

**NORTH JERSEY MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEE BENEFITS FUND  
OPEN MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 21, 2023  
RANDOLPH MUNICIPAL HALL- 9:30 AM**

Meeting of Fund Commissioners called to order by Scott Heck, Chair. Open Public Meetings notice read into record.

**ROLL CALL OF 2023 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND FUND COMMISSIONERS**

<b>2023 Executive Committee</b>		
Scott Heck, Chair	Borough of Ringwood	Present
Tom Russo, Secretary	Town of Newton	Present
Barbara Russo	Township of Berkeley Heights	Present
Dina Valente - Stoel	Borough of Lincoln Park	Absent
Tammy Smith	Knowlton BOE	Present
Silvio Esposito	Township of Hanover	Present (left 10:00am)
Carinne Piccolo- Kaufer	Township of Hardyston	Present
<b>Executive Committee Alternates:</b>		
Cathy Shanahan	Township of West Milford	Absent
Adam Brewer	Township of Pequannock	Present
Greg Poff	Borough of Randolph*	Present

<b>Fund Commissioners</b>		
Mike Sondermeyer	Borough of Bloomingdale	Present
Michael Restel	Township of Wantage	Present
Grant Rome	Township of Sparta	Absent
Diana Francisco	Andover Township*	Absent
Ralph Blakeslee	Borough of Netcong*	Absent
Keith Kazmark	Borough of Woodland Park	Absent
Rey Julve	Township of Dover	Absent
Andrew Fiore	Borough of Harding	Absent
Katie Yanke	Borough of Montville*	Absent
Joe Sabatini	Township of Byram*	Absent
James Burnett	Borough of Madison*	Absent
Open	Township of Prospect Park*	Absent
John Shepherd	Township of Roxbury*	Absent

Debra Millikin	Township of Jefferson*	Present
Open	Kinnelon	Absent
Gabby Evangelista	Borough of Wharton	Absent
<b>Fund Commissioner Alternates</b>		
Ashleigh Frueholz	Township of Byram*	Absent
Jennifer Dodd	Town of Newton	Absent
Lisa Spring	Township of Roxbury*	Absent
Joseph Kovalcik	Borough of Wharton	Present
Perry Mayers	Borough of Lincoln Park	Absent
Jasmin Azcona	Township of Bloomingdale	Absent
Michele Lantau	Township of Sparta	Present
Open	Borough of Netcong*	Absent
Victoria	Township of Dover	Absent
Sandra Emmerich	Borough of Madison*	Absent
Nancy VanHorn	Township of Wantage	Absent
Deborah Bonanno	Mountain Lakes	Absent
William Egan	Township of Jefferson	Absent
Dana Vitz	Township of Hardyston	Absent
	Town of Boonton	Absent
	Madison Housing Authority	Absent

**APPOINTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:**

Executive Director	PERMA Risk Management Services	<b>Brandon Lodics</b> <b>Emily Koval</b>
Program Manager	Vozza Agency	<b>David Vozza</b> <b>Randi Gerber</b> <b>Brittany Vozza</b>
Attorney	Dorsey & Semrau	<b>Edward Pasternak</b> <b>Fred Semrau</b>
Claims Administrator	Aetna	<b>Jason Silverstein</b>
Dental Administrator	Delta Dental	<b>Lauhra Ebarle</b>
Prescription Administrator	Express Scripts	Charles Yuk
Treasurer	Michael Soccio	<b>Absent</b>
Auditor	Nisivoccia	<b>Absentt</b>
Actuary	John Vataha	<b>Absent</b>
Wellness Coordinator	Civitas	<b>Absent</b>

**PRESENT FUND PROFESSIONALS:**

**Lisa Sabato, PIA World**  
**Staci Grant, Henry O Baker**  
**Charles Yuk, Express Scripts**  
**Wayne Dietz, Skylands Risk Management**  
**Joe Rude, EBCSG**

**FLAG SALUTE**

**CORRESPONDENCE - None**

**APPROVAL OF OPEN JUNE 28, 2023 MINUTES:** Ms. Koval noted a change to the minutes that Commissioner Lantau was not present at the meeting.

