

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

Meeting Held: May 24, 2018
Meeting Place: Board Office
Meeting Called to Order: 6:32pm
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. Funkhouser. Roll call vote, all yes.

Correspondence – Jeanette Cottone

Adm.Cl.Cottone: It’s been distributed.

Treasurer’s Report – Rich Annacone

Audubon General Account	1,818,899.52
Audubon Payroll Account	11,031.98
Expenditures: 05/24/18	70,274.33
TOTAL AMOUNT FOR APPROVAL	70,274.33

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

Budget Co-Commissioner – George Brown

No report.

Fire Prevention – George Brown

No report.

IAFF Contracts Co-Commissioner – George Brown

No report.

Legal Liaison – George Brown

Comm. Brown: Any new members?

Dep.Chief Brown: No.

Liaison to the District Volunteers – George Brown

No report.

Computer Services – George Brown

Comm. Brown: I was asked to approve the offering by Verizon to replace Sprint as our carrier for the mobile devices. I looked at their proposal and basically we got two more devices from them for \$16 as I understand it. And I think they have a little better emergency services package in terms of things they'll guarantee us in the case of emergency that Sprint won't. Dep.Chief Brown is that fact?

Dep.Chief Brown: Yes. I actually have all my notes if anyone has any questions about it.

Comm. Brown: OK. Since we're really actually going to save money, I don't think it necessary. It's money in the budget. We didn't include going with Sprint when we went with them, so I'm just saying it was done, so we can try to move the Command Vehicles along.

Dep.Chief Brown: Just in reference to the service thing, a couple things that were clear cut advantages. I checked with pretty much every carrier locally. The data devices, the routers, the data static IP address to communicate with the County, and Verizon does not charge for the static IP address, the other carrier does an additional charge to your monthly fee.

Comm. Brown: \$5 an address too, I believe.

Dep.Chief Brown: One of the clear cut features was that Verizon uses something called WPS Volte which is a lot of tech jargon, but basically one of the things we'll be able to get is wireless priority service. So for all communications in peak time, whether it's holidays, New Year's Eve, because everybody knows when you go to send their Happy New Year's text and talk to people they pretend to love, it often times takes a couple minutes to go through. In Emergency Services, we try to receive our data from the County, that's transmitted over the same wireless network as the cell phones are. As of right now in the State of NJ, Verizon is the only carrier that will offer us free of charge the wireless priority service which they identify our account and our devices as emergency service devices and they prioritize that data overtop of regular commercial traffic. So that was a clear cut thing. Two other things that's really important that we dealt with. I guess that straight line wind storm which was now three years ago on June 23rd which was outages in towers. Every single tower that Verizon carries their service on has at least a minimum of 8-12 hours of battery backup, so if there is a power outage in the area, and we actually ran into that issue during that straight line incident where we lost our cell phones and so on. In areas where the code for construction allows them to keep a backup generator on site, Verizon has 80% of those cell sites with a back-up generator to power beyond that 8-12 hour window. In addition to the cost savings we get per device, we're getting those other services in addition. They have a local government services representative. In fact the geek we actually met with that day, as I call him, whenever we have an issue with a device, I have a direct guy, not an 800 number. It's somebody that's local who actually works with the police department in Gloucester Township as well as other local agencies within the County. So I think from a service prospective, if we do have an outage or a problem like that, we've basically been told that within 48 hours we'll get something back to get us up where we need to be. So I think it's all the way around good for cost and service aspect.

Comm. Brown: That's it?

Dep.Chief Brown: Yes.

Comm. Brown: Good job.

Budget Co-Commissioner – Rich Annacone

No report.

IAFF Contracts Co-Commissioner – Rich Annacone

Comm. Annacone: The Administrator's contract is still ongoing. I was contacted by Ff. Stott the other day by email questioning his pay on his tier level, whether he should be on tier 1 or tier 2. He told me he talked to some military order and just because he's on deployment doesn't mean we can keep him back, he should be on tier 2, not tier 1. I have to talk to Civil Service to try and get some information on that.

Comm. Brown: OK, just call Mr. Long and ask him if he knows, because I knew we had the discussion about that was his hire date. His hire date was the same hire date as the other guys which means he should be on tier 2. That's the way I would read it.

Comm. Annacone: Maybe that is what it is, but there is a difference between the hire date and a start date. The appointing date and the start date.

Comm. Flinn: But if he's taken, he is number 1 from date of hiring, so his tier level has to go back to before....

Comm. Annacone: If we do owe him, it comes to like \$1,500 to \$1,700 difference back pay.

Comm. Brown: So do you want to call Mr. Long?

Comm. Annacone: I'll call Mr. Long, and call Civil Service first and see if they give me any information. That's it.

Comm. Brown: OK.

Personnel / Administration – Rich Annacone

No report.

Personnel / Operations – Rich Annacone

No report.

Apparatus – Brian Robinson

Comm. Robinson: I have nothing to report.

Fire Department Equipment – Brian Robinson

No report.

Fire Department Operations – Brian Robinson

No report.

Training – Brian Robinson

No report.

Insurance – George Flinn

No report.

Sign – George Flinn

No report.

Water – George Flinn

No report.

Building Maintenance & Grounds – Steve Funkhouser

Comm. Funkhouser: Referring to the Chief's Report, there was a problem with the HVAC unit in the Engine Bay room. The door switch is broken, so Bob's HVAC is working on that.

The yard looks great, the guys are doing a good job. The Chief is going to get ahold of a landscape company to try and level that out. I think their plans are to put sod out there to replace the evergreens that we had that were growing wildly. So the paid staff and the Chief's been out there tearing those roots out, and it wasn't an easy job. So that has to be leveled out and sod put down there.

Communications – Steve Funkhouser

No report.

EMS / Supplies & Equipment – Steve Funkhouser

Comm. Funkhouser: They are good.

Turn-Out Gear – Steve Funkhouser

Comm. Funkhouser: The gear is good now.

Uniforms – Steve Funkhouser

No report.

Chief – Michael Brezee

Chief Brezee: My report's been submitted, I have nothing further to add.

Motion made by Comm. Annacone, seconded by Comm. Robinson to accept the Chief's Report.

Roll call vote, all yes.

Solicitor – David Carlamere

Sol.Carlamere: Nothing to report.

Resolutions – Jeanette Cottone

Adm.Cl.Cottone: Nothing this evening.

Old Business – George Brown

Comm. Brown: Did you want to mention so we get it on the record of National Night Out.

Dep.Chief Brown: If you'd like me to. We were approached again by the Police Department as some of you may be aware. This year will be Tuesday, August 7th from 6-9pm. In the past 3-4 years now, we've held a public open house in cooperation with the Police Dept. There was some discussion over where we'd be doing it, if we'd be doing it, and we finally got a firm answer that we will be doing it here again. We had a brief 20-25 minute meeting last night with the personnel who were here for training with what we want to keep from previous years and what we want to add to make it better for next year. I've been working with Cpl. McLaughlin from the Gloucester Township Police Department in regards to what we'll need as far as assistance.

Comm. Brown: If we could keep it brief, can we get any comments on the meeting with the Mayor the other night?

Comm. Annacone: I couldn't make it but these two went.

Comm. Funkhouser: It was the fourth meeting, my first to be there and found it very interesting. There were a lot of comments. 2 & 4 seemed to be working on a plan for 24/7. There was a vote asked on who would like to see the District's consolidate, and out of the 17 people or so there, I'd say 15 of them raised their hand for a consolidation of the District. What that means, I don't know.

Comm. Brown: So what were the action plans and when are they supposed to be done?

Chief Brezee: 82 & 84 will be into a shared service agreement providing 1 truck 24/7 on July 8th pending a couple issues still out there.

Comm. Brown: Mostly contractual issues. So there have been no new things on the contractual issues since the March meeting.

Comm. Annacone: So nothing has been done.

Comm. Brown: I'm not going to characterize it that way, but I know that was supposed to get done March 23rd, and the second one was April 7th, and they flew by that one. So I think it's important to know that we attended the meeting that the assurances that were promised in the first meeting and that the unit would work towards getting that resolved. That's not happening.

Chief Brezee: I'd say they worked some of them out, just not all of them. The Union gave a speech in reference to how we failed, I kind of got lost in it a little bit. Generally, and the only thing we were asked, the Mayor did, eye to eye asked me what we were doing to get 7 day coverage, and I told him just like in the last meeting, we're waiting to see what the cost impact is going to be for 2 & 4 when they go to 7 days and have that guy off all the time, guys taking off and what it's going to cost. So we are kind of sitting back waiting to see their document and waiting to see the cost.

Comm. Robinson: They're doing billboard advertising for volunteers. They'll be showing up after GT day on 42, I guess that electronic thing that goes up there, some kind of video. The one that did discussions with the banner is some obscure fireman in the picture and it was asked how we can put an actual GT fireman in it, and said I don't see why not. But he didn't elaborate on who was doing the production.

Chief Brezee: I was fine with the picture because a GT fireman, how do you pick which one.

Comm. Robinson: Some 20 something year old young kid.

Chief Brezee: Handsome looking fellow. What I've been told is they've already filmed Chews Landing, and no others have been asked.

Comm. Flinn: Just so you know George, District 5 is hiring another personnel, we got 3 days back.

Chief Brezee: There was no Commission representation at the Mayor's meeting. It was noted that there was a rumor out of 85 that they were hiring another firefighter, but nobody was there to confirm that.

Comm. Flinn: You know what's holding it up? Contractual issues.

Comm. Funkhouser: There was a comment in regards to finding a consultant to see what we can do in this Township with the fire service, and I thought it was a great idea. We should actually look into finding a consultant. A lot of people that were there at that meeting didn't want anyone from the surrounding areas to be a consultant. We need to find someone from an outer area due to the fact they didn't want a Chief from Pine Hill to come in because a lot of people know certain individuals, and they think there may be a problem.

Chief Brezee: In North Jersey, there is a nationally renowned person who could handle this. I don't know what he costs, his name is Harry Carter. I read a lot of his stuff, and it's not that hard. The issue with the consultant was

Old Business – continued

that the union in certain Districts would want it binding so that if we had the study done, and they said this is what you do, close this Station, or change this in this Station, you're held to that.

Comm. Brown: I think we're losing site of the fact that should there be a desire to have consolidation, everything is dissolved, including IAFF contracts. Council has to appoint a new entity which could be a Fire District or municipality. Then those decisions are made about what you can't hold a consultant to that because there is nothing in 40A about a consultant. There is nothing that justifies his position or authority. I heard a lot of things in those meetings that just aren't true.

Chief Brezee: Comm. Funkhouser did ask the Mayor if he knows of a Municipal takeover of the Fire Department, and am I wrong in saying he does not want that.

Comm. Brown: So that furthers my previous point that we have to think about what 40A says and what it doesn't say and that becomes the parameters around whatever you're going to build.

Dep.Chief Brown: The obvious piggyback to that is a potentially binding agreement between six districts, and the first step is to consolidate into one district, it's no longer binding....

Comm. Brown: And there is a whole bunch of other issues too because not all properties are owned by the taxpayers. There are lots of issues, but I think those of us who have been to at least one meeting...for me, this is the third time around. The problem is, there is no one in charge. As far as expense is concerned of getting an outsider, if that's what it takes to get it done, that's what we're faced with. I'm reminded of 50 years ago we launched the first man into space because the Russians were ahead of us, and they asked the first astronaut what would it take to catch the Russians, and he said bucks because no bucks, no buckaroos. It's going to have to take money to fix the problem. Somebody needs to...I was thinking that maybe what we should do is think until next month and put together a letter signed by everybody on this Board urging the Mayor to start the ball rolling. Go on record with something. I think going to meetings and not having action plans...

Comm. Funkhouser: And I stated that these meetings ought to be recorded also. This is our fourth meeting, and...

Comm. Brown: They're not required by law, and I would argue that since you're discussing operations...

