

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

Meeting Held: October 26, 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. Robinson. Roll call vote, all yes.

Correspondence – Jeanette Cottone
Adm.Cl.Cottone:

Treasurer’s Report – Rich Annacone

Audubon General Account	1,591,879.58
Audubon Payroll Account	39,777.88
Expenditures: 10/26/17	98,356.33
TOTAL AMOUNT FOR APPROVAL	98,356.33

Motion made by Comm. Flinn, seconded by Comm. Robinson to approve the Treasurer’s Report as read.
Roll call vote, all yes.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Budget Co-Commissioner – George Brown

Comm. Brown: We’ve been given the schedule for the budget. We’re going to need to have some numbers by the November meeting. Anybody needs some help, let me know, I’ll help you.

Fire Prevention – George Brown

Comm. Brown: Fire Prevention night, 2017. It was a great success despite having to compete with a once upon a time obscure Philadelphia professional football team who had a game that night. We had 1,200 people who went through the doors at Lowes. Somewhere between 300-500 additional people who just attended and walked around the parking lot. Total attendance was 1,500-1,700. Thanks to everyone, Chief, Dep. Chief, all the volunteers. Everybody, it was a great night. Lowes has committed to Fire Prevention night next year there, and they were thrilled with the turn-out, so good job everybody.

Computer Services – George Brown

Comm. Brown: We're out of licenses for Windows Server, and I have to purchase some additional software due to the growth of the volunteer and career staff. It's a good thing. It's hampering our reporting right now, but we will get that fixed in the next week or so.

IAFF Contracts Co-Commissioner – George Brown

Comm. Annacone: It's approved as far as we know, I'm just waiting for them to sign. We added a line for the mediator to the contract and it's been approved.

Comm. Brown: Comm. Annacone, you're being modest. The mediator found in favor of the Board and it only took a year so that's progress I guess.

Comm. Annacone: There is no change, they just came in and signed them, and one line.

Legal Liaison – George Brown

No report.

Liaison to the District Volunteers – George Brown

No report.

Budget Co-Commissioner – Rich Annacone

No report.

IAFF Contracts Co-Commissioner – Rich Annacone

No report.

Personnel / Administration – Rich Annacone

No report.

Personnel / Operations – Rich Annacone

No report.

Apparatus – Brian Robinson

Comm. Robinson: I would defer to the Chief's report. Everybody I'm sure saw it, everything seems to be up to date. Any word on when we're going to get the truck in service.

Chief Brezee: The target date is November 7th I believe I put in the report.

Comm. Robinson: OK.

Fire Department Equipment – Brian Robinson

Comm. Robinson: Progress.

Fire Department Operations – Brian Robinson

Comm. Robinson: Very good.

Training – Brian Robinson

Comm. Robinson: I know the Dep. Chief just came back from extensive training, if you want to touch on that.

Dep. Chief Brown: First of all, thank you to the Board for providing the opportunity for me to go again this year to the Firehouse Expo, Nashville, TN. For those of you not familiar with it, we do have good training here in South Jersey with one of the better fire academy's in Camden County in the State, but being able to go to the national conferences and receive that national perspective...three of my instructors were special operations Captains or former Special Operations people from the FDNY. One of the multi hour classes that I took was with recently retired two Dep. Chief's from the Los Angeles Fire Department. So it's really a whole level and caliber of training. It was really good breaking it down from the big metropolitan cities to even smaller town departments like us. So I have a lot of good notes, I'm going to bring back and incorporate with our training for next year, and once again, I thank you for the opportunity to let me go this year.

Insurance – George Flinn

No report.

Sign – George Flinn

No report.

Water – George Flinn

No report.

Building Maintenance & Grounds – Steve Funkhouser

Comm. Funkhouser: The Chief has found a person to repair the tower lights, so we're going to have that done asap. We're putting in a

Chief Brezee: 100,000 hour LED fixture.

Comm. Funkhouser: That's it, thanks. We had the new air conditioner installed today on the second floor.

Communications – Steve Funkhouser

No report.

EMS / Supplies & Equipment – Steve Funkhouser

No report.

Turn-Out Gear – Steve Funkhouser

Comm. Funkhouser: We ordered two sets of gear for the new career firefighters.

Uniforms – Steve Funkhouser

Comm. Funkhouser: Uniforms were also ordered for the new firefighters. That's all I have to report.

Chief – Michael Brezee

Chief Brezee: The report has been submitted. I just have the two issues that I requested that you guys would have to discuss.

Comm. Brown: Plus you're leaving soon to go the Township Chief's meeting, so we'll get you out of here in a few minutes. The two items the Chief requested the Board to consider is:

1) Regarding the MOU for the SCBA award, and we should approve that tonight. The Board would be obligated to pay \$23,142.24 to get \$145,000 worth of SCBA's. Not a bad play. I'll go to Atlantic City with you anytime Chief. Also there would be an obligation to provide and participate in an audit in 2018 as required by FEMA which would obligate the Board for \$500, so the total out of the Board's budget for \$145,000 is going to be less than \$24,000 and I would like the recommendation to approve that.

