

**Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners, Fire District No. 1 was held on Monday, May 18, 2026 at 6:00 P.M.**

Commissioner John C. Kenny called the meeting to order.

Maria Bucsanszky – All the requirements of the “Open Public Meeting Act” have been complied with by advertising in the Home News Tribune and Star Ledger. Copies of the meeting notice have been sent to the Municipal Clerk’s Office and posted on the bulletin boards of the fire house and the post offices of Woodbridge and Sewaren.

Commissioner John C. Kenny led a pledge to the flag.

A moment of silence for our departed members and for all those serving overseas.

**PRESENT:** Commissioner John C. Kenny, Commissioner Robert Minkler, Sr., Commissioner Patrick Kenny, Commissioner Jay Barcellona, Commissioner Jeffrey Moran

**ALSO PRESENT:** Maria Bucsanszky, District Clerk  
Christopher Howell, Attorney  
Nicole Grzeskowiak, Labor Counsel  
Mayor John McCormac  
Chief Robert Minkler, Jr  
Deputy Chief Mark Minkler

Commissioner J.C.K.: I need a motion to suspend the minutes of the May 6, 2026 Regular Meeting until the next Regular Meeting.

Commissioner Patrick Kenny made a motion to extend the minutes of the May 6, 2026 Regular Meeting until the next Regular Meeting which was seconded by Commissioner Jay Barcellona and carried unanimously.

Commissioner J.C.K.: Thank you all for coming tonight. I know it is a little warm in here so we’re going to keep things moving along quickly. I just want to thank you all. This is a very special night. It was generated at all of extensive training. The Chief and (inaudible) are here and Mayor would you like to come up and say a few words.

Audience applauds.

Mayor John McCormac: Thank you very much. I just wanted to come tonight to congratulate the new Captains and Chief who was the Chief. The last time I saw him it was at that awful fire on Plaza Drive. That’s when I really, in one of the few times in my career, got to watch a fire being in action. I mean the fire was pretty much out by the time I got there but yet even after the fire there was an awful lot of coordination going on and fifteen families were displaced and they all had to go to the

Red Cross and they all had belongings. Some could get back in and some couldn't. It was just an amazing scene watching the Woodbridge Fire Department as the lead in that very, very unfortunate situation that took place with Port Reading, Fords and Colonia and even the two Iselins were there and I think Hopelawn were there so it was an all hands-on deck and absolutely amazing that there were no fatalities. Thank God there were two cops that were at on patrol looking for catalytic converter stealers and they were pretty close by when that first call came in. Thank God that woman that lived there, next door to there, saw the smoke and smelled the smoke whatever and made the call. Thank God because these fifteen families, many of them, might not be with us right now. I actually got to see your Chief, Robert Minkler, in action. He didn't get credit for anything though because they misidentified him on News12 as Mark Minkler so Mark got all the accolades and Mark got all the credit. Everybody is saying Mark great job the Mayor said you're wonderful, except it was not Mark Minkler it was Robert Minkler so I'm making that clear that it was Robert Minkler that led the scene. Bob, thank you very much. I watched you man and you did a great job. Your whole team did a great job. Thank you to Woodbridge Fire Company.

Audience applauds.

Commission J.C.K.: Okay, so we're going to try to move along here. Deputy Chief Mark Minkler is going to come up and do a bio and introduce the Chief.

Deputy Chief Mark Minkler: Good evening. My name is Deputy Chief Mark Minkler. Am going to be taking the bio for Chief Robert Minkler Jr. before you call him up for his oath of office. Chief Robert Minkler, Jr. started in emergency serves in August, 1997 as a cadet with the St. John's First Aid Squad in the Fords section of Woodbridge. He obtained his EMT certification in January of 1988. In June of 1999, at the age of 18, he joined the Woodbridge Fire Company where he obtained his Firefighter I and II certifications along with his Fire Official License. Chief Minkler was appointed to the Woodbridge Fire Department in November of 2003 and was assigned to the Fire Prevention Bureau before being assigned to Fire Suppression in 2005. In Fire Suppression, Chief Minkler acted as one of the department's shift inspectors conducting fire prevention duties along with other various fire suppression responsibilities. Chief Minkler is proud to have worked with his father, his uncle and his brother (with whom he continues to work with today). In April of 2014, Chief Minkler was promoted to Lieutenant followed by his promotion to Captain in 2017. In 2019, the department's rank classifications were changed by the New Jersey Civil Service Commission. As a result of this change, the rank of Captain was changed to Battalion Chief. In 2023, Chief Minkler was promoted to Deputy Chief. During Chief Minkler's time with the department, he has attended various training and certification classes and is proud to have received lifesaving and unit citation awards for his actions while operating on emergency scenes. Outside of the fire department, Chief Minkler has been employed by the Middlesex County Fire Academy since 2014 where he serves as a State of New Jersey Level II Fire Inspector. Issuing the Oath of Office is Retired Battalion Chief Robert Minkler. Chief Minkler please come up.

