for the cooperation that makes this annual event possible and very special. Howard reported that this is the twentieth year for the valor awards and the second year for the 50+ years of active service recognition. Howard commented that many adjectives used by Rev. Sweeny in the invocation are excellent descriptors for those that have served 50+ years actively. Those adjectives are commitment, courage, dedication, and service. Howard reported that six active firefighters with 50+ years of active service are being honored tonight. The 50+ years of active service recognition, now in its second year, was conceived and made possible due to the hard work of Atlantic County Fire Marshal Harold J. "Whitey" Swartz.

## "50" Year Service Awards

The presentation of the "50" Year Service Awards was made by Executive Committee Chairman, Howard Berchtold Jr. and President Amor "Skip" Portale. All honorees received a uniform bar, gold life member card, and framed certificate from the association. All honorees also received a certificate of special congressional recognition from Congressman Frank LoBiondo, a senate commendation from NJ Senator James Whelan, a joint assembly commendation from NJ Assemblymen John Amodeo and Vincent Polistina, a certificate of achievement from the Atlantic County Board of Chosen Freeholders, a certificate of achievement from Atlantic County Executive Dennis Levinson, and a certificate of certificate of achievement from Atlantic County Sheriff Frank Balles.

"50" Year Service Award Recipients:

Edward Vincent, Absecon Volunteer Fire Department  
Ted Reinhard, Egg Harbor City Volunteer Fire Department  
Joseph L. Pratzner Sr., Weekstown Volunteer Fire Company  
Ken Badger, Bargaintown Volunteer Fire Company  
William Burt, Mizpah Volunteer Fire Company  
Robert Adams, Port Republic Volunteer Fire Company

President Portale congratulated all 50 year service award recipients and thanked all of the families that supported them for all of those years. Executive Committee Chairman Berchtold congratulated all recipients and reported that there is more than 300 years of service between them.

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## Special Presentation

President Portale presented a special engraved walnut plaque to Ted Reinhard in honor to his many years of dedicated service to the association. President Portale reported that when he first joined the fire service, Ted was one of his instructors. Ted has served the association faithfully and with dedication for many years and currently serves on the Executive Committee, has held the office of President, and is an instructor for the association. Ted was a driving force in obtaining the current fire academy along with others including Tony Canale and Howard Guenther. Ted has spent years obtaining donations of equipment for the fire academy that easily exceeds \$500,000 in value and has had the equipment room dedicated to his honor. President Portale shared a story of a class he attended in which Ted was instructing tactics and the novel and thought provoking way in which Ted got the lesson across to the students. Egg Harbor City Vol. Fire Dept. Chief Kienzle provided a copy of an Egg Harbor City council resolution passed in April of 1963. The resolution recognized the area fire service for battling a large forest fire and specifically recognized Capt. Ted Reinhard, and others, for performing a rescue of firefighters that were endangered by that fire. Pleasantville Deputy Chief (Ret) and Atlantic County Director of Fire Training: Mike Corbo reported on the fifteen years that he and Ted attended the Fire Department Instructor Conference (FDIC) and witnessing the magic that Ted used to obtain so many donations from equipment manufacturers and his ability to make long lasting relationships with the representatives of so many companies. Mike reported that Ted taught him how to run the fire academy and that Ted's vision and management plan is still in force today. Mike presented Ted with a custom job shirt for the Atlantic County fire Academy with the unique title of Senior Instructor.

## Valor Awards

President Amor "Skip" Portale and Executive Committee Chairman Howard Berchtold Jr. presented each of the Valor Award recipients with their awards from the Atlantic County Firefighters' Association. This is the twentieth year of the Valor Awards presentation. All honorees also received a certificate of special congressional recognition from Congressman Frank LoBiondo, a senate commendation from NJ Senator James Whelan, a joint assembly commendation from NJ Assemblymen John Amodeo and Vincent Polistina, a certificate of recognition from the Atlantic County Board of Chosen Freeholders, a certificate of recognition from Atlantic County Executive Dennis Levinson, and a certificate of recognition from Atlantic County Sheriff Frank Balles.

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### Meritorious Award Recipients:

Christopher Ricciotti – Longport Police Officer  
Michael Simmons – Longport Volunteer Firefighter  
Christopher Maher – Margate Firefighter

Chief Levon "Lefty" Clayton, Longport Volunteer Fire Dept., highlighted the details from a structure fire on March 13, 2010 in Longport. Captain Richard Hirsch, Longport Vol. Fire Dept., suffered a severe heart attack on the scene. The quick actions of the three valor award recipients, by providing CPR and cardiac defibrillation, saved the Captain's life. Longport Mayor Dr. Nick Russo offered his thanks for the quick actions of the honored individuals and a special thanks to the instructors who taught the responders to handle such a situation without delay or second thought. Captain Richard Hirsch offered his thanks for the honorees quick action.

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Meritorious Award Recipients:

Steve Sperlak – Estell Manor Volunteer Firefighter  
Kevin Jordan – Elwood Volunteer Firefighter

Asst. Chief Christina Surran, Estell Manor Volunteer Fire Dept., highlighted the details of a Mullica Township motor vehicle accident on March 25, 2010. Two Mullica Township public works employees, Steve Sperlak and Kevin Jordan, came upon a vehicle that hit a tree on Weekstown Road. The two started extrication with the tools they had on hand and disconnected the battery as the vehicle started to smoke while awaiting for emergency services to arrive.