MOTION TO APPROVE OPEN MINUTES OF JUNE 28, 2023, AS AMENDED:

**MOTION:** Commissioner Esposito  
**SECOND:** Commissioner T. Russo  
**VOTE:** 13 Ayes, 0 Nays

**REPORTS:**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Executive Director apologized for the multiple versions of the agenda and any confusion it may have cause. He said it is important that the final version was complete and sent prior to the meeting. IN addition, he said PERMA is aware of the agendas being blocked for size for certain Commissioners. The images typically cause the file to be too large and there is no bounce back email if the email was

not received. Chair Heck suggested a read receipt confirmation. Commissioner Kauffer suggested looking into wetransfer.com. Mr Lodics said the feedback was appreciated.

Chair Heck said each resolution will be passed individually.

## **PRO FORMA REPORTS**

**Fast Track Financial Report** – Executive Director reviewed the Financial Fast Track through July 2023 stating that overall, July was a good month at 93%. He said the surplus is health and claims are about 96% of the budget so overall very good.

## **2024 NJHIF BUDGET - INTRODUCTION**

A 2024 budget presentation is included as an attachment to the agenda which will be reviewed at the meeting.

The Finance Committee met to review the budget and requested additional edits to lower the overall increase, which are included in the presentation. The Committee is recommending the introduction of the enclosed budget.

Executive Director thanked the finance committee for their diligent review. The committee had multiple reviews and it was appreciated. Committee Chair Tom Russo thanked the Executive Director for the time spent. He said the increase is more robust than prior budgets. This is the most reasonable for the future and better than some competitors.

Executive Director reviewed the power point presentation that was distributed. The overall increase is taking the prescription and medical required premium combined, which equates to 6.16% each. He said that the medical claims were running higher than Rx. Although, the volume of users not higher. He said that there are many acute circumstances that do not appear to be chronic or ongoing. These trends are apparent across the state. As usual, Executive Director said the dental is running well. The MRHIF is more favorable than average, but higher than other Funds. Executive Director said the wellness budget is increasing \$48,000. In response to Commissioner Esposito, he said that the wellness budget is increasing due to growth, not contract increases.

Executive Director reviewed the budget by line of coverage and assessments noting that the loss ratio impacts will continue to be +/- 2.5% based on performance of group.

Program Manager said if a group applied dividends last year, not reflected in this.

Executive Director said the average med and rx in private market is 7%. He said that most new members are reflected and their ppm was compared to the rest of the fund all were comparable.

In response to Fund Attorney, Executive Director said the random litigation settlements were included in the additional margin within the medical increase.

**MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 25-23 INTRODUCING THE 2024 NORTH JERSEY MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEE BENEFITS FUND BUDGET IN THE AMOUNT OF \$ 54,700,093 AND TO ADVERTISE A PUBLIC HEARING OF THE BUDGET ADOPTION ON OCTOBER 26, 2023 AT THE RANDOLPH TOWNSHIP HALL, RANDOLPH, NJ.**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Esposito  
**SECOND:** Commissioner Kaufer  
**VOTE:** 13 Ayes, 0 Nays

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS/CONTRACTS**

1. **Professional Services** – A summary report of the Professional and Wellness RFPs is included. Ms. Koval reviewed the report included and noted the following changes:
  1. Replace Fund Treasurer with Fund Attorney, submitted by Dorey and Semrau
  2. Contract Resolutions to remove law language and term will be limited to one year optional extensions.
2. **EUS Contracts** - the Aetna RFP is due the day of the meeting. We expect a contracts committee evaluation to occur prior to the October meeting with a request for action.

