

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

**Meeting Held:** July 22, 2021  
**Meeting Place:** Board Office  
**Meeting Called to Order:** 6:30pm  
**Members of Board Present:** **Chairman** – George Brown  
**Vice Chairman** – Brian Robinson  
**Treasurer** – Steven Funkhouser, excused  
**Secretary** – George Flinn  
**Commissioner** – Derek Grier  
**Administrative Clerk** – Renee Evans  
**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, Grier and Brown present. Comm. Funkhouser is excused.

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

**Correspondence** – Renee Evans

**Adm.Cl.Evans:** All have been distributed.

**Treasurer’s Report** – Renee Evans

William Penn General Account	\$2,222,602.97
William Penn Payroll Account	18,125.85
Expenditures 07/22/21	112,550.48
TOTAL AMOUNT FOR APPROVAL	112,550.48

Motion made by Comm. Grier, seconded by Comm. Flinn to approve the Treasurer’s Report as read.

Roll call vote, all yes.

**Sol. Carlamere / Roof Project**

**Comm. Brown:** The Solicitor has to leave early tonight, and I’d like to switch back to Old Business. Comm. Funkhouser is not going to make it tonight, and the Old Business item of importance from last month was the discussion on the roof. We budgeted \$200,000 and the estimated prices that we got from two bids was in the \$400,000 range, give or take a little bit. The question to the Solicitor was could we borrow from the truck fund and re-pay that in 2022 taking the money out of the truck fund that we need to get the roof done plus the \$200,000 that we budgeted.

**Sol.Carlamere:** I had a couple conversations with Steve (Comm. Funkhouser) and a couple conversations with George (Comm. Brown). In researching the statute and comparing it with the Municipal Local Fiscal law and budget law, the Fire District has a similar type section but it’s a little more restrictive. I spoke to Steve on that as well as George, and it indicates that you can declare an emergency, and the factual basis is that you anticipated this roof repair coming in around \$200,000. But because of the pandemic emergency and Covid 19, all prices are out of sight now so that was almost double of what you were actually finding out. So you have appropriated and intended to do this project, so it’s not like it’s an unknown thing that just happened, but what happened is it doubled in price. So that in a sense falls into that category of emergency. So the statute allows Fire Districts to

### Solicitor / Roof Project, continued

have a meeting, regular or a special meeting and declaring an emergency. And the emergency in a sense would be, if you don't have the funds to do it now because everything is doubled. You have a situation there with continued rain and snow, things of that nature, you could have a big crisis on your hands, someone could get hurt, property could be damaged, those kinds of things. So that would be in essence what you would build into your resolution is that it's an emergency. You have to pass that emergency by 2/3 vote of the full membership, not just those voting. Full membership...2/3 of 5. And that Resolution is you're declaring an emergency and you need funding. The problem with the statute with Fire Districts doesn't do that in Municipalities, it puts a 3% limit of your total current operations appropriation. So what we were talking, you need at least \$140,000 to close to \$200,000 with the 3% puts you under that number if the calculations are correct. So you can go forward with the resolution, and the funding can come from surplus. The question there comes up whether or not you can tap into your restricted surplus or just unrestricted funds. So I spoke to Catherine Hess of Bowman just recently today also, and she wasn't really sure. She says you have sufficient dollars in all of your surplus, but a good portion of it is restricted for a truck capital and all that kind of stuff, so she's going to speak to some of the other Auditors at Bowman. She also suggested I call the Local Finance Board, and I remember going through things with other Districts, and her name is Melissa Ford at the Local Finance Board and she's not going to be in till Monday. She's always been very helpful with other Districts when things like this happen to get some leeway. The only real question that she probably would have or I would have with her is would you allow us to use our restricted fund surplus. It's a fund balance, a restricted account, but can we use it. There is no questions the way the statute says if you have to pay that back next year anyway, so you would just fund that money, that extra \$200,000 or whatever you need. If we need to do a special meeting, we'll do a special meeting. If Ms. Ford from the Local Finance Board says it's OK, if there's a shorter way to do that we'll naturally take the easier path because your 2/3 resolution once it passes has to go to the Municipal Governing Body, Township Council. They have to pass it by 2/3 vote of their full membership for consent, which I don't think there would be an issue once they see the resolutions loaded up and all the facts of what happened and if the State approves it, so I'm sure they'll pass it, I don't think there's an issue there. So that's where we are. When I was speaking with the Chair earlier, you can't do anything tonight, you don't know what direction you're heading into. But if you have to do a special meeting with everybody's consent, the Auditor and Local Finance Board, you have to do a format and let the Chair know and call a special meeting.

