

MUNICIPAL BUILDING
7:30 PM

TOWNSHIP MEETING
FEBRUARY 25, 2016

The township meeting of the Township Committee took place on the above date, time and place with the following being present: Mayor Eugene Kobryn, Deputy Mayor Dave Schlick, Committeewoman Lisa Stevens, Township Administrator Garrett Loesch, Township Attorney Robin LaBue, Township Engineer Jason Worth, Recording Operator Linda Cicco and Township Clerk Diana McCracken; Committeemen Ray Gormley and John Kehm were absent.

Township Clerk Diana McCracken read the Open Public Meeting Statement and opened the meeting.

Flag Salute - Moment of Silence

Karen Lowrie from the Bloustein School of Planning at Rutgers spoke about the Health Impact Project which is grant funded. It is a collaboration of the Pew Research Center and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the first ever health impact study in a post disaster community.

Chief of Police Rich Buzby gave an overview of the status of the Police Department and presented the 2015 Police Report. He believes the department continues to move in a solid direction.

Earl Sutton, Jr., MUA Director spoke about the Capital Project for the Water and Sewer Infrastructure on Twin Lakes Boulevard.

Old Business – Anticipated Action for March 10, 2016

Ordinance #2016-01 (Second Reading and Final Adoption)

An Ordinance of the Township of Little Egg Harbor, County of Ocean, State of New Jersey, to establish the compensation of township employees

New Business / Public Comments

Mayor Gene Kobryn read resolutions #2016-70 and #2016-71 and explained they are appointing members to the police department. He asked for public comments.

Ms. Arlene Keenan: Mentioned with the hiring of two more police officers, asked what the total number of officers is now.

Chief of Police Buzby explained this brings our total to 44 officers. He stated he is appointing former Sergeant Scott Nino as a Class II Officer to back fill the schools security position that an officer is coming out of. We are bringing him back at a reduced salary to fill that position which is good for the schools and community as well.

Ms. Arelene Keenan: Asked how many officers are on the road and how many are at the station.

Chief of Police Buzby explained three officers on day shift and four on nights. During a typical daytime situation we probably have about seven or eight officers that are available and at night we have a similar number with some working special details.

Ms Arelene Keenan: Mentioned some residents think there are too many officers in town but she disagrees.

Chief of Police Buzby stated the town is fifty square miles with a population of about twenty thousand five hundred people. Our call volume is up from 2014 to 2015 about 15%, and our response time is one of the best in the state he believes.

Mayor Kobryn read resolution #2016-72. He asked Mr. Santarpio to stand up and thanked him for the many years of service he has given to the township. He asked for public comments.

No public comment.

Mayor Kobryn read resolution #2016-73 and asked for public comments. He mentioned we had an occasion where we could not have a quorum so this will fill in two needed appointments.

No public comments.

Mayor Kobryn read resolution #2016-74 and asked for public comments.

No public comments.

Mayor Kobryn read resolution #2016-75 and asked for public comments. He explained in this instance we require more than three committee members present for this resolution therefore it will be tabled until the next township meeting.

No public comments.

Review of township expenditures. Mayor Kobryn explained this was put in because the motion to approve the bills is under a two step process. He asked for public comments.

No public Comments.

Mayor Kobryn read resolution #2016-76 and asked for public comments.

No public comments.

Mayor Kobryn read resolution #2016-77 and asked for public comments.

No public comments

Resolution #2016-70

Authorizing the appointment of Michael LaMontagne and Matthew Cook as Police Officers

Motion to Approve: Schlick

Second: Stevens

Roll Call:

Gormley Absent

Kehm Absent

Stevens Yes

Schlick Yes

Kobryn Yes

Resolution #2016-71

Authorizing the appointment of Scott Nino as a Special Law Enforcement Class II Police Officer

Deputy Mayor Schlick asked the Police Chief if these officers are present at tonight's meeting.

Police Chief Buzby explained they are not. They start the police academy next month and will be present when they are sworn in.

Committeewoman Lisa Stevens mentioned she understands that since Officer Nino is a retired police officer that he already comes with a benefit package.

Police Chief Buzby explained he will receive benefits and will be an asset to the school.