**NORTH JERSEY MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEE BENEFITS FUND  
 2024 RFQ RESPONSES**

**Responses Deadline 11am, September 6, 2023**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Vendor</b>	<b>Proposed Fees</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Fund Attorney</b>	<b>Dorsey &amp; Semrau</b>	2024: \$20,500 2025: \$20,900 2026: \$21,325	<b>Incumbent</b>
<b>Fund Auditor</b>	<b>Holman and Frenia</b>	2024: \$14,000	<b>MRHIF Auditor; one fee for Audit of December 31, 2023</b>
<b>Fund Treasurer</b>	<b>Michael Soccio</b>	<b>No Fees</b>	<b>Incomplete</b>
<b>Wellness – Nutrition Education</b>	<b>Vernon Nutrition Center</b>	2024-2026: Nutrition Counseling \$250 Counseling w. Metab \$305 Virtual Live Programs \$225 Virtual On Demand \$99 Seminars \$995	<b>Incumbent</b>
<b>Wellness – Fitness</b>	<b>Fitness Knocking</b>	2024: \$260-\$400 2025: \$270-\$410 2026: \$280-\$420	<b>Incumbent</b>
<b>Wellness – Heart Scan</b>	<b>LifeLine Screening</b>	2024: \$259/ package 2025: \$299/Package 2026: \$299/Package	<b>Incumbent</b>

**MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 26-23 RESOLUTION REJECTING ALL SUBMITTALS  
FOR  
COMPETITIVE CONTRACT - CC #23-15, TREASURER**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Esposito  
**SECOND:** Commissioner Kaufer  
**VOTE:** 13 Ayes, 0 Nays

**MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 27-23 AWARDING CC# 23-15  
TO DORSEY & SEMRAU ATTORNEYS AT LAW  
COMPETITIVE CONTRACT IN A FAIR AND OPEN MANNER**

**MOTION:** Commissioner T. Russo  
**SECOND:** Commissioner B. Russo  
**VOTE:** 13 Ayes, 0 Nays

**MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 28-23 AWARDING CC# 23-15  
TO HOLMAN FRENIA ALLISON, P.C.  
COMPETITIVE CONTRACT IN A FAIR AND OPEN MANNER**

**MOTION:** Commissioner T. Russo  
**SECOND:** Commissioner B. Russo  
**VOTE:** 13 Ayes, 0 Nays

**MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 29-23 AWARDING CC# 23-15  
TO VARIOUS WELLNESS SERVICES: NUTRITIONAL EDUCATION, FITNESS AND HEART  
SCAN SERVICES**

**MOTION:** Commissioner T. Russo  
**SECOND:** Commissioner B. Russo  
**VOTE:** 13 Ayes, 0 Nays

**MRHIF MEETING – Ms. Koval said** the MRHIF met September 13, 2023 to introduce its 2024 budget. The NJHIF introduced budget includes these factors and total premium.

The Reinsurance contract was renewed with Starline after a formal RFP process.

The Benefits Administration RFP responses are in review and expect to be approved in December.

Princeton Strategic was awarded the marketing contract.

In addition, the Fund will be receiving a dividend in the amount of \$282,000 that was not budgeted, so will ultimately end up in surplus.

**INDEMNITY AND TRUST AGREEMENTS** - The following member's Fund agreements have expired or are expiring at the end of this year. Please include the Resolution to renew on your next local meeting.

**PRORAM MANAGER REPORT** - Program Manager reviewed the following items from the report included in the agenda:

**TOWN VISITS/MEETINGS/PLAN CHANGE REQUESTS** - Our office frequently works with towns for review of plan options for union negotiations. If anyone is entering union negotiations and needs assistance, please feel free to contact our office directly to discuss.

