

**Board of Fire Commissioners  
GLOUCESTER TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT 6  
Special Emergency Meeting Minutes  
Roof Project**

**Meeting Held:** January 11, 2023  
**Meeting Place:** Board Office  
**Meeting Called to Order:** 5:04pm  
**Members of Board Present:** **Chairman** – George Brown  
**Vice Chairman** – Brian Robinson, excused  
**Treasurer** – Steven Funkhouser  
**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. Funkhouser, Flinn, Grier & Brown present. Comm. Robinson is excused.

**Open Session – Comm. Brown**

**Comm. Brown:** I want to take all the details as I know them. First of all, CES did not review the preliminary assessment report, the 26 page long one for the first reading of the 2023 budget, so there was no time to consider hiring a project manager until now. So it wasn't something we really thought about until we looked at the document. So on page 25 of the same document was not presented on the same day of the first reading. Some of the recommendations are questionable and could not be addressed for consideration for the 2023 budget. They came up with some additional things that may have been discussed with Comm. Funkhouser, I don't know, but it's the first time they did it on paper, and there was no commitment on their part as to what these additional things were going to cost.

**Sol.Carlamere:** You're referring to CES on this?

**Comm. Brown:** I'm referring to CES. I'm referring to page 25 of their report, the same report we got on the day of the first reading. "The roof is not just one flat roof surface. There are at least 8 flat replacement surfaces and some of the roof replacement will involve horizontal surfaces as well as vertical surfaces." There is a lot to be considered. The project is far more complicated than replacement of a single flat level roof. Even at this stage the roof contract details are uncertain, since the building is not staffed every day of the week by the District Administrator, or a Commissioner responsible for the project. So my concern is if they do this by tearing something apart and say aha, look what we found, we're going to have to replace this. So the only way the job can be done is to do it separate. It's something we have to go through, the approval process. The process here is questionable. So the bottom line is in the first reading, the Board Accountant advised that there was money left that we had not used. Mr. Passarella, before he left asked me what to do about it and I said put it someplace if we have a need for it and we can do a line item transfer later on.

**Sol.Carlamere:** So for my clarity, the Accountant or whatever said there was money left in the 2022 budget?

**Comm. Brown:** He's saying if we wanted to spend as much in 2023...the one thing in the budget in 2022 in 2023 is \$71,000 under the 2022 budget.

**Sol.Carlamere:** Have you not already set your 2023 budget?

**Comm. Brown:** No.

**Sol.Carlamere:** So where is your hearing on the 2023 aside from the Election?

**Comm. Brown:** We had the first reading, right?

**Sol.Carlamere:** And tonight is your second reading?

**Comm. Brown:** Yes.

Open Session – continued

**Sol.Carlamere:** So you already advertised that you have that coming up. So it's difficult to amend to bring in more money and change how you're spending, because Trenton...(inaudible)

**Comm. Brown:** So Mr. Passarella said really that's not the case. All that you need to do is a statement on where the \$71,000 is going to in the second reading and where it's coming from and you're done.

**Sol.Carlamere:** So when you say where is it coming from and going to, I don't know what you mean by that. The budget for 2023, you've not spent anything out of that, that's your projected budget.

**Comm. Brown:** Correct.

**Sol.Carlamere:** So he's saying there's \$71,000 slush money in 2023?

**Comm. Flinn:** There is money there that isn't earmarked to go any special place.

**F.A./V.C. Brown:** I actually have his email right here, want me to quote it?

**Sol.Carlamere:** Yeah.

**F.A./V.C. Brown:** The Commissioners never indicated the exact amount, but the maximum allowable to be raised by taxation is X. The current amount to be raised by taxation is a difference of \$72,167.74 from that same proposed budget for 2023.

**Sol.Carlamere:** In other words, you already said we're going to raise X amount of dollars for the 2023 budget, tax wise?

**F.A./V.C. Brown:** At one reading.

**Comm. Brown:** The first reading.

**Sol.Carlamere:** So it's already gone to Trenton, and Trenton is OK with what your budget said so far, right?

**Comm. Brown:** Correct.

**Sol.Carlamere:** So if you change what Trenton has reviewed, Trenton has to review it.

**Comm. Brown:** We understand that. And they will review that at the second reading.

**Sol.Carlamere:** I don't think they're going to let you do that.

**Comm. Brown:** He says yes, and it happens all the time.

**Sol.Carlamere:** I'll tell you, we just ran through that in one of the other Districts.

**Comm. Brown:** My only comment to that is we did it before here, which is why I know about it, and it's not really a budget until the second reading anyway.

**Sol.Carlamere:** But you already had Trenton approve the first reading. It's already been sent to Trenton.

**Comm. Brown:** (inaudible)

**Sol.Carlamere:** If you have X amount of dollars in your budget of which Y is going to be raised by taxation...

**Comm. Brown:** We're not going to change that.

**Comm. Flinn:** That number's not changed.

**Sol.Carlamere:** How about your total budget is that changed?

**Comm. Brown:** No.

**Sol.Carlamere:** So if you have line items addressed that you're not reducing a line item and increasing another line item, Trenton has to approve that.

