

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – May 1, 2023

The meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Lower, County of Cape May, State of New Jersey was held on May 1, 2023 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 Kevin Coombs
 Councilmember Roland Roy, Jr.
 Deputy Mayor David Perry
 Mayor Frank Sippel

Also present: David Stefankiewicz, Township Solicitor and Karen Fournier, Deputy Township Clerk

Work Session

Proclamation - Kaitlyn Crouthamel

Mayor Sippel presented a Proclamation on behalf of Council to Kaitlyn Crouthamel for outstanding performance on the LCMR swim team.

2023 Budget Hearing

Deputy Manager Picard read the Budget Message, highlighting the mitigating factors contributing to a tax rate increase. See Budget Message attached.

Auditor Leon Costello, Ford Scott & Associates, pointed out the Township's minimal tax increase compared to other municipalities throughout the State. He communicated the process and advised a resolution is needed prior to adoption to amend the budget to use additional surplus. He complimented the Township for keeping the increase low.

Mayor Sippel thanked Mr. Costello and applauded his dedication. He also spoke of several factors involved with the budget and how the increase will affect property owners.

Councilmember Roy thanked all parties involved in keeping the increase low.

Councilmember Coombs echoed the above comment.

Public Hearing – no comments entertained.

Res. #2023-168 A Resolution to Amend the 2023 Budget to use additional surplus money

	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	RECUSE	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
CONRAD							X
COOMBS		X	X				
ROY			X				
PERRY			X				
SIPPEL	X		X				

Res. # 2023-153 Adoption of the 2023 Budget – As Amended

	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	RECUSE	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
CONRAD							X
COOMBS			X				
ROY		X	X				
PERRY	X		X				
SIPPEL			X				

Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes –April 17, 2023

Res. #2023-154 Authorization for the payment of vouchers \$900,763.65

Res. #2023-155 A Resolution Requesting Release of Revegetation and Restoration Guarantee for Dune Site Plan; Block 494.02, Lot 2.10 and 2.18, Escrow #P DEPAOL

- Res. #2023-156 A Resolution Requesting Release of Revegetation and Restoration Guarantee for Dune Site Plan; Block 512.14, Lot 7, Escrow #P12-07-06
- Res. #2023-157 A Resolution Affirming the Lower Township Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment's Decision to Retain its Former Board Engineer, Mott MacDonald, to Complete the Review and Inspection of Pending Development Projects that were Approved During It's Tenure as Board Engineer
- Res. #2023-158 A Resolution Approving the Lower Township Children's Fund Concert
- Res. #2023-159 Authorizing the Assignment of Three (3) Tax Sale Certificates
- Res. #2023-160 Approval of Greater Cape May Elks Lodge #2839 Application to Conduct a Flea Market
- Res. #2023-161 Approving Change Order #1 to Fred M. Schiavone Construction to Repair Pool Bonding/Removing Coping and Replacing with Concrete/Replace Pipe Thru Pool at 18 Locations/Replace Skimmers at 7 Locations for the Municipal Pool Renovations (\$21,490.89)
- Res. #2023-162 Approving Change Order #1 with DeBlasio & Associates for Additional Services for the FY2023 NJDOT Municipal Aid to Include the Reconstruction of Bay Drive Survey and Engineering Design Phase (LT-C-034) (\$60,000)
- Res. #2023-163 Approving a Professional Service Contract with DeBlasio & Associates to Prepare and Submit an Application for the Surplus FY2023 NJDOT State Aid Program
- Res. #2023-164 Authorization for the Payout of Accumulated Compensatory Time (W.Kocis \$6,243.29)
- Res. #2023-165 Authorizing Payment for 2023 Regional School Taxes
- Res. #2023-166 Insertion of Special Item of Revenue Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:4-87, Chapter 159 (NJ DOT Municipal Aid \$170,085)
- Res. #2023-167 Bid Acceptance and Award to Replaster and Repair the Lower Township Community Swimming Pool

Mayor Sippel commented in favor of Resolution #2023-158.

On the Consent:

	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	RECUSE	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
CONRAD							X
COOMBS	X		X				
ROY		X	X				
PERRY			X				
SIPPEL			X				

Regular Agenda

Ordinance #2023-06 An Ordinance of the Township of Lower Vacating, Surrendering and Extinguishing the Public Rights of a Portion of Yuma Avenue located between Cardinal Avenue and Georgia Avenue.

MOTION TO TABLE ORDINANCE #2023-06

	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	RECUSE	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
CONRAD							X
COOMBS			X				
ROY		X	X				
PERRY			X				
SIPPEL	X		X				

Administrative Reports

Finance

Personnel Action Report

Public Comment - None

Council Comments

Councilmember Coombs thanked all parties for their work on the budget.

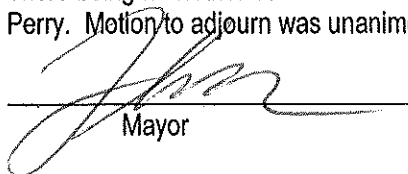
Councilmember Roy – no comments

Deputy Mayor Perry – no comments

Mayor Sippel shared the Township's participation in a pilot program for mental illness called Arrive. He also announced the following upcoming events: Cinco de Mayo, Villas Fire Company Mother's Day Breakfast, Shred Day, Family Fun Night and Veteran's Day Ceremony.

Adjournment

There being no further business to address, motion to adjourn moved by Mayor Sippel, seconded by Deputy Mayor Perry. Motion to adjourn was unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 5:27 p.m.



Mayor



Township Clerk

Approved: 5/19/23

**MANAGER'S ANNUAL BUDGET MESSAGE
2023 BUDGET HEARING – 5/1/23**

Mayor and Council received copies of the proposed municipal budget for 2023 and due to several mitigating factors, the local tax rate had an increase of 2.5 cents. Since introduction, adjustments were made to increase the use of surplus and reduce that amount to 2.2 cents. The 2023 tax levy is \$23,021,351 (Twenty-three million, twenty-one thousand, three hundred and fifty-one dollars) compared to last years \$22,019,630 (Twenty-two million, nineteen thousand, six hundred and thirty dollars), an increase of \$1,001,721 (One million, one thousand, seven hundred and twenty-one dollars).

The major contributors to this increase were insurance, utilities and pension. These lines increased by over \$1.3 million combined.

The Township completed 2022 with a surplus of \$8,422,356 (Eight million, four-hundred and twenty-two thousand, three hundred and fifty-six dollars). Of that balance \$4,360,000 (Four million, three hundred and sixty thousand dollars) is being applied to this year's budget with \$1,065,000 (One million, sixty-five thousand dollars) being used to pay down unfunded capital debt. These totals fall well within the parameters of our fund balance policy and projections show that surplus will be replenished at year-end.

The tax collection rate for 2022 was 99.25%, one of our highest to date. This collection rate added almost \$1.6 million to the surplus. This year's budget anticipates a new revenue line for occupancy taxes which is estimated to bring in at least \$514,000.

The total assessed value of real property is \$3,722,771,400 (Three billion, seven-hundred twenty-two million, seven-hundred seventy-one thousand, four-hundred dollars), an increase from last year of over \$22 million. One cent on the tax rate equals \$372,277. This budget uses a 97.41% rate to compute the reserve for uncollected taxes.