

WEST AMWELL TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING
March 6, 2024
Regular Meeting – 7:30 PM

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

The regularly scheduled meeting of the West Amwell Township Committee was called to order at 7:30 PM. Present were Mayor James Cally, Deputy Mayor Gary Hoyer, Committee Members Meghan Hudson and Bob Balaam along with Township Clerk Maria Andrews and Township Attorney Mark Peck.

Mayor Cally announced that this meeting is called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Notice of this meeting was faxed to the Hunterdon County Democrat and Trenton Times on January 11, 2024, was posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building on that 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 Township Clerk.

FLAG SALUTE

Mayor Cally led those in attendance in the pledge to the nation's flag.

AGENDA REVIEW BY TOWNSHIP CLERK

Clerk Andrews noted the following amendments to the posted agenda:

Under New Business – A discussion on Open Gym Night and a discussion on the cleaning services for the municipal offices.

Under Other – Resolution #40-2024 to enter into Closed Session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following announcements were made:

- The New Tax Collector On-line Payment System is Up – *EdmundsGovPay.com/WestAmwell*
- Primary Petition Filing Deadline is 4 PM on Monday 3/25/24
- Municipal Offices will be CLOSED Friday 3/29/24 – Good Friday
- Kindly Turn Cell Phones Off During the Meeting

PRESENTATION OF MINUTES

A motion by Hudson, seconded by Hoyer to approve the Committee's 3/6/24 regular and closed session minutes with no revisions noted was unanimously approved by voice vote.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC/TOPICS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Mayor Cally opened the floor to public comment. Seeing no members of the public who wished to speak, Mayor Cally closed the floor to public comment.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Presentation by Representatives from Edmunds on the "On-line Tax Payment System"

Leann and Matt (*no last names provided*) from Edmunds presented a PowerPoint presentation on the new on-line tax payment system. They provided an overview on how taxpayers can utilize the system to reprint current tax bills, view past payment history, calculate interest when making late tax payments and post future payments.

It was noted that payments made on-line using a credit card will be subject to a 2.95% convenience fee and payments made on-line by check will be subject to a \$1.95 convenience fee.

Reports by Department Heads

Open Space Committee Chairman John Cronce provided an update on the Deer Management Program and the new State regulations regarding farmland preservation.

Mr. Cronce noted the closing on the conservancy property along Frontage Road will likely be at the end of this year.

Minutes: 3/6/24

INTRODUCTION/PUBLIC HEARING ON ORDINANCES

It was noted for the record that there were no ordinances listed on the agenda for action.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution #38-2024: New Hire M. Kaloyerakis – Office Assistant: Construction/Zoning/Tax Offices

RESOLUTION #38-2024

WHEREAS, the Township of West Amwell advertised for the position of Construction/Zoning/Tax Office Assistant; and

WHEREAS, interviews were conducted; and

WHEREAS, the Construction Official has recommended that Melissa Kaloyerakis is best qualified for said position; and

WHEREAS, an employment offer has been accepted by Ms. Kaloyerakis to work full time Monday – Friday 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM and 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM Monday – Thursday (*Friday's off*) during summer hours, the months of July and August, earning an hourly wage of \$18.00 which will be re-evaluated for a possible adjustment after 90 days; and

WHEREAS, this position is considered probationary for the first year but is subject to full health and pension benefits; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Melissa Kaloyerakis be hired as the Construction/Zoning/Tax Office Assistant, effective March 8, 2024; and

Certification

I, Maria Andrews, Township Clerk of the Township of West Amwell, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey, hereby certify this to be a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Township Committee on March 6, 2024.

Maria Andrews, Township Clerk, RMC

A motion by Hudson, seconded by Balaam to approve Resolution #38-2024 was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Balaam: Yes, Cally: Yes, Hoyer: Yes, Hudson: Yes

Resolution #39-2024: Rescinding a Salary Adjustment Given to Zoning Official S. Rodzinak

RESOLUTION #39-2024

RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WEST AMWELL TO RESCIND A SALARY ADJUSTMENT TO STEPHEN RODZINAK AS A CONSEQUENCE OF TERMINATION OF SHARED SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH EAST AMWELL TOWNSHIP

WHEREAS, Stephen Rodzinak is the Zoning Official for the Township of West Amwell; and

WHEREAS, the Township of West Amwell had entered into a Shared Services Agreement with the Township of East Amwell whereby West Amwell would provide zoning services, including the Zoning Official, to East Amwell ("Agreement"); and

WHEREAS, as a consequence of said Agreement the Township Committee of the Township of West Amwell, by way of Resolution 56-2022, the salary of Stephen Rodzinak was increased by \$9,000.00 to reflect the additional duties provided to the Township of East Amwell; and

Minutes: 3/6/24

WHEREAS, on February 21, 2024, at the request of the Township of East Amwell, the Township Committee of the Township of West Amwell terminated said Agreement; and

WHEREAS, the Township of West Amwell wishes to rescind the said \$9,000.00 salary increase to reflect the reduced duties of the Zoning Official; and

WHEREAS, the current salary of the Zoning Official is \$18,858.28 and the new annual salary will be \$9487.84, which reflects the 3% annual increase in 2022 and the 3.5% annual increase in 2023 on the base salary of \$8900.00, effective February 21, 2024.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Township Committee that Stephen Rodzinak shall be paid an annual salary of \$9487.84 as the Zoning Official.

