

**WESTAMPTON TOWNSHIP
COMMITTEE MEETING
March 7, 2023**

**6:00PM Budget Workshop Meeting
7:00 PM Regular Meeting, Courtroom
Meeting Minutes**

The meeting was called to order and opened at 6:00 PM by Mayor Sandy Henley. Requirements of the Sunshine Law were read. This meeting was advertised in the Burlington County Times on January 6, 2023. This meeting was held in person in the Westampton Township Municipal Building Courtroom. The flag was saluted and there was a moment of silence.

Roll Call:

Committeewoman Burkley	Present
Committeeman Carr	Present
Mayor Henley	Present
Committeewoman Mungo	Present
Committeewoman Wright	Present

Township Administrator Wendy Gibson, Deputy Clerk Samantha Horton, Township Solicitor Robert Wright, Director of Public Works Chris Taylor and Chief of Police Stephen Ent were also present.

Workshop: 2023 Annual Municipal Budget

Mayor Sandy Henley opened the floor to our township department heads to present their proposals for the 2023 budget.

Township Administrator Wendy Gibson presented the 2023 Budget recap presentation. The planned introduction of the budget will be March 21, 2023. The highlights of the budget include a \$13 million budget, unexpended funds of approximately \$691,000 and significant increases in healthcare, workman's compensation insurance and fuel costs.

Ms. Gibson presented options to the Committee for adding contingency for a full Master Plan review, Architectural services for the firehouse and savings from a premium surplus from the 2022 Capital Bond purchase. Westampton's budget calculation is a penny for every \$119,000 spent or saved. By applying the Bond Premium, the tax rate can come down. Ms. Gibson stated that this year's budget is a healthy budget, and that the Township will not have to struggle next year to make up for any overspent revenues this year. She opened up the presentation for questions from the Committee.

Mayor Henley asked if there would be an increase in construction fees this year because of the new construction. Ms. Gibson advised that the new construction revenue cannot be

recognized until next year. Revenue has to be received before it can be recognized; therefore, the increase in fees will be for the 2024 budget.

Ms. Burkley asked about the percentage of court fees that are collected, and what is kept versus what is sent to the State. She noted that the Township doesn't get to keep everything that is brought in. She also noted that the credit card fees are high due to the amount of payments received.

Mayor Henley and Committeewoman Burkley briefly discussed merchant service fees through credit cards and methods of payments received.

Ms. Burkley requested to lower the tax rate, and asked about how the tax rate is calculated with the bond payment. Ms. Gibson explained the tax levy law. Ms. Burkley was confused over the difference of the Tax Levy CAP law and the Tax Levy Law. Ms. Gibson explained the exclusions to the Tax Levy law, which allows the rate to be over two percent. Ms. Burkley stated her goal is to reduce some of the debt and spend on other things, rather than taking in more debt with Capital purchases.

Ms. Burkley noted that she thought the carpet for the second floor was more than originally planned and felt that spending on carpet for the first floor was not necessary. She also did not want to make purchases for new vehicles for the Construction department out of the American Rescue Plan funds. She also stated that maintenance costs could be reduced and needed to be cut back due to the various vehicles for the departments being newer.

Ms. Burkley also requested the Land Development Board Secretary salary to be higher. She noted that fifty dollars a month wasn't enough, and the hours are longer, and that the salary has not been raised in over twenty years. Ms. Gibson corrected her and stated it was five hundred dollars a month, and that there was only one meeting a month attended.

Ms. Burkley also made comments on the line items for the maps for zoning and asked about the JIF premium increase. She asked about a \$6,000 line item for internet for the Construction department. Ms. Gibson asked for clarification, and it was determined that the line item was actually for new computers. Ms. Gibson confirmed that the costs were provided by our IT professional to budget for computer related technology costs and two new computers for hard drives that are failing.

Ms. Gibson confirmed that she receives a report from the CFO before the budget is started, which compares the last four years of expenses for each line item. It shows the spending trends and allows for better budgeting for the upcoming year. The line items are planned for inflation and provision of services to residents, and they are not padded exponentially. She stated that there isn't enough from the operating expenses to cut to put a substantial amount toward the debt service. Any cuts will cut back on the services that we are able to provide to the residents.

