

WESTAMPTON TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

6:00 PM CLOSED SESSION 7:00 PM REGULAR MEETING

April 14, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM with all present, Mr. Maybury was absent. Resolution 4-14-15 was adopted to go into Executive session to discuss redevelopment and road dedication.

The meeting was again called to order and reopened at 7:04 PM by Mayor Chang. Requirements of the Sunshine Law were read. This meeting was advertised in the Burlington County Times January 6, 2015. The flag was saluted and there was a moment of silence.

Roll Call:

Committeeman Daniels	Present
Committeeman Maybury	Absent
Committeewoman Teleisa	Present
Committeeman Thorpe	Present
Mayor Chang	Present

George Saponaro, Solicitor, was present.

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

Approve 4/14/15 Agenda – motion to approve by Mr. Daniels; second by Mr. Thorpe. All voted yes.

Minutes of the 3/24/2015 meeting – motion to approve by Mr. Daniels; second by Ms. Teleisa. All voted yes. Closed session minutes of the 3/24/2015 meeting – motion to approve by Ms. Teleisa; second by Mr. Thorpe. All voted yes.

Scheduled Appointments:

Swear in full time Police Officer Matthew Lloyd – was sworn in by Mayor Chang.

Swear in full time Class II Police Officer Shawn McDonough – was sworn in by Mayor Chang.

Public Comments on agenda items

None

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Resolutions

51-15 Payment of Vouchers – motion to approve by Mr. Daniels; seconded by Mr. Thorpe. All voted yes. Ms. Teleisa asked about the March cell phone bill that totals \$1445.00, she asked for an explanation. Donna explained that this is for all the cell phones for all employees that have one. She had some questions about police bills but Chief Otto just left the meeting. Donna would try to answer her questions. There were Police uniforms that were ordered, many of them and the Humvees – there is a bill for painting. The impression she was under was that there would be no cost to the Township and now the Police Department had spent \$4400 for painting two of the Humvees. This was also the Mayor's understanding; they were assured that these vehicles would be of no expense and they were surprised to see this on the bill list. Chief Otto explained that they needed a lot of outer repair work; there was damage where water was getting through. The Mayor said the Township didn't need military style vehicles and they raised an objection. They were told there would be no cost to the Township and that they would be used for emergency use only. She thought that BCIT would do this work at no cost; Joe explained this was only the mechanical work and not painting and bodywork. She asked if they could do the painting for free in the Medford BCIT facility; he answered that it couldn't be done because it was too large of a job for the school to handle.

52-15 Award Contract for Sports Complex, Phase IX Lighting – motion to approve by Mr. Daniels; second by Mr. Thorpe. All voted yes. This is being paid for with a Burlington County Park Grant that was received for \$250,000 in 2014. Mr. Daniels stated the lights have a life of 25 years. We would not have been able to purchase these without this grant. Ms. Teleisa asked if all documents were in order for the company that won the bid; they were, according to Donna.

53-15 Read 2015 Municipal Budget by Title Only – motion to approve by Ms. Telesia; seconded by Mr. Thorpe. All voted yes.

54-15 Local Examination of Budget – motion to approve by Mr. Thorpe; seconded by Mayor Chang. All voted yes.

55-15 Public Hearing of 2015 Municipal Budget – motion to approve by Mr. Thorpe; seconded by Ms. Teleisa. The meeting was opened to the public for comment. Wilbur Williams – asked how it works with assessments and tax appeals for commercial properties. Donna explained it to him. George Saponaro stated that we did better than he thought we would regarding the appeals. He asked which properties received appeals. Vernita Jones, 20 Amara Lane – asked when the next assessment would take place. The last was in 2010; Donna explained that there is a new process where a portion of properties would be re assessed each year.

Nancy Burkley, 226 Olive Street – thanked Donna for her explanations of her questions regarding the budget. She is concerned about only paying the interest on debt service instead of making the \$500,000 payment. Secondly she was appalled to see a 3.7% raise for the Township Committee. The Mayor recalls not approving a raise for themselves in light of the hardship caused to the residents by raising taxes. Mr. Daniels doesn't remember taking the increase out of the budget; he does remember discussing it. Donna explained that it could be used to pay for seminars or it didn't have to be used at all. They each receive \$3,710.00 a year. Nancy stated that the Board of Education gets no stipend and spends just as much time as the Township Committee; the Mayor disagrees with her as she has sat on both Boards.

