

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – April 20, 2015

The meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Lower, County of Cape May, State of New Jersey was held on April 26, 2015 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 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

Proclamation - Coast Guard Community Week

Proclamation - Arrow of Light Award - Joshua Smith & John Payne

Proclamation - Alcohol Awareness Month

Mayor Beck opened the meeting with a proclamation designating April, 2015 as Alcohol Awareness Month.

Cory Hanahan, Lower Township resident, spoke briefly about the beach cleanup scheduled for Saturday, April 25 beginning at 9:30 on Pinewood Road, ending at Douglass Park Pavilion. He encouraged everyone to help.

Work Session

Public Discussion on the 2015 Budget will take place immediately following the budget presentation

2015 Budget Hearing – Leon Costello/Lauren Read

Municipal Auditor, Leon Costello of Ford Scott & Associates, presented a summary of the 2015 budget, including a 1.9 cent tax rate increase. This budget meets all state-mandated caps and funds all township services with no cuts. He informed of a proposed amendment to add \$205,000 of revenue as a contribution from the LTMUA. The amendment will follow the public hearing.

Mayor Beck pointed out that public discussion will include Resolution #2015-132, #2015-133 and Resolution #2015-125: Amendment, Adoption and Self-Examination of the 2015 Budget.

John Skowronski, 607 Arctic Avenue, asked how much money was cut out of the budget from last year.

Lauren Read, Township CFO, informed that the budget started at an increase of 3.3 cents. \$277,572 was cut prior to introduction. Mr. Skowronski questioned the savings. Mayor Beck explained.

Mayor Beck asked the auditor why we don't use the surplus. Mr. Costello explained that the more surplus used the more dependent you become the following year. Mayor Beck commented on an outstanding collection rate.

Mr. Skowronski questioned the amount of Revenue for the 2015 Budget.

Helen Thompson, Villas, asked how much terminal leave is allotted to former Manager, Mike Voll. Lauren Read informed \$26,265. Ms. Thompson questioned the cost to remove Mike Voll. Mayor Beck explained some of the variables and informed that calculations cannot be done at the present time.

Councilmember Conrad voiced pleasure with the ability to cut the budget from a 4 cents increase to 1.9 cents without having to cut services. He hopes to keep taxes stabilized for the future.

Councilmember Perry gave credit to Lauren Read and everyone who worked on the budget. He expressed favor with not cutting services and keeping the increase below 2 cents.

Councilmember Simonsen thanked Lauren Read, Leon Costello, department heads and all others who worked on the budget. He believes the Township gained services as opposed to losing them and will be in better shape next year.

Deputy Mayor Clark commented on putting more cops on the street and expressed disapproval with several aspects of the budget including: the decision not to dissolve the LTMUA, using LTMUA surplus to fund the budget, and replacing the township solicitor with one that charges more money.

Mayor Beck voiced his reasons for disapproving the budget, starting with the LTMUA. He believes that the potential to save significant money lies in dissolving the LTMUA. He disagrees with using the LTMUA surplus to offset the budget and he does not support the hiring of new police officers so quickly due to the financial burden it puts on our taxpayers.

Councilmember Conrad countered Mayor Beck's comments. A brief discussion ensued. Deputy Mayor Clark referred back to the advice of the Local Finance Board. Councilmember Conrad and Mayor Beck disagreed about spending money to investigate a potential savings by dissolving the LTMUA.

Res. #2015-132 Amendment to 2015 Budget (State Aid & Revenue Line)

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

Res. #2015-133 Adoption of 2015 Budget As Amended

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

Res. #2015-125 Resolution for Self-Examination of Budget (requirement)

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

Consent Agenda

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|---------------------|---|
| Approval of Minutes | April 6, 2015 |
| Res. #2015-123 | Payment of Vouchers \$295,342.01 |
| Res. #2015-124 | Approval of Seashore Community Church of the Nazarene's Request to conduct a Flea Market/Spring Festival (May 2 nd) |
| Res. #2015-126 | Approval for Roadside Solicitation by Erma Volunteer Fire Company (May 23, June 20, July 5 & Aug 22) |
| Res. #2015-127 | Authorization for Waiver of Fees for Historic Cold Spring Village (reconstruction of barn) |
| Res. #2015-128 | Renewal of 2015 Campground License (Cape Island Campground) |
| Res. #2015-129 | Approval of 2015 Rotary Towing License (John's Auto Body) |
| Res. #2015-131 | Contract Award with Advanced Electronic Design d/b/a Patrol PC for Three (3) In Car Police Cameras (\$23,802. Cameras/server/software/training) |