Motion to Approve: Schlick	Second: Stevens	Roll Call:	Gormley	Absent
			Kehm	absent
			Stevens	Yes
			Schlick	Yes
			Kobryn	Yes

Resolution #2016-72

Accepting the retirement of and the authorizing the compensation of accumulated time to John Santarpio [total payout of \$24,911.37 made in a one-time payment]

Motion to Approve: Schlick	Second: Stevens	Roll Call:	Gormley	Absent
			Kehm	Absent
			Stevens	Yes
			Schlick	Yes
			Kobryn	Yes

Resolution #2016-73

Appointing William Armitage and Jeanne Connelly-Moore as members to the Natural Lands Trust Advisory Committee

Mayor Kobryn thanked them for volunteering their time and caring for land trust issues.

Motion to Approve: Schlick	Second: Stevens	Roll Call:	Gormley	Absent
			Kehm	Absent
			Stevens	Yes
			Schlick	Yes
			Kobryn	Yes

Resolution #2016-74

Appointing Chuck Griffin as a Member to the Board of Health

Committeewoman Stevens mentioned Mr. Griffin is a retired Registered Nurse and a welcomed member to the board.

Motion to Approve: Stevens	Second: Schlick	Roll Call:	Gormley	Absent
			Kehm	Absent
			Stevens	Yes
			Schlick	Yes
			Kobryn	Yes

Township Engineer

Jason Worth reported that he and Mr. Loesch had their first monitoring visit with the funding agency for the Streetscape Project on Mathistown Road and Radio Road last Friday. They check on the status of all the documentation we have for the project. We are wrapping up the design and waiting for the final environmental sign off from the EDA and DEP and going out to bid as soon as we can. We are following up the MUA project in 2017 with the townships project on Twin Lakes Boulevard which will include replacing the storm drainage system, one long storm drainage easement that drains into some large areas between Twin Lakes Boulevard and Lake Champlain. We are working diligently to wrap this project up and plans will be submitted to the EIT next Friday and will follow them up in 2017 with our project.

Committeewoman Lisa Stevens asked where the Streetscape Project will begin and end along Radio Road.

Township Engineer Jason Worth explained it will begin at Little Treasures Park on Basswood Lake Road and continue on both sides of the street to the first intersection of Country Club Boulevard.

Mayor Gene Kobryn asked if it will go down Mathistown Road as well.

Township Engineer Jason Worth stated it will extend down Mathistown Road from Radio Road to Center Street. It will tie into the Wawa site and stop at the old Shop N Bag site.

Township Committee Comments

Stevens: Thanked all the speakers at tonight's meeting. She is very appreciative of the work the police department does. She spoke about the upcoming MUA project.

Schlick: Thanked tonight's speakers and mentioned Monday night will be the Little Egg Harbor School Budget Meeting for those interested in attending.

Kobryn: Read a letter commending Township Clerk Diana McCracken on the diligent work she did on an OPRA Request. Thanked the Police Chief's Assistant, Tom Bonfonti for his cost cutting effort by ordering server cabinets for the police department at no cost to the township.

Public Comments

Mr. Roman Krochmal: Mentioned the future development along Route 9 and does not want it to fall into the county's approach of taking away 60 acres that was going to be residential. He read in the paper that Mr. Mezzina can't seem to develop the property on the intersection of Route 9 and Mathistown Road for residential and was hoping to sell it to the county.

Mayor Gene Kobryn stated he attended the Freeholder meeting last week with Mr. Armatage and had an opportunity to discuss their recommendation to purchase for open space the development on Mathistown Road about 70 acres. That recommendation will be reviewed by the Natural Lands Trust on March 10, pending what they say we will then consider their recommendation to pursue it. It will be open to the public for comment.

Mr. Roman Krochmal: Stated Route 9 will be a wonderful commercial site.

Mayor Gene Kobryn explained we are talking about the land on Mathistown Road which is the purchase of open space from a developer approved to build 168 townhomes across from Winding Run.

Mr. Charles Neumeyer: Mentioned there is a bulkhead situation in town and asked for the status of the bulkhead on Hatteras Court.

Township Engineer Jason Worth explained it's an older bulkhead like many of them in the township. After Super storm Sandy FEMA looked at it however they were not in a position to give the town money for any of the bulkheads.

