

WESTAMPTON TOWNSHIP

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

APRIL 13, 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 23, 2010 meeting. It was noted that Mr. Daniels was marked as absent but in fact was present. Mr. Robbins also asked that a few more sentences were added to explain the resident's email regarding the budget. Motion to accept by Mr. Maybury, second by Mr. Adams. All voted yes. Closed session minutes of March 23, 2010. Motion to accept by Mr. Adams, second by Mr. Maybury. All voted yes.

Scheduled Appointments

None

Comments on agenda items

Vicky Stevenson – wanted to know the status of the crosswalk project in Rancocas. We received the plan from the Township engineer with the estimate; we cannot afford the project at this time, we may be able to get our Public Works to paint the crosswalks. Donna stated that the estimate is 16 thousand dollars. She asked if the Rancocas Village Civic Association would be able to contribute something towards the cost. Ms. Stevenson stated that they could talk about it, she didn't know, but she wants to see something done at this time. There are six crosswalks in total identified in the engineer's report.

Nancy Burkley – asked if there would be discussion on the budget tonight and wanted to know when it would be posted on the website. Donna stated that it would be posted in about a week. It would be introduced tonight.

Norm Miller – thinks that the estimate for the crosswalks is way out of line; he was hoping the cost to be around \$2500. He wanted to speak about the budget. He doesn't know where we will be with layoffs and furloughs; he hopes that the cuts in salaries are made across the entire employee base, not just in Public Works. There are four major groups of employees – all add to the bulk of the budget crisis. The following years will be just as bad or worse. He wants to see strong measures used to pull the budget back; the cuts have to be made.

Gary Kritz – the cards we were dealt with from the State are beyond our control. The Fire/EMS Department just got a new contract and isn't contributing anything to their health care; the police contract is up now and is being negotiated – their steps amount to nearly \$260,000 and they aren't contributing to their health care either. He works three jobs to pay his living expenses, commutes 78 miles each way to work because he can't afford the taxes in North Jersey; he is being forced out of the Township. He can't continue to afford to pay everyone's health and pension benefits. Along with the increase in the school budget, residents are facing a huge tax increase. Several homes in his area are in foreclosure; the buck has to stop. He doesn't want the Committee to repeat the mistakes of our governor and our legislature. Everyone should be paying less, we can't be paying more. He doesn't want to see any layoffs but they must occur.

Janet Curran – asked if the budget was a topic of discussion at this evening's meeting. The initial introduction of the budget will be voted on tonight. She asked about raising taxes.

Gary Kritz – it came to his attention that snow removal in Deerwood isn't done by Public Works and was contracted out to Father Nature. He was shocked because they (the homeowner's association) fired them due to incompetence. He asked why they weren't solicited for feedback before the contract was awarded. It would be unanimous to say no to hiring Father Nature. He asked who was negotiating the police contract. He wants to reiterate that all public employees should be paying 1.5% of their health care costs; if they aren't willing to negotiate, then someone has to go. He is paying 50% of his medical costs, the Township employees should be paying something towards their health care. This needs to happen, this is responsible government; he can't keep paying for everyone else. 1.5% isn't unreasonable. He wanted to know if it was possible to introduce a resolution to let residents vote on the municipal budget. It is a state law that the budget process runs this way. He thinks the residents should have a say in the approval of the budget.

Brian Gross – looks around the room and sees a lot of Township employees. He wants to know how the meeting was communicated to everyone. It is advertised in the BCT. He asked how the cuts to the Public Works department would affect the residents and if they would still get leaf collection and snow removal. Everything will take a lot longer and be slower. Donna answered that the cuts will affect services. The labor for the sports complex field will take away from other services. He also asked why other groups that use our fields don't contribute money to the Township for the use of the fields. He thinks that a lot of people are not aware that the budget meeting was going on tonight. It needs to be communicated better.

Mr. Maybury – commented that the meetings are posted on the Township website.

George Stevenson – asked about the price for the Rancocas crosswalks. He thinks the same result could be accomplished by painting the crosswalks and getting signage. Donna answered that they (Public Works) could do the painting but didn't know when it could fit into their schedule. They were very much behind at this point.

Dave Guerrero – asked if open space funds were being used for Public Works employees and the maintenance of the fields. Donna answered that one employee was being funded out of it.

Norm Miller – he asked if he heard this correctly. We are taking open space and recreation funds and using some for an employee. Last year we took in \$273,000 in the fund. The salary is actually half; we are using approximately \$27,000 this year. We are doing it for this year only according to Donna. It is a legal, approved use. He asked if there was a plan for the children's parents to pitch in doing the maintenance on the fields. There is, but it is new at this point and everything is still being worked out.

