

## WESTAMPTON TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

5:30 PM CLOSED SESSION    7:00 PM REGULAR MEETING

October 27, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM with all present, Mr. Thorpe was absent. Resolution 10-27-15 was adopted to go into Executive session to discuss employee contracts.

The meeting was again called to order and reopened at 7:00 PM by Mayor Chang. Requirements of the Sunshine Law were read. This meeting was advertised in the Burlington County Times on January 6, 2015. The flag was saluted and there was a moment of silence.

### Roll Call:

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

George Saponaro, Solicitor, was present.

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

Jason Carty, Fire Chief, spoke about Becky Scott of Virtua who lost her life to cancer; she was a paramedic. He wanted everyone to keep her and her family in their thoughts and prayers.

Approve 10/27/15 Agenda – motion to approve by Mr. Daniels; second by Mr. Maybury. All voted yes.

Closed session Minutes of 10/13/15 – motion to approve by Mr. Daniels; second by Ms. Teleisa. All voted yes, Mr. Maybury abstained. Minutes of the 10/13/15 meeting – motion to approve by Mr. Daniels; second by Ms. Teleisa. All voted yes, Mr. Maybury abstained.

### **Public Comments on agenda items**

Jonathan Wright – asked about the item on the agenda regarding approval of contracts and who was being approved as it doesn't mention anything. He finds it disturbing that they are trying to ram through contracts 7 days before the election. It is important to listen to the residents of the town and to hold off on this until after the election. He wants everyone to be looked at individually and not grouped together.

Abraham Lopez – asked the Committee if they knew which contracts would be voted on tonight.

Denise Blain – asked about the contracts, there was nothing posted on the Township website. They would like more information about which contracts would be signed.

Johnathan Wright – asked for specific names and departments for the contracts.

Solicitor George Saponaro – the contracts are for the Fire Chief, Police Chief and Deputy Fire Chief.

Jonathan Wright – it would be highly irresponsible to vote on it tonight; it looks like they are scared they will lose the election and are trying to get the contracts through. Listen to the residents who put you here.

Abraham Lopez – it has been said that the Fire Chief was active politically and labeled a political operative; they received proof this week that he is running the campaigns of Vernita Jones and Bob Thorpe. It has also been said that he has managed Ms. Teleisa's and Mr. Daniel's campaign. Do they think it appropriate to be voting on a contract if this person has managed their campaigns? Mr. Daniels answered that yes, he had worked on his campaign. Ms. Teleisa stated that this was a session for public comment; not a question and answer session. Mr. Lopez asked if anyone had ever guaranteed Mr. Carty a position, the Committee answered they had not.

Sharon Fisher – has lived in Westampton for 38 years. She wants to address an article that appeared in the Philadelphia Inquirer. Mayor Chang told her it must wait until end of the meeting since this public comment session was for agenda items only.

Lori Hustus – agrees with Mr. Wright; she doesn't see what the issue is to wait for the contracts. She hopes everyone here that has an issue with it speaks up now.

Abraham Lopez – the State Attorney General's Office is looking into alleged wrongdoing that has occurred here. It is a conflict of interest for the Committee to cast a vote tonight for Jason Carty's contract; do the right thing tonight and recuse yourself. If not, they will amend the original request filed with the Attorney General's Office and ask that this be included.

John Mumbower – has great concern about Township employees being involved in politics behind the scene. These are the types of things that happen in other countries, not in America. He wanted to know if this would put him on the radar for speaking his mind.

Nancy Burkley – asked what the contract length was when Carty was hired; there was no contract. It is a director's position and he was appointed.

Gil Gehin Scott – recommends postponement on the employment contracts until after the election. He asked for a show of hands of the audience of those in agreement.

Jonathan Wright – it's overwhelming, the town is against it, please listen to us. They are pushing it through quickly. It is the Committee's job to represent the public.

There being no further comments from the public, the meeting was closed.

### **Scheduled Appointments**

7:00 PM – Swear in 2 Police Sergeants. Mayor Chang swore in Ryan Bieri and Ralph Lutz into their new positions as Sergeant.

A five minute break was taken for refreshments.

### **New Business**

Best Practices Submission – achieved a score of 45/50. Congratulations to Donna on achieving this score.

World Stroke Day Proclamation – Mayor Chang had Ms. Orlando come forward; she had asked Westampton Township for the proclamation. She wanted to thank the Mayor and Committee for issuing the proclamation. Many suffer from stroke each year; they want to raise awareness and to educate.

Police Report – no further comments made.

Public Works Report – no further comments made.

