Greenville Fire District **ACCEPTED**
Regular Meeting

Minutes:	**May 12, 2026**
Type of Meeting:	Public Session
Meeting opened:	6:33 PM
Meeting called by:	Walter Groden
Attendees:	Commissioners: Walter Groden Warren Hershkowitz Helene Orce Michael Rappe Louis Russo Fire Chief: Costanzo Spedaliere Consultant Treasurer: Angela Sinclair Deputy Treasurer / Secretary: Jennifer DiMartino

Courtesy of the floor: None

Resolution	**2026 –5.1**
The minutes of the April 7, 2026 Public Session be accepted as amended. An additional amendment to the March 10, 2026 Public Session was made.	
Motion:	Orce
Second:	Hershkowitz
Voting in favor: Groden, Hershkowitz, Orce, Russo	
Abstain: Rappe	

Resolution	**2026 – 5.2**
Approve the financial reports for April 2026 as presented.	
Motion:	Rappe
Second:	Hershkowitz
Voting in favor: Groden, Hershkowitz, Orce, Rappe, Russo	

It was suggested that we review the expenses for each apparatus on a quarterly or bi-annual bases to track how much we are spending on each rig.

Chief's Report:

Resolution	**2026 – 5.3**
Approve that all members be paid for illnesses during April 2026.	
Motion:	Hershkowitz
Second:	Rappe
Voting in favor: Groden, Hershkowitz, Orce, Rappe, Russo	

- Chief gave an update on:
- The four Probationary Firefighters, they are all doing well. One Probationary Firefighter will go back to Academy in the Fall due to an injury that prevented him from completing Academy this Spring. He will be on shift in February 2027.
- Flood mitigation was paused for a couple of weeks we will commence work the week of May 18.
- Chief had a meeting with the Volunteer Company (Re: training, attendance, etc) it was a constructive meeting.
- The Day Officer will be added to the project for the new rig acquisition.
- The Volunteer tax exempt process was discussed, only 3 members requested and were issued letters.
- A suggestion was made that Re: Flood mitigation: the Structural Engineer should complete a final inspection of the project before we pay out the contractor and the door company.

Volunteer Assistant Chief Report: The A/C report was presented. They have 3 new potential candidates and 1 member starting FF 1. They received the EMS bag (picking it up on 5/12) and they are working on putting up the Volunteer banner.

Volunteer information (active list of members, contact info, gear etc.):
We just have the roster for now, Commissioner Russo and Hershkowitz will track down the remaining information and consolidate the information.

Old Business:

Promotional and new hire discussion will be moved to Executive Session.

Badges for Commissioners – The District stopped giving out badges a long time ago.

ID cards for the Commissioners and personnel – Capt. Cappello is working on this and will get that completed. He will need pedigree info and pictures to complete this.

Building use policy: decided to wait for the building construction to be completed before we finalize the policy.

Crisis and trauma training: yes we should set up a 2 hour pro bono training. It was suggested that we schedule a special summer meeting with the board. Jen to check with our health insurance carrier to see if this training will drive down insurance costs.

Class action lawsuit for apparatus: do we wish to participate? We are getting more information before we opt in or out (check our risk mgmt., what are we giving up by participating in the class action etc.).

Refreshments policy – does anyone wish to take it on? Russo and Orce and work on it together.

New Business:

Banking and interest rates: the District can increase our interest rate by moving money to Metropolitan Bank. Angela will send further information to the board and they can make a decision for the next meeting.

Investment policy: We need to update this policy, we will plan to do so at the next meeting.

Correspondence:

Regarding: Operational communication of emergency events / incidents

5.12.2026

Mr. Chair, fellow Commissioners:

I am placing a formal legal objection on the record regarding the exclusion of any Commissioner—including myself—from participating in interviews for new hires or promotional candidates.

Under New York Town Law §§174–176, all Fire Commissioners possess equal authority, equal access to district information, and equal responsibility for personnel decisions. No statute, regulation, or case law permits the Chair or any subset of Commissioners to exclude another Commissioner from participating in interviews or from receiving information relevant to hiring or promotion.

The Board of Fire Commissioners is a public body, and personnel interviews are a Board function, not a function of two hand selected members. Excluding a Commissioner from interviews is inconsistent with Town Law, violates the equal authority structure of the Board, and constitutes an improper restriction on a Commissioner's statutory duties.

The claim that allowing more than two Commissioners to attend interviews would "create a public meeting" and therefore justify excluding Commissioners is legally incorrect. If three or more Commissioners attend an interview, it is a meeting under the Open Meetings Law—and the law provides the proper mechanism: the Board simply enters executive session under Public Officers Law §105(1)(f) for "matters leading to the appointment, employment, or promotion of a particular person." I raised this issue at the last meeting, but the concern was dismissed.

