

Regular & Work Session Meeting Minutes - March 29, 2010

The regular meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Lower, County of Cape May, State of New Jersey was held on March 29, 2010 at 7:00 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 Wayne Mazurek
Councilmember Glenn Douglass
Deputy Mayor Kevin Lare
Mayor Michael Beck

Also present: Anthony Monzo, Solicitor, and Kathleen McPherson, Manager
Leon Costello - Auditor

April - Autism Month - Jason Pisieczko

Mayor Beck introduced Lisa Bryant who spoke on a personal level about having a child with autism. Jason, her son read a letter to the Mayor and Council about his autism and some of the issues he faced.

Proclamation -In Support of Organ and Tissue Donation

Mayor Beck read a proclamation regarding the importance of organ and tissue donation.

Certificates of Recognition - Lower Cape May Regional HS

Mayor Beck presented certificates to the Basketball and Wrestling team for their accomplishments.

WORK SESSION

Leon Costello, Municipal Auditor - Budget Introduction Presentation

Mr. Costello said it was the formal start of the budget process introduction. He said as last year they had planned a work shop on April 19th. He said people could do a review and have their questions for the April 19th meeting. He said at the May 3rd public hearing questions could also be asked and at that point they could change anything. Mr. Costello highlighted some things as a reveal that was a devaluation and not all the taxpayers were treated the same. He said the budget had been in both CAPS. He stated the budget was legal to present, there was an increase in salaries 1.72% other expenses were up 3 ½ %. The Township had lost \$393,000 in State Aid and were still in the CAPS, local revenue was down \$183,000 which was typical due to the economy. He said the fund balance didn't change they were using about the same as last year, the tax collection fell slightly again due to the economy.

Mr. Costello said it was a well put together budget. He mentioned the benefits had changed which saved a little and that helped. He said changes could be made at the official public hearing on May 3rd and 3 votes were needed. He

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said if there no changes were more than 10% the budget could be adopted on May 3rd. He said the budget wouldn't change unless the number of employees changed and that wasn't just Lower Township that was everywhere. He mentioned the Governor's speech and said one thing that passed was the 1.5% towards health coverage and for Lower Township it would take effect in 2011 for contracts that expired in 2010. Mayor Beck said the April 19th meeting would be at 6:00 p.m. and there was no meeting on April 5th.

Council Comment on the Budget

Mayor Beck stated Council as a whole started preparing last year for this year's budget. He said April 19th was the night for questions.

Public Comment on the Budget

Joe Winters of Florida Ave. asked what the numbers were?

Mr. Costello gave out a summary sheet.

Fred Long of Cold Spring asked if it was correct the meeting on April 19th started at 6:00 p.m. then followed by the regular council meeting.

Mayor Beck said yes.

Mr. Long asked if Council asked the CFO to cut \$500,000 out of the budget where would they start?

Mr. Costello said he would have to ask how many people would they want laid off and what programs they wanted cut. He said when they get to the budget hearing May 3rd most of the money would have been spent. He said any change in staffing would not affect this budget it would affect the 2011 budget.

Joe Winters asked about the local purpose tax.

Councilmember Mazurek said it was important to understand when they cut staff that meant a cut in services. He said they weren't able to run services if people were laid off.

Mr. Winters said they needed to raise revenue and asked about liquor license and campground fees.

The Township Clerk explained the fees for the licenses.

Deputy Mayor Lare asked Mr. Costello about the School District could only carry 2% surplus and asked about the towns. He said no member of Council was aware of any layoffs.

Mayor Beck said they were not recommending any layoffs and he said they all agreed that 2.6 cents was too much and they would try and cut what they could. He said they had to finish the contracts and the next time it would be different.

Ed Butler of Delaware Bay Drive said they needed to open the tool box and talk to the unions and employees, every town was getting concessions. He said he hadn't seen anything in the paper.

Deputy Mayor Lare said the Manager was in the process of talking with the unions.

Mayor Beck said the towns Mr. Butler read about were the ones laying people off and they were over the CAP. He said they wouldn't fill positions again this year.

Mr. Butler questioned the number of employees.

