

The Board of Fire Commissioners, Gloucester Township Fire District # 4 held a Workshop Meeting on August 2, 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 Reiss, IAFF President Kemery, Chief Cipriano, FF J. Imelinski, Treasurer J. Miller, President Stott, Trustee Klingberg, FF Alvin, FF Shrader

Commissioner J. Vannoni stated that the Board will be changing its healthcare plan, from the State Plan, to, what he called the Norcross Plan. The reason for the change is that the State Plan increased 27% last year, and the new plan which guarantees the same if not better coverage, is 7% less than the current plan. He said they are still waiting on some answers, and if they have those, he will move to pass the resolutions at the Regular Meeting on 8.16.23. The reason for passing the resolutions this early, is it takes 60 days to be removed from the State Plan, and he wants that done prior to the new year, and additional increases from the State. No other Districts besides # 2 and # 4 are going with the new plan. There were questions concerning retirees, and they are waiting on those questions to be answered.

Commissioner Jones questioned if it applies to the retirees?

IAFF President Kemery asked for Commissioner Jones email address, and stated he would send the information to him, so he can forward it to his father.

Commissioner D. Vannoni said Power DMS is on the agenda.

Commissioner J. Vannoni said they are going with Lexipol, and it will also cover policies, plus all Power DMS does.

Commissioner D. Vannoni asked if it is cheaper?

Commissioner J. Vannoni said it is about the same cost, but you are getting more.

Commissioner D. Vannoni would like to see a presentation, and an introduction was sent out by Bill Robb, so he wants to check and see what is covers.

Commissioner D. Vannoni said a new protection will be placed on all phones, tablets in which Outlook will be password protected. If you use a pin on your phone, it will not affect you. If not, you will need to set up a password before opening Outlook on your phone or tablet.

Commissioner J. Vannoni brought up the service contact between Blackwood Fire Company and the Board of Fire Commissioners. It was suggested we do this to have something in writing as to

what is expected of Blackwood Fire Company. He will send it out to everyone, and a decision can be made at the Regular Meeting.

Commissioner Jones stated Squad 84 is out of service, there is a sensor in the transmission that is causing havoc. It is not a common problem. They are waiting on Allison Transmission to come out and do the repair.

He had a conversation with Captain Reiss, and he took inventory of the air packs at Station# 2. The Chief thinks we could sell 10 to 12 of them, and still be comfortable with what we have. Frank Reiss will get a quote on what we can get for them from someone he knows, and if the Board does not like that price, we can put them out on Gov Deals.

Commissioner J. Vannoni said he wanted to thank Captain Reiss for applying for, and then being granted the Zallies Grant for \$5,000.00, which will go towards the purchase of a TIC for Squad 88.

Commissioner McCann asked if the FAM came in today, to get the Utility in service.

Commissioner Jones said he did, and he came back for a conference call with the transmission company and Campbells.

IAFF President Kemery asked what was going on with the tower ladder.

Commissioner D. Vannoni explained the contract that was signed with Adirondack.

FF Alvin asked to address the Board. He went on to say he has been very busy, and he was going to make a decision on whether, he was going to remain a member. He said when he joined here, he felt as though it was a brotherhood, and that has long dwindled. This past year has been rough, and he feels very bad about it. Service is important, integrity is important. He has decided to stay. He has a list, and in the last 2 years we have lost 11 members, some to Deptford. They are going there because it is exciting, and Deptford has the brotherhood. He said the Board does not want to give BFC money, because BFC was robbed. We need the old members, maybe associate members to come out and show us some of their tricks. He said he can't type, but he is doing the secretary duties, because it needs to be done.

Commissioner D. Vannoni asked him what he thinks the Board should do. He let FF Alvin know, that when BFC came to the Board and asked for LOSAP, the Board gave them LOSAP, and every year where possible, the amount of the contribution is the highest allowed by law. Then it was LOSAP isn't doing it anymore, we want \$5.00 per call. The Board scraped up the money to pay \$5.00 per call. BFC said they needed a new squad, and BFC picked out a squad, and although the Board did not have the money for it, they found a way to finance it. The Chief came to the Board and said he knew the Board did not have the money for a new utility, but Lindenwold is selling this Cascade, and the guys are excited about it. The Board found a way to buy that.

FF Alvin said he understands the Board is here to serve the Company, but he is talking about serving the community.

Commissioner D. Vannoni said I get it, but you are talking about the morale being down.

