

**Board of Fire Commissioners  
GLOUCESTER TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT 6  
Monthly Board Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting Held:** August 24, 2017  
**Meeting Place:** Board Office  
**Meeting Called to Order:** 6:30pm  
**Members of Board Present:** **Chairman** – George Brown  
**Vice Chairman** – Richard Annacone  
**Treasurer** – Brian Robinson  
**Secretary** – George Flinn  
**Commissioner** – Steven Funkhouser  
**Administrative Clerk** – Jeanette Cottone  
**Solicitor** – David Carlamere

**Salute the Flag**

**The Sunshine Law** – George Brown: In accordance with the NJ Sunshine Law this meeting is open to the public. The public portion will follow the regular business of the Board.

**Roll call Commissioners:**  
All present.

**Minutes of the previous meeting** - Motion to accept the previous month's minutes as they are available to the public upon request.  
Motion made by Comm. Annacone, seconded by Comm. Flinn. Roll call vote, all yes.

**Correspondence** – Jeanette Cottone  
Adm.Cl.Cottone: No report.

**Treasurer's Report** – Rich Annacone

Audubon General Account	1,391,342.64
Audubon Payroll Account	28,476.81
Expenditures: 08/24/17	67,658.81
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT FOR APPROVAL</b>	<b>67,658.76</b>

Motion made by Comm. Funkhouser, seconded by Comm. Robinson to approve the Treasurer's Report.  
Roll call vote, all yes.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Budget Co-Commissioner** – George Brown  
No report.

**Computer Services** – George Brown  
Nothing to report.

**Liaison to the District Volunteers** – George Brown  
**Comm. Brown:** There is a new member...Andrew Marshall up for approval. The Deputy Chief has all of his paperwork?  
**Dep.Chief Brown:** Yes, he's already all the way through the approval process except for the Board. His physical, driver's abstract and background were good. He's also a District resident and lives at 18 Kohomo Ave, right up the street from the firehouse. He's already through his 10 hours learning the apparatus. He's ready to start running.

Motion made by Comm. Annacone, seconded by Comm. Funkhouser to accept Andrew Marshal.  
Roll call vote, all yes.

**Fire Prevention – George Brown**

**Comm. Brown:** I hope everyone has October 12<sup>th</sup> in their calendar...we're going to need all hands to help us this year as we did last year.

**IAFF Contracts Co-Commissioner – George Brown**

No report.

**Legal Liaison – George Brown**

**Comm. Brown:** I'll get to the Social Media Policy as Old Business.

**Budget Co-Commissioner – Rich Annacone**

No report.

**IAFF Contracts Co-Commissioner – Rich Annacone**

**Comm. Annacone:** The contracts are still wherever the contracts are at this point, I'm not even sure. We haven't heard from the State of the Firefighter's Union in a while. The Chief is going to get his stuff together so we can start going over the contract with him as well as Jan's contract.

**Personnel / Administration – Rich Annacone**

No report.

**Personnel / Operations – Rich Annacone**

**Comm. Annacone:** The hiring process...we just sent and was approved for a 60 day extension for the list, that's approved. I'm assuming Chief we didn't get all the background checks back from the police department?

**Chief Brezee:** No.

**Comm. Annacone:** So apparently they did all four and two of them came back so far. I don't know what's the hold up on the other two. So we're waiting to get those back before we do anything. Monday, the Chief is going to send out the applications so we'll get that rolling and go from there.

**Apparatus – Brian Robinson**

**Comm. Robinson:** I was out looking at the new Squad, it's awesome. The equipment is coming along really, really well.

**Fire Department Equipment – Brian Robinson**

**Comm. Robinson:** All good.

**Fire Department Operations – Brian Robinson**

No report.

**Training – Brian Robinson**

**Comm. Robinson:** I understand Training is moving forward.

**Insurance – George Flinn**

No report.

**Sign – George Flinn**

No report.

**Water – George Flinn**

No report.

**Building Maintenance & Grounds – Steve Funkhouser**

**Comm. Funkhouser:** The building is still standing, it's still here.

**Chief Brezee:** The roof leak...we are waiting from 3 different companies for quotes. They've all been out.

**Communications – Steve Funkhouser**

**Comm. Funkhouser:** I haven't heard anything. Chief, has the radio been put in the new Squad yet?

**Chief Brezee:** No, it has to be scheduled. We're in the process of scheduling.

**Comm. Funkhouser:** OK.

**EMS / Supplies & Equipment – Steve Funkhouser**

**Comm. Funkhouser:** I haven't heard any reports or anything negative on that.

**Turn-Out Gear – Steve Funkhouser**

No report.

