

**SOMERSET COUNTY JOINT INSURANCE FUND**  
**FUND COMMISSIONER'S MEETING MINUTES**  
**March 23, 2022**

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**STATEMENT OF PROPER NOTICE READ BY BRIAN AUGER:** Adequate notice of the regular meeting of the SCJIF held on Wednesday, March 23, 2022 at 9:04 a.m. via Zoom Video Conference, has been provided through posting of said notice to the Courier News, and the Hunterdon County Democrat in accordance with Section 13 of the Open Public Meetings Act.

**ROLL CALL OF COMMISSIONERS**

SHANEL Y ROBINSON	County of Somerset	Present
GEOFFREY D. SORIANO	Somerset County Park Commission	Present
JOHN TROJAN	Raritan Valley Community College	Present
RAELENE SIPPLE	Somerset County Vocational & Technical Schools	Present
GREGORY J. BONIN	Township of Branchburg	Absent
BRIAN K. AUGER	Somerset County Library Commission	Present
KELLY G. CUPIT	Township of Green Brook	Present
KAREN GILBERT	Township of Raritan	Present
MICHAEL PAPPAS	Township of Bridgewater	Present
VITA MEKOVETZ	Township of Clinton	Present
DIANE MC DANIEL	Township of Delaware	Absent
GLENN CULLEN	Borough of South Plainfield	Present

**ALTERNATE COMMISSIONERS**

YVONNE CHILDRESS	County of Somerset	Present
DONNA UMGELTER	Somerset County Park Commission	Absent
CHERYL WALLACE	Raritan Valley Community College	Absent
WILLIAM G. HYNICK, JR.	Somerset County Vocational & Technical Schools	Absent
MARGUERITE SCHMITT	Township of Branchburg	Absent
BRIAN MORGAN	Somerset County Library Commission	Absent
RAYMOND S. MURRAY	Township of Green Brook	Present
CAROL BARBATI	Township of Raritan	Absent
THOMAS GENOVA	Township of Bridgewater	Absent
CARLA CONNER	Township of Clinton	Absent
JAMES WALTMAN	Township of Delaware	Absent
VACANT	Borough of South Plainfield	Vacant

**ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS/GUESTS**

**EXECUTIVE DIR/ADMIN:**

NEW JERSEY RISK MANAGERS & CONSULTANTS, INC.

◆ Raymond L. Hughes II ◆ Maryjane Hydro ◆ Javier B. Esparra  
◆ H. James Griffith ◆ Kenneth Spiller ◆ Cindy Villagran ◆ Lucy Martins

FUND ATTY/CLAIMS MANAGEMENT/LITIGATION:

DiFRANCESCO, BATEMAN, KUNZMAN, DAVIS, LEHRER & FLAUM, P.C.

◆ Stephen O. Davis, Esq.

FUND ATTY/REGULATORY COMPLIANCE/LEGISLATION:

SAUL EWING ARNSTEIN & LEHR

◆ M. Paige Berry, Esq.

ADDITIONAL RISK MANAGERS:

ACRISURE, David Balken

◆ Township of Clinton

ACRISURE, Louis Beckerman

◆ Township of Green Brook

ACRISURE, Amy Pieroni

◆ Township of Bridgewater & Borough of South Plainfield

LAFONTAINE & BUDD, James T. Rick, Jr.

◆ Township of Branchburg

RICHLAND KNOWLES AGENCY, Paul Joyce

◆ Township of Delaware

CLAIMS ADMINISTRATOR:

GUARDIAN PUBLIC ENTITY CLAIMS SERVICES

◆ Jacquelyn Fresco

**INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:** Patti Fahy/Acrisure North American Insurance Management as well as Mark Worthington from T&M Associates also participated.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 26<sup>TH</sup>, 2022 MEETING:**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Trojan

**SECOND:** Commissioner Soriano

**VOTE:** Unanimous

**SERVICE PROVIDER REPORTS**

**Executive Director/Administrator:** In addition to the report submitted, Mr. Raymond L. Hughes II provided a brief overview of the IBNRs (claims Incurred But Not Yet Reported). Mr. Hughes also thanked the Members of the Fund for facilitating property inspections currently being conducted by the Fund's property insurance carrier. This certainly demonstrates the Fund's history of a culture of safety and loss prevention. Questions were welcomed.