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

Res. #2015-130

A Resolution Authorizing the Indemnification and Defense in Accordance with Chapter 25 of the Code of the Township of Lower (J. Neville)

Councilmember Simonsen questioned the amount. Clerk Picard stated the amount, \$3,079.22. Councilmember Simonsen voiced his disapproval with paying it. Deputy Mayor Clark asked Manager Ridgway about seeking legal counsel on this matter. Manager Ridgway was referred to Labor Attorney, Bill Blaney, who advised him to add a clause indemnifying the Township and the LTMUA. Solicitor Stefankiewicz had recused himself due to the appearance of a conflict. Mayor Beck inquired about the motivation behind Mr. Blaney's legal advice. Solicitor Stefankiewicz intervened to advise that any further discussion on the matter be reserved for a closed session. Manager Ridgway communicated that Mr. Blaney did not make a suggestion either way. Council discussed the possibility of tabling the resolution to discuss it in closed session. No motion was made to table the resolution.

Frank Sarocco, North Cape May, questioned the allegations and communicated the determination from the County Prosecutor's office. He insisted that former Councilman Neville did nothing wrong.

Helen Thompson, Villas, reminded Council that you are innocent until proven guilty in this country and that this case has been dismissed.

Ed Bulter, Villas, questioned the difference between this and the recent indemnification of a Township employee.

Deputy Mayor Clark made a motion to approve Resolution #2015-130.

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

Administrative Reports

Monthly Reports - Clerk, Construction, Dog, Fire Safety, Police, Tax Collector, Vital Statistics

Council Comments

Councilmember Conrad welcomed Spring and offered support to Michael Nolan on a potential upcoming Eagle Scout project. He also announced the Relay for Life Event and encouraged donations and volunteers.

Councilmember Perry commented on the success of Little League's Opening Day Ceremonies and encouraged help with Saturday's beach clean-up.

Councilmember Simonsen spoke briefly about Little League's Opening Day Ceremonies and complimented Tod Shoffler and Little League Board Members as well as many volunteers, coaches and the Teitelman Band for another successful event. He reminded about the Thomas Family Benefit and Family Fitness Night at LCMR. He also validated his support for 46 police officers.

Deputy Mayor Clark offered his sincere appreciation for the outpouring of support from the community in the recent loss of his father.

Mayor Beck addressed the comment on the heroin issue and reiterated his perspective about hiring police officers. He made several announcements including Beach Cleanup, Arbor Day, the Thomas Family fund raiser, and the Coast Guard Community Festival.

Councilmember Conrad reminded about the Coast Guard Base being open for tours.

Call to Public

John Skowronski, addressed Councilmember Simonsen about his comments on heroin use in Cape May County.

Ed Butler, Villas, added comments regarding the crime rate and the number of police officers on the street. He also addressed the Council meeting time.

Bill Murphy, Townbank, gave a synopsis of the chain of events involving his MUA appointment. He read a prepared statement and voiced displeasure with the actions of certain Council members and Ms. Dynan.

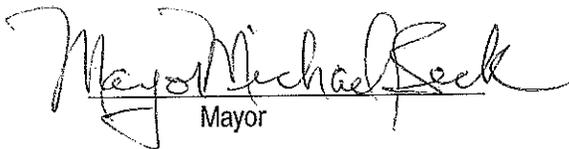
Melissa Roy, Tecumseh Road, commended Councilmember Simonsen for standing up for his beliefs. She also voiced favor with hiring more police officers.

Rosalie Gallagher, Cape May Beach, addressed Councilmember Simonsen to ask about alcohol awareness in school.

Helen Thompson, Villas, asked Solicitor Stefankiewicz for an update on the animal ordinance. She also offered her opinion about not needing four additional police officers.

Adjournment

There being no further business to address, motion to adjourn moved by Councilmember Conrad, seconded by Councilmember Simonsen. Motion to adjourn unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.


Mayor


Township Clerk

Approved: May 4, 2015