The Open Meetings Law does not permit a public body to avoid a meeting by artificially limiting attendance. The Committee on Open Government has repeatedly held that a Board cannot use a subcommittee structure to evade OML requirements, nor can it exclude members to avoid a quorum. Doing so is considered an improper circumvention of the law.

This harmful practice also deviates from the long-standing procedures of prior Greenville Boards under previous Chairs, as I have personally confirmed with three former Board members. Past Boards allowed all Commissioners to participate fully in interviews, consistent with Town Law and proper governance. The current deviation from that practice is both unprecedented and legally unsound.

For these reasons, I am formally objecting to any process that excludes Commissioners from interviews, restricts their participation, or denies them equal access to personnel information. Such actions exceed the authority of the Chair, violate Town Law, and undermine the lawful functioning of this Board.

I request that no hiring or promotions take place until interviews—whether for hiring or promotion—be conducted in properly noticed meetings, with the Board entering executive session as required, and with all Commissioners permitted to participate fully, as the law mandates.

I ask that this objection be entered into the minutes in full.

Thank you,
Louis Russo

Commissioner Orce: Doesn't see a need for this policy, Chief will do whatever he sees fit.
Even without this policy, we can still continue this informally and maybe discuss at a later time.
Commissioner Russo: Doing everything backwards on this board (example, he didn't even interview the candidates for promotion/hire).

Commissioner Russo referred to and summarized the letter he wrote to the Board in 5 points:

(i) the policy inserts the Chair into Operations which is illegal under the law,
(ii) when the Chief notifies the Chair, the entire Board is considered notified – this is legally flawed because you can't say something happened when it did not,
(iii) it gives additional power to the chair of deciding when and if to notify the other board members making the Chair more powerful and unequal to the other Commissioners which contradicts the law,
(iv) it contradicts the National Incident Command System (ICS) protocol put in place after 9-11 which already accounts for communication through the IC/Chief assigned Information Officer so there is no need for this policy. During Operational events both NYS Town Law and the ICS system make it clear the IC/Chief have full discretion of what and when to notify the Board during an ACTIVE Operation.
(v) Further, how difficult is it to add all 5 Commissioners' email or text address to the same communication - in today's world you can simply create a DL and I am more than happy to help the Chief set up a DL so there is no extra effort. It should not be only one Board member being notified.

Courtesy of the floor: A member of the public suggested that we use our counsel if there is a question about any legal issues. There was also a request to have the monthly financial statements added to the District website.

Questions: None.

7:30 PM – Motion to close Public Session to discuss legal and personnel matters.

Motion:	Hershkowitz
Second:	Rappe
Voting in favor: Groden, Hershkowitz, Orce, Rappe, Russo	

8:55 PM – Motion to re-open Public Session to discuss public matters.

Motion:	Hershkowitz
Second:	Orce
Voting in favor: Groden, Hershkowitz, Orce, Rappe, Russo	

Resolution	**2026 – 5.4**
Promote Andrew Lee to Lieutenant, David Kane to Captain and hire transfer Firefighter Michael Henry.	
Motion:	Hershkowitz
Second:	Rappe
Voting in favor: Groden, Hershkowitz, Orce, Rappe	
Abstained (due to insufficient information, specifically despite asking to be included I was not allowed to be a part of the interview process, not allowed to participate in review any information about candidates and I strongly object to the process whereby the individuals were already told of their promotion and being referred to by their new rank before the vote, so a reasonable person would conclude the commissioner approval process is just a rubber stamp after the fact. I first found out about the promotion by someone who is not even a part of the staff. I have a big issue with the process and I have no issues with the individuals promoted and expect they will do well.)	

Resolution	**2026 – 5.5**
Hire Angela Sinclair at $95,000 and an approved $22,000 to pay Robert Haft agency for the one time fee.	
Motion:	Hershkowitz
Second:	Orce
Voting in favor: Groden, Hershkowitz, Orce, Rappe, Russo	

Resolution	**2026 – 5.6**
Justin Vanoli's application will be re-reviewed, after a 4 month period in total from when the Board took action in March 2026, and the Board will act on it in the July Board meeting."	
Motion:	Rappe
Second:	Orce
Voting in favor: Orce, Rappe, Russo	
Voting against: Groden, Hershkowitz	

9:08 PM – Meeting adjorned.

Motion:	Hershkowitz
Second:	Orce
Voting in favor: Groden, Hershkowitz, Orce, Rappe, Russo	