Mr. Charles Neumeyer: Shared pictures of various bulkheads in town in need of repair and asked at what point will they get on the to-do list.

Township Administrator Garrett Loesch explained each year he has many capital items to look at and make recommendations to the governing body to fit into a Capital Ordinance Budget. These items include paving projects, easement projects, purchase of large equipment, infrastructure repairs to the buildings and bulkheads just to name a few. That is something he is preparing to introduce to the committee next month and will revisit the bulkhead issues. He spoke about the damage to the roads due to Super Storm Sandy.

Mr. Charles Neumeyer: Stated it has been 3 years and 4 months after Sandy and asked what would happen if the bulkhead collapses into the water.

Township Engineer Jason Worth stated he will take a look at the bulkhead again.

Mr. Charles Neumeyer: Stated in the Strategic Recovery Planning Report from May 2014, there are a total of four bulkheads including one on North Boom Way which is in bad shape.

Mayor Gene Kobryn stated the engineer will revisit those areas again and give the public some feedback at one of the upcoming meetings.

Township Engineer Jason Worth stated it will be before the next meeting.

Mr. Matt Perdue: Spoke in favor of the proposal through Ocean County Lands Trust for the 8 acre tract on Mathistown Road and believes it would be a tremendous asset to the township and the taxpayers if it were preserved. It is currently slated for multi housing and if you look at the statistics for preserving land versus developing residentially tax payers save in the end if it is preserved as open space. He mentioned eco tourism for hiking, mountain biking, hunting and fishing since it is on the national wildlife refuge and encouraged the committee to consider it.

Mr. Bill Armatage: Thanked the committee for appointing him to the Natural Land Trust Committee. He asked if there will be additional lighting in front of town hall with the Streetscape Project.

Township Engineer Jason Worth explained we are looking at additional lighting as part of that project.

Mr. Bill Armatage: Asked how far up Mathistown Road the project will go.

Township Engineer Jason Worth stated from the Wawa to Center Street.

Mr. Jamie Carnth: Lives in the Nugentown area they don't have water and sewer or high speed cable and feels they have been left out. He is against the development on Route 9.

Mr. Ed Andrews: Asked the engineer if he received an answer from the DEP regarding the cut out areas for the busses on the Streetscape.

Township Engineer Jason Worth stated not yet.

Mr. Ed Andrews: Asked for an update on the Park-N-Ride.

Township Engineer Jason Worth explained he reached out to the county engineer to set up a meeting and was told they had a preliminary meeting with Pinelands and would get back to him after that.

Mr. Mike Polito: Asked for information on the salary ordinance.

Township Administrator Garrett Loesch explained he looks at the contracts that are in place to make sure the ranges are covered so when the auditors look at them they can verify the contracts to the salary ordinance of the town. If the governing body created a new position we would have to include that in the new salary ordinance.

Mr. Mike Polito: Believes there are some increases on almost every line item in the list. Township Administrator Garrett Loesch stated no, a handful was adjusted.

Mr. Mike Polito: Asked that the schedule be updated to reflect the 2014 rate, current rate, new proposed rate and percentage of change which the committee should know when they vote on the ordinance.

Township Administrator Garrett Loesch explained the ordinance doesn't set the contract, the contract dictates the ordinance.

Mr. Mike Polito: Stated he does not believe the committee has the information in the schedule that was published to fiscally and responsibly vote on it.

Mayor Gene Kobryn explained we have carried this to the next meeting and Mr. Loesch should be able to come up with something to satisfy your questions.

Mr. Mike Polito: Would like the schedule re-published and on the website for public review.

Mayor Gene Kobryn explained it will be a comparison analysis between the previous one and the one we are introducing.

Mr. Mike Polito: Asked why the committee has not appointed a liaison to the Pinelands Regional District yet. He has not seen it on the agenda recently and feels it is extremely important.

Deputy Mayor Dave Schlick explained he thought it would be a liaison for each individual school and he volunteered to take them both however another committee member wanted to form a committee for Pinelands separately which he was against.

Mr. Mike Polito: Stated nothing has been done since January 1st and Mrs. Ernst of Pinelands requested it a previous meeting.

