

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – June 2, 2014

The meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Lower, County of Cape May, State of New Jersey was held on June 2, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. in the meeting room of the Township Hall, 2600 Bayshore Road, Villas, New Jersey.

The Clerk announced that the meeting was being held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act and that adequate notice of the meeting had been provided according to law.

The following members of Council were present for roll call taken by the Clerk:

Councilmember Thomas Conrad
Councilmember James Neville
Councilmember Erik Simonsen
Deputy Mayor Clark
Mayor Michael Beck

Also present: Michael Voll, Township Manager, Ron Gelzunas, Township Solicitor and Karen Fournier, Clerk's Office

Work Session –

Councilmember Neville gave an update on the meeting involving the Beach Drive Improvement Plan. He thanked Mayor Beck and Deputy Mayor Clark for their attendance and commented on the amount of people present. Based on the opinions of the voices heard, Councilmember Neville recommended a resolution be drafted to abandon the project completely and not apply to the County for funding. He used this scenario to exemplify the importance of having a public information officer to keep people well informed.

Deputy Mayor Clark agreed with the importance of communication. He said that it was clearly expressed at the meeting what the people's positions were and that he was happy their voices were able to be heard.

Mayor Beck encouraged a consensus in response to Councilmember Neville's request to withdraw from the project. Councilmember Conrad agreed to drop the project.

Councilmember Simonsen agreed to drop the project for now but stated that the roads are still in need of repair. Deputy Mayor Clark acknowledged and thanked the Recreation Advisory Board for their work and position on the project.

Councilmember Neville made a request for the Police Department to enforce the speed limit along Beach Drive. Solicitor Gelzunas advised that a resolution revoking the previous resolution would suffice. Discussion ensued about the process.

Councilmember Simonsen expressed his gratitude to the Recreation Advisory Board for their efforts and good intentions.

Mayor Beck agreed and commented on the importance of communication.

Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes	May 19, 2014
Res. #2014-159	Payment of Vouchers \$ 810,501.15
Res. #2014-160	Change Order #1 (Tru Green) Provide Additional Slice Seed Repair to Freeman Douglass Football Field (additional \$850. due to damage from heavy traffic of games played in a short period of time)
Res. #2014-161	Appoint Public Information Officer for the year 2014 Without Public Bidding (Lauren Suit June 1 thru Dec 31, 2014 not to exceed \$10,500.)
Res. #2014-162	Approval for Pyro Spectaculars By Souza Fireworks to Load a Fireworks Barge in Lower Township (July 1 thru 4 for Atlantic City display)
Res. #2014-163	Issuance of Ice Cream Peddling and Ice Cream Salesmen Licenses for the Year 2014 (Kelly & Eric Blum Kona Ice)
Res. #2014-164	Resolution Approving Contract With HM Life Insurance for Stop Loss Coverage for Amerihealth Medical and Prescription Extraordinary Unspecifiable Services (June 1,2014 to May 31, 2015)
Res. #2014-165	Authorization to Participate in US Communities and National Joint Powers Alliance National Cooperative Contracts (Allowing Twp to buy competitively through co-op contracts)
Res. #2014-166	Annual Renewal of Liquor Licenses for the Year 2014-2015 (22 of 28 licenses)
Res. #2014-167	Resolution Authorizing The Cancellation of Taxes for the Remainder of 2014 on Real Property Acquired by the Delaware River and Bay Authority and the County of Cape May

(airport property acquired by DRBA and titled to the County of Cape May Block 500.01 Lots 3,4,5)

Ordinance #2014-06 An Ordinance Dissolving the Lower Township Municipal Utilities Authority Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:5A-20 – 1st reading - 2nd reading and public hearing to be scheduled after approval from Local Finance Board

Ordinance #2014-07 An Ordinance Amending The Code of the Township of Lower To Create A Water and Sewer Utility Division Within the Department of Public Works for the Township of Lower - 1st reading - 2nd reading and public hearing to be scheduled after approval from Local Finance Board

Councilmember Conrad requested to move Resolution #2014-161, Ordinance #2014-06 and Ordinance #2014-07 to the regular agenda.

