

The Board of Fire Commissioners, Gloucester Township Fire District # 4 was held a Regular Meeting on 10/18/2023. The meeting was held at Blackwood Fire Company, 14 W. Central Avenue, Blackwood, NJ 08012. This meeting has been properly advertised according to the State of New Jersey Sunshine Laws.

COMMISSIONERS: D. Vannoni, M. Cristella, J. Vannoni, M. Jones, J. McCann

ATTENDEES: Captain Riess, FM Urso, FAM Prendergast

Motion by Commissioner McCann, second by Commissioner Jones to approve the Regular Meeting minutes of 9/20/2023. All in favor, motion carries.

Motion by Commissioner Jones, second by Commissioner McCann to approve the Budget Meeting minutes of 10/4/2023. All in favor, motion carries.

Commissioner J. Vannoni thanked all the volunteers who helped to get the utility ready, and took it to the Wildwood Parade. Good Job!!

Commissioner Jones said the utility is completed. He went on to say the tower ladder is still not sold. According to the FAM, the Durango needs to be sold, it has outlasted its time. The 2023 gear order is for Urso and Ricciardelli, and the 2022 gear order boots will be replaced.

Commissioner McCann reported that all the financial documents from BFC have been received, and after speaking to the Treasurer of BFC, everything seems to be ok at this time.

CLERK'S REPORT: None

TREASURER'S REPORT: Motion by Commissioner McCann, second by Commissioner J. Vannoni to approve the October bills in the amount of \$71,550.54. All in favor, motion carries. He reminded the Board about the profit and loss, and the upcoming Budget Meetings.

FIRE OFFICIAL: Attached

CHIEFS REPORT: Chief Cipriano reported the Utility is back, with the new stripping, and looks great. The tower Ladder is still for sale, and he spoke to Adirondack, and he feels as though it should run for another month, due to the fact it took them one month to get it on the web site. He said they mentioned if the Board would like to re-list it, reduce the price, they would take 5% commission instead of the original 10% commission.

PRESIDENTS REPORT: None

CAPTAINS REPORT: None

Motion by Commissioner Jones, second by Commissioner J. Vannoni to accept all reports as read. All in favor, motion carries.

OLD BUSINESS:

Commissioner J. Vannoni recommended to the Board that they stay with the State Healthcare and Dental Plans, due to the fact that Connor Strong could not provide a benefit statement for the dental coverage. He said he did not trust them, and he will wait to see how District # 2 makes out with them in 2024.

Motion by Commissioner J. Vannoni, second by Commissioner McCann to stay with the NJ State Healthcare and Dental Plan for the year 2024. All in favor, motion carries.

Commissioner J. Vannoni reported that the contract for Blackwood Fire Company has been reviewed by Solicitor Carlamere, and he asked it be put on the agenda for the November Workshop. He commended FF Bob Sambucco for being inducted into the Citizens Hall of Fame, congratulations to him.

Commissioner J. Vannoni said the contract for BFC is being reviewed by Solicitor Carlamere, and he will put it on the agenda for the Workshop.

The meeting room was inspected, and is now officially a training room. Thank you, Captain Reiss for doing most of the work on that.

Commissioner D. Vannoni asked Operation Commissioner Jones what is his plan for the Tower Ladder?

Commissioner Jones said he has no plan, and asked the Board what direction they want to go.

The Chief said he will reach out to Adirondack, and also the guy who bid \$17,900.00 on GOV Deals to see where he stands.

Commissioner D. Vannoni asked if anyone had driven it to the scrap yard to see what it would be worth to scrap it.

FM Urso, said being mixed metal about \$10.00 per pound.

Commissioner D. Vannoni said so the \$17,900.00 would defiantly be more.

NEW BUSINESS:

The Administrative Clerk explained the GASB96 program to the Board, and it has been mandated by the State that all contracts for IT that are web based, must be included on the audit financial statements. It takes a special program, which Bowman has purchased, that will scan the contracts, and will tell them if that particular contract needs to be included.

Motion by Commissioner J. Vannoni, second by Commissioner Jones to contract with Bowman to provide the service for the GASB96. All in favor, motion carries.

Commissioner D. Vannoni has a matter for closed session.

Motion by Commissioner J. Vannoni, second by Commissioner Cristella to advertise the 2024 Regular Meetings on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, and the Workshop Meeting on the 1st Wednesday of the month. All in favor, motion carries.

Motion by Commissioner McCann, second by Commissioner J. Vannoni to old the End of Year Meeting on Thursday 12/28/2023. All in favor, motion carries.

Motion by Commissioner Jones, second by Commissioner Cristella to hold the First Reading of the Budget, prior to the Workshop at 7:00 PM, prior to the Workshop on December 6, 2023. All in favor, motion carries.

Motion by Commissioner Jones, second by Commissioner Cristella to pass a Compensation Resolution for the year 2024, for the Commissioners, with the salaries remaining the same as 2023. All in favor, motion carries.

ROLL CALL: D. Vannoni-yes, M. Cristella-yes, J. Vannoni-yes, M. Jones-yes, J. McCann-yes.

GOOD & WELFARE: None

COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR:

IAFF Local 3249 President Kemery thanked Commissioner J. Vannoni, and the Board for staying with the State Healthcare and Dental, and realizes they tried to consider the taxpayers as well as the employees in their decision. However, even though Connor Strong provided a letter saying the dental would be equal to or better than the current State Plan, they could not, or would not provide a benefit statement that would show exactly what their benefits were. On another note, he stated he just has gotten written confirmation from Camden City, who are covered under Connor Strong Healthcare, that their healthcare will increase by 24% in 2024.