**Uniforms – Steve Funkhouser**

No report.

**Chief – Michael Brezee**

**Chief Brezee:** My report's been submitted.

**Comm. Brown:** We'll take up the old pick truck in New Business.

**Old Business – George Brown**

**Comm. Brown:** The Social Media policy has been bouncing around forever. And I think we finally have something. The Chief has read it, I've read it, a number of you have read it. There are copies there for the Chief and Dep. Chief, extras left over. Again, as background...originally, we were going to follow the policy that was in the JIF, but Comm. Robinson did some research and found the US Court of Appeals were Federal and District. So before on a Howard County case which upheld their Social Media policy, as well as what was tied into that was the Code of Conduct, they both work together. So I spoke to the Chief and we did not really have a Code of Conduct. We decided that it would be a good starting place and we would like to have that in effect by the time the new hires came, so we set a goal to have it done by October 1<sup>st</sup>, and we're going to have it done by September 1<sup>st</sup>. It's been modified somewhat because of the difference of our structure, but I believe it's almost word for word of the Howard County case. So we have that. In order to have that and have the Social Media policy work, it refers to that Code of Conduct, so they work together. So now Directive No. 2 which the Chief has also read, is the actual Social Media Policy. We talked about both of these in at least the last three meetings. I've sent the original emails out of the Howard County case to everyone over the past couple months. Fearful the JIF would say that we were going down the wrong path, I sent an email to them back on August 7<sup>th</sup>, and I said it took some time for me to get the attached case and Howard County documents. It appears to me that your Social Media policy may have been written before the Howard County case. They responded with "It does look that way. We last updated in early 2015. We will begin the process of updating the final quarter of the year and will share the decision with the Committee that will begin that process." So what he has confirmed is that the JIF policy is outdated. So we're best off sticking with the Howard County policy since that has been confirmed by the Courts. So rather than waiting for the JIF's to probably come out next year with some new policy, we're going to go basically with the Howard County approach, and I'd like the Board's approval to issue to those two directives so we can get those in place, especially with the new hires coming.

Motion made by Comm. Funkhouser, seconded by Comm. Flinn to accept Directive #2017-01 and Directive 2017-02, the new documents I've handed out. Roll call vote, all yes.

**Chief Brezee:** Did you do 1 & 2?

**Comm. Brown:** Yes.

**Chief Brezee:** Can I ask...that it states the Chief or the Board's designee. I would ask the Board to go ahead and make that designee Dep. Chief Brown.

**Comm. Brown:** It's your designee, so you can...

**Chief Brezee:** Oh, I read it as the Board's designee.

**Comm. Brown:** No, the Chief or his designee.

**Chief Brezee:** Dep. Chief Chris Brown will be the designee.

**Comm. Brown:** OK, fine.

Motion made by Comm. Annacone, seconded by Comm. Robinson to make the Chief's designee Dep. Chief Brown. Roll call vote, all yes.

**Comm. Brown:** The intent was to have a list of surplus items and if someone came along and said I'll buy that, the Chief could go ahead and do that and slowly begin to get any of the old things out of the kitchen. So we don't have the list yet, I'm just reminding.

**Chief Brezee:** An update on that is, Lt. Kramer today had an air conditioning/refrigeration fellow come in and look at our systems and what can be dismantled, brought out and put back together, so I'm waiting for the report on what comes of that. Because some of it may be that we either have to destroy the item or destroy the door or wall to get stuff out.

### New Business – George Brown

**Comm. Brown:** Not all of it. Some of it could come out of there.

**Chief Brezee:** Yes, some of it could and some might be able to come out that we didn't think could.

**Comm. Brown:** So that's a work in progress for right now.

**Comm. Brown:** I'm not sure whether or not we need a special resolution to hire a profile organization, but that's the company doing the background checks on the new hire. Our approach on using a profile organization was that we would use all the services that we normally use at our disposal in order to save money. So there are things like the NJ CAIR system that we use to check driver's licenses, there's Applicant Insight that does background and credit checks and what not. We'll do all of that, but at Comm. Robinson's recommendation, he felt that having someone personally interview people making recommendations is a vital part of the hiring process. We had some trouble getting somebody, and the profile organization does that for business. The President that's a former Lieutenant in the Philadelphia Police Dept., a former FBI agent, and he's been running his business for some time. The fee for his services is \$80 per hour, and we put together a list of what his responsibilities were and what he had to report back to us. He's accepted that in a letter we gave him, so I think we have all of our bases covered. I would just like a resolution to go ahead with the Profile Group. We want to keep moving the hiring process along.

**Sol.Carlamere:** What would you anticipate the cost...is it going to be a balance of this year and a new contract next year?

