

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

Meeting Held: January 19, 2023
Meeting Place: Board Office
Meeting Called to Order: 6:41pm
Members of Board Present: **Chairman** – George Brown
Vice Chairman – Brian Robinson
Treasurer – Steven Funkhouser
Secretary – George Flinn
Commissioner – Derek Grier
Administrative Clerk – Renee Evans
Solicitor – David Carlamere, excused

Salute the Flag

Comm. Brown: I just want to go on record saying I didn't think they should be cutting holes in the roof, but they did, so let's cut 50 holes in the roof and see if it's leaking. Happy New Year to everybody, first of all.

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

Correspondence – Renee Evans
Adm.Cl.Evans: All have been distributed.

Treasurer's Report – Steven Funkhouser

William Penn General Account	2,756,346.02
William Penn Payroll Account	20,289.76
Expenditures 01/19/23:	115,958.11
TOTAL AMOUNT FOR APPROVAL	115,958.11

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Fire Administrator/Volunteer Chief – Christopher Brown

F.A.V.C. Brown: No new members to present this evening. Just wanted to point out it's included in the Chief's report about Ffs. Baxley & Harrison finished up and received notification of passing FF1. A lot of our members here are mentors, they concluded their probationary test out internally, they've been issued their black helmet fronts while they're awaiting their official certifications and will be sworn in as firefighters of the District at the February meeting.

Comm. Brown: OK.

Budget Co-Commissioner – George Brown
No report.

Computer Services – George Brown

Comm. Brown: We finally did get our GTFD6 email up and running, and thank God we did that because Microsoft laid off 10,000 people today. It was tough enough for almost two weeks trying to get some assistance out of them. So 10,000 people which is mind boggling today. I know it's global, so we got it done just in time.

Fire Prevention – George Brown

No report.

IAFF Contracts Co-Commissioner – George Brown

No report.

Legal Liaison – George Brown

No report.

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'd like to thank Lt. Schoonmaker for his assistance and weeks of work on the updated volunteer contract. A lot goes into that and it hasn't been touched in quite a while, it was a huge help. My only other comment would be the place is looking sharp bit by bit. I understand there are a lot of small committees working and it's coming along.

Building Maintenance & Grounds – Steve Funkhouser

Comm. Funkhouser: I refer to the Chief's report. I have nothing else to report, everything is running smoothly except for the roof project.

Comm. Brown: And we've not heard anything from them since our last meeting?

Comm. Funkhouser: No, I haven't heard anything.

Comm. Brown: And it's not your fault, but I think we need to set specific deadlines. A meeting once a week or an update of some sort because there are a lot of questions from last time. I've probably forgotten most of them already and they were going to update their report and that was 2 or 3 weeks ago. You just can't run a project of that size without good communications and I think Derek would attest to that. I think we should send him a letter saying, and you can make a resolution of the Board that we're going to engage them and we've got to have some sort of timing.

Comm. Funkhouser: I'm going to reopen their contract a little further to see exactly what the timeline was on the contract was, but I think this is getting crazy that I haven't heard anything since they were here that night.

Comm. Brown: I'm concerned at this phase we're not hearing from them, what's it going to be like in the rest of the phases. Are we going to be chasing them down to say hey, what's with the truck you left parked in the middle of the street...it's not a cheap job. We're talking almost \$400,000 so I know we're all nice guys here, but I think we have to be a little more demanding and set the rules for it. And you have our support, I'm not criticizing you Steve.

Comm. Funkhouser: I understand.

Comm. Brown: At this rate the roof will get done in 2032 and that's a lot of water.

Comm. Funkhouser: No comment.

Comm. Brown: OK. Again I'm not talking down to you, we're in this together. Anything else Comm. Funkhouser?

Comm. Funkhouser: No, that's it.

Communications – Steve Funkhouser

No report.

EMS / Supplies & Equipment – Steve Funkhouser

No report.

Turn-Out Gear – Steve Funkhouser

No report.

Uniforms – Steve Funkhouser

No report.

