

The Board recognizes its obligation to disseminate accurate information to the public. The Board is committed to employ all reasonable means to inform the public on matters of importance regarding District policies, finances, programs, personnel and operations. The Board understands that inaccurate or incorrect dissemination of material to the public may expose the Board and the public to a claim for damages. To facilitate the above, the Board shall appoint a public information officer (PIO) empowered with authority to establish the ways and means to accomplish the purpose and intent of this Policy.

In doing so, the PIO shall attempt to assure the prompt and accurate dissemination of all materials and information either required or requested by the public or at the discretion of the Board for public relations or information purposes.

The Board also recognizes the value of informing the public on a regular basis about the activities surrounding the fire service. The Board will determine which of its official actions have sufficient community impact and interest to warrant special release. Board official actions of lesser importance may be released by the PIO as such actions have been recorded in the official minutes of the Board meetings and upon the request of media representatives or as otherwise required by law. All other publications, released photographs and electronic communications depicting the accomplishments of the personnel and staff of the District will be approved by the PIO and/or designee.

The PIO may establish a Community Relations Committee, to include District personnel and staff and members of the public with the charge of designing information programs to acquaint the citizens of the community and public generally with achievements of the fire service and its needs.

The Board in informing the public recognizes its obligation to protect matters involving confidentiality as well as other matters protected by law. Implicit in this obligation is the Board's responsibility under the Open Public Records Act to disseminate certain material.

The Board shall enact Rules and Regulations, procedures or guidelines and directives to implement or otherwise effectuate the purpose and intent of this Policy and Federal, State and local laws, and Rules, Regulations, Procedures, Guidelines or Directives promulgated thereto, as amended, which were enacted to insure or supplement the intent and purpose of this Policy. Said Rules and Regulations, procedures or guidelines and directives may be amended or supplemented by the Board as it deems necessary.

Legal References:           Open Public Records Act; N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1, *et seq.*  
                                  Destruction of Public Records Law (1953); N.J.S.A. 47:3-8.1, *etseq.*

1<sup>st</sup> Reading: 9/21/2011

Effective Date: 10/01/11

2<sup>nd</sup> Reading: 10/19/2011

Revised Date: