

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

Meeting Held: October 25, 2018
Meeting Place: Board Office
Meeting Called to Order: 6:33pm
Members of Board Present: **Chairman** – George Brown
Vice Chairman – Richard Annacone, excused
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:

Comms. Robinson, Flinn, Funkhouser and Brown are present. Comm. Annacone is excused this evening.

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

Correspondence – Jeanette Cottone

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

Treasurer's Report – Jeanette Cottone

Audubon General Account	1,676,000.24
Audubon Payroll Account	16,232.23
Expenditures: 10/25/18	105,560.23
TOTAL AMOUNT FOR APPROVAL	105,560.23

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Budget Co-Commissioner – George Brown

No report.

Computer Services – George Brown

Comm. Brown: We met with Verizon to try and figure out whether it made any sense to put a new phone system in, especially now that the Clerk is resigning and she's wanted it for 10 years...

Adm.Cl.Cottone: So we'll get it now.

Comm. Brown: We'll get it now. We'll work on that and we're going to need some numbers for the budget.

IAFF Contracts Co-Commissioner – George Brown

No report.

Legal Liaison – George Brown

No report.

Fire Prevention – George Brown

Comm. Brown: Again, very difficult decision per your report Chief, to cancel that. It's the first time we cancelled Fire Prevention in the 12 or 13 years I've been Commissioner. I think it was a good decision and Lowes wrote me an email saying I've got all these buckets for the kids and all these smoke detectors for the citizens, can't we do something? So I had some conversations, the Eagles are not playing on 11/4. I'd like to have a mini-fire prevention on 11/4 between 10:30am and 2:30pm, because that's when Lowes said they're the busiest. And if everybody agrees, I'd like to vote on that and we'll get that underway. I spoke to the store manager today, and he's really anxious to make sure they play a role in what we're doing here in whatever way it is. And he said not only that, I don't have enough room to store all those buckets I have. Anybody object to having mini fire prevention?

Comm. Flinn: No, because I heard a lot of complaints that we didn't have it. A lot of people complained we weren't having it.

Comm. Brown: The problem was trying to coordinate it number one. Number two, you still take a crap shoot on the weather the next time around. I heard not complaints, but they all said what an important date that was and they were sorry we missed it. So does anybody have any objections? (hearing none) No objections, I'll take that as consent and we can go ahead with 11/4 from 10:30am to 2:30pm.

Liaison to the District Volunteers – George Brown

Comm. Brown: Any new members?

Chief Brezee: We do have a new member, Austin Reynolds I believe his name is. So far a fine young man, he's made it through his first couple steps and I'm sure you'll be meeting him too.

Comm. Brown: OK, great. Number two, happy birthday to the Deputy Chief. He determined that going to the Metallica concert tonight would be more fun than being at the meeting. Chief, I think you need to have a discussion with him.

Chief Brezee: I did. I ordered him to have fun tonight.

Comm. Brown: Alright.

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

No report.

Fire Department Equipment – Brian Robinson

Comm. Robinson: I'm going to defer pretty much to the Chief's report. It covered everything and I know he's going to cover some equipment maintenance, and other issues, but that is it.

Fire Department Operations – Brian Robinson

No report.

Training – Brian Robinson

No report.

Insurance – George Flinn

No report.

Water – George Flinn

No report.

Sign – George Flinn

Comm. Brown: The sign was repaired, and I want to thank the sign company because they did us a favor by basically covering everything except for the travel under warranty. So I put some money in the budget for next year, I'll have to talk to you about whether you want that in building or in computers. I got prices for all that. We'll talk about that.

Building Maintenance & Grounds – Steve Funkhouser

Comm. Flinn: I have one thing under Building Maintenance, to get the heaters replaced in the engine bay this year, we have the money. We only spent \$7,300 I think. Here are the quotes, so we need to get those done, two heaters at \$2,975 a piece. Anybody have an objection with that? (hearing none) I make a motion we get the heaters replaced in the engine bay.

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

Comm. Funkhouser: I'll defer to the Chief's report. The canvas out front has rotted away finally, and I have the Chief looking for a new canvas guy. I think he found one guy in the area?

Chief Brezee: I found one in Gloucester Township and I figured I'd contact him first. He hasn't gotten a quote in detail.

Comm. Funkhouser: I have a question. Do we want to put anything on that, like District 6 or leave it blank?

Comm. Brown: Volunteers wanted. That's what I would put on it.

Comm. Funkhouser: So we do want to put something on it? 866 or whatever? OK

Comm. Funkhouser: A leak is still in the building a little bit, but we're OK right now. Has the sprinkler system been closed down for the season?