Comm. Robinson: How would the law cover if all the Commissioners were at one meeting? I get it, it's not going to happen, but a representative per the Mayor from every Commission was in the same room to find out openly where we're at.

Comm. Brown: I think you can do that in writing, which is where I was going. You could have all the Commissioners in a virtual room, but writing out the same idea and signing it. But somebody's got to start the ball rolling. It could also go to Council, because they're the ones that would have to dissolve, and they should know that we need their involvement. I think perhaps if you got somebody on Council who said I'll listen to it, and we'll find some money or the Districts could find some money to appoint somebody.

Comm. Robinson: I thought there was State merger money.

Comm. Brown: I inquired about that when we were going up to Courage to Connect. We had hooked up with an organization in Princeton that's responsible for consolidation of Princeton and Princeton Junction, and there was no money then. And I talked to the State guy who was formerly responsible, and all that money dried up about 3-4 years ago. There is none.

Chief Brezee: Interestingly enough, when Comm. Funkhouser made reference to who's interested in consolidating, the majority of the room raised their hand. The Mayor went...there you have it, go back and do it.

Comm. Annacone: It doesn't work that way.

Comm. Brown: That's my point.

Chief Brezee: It kind of put it back on...

Comm. Funkhouser: On us. That's exactly who he put it back on.

Comm. Brown: But with all due respect to the Mayor, we have no authority over the other Districts. If you don't have any authority, you can't get action plans in place. That's the problem. And as I said, this is my third round of this which, if we continue to do the same thing over and over again, you get the same results. That's the definition of insanity, and it's insane. So I'm saying, maybe a letter is a bad idea, but let's think for the next Board meeting what can we do to get us out of this loop that we're going to get in again. I don't have the answer to it, because again, without any of the fire, you're not going to get anybody doing anything.

Comm. Robinson: I don't think we're getting anywhere with having Commissioners start out the meeting going I'm broke, I'm broke, I'm broke. That was incredible to be honest with you. Then we go into Operations...it's two different animals.

Comm. Brown: In the prior meeting, I totally agree with what you're saying. My thought in the prior meeting was to put the Commissioners in one group and the Chief's in another group and have a Chairman of the Chief's and the Chairman of the Commissioners. Sub groups would meet and then the Chief's and Commissioners would try to

Old Business – continued

get some action plans together. Not a single Commissioner signed up on that despite multiple emails that I sent to them that we're supposed to get together. Nobody cared.

Chief Brezee: And District 3 and District 5 had no Commissioners at the meeting.

Comm. Brown: Right. So that's the problem. And the fact that some Districts are broke, that's a problem. And by the way, I misquoted, it wasn't no bucks, no buckaroos. It was no bucks, no Buck Rogers. Anyway, when is the next meeting?

Comm. Funkhouser: June 25th, 6:30pm. It's a Monday night.

Comm. Brown: Again, at least one Commissioner has to be there. I sent an email to everybody. If you guys don't make it, I'll go, but I think it's very important. If you're there, you learn something much more than I could have ever explained to you, so I think it's good that different people go.

New Business – George Brown

No report.

Public Portion – George Brown

Comm. Brown: Public Portion? (hearing none)

Closed Session – George Brown

Comm. Brown: I'd like to go into Closed Session to discuss the Administrative contract.

Motion made by Comm. Funkhouser, seconded by Comm. Robinson to go into Closed Session to discuss the Clerk's contract. Roll call vote, all yes.

Comm. Brown: OK, we'll excuse Comm. Flinn and the Clerk and turn the recorder off. And I'll have my notes that I'll give to you after the meeting.

Open Session – George Brown

Comm. Brown: We just came out of Closed Session, roll call Commissioners, all present.

During the Closed Session, personnel matters were discussed including the Clerk's contract and we have nothing resolved in Personnel matters or the Clerk's contract at this time.

Adjourn – George Brown

Motion made by Comm. Robinson, seconded by Comm. Funkhouser to adjourn the meeting at 7:31pm.

Roll call vote, all yes. Thank you, and happy Memorial Day to everyone.