Audience applauds.

Retired Battalion Chief Robert Minkler: I, Robert Minkler, Jr.

Robert Minkler, Jr: I, Robert Minkler, Jr.

Retired Battalion Chief Robert Minkler.: Do solemnly swear that I will faithfully and conscientiously discharge the duties of Chief for Fire District #1 Township of Woodbridge, New Jersey according to the best of my ability and render full service to the District, and to the Fire Department, and at all times be subordinate to the orders and to the directions of my superiors and in conformity with the rules. I further solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of New Jersey and that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same and to the governments established in the United States so help me God. Congratulations.

Audience applauds.

Chief Rober Minkler, Jr.: We're going to swear in our Captain now. Cory Snyder has proudly served in the fire service since 2011 dedicating his career to protecting lives, serving his community, and upholding the values of integrity, professionalism, and commitment. Since being hired full-time in 2019, he has continued to build on that foundation through hands-on experience, ongoing training and a strong dedication to the craft of the fire services. In September of 2025, Cory was promoted to the rank of Captain. Following his promotion, he was assigned to the Day Tour where he is responsible for training and developing new firefighters. He brings a leadership style shaped by mentorship and service and remains focused on maintaining high standards. Captain Snyder, would you please come up to the stand.

Audience applauds.

Christopher Howell, Attorney: I, Cory Snyder

Captain Cory Snyder: I, Cory Snyder.

Christopher Howell, Attorney: Do solemnly swear that I will faithfully and conscientiously discharge the duties of Captain for Fire District #1 Township of Woodbridge, New Jersey according to the best of my ability and render full service to the District, and to the Fire Department, and at all times be subordinate to the orders and to the directions of my superiors and in conformity with the rules. I further solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of New Jersey and that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same and to the governments established in the United States and in this State so help me God.

Captain Cory Snyder: I do.

Audience applauds.

Chief Robert Minkler, Jr.: Captain Daniel Aquino. Captain Daniel Aquino began his service career in 2008 as a volunteer firefighter with the Hopelawn Engine Company #1. Daniel served as a New Jersey State Correctional Police Officer from 2013 to 2019 and finished his law enforcement service with the rank of Sergeant prior to being hired as a career firefighter with the Woodbridge Fire District #1 in September of 2019. Daniel was promoted to the rank of Captain with the Woodbridge Fire Department in September of 2025. Daniel is a 2010 graduate of Kean University with a B.A. in Criminal Justice and a minor in Political Science. He is currently assigned to Fire Administration on the daytime rotation.

Audience applauds.

Captain Daniel Aquino: Thank you, sir.

Christopher Howell, Attorney: I, Daniel Aquino.

Captain Daniel Aquino: I, Daniel Aquino.

Christopher Howell, Attorney: Do solemnly swear that I will faithfully and conscientiously discharge the duties of Captain for Fire District #1 Township of Woodbridge, New Jersey according to the best of my ability and render full service to the District, and to the Fire Department, and at all times be subordinate to the orders and to the directions of my superiors and in conformity with the rules. I further solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of New Jersey and that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same and to the governments established in the United States and in this State so help me God.

Captain Daniel Aquino: I do.

Audience applauds.

Chief Robert Minkler Jr.: Captain Robert Hillard, III. Robert joined the Woodbridge Fire Company in 2008 as a volunteer firefighter beginning a lifelong commitment to serving his community. In 2019, he was hired as a career firefighter with the Woodbridge Fire Department where he quickly earned a reputation for his professionalism, leadership, and dedication to the job. In 2026, he was promoted to Captain and assigned to the Training Division where he plays an active role in preparing, mentoring, and developing the next generation of firefighters while continuing to uphold the department's commitment to excellence and public service. Captain Hilliard.