**Comm. Brown:** No, I think for right now we're just going to deal with the current hires. We're hoping that they'll be around long enough that we won't have to deal with the subject for some time to come.

**Sol.Carlamere:** So what do you think the cost will be so you don't violate...

**Comm. Brown:** And what's the procurement limit?

**Sol.Carlamere:** Well it's the bid process. \$17,500 on a bid and it's 15% of that on your quotes are \$2,600.

**Comm. Brown:** I think we'll be within the 15% at least. The problem with this is we don't know where these interviews lead us. The first person may say he's a good guy, and the next person will say hey, you really ought to go talk to these three people. So it's a very tough decision. It's not going to exceed the \$17,500 I'm certain of that. I'm guessing it's probably going to be somewhere in the area of maybe two weeks' worth of work so you're talking \$6,500 tops, but it all depends. We don't know.

**Sol.Carlamere:** So you think you're going to be in the quote range.

**Comm. Brown:** We don't know.

**Sol.Carlamere:** What do you anticipate spending in the one year period? So if you're going to make the appointment for the balance of this year, what do you think for the balance of this year and reappoint for next year?

**Comm. Brown:** We won't reappoint next year.

**Chief Brezee:** We may have to, but even still that would be nominal.

**Comm. Flinn:** We could revisit that next year.

**Comm. Brown:** He may come back and say I've had enough time in my life...so let's leave next year for next year if that's ok.

**Sol.Carlamere:** So you just have to deal with what you anticipate spending this year.

**Comm. Annacone:** What can we spend without worrying about going out to bid?

**Sol.Carlamere:** A rough figure bench mark of \$2,600 and you don't have to do any process...you are at will. Between that and the \$17,500, you need quotes.

**Comm. Brown:** Since we're all guessing, I don't think it will exceed \$2,599.

**Sol.Carlamere:** If it's reasonable to do that, then you don't need any process.

Motion made by Comm. Robinson, seconded by Comm. Annacone to approve the Profile Group.  
Roll call vote, all yes.

**Comm. Brown:** The Chief has found someone who is willing to purchase the old brush truck which is in deplorable condition and give the District \$500.00. The Chief has written up the Bill of Sale outlining the conditions of the truck and that it must be towed since he feels it's unsafe to drive it right now. The buyer has accepted those terms. I would like a motion to approve the sale of that truck.

Motion made by Comm. Flinn, seconded by Comm. Funkhouser. Roll call vote, all yes.

**Sol.Carlamere:** That takes it out of your inventory?

**Comm. Brown:** Yes.

**Solicitor – David Carlamere**

**Sol.Carlamere:** Nothing to report. I've reviewed some of the information under the Chapter...and it seems to be in order. The form of the resolution is modified.

**Comm. Brown:** I need to back up because I made a mistake moving on. One of the new Old Business items, I don't have an old New Business category on my sheet, Chapter 48. So I want to turn to the Solicitor. I understand, and there are documents to support this, that the Board passed a Resolution for the employees for Chapter 88, correct?

**Sol.Carlamere:** That goes back a few years.

**Comm. Brown:** So Chapter 88 entitled the employees to receive benefits upon retirement for the employee and the spouse, correct?

**Sol.Carlamere:** Correct.

**Comm. Brown:** So then Chapter 88 was replaced by Chapter 48. And Chapter 48 now basically said, we're going to let you figure out on an employee basis whether or not you want to have all of that or split it up. It went from one fits all to the Chinese menu system for your health benefits. So we have three employment groups here, the Chief, the Administrative Clerk and the Firefighters. The Firefighters do not have Chapter 88 or 48 in their agreement, and we were told by the labor attorney that that should be negotiated through the labor process. So the Solicitor agrees to that?

**Sol.Carlamere:** Correct.

**Comm. Brown:** So what we're left with is the Chief and the Administrative Clerk. And I would like to propose that we proceed with whatever Resolutions we need and reports to the State to provide Chapter 48, surviving spouse benefits...so the employee and surviving spouse, as was previously promised in Chapter 88.

Motion made by Comm. Robinson, seconded by Comm. Flinn.

**Comm. Annacone:** Question on that. We're just doing it for two people and we can do the firefighters later.

**Sol.Carlamere:** As your bargaining unit.

**Comm. Brown:** Right...the two groups.

**Comm. Flinn:** Our current firefighters still have that, so if he retires tomorrow for some reason...

**Comm. Brown:** No, the current firefighter does not, because Chapter 88 has been repealed and Chapter 48 does not automatically roll Chapter 88 over. It was intended to be a negotiated item for the work group.