Wilbur Williams, 8 Treetop Lane – he doesn't think \$140 dollars a year is much to get upset about. He received an automated call today regarding the raise the Committee was going to receive and to advise him to attend this evening's meeting.

James Palmieri, 38 Spyglass Court – asked if there are any foreseeable new ratables coming into the town. The Mayor stated yes, absolutely. They are hopeful that in 2015 we will get one or two shovels into the ground.

Jonathan Wright, 18 Glasgow Road – the dollar amount of the Committee salary increase is easy to brush off; most people aren't getting a 3.7 percent raise. There have been tax increases every year for the last 7 years; he doesn't think it is appropriate or necessary to get a raise.

Mr. Daniels – the Committee all does their best to attend seminars and conferences. Most jobs pay for continuing education and pay much more than the small stipend they receive. It is not an easy job; he doesn't do this for the stipend. He is happy to hear everyone's comments. The Committee understands the resident's concerns; there has been no increase in the stipend in 20 years.

Jonathan Wright – appreciates Andre Daniels having the discussion with them regarding this.

Jose Sosa, 18 Maple Tree Drive – was a Councilman and Mayor in Mount Holly years ago; they never took a stipend or salary. The message the Committee is sending no matter how much the increase isn't good. He suggests that a fund for events or educational training be built into the budget; a separate line item budget that is defensible to the public. State in specific terms what the money is to be spent for.

Gil Gehin Scott, 102 Second Street – both last year and this year the Committee seems to blame the real estate market and tax appeals on the tax increase. He thinks it is the company that was hired to do the reassessment; Burlington County Country Club's assessment was raised astronomically in the middle of a recession. The money was spent and now has to be given back. He noticed that salaries and wages went up a lot from 2014 to 2015. Donna explained that the administrative salaries went up 2%, that was per

contract. He asked about the EMS salaries and wages; Donna explained that we had to hire additional per diems and that was the reason for the greater expenditure. We also added another employee this year whose salary is \$90,000.00.

With no further comments from the public, the public hearing for the 2015 Budget was closed. Mr. Daniels abstained from voting, Ms. Teleisa voted no, Mr. Thorpe voted yes and Mayor Chang voted no.

56-15 Award Purchase for Ambulance Remount – motion to approve by Ms. Teleisa; seconded by Mr. Thorpe. All voted yes.

57-15 Refund/Credit Taxes, Block 904, Lot 5 – motion to approve by Ms. Teleisa; second by Mr. Thorpe. All voted yes.

58-15 Designation of Non-Condernation Redevelopment Area, Block 203, Lot 4.03 – motion to approve by Mr. Thorpe; second by Ms. Teleisa. All voted yes.

Ordinances

5-2015 Adoption of Redevelopment Plan, Block 203, Lot 4.03 (first reading) – motion to approve by Mr. Thorpe; second by Ms. Teleisa. All voted yes.

Mr. Daniels – has every right to ask a question when a question is in order. What happens now since they were supposed to adopt the budget tonight? Donna said she has no idea; it depends when it is passed. He asked why it was on the agenda tonight if it isn't going to be passed. This already happened when they introduced the budget. Was there anything that transpired that he wasn't aware of? He is conflicted, that is why he abstained.

Ms. Teleisa – when they had budget meetings, they went line item by line item. She has reviewed it as a Committeeperson and has reviewed it as a resident; she is uncomfortable and unsatisfied with it on both levels.

Correspondence

Dept. of Transportation – letters of denial for the Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program and Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program – we did not receive these grants.

Green Acres Program – Westampton Planning Incentive (Scharpf property) – we couldn't find anyone to purchase property from, we will lose most of the money.

Letter of appreciation for Westampton Indoor Soccer League – we had about 800 children playing this year.

NJ American Water – notices of proposed rate increase and public hearings. One of the public hearings will take place on April 21st in the Municipal Building.

Dates to remember

Friday April 17 – Sports Complex – Rutgers and Villanova soccer tournament

April 29th, Westampton Firehouse - Spaghetti dinner for Project Graduation

Comments – Department Heads & Professionals

Fire Chief Jason Carty – May 7th will be the mock crash for RV students; they will be demonstrating extrication services (Jaws of Life). He thanked the Committee for their support. The Department recently submitted a FEMA fire grant for smoke detectors for residents.