Tom DiOrio – the fields have become a money pit for the Township. This was not thought out properly, it has become a fiasco.

Nancy Burkley – the schools have a global telephone service; perhaps it could be used by the municipality for communication regarding meetings.

John Mumbower – we do have the Nixle system for communication.

Gary Kritz – asked that the Father Nature decision be put before the Deerwood Homeowner's Association so that they could have input.

Continued Agenda Items

Dolan Contractors – continued

Old Business

Rancocas Village traffic – comments were made early in the meeting.

New Business

Raffle License #5-2010 (St. Joan of Arc PTA, 5/24/10 – Deerwood Country Club) – motion to approve by Mr. Adams; seconded by Mr. Robbins. All voted yes.

Raffle License #6-2010 (Burlington County 4-H Leader's Council, 10/22/10 – 2 Academy Drive) – motion to approve by Mr. Daniels; seconded by Mr. Adams. All voted yes.

Ordinances

5-2010 Cap Bank Ordinance – first reading. Motion to approve by Mr. Maybury; seconded by Mr. Daniels. Mr. Robbins asked if this was the first of two cap waivers that would be necessary, which Donna affirmed. All voted yes. Second reading would be on May 11, 2010.

Resolutions

44-10 Payment of Vouchers – motion to approve by Mr. Adams; seconded by Mr. Maybury. All voted yes. Mr. Robbins asked about the Westampton Township accumulated sick leave comp. item on the bill list. Donna explained that this is a bank for sick time that is accumulated and must be paid upon retirement.

45-10 Defer School Taxes – motion to approve by Mr. Maybury; seconded by Mr. Daniels. All voted yes. Mr. Robbins commented that this is a one time effort to try to get to a budget we can live with; this has been done in previous years, and there is a limit to how much we can defer. We are nearing the limit on how much can be deferred, which is about a million dollars.

46-10 2010 Budget – motion to approve by Mr. Maybury; seconded by Mr. Daniels. Mr. Daniels, Mr. Maybury and Mayor Camp voted yes, Mr. Adams and Mr. Robbins voted no. Donna read the budget figures. There will be a 13 cent tax increase. There was a deficit of approximately \$1.7 million dollars this year. Budget line items were decreased and we deferred school taxes to try and close the gap. The 13 cent increase requires a cap waiver from the State. We will get an appointment in May for approval of the other 8 cents. In the Public Works department, one employee was laid off and two employees were reduced in hours. In the Police department, one promotion has been delayed, one special officer position was unfilled and one secretary was laid off. All Public Works and Administrative employees must take 12 furlough days by the end of the year. The Municipal Building will be closed on Fridays for the remainder of the year. We hope to adopt the budget in May, perhaps with some changes.

Mr. Adams stated that this is one of the worst budgets he had to sit thru in his 17 years on the Committee; he doesn't feel that it is fair to all the employees. Mr. Robbins commented that this has been very difficult and they have worked hard. He is not happy with the budget, there are not shared sacrifices amongst the employees across the Board; he is not happy with the unions who did not step up to the plate and offer concessions. They are torn between furloughs and laying people off. Regional school tax will average an 8 dollar decrease; however the local school budget will increase the tax bill approximately 10%. He is not in favor of this budget; he thinks we need to go back and cut deeper and this must be shared by all the employees. He thinks all the Committee should give back their stipends.

Mr. Maybury – sees a few people that attended the School Board meeting. If their budget is defeated it will come before the Committee for approval. Between the school and the local municipal tax increases, this will amount to about \$325 more in taxes a year for the average homeowner.

Mr. Daniels – this is one of the hardest decisions he will have to make as a Committeeman. The reality is that they have to raise taxes. We as homeowners and taxpayers have become used to a certain level of service in the Township. What is the answer? It is not an easy decision. Not all

is done yet; we still have the Police contract to settle; equity across the board should be included. We all have to share in this. He is hopeful in moving forward and hopes the negotiations prove fruitful. It is truly a sad state of affairs; everyone in the State is experiencing this. Hopefully the economy will turn around.

Mayor Camp – thinks that the decision that they make is one of the hardest they have had to make. Discussions are still underway as it relates to the Police contract; they can go back and have discussions with the Fire/EMS union. This whole process is ripping his heart apart. The public hearing on the budget will be held on May 11, 2010.

47-10 Addendum to Interlocal Services Agreement – motion to approve by Mr. Adams; seconded by Mr. Robbins. All voted yes.

48-10 Refund Taxes, Block 1102.01, Lot 40 – motion to approve by Mr. Maybury; seconded by Mr. Robbins. All voted yes.