Insurance – George Flinn

F.A.V.C. Brown: I believe I copied you on the email also to follow up on the Resolution for the Fund Administrator for the JIF. I was in contact with them last week and one of the representatives is supposed to reach out to me to set the meeting for this month. I'll follow up to see if we can get that going.

Comm. Flinn: We have the Resolution for me to sign. I already signed that.

Adm.Cl.Evans: I think so.

Comm. Brown: For a new sign did you say?

Comm. Flinn: Yeah, it's already done.

Adm.Cl.Evans: For the JIF.

Comm. Brown: Oh, ok.

Sign – George Flinn

No report.

Water – George Flinn

Comm. Flinn: Chris, did the Water Co. ever get back to us?

F.A.V.C. Brown: No.

Comm. Flinn: Thank you.

Apparatus – Derek Grier

Comm. Grier: On a lot of it, I'm going to rely on the Chief's report, but I got some questions. One, the Safer Grant is yet concluded. Do you know if you plan to renew or reapply?

F.A.V.C. Brown: So I was contacted by a couple of the Chief's in town including a couple Districts who were not participants in the last grant period about applying again and renewing for the same thing. What fruit will be born from that tree is yet to be seen. I told them if that's the case we're back in again and look it up.

Comm. Grier: Also I see the Apparatus Shared Service Agreement?

F.A.V.C. Brown: I meant to leave that on your desk. I was approached by District 4. They are going through some apparatus move right now. They do have an agreement with Fire District 2 in regards to sharing apparatus in case of mechanical issues. Due to some complications, they approached us and asked if we'd be interested. I said send it over, it's not on the top 10 of my to do list of what we need to achieve right here. I think that to be good neighbors we could at least look at it and see what it entails.

Comm. Grier: And that involved fire apparatus being driven by personnel other than...

F.A.V.C. Brown: Yes.

Comm. Grier: And we're looking at March is the projected shipping date for the boom.

Comm. Brown: Alright.

Comm. Grier: Which presents a problem with the air bag system that we were looking at getting repaired at the same time. Do you know if that hole has increased or is getting worse?

F.A.V.C. Brown: I couldn't give you a range on it.

Comm. Grier: I know that the Chief has reached out to another repair center for a different quote on getting that repaired, we're waiting on an answer for that. But we may have to look and repair the airbag system.

Comm. Brown: Just for clarity, we're talking about this Chief?

Comm. Grier: Correct. He's the only Chief I know at this point.

Comm. Brown: No, because there's stuff that's flying over from the last and we just had a conversation about that, so we should be clear who we're talking about. And again, not correcting anybody here, but just for my own brain. So how long will the Squad be out of service for the parts?

Comm. Grier: They're looking for the boom in March, so we may be a few weeks into March.

Apparatus – continued

Comm. Brown: OK. And I'm only asking that question because in my mind, that follows on to the last thing about the Shared Services Agreement on apparatus. I don't think...

F.A.V.C. Brown: They were advised both their Chief and the Commissioner who I spoke with were advised that my piece is going to be out of service for anywhere from two to four weeks in the near future. All the more reason why we review that process for the future.

Comm. Brown: Did they provide any information on how we are reimbursed for the use of that?

F.A.V.C. Brown: It's contained in the agreement I believe.

Comm. Brown: OK. So if you want to...Carlamere's probably approved the one that's in place, but he may not have been, so when we go back to him the Board said the first step would be to review the agreement, if they want to send us a draft copy we'll start reviewing it, and I'm sure there's going to be a lot of discussion about that.

F.A.V.C. Brown: No doubt. Infancy stage...

Comm. Brown: Alright, I want to make sure Dave's good.

Fire Department Equipment – Derek Grier

No report.

Fire Department Operations – Derek Grier

No report.

Training – Derek Grier

No report.

Fire Administrator/Volunteer Chief Report – Christopher Brown

F.A.V.C. Brown: It's been submitted. I apologize for being a little bit later than I would like it. It's also been distributed to the Officer's. The goal is also for you who do Slack is putting out the department so they can see what information is given by the Board. One of the things I want to thank again about, just a couple highlights to report is those emails that are absolutely influential. As trivial as it seems in trying to make the transition in the Fire Official's office, it was one of the pieces of information the Division of Fire Safety was requesting.

