

WEST AMWELL TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

June 3, 2015 - 7:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER AND STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

The regular meeting of the West Amwell Township Committee was called to order at 7:36 p.m. Present were Mayor George A. Fisher, Deputy Mayor Zachary T. Rich, Committeeman John Dale, Clerk Lora Olsen and Attorney Philip J. Faherty III. Also in attendance were Dave Beaumont, Mary and John Hyland, Harry Heller, Hal Shute and John Cronce.

Mayor Fisher announced that this meeting is called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Notice of this meeting was included in the Resolution faxed to the Hunterdon County Democrat and Trenton Times on January 6, 2015, was posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building on said date and has remained continuously posted as required under the Statute. A copy of this notice is and has been available to the public and is on file in the office of the Municipal Clerk.

The meeting was recorded via digital recording system.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG

Mayor Fisher led the assembled group in the pledge to the nation's flag.

AGENDA REVIEW BY TOWNSHIP CLERK

The following items were added: 9.B. Finance, Authorization to Post Minutes (listed under Open Space in error); 13. Administrative: Add Roads Report. Deleted were: 13. Administrative, A&B.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Fire Company Chicken Bar-B-Q, June 13th, 4 – 8 p.m., Mt. Airy
- Please Come to the Table if You Wish to Address the Committee
- Kindly Turn Cell Phones Off During Meeting

PRESENTATION OF MINUTES

The following Regular, Special and Closed Session minutes were unanimously approved on motion from Rich, seconded by Fisher.

May 20, 2015 Special
May 20, 2015 Closed Session (Interviews)
May 20, 2015 Regular
May 20, 2015 Closed Session (Purchase, Lease or Acquisition of Real Property)

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC/TOPIC NOT ON THE AGENDA

Dave Beaumont came forward to inquire about the recently received 1st Energy letter. Mr. Fisher advised that the new bid round did not produce any savings, therefore, the energy generator portion of the bill reverts to JCP&L.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION(S)

None

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE AND/OR PUBLIC HEARING

Public Hearing: Ordinance 04, 2015 AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR AND DETERMINE THE RATE OF COMPENSATION OF OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WEST AMWELL, COUNTY OF HUNTERDON, NEW JERSEY

Proof of publication in the May 14, 2015 issue of the Hunterdon County Democrat was presented. The ordinance has been posted and available to the public since its introduction at the May 6, 2014 Township Committee meeting. Mr. Fisher read the Ordinance by title and opened the public hearing. Hearing no comments, the public hearing was unanimously closed.

The Ordinance was unanimously approved on motion by Rich, seconded by Dale.

Public Hearing: Ordinance 05, 2015 A CAPITAL ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WEST AMWELL, COUNTY OF HUNTERDON, AUTHORIZING VARIOUS PURCHASES LISTED BELOW AND APPROPRIATING \$54,000.00 FROM THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND.

Proof of publication in the May 14, 2015 issue of the Hunterdon County Democrat was presented. The ordinance has been posted and available to the public since its introduction at the May 6, 2014 Township Committee meeting. Mr. Fisher read the Ordinance by title and opened the public hearing. Hearing no comments, the public hearing was unanimously closed.

The Ordinance was unanimously approved on motion by Dale, seconded by Rich.

Public Hearing: Ordinance 06, 2015 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK OF WEST AMWELL TOWNSHIP TO INCLUDE A DONATED SICK LEAVE POLICY

Proof of publication in the May 14, 2015 issue of the Hunterdon County Democrat was presented. The ordinance has been posted and available to the public since its introduction at the May 6, 2014 Township Committee meeting. Mr. Fisher read the Ordinance by title and opened the public hearing. Hearing no comments, the public hearing was unanimously closed.

The Ordinance was unanimously approved on motion by Dale, seconded by Rich.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Open Space

- *Project Status Updates:* John Cronce relayed that **Lambert** is waiting for information from the County. The same is true for **Toll** but both County and State. Mr. Cronce expressed disappointment as to progress but hopes everything works out. Concerning **Ziegenfuss**, Attorney Faherty advised that he has been in touch with Jay Watson but Mr. Watson is not involved. The matter has to go to Green Acres. The title company just returned his call this afternoon and recommended that Commonweath in New Jersey be contacted. Hal Shute stated that there will be a meeting with the SADC on Friday concerning the **Fulper** application as to zoning for appraisal purposes. Attorney Bill Shurts will be in attendance as well.

Finance

- *Authorization to Post March 17, 2015 & April 16, 2015 Minutes to Website:* Approved.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Possible Appointments – No appointments were made. However, the Alternate 2 slot on the Zoning Board is again vacant as the recently appointed Ken Turi has resigned.