FF Alvin said someone goes somewhere else, and you hear all negative things about it.

Commissioner J. Vannoni said you are hearing that from the Board?

FF Alvin said that not what I'm saying.

Commissioner Cristella asked him if he is saying the Board needs to take over BFC.

FF Alvin said that may be case. Whatever it is going to take to serve our community better.

Commissioner Vannoni said, in his opinion, whenever BFC has come to the Board for, meeting room, the Board has always stepped up.

FF Alvin said don't just be Board members, come out and hang out with us. Get to know us. Serve the community.

Commissioner Cristella said he served BFC for 32 years, but to train someone, he is not qualified, because he hasn't been trained for 15 years.

FF Alvin said he understands, but just come out and hang with us. Attend National Night Out, let us get to know you. We don't know you, as well as some members of the Executive Board. The elder members should be concerned about the way things are going.

Commissioner D. Vannoni said he knows 3 members of the Board who regularly attend the Fire Company Meeting's.

Commissioner J. Vannoni said I am only making these comments, because you are addressing the Board of Fire Commissioners.

FF Alvin said he understands the membership should be addressed, but we are all here and he thought it would be a good time to address the issue. The excitement has been drained. Unfortunately, stuff like this makes it worse.

Commissioner J. Vannon, stuff like this is very discouraging, and needs to be addressed. And there are other things that do go on. If you look in the meeting room, there are notes on the wall. I brought back John Carlin to help with the training. He went on to say, and he is only speaking for himself, he spent 3 ½ to 4 hours today, at the computer, doing personnel issues for the Board. In my position at the Board, takes up my time, and he is not in a position to ride the firetruck anymore. He said, he comes up on Tuesday nights sometimes, but again, it comes

down to time. You just said it. The problem is not just here, and he has been working with the Chief, and the Fire Company. Out in California, the Fire Company put a big banner out front that said Out of Business Due to a Lack of Staffing. It is not just the East Coast; it is all across the country.

Commissioner D. Vannoni asked FF Alvin, what are these other companies offering, and why can't they bring that here. Why are these guys running to Deptford and Washington Township instead of bringing the comradery here. He said he does not understand that.

Commissioner J. Vannoni addressed FF Alvin and asked him when you said you have not had an air pack on in how long, what is the reason for that? Is it because you are not responding to calls, what is the reason?

FF Alvin said training and communication. He sees Mike, and John, but he never sees David to get a chance to know him.

Commissioner McCann addressed FF Alvin. He said this is history, when he was 20 years old, and was a member of the Fire Company, it was the Fire Company against the Board. No one thought the Commissioner knew what they were doing. As he got older, and became a commissioner, the next generation fought the Board also. It was us vs them, and they didn't think the Board knew what was going on. Then the next generation came along, and they thought the Board were assholes. They bought the wrong kind of trucks, built Station # 2. Then the next generation came along. It is not something brand new, oddly to say, it has existed for 60 years.

Commissioner Vannoni said he would love to sit in the back, and shoot the shit about kids, whatever. But instead, all he heard was complaints about the Board, the career staff, this guy did this and that guy did that. He said he does not want to spend his free time up here listening to that.

Commissioner Cristella said he would come up on Friday night to watch TV, prior to his daughter getting sick. But the business side never stopped, it was always, this is wrong or that is wrong. He stated he was on the Board for 27 years, before he had to step down, due to his daughter's illness, but back then, if BFC would have approached the Board about buying a used utility from Lindenwold, the Board would have said no. We, the Board saw such an urgency, because the Chief came to the Board and said the Cascade would be a morale builder, that we decided to purchase it. There are not a lot of Boards that would do that. He thinks the Board has been pretty good to BFC.

Commissioner McCann said that morale booster was overshadowed by the theft of the Treasurer. It became a secondary issue; the theft became the focus.

FF Alvin said there have been many things, the passing of a driver, who always showed up, health issues with other drivers, and we are in a funk, but it is going to take all of us to get out of it. Everyone needs to work together.

Commissioner D. Vannoni said it is going to take BFC, the auxiliary. They need to get everyone out. He remembers when they would have family nights, they would make dinner, and everyone and their families would come up and hang out. He cannot remember the last time one of those were held.

FF Alvin responded, but the audio was eligible.

Commissioner D. Vannoni said your points were very well taken.

With no further business to discuss.

Motion by Commissioner Jones, second by Commissioner McCann to adjourn.

DATED: August 2, 2023

Signed: _____
Michael Jones, Secretary