Comm. Grier: (inaudible)

F.A.V.C. Brown: At some point down the line, maybe. But right now I believe there is a total of 8 accounts.

Comm. Brown: Well, I got 8 just to get us started. They jacked the price up, it's now \$8.50 pp per month, and I'm going to go back to them once we get to a certain point, it's a lot easier to trim things out than it is to get started. They're just very difficult to do business with, but my intent was that we would eventually have all the firefighters here at least on the GTFD6 system. There are a lot of products that they provide for that service. Even I who likes to think...it's a waste. It's a waste of resources. So it was a couple dollars a week for an email account, now it's up to \$8.50 for email and stuff we'll never use. So I have to negotiate that. But yes, the idea is we're supposed to by law have everybody here on the same email and at least we're moving towards that. We have some additional accounts right now, but they sent us a quote for 8 and gave us one license. So as soon as I make sure we have the other seven, then we can divvy those up. But I don't think we should be giving them out to people that only need email.

F.A.V.C. Brown: Yeah, I think that the precedence would be mostly personnel who would have justifiable reasons to communicate outside the agency. Most of our internal communications are handled via Slack for our own personnel, and that would kind of be what would set the precedence of who would need those next in line for external communication.

Comm. Brown: And to answer your question, I don't know if we did. If there's a need, they'll get it. Now that we've got it, we just have to go in and say 8 to 9.

F.A.V.C. Brown: All the way in the back of the room, everybody here actually knows him, our Fire Official James Gordon, Sr. is in the back of the room at the meeting tonight. All of his documents that were required to go up to the Division of Fire Safety have been submitted. They ended up calling me apologizing, but those of you who saw the form they sent down with different information levels was rather confusing. I try to be the type of measure twice cut once person, so I emailed them saying just to confirm that these are the only things you need. The email went unanswered. Dave called and got me information and then realized the error was on their side. That was all squared away and we're good there. The Fire Official completed the 2022 end of year reporting on Monday and his email has been distributed as well as his cell phone number, thank you to the District for taking care of that, for

Fire Administrator/Volunteer Chief Report – continued

amongst our own personnel as well as the Communications Center has his phone number. So should that be needed, it's been provided. One of the things, and I'd like to give credit where credit is due, ideas he already had especially for him being the new Fire Official and me being the new Chief, is that when he goes out and initiates new inspections, we're going to collaborate on a letter of introduction that's going to go with the information sheets that we'll be needing to better fill out our pre-plan information. So we're going to collaborate on that together and get that to those new businesses.

As far as apparatus, we've pretty much covered those things. I was able to handle and rectify an issue from 2022. Thank you again also the Board for the Communications line items. The batteries that we ordered are due hopefully this time next month. For the radios, unfortunately because of supply chain issues, that's what they're leaning on, and also us and everyone else in the County as well as many other Counties have switched to these digital trunk systems are going through the same end of life consequences with their batteries. As soon as the 2023 budget is approved with the funds that are in there we're going to make an additional order because we're down to only a handful of spare batteries. Also the new pagers are in the process of being distributed. They gave us a great idea. Ff. Blevins who initially approached me as well as Lt. Schoonmaker, Ff. Koneful for getting the process going, and Ff. Lemmerman. It's a way in which Comm. Funkhouser and I had a discussion about why we were going to switch to new pagers initially, supported the initiative, and it's a way in which aside from getting newer technology into people's hands, I think we'll really help enhance our response which in our list of priorities that's what we need to be most concerned about responding, preparing to respond and then worry about everything else later.

Everything else was in there. Training requests have all been submitted, and that's it. Contacted the vendor from the Key Fob system, that's in process. One other thing too, it was discussed at the staff meeting, I didn't get a chance to review the final draft of it with edits. It was that welcome pack that we pointed out. It was Comm. Robinson eluded to earlier...I actually thought for a minute the fire that Blenheim had that night we were going to end up with a move up company here. But the key box is in and will hopefully be mounted next week and we'll have a welcome packet ready to go for the move up company to come to our station. Something people remember and it will make them more eager to come out to cover.