Chief Brezee: He called me yesterday, 11/2.

Comm. Funkhouser: There's one light in the back the Chief's aware of and we'll work on getting that replaced. The fence is up and we're hoping to get rid of a couple cars out there, and we'll have them all encaged. That's pretty much all I have to report right now.

Communications – Steve Funkhouser

No report.

EMS / Supplies & Equipment – Steve Funkhouser

No report.

Turn-Out Gear – Steve Funkhouser

No report.

Uniforms – Steve Funkhouser

No report.

Chief – Michael Brezee

Chief Brezee: Just two amendments to the report since yesterday was one, that the Erial Elementary School has changed their date to visit the Fire house from the 2nd to the 7th, which is fine with us, we worked that out. The other thing is that 861 has developed a transmission problem today, which was found during the truck checks. We had Campbell's out, they did a diagnostic. It's an internal sensor that's in the transmission. That's going to call for a tow.

The truck is going to be towed to Cranbury where the transmission will have to be dropped and opened up and the sensor replaced. It's not going to be cheap. I won't have the numbers till tomorrow, but will speak to Comm. Robinson and let him know. We have around \$15,000 left in the line. We have a pending \$5,000 repair on the books right now, and that will leave us \$10,000. We can look at some other items in the budget to see where if something else should fail can we cover it.

Comm. Funkhouser: Question on that, do we need to get other quotes from other companies for that on the apparatus?

Chief Brezee: I never have before.

Comm. Flinn: You don't know what you're going to run into, they charge by the hour.

Chief – continued

Chief Brezee: We were charged today for a diagnostic. If we call other companies, we'll be charged for a diagnostic to. We're under contract with them, they have been doing our maintenance work now for 4 years. They take care of us pretty well with being a small fire department. I've watched them push us in front of other departments because they know we're smaller and can't risk having trucks out of service.

Comm. Flinn: The truck's got to be fixed, we'll figure out where the money comes from later.

Comm. Robinson: On that note, they found it this morning and they were here this afternoon. You can't ask for much better than that.

Comm. Brown: OK, just so you understand, and I think what I heard everybody here say is, we need it fixed, we'll figure out how to pay for it, whatever. Anything else? (hearing none)

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

Solicitor – David Carlamere

Sol.Carlamere: The Chairman and I discussed the District considering purchasing a Cascade System, and the purpose of the discussion was to determine whether or not that comes under Section 40A 14:84, the statute that says anything that you're purchasing, you'd have to have a special annual or special election to do it, specifically if it falls into a Capital category. I did a little research and determined that the purchase price doesn't necessarily control whether it's Capital, it's the life expectancy. If it's anything that you're purchasing that has 5 or more years of life expectancy, the finance Department of Community Affairs determines that to be Capital. So in order for you to buy it next year, you have to have a special election this year and it approved for this year. I feel as though you're not going to be able to make the time to do it this year, because of the Board of Elections, and rightfully so, says you have to still conform with the absentee notices and the publications and all that kind of stuff, so you may be locked and not be able to do it this year. It doesn't make sense to me, because the DCA also says if you buy a four wheel drive Command vehicle which is considerable dollars, they say that's not Capital. It doesn't make sense, but that's the ruling, five years or more life expectancy. So you're not going to be able to do that. So that means if you put it on the annual election in February, you can't purchase it until 2020.

Comm. Brown: With all due respect to the Solicitor who's never been wrong before, I still think we need to see what we can do to make this happen. If there is a way to get it done even in the 11th hour, I think we should try that. We've done without it for a couple years. The fact of the matter is, as far as I'm concerned, that is an emergency piece of equipment. You can't train without a Cascade because you can't fill your bottles. If you can't fill your bottles, you can't go on calls. Fundamentally by not replacing that, one more year we're saying that it's not that important, and it is that important. So I have a couple people trying to see if I can sway them into that, I'll call them tomorrow. We did some research today. There is a paragraph in a Local Finance Notice which all of you have received, on page 2 about this matter. But also, they're moving all the rules around once again. Back in 2017, they said we'd have a new budgeting system for the 2019 budget, and I made a comment at the time which I don't need to repeat because I'm always right anyway, but in this document it says it will eventually facilitate the whole electronic budgeting submissions system for the 2020 budget, but don't hold your breath.