Deputy Mayor Dave Schlick explained the committee member has not formed the committee however he would be happy to be the liaison but it has not been appointed to him.

Mr. Mike Polito: Asked Mayor Kobryn what is holding this up.

Mayor Gene Kobryn explained we have two different points of view but it will be resolved by the next township meeting.

Mr. Mike Polito: Stated the function of a liaison is to bridge the communication, logistics, assessments, tax levy's. It's something the boards can act upon when they develop their budget.

Deputy Mayor Dave Schlick stated he agrees and explained he attends the board meetings and is in constant communication with the superintendent. It does not need to be a committee, one person can do it.

Mr. Mike Polito: Stated he has not seen a resolution for the contract of the township CFO and would like to know what is going on with it.

Mayor Gene Kobryn explained there was a vote at that time to rescind the revised contract for our CFO. It was approved by a three to two vote, one abstained, one voted no and three voted yes, including me. The contract is now finalized by our attorney and both Mr. Schlick and myself reviewed it and are now in discussion to clear up any questions we have. It will then be submitted to the committee for review and the resolution will be put on the agenda for a vote.

Mr. Mike Polito: Mentioned this contract expired in December 2014 and we are now in March of 2016.

Township Administrator Garrett Loesch asked the attorney if we are on the verge of a Rice Notice requirement.

Township Attorney Robin LaBue explained we are because we are talking about the terms and conditions of someone's employment. We have informed Mr. Polito that the contract has been drafted, is under review and will be up for a vote.

Mr. Art Mooney: Requested the meeting time be changed to 7pm. Due to transparency the meetings are taking longer and we are going on two hours now. He mentioned since Super Storm Sandy the township lost 540 million dollars worth of ratables.

Township Administrator Garrett Loesch explained approximately 540 million dollars after the reassessment he cannot say it was all due to the storm.

Mr. Art Mooney: Asked how much of that money has the town recouped.

Township Administrator Garrett Loesch explained the certified number this year added approximately 33 million to our net valuation.

Mr. Art Mooney: Stated we are still behind what we started at prior to the storm.

Township Administrator Garrett Loesch explained before Super Storm Sandy back in 2007 home values declined and we had millions of dollars in tax appeals each year.

Mayor Gene Kobryn explained multiple conditions contributed to where we are at this time. Property recession started the ball rolling down hill.

Mr. Art Mooney: Stated we are still behind over 500 million dollars worth of ratable.

Township Administrator Garrett Loesch stated that is correct.

Mr. George Lange: With Walmart opening he asked how many more police officers will be needed to patrol the area.

Police Chief Rich Buzby explained Walmart and the commercial corridor in that area will have an impact and we are looking at the future needs of the town.

Mr. Anthony Corti: Asked for the total of abandoned homes in town.

Township Administrator Garrett Loesch explained he does not have a number because many of the homes that appear abandoned are in the process of raising or rebuilding. To have someone research each home to determine if it is abandoned would not be feasible and the money is better spent in other areas.

Mr. Anthony Corti: Asked if the taxes went up due to people not paying taxes on their abandoned homes.

Township Administrator Garrett Loesch explained some of the homes are bank owned and taxes are being paid.

Mr. Anthony Corti: Asked why the ratable went up so much.

Township Administrator Garrett Loesch explained the tax rate went up last year due to a town wide reassessment and multiple factors. One was the housing decline over the last 8 years nationally and in the State of New Jersey.

Mr. Anthony Corti; Stated he thought the town said it was the ratables.

Township Administrator Garrett Loesch explained the net ratable is the value of the town. Home values create the net ratable.

Mr. Anthony Corti: Asked what the process is once it is determined a house is abandoned. He mentioned the demolishing the home and selling the property to get the ratables back.

Township Administrator Garrett Loesch stated it sounds like a great idea if it is legal.

Township Attorney Robin LaBue explained it would be under the Abandoned Property Rehabilitation Act however that would cost a lot of money. The town would have to pay the cost and a lot of research and money is involved.

Committeewoman Lisa Stevens asked the township attorney to research ways to make the banks accountable for these abandoned homes.

Township Attorney Robin LaBue explained the town has an ordinance requiring banks to maintain the properties. If they are maintaining them and paying the taxes there is not much we can do to force them to sell the property.