CERTIFICATION

I, Maria Andrews, Clerk of the Township of West Amwell, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey, do hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution is a true copy of the Original Resolution duly passed and adopted by a majority of the full membership of the Governing Body of the Township of West Amwell at their meeting of March 6, 2024.

Maria Andrews, RMC, Township Clerk

Committeewoman Hudson asked for clarification on why only one employee was subject to having their salary increase rescinded when two employees received additional compensation at the time the Zoning Shared Services Agreement with East Amwell was signed. She questioned the fairness of this action. Mayor Cally stated the revenue was allocated so that the Zoning Official received a \$9000 pay increase, and the Construction Office Manager received a \$1000 pay increase with the other \$4500 being a “fee” for West Amwell to receive. Committeewoman Hudson stated that is not how the language in the resolutions read. She indicated they clearly specify that the Zoning Officer will receive \$9000 and the Construction Office Manager will receive \$5500. Mayor Cally then stated that the Office Manager was allowed to keep the \$1000 because he said the compensation was not specific to the Zoning Shared Services but rather for all of the extra work and duties in the office for both the zoning and construction jobs for both towns.

Ms. Brewi then spoke up from the public and verified that she only received \$1000 extra compensation, despite having requested more.

Mayor Cally added that since there is so much volume on the construction side in the department, they decided to allocate the compensation there. He commented that when the shared services contract is negotiated in 2025, the Township will re-coop the funds from East Amwell.

Committeewoman Hudson questioned why the Township would still pay a stipend when the services have been terminated.

Mayor Cally confirmed with Attorney Peck that he wants East Amwell to provide payment of all administrative fees, pro-rated, prior to the termination agreement being sent over to them.

NEW BUSINESS/OTHER

Acknowledgement: Annual “Tracks for South 5K” Run on Township Roads – 4/21/24

It was noted for the record that the Committee supported the event.

Discussion: Open Gym Night

It was noted for the record that the Committee supported the Open Gym Night at the High School and authorized Clerk Andrews to sign off on the facilities use form for Jake Phillips.

Discussion: Cleaning Services for the Municipal Offices

Clerk Andrews explained the former cleaning lady has not shown up since February 15th and is not responding to any phone calls, text messages or emails. She asked for authorization to look for another

Minutes: 3/6/24

cleaning service. The Committee instructed Clerk Andrews to send a letter to the cleaning lady officially terminating her services and to go ahead and find another provider.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

It was noted for the record that there were no Unfinished Business matters listed on the agenda.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Open Space: *A report was given earlier in the evening by Mr. Cronic.*
- B. Environmental: Mr. Beaumont asked if he could be given back his access to the website in order to administer the Environmental Commission webpages. Committeeman Balaam suggested he work with Mr. Tomenchok and Office Assistant Pauline Bahrt to modify the webpages. He remarked the matter should be Mr. Tomenchok's choice whether or not he wishes to grant Mr. Beaumont access.
- C. Ag Advisory: No report given.
- D. Finance Committee: No report given.

ADMINISTRATIVE

A motion was made by Balaam and seconded by Hudson approving the 2/26/24 bill list. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Balaam: Yes, Hoyer: Yes, Hudson: Yes, Cally: Yes

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

A motion by Hoyer, seconded by Hudson to open the floor to public comment was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Anthony Sabidussi of 122 Rock Road West commented that the skunk odor coming from the GMNJ property on Sunday, 3/3/24 was awful. Deputy Mayor Hoyer remarked the Zoning Official had conducted a site visit to inspect the lighting and he too, had commented on the bad odor, although he could not detect if it was coming from their exhaust system. Committeeman Balaam stated the Committee is aware of the situation, it is being monitored, and they are trying to determine what can be done. Mayor Cally stated once the source of the odor is identified, GMNJ will have to resolve it.

Seeing no other members of the public who wished to speak, a motion was made by Balaam and seconded by Hoyer to close the floor to public comment. The motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.

OTHER

Resolution #40-2024: Closed Session – Personnel/Contracts – Litigation/Affordable Housing and Matters Falling Under Attorney Client Privilege

A motion was made by Hoyer and seconded by Balaam to approve Resolution #40-2024 and enter into closed session. The motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Resolution #40-2024

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975, permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Committee of West Amwell Township, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The public shall be excluded from the expected 30 minute discussion of and action upon the hereinafter specified subject matter.

Minutes: 3/6/24

2. The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows: Personnel/Contracts – Litigation/Affordable Housing and matters falling under attorney client privilege. Action may be taken.
3. As nearly as can be ascertained, the matter or matters to be discussed during this closed session will be disclosed to the public when such matters are resolved.
4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

Maria Andrews, Township Clerk, RMC

It was noted for the record that the Committee was in closed session from 8:49 PM – 10:14 PM.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion by Cally, seconded by Balaam to adjourn the meeting was unanimously approved by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 PM.

Maria Andrews, Township Clerk, RMC

Approved: 3/20/24