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Meritorious Award Recipients:

Ms. Shelly Hall – civilian, Atlantic City  
Daren Smiley – civilian, Atlantic City

Deputy Fire Marshal Thomas Bell III, Atlantic City Fire Dept., highlighted the details from a structure fire on Dec. 7, 2011 in Atlantic City. Ms. Shelly Hall and Daren Smiley, two civilians without any training, entered a smoke filled building, after reporting it to 9-1-1, and evacuated four children while also knocking on every door to inform the other occupants to evacuate. The children and occupants did not speak English as a primary language. Despite the smoke conditions, and the language barrier, these two civilians had the entire structure evacuated before the fire department arrived. The two civilians are a mother and her ten year old son.

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Class Two Award Recipient:

James Nunan – Pleasantville Firefighter/EMT

Deputy Chief (ret) Mike Corbo, Pleasantville Fire Dept., highlighted the details from a pedestrian involved motor vehicle accident on Nov. 16, 2010 in Northfield. An off duty Pleasantville Firefighter/EMT James Nunan witnessed the accident on Route 9. He immediately rendered emergency care by stabilizing the victim and securing her airway. His immediate actions made a difference in the outcome of this tragic event. Unfortunately James Nunan was not able to attend the ceremony to receive the award and it will be sent to him.

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Class One Award Recipient:

Michael T. Chura – District Fire Chief, Syracuse NY

Meritorious Award Recipient:

Paul Talarico – civilian, Northfield

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Chief (ret) James Garth, Farmington Volunteer Fire Co., highlighted the details of a motor vehicle accident on Aug. 11, 2010 on the Atlantic City Expressway at the interchange with the Garden State Parkway. A vehicle was overturned and on fire with the occupant trapped inside and hanging by her seatbelt. Michael T. Chura was first to arrive on the scene and entered the vehicle from the passenger side to make several attempts to free the occupant from the seatbelt. He lowered the occupant to the ceiling of the vehicle, after releasing the seatbelt, and was assisted by Paul Talarico with removal of the occupant to a safe distance just as fire breached the engine compartment's firewall. The action of entering the vehicle receives a class one award and helping move the occupant earned a meritorious award. The victim from the accident, Pricilla Roslyn, thanked both for their quick actions. This incident is reported in the April 2011 issue of "Firehouse" magazine highlighting the actions of Chief Chura.

## Good of the Order

Executive Committee Chairman, Howard Berchtold Jr. and President Amor "Skip" Portale congratulated all recipients of the evening and thanked all elected and appointed officials for attending the ceremonies. Howard thanked all who served on the valor awards committee and spent much time reviewing all of the submissions.

Howard Berchtold again thanked Fire Marshal Harold J. "Whitey" Swartz for all the hard work in organizing tonight's events and reported that Atlantic County will honor him on Arbor Day with a tree planting at the Anthony "Tony" Canale Training Center on April 29, 2011 at 11:00 AM

Thank you to the Margate City Fire Department in cooperation with FMBA Local 41 for hosting the evening and providing the refreshments.

## Adjournment

Benediction was conducted by Chaplain Rev. Thomas Sweeny.

There being no further business at hand, the meeting and awards presentation was adjourned at 21:50. The next regular meeting is scheduled to be held at 20:00 on May 18, 2011 in Bayview, Galloway Township.

Attested:

Robert A. Mellon, Secretary

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## Date Clearing

Fri. Apr. 29, 2011	11:00	Anthony "Tony" Canale Training Ctr.	Arbor Day Tree Planting to Honor Atl. Co. Fire Marshal Harold J. "Whitey" Swartz
Sat. Apr. 30, 2011	19:30	Hammonton VFC #2	Comedy Night with Dinner Buffet
Sat. May 7, 2011	16:00	Germania VFC	Turkey Dinner
Tues. May 10, 2011	08:30	Neshanic Valley Golf Club	New Jersey Firemen's Home 2011 Golf Outing
Sat. May 14, 2011	10:00	Smithville	Oceanville VFC @ Mayfest (Foot-Long Hot Dogs, Hamburgers, Fries) (10:00 - 17:00)
Sun. May 15, 2011	07:00	Minotola VFC	Minotola Fire Company Breakfast (07:00-12:00)
Sun. May 15, 2011	10:00	Smithville	Oceanville VFC @ Mayfest (Foot-Long Hot Dogs, Hamburgers, Fries) (10:00 - 17:00)
Sat. May 21, 2011	09:00	Nesco VFC	Craft & Vender Show
Sat. May 21, 2011	11:00	Hammonton VFC #2	4th Annual Second-2-None Motorcycle Run
Sat. May 21, 2011	15:30	Port Republic VFC	Roast Beef Dinner
Sat. Jun. 4, 2011	09:00	Elwood VFC	Biker Bash 2011
Sun. Jun. 5, 2011	12:00	Dorothy VFC	54th Annual Chicken BBQ 12:00 -18:00
Sat. Oct. 1, 2011	10:00	Smithville	Oceanville VFC @ Oktoberfest (Foot-Long Hot Dogs, Hamburgers, Fries) (10:00 - 17:00)
Sat. Oct. 1, 2011	16:00	Germania VFC	Turkey Dinner
Sun. Oct. 2, 2011	10:00	Smithville	Oceanville VFC @ Oktoberfest (Foot-Long Hot Dogs, Hamburgers, Fries) (10:00 - 17:00)
Sat. Nov. 12, 2011	16:00	Oceanville VFC	Baked Ham & Fried Oyster Dinner

(Please email your event info to [robert.mellon@atlanticcountyfireassoc.org](mailto:robert.mellon@atlanticcountyfireassoc.org))