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

Comm. Brown: Chief, could you briefly explain the local agreement for the Fire Official.

Chief Brezee: For the Fire Official, this actually came up about two years ago. Some people didn't think it was a good idea, and now they realize it was a great idea. What it is, is its mutual aid in Fire Official's. As we know, several years back the County backed out of the Fire Official business, the Fire Marshall business. They were no longer doing fire investigations for us. This was then pushed all back to the locals. We were required and responsible to do our own fire investigations in town. The fact is, me as well as the other Fire Officials may not always be in town when a fire needs to be investigated. So without costing each other any money, which this was a big stickler before, the idea is if I'm out of town and my backup being Chris and he's out of town unavailable, we can call FM 84 and he will come over and do the investigation for us at no charge to District 6 and vice versa, we would do the same for him. Right now the only Districts interested are 2,4,5 & 6 and that's fine with me. The other's don't want to do that, but the big thing here is it's no cost and it's giving us more coverage in the Fire Official, Fire Investigation field. Now, in the other departments, you got it pretty good here guys, because I don't get overtime. But the other departments will be paying their fire investigators overtime if they had to come to our town to do it. And we're not going to incur that charge. They'll handle that, the only thing they're looking for is the reciprocation of if they're not available and I am or Chris can or Donato can, we can go down there and do their fire investigation for them. Just helping each other out, working together...this new concept in Gloucester Township's fire service.

Comm. Brown: What a thought.

Chief – continued

Sol.Carlamere: The only comment I would make, I made it at the other Districts, do the resolution. I gave the Clerk the resolution format. I said if all the Districts, once they participate, then the Fire Officials get together and have a kind of set program of how they rotate so nothing is being left to somebody being arbitrary and cutting somebody out in a sense, so it should be a set program. If you call the first one and they're not available, you go down the line.

Chief Brezee: That has been discussed to the point where if it was us, the next one they would hit would be the closest which would be 5, if he's unavailable, the next one is 4.

Sol.Carlamere: So there will be a certainty of an order to follow, so everyone should agree.

Comm. Brown: OK, so motion to approve the Inter-local agreement for Fire Official assistance as provided by the Solicitor.

Sol.Carlamere: And it's by Resolution format. It's a resolution...I gave it to the Clerk.

Comm. Brown: So the Resolution, Board of Fire Commissioners, Fire District 6, Township of Gloucester, Camden County, NJ, authorizing the entry into a Shared Services Agreement for a Fire Official Assistance Program of various District's within the Township of Gloucester.

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

Motion made by Comm. Flinn, seconded by Comm. Robinson to accept the Chief's Report.
Roll call vote, all yes.

Comm. Brown: You two guys can now go because we've got rid of all the business.

Chief Brezee: OK.

Comm. Brown: I said I'd have you out of here by 6:45pm.

Solicitor – David Carlamere

Sol.Carlamere: Nothing else to comment on, but on the Resolution for the Fire Official Assistance Program, we recommend doing that by Resolution. Once you do it by Resolution, you are in a sense choosing and appointing whomever on that rotation list. If you're in your own court situation, that Resolution supports the fact that you actually have appointed that, so if you ever get challenged in a court, you'll have a Resolution.

Resolutions – Jeanette Cottone

Adm.Cl.Cottone: I think that's it for this evening. You have everything covered Michael?

Chief Brezee: I believe so.

Old Business – George Brown

Comm. Brown: Old Business? (hearing none)

New Business – George Brown

Comm. Brown: We covered the MOU for the SCBA's and the Fire Official.

Public Portion – George Brown

Comm. Brown: Public portion? (hearing none)

Closed Session – George Brown

Comm. Brown: Motion to go into Closed Session to discuss the healthcare benefits provision at 6:45pm

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

Open Session – George Brown

Comm. Brown: The Board has come out of Closed Session at 6:52pm. Roll call Commissioners, all present.

Comm. Annacone: In Closed Session, we discussed the retirement benefits for the Chief again. Whereas we had at one time said 1.5%, the State will not do that, it has to work in whole numbers, so we are suggesting that they pay 2% of their retirement benefit for healthcare.

Comm. Flinn: So on \$32,000 it's roughly \$600 a year, right.

Adm.Cl.Cottone: OK, so you're saying 2% on the final salary.

Comm. Brown: No, on the retirement benefit, not on your final salary.

Open Session – continued

Adm.Cl.Cottone: The final salary is your retirement salary.

Comm. Brown: No, that's a benefit, that's not a salary. The salary is when you work and that's your hourly wage. Once you stop working, it becomes a retirement benefit and not a salary. We're trying to be extremely clear that it's on your benefit payment and not on your last year's work. And we're trying to be clear just in case another opinion comes along down the road, the Board can be assured as to what we authorized and what we wanted to authorize. Somebody comes along later on and says no, it's based on your last year of salary, the Board was not trying to do that at 2%.