Ms. Burkley noted that Police, Fire and Court did not increase their line items and seem to spend a lot. Ms. Gibson confirmed that they receive Federal grant money to help offset the taxpayer expense. Committeewoman Mungo confirmed that it offsets the cost of having to purchase items from Township funds.

Ms. Burkley asked about water and sewer increases, and Ms. Gibson confirmed she received those costs from the CFO at the beginning of the year.

Mayor Henley asked about the Recreation minivan, and Ms. Gibson confirmed that the purchase of the Construction vehicles will provide the current Construction Official's vehicle for the Recreation department. She also stated that the second vehicle planned to be purchased will be for the inspectors, since they use their own vehicles to drive onto Construction sites. Mayor Henley asked about the insurance and damages to the inspectors' vehicles, and Township Solicitor confirmed that we would be responsible.

Ms. Burkley would like to forego spending on vehicles and other items, to supplement debt payments.

Ms. Gibson ended the presentation by requesting that the Committee consider the changes and the calculation for the debt. Ms. Burkley wanted an explanation on the amount of surplus that was applied to the budget. Ms. Gibson clarified that we do not use 100 percent of the surplus, and that the Township has cash flow in case there is a problem. The Township is only utilizing 75 percent of the available surplus as revenue.

Mayor Henley asked Ms. Burkley for clarification on what she was seeking for a raise for the Land Development Board Secretary. Ms. Burkley suggested a 2 percent raise. Mayor Henley stated that it should be more than just 2 percent.

Motion to close the workshop was made by Ms. Burkley; seconded by Ms. Mungo
All in favor to close workshop. The workshop closed at 6:45PM.

The Committee took a break in between the Budget workshop and the Regular Meeting.

Mayor Henley asked for a Motion and Second to open the regular meeting to order.

Motion to open the regular meeting was made by Ms. Mungo; seconded by Ms. Wright
All in favor to open regular meeting.

Presentation: Oath of Office for Officer Eric Sweeney

Mayor Sandy Henley swore in Officer Eric Sweeney to the Westampton Township Police Department.

Open Meeting for Public Comments on Agenda Items Only:

Kristina Goetz, 109 West Maple Tree Drive, thanked the committee for listening to all the residents who came out and voiced their opinions and for taking section three out of Ordinance number 1-2023.

Eileen Kuriskin, 4 Oak Tree Court, had questions about the zoning goals and plans for the township. She stated she reviewed the vision plan from 2010 and noted that the original plan discussed rural and farmland preservation including recreational areas, and protection of the resources and environmental impacts and other points of interest. She noted that her understanding of the definition of the Agrihood neighborhood could mean that anything could be built. She requested a moratorium on construction of warehouses in the township.

Shanti Williams, 6 Tree Top Lane, stated that she likes all the open space in Westampton Township. She is very against any warehouses being built in the township, as it will bring more truck noise, pollution, and many other unforeseen headaches. She hopes the Committee will keep the township as it is.

Township Solicitor Bob Wright reminded everyone that this portion of the meeting is for comment only. The Township Planner will be available at the next meeting to address any questions or comments from this evening's meeting. The public comment period is not intended as a question-and-answer period. If anyone would like a response, please leave your contact information on the podium so the Township Committee or the Township Administrator can respond appropriately. He also stated that everyone would be allowed three minutes to comment, in order to give everyone an opportunity to speak.

Ron Kuriskin, 4 Oak Tree Court, stated he very strongly recommends that any warehouse of any type should be specifically prohibited in zone OR1, because there will be no more open space left. He noted the vision plan calls for preservation of farmland, and it seems that all of the land is being developed.

Anthony Goetz, 109 West Maple Tree Drive, thanked the committee for listening to the residents' concerns. Mr. Goetz would also like clarification on how the township is replacing already existing construction vehicles. He also congratulated the new police officer Sweeney for getting sworn in.

Amber Pingitore, 71 Sherwood Lane, stated that she feels the agenda has changed, and she is unsure of where to find what to comment on. She stated that she doesn't know what the Ordinance is if it's not available to view and thinks that there should be more transparency.

Chrissy Eckerd, 120 Main Street, stated that she thinks Westampton is a great community to live in and she appreciates the open spaces. She appreciates growth and is a business owner, but she thinks we need to keep the warehouses under control.

