

Board of Fire Commissioners

Gloucester Township Fire District Six
1946 Williamstown Road
Erial, NJ 08081
(856) 435-0700

Chairman	Vice Chairman	Treasurer	Secretary	Commissioner
George L. Brown	Brian Robinson	Steven M. Funkhouser	George W. Flinn	Derek Grier

Minutes of Regular Meeting July 27, 2023

Flag Salute

Call to Order

Public meeting call to order at 18:30 hours.

Sunshine Law - In accordance with the New Jersey Sunshine Law, section 5 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231 P.L. 1975, this meeting is open to the public. The public portion will follow the regular business of the Board. Notice of this meeting was posted on the Fire District bulletin board designed for that purpose.

Roll Call

GRIER	Absent (arrived 18:45 hours)
ROBINSON	Excused
FLINN	Present
FUNKHOUSER	Present
BROWN	Present

Also present: Chief Brown, Solicitor Carlamere, Administrative Clerk Evans.

Presentation of Minutes

*Motion made by **Comm. Flinn** , seconded by **Comm. Funkhouser** to approve the previous months minutes as they are available to the public upon request.*

Roll Call Vote

GRIER	n/a
ROBINSON	n/a
FLINN	Yes
FUNKHOUSER	Yes
BROWN	Yes

Correspondence

Adm.Cl.Evans said all have been distributed.

Treasurer's Report

Commissioner Funkhouser read the Treasurer's Report into the record:

William Penn General Account	\$2,809,722.69
William Penn Payroll Account	\$49,240.98
Expenditures July 27, 2023	\$148,648.04
Bills attached for approval	\$148,648.04

*Motion made by **Comm. Flinn** , seconded by **Comm. Funkhouser** to accept the Treasurer's Report as read and monthly bill list.*

ROLL CALL VOTE

GRIER	n/a
ROBINSON	n/a
FLINN	Yes
FUNKHOUSER	Yes
BROWN	Yes

COMMITTEE REPORTS

COMMISSIONER BROWN: Before I start the Committee Reports, we have a special guest.

Chief Brown said Xeniamarie Chambers here is the temporary Clerk and has already started as of this Monday. She's been trained on basic needs while the Adm. Clerk is on vacation. She was introduced to the Board and Solicitor.

(**Comm. Grier** just entered the meeting 18:45 hours)

Comm. Brown updated the Computer wireless project. The vendor who put in the wireless system was monitored and detected some sort of voltage problem in the building. We called Atlantic City Electric to check it out, they couldn't find anything. I spoke to Comm. Flinn who is an expert in all things electrical, and he said we have "dirty" electric. To find out is to monitor where Atlantic City Electric comes into the building and we're monitoring for a week. We needed an outside vendor because it required special equipment. They will be here on Wednesday, monitor the electric for the week and collect data then analyze the data and give us a report. The electric was a problem, then the wireless devices told us there was a problem. We can't move forward with the wireless and telephones till we solve that. It will take another 2-3 weeks to get to the bottom of that. I asked the Commissioners via email for a verbal approval and got OK's from the board, but need a resolution to use the vendor. The estimated cost for the work from Scalfo Electric is \$2,989.00 to do the temporary equipment and analyze the data.

Motion made by Comm. Flinn, seconded by Comm. Grier.

ROLL CALL VOTE

GRIER	Yes
ROBINSON	n/a
FLINN	Yes
FUNKHOUSER	Yes
BROWN	Yes

Comm. Brown said that's an update. The Computer services and the old task are still open and will get resolved once we get the building Electric resolved.

COMMISSIONER ROBINSON:

Comm. Brown asked if we have a report from Comm. Robinson? (hearing none)

COMMISSIONER FUNKHOUSER:

Comm. Funkhouser said he has a second quote for the generator repairs, also second quote for the door repairs. Both are close together price-wise. The difference for the doors is \$1,502 and for the generator was \$132.50 difference between the two companies. I recommend GenServe for the generator.

Comm. Brown said they are the vendor of record, correct?

Comm. Funkhouser said they have been servicing our unit.

Comm. Brown asked if they were the cheapest?

Comm. Funkhouser said no, by \$132.00.

Comm. Brown said we want to go with GenServe because they're the vendor of record and know the equipment, they have serviced it in the past.