**Comm. Brown:** Effectively it will be two more years if we can't do this by the time we get the budget approved and get the contracts out and everything. The real question is, does anybody think we won't have a major leak in the next two years, and the answer I got from everybody is of course we will, that's why we wanted to replace the roof. So that's what makes the emergency. And the other thing too is, Mr. Solicitor, when you were reading the various statutes today, I don't recall that it said the Municipality had to approve this.

**Sol.Carlamere:** Yeah, it does.

**Comm. Brown:** If it does, that's OK. So then we have to get on their calendar.

**Sol.Carlamere:** "A copy of the resolution shall be filed immediately from the Governing body. The resolution shall not take effect until the Municipal Governing body shall, by a vote of 2/3 of its full membership approve the emergency appropriation and certify it's approval to the District."

**Comm. Brown:** Now is that out of the Municipal...

**Sol.Carlamere:** No, that's Fire District. I'll give you two copies of the session. That's 40A:14-78.13 on Emergency Appropriation Procedures.

**Comm. Brown:** So it's a couple months to get this thing approved.

**Sol.Carlamere:** The only thing I might address with the State is, when you read on it says the Fire District may finance any emergency appropriation from the District available surplus. I think people will get hung up on the word available since most of your money is restricted, it's not available.

**Comm. Flinn:** If you split hairs it will be. As long as it's in the bank, it's available.

**Sol.Carlamere:** That might me what the Auditor and Melissa says, but she might give you a little leeway because of the circumstances. Here is a copy of the relative sections.

**Comm. Brown:** Any questions? (hearing none) Mr. Solicitor, you're excused.

**Comm. Flinn:** We won't be far behind you.

**Sol.Carlamere:** I appreciate it, it will give me time to get there. If any of the Commissioners have any questions as a result of the above, Monday I should have more direction from the Local Finance people.

**Comm. Brown:** OK great, thank you.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Budget Co-Commissioner – George Brown

No report.

### Computer Services – George Brown

No report.

### Fire Prevention – George Brown

No report.

### IAFF Contracts Co-Commissioner – George Brown

No report.

### Legal Liaison – George Brown

No report.

### Liaison to the District Volunteers – George Brown

**Comm. Brown:** Any new volunteers?

**Dep.Chief Brown:** No.

### Budget Co-Commissioner – Brian Robinson

No report.

### IAFF Contracts Co-Commissioner – Brian Robinson

No report.

### Personnel / Administration – Brian Robinson

No report.

### Personnel / Operations – Brian Robinson

**Comm. Robinson:** I just received prior to the meeting a new Interlocal Services Agreement between the Districts for the fill-ins, literally as I was leaving my house Keith sent it over to me. So if anybody wants to look at it before we sign off on it. What they're asking is for my signature and Mike will sign off on it I guess Monday when he gets back.

Briefly on hiring, we have six applications returned that I'm going to be going over. I just received two more copies today, the two additional ones. I'm away next week so I'll be studying them in North Carolina and I'll try to put something together for the weekend. Some resident, some non-resident, there is experience there and there are certified firemen in there so that's a plus. We will need help obviously...are you available (Comm. Grier) the week of August 2 – 6?

**Comm. Grier:** OK.

**Comm. Robinson:** All I'm asking for that week is we'll get together and we'll have a quick talk. Dep.Chief Brown, are you available that week and are you willing to sit in?

**Dep.Chief Brown:** Absolutely.

**Comm. Robinson:** The Chief has withdrawn from the process due to a family member being one of the applicants. I don't want to do it without somebody from the fireside sitting there, and we're talking the week of the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>. It will be a short meeting and then we'll come up with a game plan from there. I've been on hiring Boards before where we just had to fill-in spots, and my ask is for two Commissioners and one rep from the fireside, either the Deputy Chief preferably or one of the Officers.