Linda Ward, 2 Greenwich Drive, would like to know what will happen if the warehouses remain empty and no one rents them. She thinks that the vacant buildings will create issues with kids and the homeless trying to break in, rats and pigeons will live in them.

Ms. Ward also stated that traffic and speeding on Rancocas Road and Woodlane Road is becoming very bad. She noted that on Woodlane road there are markers for pedestrians, and once the trucks come the area will be filled with pollution. She wanted to know why the land cannot be used as a dog park or kept open for the community.

Susan Baldassare, 129 West Country Club Drive, wanted to speak with regard to the warehouses. She asked who the Committee represents, if they are for the warehouses or the residents. She was worried that the warehouses take precedence over the residents. She presented the pages of the Master Plan Technical Appendix to the residents and did not address the Committee.

Roger Roslowski, 27 Doral Drive, stated that he does not feel like it is in the best interest of the Township to allow anything other than a medical facility to be built on the Virtua property. He stated he understands that it is their property, and they can do what they like; but it is currently not zoned for anything other than that, and the residents should not give up their rights to dictate for what that land can be developed.

Kelly Gehin-Scott, 3 Valley Farm Road, stated she agreed with everything about the warehouses. She would like to know what can be done for the traffic patterns and speed limits by the apartments and townhouses, and that the addition of warehouses will add to the problem.

Motion to close public comment on agenda items only made by Ms. Mungo; seconded by Ms. Burkley. All in favor.

Approval of Minutes:

a. February 7, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve was made by Mr. Carr; seconded by Ms. Burkley

Motion carried 3-0-2

Ayes: Burkley, Carr, Mayor Henley

Naye: none

Abstain: Mungo, Wright

b. February 21, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes

Ms. Burkley motioned to have the minutes amended to add in the word delete within the section of her comment to show she is opposed to warehouses, upon approval; seconded by Mr. Carr.

Motion carried: 5-0

Ayes: Burkley, Carr, Mungo, Mayor Henley, Wright

Naye: none

Abstain: none

Ordinances:

a. 1-2023 An Ordinance of the Township of Westampton Amending and Supplementing Westampton Township Code Chapter 250 Entitled Zoning, and Chapter 196 Entitled Site Plan Review in Accordance with the 2022 Master Plan

Motion to approve First Reading was made by Mr. Carr; seconded by Ms. Wright.

Motion carried: 5-0

Ayes: Burkley, Carr, Mungo, Mayor Henley, Wright

Naye: none

Abstain: none

Committeewoman Burkley asked if the planner was in attendance to answer any questions. Township Solicitor and Committeeman Carr confirmed that the planner would be available during the second reading for the open public comment section of the Ordinance, and that this Ordinance is still on first reading, tabled from the previous meeting.

Ms. Burkley announced to the residents that the Land Development Board did decide to keep the Virtua property as the medical campus overlay. They also kept the 1,000 ft. barrier from houses or schools, instead of moving it closer at 500 ft if there was a sound barrier. Lastly, the height will stay no higher than 40 ft, instead of increasing it to 45-55ft. She asked if there was anything else added after the Land Development Board's recommendation that she was not aware of.

Committeeman Carr confirmed there was nothing added; however, there were recommendations for reflective pavement that cannot be supported at this time.

Mr. Wright added that the Land Development Board did not address warehouses being permitted in the land adjacent to the Village, but this Ordinance made recommendations against permitting them.

b. 2-2023 An Ordinance of the Township of Westampton Amending Chapter 232 Entitled Handicapped Parking

Committeewoman Burkley stated she received the Ordinance at 5:00PM and did not have enough time to digest the information before it was introduced. She stated she didn't like getting it an hour before the meeting.

Mayor Henley stated that the Ordinance was already in effect in Westampton, and that the change was to update the spaces.

Mr. Wright stated that the process of introducing the Ordinance does not require a review and discussion of the Ordinance, and that will happen at a subsequent date.

Motion to approve First Reading was made by Ms. Mungo; seconded by Mr. Carr.

Motion carried: 4-0-1

Ayes: Carr, Mungo, Mayor Henley, Wright

Naye: none
Abstain: Burkley

c. 3-2023 An Ordinance of the Township of Westampton Amending Chapter 203 Entitled Solicitors and Canvassers

Motion to approve First Reading was made by Mr. Carr; seconded by Ms. Mungo.

