

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – March 23, 2015

The SPECIAL meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Lower, County of Cape May, State of New Jersey was held on March 23, 2015 at 4:00 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 David Perry
Councilmember Erik Simonsen
Deputy Mayor Clark
Mayor Michael Beck

Also present: James Ridgway, Township Manager, David Stefankiewicz, Township Solicitor and Karen Fournier, Clerk's Office

Regular Agenda

Res. # 2015- 105 Resolution Authorizing A Request for Funds From the Lower Township Municipal Utilities Authority

Robert Rizzo, Mickel's Run, argued his case against using ratepayer money to pay for hiring new police officers. He urged Council to find another way to save the \$200,000.

Bill Murphy, Townbank, member of the LTMUA Board, spoke his objection to using LTMUA money for police officers. He prefers the money be reserved for infrastructure use.

Fred Long, Cold Spring, talked about the Township's use of surplus and suggested that Council urge the LTMUA to explore ways to leverage their surplus to begin needed projects in their capital program.

Councilmember Simonsen reaffirmed his obligation to do what he feels is in the best interest of the Township. He believes this would allow a way to reduce the tax rate and improve safety in the Township. He also reminded that upcoming retirements will account for the \$200,000.

Councilmember Conrad compared this request to a grant program and indicated that it is needed as a result of prior spending. He reminded that the resolution is a request; it does not guarantee payment and it is not stealing. His constituents communicated their concern for safety and the desire to see more officers on the streets.

Councilmember Perry pointed out that this is common practice in other municipalities. He believes public safety should be top priority, in conjunction with meeting our fiscal responsibilities. He commented on the fluctuation in past year's tax rates and expressed a desire for more consistency. He reaffirmed his responsibility to the taxpayers to do what he can to keep the tax rate down.

Deputy Mayor Clark voiced discontent with the fact that discussion on this matter was not reserved for a regular meeting. He communicated reasons for believing that this is poor planning and bad policy. He stated the mission of the LTMUA: to take care of infrastructure for water and sewer, to keep rates low and to preserve a surplus for emergencies. He emphasized the reasons he believes this is a mistake for the LTMUA, the ratepayers and the Township. He suggested refunding the ratepayers. He concluded by restating his strong opposition.

Manager Ridgway reminded about the provisional budget as introduced and his diligence in making reductions. He pointed out the state law that allows the municipality to accept five percent of authority surplus. He said further cuts would mean cutting services. He believes the amount being requested is reasonable.

Mayor Beck stood firm in his opposition to receiving money from the LTMUA and offered his opinion about how it will affect future budgets. He voiced concern for the eighty percent of taxpayers that are not ratepayers. He spoke about infrastructure problems and how he believes the money should be used.

Councilmember Conrad disagreed with Mayor Beck and past Council's spending to try to dissolve the LTMUA. He talked about the intent of the special meeting and addressed the LTMUA infrastructure problems.

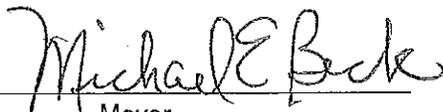
Mayor Beck refuted Councilmember Conrad's comments. A disagreement ensued.

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

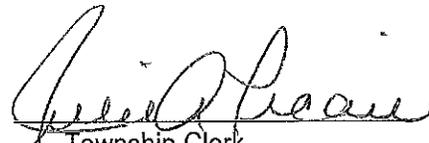
Call to Public

Adjournment

There being no further business to address, motion to adjourn moved by Councilmember Simonsen, seconded by Councilmember Conrad. Motion to adjourn unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 4:32 p.m.



Mayor



Township Clerk

Approved: April 6, 2015