EMS Report – Deputy Chief Farnsworth stated that FEMA declared it a natural disaster for our area on June 21; we were reimbursed \$15,000 because debris was removed so quickly. They are doing an internal audit of the Fire Marshal's office and are being audited by the state next Monday. They are preparing for that and hope everything will go well.

### **Resolutions**

131-15 Payment of Vouchers – motion to approve by Mr. Daniels; seconded by Mr. Maybury. All voted yes.

132-15 Chapter 159, SAFER Grant– motion to approve by Ms. Teleisa; seconded by Mr. Maybury. All voted yes.

133-15 Refund Taxes, Block 401.02, Lot 13 – motion to approve by Mr. Maybury; second by Mr. Teleisa. All voted yes.

134-15 Approve Employment Contracts – Mr. Daniels wants to table the motion. He would like to move the individual parts instead of a whole and wants to vote on each

contract individually. He made a motion to table the approval of the contracts; there was no second. Motion to approve by Mr. Maybury; seconded by Ms. Teleisa. All voted yes, Mr. Daniels voted no.

### **Correspondence**

A letter was received from former Fire Marshal John Augustino which was addressed to the Committee and Donna Ryan. It was a letter of thanks for the retirement plaque received from the Township.

### **Dates to Remember**

Westampton Township Annual Fall Festival – October 30, 2015, 6 PM to 9 PM

Annual Free Rabies Clinic – Saturday, Nov. 21, 2015, 9 AM to 11 AM, Public Works Garage

Senior Citizens Holiday Dinner, Wed., Dec. 9<sup>th</sup> @ 6 PM, WMS

Nov. 14, 2015 – Am Vet Post 79, Annual Spaghetti Dinner, Rancocas Community Center

Dec. 12, Breakfast with Santa, 9 AM, WMS

Candidate's Debate – 7 PM, October 28th

### **Open to public Comment**

Nancy Burkley – had emailed the Mayor and wanted a follow up regarding the newsletter. Residents in Rancocas did not receive the newsletter; she wants it sent to all the residents since it was taxpayer paid. Secondly, she missed the last meeting. She wanted to know about the PILOT agreement; and specifically wanted to know if we were still bound by any kind of agreement. George Saponaro stated there was a redevelopment agreement; Woodmont has not come forward with a new proposal.

Jonathan Wright – he is disgusted; aside from Committeeman Daniels all have failed miserably; it is a disgrace. To vote for someone who was their political campaign manager is wrong. Why are they doing this? He asked if a background check was run on Mr. Carty when they hired him. Ms. Teleisa said they could talk another time; he answered that the public wants to know. Ms. Teleisa said this is like a witch hunt. To him it looks like they are scared they are going to lose the elections, which is what it looks like here. Mayor Chang said she will not accept political grandstanding. They will not allow him to obstruct the work going on in the Township; he may not agree with everything, however the business and work of the Township must continue. Mr. Wright stated that none of the Committee is doing their jobs.

Lori Hustus – as the wife of a founding member of the WTES, she was offended to see Mr. Thorpe's photo in turn out gear in the newsletter. There should be no mixing of firehouse and politics.

Denise Blaine – as part of Eagle Scout requirements there are 3 Boy scouts sitting here as part of their badge requirements. It is important for us and them to see how the Committee handles the public's thoughts and requests. She doesn't know what to say to them.

Sharon Fisher – wants to talk about the article in the Philadelphia Inquirer. She was quoted incorrectly and her comments were taken out of context. She wanted to know why she was being painted with a broad brush of racism.

The Mayor stated that respectfully, Ms. Fisher branded herself.

John Mumbower – is concerned about public employees being involved in politics. Veterans received a flyer today that had Thorpe's photo on it. Vernita is a 26 year Veteran; he respects that. The Air Force emblem is on the mailer; it appears that the Department of Defense is endorsing their campaign and they do no such thing.

Steve Boonstra – there was a bad car wreck at the intersection of Oxmead and Burrs Roads the other day; maybe we should look at a solar powered blinking light for the intersection. Maybe the 3 departments could get together and look at this. Mayor Chang will look into it.

Mr. Milanes – good job by the Police Department, same to Public Works and the Clerk Donna Ryan.

Maureen Smith Hartman – she is scared now; she is running for Township Committee; a lot of people have spoken and they are not willing to listen. She thinks their voices should be heard; these are the people who voted for you. If elected, she vows to listen to the people. It appears that their campaign wants them to do nothing so that if elected, they can come in and clean house. Why is only Mr. Daniels willing to listen: She doesn't understand why they had to vote on the contracts this evening. The Mayor said the vote has already been taken.

Patricia Adams – on the occasion she has come to the meetings, the meetings focus on the business of the Township. If residents take issue, there are certain avenues they can pursue. This is a comment period. They are wasting her time.