**Fund Attorney - Claims Management / Litigation:** No additions to the report submitted.

**Fund Attorney – Regulatory Compliance / Legislation:** Fund Attorney Berry highlighted a couple of cases illustrated in her Report and provided brief updates on recent Legislation that was signed into law. Discussion followed.

**Third Party Administrator:** No additions to the report submitted; however, Mr. Javier Esparra welcomed questions from the Fund Members.

**Custodian of Funds:** No additions to the report submitted.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Safety Committee:** In addition to the Report submitted on behalf of Committee Chair Sipple, Ms. Maryjane Hydro of NJRM advised that the Safety Committee meet via teleconference and in-person at the Somerset County Vocational & Technical Schools/TradeWins Restaurant on February 1<sup>st</sup> and March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 and the Meeting Minutes were distributed to all Fund Members electronically.

As required by one of the insurance carriers, New Jersey Risk Managers & Consultants, Inc. provided a brief presentation on Moisture and Mold Prevention Plans. Safety Committee Representatives were encouraged to work with their respective Risk Managers and legal counsel to create a Moisture and Mold Prevention Plan to adopt within their individual Entities. NJRM provided a handout to serve as a starting point or guideline.

The Fund held a training seminar on February 24, 2022, entitled “*Confined Space*” which was presented by the Fund’s Safety Consultant, Mark Worthington via Microsoft Teams. Approximately 15 participants attended the seminar and a PowerPoint Presentation containing the information presented during the seminar is available to participants.

Also, the Somerset County Board of County Commissioners is in the process of updating its 2022 Training Seminar Catalog which will be available to all Fund Members once it is finalized. Ms. Hydro also advised that a select number of Safety Representatives have been provided access to a Pilot Program of the On-Line Safety Training to ensure that it meets the expectations of the SCJIF Safety Committee Members. The new and improved On-Line Safety Training Program should be implemented once it is customized to the needs of the Fund Members. The April 2022 JIFNEWS, Volume 14, Volume 2 was distributed and contains articles on The Art of Kindness, Volunteering And Its Surprising Benefits, and Staying on Top of Your Health by Eating Well, Moving More, Supporting Your Mind and Getting Tools. There are also tips on Eat This to Help That.

Following discussion and concerns expressed by some of the Safety Committee Representatives regarding securing training and costs involved as a result of the new requirements established by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration for entry level CDL, which went into effect on February 7, 2022, New Jersey Risk Managers reached out to the Somerset County and in the spirit of shared services, arrangements have been with the County of Somerset to provide this training to all of the SCJIF Fund Members. The State Training Provider Registry has recognized Somerset County and their certified Trainer to provide this service, which will be available thru The Marketplace.



The next scheduled SCJIF Safety Committee Meeting will be held in-person on Tuesday, April 5, 2022 at 9:00 AM at the Somerset County Vocational & Technical Schools/TradeWins Restaurant. Since the COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted, the teleconference option will be discontinued and everyone is encouraged to attend in-person.

The 2021 Workers' Compensation Year-End Trend Analysis and Evaluation for the overall Fund has been provided to all Entity Members. Individual Fund Members can access their information thru the Fund's website (<http://scjif.org>). Safety Consultant, Mark Worthington of T&M Associates advised that for the first time in five years, the "Total Net Paid to Date" figure exceeded the previous year. However, the number of claims is still well below the "five-year" average and he expects these figures to improve. To that end, Ms. Hydro added that the increase in number of COVID-19 cases recorded is due to the fact that at the onset of the health emergency declared by the Governor of New Jersey, the SCJIF took the position to accept these work-related COVID-19 claims and track them. This was done in anticipation of the Legislature eventually requiring employers to cover work-related COVID-19 claims. As a result of this, the frequency of COVID-19 work-related claims appears to be extremely high because any employee exposed to COVID-19 was instructed to contact a Nurse Case Manager and Claims Adjuster who in turn would monitor and track this employee. However, as reflected in the low percentage of dollars paid out, many of these claims did not require medical assistance and the claims were simply closed out.

**Claim PAR Committee:** Committee Chairperson Soriano stated that the Committee met on February 23<sup>rd</sup> and March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022 and the Meeting Minutes were submitted in the Meeting Package. Actions will be ratified during the Old Business portion of the Agenda.

**Legislative Committee:** On behalf of Committee Chair Robinson, Fund Attorney Berry provided an overview of Legislation introduced into the 2022-2023 Legislative Session. She will continue to monitor and track the Legislation throughout the year and will inform the Fund as needed.