**ENROLLMENT, ELIGIBILITY, BILLING** - Our office received a complaint that was filed by a direct bill retiree of new member Chatham. As some of you may know the town is often not aware of who these retirees are since they are not part of the towns bill from SHBP. It usually takes the NJDPB about 4-6 weeks to let the town know who these people are which leaves very short time frame to get them enrolled or properly communicate with them. When the town found out about 11 former employees, they all came over as part of an updated census file for enrollment and were enrolled in the MAPDP plan with Aetna as instructed and as is done with all other Medicare eligible retirees. The crux of the complaint was that she and her husband should never have been enrolled w/o her permission as she didn't want to be enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan. When she was enrolled in the funds program CMS automatically disenrolls in any other Medicare related supplemental plans including Medicare part D Rx plans. They apparently had I hybrid program in that they had their medical under the SHBP and separate part D Rx outside. Once she found out her other plans were canceled, she reached out and the process to disenroll them began immediately but since Aetna/ CMS was already involved at that point it took a couple of weeks to get straightened out causing them anxiety if they would get their other coverage re-enroll in time. As it turned out the fund plans were termed so her new plans could take effect when they needed to. The complaint with time frames of what transpired was provided and we have heard nothing further.

The funds policy is to limit retro corrections, including terminations to 60 days. Please check your monthly invoice for accuracy. If you find a discrepancy, please report it immediately to the NJHIF enrollment Team at [northernnj enrollments@permainc.com](mailto:northernnj enrollments@permainc.com)

*Use of the Benefits Express enrollment system is mandatory.*

**Online Enrollment System Training Schedule - 2022**

PERMA offers a virtual training and a refresher class on the online enrollment system the third Wednesday of each month. The session provides an overview of the Fund's enrollment system and

shows HR users how perform tasks in the system. To gain access to the Fund's enrollment system, each HR user must complete a system access form.

Wednesday October 19th 10:00 am - 11:00 am

Wednesday November 16th 10:00 am - 11:00 am

Please email Austin Flinn at PERMA to join a training session.

In the subject line of the email, please include *Training - Fund Name and Client Name*. Please be sure to add the date of the training you would like to attend to your email so an invite can be sent.

Email: [aflinn@permainc.com](mailto:aflinn@permainc.com)

### **2023 OPEN ENROLLMENT**

The NJMEBF will be holding open enrollment for the 2023 plan year from 10/30/2023 – 11/10/2023. All changes must be processed online in Benefits Express by 11/17/2023 in order for ID cards to be generated for any members making plan changes and in member's hands by January 1, 2024.

### **NEW MEDICAL MEMBER SUBMISSIONS**

The Twp of Mount Olive is currently receiving their benefits through the SHBP. They have expressed an interest in becoming a member of the NJMEBF. We will be duplicating the plans from the SHBP for which there is current enrollment.

- ◆ **Size - 148 Actives; 77 Retirees (43 Medicare Advantage)**
- ◆ **Current type of plan(s) - NJ Direct 10; Direct 15; Direct 1525; Direct 2019 and Direct 2030 with integrated RX**
- ◆ **Medicare eligible Retirees - Medicare Advantage Plan**
- ◆ **Commitment to JIF philosophy and Active Participation in the Fund**
- ◆ **Vernon Age/Sex Factor - 1.0994**
- ◆ **Fund Average Age/Sex Factor - 1.2676**
- ◆ **Relativity - 0.8673**

The Operations Committee met on September 13<sup>th</sup> and feels the Twp would be a good fit and is recommending membership for this group. Commissioner Poff noted that the resolution said Finance Committee instead of Operations Committee.

### **MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 30-23 APPROVING THE TOWNSHIP OF MOUNT OLIVE FOR MEMBERSHIP, AS AMENDED.**

<b>MOTION:</b>	Commissioner T. Russo
<b>SECOND:</b>	Commissioner Brewer
<b>VOTE:</b>	13 Ayes, 0 Nays

Program Manager requested authorization to allow the Operations Committee to review and approve future new members, then ratify at the next meeting. Chair Heck said it would be best to have formal approval before inception and if an emergency zoom meeting is needed, then it will be scheduled.