Mayor Chang – there are a lot in the audience who are obstructionists; they would like them to shut down. They are going to do the business of the town.

Kevin Ennis – congratulations to Donna for all her years of service; to Chief Otto, congratulations to the 2 new Sergeants. He doesn't know Jason Carty but he has a

brother who died in the line of duty. He is an Eagle Scout and is proud of it. He isn't connected to either political party but it's sad to listen to how this is going. He would have liked to see Mr. Thorpe's input. He appreciates their honesty and courage for voting with their hearts.

Ann Mastin – she is totally disappointed in the Committee for not listening to the audience tonight.

Ruth Sosa – all political issues aside, she has never seen such arrogance; she has sat here tonight while the Mayor cuts everyone off. She is appalled and disappointed. Mayor Chang commented that for transparency should she state she is married to Jose Sosa, the Republican's campaign manager.

Lindsay Hustus – asked why the Mayor is dividing the residents; the Mayor stated that she is doing it herself.

Abraham Lopez – the mailer that was sent out was illegal; a quarter of the community didn't receive it and it was sent to Eastampton who shouldn't have received it. Mr. Thorpe appeared in it. Why are we sending this out? Why are residents receiving email messages? Mayor Chang appreciates his comments; he is still political grandstanding.

George Saponaro – it represented a great savings to send it to Eastampton, it was far cheaper to send it there too.

Abraham Lopez – asked who wrote the newsletter; the Recreation dates were incorrect.

Maureen Smith – it could have been delivered without including Eastampton.

Mary Weston – she is deeply saddened by what she hears and sees. She hasn't lived in any country where people disrespect their officials. She thanked all of the elected officials. She doesn't expect them to do exactly what she wants.

Jose Sosa – his wife has a mind of her own; she thinks for herself, including politics. He thinks the time limit to speak is arbitrary and unfair. The text that was sent was illegal; it is comparable to opening up a sealed envelope. He will follow up and see if there is a case to be made about the violation of his privacy rights.

Janet Curran – read a letter aloud to the Committee regarding her appreciation for the Westampton EMS. She had to call for help a few weeks ago for her husband; without their help, he would have died. She wanted to recognize our Fire Police; they never receive recognition and do a lot for our Township.

Jason Blaine – is a Boy Scout. He commented that if someone says something bad, the Mayor cuts them off.

Nancy Burkley – a few months ago she came before the Committee regarding her concerns for Centerton Bridge. She spoke to the Freeholders at the library regarding the timing at the light at the intersection. The 8 second light is now a 12 second light, she is happy to report.

### **Comments – Department Heads & Professionals**

Police Chief Joe Otto – thanked the Committee for their support with the Sergeant promotions. His office was contacted regarding participating in the NY Veteran's Day parade. Officer Daryl Caulfield has returned home safely; they are glad to have him back. On Veteran's Day some Officers will participate at the school; congratulations to Officer Einstein; he was elected as "Man of the Year" for South Jersey magazine.

George Saponaro – thanked both Chiefs and the Deputy Chief for helping finish up the contracts. The Chiefs wanted to wait until all the subordinate contracts were approved before approval of their contracts. He understands the public comment and concern regarding the contracts. The appointments, when made, were permanent appointments.

### **Committee Members Comments**

Mr. Daniels – heavy is the head that wears the crown. While he thanks the residents who thanked him, this is what he signed up for. Tonight the people spoke and whether he agrees or disagrees with them we need to listen to the people. Each contract should be voted on its own merits and should be able to stand alone. He was asked a question tonight which could have a legal implication for him; his no vote was not a vote against the 3 individuals or the contracts themselves. It was a no vote for the way the resolution was constructed and he heard the concerns of the residents this evening. He advised Ms. Blaine with the 3 scouts that sometimes there will be discord at meetings.

He is very happy to hear the good news about Janet's husband; it reminded him that we are one community. Tell Officer Einstein that he salutes him. In a few weeks he intends to go to the NJLOM and take some seminars as an opportunity to learn and advance his craft. With the exception of the registration, he will pay for everything himself.

Ms. Teleisa – congratulations to the 2 new Sergeants; she has every confidence in them.

Mr. Maybury – he was unable to attend the last meeting; congratulations to the 3 new Lieutenants and to the 2 new Sergeants. Thanks for your service.

Mayor Chang – congratulations to the 2 new Sergeants; they were fantastic at their interviews. Thanks to the EMS and Fire Department for the work that you do. Janet's letter was extremely moving; we are thankful that his life was saved and we appreciate the letter.

There were no further comments and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Marion Karp, Deputy Clerk