Comm. Robinson: Under Apparatus, seeking permission from the Board with Gloucester Township Public Works. I think it's a great idea....

F.A.V.C. Brown: Yes. Years ago it had been brought up as a point of discussion and we did not pursue that. Now that it's been in effect with multiple departments in the area, all the feedback I've gotten from the end user and consumer is all very positive. The labor rate on very quick estimates so please don't hold me to this, but the hourly labor rate is about half of what we're paying if that, and way before specialty services on certain apparatus, obviously we would want to talk to somebody from the manufacturer for it, but for general PM's, if it's something we could save 20-50% of apparatus maintenance cost by going through that. It also helps a lot too because right now when it's time for the Squad to get the boom fixed, we need to schedule it around having personnel here to either drive it there or have it transported there and back. Whereas one of the advantages of Public Works is it's a straight run up the street. God forbid there is an issue with a truck that we kind of had to take our time getting somewhere instead of taking it all the way up 295 and the Turnpike, it's up the road on the left hand side. So I'm not committed to it in anyway. It was something that a number of persons approached me about as an idea, and based on the positive feedback, again to investigate it and look at it and go from there. But I didn't want to do it since the decision previously kind of seemed strongly against doing that, I didn't want to go that way without the Board's blessing.

Comm. Flinn: One more thing Chris, the Fire Official's office. Is he going to be granted a little more time to get some businesses that are not registered registered, because it's going to take him some time to get that done.

F.A.V.C. Brown: Aside from that, we're all learning the new recording system together and there's information we want to make sure that's in there...phone numbers, emergency contacts that we've been working on building up as well as making sure we have everything in the new system that needs to be there. The initial plan was, and I don't want to speak too much for him, but everyday whether I catch him here or not, he's been incredible about placing a follow up phone call on what he was able to do that day. The original plan was to hit the ground running with inspections on our businesses probably within this week or next, but because of some of the ground work that needs to be laid in the reporting system and the mechanics of how it works, that's just not going to be possible. I have all the full confidence that he'll be complete what needs to be done before the end of the year, but as far as actually getting into a lot of the businesses, we'll have a little bit of time on that to make sure we're good on our internal processes. And with that too, I have not spoken to both of them together. The Clerk and I have had

Fire Administrator/Volunteer Chief Report – continued

numerous conversations on the billing process. The fact that generally speaking checks will come in for businesses. There's nothing tabulated in Accounts Receivable or anything in the accounting software to marry that check against, so unless there's a conversation that occurs between the Clerk and the Fire Official, we don't know if we're receiving the right amount, how long, when, if it was this year's payment, last year's payment, there's nothing there. We want to rectify those processes to make sure it's easy to report upon to know who hasn't paid, who owes, so and so.

Comm. Flinn: He should be billing once a year, right...or the Clerk will bill.

Comm. Brown: But the Clerk can't bill if the information isn't in the system.

Comm. Flinn: Right, but I think your software should have that billing right? They have that software in there correct, for Non-Life Hazards.

F.A.V.C. Brown: I couldn't tell you that for sure.

Comm. Flinn: Jimmy!

F.O. Gordon: I could tell you that the Chief and I speak daily or every other day like he's mentioned. Mr. Brown noted that Microsoft laid off 10,000 employees. Guess who designed the new system from the State that they want to roll out as soon as they finish up RIMS and close that out. RIMS is the system the State is presently using. When all year-end reports are finished that system will go off line and then there will be new training for the new system. From my understanding it's designed by Microsoft, I believe. My goal is to get everything done. I'd like to use November and early December to clean up. That may happen in 24. I'll probably be still doing a good portion of inspections in November and December this year only because the Chief already mentioned getting the system up and feeding it properly given all that information. Mike obviously is not here, Chief Brezee he said to me a couple times I'm here to help, but it is going to be a learning process for everybody as far as billing and stuff. Chief Brown and I have talked about it. An introduction letter, I'd like to really get with this to introduce Chief Brown, myself, the Commission to who we are. We need all the residents and we need all the businesses, we need to support them for them to be here for us. With that being said at this point and time, thank you for giving me the opportunity too to represent the Board and the residents of District 6. And if there is anything outside of that office that I'm in that I could assist with, if I could take care of it, I'd have no problem. The overwhelming amount of support that I've gotten not only from the Board but every member I've run into and welcomed me here is astonishing. To the other situation I'm presently in, it's astonishing, and I absolutely appreciate it very much.

