

WESTAMPTON TOWNSHIP

7:00 PM CLOSED SESSION REGULAR MEETING 8:00 PM

MARCH 23, 2010

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 PM by Mayor Sidney Camp. Requirements of the Sunshine Law were read. This meeting was advertised in the Burlington County Times January 6, 2010. The flag was saluted and there was a moment of silence.

Roll Call:

Committeeman Adams	Present
Committeeman Daniels	Present
Committeeman Maybury	Present
Committeeman Robbins	Present
Mayor Camp	Present

George Saponaro, Solicitor, was present.

Donna Ryan, Clerk/Administrator, and Marion Karp, Deputy Clerk were present.

Minutes of the March 9, 2010 meeting. Motion to accept by Mr. Adams, second by Mr. Robbins. All voted yes, Mr. Daniels abstained. Closed session minutes of March 9, 2010. Motion to accept by Mr. Robbins, second by Mr. Adams. All voted yes, Mr. Daniels abstained.

Scheduled Appointments

None

Comments on agenda items

No comments were made.

Continued Agenda Items

Dolan Contractors – nothing new on this at this point

Old Business

Rancocas Village traffic – the study is complete, however there is no report yet. Will have it by the next meeting on April 13th.

New Business

Fernwood Springs Farm – Mr. Chitester contacted the State regarding preservation

Bureau of Fire Prevention Report – no comments

Municipal Court Reports – Mayor Camp had some questions about what amount represented the Township profit.

Public Works Report – DEP revised the law regarding storage of leaves in the street since no one could adhere to it

Police Report – no comments

Raffle License #4-2010 (Deborah Hospital, 4/22/10, Moose Lodge) – motion to approve by Mr. Adams; seconded by Mr. Daniels. All voted yes, with the exception of Mr. Robbins, who abstained.

EMS Report – the EMS/Fire Department participated in Read Across America at Holly Hills School. There was a nice letter of thanks attached to the report from an Eastampton resident, according to the Mayor.

Ordinances

None

Resolutions

41-10 Payment of Vouchers – motion to approve by Mr. Adams; seconded by Mr. Maybury. All voted yes.

42-10 Transfer of Appropriation Reserves – motion to approve by Mr. Daniels; seconded by Mr. Robbins. All voted yes.

43-10 Executive Session – for discussion of personnel and the budget. Motion to approve by Mr. Adams; seconded by Mr. Maybury. All voted yes.

Correspondence

Donna Ryan read aloud a letter from Janet Curran which was written to the Committee; she expressed her opinion regarding the budget crisis and said she hoped that no one would lose their jobs. She also extended her good wishes on the grand opening of Westampton Sports Complex.

Mayor Camp read aloud a piece of correspondence from a resident, Michael Eaton, regarding the budget crisis. Mr. Eaton had attended the February 23, 2010 meeting at which the public were invited to comment on the budget for an hour before the regularly scheduled meeting. Mr. Eaton felt that all Township employees and departments should cooperate and do their part in helping reduce the budget deficit. He was dismayed to find out that this kind of cooperation was not going to be forthcoming and spoke about an employee who displayed a particularly negative attitude of entitlement.

Dates to remember

March 27, 2010 – first baseball games to take place at the new Westampton Sports Complex. This is a soft opening and will take place at 9:00 AM.

May 13, 2010 – Hilton Garden Inn grand opening celebration

Comments

Mr. Daniels – reminded everyone that they should fill out and send in their Census forms.

Public Comment

Christian Taylor – is a mechanic in the Westampton Public Works Department. They have received word today that the Committee is seeking to lay off 4 employees. He wanted to know why the Township was balancing the budget on their backs. They haven't asked anyone to sit down and discuss give backs; we all have to sit down together and talk. He requested a council member sit down with them and talk about it. Everyone has to give a little bit; not just the Public Works Department.

Garfield Harper – hopes that the Committee has learned something about what has happened in the Township. Even though they didn't create what happened, you cannot run a Township without raising taxes. The former Mayor ran around for 15 years beating his chest and exclaiming that he never raised taxes. He hopes that they have learned from this; the Township is a business and must be run like one. The tax increases did not keep up with inflation; anyone with common sense should know that taxes have to be raised to run a Township. It is bad management of business as far as he is concerned.

John Mumbower – the State and Township are in a fiscal crisis. The school board is considering cutting programs and laying off non tenured teachers. The Township residents cannot afford to pay all the salaries, health care and pension benefits. He urges the police to be flexible with this. He respects their service but they are faced with diminishing state aid, school aid and a statewide financial crisis.

Lori Hustus – wants cuts made across the Board; not just in the Public Works Department.