**REINSURANCE RENEWAL** -The reinsurance renewal has resulted in 5.98% increase in premium for the NJHIF.

The local HIF SIR will be increasing by \$25,000 or to \$450,000.

**Fund Complaint** – Program Manager said there was a complaint from a retiree about coming to the Medicare Advantage program from a new group that should not have been automatically enrolled. Ms. Gerber said she disenrolled the member immediately. This was a direct retiree that the group was not aware of and the town was supposed to notify them. She was enrolled properly in time with the CMS rules. Ms. Gerber said the town doesn't necessarily know about these people, they choose to do so through pensions. The state disenrolls. Program Manager said these are issues that have been occurring with new groups from the State that we are working around.

### **WELLNESS PROGRAM - Wellness**

The Fund released three RFPs for wellness: cardio screening, fitness coaching and nutritional counseling. The responses were received on 9/6/23 and will be reviewed by the wellness committee this month. We will have a recommendation for the next meeting.

The goal of the wellness program is to help promote a healthy lifestyle and require screenings and annual exams to increase early detection and increase disease state awareness. The Wellness committee will be reviewing the Aetna level B reports for highest disease states and taking the survey results for topic interest to develop the 2024 program components. As we know, preventive care helps lower the long-term cost of managing disease by catching problems in the early stages when most diseases are more treatable. The purpose is to shift the focus of health care from treating sickness to maintaining wellness and good health.

Ms. B Vozza had reviewed the Wellness RFP responses that were all incumbents, one response. The Committee is working to get two new members on board for January. She said it may be needed to take action in October for the additional members. She said the first members of the program are going on 10 years and we are trying to revamp that for them. Commissioner Kauffer said that Marianne will be going into full retirement. She will not be responding to the RFP.

In repons to a Commissioner inquiry, Ms. B Vozza said it is difficult to capture participants who are actually doing the program vs. those who are not. Commissioner Brewer said the MEL hired a company to determine police accreditation actual helps. It is hard to do. Ms. B. Vozza said that COVID skewed the data and the participation.

Ms. From Fitness knocking said there is 93% completion of her actual program, which is successful. She had someone lose 30 pounds in a year. She said she had someone no longer on diabetes. This makes a major impact, although a small program. Unfortunately, we don't see them often enough to give an actual statistic.

**Anxiety** -*see live well newsletter for further information.*

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) now recommends that adults ages 8- 65 get regularly screened for anxiety. For the first time, the Task Force recommends screening all adults under 65 who don't have a diagnosed mental health disorder or related symptoms. This is meant to help primary care clinicians identify early signs of anxiety, which can go undetected for years. Anxiety disorders typically begin in childhood and early adulthood, and symptoms appear to decline with age.

**Heart Health** – *see live well newsletter for further information.*

American Heart Association recommends 150 minutes or more of moderate to vigorous physical activity each week. New research published in The Journal of the American Medical Association found that working out at least 150 minutes each week can help cut one's risk of stroke, heart attack and atrial fibrillation (also known as AFib)—and those minutes can be split equally across the week or concentrated into the weekend.

**Nutrition Component Completed:**

31 Participants completed Nutritional Counseling with Registered Dieticians from the Vernon Nutrition Center – 74% reported increased energy levels and 81% reported increased knowledge in Nutrition.

**AETNA**

**Flu Shots** – Please see the attached flu shot flyer for member distribution. Members can receive a no cost flu shot by scheduling their flu shot at a CVS pharmacy or CVS Minute Clinic.

**Who needs a flu shot?**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends everyone six months and older should get a flu shot every season with rare exceptions.

**Getting vaccinated is especially important for high-risk individuals:**

- Pregnant people
- Children under the age of five
- School-aged children
- Older adults
- Professionals in settings with high infection rates
- Anyone with a health condition
- Anyone with a weakened immune system

**TREASURER:** Mr. Soccio was not in attendance but the report was included. Ms. Koval said all questions can come to her.