**Comm. Flinn:** The District as a District should provide the spouse and retiree with benefits 200 years from now.

**Comm. Annacone:** We're not leaving it up to the State, we're leaving it up to us.

**Comm. Flinn:** But if you get 3 or 4 bad eggs in here in the future, now we have guys who work here for 19 years and all of a sudden he loses his benefits because you've got Commissioners in here that...

**Comm. Brown:** Hold on for a second. That's not just a Commissioner decision. We've had a very open and fair bases with the Union and we'll sit down with them and work it out. We're not trying to cheat anybody out of anything. The problem is, is that we're at a state now where we have no contract and we can't re-open that up. The person you're referring to is young enough and not retiring for a while. The District and the Board's opinion is that that will be resolved in its normal course. But it's unfair to withhold a decision about that to the other two work groups, and the law provides that on our side. So we're trying to move it forward.

**Comm. Flinn:** I get that, but my question is to you, this wasn't even an option 5 years ago. We automatically....

**Comm. Brown:** Comm. Flinn, 5 years ago you got 100% of your benefits paid.

**Comm. Flinn:** Correct.

**Comm. Brown:** Things change. The State makes those laws, we don't. This Board didn't decide we're going to come up with Chapter 48. We have to be as reactive to that as possible. I don't agree with it either, but I don't think you can circumvent the right of the negotiating process when this comes back. But I don't think that you can put the long term employees, in this case the Chief and the Clerk at risk because we can't get everybody lined up. So I get where you're coming from, I respect your opinion. But we're stuck at doing nothing because of this.

**Comm. Flinn:** I thought we had an option to stick with the old 88.

**Comm. Brown:** No we don't, that's where you're wrong.

**Comm. Flinn:** So if we pass a resolution to stick with old 88 for the next 35-40 years, we're not good with that?

**Comm. Brown:** No, the State has repealed that. And the truth of the matter is, that I think by moving forward with 48, you give the firefighters some advantage to talk about why am I being treated as a different work class. But that has to be taken up in the next round of negotiations.

**Comm. Annacone:** They didn't bring it up.

**Comm. Brown:** We asked them if they wanted to bring it up, they didn't bring it up. At the rate we're going, we'll be starting to open negotiations on the new contract probably maybe like a week after we sign the old one. So

**Solicitor – David Carlamere**

we've been at this with them for 3 years. We're stuck doing nothing because we're waiting for them, and we can't wait anymore because it's unfair to the other work groups in the District. So let's move it forward if we could and we'll sit down and explain to them why we did what we did. It's no secret, but we can't leave the other employees...if you put yourself in the seat of the other employees, they're out there hanging out now without any coverage that was promised to them 8 or 10 years ago, whenever it was.

**Adm.Ci.Cottone:** 1999.

**Comm. Brown:** So 18 years of...so let's just pass the Resolution and hope we can work through it while the members of this Board are still here. We've got to move, we can't wait. We can't get everybody lined up at the same time, and we can't leave the other work groups exposed. I don't think that's fair.

**Sol.Carlamere:** It's 1.5% statutory contribution.

**Comm. Annacone:** That's the minimum but we have the right to set whatever we want to set.

**Comm. Flinn:** See, that's something else I don't agree with.

**Comm. Annacone:** It is what the law is.

**Comm. Brown:** Listen, I don't agree with \$2.59 for a gallon of gas, but I have to buy it.

**Comm. Flinn:** I agree with you, but people signed on 19 years ago to do this job because they knew they weren't paying for their benefits, whatever. So I don't think...I don't know.

**Comm. Annacone:** And we were all one of them.

**Chief Brezee:** 22 years ago, and right now I have nothing here.

**Comm. Flinn:** Mike I'm with you.

**Comm. Brown:** We need a motion to approve Chapter 48 for the two work groups, and coverage for the employees of those groups, is that correct?

Motion made by Comm. Funkhouser, seconded by Comm. Annacone. Roll call vote, all yes.

**Comm. Annacone:** Along with that, this form we have to fill out for this Chapter 48 that will determine the percentage that they will pay, whatever it is, I guess we have to come up with a number for that.

**Comm. Brown:** Right. We moved it a little bit tonight, let's...

**Comm. Annacone:** It's got to be at least 1.5% of salary, can't go below that, sorry.

**Comm. Brown:** But at least we got the go ahead to work on that, we didn't have that before.

**Resolutions – Jeanette Cottone**

No report.

**Public Portion – George Brown**

n/a

**Closed Session – George Brown**

n/a

**Adjourn – George Brown**

Motion made by Comm. Annacone, seconded by Comm Flinn to adjourn the meeting at 6:55pm.

Roll call vote, all yes.