

**Board of Fire Commissioners
GLOUCESTER TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT 6
Special Year-End Meeting Minutes**

Meeting Held: December 30, 2021
Meeting Place: Board Office
Meeting Called to Order: 3:00pm
Members of Board Present: **Chairman** – George Brown
Vice Chairman – Brian Robinson
Treasurer – Steven Funkhouser
Secretary – George Flinn
Commissioner – Derek Grier
Administrative Clerk – Renee Evans, excused
Clerk – Jeanette Cottone
Clerk – Kathleen Crockett
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 Special Meeting of the Board.

Roll call Commissioners: All present.

Comm. Brown: This is a Special Meeting for Year-End Resolutions and final bill pay and we've got to stick to that. Following this, there will be a separate meeting or something regarding the EMS situation.

The Year-End Resolutions for 2021 are as follows:

Resolution R-27-21 Line Item Transfers

Cl.Cottone: As soon as the year is closed and all the bills are in, any appropriation that short any amount of money, we can then move from another appropriation that has excess funds. Before we close the total year's budget, we would then put the excess funds into the general fund balance. It's to move money around at the end of the year.

Resolution R-28-21 Establishes Accounts Payable

Cl.Cottone: Anything that the Fire District has ordered through the 31st of December, and we don't receive the bill for until January or early February depending what the produce is, that then comes into an accounts payable.

Resolution R-29-21 Establish a Reserve for Encumbrances

Cl.Cottone: The encumbrances are any product that has been ordered but not received in the building by the 31st of December, we then have to encumbrance that money. If the Chief orders something on the 30th, we don't get it by the 31st in the building, then we have to encumbrance that money. The accounts payable is, it's purchased, it's here and delivered, but we haven't received the invoice yet. When you see those resolutions that say "see attached schedule", it's because until we process. The normal process is that the whole year does not physically get closed until at least the first or second week of February.

Resolution R-30-21 To Cancel Unexpended Balances

Cl.Cottone: Once we get to the final budget and we can transfer our line items, set up our accounts payable and set up our encumbrances, everything else is finalized with the budget. We then have the final balances left in each appropriation which will then flow into the District fund balance.

Resolution R-31-21 To Adopt a Temporary Budget for 2022

Cl.Cottone: There is a statute that through the month of January and February, until the Election is held and the voters pass our budget, we can expend certain percentages of the 2022 budget, not to exceed 14%. So we are literally saying yes, we're approving that we can spend those amounts until the Election.

Comm. Brown: OK, before we do a vote on all the Resolutions, let's back up for a second. We need a motion to pay the Year-End final bills.

Cl.Crockett: The total for the final bills of 2021 is \$45,863.38

Year-End Final Bills & Resolutions – George Brown

Motion made by Comm. Flinn seconded by Comm. Grier to pay the 2021 year-end final bills as read.
Roll call vote, all yes.

Comm. Brown: OK, we need a motion for the Resolutions just read, R-27-21 thru R-31-21.
Motion made by Comm. Grier, seconded by Comm. Flinn to accept the Resolutions as read.
Roll call vote, all yes.

EMS Emergency Services – George Brown

Sol.Carlamere: Do you still want to consider Resolution **R-32-21** for the EMS Emergency Services?

Comm. Brown: Yes.

Sol.Carlamere: So it should be part of this meeting though. This meeting has been properly advertised.

Comm. Brown: For a Year-End meeting it's been properly advertised.

Sol.Carlamere: That's correct, but you are at a noticed meeting. The way the Statute reads, when you have an unscheduled item, because this item falls under emergency, you're not going to have to advertise and publish or go through this kind of process, specifically publishing the resolution.

Comm. Brown: So that being said....

Sol.Carlamere: OK, do you want me to bring you to speed on what's happening?

Comm. Brown: I think all we need is a motion to comply with the emergency request for our career personnel.

Sol.Carlamere: Correct. What you're calling emergency, from what I understand is from a meeting that this District and probably others, I'm not sure, had a meeting with the Township Mayor and Business Administrator and other individuals to discuss the lack of proper emergency response, EMS services from the current contractor which is AMR.

Comm. Brown: At that meeting from this District was the Chief, Comm. Grier and the Deputy Chief. Our information comes through those three people and whatever else we need to know passed what happened the other day.

Sol.Carlamere: So the mechanics of the result of that meeting, and how it works out I'm not sure, but from what I understand, this District agreed to participate in providing services by personnel getting assigned to Pine Hill over this weekend period to cover EMS, am I correct?

Comm. Brown: We had a poll of the Commissioners and it was unanimous that we would support that approach.

Sol.Carlamere: And just by tracking, this is probably the only District and perhaps District 5 that's agreed to participate.

Comm. Flinn: District 5 voted on it last night.

Sol.Carlamere: OK. What has happened over yesterday and also as of today, the Township as you know is contracted with AMR for services, and part of the region of the Township being the lead agency I'll say, includes service being presented to Pine Hill. AMR is supposed to be running out of the Erial building that used to be the EMS Alliance, the volunteer group and Glendora what have you. What has happened is, AMR has consistently failed to respond. They notify the Town 5pm at night that they don't have sufficient staff. From several meetings, they've issued a notice of termination of their contract to the Township, you might be aware of that.

Comm. Brown: No.