Updates – 1) The mayor advised of the circling **solar lease** situation with the certification of insurance. 2) Attorney Faherty has made contact with Attorney Tauriello regarding **Block 46 Lot 5** and was advised that the files in question are in storage. 3) A revised agreement with the County was presented for culvert work on the **Rocktown-Lamb. Road Project** stating that they will pay up to \$16,500 towards the job in return for the Township assuming ownership and responsibility for the maintenance of W-58. Attorney Faherty has reviewed the document and advised that all is in order. In a related matter to the road work, Mr. Cronce advised that he has received no word from the Township Engineer since the last meeting.

Rich motioned to authorize the mayor to execute the document and Dale seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Tax Collector – Mrs. Hyland addressed the Committee concerning her recent resignation letter. She offered to rescind, if the Committee was amenable, and would be conditioned on having an assistant during collection periods to open mail, retrieve phone messages and help with other clerical duties of the office. She also mentioned the PTR problems experienced by taxpayers, and the heat she took, due to the tax situation experienced last year. In addition to this, Mrs. Hyland noted that information received from Tax Administrator Porto, shows a missing A4F form for South which translates to no tax rate. The business administrator was contacted and responded that she couldn't find it, although it was sent by the Township Clerk on April 29th. A brief discussion ensued over the proposal with the consensus being that the police secretary be approached about possibly taking on this quarterly work. The Committee unanimously agreed to accept Mrs. Hyland's offer to rescind her resignation and to provide tax quarter assistance.

Mrs. Hyland then inquired about whether the Township Committee would approve changing the Vital tax collection system into a web-based/look-up system. The advantage to this would be the ability of taxpayers, attorneys, etc. to look up tax information on a particular property as needed and not have to wait for the part time collector to be in the office. There would be no additional cost to the Township for this system other than the initial \$175.00 for

setup. West Amwell would be among the first municipalities to have this on-line ability. Approval for the conversion was given.

The next item discussed was the status of the tax collector's computer. The operating system is no longer supported by Microsoft and replacement has been recommended. A quote was received from Vital for \$1675.00. If a computer was purchased elsewhere, the Vital software package would be an additional cost of \$500.00. Purchase was approved pending available funds.

Proposal for Dog Census – An article in the May *League* magazine was referenced by the Clerk. According to the estimating tool given therein, West Amwell should have in the neighborhood of 640 dogs. The current count stands at 515 with 40 delinquents. Mr. Rich suggested that those involved with the census activity have identification.

Fisher motioned to approve the proposal received from Animal Control & Investigative Services in the amount of \$1,960 for a 2015 dog census. Dale seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Payment will come out of the dog trust account, not the salary and wage ordinance, as the latter is only for employees.

Staffing/Salary Discussion – A recommendation was received from the Construction Official concerning the 90 day review period for Ms. Brewi together with a salary increase number. A resolution was presented for consideration.

RESOLUTION #98-2015
Amending Resolution #84-2015

BE IT RESOLVED by the Committee of the Township of West Amwell that the 2015 Salary and Wage Resolution, adopted May 6, 2015 be amended as follows:

Position	Salary/Compensation
<u>Delete:</u>	
Construction Office Assistant Brewi	\$15.00/hr
<u>Add:</u>	
Construction Office Assistant Brewi	\$18.00/hr

The Resolution was unanimously approved on motion by Fisher, seconded by Rich.

Office Space Issues – Mr. Fisher overviewed the proposals to address the space issues raised at the last meeting concerning the construction office. The ideas floated to date include switching with the tax office, moving the current wall over 3 ft or so into the tax office, and moving to the basement. Mrs. Olsen offered several points in favor of the installation of an elevator as a solution to the space, access and accessibility issues. An elevator was seen as something that would be needed at some point but a hard sell to the taxpayer. Mr. Dale offered that ultimately an expansion to the lower area would have to be done and is something that needs to be looked into. Dave Beaumont suggested that Mrs. Olsen pull together some salient points on the topic for the June 17th meeting. Mr. Cronce expressed his support for the concept and if done now, the cost could be spread out over time. Harry Heller commented that he was in agreement with both Mr. Beaumont and Mr. Dale on the subject. Approximate cost of an elevator is also be researched.

Recommendation from Consultant Shirley Bishop re: Dr. Burchell – The recommendation was briefly discussed as the \$1000 fee would be protection for the Township in addition to obtaining a competent re-calculation of the housing numbers. Mr. Shute inquired whether court fees would be included and was advised that this was just for the housing calculations.

Mr. Fisher motioned to retain Dr. Burchell and Dale seconded. Motion carried unanimously. The Clerk was instructed to make contact with Jeff Surenian to get West Amwell on the list.

Summer Help – A decision was not made after the last meeting due to the need for additional information. This has since been cleared up. The unanimous consensus of the Committee was to offer the second summer help slot to Diego Valdez.

Insurance Claim re: Sworn Statement in Partial Proof of Loss – The particulars of the loss and the dollar value of the claim were received for approval and sign off.

The mayor was unanimously authorized to execute the document on motion by Rich, seconded by Dale.