**#22-017 RESOLUTION APPROVING SERVICE PROVIDER AND COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Trojan  
**SECOND:** Commissioner Mekovetz  
**VOTE:** Roll Call

ROLL CALL VOTE					
COMMISSIONER		YES	NO	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
COS	SHANEL ROBINSON	X			
SCPC	GEOFFREY D. SORIANO	X			
RVCC	JOHN TROJAN	X			
SCVT	RAELENE SIPPLE	X			
TOB	GREGORY J. BONIN			X	
SCLC	BRIAN AUGER	X			
TOGB	KELLY G. CUPIT	X			
TOR	KAREN GILBERT	X			
TOBW	MICHAEL PAPPAS	X			
TOC	VETA MEKOVETZ	X			

TOD	DIANE Mc DANIEL			X	
BSP	GLENN CULLEN	X			

### OLD BUSINESS

#### **#22-015 RESOLUTION RATIFYING PAYMENT OF CLAIMS REIMBURSEMENTS & APPROVAL OF EXPENSES PAID IN FEBRUARY 2022:**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Trojan  
**SECOND:** Commissioner Soriano  
**VOTE:** Roll Call

ROLL CALL VOTE					
COMMISSIONER		YES	NO	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
COS	SHANEL ROBINSON	X			
SCPC	GEOFFREY D. SORIANO	X			
RVCC	JOHN TROJAN	X			
SCVT	RAELENE SIPPLE	X			
TOB	GREGORY J. BONIN			X	
SCLC	BRIAN AUGER	X			
TOGB	KELLY G. CUPIT	X			
TOR	KAREN GILBERT	X			
TOBW	MICHAEL PAPPAS	X			
TOC	VETA MEKOVETZ	X			
TOD	DIANE Mc DANIEL			X	
BSP	GLENN CULLEN	X			

#### **#22-016 RESOLUTION RATIFYING PAYMENT OF CLAIMS REIMBURSEMENTS & APPROVAL OF EXPENSES PAID IN MARCH 2022:**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Trojan  
**SECOND:** Commissioner Sipple  
**VOTE:** Roll Call

ROLL CALL VOTE					
COMMISSIONER		YES	NO	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
COS	SHANEL ROBINSON	X			
SCPC	GEOFFREY D. SORIANO	X			
RVCC	JOHN TROJAN	X			
SCVT	RAELENE SIPPLE	X			
TOB	GREGORY J. BONIN			X	
SCLC	BRIAN AUGER	X			
TOGB	KELLY G. CUPIT	X			
TOR	KAREN GILBERT	X			
TOBW	MICHAEL PAPPAS	X			
TOC	CARLA CONNER	X			

TOD	DIANE Mc DANIEL			X	
BSP	GLENN CULLEN	X			

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Raymond I. Hughes II, NJRM advised that the insurance industry remains in a hard market which simply means that insurance carriers generally require higher premium and increases in deductibles. This affects all Joint Insurance Funds making it a challenge for the renewal process. Despite these challenges, the Somerset County Joint Insurance Fund was able to have a successful renewal season maintaining our increases in the single digits. Raymond thanked the New Jersey Risk Managers Team for their extraordinary work during the renewal season.

### **#22-018 INTRODUCING THE AMENDED BUDGET FOR THE 2022 FUND YEAR:**

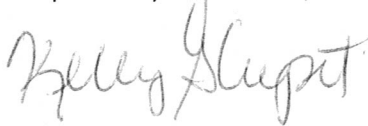
**MOTION:** Commissioner Trojan  
**SECOND:** Commissioner Sipple  
**VOTE:** Unanimous

ROLL CALL VOTE					
COMMISSIONER		YES	NO	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
COS	SHANEL ROBINSON	X			
SCPC	GEOFFREY D. SORIANO	X			
RVCC	JOHN TROJAN	X			
SCVT	RAELENE SIPPLE	X			
TOB	GREGORY J. BONIN			X	
SCLC	BRIAN AUGER	X			
TOGB	KELLY G. CUPIT	X			
TOR	KAREN GILBERT	X			
TOBW	MICHAEL PAPPAS	X			
TOC	VETA MEKOVETZ	X			
TOD	DIANE Mc DANIEL			X	
BSP	GLENN CULLEN	X			

### **MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 9:35 A.M.:**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Trojan  
**SECOND:** Commissioner Mekovetz  
**VOTE:** Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,



Kelly Cupit, Secretary