**ATTORNEY:** Fund Attorney thanked the Committee for reappointment. He said the Fund Budget vs. State makes one appreciate the success and efficiency of the Fund. There are no matters in court and no group of participants challenging the financial stability of the Fund.

**AETNA:** Mr. Silverstein reviewed the claims report for the months of June and July 2023, included in the agenda.

**EXPRESS SCRIPTS:** Mr. Yuk reviewed the July 2023 report included in the agenda. He stated that all costs continue to stay down.

**DELTA DENTAL:** No report

**OLD BUSINESS:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Commissioner Smith asked if the coverage in the budgt have taken into account the new legislation of the fire fighters legislation. She said the non State members with fire fighters can apply for a grant. Executive Director said the Fund always keeps up with State mandates, but are not

subject to the them. Anyone that came after these legislations would get them on an equal to or better. It would be prudent for groups to continue to do so.

**PUBLIC COMMENT: None.**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN:**

<b>MOTION:</b>	Commissioner T. Russo
<b>SECOND:</b>	Commissioner Brewer
<b>VOTE:</b>	Unanimous

**MEETING ADJOURNED AT: 10:19 am**

**NEXT MEETING: September 21, 2023, 9:30 am**  
**RANDOLPH MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

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*Jordyn DeLorenzo*  
For

**Tom Russo, Secretary**

**Date Prepared: 6/22/2023**

# **APPENDIX I**

**NJMEBF Wellness Committee Meeting  
October 4, 2023 – 2:00pm  
Zoom**

**Attendees:**

Carrine Piccolo-Kaufer  
Mike Sondermeyer  
Gregory Poff  
Marianne Eskilson  
Brittany Voza  
Jordyn DeLorenzo

Mrs. Kaufer started the meeting off by talking about the RFP responses from Lifeline Screening, Vernon Nutrition Center and Fitness Knocking. She opened the floor to the committee to discuss the responses or if they have any questions. Mrs. Eskilson stated that metabolism tracking has many benefits and she believes that this is a good option for the members to take advantage of. They discussed the vendor options for the programs.

Mr. Poff stated that the wellness program has been running very well and they have a robust program. The committee discussed changes to programming and the future of the Wellness program, a sample layout was completed to show some alternative program options for groups as they get further into the program to manage the per person cost. The committee agreed to the new approach of the program moving forward. The committee recommends locking in the 2025 pricing with lifeline screening at the lowered rate of \$259 per screening, excluding the colorectal screening as originally proposed. Action item: to lock-in lifeline for 2025 at the discounted pricing.

Mr. Kaufer stated that they have done all of the main components after everyone has gone through the cycle twice, you have been given the tools to - going forward it is more for the preventative screening and checking off their boxes as the other element. She stated that the major components are redundant after you've done them a few times already – preventive health standpoint. Mike suggested changing the program incentive for the future to give the \$250 for the basic requirements, and the additional \$250 if you complete all the requirements. More of a piecemeal instead of all or nothing. Mrs. Voza stated that providing a robust wellness program is the goal but we can't have the cost rise with each new member. Mr. Poff agreed with possibly making a cap on the new members. Maybe giving new members the screenings that they need but not the incentives. Mrs. Kaufer stated that the program is pretty much set for 2024 so this would all be going forward into 2025 where the committee can really set what they want with wellness requirements.

**Scope of Services for Wellness Coordinator**

Mrs. Eskilson is retiring and will no longer be the wellness coordinator until about March or 2024. She stated that she can work with Mrs. Voza to discuss the scope of services needed and she will be willing to train the new coordinator with the program transitions and how it runs. Committee agrees to extend

Mariannes contract to March 31, 2024. Marianne and Brittany will work on a draft RFP for the wellness consulting services and review further with the committee before sending out. The committee recommended continuing Marianne's contract through March of 2024 at the same contracted rate.