Adm.Cl.Cottone: On the retirement benefit.

Comm. Brown: We're all in agreement with that?

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

Sol.Carlamere: Jan, is there a State form Resolution that we were going to change? I thought there was verbiage in there that was not necessary and we have to use their form?

Adm.Cl.Cottone: We have to use their form, yes.

Sol.Carlamere: Is it in a Resolution format that they want the Board to sign?

Adm.Cl.Cottone: It's a Resolution and an addendum that the Board has to sign.

Comm. Brown: So we did the Resolution, but the percentage was unacceptable to the State.

Adm.Cl.Cottone: So what they have to do is put in the premium payment, if yes, show percentage. We'll put in there 98%. You have that page?

Sol.Carlamere: Yes, you're good.

Comm. Brown: OK, motion to approve the 2% based on benefits, not last year's salary.

Adm.Cl.Cottone: Retirement benefits, which in effect on the addendum 98%, because we want to make sure that's noted in the minutes because that has to go into the contract and the addendum. So 98% is paid by the Board.

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

Comm. Annacone: A question. 98% of what...of the premium?

Comm. Brown: I'm sure the premium.

Comm. Annacone: That's not what we're talking about 2% of...

Comm. Brown: She pays 2%, the Board pays the rest.

Adm.Cl.Cottone: I see what he's saying.

Comm. Annacone: But 98% of...

Adm.Cl.Cottone: This says Premium Payment Retirees. I see what you're saying.

Comm. Flinn: It's not based off your salary, it's based off the benefit it costs.

Comm. Annacone: We're going to pay 98%. I think that's 98% of the premium, and that's not what we're doing.

Sol.Carlamere: I had trouble with the form.

Comm. Annacone: So we're not paying 98% of anything, we're paying...

Comm. Brown: See there are other things that come into play here, including Social Security. Basically what she's paying for is the other parts of Medicare that are not covered under...

Adm.Cl.Cottone: What that may mean is, the way the Board is doing this then, you may run into a conflict with the way they figure this out. That's why I want Dave to look at that then.

Comm. Brown: I don't think that's the intent. As I understand the law, and I thought I understood it 10 times before, but Medicare part whatever it is, is basically the pharmacy piece that Medicare doesn't pay for. This pays for all but 2% of that cost.

Adm.Cl.Cottone: The Medicare is 100% paid for.

Comm. Brown: There is a piece in which Medicare doesn't pay for, the pharmacy piece. What this would do is, this would give you no more than 2% of the cost of that. So if that part C, D or F is \$1,000 a year, it would cost you \$200 to have that coverage, and the additional percentage of that part C or D. All that you're trying to do is put you in the same place today relative to healthcare and pharmacy, with the exception you pay a little into it because that's what the State wants.

Comm. Annacone: That's not what they're going to be paying. Chapter 78 changes all this. I don't even know how this actually works anymore is what I was saying before because of Chapter 78.

Comm. Brown: So how about if we do this. There is some uncertainty here, we're sneaking up on it, why don't we get all these questions out and just table this to make sure we get it right next month.

Comm. Flinn: I agree.

Comm. Brown: So the resolution is right now is that the Board wants the maximum for the employee to be 2% of the

Open Session – continued

retirement benefit, but we want to confirm what that actually is.

Comm. Flinn: Because we already approved the one last month.

Sol.Carlamere: And this is then to look at the instructions and say you're putting down premium payment retirees, you're putting down 98% and you're talking about the premium.

Comm. Brown: But it's only the premium of part C. Because the premium of Medicare is already paid by Uncle. It's the word premium that's getting us twisted. Let's not make a mistake, we've come this far.

Sol.Carlamere: What will happen here, tonight's the date your resolution which you authorize. You just have to get clarification of how this addendum is filled out.

Comm. Brown: So let's pass that and let's see if we can get clarification so we don't delay this.

Sol.Carlamere: Now is there any downside waiting till the next meeting for it? If so, you can authorize a Commissioner to communicate how it's clarified then fill it in and send it so there is no longer a continued delay.

Comm. Brown: I'm for moving it forward. I don't like these delays. I wouldn't want the Clerk or the Chief in a bad spot, so let's authorize to move forward.

Motion to approve the resolution, with Comm. Annacone to get the specifics and move it forward and report back to the Board at the next meeting.

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

Adjourn – George Brown

Motion made by Comm. Flinn, seconded by Comm. Funkhouser to adjourn the meeting at 7:04pm

Roll call vote, all yes.

Roll call the Commissioners at 6:45pm. All present.

Comm. Brown: Let the record show that the Board has gone into Closed Session at 6:45pm to discuss the State Healthcare benefits percentage due to the employees.

The recorder was turned off.

The Board went back to Open Session at 6:52pm.