Sol.Carlamere: So they're in 120 day, which they've used 30 days of that, so the notice was provided more than a month ago, so they've taken the position that their terminating their contract authorization for Gloucester Township and Pine Hill. So during that termination period, their response has worsened. Every day at 5:30pm, they say they don't have basic life support or staffing. Now that we're in this critical holiday time, the same thing is they're pulling last minute services. So the Township has been holding several meetings with Inspira, and the Township has actually taken affirmative pro-active and going out for bid for another EMS provider to service. But that takes a process. So we decided the Township would go forward with an emergency process and they've entered into, just today, we've established a memorandum of agreement with Inspira. Inspira is going to be on-line service tomorrow morning at 8:00am. They're going to be coordinating between the Erial building as well as the old Glendora Rescue Squad building. That's getting set up for them to house equipment. In the interim if they can't meet it, Pine Hill's Fire District will allow the services of housing BLS in their station, but I don't think that's going to be necessary. From what I understand, the District has already resolved to participate, and I would tend to think you go forward with doing that, whether it's going to be needed, I can't say. You guys probably understand that better than I do, but the Township is also taking the position that we've declared a breach with AMR. We sent them a detailed notice of the history that has been happening over the last several months. So

EMS Emergency Services – George Brown

even though they're in termination, they still have an obligation of meeting their contract. They've breached that consistently and repeatedly over the past several months. It's been too much of a risk for the residents, so we've declared a breach termination immediately and we're entering into a contract with Inspira, there's a memorandum of understanding, and they're online 8:00am tomorrow morning.

Comm. Brown: OK, just so everybody is on the same page, what the Board approved was the career personnel could go to Pine Hill if they wanted to be paid. The Township will reimburse the District the career people here so they'll get one check and they won't have to go chasing their money around. The Township is going to reimburse us for those expenses. I had one thought after the brief meeting the other day was, it's not just what the firefighters are paid, they have to reimburse us for all payroll taxes, including workers comp. So in doing that, that validates if they have to reimburse us for workers comp under the law, then I guess our guys are covered on their workers comp policy if they go down there and are injured. So somebody's got to steer me on whether or not I'm correct or not. You can't not pay the workers comp here because when we get a workers comp audit, they're going to look for those payments, the workers comp auditors. So it seems to me that the workers comp payment must follow who gets the claims.

Sol. Carlamere: I'm not sure if I follow that reason, in other words you're saying workers comp should come under Pine Hill or stay under Erial?

Comm. Brown: It should stay here because they're getting paid from here, and the basis for the audit, and correct me if I'm wrong is, the workers comp auditor comes in and says show me all your payrolls. And based on your payroll, that's what your workers comp assessment is. So if we're going to have to pay for it because that's the way it works, then they should understand and know and not get caught up in a situation where nobody knows who's workers comp should fall under.

Sol. Carlamere: I agree it should be this District workers comp, and whatever audit reporting should come out of here.

Comm. Brown: So what we want to say in our resolution is, we would be reimbursed for actual and all other payroll taxes by the Township.

Sol. Carlamere: Right.

Comm. Robinson: If I'm not wrong, Mike, isn't that what we agreed we had with the fill-ins. The hurdle that we all had to agree on, and the beginning of the fill-in discussion came up. If somebody should shut down we'd go help them. We did not want to transfer the workers comp all over the world, we wanted to make sure it stayed with us.

Comm. Brown: Follow the money.

Sol. Carlamere: So I think you should still do your Resolution to participate in this emergency. The mechanics of it, whether it's going to be needed, and you gentleman know more about the mechanics of that than I would. And the reason I say that is the memorandum of agreement mandates that Inspira is going to operate 24 hours 7 days a week to BLS equipment, fully staffed, plus a supervisor going certain peak hours to assist. And the Township is continuing to refurbish the Taylor Ave. property as well as Erial, and supposedly AMR is cooperating to their equipment out so they're not bumping heads with each other. So they're going to be moving out and Inspira is going to be moving in, and their effective operation is tomorrow morning, 8:00am.

Comm. Funkhouser: Where is Inspira headquartered?

Sol. Carlamere: They talked about using space in one of their Urgent Care facilities, and it might be the one on Chews Landing Road.

Comm. Flinn: Their main office, it's Woodbury.

Sol. Carlamere: As far as centralizing, how that's going to get coordinated as far as their office staff side, response side, I think their trying to establish space in this Urgent Care facility on Chews Landing Rd. They talked about Voorhees because there is one there, but I think they want to centralize here. I think that's all going to get worked out, but as far as the location of the ambulance, it's going to be between the Glendora Taylor Ave. and Erial. It's going to be two fully staffed 24/7 vehicles.

Comm. Brown: So we're all understanding on who's workers comp is...

Comm. Flinn: So if it happens, we'll be sending a bill to the persons name...

Comm. Brown: I'm not talking about claims, I'm talking about the employer pays...

Comm. Flinn: No, I'm talking about getting reimbursed from the Town. We're just going to send them a bill.

Comm. Brown: For whatever our cost, between salary and whatever, and tomorrow I'll wake up and think of some other employer tax that we pay once a year...any and all payroll tax that we pay. Any other questions? (hearing none)

Motion made by Comm. Robinson, seconded by Comm. Flinn to accept **R-32-21**, EMS Mutual Aid as discussed.

Roll call vote, all yes.

Public Portion – George Brown

Comm. Brown: Public Portion? (hearing none)

Chief Brezee: I just came out of a meeting with Chief Dukes. If you would, don't make any mention outside of this room of AMR until at least tomorrow. Some people working right now don't know yet.

Sol.Carlamere: That might be true, I'm not sure. But as far as my last communication, AMR is transitioning their people out so that Inspira is in tomorrow morning, but I would think that is appropriate, keep it closed right here.

Adjourn – George Brown

Motion made by Comm. Flinn, seconded by Comm. Robinson to adjourn the meeting at 3:22pm.

Roll call vote, all yes.

Happy New Year everyone.