Comm. Brown: I know it's your first month in the role and it's not fair to put pressure this much, but next month maybe we will. And I'm just wondering, I'm picking up a lot of information from other Commissioners and what not, and let's get the elephant in the room out on the table, that there's a lot that has not been done in recent time.

Comm. Flinn: We have quite a few businesses that are not registered, so we don't even know they exist, not to mention the NLH fees we've been losing for the last 25 years. That's my concern to get our fees on schedule.

Comm. Brown: I mention that because we want to see you be successful.

F.O. Gordon: I appreciate that.

Comm. Brown: And I would like to know as soon as you are confident that you can give us a review about whether or not one person can do this job this year. I know in subsequent years after you go straightening everything out...

F.O. Gordon: This year, as part-time I could give you the answer. No, I would think you need a part-time inspector if you're asking me truly. You could always appoint them as needed, but take care of that ahead of the game in case he is needed.

Comm. Brown: You know you were reading my mind.

F.O. Gordon: To avoid that and have that done, because a lot of the computer work Chief Brown and I are going to bounce off each other, and more NLH to start with, and that would be entirely up to the Board if you want to do that. I don't know how everything works up here. I've got a lot of paperwork to read, maybe we'll speak about that a little more outside of the meeting and bring something back more solid next month.

Comm. Flinn: Hit the Administrator with it, he'll decide and let us know.

Comm. Brown: But here's how I'm reading it right now. There's an awful lot of catch up to be done.

F.O. Gordon: Correct.

Comm. Brown: OK. We have you a part time FM, we have a Clerk who's got other duties as well. She's not just the Fire Official's Clerk.

F.O. Gordon: Absolutely, I 100% agree with you.

Fire Administrator/Volunteer Chief Report – continued

Comm. Brown: OK, so I want to sit here if I'm re-elected and say you know what, the mound was enormous and we got it done, rather than we just couldn't figure out a way to get it done. The way to figure out how to fix this problem in my opinion is this month, meaning come back to the Board next month and say I want this, this and this in order to get back on schedule. And that's really the Administrator's job, but sometimes things get said around here like I'm picking on somebody or I'm unhappy. We went bare-bones in that area for years. I don't know the rules as well as other people do, and I've been told and you just confirmed that there's a lot of loose ends out on the table. We're trying to get the new regime which is the Administrator in front of us and you the Fire Marshal in a position where you can succeed, and it doesn't feel that way right now. And we're not here to put you in a position where we're all going to look around the room and know you're going to fail, because that's not the way...

F.O. Gordon: I appreciate that.

Comm. Brown: And like I say, it's not fair 12 days or whatever it is into your tour, but I think I would say no later than the March meeting you should give us an assessment of what you think you're going to get done and what resources you need to make this year a good year.

F.O. Gordon: And I do apologize, I will not make every meeting because my schedule rotates, but the Chief will have some type of...

Comm. Brown: That's why I just said, you may not be available next month, but March. I wanted everybody to realize that this isn't something that's just going to happen, because we're all nice people. There's an enormous amount of work from what I'm picking up that has to be done. The Board's role is to make sure those resources are made available to get the job done, that's the way I understand it.

F.O. Gordon: I appreciate it.

Comm. Flinn: And I believe Chris, we have someone on staff who does our minutes who's used to doing that billing in another town, if you wanted to reach out.

F.A.V.C. Brown: I think a couple of us can figure out a plan for the March meeting.