49-10 2009 Recycling Tonnage Grant – motion to approve by Mr. Robbins; seconded by Mr. Adams. All voted yes.

50-10 Click It or Ticket – motion to approve by Mr. Robbins; seconded by Mr. Adams. All voted yes. This is a \$4,000 grant for the Police Department.

51-10 Award EMS Billing Contract – motion to approve by Mr. Adams; seconded by Mr. Maybury. The bid was awarded to Farnsworth & Semptimphelter, LLC. Three bids were received; this was the lowest of the three bids. It is a cost savings for us; there will be more revenue realized for the Township. Mr. Robbins asked if there is a compliance plan related to Medicare and asked if any clients had undergone any Medicare audits. They have and both audits came back 100% compliant. They bill for Beverly and Edgewater Park Townships, they have 18 employees.

52-10 Award Municipal Revaluation Contract – motion to approve by Mr. Maybury; seconded by Mr. Daniels. The bid was awarded to Appraisal Systems. Three bids were submitted; this was the lowest of the three. Our tax assessor approved of this firm. There will be a savings of nearly \$100,000 according to the budget for the revaluation.

53-10 Executive Session – for discussion of contracts. Motion to approve by Mr. Maybury; seconded by Mr. Robbins. All voted yes.

54-10 Authorize Application to Local Finance Board for Property Tax Levy Waiver – motion to approve by Mr. Daniels; seconded by Mr. Maybury. All voted yes, Mr. Robbins voted no.

55-10 Authorize Development Agreement with Project Freedom, Block 203, Lot 4.02 – motion to approve by Mr. Adams; seconded by Mr. Robbins. All voted yes.

Correspondence

Municipal Percentage Shares for Regional School District Tax Levies – we dropped a little bit.

Amended Notice of Facility Closing – Office Depot – Mr. Daniels asked if we could reach out to them to see if there is anything we could do. This was a corporate decision. There are 135 people being laid off; Donna does not know how many of the employees reside in the community.

Literacy Training Grant Award – IKEA

Burlington County Farmland Preservation Program – 2010 Application Round – we will add Fernwood Springs Farm and the Hogan Farm. Mr. Adams made a motion to approve; Mr. Robbins seconded the motion. All voted yes.

Recovery Zone Facility Bonds – this is for businesses.

Dates to remember

May 13, 2010 – Hilton Garden Inn grand opening celebration

May 1 – Ham Dinner in Rancocas 4-7 PM

School Board Election – April 20 2-9 PM at Holly Hills School

Comments

Solicitor George Saponaro – will review the Project Freedom agreement.

Police Chief Rick Smith – Max Scherzer is back from the Narcotics Task Force training. The dog is ready; the car is outfitted; everything is done; everything has been financed from donations. There is enough in the fund to last for the life of the dog.

Fire Chief Wylie Johnson – everything is in order to make the EMS billing switch on May 1st.

Public Comment

Tom DiOrio – asked about the closing of the Municipal Building. Wanted to know what it would accomplish. Donna stated that it would enable them to take their furlough days. He asked when the revaluation will start; it should be in June or July. Every resident will receive a letter. He asked for an explanation of school tax deferral. Donna explained it to him.

Anthony D'Errico – asked about the deferred school taxes. It is money we have in the bank that we borrow. It is an accounting measure. It would be helpful to see the numbers attached to the resolutions. He asked if he could receive the budget numbers that Donna spoke of earlier. He

doesn't think the Township should be asking the residents of Rancocas to pay for safety measures. His budget suggestion is that only tax paying members of the Committee should vote on the budget on May 11th.

Nancy Burkley – most of the cuts she heard were in personnel. She asked if there were any other cuts and particularly, if anything was cut from Recreation. The only thing that was cut was a twelve thousand dollar salary that used to be within the budget; all other costs are not included in the budget. The swim club is a private club that we own; she thinks it is a source of possible income if we would consider selling it. She thinks that we should be charging to use the fields in the Sports Complex and Westampton residents have funded it. People should have to pay something to use the fields; you can't guarantee that the concession stand will generate revenue. People may not be spending money there if they can't pay their mortgages.

Janet Curran – she didn't want to see any layoffs; the budget has been an issue for the last twenty years; this is the worst it has been. It is time to start living with what we have; let's do away with buying things that we really don't need. She wanted to know who would be taking care of the fields with the Public Works layoffs. The salary for one full time Public Works employee was moved into Recreation.

Donna – they are working on an idea of charging a certain amount per child to help with the field maintenance.

There were no further comments and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Marion Karp, Deputy Clerk