Frank Seracco addressed Council for clarification on Resolution #2014-167.

Solicitor Gelzunas informed that the DRBA will be purchasing the property and turning it over to Cape May County.

	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
CONRAD			X			
NEVILLE		X	X			
SIMONSEN			X			
CLARK	X		X			
BECK			X			

Regular Agenda

Res. #2014-161

Appoint Public Information Officer for the year 2014 Without Public Bidding (Lauren Suit June 1 thru Dec 31, 2014 not to exceed \$10,500.)

Manager Voll explained the process leading up to the appointment.

Councilmember Conrad disagreed with the position, as he stated he is concerned about spending the money.

Councilmember Simonsen also disagreed with the position, as he feels it is the manager's duty.

Deputy Mayor Clark stressed the importance of the position and validated Ms. Suit's qualifications. He described communication as a two way street.

Mayor Beck expressed his favor with the position.

Linda Blanchette, Townbank, agreed with the reasons for having a public information officer, but questioned why the position was not put out to bid. She also asked if the PIO will be available for public comment.

Mayor Beck explained professional service contracts and responded to the public comment question.

Manager Voll communicated his interview process.

Solicitor Gelzunas informed of professional service exceptions from the statute.

	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
CONRAD				X		
NEVILLE	X		X			
SIMONSEN					X	
CLARK		X		X		
BECK				X		

Ordinance #2014-06 An Ordinance Dissolving the Lower Township Municipal Utilities Authority Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:5A-20 – 1st reading - 2nd reading and public hearing to be scheduled after approval from Local Finance Board

Councilmember Conrad stated that he still has unanswered questions but thanked the Clerk, Manager, Solicitor, Auditor and Mr. Douglass for helping him get some answers. He asked how much it will cost to move Public Works and expressed his concerns about future spending.

Manager Voll reminded about the township's bonding capacity and updated on what other communities are doing to consolidate government.

Councilmember Conrad argued the potential savings and referred to it as paper "monopoly" money. His priorities remain with Roseann Avenue and Bay Drive.

Mayor Beck refuted the comments about savings and argued Councilmember Conrad's reasoning.

Deputy Mayor Clark questioned Councilmember Conrad's reference to paper money and explained that it will delay a property tax increase.

Manager Voll asked Councilmember Conrad what else he wants to know. Discussion continued.

Councilmember Simonsen questioned the timing of the ordinance and prefers to make a decision after hearing from the MUA's attorney.

Manager Voll gave his rebuttal and reminded that the Governor endorses consolidation of government to save money.

Councilmember Conrad asked why this is being rushed.

Mayor Beck referred to the amount of savings at hand.

Councilmember Simonsen asked Manager Voll if he stands to get a raise from this.

Manager Voll insisted that he does not want a raise.

Mayor Beck commented on eliminating duplication to save money.

	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
CONRAD				X		
NEVILLE		X	X			
SIMONSEN				X		
CLARK	X		X			
BECK			X			

Ordinance #2014-07

An Ordinance Amending The Code of the Township of Lower To Create A Water and Sewer Utility Division Within the Department of Public Works for the Township of Lower - 1st reading - 2nd reading and public hearing to be scheduled after approval from Local Finance Board

	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
CONRAD				X		
NEVILLE		X	X			
SIMONSEN				X		
CLARK	X		X			
BECK			X			

Res. #2014-168 Authorizing Payment for 2014 Regional School Taxes (July thru December, 2014 total of \$6,013,966.50)

	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
CONRAD	X		X			
NEVILLE		X	X			
SIMONSEN					X	
CLARK			X			
BECK			X			

Res. #2014-169

Authorizing Payment to Lower Township Board of Education (for 2014 School Taxes July thru December, 2014 total of \$7,903,298.00)

	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
CONRAD			X			
NEVILLE	X		X			
SIMONSEN			X			
CLARK		X	X			
BECK			X			

Administrative Reports

Council Comments

Councilmember Conrad commented on the success of Community Day and chose to avert the crowded meeting on the Beach Drive Project. He reminded about road closures for the upcoming triathlon and informed that the jump will take place at 8:00 a.m.