Sol.Carlamere: You might have some success, and I'll tell you why. The law is pretty exact, but Pine Hill moved to replace the vehicle that was damaged or destroyed. They fell into that same issue that they had to do a special election. They spoke with DCA, and DCA took the position that well, if it's an emergency, we don't want to hurt a small District where you're without some piece of equipment, so if you express and make it clear that you determine this to be an emergency, they told Pine Hill you don't need a special election, just go ahead and do it.

Comm. Brown: Especially since we're not bonding it, we have the money already in the bank.

Sol.Carlamere: This they probably wouldn't check on and it would probably slip through because you're not financing it, but that's what the case law says, but they did make an exception last year with the Pine Hill District and allowed them to purchase a vehicle, and they said don't worry about the statute, we'll pass on it.

Comm. Brown: OK. We need to vote on authorizing somebody to proceed with that strategy.

Comm. Flinn: I make a motion the Chairman follows up with Trenton and gets this done.

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

Sol.Carlamere: Now the statute is making the change for Districts that move their election to November. You're going to be difficult to do that here because you're 6 Districts, and your District lines don't correspond

Solicitor – continued

to voting lines, so it makes it difficult. One of the things that they're saying is, you have to readjust your jurisdiction lines in order for you to do that to correspond with the Election Board lines. So it makes it difficult for Gloucester Township to do it. Pine Hill is doing it, Berlin is switching to November elections, which means they do not have an Election this year in February. Everybody moves and extended their term and their Election is November. And their budget is no longer subject to voter approval. It's an incentive for you to move it. But it's difficult for a multi-district town.

Comm. Brown: All the details are in this too by the way, which if you're having trouble sleeping at night...

Comm. Robinson: Any of the GT Districts looking at doing so?

Comm. Brown: No they can't because of overlapping.

Chief Brezee: The rumor throughout the town was unless we merge into one District.

Sol. Carlamere: Emerge into one District. Or, the difficulty becomes if you move a process to change your jurisdiction lines for District 6 to correspond ...that means all the Districts have to do that, and creates a mess.

Chief Brezee: That means all six have to do it or none.

Sol. Carlamere: Or you can have two Districts for example and cut the town in half, as long as it corresponds to voting Election board lines. But one District would be the easiest to follow the new statutes.

Resolutions – Jeanette Cottone

Adm. Cl. Cottone: Resolution R-23-18 is the Appointment of the Fund Commissioner to the FIRST Responder Joint Insurance Fund. The Fund Commissioner being Michael Brezee, the alternate Fund Commissioner being George Flinn.

Motion made by Comm. Robinson, seconded by Comm. Funkhouser to accept that Resolution. Roll call vote, all yes.

Old Business – George Brown

Comm. Brown: In last month's meeting, Comm. Annacone who was absent and sent me a letter asking me to represent his thoughts on the Jan replacement. I did have a conversation with him. His recommendation was that the replacement be a Clerk's title, but thinking about it, it's more. There are so many parts to what she does, I'm not sure that just a standard Clerk's title is appropriate. I told him that we would get together her current responsibilities which she has provided to us. It needs to be a little bit updated and the plan is we'll send it up to Civil Service and say what should this person be. So that's one alternative. A second alternative that we discussed is whether or not the job should be split up so we could have the office open every day of the year. It's just a thought, everybody is entitled to vacation, I've had some feedback from people that not having someone here during normal business hours is not really good customer service. I get that, I'm in favor of that. And the third alternative is, not just to replace the full time person, but to make sure we have some sort of part time fill in person for when she's on vacation, out sick or whatever. I think that it's really important that the office be staffed Monday through Friday at the hours posted, and it's a disservice to the taxpayers to come here and not be able to find anybody to help them out. So we're going to come back with a recommendation after we explore those three alternatives. But thank you for sending over the document.

Adm. Cl. Cottone: I did also copy you the Civil Service title, so you can put that with it.

Comm. Brown: OK, great.

New Business – George Brown

Comm. Brown: Again, you should really look at that Local Finance Notice on the budget, because there are a bunch of things that are changing. There are some things that we have to do this year, for example publish our Audit in a local newspaper, and proof that we did that. I don't remember...

Adm. Cl. Cottone: Always, every year. There are a lot of things that have to be published.

Comm. Brown: OK, I didn't remember that. There seems to be a bunch of new stuff and it seems like everything is moving around again, so that was that. And again, thanks to the Chief and career guys for the Commissioner's Office. You guys did a great job in there.

Public Portion – George Brown

Comm. Brown: Public Portion? (hearing none)

Closed Session – George Brown

n/a

Adjourn – George Brown

Motion made by Comm. Flinn, seconded by Comm. Robinson to adjourn the meeting at 6:57pm.

Roll call vote, all yes.