Comm. Brown: But again, the way I'm looking at the landscape is, we've got a new Administrator, new Chief, new software which is always a setup for failure, and a program that all of us are questioning how good it is for those of us that are in the business. Microsoft laying off 10,000 people, of which probably 8,000 of those are outside the US which is where that software program is written, so good luck with getting any graphic support for that. And the landscape is not good right now, plus we've gone years here from Comm. Flinn's statement that we're not collecting all the money we're supposed to. And sometimes we go around counting paperclips and there's fortunes in front of us that can be had with good planning and management. I really, really want to see you do well Jim.

F.O. Gordon: And my goal is to make it successful. The way I've been receiving things from you personally and the Board and the Chief and the members of this department, we're going to have to mess up real bad to make it fail. I just think it's positive all the way around.

Comm. Brown: Well there's a history where we've proven that we can make it bad, so I just don't want to repeat it, you know? Alright, anything else Chief?

F.A.V.C. Brown: No sir.

Solicitor – David Carlamere

Solicitor Carlamere is excused.

Resolutions – Renee Evans

Adm.Cl.Evans: We have one Resolution to pass tonight **R – 01 – 23**, and it's the Resolution for the procedures to Adopt the budget, and at the next meeting we'll adopt the budget.

Comm. Brown: Alright, so the Public is here and I think they should understand why we're having a Special Meeting on Saturday. When we met for the first reading of the budget, we didn't budget all the things we were allowed to under the cap. I have been concerned, as are the other Commissioners, that this roof project is enormous, and leaving it in the hands with the company that doesn't want to follow up with us is the beginning of bad things for failure. So we go after those things when we first see them, not months down the road. So the money that we did not spend this year that we could've if we were not so thrifty is, there is \$71,000 in there. And the meeting on Saturday is to approve that if we get to the point where we need someone as a project manager that we can hire those skills temporarily, it's not a permanent position. None of the Commissioners here have either the time or the experience to do that. But the only time we can get this in is right now. If we don't meet on Saturday and get the budget revised and get it in the second reading, we won't have those funds. The roof could

Resolutions – continued

have a 25 foot hole in it, and it's tough luck. You have to get together to approve some other plan. I want a plan so if we need it we have it, or don't need it we're not going to spend it and it goes back into our funds for subsequent years. It's the way the process is. For those of you that know, Comm. Funkhouser has been working just getting us to this point for at least a year, and I know it's longer because I looked back when this whole thing started. It's your taxes not at work. The process is insane. So we're trying to get ahead of that just in case. So that \$71,000 would be to hire part time project manager who has experience with roofing and can say no, they're not doing it right...they're not doing it the way they said they were going to do it. I just had so many bad experiences in this Township and in public in general and a subsequent one went on the following year. And for those of you that have not been up on the roof, this is not one roof, this is 8 roofs because of the way it was built. So that's what the Saturday meeting is to approve to the budget to put that reserve in there and again, we're not going to spend it unless we absolutely need to. But if we need to, we can get somebody in here as fast as we can find them, otherwise you couldn't do it till next year. The roofing project would have to be put off again. So I don't want to do that.

Motion made by Comm. Funkhouser, seconded by Comm. Robinson for the Resolution. Roll call vote, all yes.

Old Business – George Brown

1) Computer Room/Officer's Room project –

Comm. Brown: The office project is coming along?

F.A.V.C. Brown: Nearing completion. The woods been stained, basically a clear coat assembly and it's good to go.

2) Apparatus boom leak – update –

Comm. Brown: Comm. Grier talked about the apparatus boom leak.

3) Roof – update –

Comm. Brown: I've beat the roof project to death at this point, so enough said on that for tonight.

4) New phone system for the building

Comm. Brown: Nothing on the wireless in the building yet. One thing I did find out, and this is for those of you who maybe don't know this, but WIFI doesn't work if you have a microwave in the room, just telling you. So that's the complication of that project.