**Comm. Brown:** OK, and the process will be that you review everything then come back to the Board with your recommendations, is that correct?

**Comm. Robinson:** Yes.

**Comm. Brown:** OK, I just want to make sure I understand. No information until they're done their reviews. Nobody's in, nobody's out.

**Personnel / Operations – Brian Robinson**

**Comm. Robinson:** No, I'll have copies made for everyone on what we discussed and then we'll set up times for the actual interviews.

**Comm. Brown:** Can I backtrack to your Interlocal Services agreement. Since time is of the essence, can we say unless someone has an objection in the next 48 hours that you have the authority of the Board to approve this. That will give us all of two days to look through this.

**Comm. Robinson:** I've spoken to Pres. Kemery several times and the only issue with the last two of the forms was the Workman's Comp. It kept saying we would cover the Workman's Comp if God forbid someone was injured while filling-in here.

**Comm. Flinn:** For the career staff?

**Comm. Robinson:** It's back to their Workman's Comp will cover them if injured, because it would be an absolute nightmare under Workman's Comp if somebody is in our building on our operation and gets hurt and it goes back and forth so their request was their Workman's Comp.

**Comm. Flinn:** If they're being paid from them, they got to be on their Workman's Comp. We're just reimbursing.

**Comm. Robinson:** We're reimbursing, yes. It would be a nightmare. Thank you.

**Comm. Brown:** OK. Anything else Comm. Robinson?

**Comm. Robinson:** Negative.

**Apparatus – Derek Grier**

**Comm. Grier:** I'll take my report from the Chief's report, and the apparatus has been inspected and I don't think there are any major issues.

**Fire Department Equipment – Derek Grier**

No report.

**Fire Department Operations – Derek Grier**

No report.

**Training – Derek Grier**

No report.

**Insurance – George Flinn**

No report.

**Sign – George Flinn**

No report.

**Water – George Flinn**

No report.

**Building Maintenance & Grounds – Steve Funkhouser**

**Comm. Brown:** Comm. Funkhouser was unable to make it at the last minute, so he's excused. He and I had been going in sync on the roof issue. By the way there is an article on his desk from the Wall Street Journal this week, that once again the wood prices have dropped by 70%, so we had a big price drop two weeks ago and now we had another one. So the \$200,000 that we're trying to borrow may not be that much and or needed, but we got to keep going.

**Comm. Flinn:** The bids should be coming down with the price of everything.

**Comm. Grier:** (inaudible)

**Comm. Brown:** We're going to replace all the decking so it's a good thing.

**Comm. Flinn:** It's either Styrofoam and or decking, mostly 2 ½ Styrofoam on top of steel beams.

**Comm. Brown:** That's all I had from Comm. Funkhouser.

**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**

(the Chief is on vacation this week)

Motion made by Comm. Robinson, seconded by Comm. Grier to accept the Chief's Report as submitted.

Roll call vote, all yes.

**Solicitor – David Carlamere**

**Comm. Brown:** The Solicitor has left.

(see report above)

**Resolutions – Renee Evans**

**Comm. Brown:** Resolutions...I don't think we have any.

**Adm.Cl.Evans:** No.

**Old Business – George Brown**

**Comm. Brown:** I think we took care of the one major piece of Old Business which was the roof and the hiring. Both of those we know where that stands, so we'll skip over that.

- 1) CPA issue with 1099's.
- 2) Computer Room project.
- 3) What to do with Engine 869.
- 4) Chairs for the radio room.
- 5) Battery for generator out back.
- 6) Ongoing roof discussion.
- 7) Hiring new fireman.

**New Business – George Brown**

No report.

**Closed Session – George Brown**

n/a

**Public Portion – George Brown**

**Comm. Brown:** No one is here from the Public.

**Adjourn – George Brown**

Motion made by Comm. Flinn, seconded by Comm. Grier to adjourn the meeting at 6:47pm.

Roll call vote, all yes.