Manager McPherson said there were 137 full time, 23 part time, 2 full time vacancies and 1 part time vacancy.

Mr. Butler said running the Township was a business.

Review of Consent and Regular Agenda Items

No Council comments.

Public Questions on Consent Agenda and/or Regular Agenda Items

No public comments.

Consent Agenda

Mayor Beck explained Res. #2010-110 NASW, it was a great program and asked for support on it.

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- Approval of Minutes March 15, 2010
- Membership Approval N.J. State Firemen s Association Application - Erma Vol. Fire Co. - Ryan S. Sheets & Evan D. Hansen, Villas Vol. Fire Co. - John C. Snyder, Robert J. Richman & Christopher M. Parcell
- Res. #2010-99, Payment of Vouchers, \$5,367,374.15
- Res. #2010-100, A Resolution Requesting Release of Maintenance Guarantee for Treasure Chest Antiques; Block 628, Lots etc.; Escrow P04-08-01
- Res. #2010-101, A Resolution Requesting Release of Performance Guarantee for S. W. Bajus, Ltd.; Block 690, Lot 1.01, Escrow P#08-04-65
- Res. #2010-102, Resolution for Emergency Temporary Appropriations
- Res. #2010-103, Refund of Taxes (5 refunds - duplicate)
- Res. #2010-104, Introduction of the 2010 Municipal Budget (Budget workshop 6 p.m. April 19, public hearing & adoption May 3)
- Res. #2010-105, Resolutions Amending the Meeting Time for April 19, 2010 (changing time from 7 p.m. to 6 p.m.)
- Res. #2010-106, Click It or Ticket
- Res. #2010-107, Recycling Tonnage Grant Application (Annual resolution)
- Res. #2010-108, Resolution Supporting New Jersey Department of Transportation s Recommendation to Establish A No Passing Zone the Entire Length of Route 9 in Lower Township (Recommendation & request of DOT)
- Res. #2010-109, Resolution Approving Project Proposal Between Hatch Mott MacDonald and the Township of Lower For Permitting and Engineering Services Related to Reconstruction of the Storm Damaged Area of the Outfall at Holmes Avenue and the Permit/Engineering Plans and Construction Documents for Holmes Avenue and the Five Remaining (\$41,350.00)
- Res. #2010-110, Resolution Supporting the Naval Air Station Wildwood Aviation Museum ACE Summer Academy

Councilmember Conrad motioned to adopt the consent agenda, seconded by Councilmember Douglass. The consent agenda was adopted by the following roll call vote: Councilmember Conrad, yes , Councilmember Mazurek, yes , Councilmember Douglass, yes , Deputy Mayor Lare, yes , Mayor Beck , yes .

Administrative Reports

Manager s Budget Message

Council Comments

Fireworks

Councilmember Conrad said he hoped to see the public on April 19th.
Deputy Mayor Lare said the DRBA wasn t funding the fireworks. He said Council was faced with the decision of whether or not to hold the Independence Day Festival along the bay.
Councilmember Conrad said he didnt think there were any vendors.
Manager McPherson said they wouldnt have a big turn out without vendors.

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Mayor Beck said they may want to discuss the Township taking over the fireworks.

Deputy Mayor Lare said he didn't see the DRBA changing, if they didn't show a profit for the fireworks they couldn't do it anymore. He said the Township spent \$27,000 on the festival.

Councilmember Mazurek asked what Cape May was doing and maybe it could be a combined event.

Councilmember Douglass said the problem would be with permits, to get them it was a little late.

Mayor Beck said he would like a formal recommendation from the Recreation Department.

Councilmember Douglass said maybe get the Lower Township Chamber of Commerce involved and other groups to help out.

Mayor Beck announced there would be an Easter Egg Hunt at the Freeman Douglass Memorial Park on April 3rd at 10:00 a.m.. He said there was substantial flooding throughout the Township. He said the CMC Health Department would test wells if the homeowners well and septic had been underwater.

Manager McPherson said her office was collecting names of residents affected by the flooding.