5) 2023 Budget –

Comm. Brown: The 2023 budget will be put to bed on Saturday. I just wanted to say, those things that you know you're going to need even though we don't have the approved budget yet but are critical to the operation, you should just go ahead and order those, we're not going to get them...I wouldn't wait two or three weeks that matters or what not. Just order them now, we know we're not going to get them for a month or two. The budget will be approved by then and we'll explain it if anybody wants to question.

Comm. Brown: Clerk, the Election is coming up next month. Any comments on that?

Adm.Cl.Evans: No, just the petitions are due by tomorrow.

New Business – George Brown

Comm. Brown: Does anybody have New Business? (hearing none)

Closed Session – George Brown

n/a

Public Portion – George Brown

Comm. Brown: If you have anything to say, stand, state your name and address to address the Board.

Ff. Stott: Ff. Stott, Fire District 6. Just a question to the Board, and this is for everybody's general knowledge.

We talked about the transition of the new regiment and what have you as it pertains to training and training requests. It was done a little bit different prior, and just trying to get a strong hold and a process of how it's going to operate now. As an individual tonight, I put in a request two weeks ago for a class for a class that started

Public Portion – continued

tonight given once, a college course. Previously it would be a week or 10 days where I would know one way or the other. Just wondering after communication with Chief Brown as well as Administrator Brown, there isn't a process in place. But just for our general knowledge, should we anticipate just, hey get it in wherever that is as soon as possible before the monthly meeting so that those who are approved or denied, or what is that process just so we have a general knowledge so we're not in a situation that I'm in...I'm hoping to have approval for a class, but I'm literally missing the first class which is this evening. Thank you.

Comm. Robinson: If we can please write down the definition of class, first of all. What do you mean by class?

Ff. Stott: It's a college course offered by Camden County College, this specific one.

Comm. Robinson: So the training request would be submitted through regular training. A college course is a college course which is not contractually covered. It was not in the career staff contract to cover college reimbursement. And/or is anything to cover the hours, the shift coverage etc., contractual item, it's not there. So the Board can't cover it.

Ff. Stott: I was looking for an answer for mine specifically what works.

Comm. Robinson: Well we can't cover a college course again, it's not contractually covered. College reimbursement has to be in the contract, so that could be addressed in the future for sure. But as far as training requests...would you like to address it or do you want me to just handle it?

Comm. Grier: Use the request form that's filled out and submitted to the Administrator/Chief. To be approved, he submits it to Training, myself, the Director of Training for approval. If it's a last minute request there's a way around that as well through email and/or voice communication for approval. Then it gets approved and then submitted back to you as the requestor.

Ff. Stott: Is that a 14 day, 30 day kind of thing?

Comm. Robinson: To be honest with you, we were never getting training requests that we were supposed to get. The Training Commissioner is supposed to receive and sign off on. First of all, they go to the Chief, the Chief signs off, it goes to the Training Commissioner, goes to the Personnel Commissioner. We have not seen this in ages. Several in the last three weeks have been done very expeditiously to try to catch up and to put things in the proper order. Like Comm. Grier said, via email, via phone call, via a text hey I shot you an email, which we appreciate because we're all not locked into our email 24/7. I don't leave my alerts on or they would go off nonstop, and again most of us have several email accounts. So the Chief, Administrator whatever, under his title, shoots it to us, boom, got it, done. And we'll shoot back, I'm good, I'm good. Then we'll stop by and sign the paper. That was the for emergent, that was for catch up stuff. For stuff that's planned ahead...

F.A.V.C. Brown: We had two members, one of whom is here tonight, the class was cancelled. It was kind of a late push for the Academy to get it out, which is also neither here nor there, but in those requests I either receive a request for additional information or a yes or no, and all yes's so far. In that case the paperwork is left with Comm. Grier for a retroactive signature based on that initial approval. In fact, once again get paperwork in order, on the, I guess we can call it the Inspection desk in the Commission office, I found probably about a dozen training requests that were just sitting there, had only one signature on them. And I did it tonight with a lot of people, as I get them, we get a copy of them, Derek and I are going to make sure that anything that's approved or denied, we ensure they're kept on file in the District office, and the individual will get the written request. The form has never changed. You can actually look at the bottom of the form, I don't have one in front of me, but there's a place that says class in not approved, and all signatures and boxes are filled out. I don't want to jam anybody up, but to my knowledge the process hasn't changed. I'm finding out that's what the process is. The District sides that they want to collaborate with me to change the process, and as we saw in our Staff meeting, we can always have those discussions. But as long as that's what's at the bottom of the form, and that's my understanding of what it is that I need to do, which is to forward those forms to those two Commissioners, I'm going to continue to do so. And to the men and women who serve our Department, rest assured, if I know we're under a short time table, I will go out of my way and send as many emails as necessary or start placing phone calls...we got it, we hear you, but a couple of us need to talk about it, that's vindication. Hopefully it will continue to be the case.