**Comm. Brown:** It's reducing and increasing.

**Sol.Carlamere:** So in a sense, we just around this with Berlin, and what Trenton says, and the Auditor took the same position in the beginning. The bottom line is, if you have Line Item A with \$100,000 and you're not changing that line item, then you're OK. If you're just retitling how that money is spent, you're OK. But if you're changing that line item, Trenton has to approve it.

**Comm. Brown:** Our Accountant says no, he does it all the time. I've done it before, so I don't know what changed. You're the Attorney...two Accountants against the Attorney.

**Sol.Carlamere:** What Trenton says, I communicate with them, and would Trenton then confirm with your Auditor Bowman sent someone to their meeting and he said the same thing. As long as we're not changing the amount of dollars in a line item and we're just changing the title or how that line item is used, then we're OK because the budget is not changing. If you say I'm going to reduce this line item and create another line item, whether it's a staffing or employee or expense, they say you have to come back to them. And that's what the Auditor said too.

**Comm. Flinn:** I'd rather ask for forgiveness than permission.

**Sol.Carlamere:** So when we talked earlier, I indicated as long as you're not changing that number and you're going to reassess how you're titling the line item, that's the only thing you're doing, you can do it. But if you're changing that number, then I think...

**Comm. Flinn:** Our bottom line's not changing.

Open Session – continued

**Sol.Carlamere:** You're bottom line's not changing, but what you're doing is you're taking the numbers out and putting those numbers somewhere else, and putting in another line item.

**Comm. Brown:** There's one tiny little fact that you'll be missing and telling us about, and I'll bet...

**Sol.Carlamere:** They wanted to create a Stipend program, and it came to light they were using money not the way the budget was saying so they got a little hand slap on that. They wanted to change a line item, so I said we're not taking money and creating a new line item for a salary or stipend program for the firefighters. What we're going to do is have that line item change a title so that some of that money can be used for funds.

**Comm. Flinn:** So it's all semantics.

**Sol.Carlamere:** As long as that line, when they look at those lines they see the same gross numbers.

**Comm. Funkhouser:** So where is the \$71,000 coming out of? We stuck it in Fire Dept. Equipment. So we just need to change the Fire Dept. Equipment ...

**Comm. Flinn:** And rename it? Not create a new one, right?

**Comm. Funkhouser:** Building Maintenance said the Accountant.

**Sol.Carlamere:** What's the line it's coming from, what's it called?

**Comm. Flinn:** Fire Department Equipment.

**Adm.Cl.Evans:** I don't think he added it yet, he said he wanted to add it before the next reading.

**Comm. Flinn:** So it's just floating out there.

**Sol.Carlamere:** So why wouldn't he just let you use that Fire Dept. Equipment as part ....

**Comm. Flinn:** As far as I'm concerned, it's going as a piece of equipment to protect our equipment.

**F.A./V.C. Brown:** The issue in which he raised via his email is in Sections FN and page F1 of the budget. In regards to the total amount allowable to be raised by taxation and the current amount to be raised by taxation, that's where the difference of the number is.

**Sol.Carlamere:** Then those numbers won't change it.

**Comm. Brown:** He said it's coming out of taxation so it's not...

**Comm. Flinn:** Right, we're not raising the taxes more than we had last year.

**Sol.Carlamere:** So as far as Trenton is concerned what they already looked at...if you say I'm raising \$500,000 in taxation, you can't change that number.

**Comm. Brown:** We're not going to.

**Comm. Funkhouser:** That \$71,000 is already in there.

**Comm. Flinn:** It wasn't put in the proper line item.

**Sol.Carlamere:** They don't want to see you create a new line...

**Adm.Cl.Evans:** He didn't add it though. He said that he would add it before the next reading and that he could. But it wasn't in there for the first reading, the \$71,000.

**Sol.Carlamere:** So something's going to increase by \$71,000?

**Adm.Cl.Evans:** Do want me to see if he's available to call in?

**Comm. Brown:** Sure.

**Sol.Carlamere:** If you're increasing a line item, then you're increasing the budget somewhere, and I think Trenton's going to say...

**Comm. Flinn:** The way I see this, you should never lower your budget. So if it's this amount last year, that's what you should be getting this year.

**Comm. Funkhouser:** It could go up and down.

**Comm. Flinn:** You never go backwards.

**Sol.Carlamere:** If the money is already there and you're just retitling it, you can do that as long as you're not adding to or taking away.

**Comm. Brown:** I believe that that's what he suggested we do.

**Comm. Flinn:** It was in the 2022 budget, and we talked about that line item when he was here at the meeting two weeks ago. I forget how he said he was going to do it, but obviously he didn't put it in there yet.

**Comm. Grier:** Well he returned it in that meeting to put it in the Fire Dept. Equipment. We did say that at the meeting, so it will be in the minutes.