Comm. Funkhouser said the total is \$5,592.50.

Comm. Brown said that's for repairs.

*Motion made by **Comm. Flinn**, seconded by **Comm. Grier** to approve.*

GRIER	Yes
ROBINSON	n/a
FLINN	Yes
FUNKHOUSER	Yes
BROWN	Yes

Comm. Funkhouser said for the quote on the doors, a company in Philadelphia gave me a quote for \$6,818.99 to repair the doors.

Comm. Brown asked if this was for the FOB's.

Comm. Funkhouser said it's for the repair of the doors.

Comm. Brown thought we approved the repair of the doors last month.

Comm. Funkhouser said he was asked to get a second quote because of the price. ABS quote is \$1,502 less that the quote from Philadelphia so I'm asking we approve Associated Building Specialists to repair the doors in the building. The total is \$4,893.00.

*Motion made by **Comm. Flinn**, seconded by **Comm. Grier** to approve the quote.*

GRIER	Yes
ROBINSON	n/a
FLINN	Yes
FUNKHOUSER	Yes
BROWN	Yes

Comm. Funkhouser said on the roof, Mr. Rogers was on vacation for several weeks. He said he wants to be the only one to handle because he knows the situation and will get started soon.

Sol. Carlamere asked on the information just received, can you provide copies of the generator and doors to the Clerk, and then email me those two plus this one so he can do a resolution.

Comm. Brown said he'd like to follow up on a conversation he had with Mr. Funkhouser on a very expensive article in the Philadelphia Inquirer about the current Firefighter gear across the country, not just here, and it's now proven to be a health hazard. I'm bringing it up now because I'll be on this every month as we go into the budget, we don't know when new gear will be available. He spoke to the Chief as well, but we're going to have to replace all of our gear and that will be a big number. We have to put

COMMISSIONER FUNKHOUSER, continued

money away to do that. I'll try to get a copy of the article to pass it around. It's been a study by the IAFF...Adam, you might be able to hunt it down through the Union or the Chief. Apparently there is some dispute on the part of the Federal Agencies, but I'm convinced based on what I've read and what we've heard about the foam issue and the fact the Philadelphia Firefighters have a significantly, significantly higher rate of cancer than the rest of the population. We need to save money for gear or get a Federal grant. But I want to be in a position with cash in hand and say to a vendor we've got our money already and get to the head of the line if we can. Do you agree with that? The article is very, very compelling it's a major problem to get fixed and I want us as a District to be pro-active on this. Let's keep that on our radar.

COMMISSIONER FLINN:

Comm. Flinn has nothing to report.

COMMISSIONER GRIER:

Comm. Grier refers to the Chief's Report. We do have the Squad back in service. There was an unexpected repair done at the factory. It's back and I haven't heard anything negative from the Officer's. The crew had released the weight in the rear, unloaded much of the equipment with the Chief's appointment of that. It's back in service and ready to go and will be monitored again next month.

Chief Brown said there are additional items that may come off...the hydraulic tools are heavy and that he believes he sent the Commission a spread sheet that had the weights on it and info on other items.

Comm. Brown asked how much did you find it was overweight?

Chief Brown said it was approximately 1,060 pounds overweight in the rear axle. We've removed a little over 1,400 pounds of equipment at this time, and a few more items will come off as well.

Comm. Brown said he has a copy of the bill and scrutinized the bill and wants to know why they charged us almost \$1,300 to repair wiring on the Squad. Does anybody know why?

Comm. Grier said the boom control went into their factory to be tested. First thought it was a remote issue, still wasn't working. Found out the wiring was frayed inside and had to replace it.

Comm. Brown said on the bill it says failed wiring. To me wiring doesn't fail by itself. In the end we are paying \$1,300 for failed wiring which is over and above the labor to fix the boom at \$3,900. We agreed to pay the labor for the boom repair. I'm willing to pay that right now but would like to dispute the \$1,300 that seems to be a question in my mind, just explain it to me.

Chief Brown said it's in where the gear box is.

Comm. Funkhouser thought it may have been in the booms location.

Comm. Brown said he thinks for \$1,300 they owe us an explanation.