Ff. Stott: Thank you for that, and that cleared some things up but you mentioned about the career contract, but just for clarification purposes, and so that I or anyone else is looking for classes, there are classes that are fire related if you will and do qualify as college courses, and they are actually college courses. I'll give the most prominent one, and only because it was this class that I'm taking, but Inspector I and Inspector II. It's not just one weekend a month or what have you, and at the County, it's a college course. So is there a discrepancy between those courses that you made mention to, or if it is a college course that it's not covered? I'm just looking for clarification on that.

Public Portion – continued

Comm. Robinson: It has to be written in the contract to be covered.

F.A.V.C. Brown: I think one of the things Ff. Stott is bringing to light is that, so for instance, if somebody in the District were to elect, and tying back into our previous conversation with the Fire Official, if we were deciding we wanted additional Inspectors, those classes are offered through the College as a college-styled class in order to get that. It's specific through the job title, and I think that's the key there...

Ff. Stott: And we're just not limited to, and just to give four other examples would be Hazmat, Hazmat Technician, as well as Fire Officer I...

Comm. Brown: If I could interject, because I wanted to say something before you got up there. You know, I've heard conversations around here about Training that some people want. And I think that part of being successful is if you know what your position is, and you play that position as well as you can. We are not, and are never going to be in the Hazmat business, since you brought that up, so...

Ff. Stott: And I don't disagree.

Comm. Brown: But I'm just telling you, there are two personalities that sit up here. One is the lovable Fire Commissioner George Brown, then the other guy is a mean rotten taxpayer that says why are we wasting our money, OK. And I heard somebody say something about a \$10,000 course somewhere across the country this year for nothing that we do. We're not a travel agency. That's the mean George Brown guy, you can have all the classes that are making it better and safer for the mission that we have here, but we're not sending guys off so they can be firemen at airports, that's a separate thing. And in the past year we have done that, but a new regime is in, and I mention how important we are at this point to get our house in order, and we're just not going to spend money and time on that stuff. At least I'm only one vote. If you could convince the other four to send you to some dancing school in Las Vegas because that's what firefighters do, go right ahead.

Ff. Stott: There are some classes that are just a certification class, i.e. a large are search, a weekend kind of deal. But there are classes, EMS classes, Hazmat, Fire Officer I, Fire Officer II, they are college courses, but they are directly related, so I'm just looking for classification.

Comm. Robinson: But that may not be tonight, we have to go in and look at this.

Comm. Flinn: I think the problem is, now that the College runs the Fire Academy, so everything now becomes college accredited courses. It never was that way in the past. If you went to the Fire Academy you got a little certificate and you were certified in the County or State. Now it's a college-run facility, so maybe we got to look into what worked for here and what we need and don't need. I think that's where...when the college took it over, that's where all this gray area comes from.

F.A.V.C. Brown: To some degree, yes. The staff that teaches certain programs are different, even though they're titled the same, they're a different staff and have different reporting procedures.

Comm. Brown: Anything else from the Public? (hearing none)

Comm. Flinn: I make a motion to pass that Resolution for Saturday.

F.A.V.C. Brown: I thought we did that?

Adm.Cl.Evans: No, we did.

Comm. Flinn: It's voted on? OK.

Adjourn – George Brown

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

Roll call vote, all yes.

Comm. Brown: Thank you everyone, we're happy to see you here.