**Comm. Flinn:** So I say we put the Accountant on the hook for it.

**Comm. Brown:** He's willing to go on the hook for it. He does this all the time day in day out. We do it once a year.

**Comm. Grier:** And the Project Manager (inaudible)

Open Session – continued

**Comm. Brown:** I don't know. We can't discuss that at this point. The fact of the matter is, is that we're only looking for somebody to have somebody here on a part time basis who says to Steve when do you want me around? Well I'm going down the shore for 4 days, and I want you to do those 4 days.

**F.A./V.C. Brown.:** And based on how I understand it, it would make the most sense regardless of what any projected cost would be is to put that amount in that line, because if it's not spent at the end of the year, you redistribute it to other lines of which if everybody is happy with their sections of the budget then they're good and that'll be surplus money...

**Comm. Brown:** Go into Fund Balance.

**F.A./V.C. Brown:** It will go into Fund Balance and redistributed to other lines at the end of the year.

**Comm. Brown:** The problem is, is that we're up against a schedule here to get to the second reading. So the purpose of this meeting is to agree that we're going to put it someplace.

**Sol.Carlamere:** Well that tells me that you're talking about money left over from 2022.

**Comm. Brown:** No, I'm talking about 2023 taxation.

**Sol.Carlamere:** OK, so you're hinting that you might over extend a line item and the last two months you change it around.

**Comm. Flinn:** Line Item Transfer.

**Sol.Carlamere:** OK, that's fine you can do that.

**Comm. Brown:** I don't want to, but we don't know whether the project is supposed to go 6 or 7 months, and if its California, it's going to be 6 or 7 years.

**Comm. Flinn:** We had something from 2017 in there.

**Sol.Carlamere:** So let's jump ahead just a bit. Let's assume this \$71,000 is fine. The Accountant's correct and that's how you're going to do it. So now the question becomes, how do you designate this? I'm going through the statute just thinking that you probably should not classify a person as an employee. Do you intend to do that or do you intend as if you were hiring a Professional oversight?

**Comm. Brown:** The intent is Professional oversight.

**Comm. Flinn:** Then that's a 1099.

**Sol.Carlamere:** That's the way to go. I was just concerned because when we talked the note said part-time employee.

**Comm. Brown:** Employee vs. part time truck.

**Sol.Carlamere:** So you're going to have a contractor...you need somebody to have oversight on the construction so it all gets pulled into the construction roof repair construction. Besides the physical person doing the work contracted, you need somebody to do oversight. So you're going to hire somebody, or however you call that person, is going to have employment 1099 oversight for that contract.

**Comm. Brown:** Let's just put your ballet slippers on for a second, ok. We don't really...we want to make sure that someone does not determine that this should've been put in the Capital budget.

**Sol.Carlamere:** Should have, you mean an individual?

**Comm. Brown:** And I don't want the implication is to that. I don't think we want to tie it to the Capital budget. We want to have somebody here who can walk around and see progress is being made, and when they see something sloppy being done...

**Sol.Carlamere:** That could be in your description...

**Comm. Brown:** I'm just making sure that I'm not leading you down...

**Sol.Carlamere:** But the part is tied into the construction...

**Comm. Brown:** This is not a place where we have people here every day.

**Sol.Carlamere:** I thought the CES contract included contract oversight.

**Comm. Brown:** They do, two days a week.

**Comm. Flinn:** And they're a quick visit...

**Sol.Carlamere:** That might not work. In a sense, the intent really was to have somebody here more than that because of the nature of this contract and what we found out, so you don't want to get involved in revising CES's contract...

**Comm. Flinn:** No, and that's going to cost us a lot more money if we do that.

**Sol.Carlamere:** You want to have somebody here for oversight.

**Comm. Flinn:** We're waiting for the numbers to come back again.

**Comm. Brown:** Steve, we don't have a signed contract with CES for construction?

**Open Session – continued**

**Comm. Funkhouser:** I think we do.

**Sol. Carlamere:** You have their contract, but not the contractor for the work.

**Comm. Flinn:** Right, we need to sign a contractor. CES has the contract to award or go out for bid for a contractor. They're the middle man. We don't have a contractor hired, correct?

**Comm. Funkhouser:** Yeah, this is just for consulting engineering that was signed.

**Comm. Brown:** This phase is ending, so now we look at the construction phase...

**Comm. Flinn:** We need somebody to supervise the construction phase.

**Comm. Brown:** Right.

**Comm. Flinn:** They're just paying visits to make sure the project is being completed, that doesn't mean it's to our satisfaction. We need somebody to make it to our satisfaction. I'm going to make a motion that we move the money...

**F.A./V.C. Brown:** \$72,167.74.

**Comm. Brown:** \$72,000.

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

**Comm. Brown:** The motion is passed, and motion to adjourn.

Motion made by Comm. Flinn, seconded by Comm. Funkhouser to adjourn the meeting at 5:04pm.

Roll call vote, all yes.