

**SOMERSET COUNTY JOINT INSURANCE FUND**  
**FUND COMMISSIONERS' MEETING MINUTES**  
**March 26, 2025**

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**STATEMENT OF PROPER NOTICE READ BY COMMISSIONER GILBERT:** Adequate notice of the regular meeting of the Somerset County Joint Insurance Fund held on Wednesday, March 26, 2025 at 9:34 a.m. at the Somerset County Park Commission Headquarters located in Bridgewater 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.

**FLAG SALUTE**

**ROLL CALL OF COMMISSIONERS**

SHANEL Y ROBINSON	County of Somerset	Present
DANIEL J. HAYES, JR.	Somerset County Park Commission	Present
JOHN TROJAN	Raritan Valley Community College	Present
RAELENE SIPPLE	Somerset County Vocational & Technical Schools	Absent
GREGORY J. BONIN	Township of Branchburg	Absent
BRIAN K. AUGER	Somerset County Library Commission	Present
KELLY G. CUPIT	Township of Green Brook	Absent
KAREN GILBERT	Township of Raritan	Present
WILLIAM CLOSE	Township of Clinton	Absent
DIANE MC DANIEL	Township of Delaware	Present
GLENN CULLEN	Borough of South Plainfield	Absent

**ALTERNATE COMMISSIONERS**

YVONNE CHILDRESS	County of Somerset	Absent
JANINE ERICKSON	Somerset County Park Commission	Present
CHERYL WALLACE	Raritan Valley Community College	Absent
ADAM BEDER	Somerset County Vocational & Technical Schools	Absent
DENISE PISZKOWSKI	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
CHIEF THOMAS DEROSA	Township of Clinton	Absent
DIANA RUMAGE	Township of Delaware	Absent
AMY L. ANTONIDES	Borough of South Plainfield	Present

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**ALSO PRESENT:**

Barbara Murphy	New Jersey Risk Managers & Consultants, LLC
Cindy Villagran	
Javier Esparra	
Kenneth Spiller	
Lucy Martins	
Pamela Aquino	

Stephen O. Davis, Esq.	DiFrancesco, Bateman, Kunzman, Davis, Lehrer & Flaum, PC
M. Paige Berry, Esq.	Saul Ewing, LLP
Jamie Rick	LaFontaine & Budd, Inc.
Dave Balken	ACRISURE
Trevor Morris	ACRISURE
Diane Bellinger	RICHLAND KNOWLES AGENCY

**INTRODUCTION OF GUEST:** Present at this meeting were Highland Claim Services President and Claims Manager-Robert Granata, WC Supervisor-Denise Fierro, WC Adjuster-Ludmila Paris and Multi-Line Manager-Lisa Pflug to address the Board in Closed Session.

**FUND BUSINESS:**

- **MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES FROM THE OPEN AND CLOSED SESSION MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 22, 2025, MEETING:**

<b>MOTION:</b>	<b>Commissioner Trojan</b>
<b>SECOND:</b>	<b>Commissioner Robinson</b>
<b>VOTE:</b>	<b>Unanimous</b>

**SERVICE PROVIDER REPORTS:**

**Executive Director/Administrator:** In addition to the Report included in the Agenda Package, Barbara advised that the yearly Audit is underway, and the final Audit Report findings would be presented to the Board at the May 2025 SCJIF Commissioner's Meeting.

**Fund Attorney - Claims Management / Litigation:** In addition to the Report, Fund Attorney Davis added that recent Court rulings have significantly impacted the cost of claim thereby increasing payments than in previous years. He would provide additional comments during the Closed Session portion of the meeting.

**Fund Attorney – Regulatory Compliance / Legislation:** In addition to the Report submitted, Fund Attorney Berry discussed the impact that the recent amendments and proposed changes to the Legislation would have on public entities specifically as it relates to recovery of damages for pain and suffering and workers' compensation law relating to maximum workers compensation benefits.

**Third Party Administrator:** In addition to the Report submitted, as noted by Attorney Davis, Barbara reiterated that the increase in certain lines of coverage was particularly due to the fact the costs to resolve claims, wages and medical expenses have increased in recent years. Additionally, claims are reviewed frequently to ensure that reserves are properly set for each claim.

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

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Safety Committee:** Commissioner Auger advised that representatives of the Safety Committee met on February 4 and March 4, 2025. The Meeting Minutes were included in the Agenda Package. Brian stated that

the Fund's first quarter training entitled "OSHA Heat Standard Update" was held on March 18, 2025, at the Somerset County Library Commission. The training seminar was conducted by the Fund's Safety Consultant, Mark Worthington, and approximately 50 employees participated. The information presented during the seminar was posted to the Fund's website as well.