Jayne Boone – asked about the compensation plan for employees who opt out of taking health insurance. She asked why this practice continued and wanted to know if this was being looked at as part of the budget process. Mayor Camp answered that the State has mandated payment and that this is on the table.

Lou Hustus – asked how much the new contribution would be towards health benefits; it would be 1.5% of the employee's salary.

Rick Smith – police officers pay 8.5% of their gross salary into the pension system every week.

Mike Meenan – the Public Works Department does as well.

Gene Blair – the Administrative and Public Works employees have started paying \$10 towards their health care benefits each week. He wants the Committee to make the cuts across the Board and consider all employees; he thinks this would be in the best interest of all the employees.

Bruce Boone – works for the Westampton Public Works Department. He asked if there has been any thought to selling the swim club and perhaps selling the land for homes to be built. It is a liability and costs us money; he wanted to know if it could be sold or leased to raise funds. Mayor Camp stated that we haven't considered this; but the Committee wants to re evaluate the lease agreement on the property. It is something that is on their radar.

Russ Hansel – wants to know what we pay for the swim club. Costs include the trash dumpster, insurance; grass cutting and some maintenance. There is no figure at this moment projected in the budget.

Chris Taylor – has future work to be done on the swim club; the concrete, pump and lights will need to be replaced, they are cutting trees all the time. He asked about paying the costs on the old Community Center and the Rancocas Firehouse.

Jayne Boone – asked if the Township has considered auctioning off any old equipment. We do this every few years.

Mr. Robbins – over 65% of the budget is salaries, health care and pension costs. The Committee is not in agreement at all regarding the budget.

Jayne Boone – it is a poor business decision to pay people who do not take health benefits.

Chris Taylor – asked for the breakdown of each department. A total of \$6.2 million of the budget is for salaries, pensions and benefits. Of that \$6.2 million, the Police Department's share is \$3.67 million; EMS \$895,000; Administration \$1.23 million; and Public Works \$900,000.

William Holland – works in the private sector; he doesn't use his employer's insurance but gets no money for this.

Tom DiOrio – if you don't take the benefits, you don't get paid for it.

Tom Quinn – asked if there has been talk amongst municipalities about sharing services and seeing what others are doing to meet their budget shortfalls. Mayor Camp answered that they are. Every municipality has been affected; it is across the board at this point. They know they have to fix this year but they are concerned about next year and must look at that now. It has been a daunting process.

Mr. Robbins – it is amazing how this state and the residents of this state refuse to look at regionalization and merging of municipalities and school systems. Home rule comes at a price and unfortunately the bill has come due. There is a cost for duplicative services.

Mayor Camp – the municipalities that do not pay for police do not have budget problems this year, such as Hainesport or Southampton.

Tom Quinn – we need to look at regionalization now and develop a plan. He thinks we should approach this and it would be a good start.

Mr. Daniels – agrees with his comments. There is a plan to do this with the schools.

Tom DiOrio – remember that your local purpose tax only amounts to 17% of the total tax you pay. Most of this is due to the schools; every time the school budget comes up for a vote, only about 300 voters go out to vote; the budget passes all the time.

Russ Hansel – asked what progress was made with having the County contribute to the Township. Mayor Camp answered that they have, they have been compiling information and the issue is certainly not dead. Mr. Robbins commented that we have been rebuked by the County and refused any kind of payment in lieu of the services that we provide.

John Mumbower – the RV school board met; they will cut all freshman sports as well as ROTC amongst other things. What will be cut are programs for the kids and there will be give backs for health care, benefits, salaries.

Garfield Harper – asked how much state aid we lost this year. \$168,000 is the amount. It was a huge mistake to not build the Ikea warehouse; it would have helped us. There are too many cry babies in the Township; they didn't want it to be built.

DiOrio – there will be costs and maintenance fees for years to come with the Sports Complex. He urges the Committee to preserve Fernwood Springs Farm.

There was no further comment from the public and the meeting was closed for public comment.

Mayor Camp – they were not able to introduce the budget tonight since they just received their State aid amount on Friday, March 19th. The budget will be introduced for first reading on April 13th. He rode along with the Fire Department on Sunday; there was a fire at the Indian Reservation; seven acres burned far back into the woods. On Sunday there was an editorial addressed to the Mayor and the Committee in the BCT; it concerned things they haven't done. In 2009 they promoted the current Police Chief to Chief and did not fill his prior position; they promoted Mike Meenan and did not fill his position either; they started shared services with our Municipal Court and cut money from the Construction Department.

There were no further comments and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Marion Karp, Deputy Clerk