Storm Damage

Art Treon, Office of Emergency Management explained the process for possible help from FEMA for those affected by the flooding of March 12, 13 & 14th. He said anyone who applied must have received a check or a denial letter from their insurance company and without that they couldn't apply. It must be their primary residence and advised people to take pictures of the damage.

Public Comments

Fishing Creek Meadows

Harry McCloy of Tampa Ave. asked what was going on with Fishing Creek, he was told the pumps weren't doing the job. He said the storm drains were sinking and there were a lot of potholes. He said the pipes were breaking and peoples yards were sinking. He said the Township had to contact the County and get something done. He added the roads were deteriorating.

Councilmember Conrad explained what the Mosquito Commission wanted done.

Mayor Beck said that information was different from what they had. He had received an email saying the water was lower than it had ever been.

Councilmember Conrad said if he went by the levels they were high.

Mayor Beck asked the Manager to have Bill Galestok or Gary Douglass go take a look at the area and let Council know what the story was.

Mr. McCloy said he had been complaining for years.

A discussion ensued regarding the pumps whether or not they were always working properly.

Mr. McCloy said the answer was to open the flood gates but the County didn't want to do that.

Lois Grimes of 210 Frances Avenue said her house was sitting in water but the new outfall pipe was working. She said regarding the budget she wasn't in favor of laying off Police, Teachers, Public Works, EMT's and Fire Service because those people kept things going, she suggested looking at management.

Joe Boyle of Arizona Avenue said they could go on his property and see the water.

Frank Seracco of Tampa Avenue said the two storm drains at Mr. McCloy's property went to Pirate Road and ran into Fishing Creek when that was full the water couldn't go anywhere.

Mayor Beck said he would like to see if the gates were open would that make a difference.

Budget

Jack Sparks of North Cape May said everyone heard the auditor say the only way to lower costs was to lay off. He urged Council to see if they could do business with the unions. He said he had a letter to the editor going in listing the 15 highest paid employees and 14 of them were police. He said some of them had a 16-18% increase and that was obscene he felt they should be able to take some kind of cut. He said seniors hadn't had a raise in years.

Mr. Sparks said there were kids in school and a lot of their families were below poverty level. He said 4% raises

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were not the case today.

Mayor Beck said he agreed with Mr. Sparks and supported what the Governor did. He said interest arbitration had to be addressed and wanted it adjusted significantly.

Bob Rizzo said his insurance cost had gone up \$50.00 a month. He said seniors had suffered setbacks and can't keep up. He said they had less money and had to spend more. He said they needed to do something to get the costs down.

Mr. Rizzo said people were moving out of state and needed to hold the line on taxes.

Mr. Serraco said he read in the paper that Cape May County was the 12th in the nation as the most expensive place to live. He said another article stated that New Jersey was one of the most unaffordable places to live. He said something had to be done. He said out of his social security check \$100 was taken right out for medicare. He said after bills were paid there was no money left to live off of.

Mr. Serraco said Council had a tough decision to make.

Mayor Beck said the mess wasn't created in a year and it was going to take time to fix things. He said the Township had to pay bills and meet obligations. He said they did not replace five or six spots last year and they didn't plan on filling any vacant spots.

Councilmember Mazurek said a 2.6 cents cut would mean over one million dollars would have to be cut. He said even if they cut all the stuff that still would not save the million. He said the Township didn't spend \$300,000 on stuff. He asked what programs the public didn't want. He said the Police were down to 39 and they weren't happy they used to have 45. He said they had to look at lowering the starting salaries.

Mr. Rizzo said in the Gazette it listed the snow costs throughout the County but Lower Township wasn't in there.

Manager McPherson said it was about \$200,000.00.

Mr. Rizzo asked about the storm clean up.

Manager McPherson said the next clean up would be on April 17th.

Deputy Mayor Lare thought the overtime clean up would be covered by FEMA.

Manager McPherson said they were keeping track of it in case they did cover it.

There being no further comment, Councilmember Mazurek motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilmember Douglass the meeting unanimously adjourned by verbal ayes at 8:35 p.m.

Mayor

Township Clerk

Approved: April 19, 2010