He also commented that due to numerous requests made by safety representatives, a training seminar entitled Job Site Safety Training: Chiper Safety, Bucket Truck Safety & Debris Management has been scheduled for Tuesday, April 15, 2025, at the Borough of South Plainfield. The training will be presented by Noble Oak Safety & Training of Flemington, NJ.

Commissioner Auger also advised that the yearly Safety Recognition Breakfast was scheduled for June 10, 2025 at the Somerville Elks in Bridgewater. The formal invitation to this event will be distributed in the next couple of weeks.

The 2024 Year-End Workers' Compensation Claim Trend Analysis & Evaluation was provided to each Entity. These Reports were also posted to the "Members Only" portion of the Fund' website. Mark Worthington of T&M Associates provided an overview of the workers' compensation trends and commended the Fund for emphasizing a safety culture as the total number of claims was lower than Fund Year 2023.

Barbara Murphy added that over the past couple of years, the Fund has received a grant from MunichRe to be used for training. Barbara stated that some of the training courses will offer continuing education credits. The training schedule would be distributed once all classes and times are confirmed.

Members were reminded that the next regular SCJIF Safety Committee Meeting is scheduled for 9:00 A.M. Tuesday, May 6, 2025, at the Somerset County Vocational & Technical Schools TradeWins Restaurant.

A copy of the JIFNEWS, Volume 16, Volume 2 featuring information on the benefits of walking, playground safety, and work zone safety tips was also included in the Meeting Agenda and posted to the Fund's website.

**Claim PAR Committee:** Committee Chairperson Hayes stated that the Committee met on February 26, 2025, and the Meeting Minutes were submitted in the Meeting Package. Actions will be ratified during the Old Business portion of the Agenda.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**MOTION RATIFYING PAYMENT OF EXPENSES & CLAIMS PAID IN FEBRUARY 2025:**

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

ROLL CALL VOTE					
COMMISSIONER		YES	NO	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
COS	SHANEL Y. ROBINSON	X			
SCPC	DANIEL J. HAYES, JR.	X			
RVCC	JOHN TROJAN	X			
SCVT	RAELENE SIPPLE			X	
TOB	GREGORY J. BONIN			X	
SCLC	BRIAN AUGER	X			
TOGB	RAYMOND S. MURRAY	X			
TOR	KAREN GILBERT	X			
TOC	WILLIAM CLOSE			X	
TOD	DIANE Mc DANIEL	X			
BSP	AMY ANTONIDES	X			
BOM	RAYMOND HECK			X	

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**MOTION AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF CURRENT EXPENSES & CLAIMS:**

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

ROLL CALL VOTE					
COMMISSIONER		YES	NO	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
COS	SHANEL Y. ROBINSON	X			
SCPC	DANIEL J. HAYES, JR.	X			
RVCC	JOHN TROJAN	X			
SCVT	RAELENE SIPPLE			X	
TOB	GREGORY J. BONIN			X	
SCLC	BRIAN AUGER	X			
TOGB	RAYMOND S. MURRAY	X			
TOR	KAREN GILBERT	X			
TOC	WILLIAM CLOSE			X	
TOD	DIANE Mc DANIEL	X			
BSP	AMY ANTONIDES	X			
BOM	RAYMOND HECK			X	

Motion for Introduction of the 2025 Fund Year Budget Revision #1 was carried to the May Board Meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**MOTION TO ENTER CLOSED SESSION AT 9:55 AM TO DISCUSS CLAIMS AND OTHER ACTIONS:**

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

**MOTION TO RETURN TO REGULAR MEETING AT 10:20 AM:**

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

**MOTION AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF CLAIMS AND OTHER ACTIONS ESTABLISHED IN CLOSED SESSION:**

Workers' Compensation/Property/General Liability Claims:

- SCJIF015567
- SCJIF015871
- SCJIF019463
- SCJIF020515
- SCJIF021028
- SCJIF021070
- SCJIF030014
- SCJIF019918
- SCJIF020655
- SCJIF020679
- SCJIF020994
- SCJIF030042
- SCJIF016799
- SCJIF017393
- SCJIF018371
- SCJIF020883

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

ROLL CALL VOTE					
COMMISSIONER		YES	NO	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
COS	SHANEL Y. ROBINSON	X			
SCPC	DANIEL J. HAYES, Jr.	X			
RVCC	JOHN TROJAN	X			
SCVT	RAELENE SIPPLE			X	
TOB	GREGORY BONIN			x	
SCLC	BRIAN AUGER	X			
TOGB	RAYMOND S. MURRAY	X			
TOR	KAREN GILBERT	X			
TOC	WILLIAM CLOSE			X	
TOD	DIANE McDANIEL	X			
BSP	AMY ANTONIDES	X			
BOM	RAYMOND HECK			x	

**MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 10:21 A.M.:**

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

Respectfully submitted,

Diane McDaniel, Secretary