Councilmember Neville is looking forward to the triathlon and the additional events being held on the ferry grounds this summer. He commented on the 40th birthday celebration for the MV Delaware and his attendance at the grand opening of the Grand Coffee House. He also encouraged residents to enjoy the Little League playoff games.

Councilmember Simonsen announced that he will be participating in the triathlon and reminded any interested volunteers to go to the Escape the Cape website to register. He thanked the Recreation Department for their support of the teen boys program and for providing a meeting place for "faces for autism". He also spoke about the dedication service for Micahel Scuza.

Deputy Mayor Clark talked about his commitment to public service and his continued work toward economic development, education and saving money for the taxpayers. He thanked Manager Voll for the selection process in choosing a public information officer and welcomed Lauren Suit to the team.

Manager Voll expressed his pride with the community and his aim to continue to improve our Township. He feels confident that Ms. Suit will do a great job.

Mayor Beck thanked Manager Voll for what he does for the Township. He announced the upcoming Escape the Cape Triathlon, Runway 5k, additional summer events at the ferry, and Cop Stops in Diamond Beach.

Manager Voll asked Council for an update on the fireworks fund raising. Deputy Mayor Clark agreed to give a report at the next meeting.

Call to Public

Janet Pitts of Villas, thanked Mayor Beck, Deputy Mayor Clark and Councilmember Neville for keeping their composure during the meeting on the Beach Drive Project. She requested that Council air all of their questions now concerning the MUA. Councilmember Conrad raised the question about Public Works. Mayor Beck explained. Ms. Pitts volunteered to get answers to any unanswered questions.

Dan Airs, Townbank Road, addressed Council with a question about consolidation and how it will affect the projected savings. Manager Voll explained that the savings will be on administration. Mr. Airs suggested an introduction of Lauren Suit.

Lauren Suit, Public Information Officer, introduced herself and stated that she looks forward to getting the good word out about Lower Township.

Jay Young, Cape May Beach, addressed Council with questions concerning the MUA's budget and rates. Solicitor Gelzunas addressed Mr. Young's concerns and explained that any rate increase would require an ordinance.

Bill Greenfield, Villas, inquired about a dune project by the Army Corps of Engineers. Councilmember Neville explained that the project was rejected by Council back in the '90's. Conversation followed about using dredged materials for beach fill. Mr. Greenfield also inquired about the fishing pier project. Mayor Beck discussed the Army Corps' objection with the fishing pier.

Joe Ganci, North Cape May, commented on the meeting about the Beach Drive Project and thanked the councilmembers who attended. He voiced his approval with the process of hiring a public information officer. He referenced the township's website video and warned that it may send a false message about dunes protecting us from a hurricane.

Glenn Douglass, North Cape May, expressed favor with dissolving the MUA, not just to save money, but to consolidate services and better utilize our resources. He also pointed out the great extent of fishing taking place along the Delaware Bay.

Jim Quinn, Townbank, commented on insurance companies opposing the safety of the dunes. He also made a suggestion regarding the high grass on vacant properties. Manager Voll informed of the process enforced by the Township Code Officer.

Joe Grund, North Cape May, thanked Council for saving the dunes. He also pointed out the hazard created by the dune stakes between Lincoln and Rosehill. Mayor Beck agreed to look into it.

Ed Butler, Villas, voiced his disappointment with the rejection of the Beach Drive Project. He suggested a compromise for the good of the township. He commented on the absence of council meeting broadcasts. Manager Voll explained.

Johnny Walker pointed out the consistent 3-2 vote from Council. He suggested that Council start voting for the people of the township instead of their political party. Councilmember Conrad stated that he does vote for the people.

Adjournment

There being no further business to address, motion to adjourn moved by Councilmember Neville, seconded by Councilmember Conrad. Motion to adjourn unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.


Mayor


Township Clerk

Approved: June 16, 2014