Commissioner McCann wanted to go back to good and welfare:

He stated he and Commissioner J. Vannoni, along with District # 2 met with Fire District # 3 concerning the shared service agreement for 2024. He said District # 3 likes the program, but he came away from the meeting that if we want a 5% increase, they want us to prove it is costing us 5% more. He can understand that, but the fact of the matter is they are not even close to paying the full price for each call. He doesn't feel we should have to show them a 5% increase, when they are not close to the full price. He thinks District 3's Commissioner who attended the meeting will get their Board to increase the amount they are contributing. He asked, how many additional miles are we putting on the truck to answer their calls? Will we be replacing the truck 1 ½ years earlier because of it? He's glad they met, but he does not think they are going to be contributing their fair share.

Commissioner J. Vannoni stated he gave them the number we have for hiring a new employee in 2024, prior to Commissioner McCann entering the meeting. He likes the idea of a percentage, and he said if we ask for 11% and they offer 5%, he will walk away and not answer calls in District # 3. He said we have the right to say no. He said Commissioner McCann, and Bill Robb need to come up with numbers to show the increased cost from 2021 to 2022, and from 2022 to 2023.

Commissioner McCann said fuel is increasing, salaries are increasing, insurance is increasing, but they are not even close to the cost, so why do we have to show them the increase costs?

Commissioner D. Vannoni said while they should be responsible for the runs, they are not getting he in house cleaning, fire inspections etc. So, if 11% of runs are in their District, they are probably only responsible for 6% of the cost. It was his understanding, when we started this program, we were

working on getting them to eventually pay for a firefighter. He said we are not doing a good job getting close to that number.

Commissioner J. Vannoni said again, prior to Commissioner McCann coming into the meeting, he made the point that there are those of us who realize there are problems, and the ones that do not realize that will fail. He agrees with everyone, but this will have to be done next year, as they sort of agreed to a percentage increase this year.

Commissioner D. Vannoni brought up the topic of the Committee that was going to be formed with members of the commission, and members of Blackwood Fire Company, called Recruitment and Retention Committee, because of Blackwood Fire Company hemorrhaging, and what the Board and the Fire Company can do to support the recruitment and retention of the Fire Company. Commissioner J. Vannoni, and Commissioner Jones will represent the Board, and now we need representatives from BFC.

Commissioner Cristella asked if BFC has indicated they would like to participate?

Commissioner D. Vannoni said he does not know, but the Board will extend the olive branch. He went on to say, he knows the Board has been criticized and lambasted by the BFC, and he personally does not know why, when the Board has supported them. This will be their chance to discuss those concerns, and to let the Board know, how they can better support retention and recruitment for BFC.

Commissioner J. Vannoni asked the Chief to put up a survey monkey, asking about LOSAP, since that is part of our budget.

Motion by Commissioner J. Vannoni, second by Commissioner Cristella to form a retention and recruitment committee which will include 2 members of the Board and 2 representatives of Administrative and Operational of Blackwood Fire Company. The Board can vote on a chairman. All in favor, motion carries.

Motion by Commissioner McCann, second by Commissioner Cristella to appoint Commissioner J. Vannoni and Commissioner Jones to the recruitment and retention committee, with Commissioner McCann as an alternate. All in favor, motion carries.

IAFF President Kemery stated at the beginning of the year, you were going to have a Strategic Planning Committee, and it was going to start with District # 4, and then encompasses the other Districts. Now you are going in this direction, specifically for this purpose.

Commissioner J. Vannoni responded, and said at this time we are starting at this level this issue is the first to be discussed, and eventually will include other areas. There is stuff we need to handle at the volunteer level.

Commissioner D. Vannoni said he feels as though having a representative from the Union present at the volunteer meetings could prove to be detrimental. They have been invited to our Workshop to discuss this topic.

Commissioner J. Vannoni stated they first need to address the volunteer issue., and to provide firefighting services. Let's see if we can get that stabilized first.

IAFF President Kemery said this was given a 90-day time period, and the clock is ticking.

Motion by Commissioner J. Vannoni, second by Commissioner McCann to pass a resolution to go into closed session to discuss Personnel and the Audit. All in favor, motion carries.

ROLL CALL: D. Vannoni-yes, M. Cristella-yes, J. Vannoni-yes, M. Jones-yes, J. McCann-yes

Meeting called back to order.

ROLL CALL: D. Vannoni-here, M. Cristella-here, J. Vannoni-here, M. Jones-here, J. McCann-here

Commissioner D. Vannoni stated during closed session they discussed multiple personnel issues, which will remain in closed session at this time.

Also discussed was the use of blue lights, and Commissioner J. Vannoni will meet with the Chief to establish a training program for the correct use of blue lights, when responding to a call in Fire District # 4. Also, a list will be established of those members who are authorized to use them. A progressive disciplinary plan will also be established, for those in violation.

Motion by Commissioner McCann, second by Commissioner Cristella to adopt the use of blue light plans, and disciplinary actions for those in violation. All in favor, motion carries.

With no further business to discuss.

Motion by Commissioner Jones, second by Commissioner Cristella to adjourn. All in favor, motion carries.

DATED: October 18, 2023

BY: _____
Micheal Jones, Secretary