Police Chief Joe Otto – congratulated the two new officers that were sworn in this evening.

Mr. Daniels – thanked all who came out tonight. Everyone should have an opportunity to speak.

Open to public Comment

Wilbur Williams, 8 Treetop Lane – asked what a Class II Officer was. Chief Otto explained to him what it was.

Mary Weston, 104 Church Street – thanked the Committee for what they do; it's not a perfect world. There are some positive things. She is in support of Timbuctoo. The charge for water is exorbitant, is there a way there can be a discount for a senior. Is there something the Township can do to assist a senior? Mayor Chang has contacted the MUA to see if there is something she can do for a discount; it doesn't make sense to charge a flat rate.

Nancy Burkley, 226 Olive Street – didn't realize the grant for the lights was only \$250,000. There are engineering bills on the bill list; how is that paid for? Donna stated that it comes out of open space but one comes out of the bond ordinance for the turf field.

Lynda Williams, 8 Treetop Lane – is following up on the status of the proposed senior center. Mayor Chang stated that they are hopeful the shovel will be in the ground in 2015.

Robert Lee – asked if the microphones can be turned on. He is a member of the senior gathering that meets twice a month; the renovation would allow more seniors to participate in things that they like to do. He invited the Committee to attend their

meetings to see what they do. Seniors are good taxpayers and don't have any children in the schools; they have a stake in the town. He thinks it is ridiculous to be quibbling over \$140. People that sit on these Boards are here to make the town a bit better. He applauds the police and fire department.

Jim Palmieri, 38 Spyglass Court – gets the Nixle emails regarding crime; thanked the Police Department.

Vernita Jones, 20 Amara Lane – thanked the council. The Mayor and Committee members came around door to door and asked what their concerns were; that has never happened before. She offered her continued support.

Wilbur Williams, 8 Treetop Lane – asks each resident to get someone to come out to the meeting. It's very important; the Committee will have more input from their residents. Showing up is important.

John Mumbower, 29 Lancaster Drive – asked how they do promotions within the Police Department and the Fire Department. George Saponaro stated that we discussed this already; Mr. Carty's title isn't mentioned in the statute. He asked if his title was in the retirement system; George Saponaro answered that it was. He wanted the pension code; Donna could get it for him.

Gil Gehin Scott, 102 Second Street – they haven't seen an EMS Report since October 2014, will we see something soon. Why is the hotel occupancy tax recorded as unanticipated revenue in the budget? We use it to build our surplus according to Donna.

Committee Members Comments

Mr. Thorpe – is a big fan of both the Police and Fire Departments. They look forward to the senior citizen center renovation.

Ms. Teleisa – attended the Recreation meeting the other evening; the Boy Scouts had a plaque thanking the Township. We had our Easter Egg Hunt, it was a big success, 150 children participated. She went to the Fire/EMS liaison meeting; they are currently evaluating brands of fire gear. A fire prevention grant was applied for; we can get 1000 smoke detectors. They are currently reviewing the Ordinance for EMS job descriptions.

Mayor Chang – thanked all residents and guests who came out to show support for the Township Committee. There were two articles in the local newspaper recently regarding a change in a Township contract. It isn't unusual for the appointments to change especially after a change in the governing body. This is common and standard. There is certainly no entitlement to re-appointment in perpetuity. I am the only female Mayor of color in the 40 municipalities in Burlington County. For some odd reason, when something which is standard, even common place occurs under the leadership of Mayor Chang, there are those who come out in attempt to make something devious out of

nothing. I have quickly realized that like the obstructionist members of the U.S. Congress, a few residents of Westampton Township will attempt to hide behind non-issues, hide behind the guise of "Concerned Citizens" and have set upon a course of conduct to impede all progress in this Township. The majority of the residents support economic development and want to move forward in a progressive manner. The only thing constant in life is change. This Township's population is 28%-30% people of color; we need to move forward in a positive manner. Mayor Chang has received numerous telephone messages with positive feedback regarding the past two Municipal Court sessions. The new judge is extremely well qualified. She spoke regarding the accusations made by some residents at the March 24, 2015 meeting regarding appointments that were made and accusations that she was friends with the judge's wife. It is simply not true.

There were no further comments and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Marion Karp, Deputy Clerk