Comm. Grier said he did get on them about not informing us of that, and just showing up on the bill.

Comm. Brown said they've lost credibility with me and with you Comm. Grier? **Comm. Grier** said yes.

Comm. Brown said there are two Commissioners questioning credibility and something like a wiring harness or wiring...wiring doesn't fail. You need to properly describe what the \$1,300 was for, or we're paying for something that was a factory defect just like the boom was. I'll have the Solicitor review.

Chief Brown said there was a lack of specificity on the labor hours. The original invoice we received from Campbell's, all they had was gross numbers for the labor.

Comm. Grier said they changed their internal policy on that and all bills will look like ours.

Comm. Brown said they billed us for a gross number and not a breakdown.

Chief Brown said initially we received the revised invoice with the breakdown of the hourly rate.

Comm. Brown asked if you were OK with that?

Chief Brown said he has no means of judging if that's appropriate.

Comm. Grier said he'd like to publicly congratulate Ff. Zizzamia for stepping up to the plate and taking additional training. That's it.

Comm. Brown said good job. Anything else Comm. Grier?

FIRE CHIEF/ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

Chief Brown said his report has been submitted along with policies and compliance directives, and revised and reviewed the fitness area policy. There is one policy that might warrant Closed Session because it's potentially a personnel issue, that's at the Board's discretion.

Chief Brown discussed the chemicals in protective firefighter equipment which has been found to be cancer causing and is also found in firefighter foam. We have at least 45 gallons in the basement along with 30 additional gallons on board the Squad. These foams are currently allowed to be utilized from the Div. of Fire Safety EPA NJ only for incidents. We do have training foam that does not have these chemicals which we have utilized in training. If we do maintain any type of Class B foam that we start transitioning to compliant foam that now is required by the Div. of Fire Safety as well as EPA. I've issued guidance to the Department that any time that foam is utilized on incident, they need to, per State regulations get a case number. The Division has flip flopped on these issues, there was guidance issued 6 months ago regarding the foam which was full stop, don't use it. Then it was OK, if you have to use it, use it. The concern was for areas much greater than we would operate on in our initial phases. I will consult with Officers in the department about our long term thoughts, about maintaining foam on the apparatus, but have approximately 35 gallons which is not great to use with PFAS, a concern of carcinogens and they're in the apparatus. As part of the disposal of the surplus in the basement, have that removed from the apparatus to be replaced with the better foam on the apparatus. The apparatus replacement plan incorporates all for consideration.

In regards to the PPE, the real crux is the PFAS's inside the PPE are a treatment the NFPA recommended as part of their standard for water repellency in the moisture barrier of the PPE. The NFPA recommends a standard of 10 year service life. There are people from gear manufacturers sitting on technical committee recommending a 10 year replacement with no real evidence to back it up.

Comm. Brown said and they are making financial contributions to the study.

Chief Brown said yes and profiting off of that rotation of 10 year PPE, as well as making financial contributions to the University studying it. I at the very least have some questions, not accusing directly, but I think it's something that should be considered. Knowing what we know now about the potential dangers of PFAS's inside the PPE, and we want to move away from gear that has these chemicals in them, we have personnel that would be scheduled to receive new PPE this year and next year based upon and solely based upon the Districts resolution they passed for a 10 year service life in gear for our personnel. This gear otherwise will move into at least bi-annual inspections of the gear if there is no other indications of failure, soiling etc. It bears some consideration that based upon these scientific findings of chemicals in the gear, the Board at least consider removing the blanket 10 year replacement rule. In those cases now, if something is otherwise fitting, just because it's 10 years old, you don't throw it out. We'll put the District in a financial position where we might be buying a couple sets of gear this year or next year that may contain these chemicals just to get rid of it another year or two down the line.

Comm. Brown said OK, when that comes up just remind the Board.

Comm. Grier asked if we're awaiting for gear to arrive now?

Chief Brown said I reached one vendor and utilized contacts for a vendor a few Counties away. The local vendor has not returned any phone calls. I've made contact with that individual to look at their gear. They do have a non PFAS version of the PPE available. I haven't had that conversation with the local vendor.

Comm. Brown said he thinks first of all the safety concerns. We've done a good job anticipating cost and for going for things we'd like to have. Now is the time to think about that. Next month is August and September starts the budget process, so keep it in the forefront of what we're doing.