Audience applauds.

Christopher Howell, Attorney: I, Robert Hillard, III.

Captain Robert Hillard, III: I, Robert Hillard, III.

Christopher Howell, Attorney: Do solemnly swear that I will faithfully and conscientiously discharge the duties of Captain for Fire District #1 Township of Woodbridge, New Jersey according to the best of my ability and render full service to the District, and to the Fire Department, and at all times be subordinate to the orders and to the directions of my superiors and in conformity with the rules. I further solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of New Jersey and that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same and to the governments established in the United States and in this State so help me God.

Captain Robert Hillard, III: I do.

Audience applauds.

Captain Robert Minkler, Jr.: Captain Christopher Kenny. Chris started in the Fire service as a member of the Hopelawn Engine Company in 2005. While in high school he attended Middlesex County Fire Academy at night. Chris joined the Woodbridge Fire Company in 2012 as a Firefighter and quickly worked his way through the ranks of the Volunteer company and in 2018 he was the Volunteer Chief. Chris was hired to the Fire Department in 2019 where he worked various tours before getting promoted to Captain in 2026. Currently, Chris works in the training division training new recruits at Woodbridge Fire Department for their future careers. Captain Kenny.

Audience applauds.

Christopher Howell, Attorney: I, Christopher Kenny.

Captain Christopher Kenny: I Christopher Kenny.

Christopher Howell, Attorney: Do solemnly swear that I will faithfully and conscientiously discharge the duties of Captain for Fire District #1 Township of Woodbridge, New Jersey according to the best of my ability and render full service to the District, and to the Fire Department, and at all times be subordinate to the orders and to the directions of my superiors and in conformity with the rules. I further solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of New Jersey and that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same and to the governments established in the United States and to this State so help me God.

Captain Christopher Kenny: I do.

Audience applauds.

Captain Robert Minkler, Jr.: On behalf of myself, Deputy Chief Minkler and Deputy Chief Weber we'd like to thank everybody for attending tonight and being here for the ceremonies. Congratulations to our four new Captains. All, with the exception of Cory, I actually had the privilege on working on the same shift with them but I've known Cory for a long time. They all are tremendous firefighters and we see that they are going to be tremendous officers in all their lines in our department. With the fire department administration, we'd also like to thank the Board of Fire Commissioners for seeing our future and where we are. They are a big advocate for our training and to provide the funding for our training which we have taken on various different training aspects. Between Swift Water, we now provide First Responder Medical Services, Motor Vehicle Extraction, (inaudible) and we are one of the two Middlesex County Home Task Force Units for the county and also for surrounding towns which if you read the news or seen the news yesterday, we were called into action for our members. So, Commissioners thank you for moving this department forward with the administration and we look forward to another year.

Audience applauds.

Commissioner J.C.K.: I just want to take a second to recognize a couple new faces that are here. We have Director Joe Nisky here from the Township Police Department.

Audience applauds.

Commissioner J.C.K.: We have 1<sup>st</sup> Ward Councilwoman Sharon McAuliffe.

Audience applauds.

Commissioner J.C.K.: We have 4<sup>th</sup> Ward Councilwoman Debbie Meehan.

Audience applauds.

Commissioner J.C.K.: Again I would just like to recognize some of our retirees. Currently our last Chief, Chief Michael Balog.

Audience applauds

Commissioner J.C.K.: Captain Robert Hilliard, Jr.

Audience applauds.

Commissioner J.C.K.: Captain Leonard Minkler.

Audience applauds.

Commissioner J.C.K.: Dick Snyder.

Audience applauds.

Commissioner J.C.K.: And past Fire Official Keith Repace.

Audience applauds.

Commissioner J.C.K.: We're going to have something afterwards so I'd like to ask for adjournment of the meeting.

Commissioner Robert Hilliard, Sr. made a motion to adjourn the Special Meeting at 6:25 P.M. which was seconded by Commissioner Jeffrey Moran and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Maria Bucsanszky  
District Clerk