Sign Off for 2012 FEMA Project – Mr. Heller addressed this latest paperwork, advising that the Township received the money without any sign-off. The money was for debris removal and tub grinder work. FEMA now needs a sign-off for the money distributed. The mayor executed the document. Mr. Heller relayed that the Township has received \$100,000 for the three events that took place in 2011 and 2012.

The status of the generator project was relayed. Mr. Heller stated that the State has to approve what was sent in and then forward same to FEMA, something that was promised to happen by the end of this week. Thereafter, FEMA has a 30-40 day turnaround time. Mr. Heller noted that all hoops have been navigated and he expects there will be a free generator, once the Township receives reimbursement from FEMA. Mr. Fisher inquired about the status of the State contract for this commodity. Mr. Heller relayed that his contact has responded in the negative but that there is progress on getting this back on State contract. He also noted that there are other cooperative purchase avenues that can be pursued to obtain a generator. As an aside, Mr. Heller mentioned that there's a State contract available now for fire trucks.

A brief overview of the recent hazard mitigation process was given. Mr. Heller also reminded the Committee that he needs paperwork from them in order to update the Emergency Operation Plan (EOP) which is now out of compliance. He will e-mail the required sections to the respective parties for completion.

Interview Date for Fire Official Position – Seven applications have been received to date. A special meeting will be held June 17th at 6:30 p.m. to conduct interviews. The applications are to be reviewed and a subset of those selected for interview is to be forwarded to the Clerk by next Thursday. The current fire official, Jason Fretz, will be asked to attend.

Discussion

- *Acquisition of Truck for Recycling:* A field trip to look at possible trucks has been scheduled for Monday. Apparently there are currently two older vehicles available with approximately 45,000 miles and low hours. Taking recyclables to Trenton instead of New Brunswick was also mentioned in passing. A \$3000 down payment is proposed for a capital bond ordinance. This direction will eliminate the shared service contract with Lambertville for their truck.

- *Security Fencing for Recycling & Garbage Depot Areas; Camera:* Mr. Fisher reported that the dumpster is full from the recent clean-ups and a brief discussion ensued over the cans being an open invitation for after-hours dumping and giving consideration to the installation of a camera to monitor the situation. An estimate for running electricity to the unit needs to be obtained. Mr. Dale will speak with the Road Supervisor about placement options and Mr. Rich will touch back with his IT people about running this over the internet line.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution re: Ditch Aprons – A review of various ordinances has revealed that the DPW is only to inspect ditches and driveway pipes, not provide installation for the latter. The resolution was deemed unnecessary due to this revelation. Mr. Cronce was provided with a copy of Chapters 79, 109-184, and 139 and same will be given to the Road Supervisor. Mr. Cronce suggested that the Township Committee be cc'd on driveway permits submitted to Construction by the Road Supervisor.

As for street opening permits, Mr. Cronce would like to see this be assigned to the Road Supervisor as opposed to the Township Engineer. He urged the Committee to trust their employees and that Mr. Rollero is top shelf. This particular activity is guided by Chapter 139, which needs to be reviewed and this review activity was assigned to Attorney Faherty and Mr. Cronce.

Mr. Cronce then inquired about the inspection of the road opening that was performed at the Firehouse. He expressed disappointment in the final product. The permit will be pulled and Mr. Cronce will discuss the matter with the Township Engineer.

Receipt of 2014 Audit – The 2014 audit has been received for Township Committee review. The resolution to formally approve will be scheduled for the June 17th meeting.

Farm Contract – A new two year contract, prepared by Attorney Faherty, was presented.

Rich motioned to authorize the mayor sign and Fisher seconded. Motion carried unanimously. The document will be forwarded to Rob Fulper.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mr. Beaumont came forward concerning a possible drop down screen for use with the projector and offered suggestions for placement. Mr. Beaumont was tasked with the investigation of this amenity.

Mr. Fisher advised that cones are needed at the recycling area. He's received an e-mail from a concerned resident that the area is chaotic. The cones would help direct the traffic flow. Mr. Rollero will be contacted concerning set-up. In a related matter, Mr. Rich inquired about reflective vests for the depot workers. Porter Little, the recycling chair, will be contacted concerning this situation. Paving the garbage pad and stripping same for traffic flow was mentioned by the mayor.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Construction – The Permit Fee Log Summary for May 2015 reflected the issuance of 20 permits for a total of \$5,807.00 for West Amwell. Seventeen (17) CA's and one CO were processed per the Certificate Log Summary. The Permit Fee Log Summary for East Amwell reported 25 permits issued and \$4,851.00 collected. Fourteen (14) CA's were processed according to the Certificate Log Summary.

Court – The April 2015 monthly report was received showing a ticket total of 348 (169 local) and the receipt of \$10,312.58.

Roads – The May 2015 report of department activities was received.

Website Review - none

The reports were accepted as filed without comment.

CORRESPONDENCE

The correspondence as listed on the Agenda was ordered filed.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:18 p.m. on motion from Rich.

Respectfully submitted,

Lora L. Olsen, RMC
Township Clerk

APPROVED: June 17, 2015