SOLICITOR REPORT

Sol. Carlamere has nothing to report.

RESOLUTIONS

Adm. Cl. Evans has none at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

Comm. Brown said one Old Business item. He received a call yesterday from the Div. of Fire Safety, Duane Breeden will be paying us a visit to do an Audit on our Fire Official Safety. This was supposed to have happened in May. I first was contacted in April and it slid because of the new software. He's going to send us the documents they want us to review before they get here. I'll send an email after the meeting, I just wanted the Board's concurrence to do that. There are some items on there we need a recommendation for. The one on my mind among others is for somebody who has paid their annual fee and did not get inspected, what should be done for those individuals. And I'm on the record to say I'm one of them. I paid my fee two years in a row and did not get inspected. He said normally what happens is the Board makes a recommendation not to refund the money but to give them a credit equal to the dollars that they paid to use against the next years' inspection which is fine by me. I think there a number of people in the District who paid their bill and didn't get the service and that concerns me. So he's going to help us straighten that out and a few other things. That's it.

Comm. Funkhouser said a few meetings ago we discussed removing the electric where we put Christmas lights along the roof...are we going to get that done?

Chief Brown said during the meeting we had with CES, it will be removed. Contact an electrician for lights on the island out front not operating. There will be no more Christmas lights hanging off the new roof, we don't need to be walking up there.

Comm. Funkhouser said we'll talk after the meeting.

Comm. Brown asked Comm. Flinn why we get 3 electric bills now?

Comm. Flinn said we have the building, the pole out front that runs the sign and one parking lot light, and the other one is the parking lot lights which Atlantic City Electric owns and we're renting them. That's why we get three bills.

NEW BUSINESS

No report.

CLOSED SESSION

*Motion made by **Comm. Funkhouser**, seconded by **Comm. Flinn** to enter Closed Session at 19:06pm to discuss a Personnel Policy. **CS – 107** Time Off Policy Obligated Under State Statute for Part Timers.*

ROLL CALL VOTE

GRIER	Yes
ROBINSON	n/a
FLINN	Yes
FUNKHOUSER	Yes
BROWN	Yes

RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION-- 19:11 HOURS

Comm. Brown said to let the record show that the Board has gone back into Open Session at 7:11pm.

ROLL CALL OF COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

GRIER	Yes
ROBINSON	n/a
FLINN	Yes
FUNKHOUSER	Yes
BROWN	Yes

PUBLIC COMMENT

Fire Official Gordon said the first thing is to acknowledge the Chief and all the members who attended or acknowledged the passing of my Mother this past week ago. It was a great turn out at her viewing and I greatly appreciate the support from all the members.

Comm. Brown said our condolences from the Board too.

Fire Official Gordon said thank you. Are you going to set up a date when Duane calls you, because I'd like to be around when he does that? **Chief Brown** has my schedule

Comm. Brown said I'm going to send him an email instructing him to forward to us instructions on the documents he wants us to review, and copies of the blank documents so we make sure we have them. It will say I'm coming in here to look at these things, no surprises. So we'll see what he's interested in.

Fire Official Gordon said sometimes they'll do an audit, take 5 businesses, Life Hazards...

Comm. Brown said he's going to tell us what he's going to look at, no surprises, no sneak attacks, no nothing.

Fire Official Gordon said we set up a lot of the billing, and the first billing went out and when I say we, Renee took care of that and has been a phenomenal help. I probably wouldn't be as far as I am right now. I absolutely appreciate her help and have to acknowledge that here.

Comm. Brown said she has elevated the District on a number of topics I would say.

Fire Official Gordon said she deserves the credit. You acknowledge people for the work they do.

We're doing a community event on August 6th for a faith based church on Liberty Place. I'll be there and well as the Chief and possibly having an Engine there. Probably 2-3 hours, a community event. The more community events we do, the more the community supports us.

ADJOURN

*Motion by **Comm. Flinn**, seconded by **Comm. Grier** to adjourn meeting at 19:14 hours.*

ROLL CALL VOTE

GRIER	Yes
ROBINSON	n/a
FLINN	Yes
FUNKHOUSER	Yes
BROWN	Yes