Motion carried 5-0

Ms. Burkley stated she wanted to receive the document in advance, so she has time to understand it prior to voting.

Ayes: Burkley, Carr, Mungo, Mayor Henley, Wright

Naye: none

Abstain: none

Resolutions:

- a. 43-23 Payment of Vouchers – this resolution approves the payment of bills through 03/07/2023

Motion to approve Resolution 43-23 was made by Mr. Carr; seconded by Ms. Mungo.

Motion carried 5-0.

Ayes: Burkley, Carr, Mungo, Mayor Henley, Wright

Naye: none

Abstain: none

Consent Agenda Resolutions:

Consent Agenda items are considered to be routine and will be enacted with a single motion; any items requiring expenditure are supported by a Certification of Availability of funds; any items requiring discussion will be removed from the Consent Agenda.

- a. 44-23 Resolution Appointing Full Time Police Officer Sweeney
b. 45-23 Resolution Approving Purchase of Construction Vehicles

Motion to approve Resolution 44-23 was made by Ms. Burkley; seconded by Mr. Carr.

Motion carried 5-0.

Ayes: Burkley, Carr, Mungo, Mayor Henley, Wright

Naye: none

Abstain: none

Motion to approve Resolution 45-23 was made by Mr. Carr; seconded by Ms. Mungo. Committeewoman Burkley said she will vote no on Resolution 45-23. She doesn't like the vehicle that was chosen. She doesn't approve of the purchase for the second vehicle to go to the Construction inspectors. She wants the Recreation Director, who is a full-time employee, to receive a new vehicle.

Mayor Henley stated that the vehicle will help bring insurance claims down by allowing the inspectors to use Township owned vehicles. Ms. Burkley then argued that she

believed that the claims did not have anything to do with the vehicles being purchased. Mayor Henley stated that we wanted to be proactive and not reactive.

Motion carried: 4-1-0

Ayes: Carr, Mungo, Mayor Henley, Wright

Naye: Burkley

Abstain: none

Open Meeting for Public Comment:

Before any residents spoke, our Township Solicitor Bob Wright, reminded everyone that this portion of the meeting is for comment only. The Township Planner will be available at the next meeting to address any questions or comments from this evening's meeting. The public comment period is not intended as a question-and-answer period. If anyone would like a response, please leave your contact information on the podium so the Township Committee or the Township Administrator can respond appropriately. He also stated that everyone would be allowed three minutes to comment, in order to give everyone an opportunity to speak.

Terrance Brown, 9 Pine Tree Drive, asked the Mayor to check the statements being made regarding the insurance, because he was involved in the industry for a while. He stated that personal insurance would be affected for using a personal vehicle for work. He stated that acquiring new vehicles requires insurance and maintenance.

Mr. Brown would also like to know if the township can look into possibly giving the residents an access easement into Timbuctoo, so that residents do not have to go through protocol of giving notice of using the property for events. He stated he doesn't know how the Township plays a role in the use of the property. He would also like to see if the township can look into a vacancy tax for buildings or registration for vacant warehouses.

Roger Roslowski, 27 Doral Drive, stated he doesn't think a Ford Edge should be the vehicle being purchased for the Construction Department part time employees, and that the Recreation Department should receive the new vehicle.

Gary Berberian, 138 Winstead Drive, shared an article from the Wall Street Journal about storm drains and debris cleanout. He looked into the minutes from the Timbuctoo advisory committee, stating they should be posted four times a year, but on our township website there only two sets of minutes posted from the Timbuctoo committee. He commented that the August 2022 meeting notes reference funds for a reenactor and asked the Mayor if he recalled anything about it. He stated that he attended the Commissioners meeting, and they discussed grant funding for programs that may be applicable to the Timbuctoo Advisory Committee.

Mr. Berberian congratulated the new Police officer Sweeney. He also noted that it was the anniversary of the fallen officer Sean Cullen, and wanted to present the township with a card for the Cullen family that anyone was welcome to sign.

Chrissy Eckerd, 120 Main Street, stated that she thinks it is unlawful for an employee to not have insurance coverage on a personal vehicle used for business purposes. She

suggested that the Committee reconsider the costs associated with the vehicle purchase for the employees.

Lori Hustus, 14 Kanabe Drive, urged residents to keep coming to the meetings.

David Guerrero, 121 Sharpless Blvd., recommended that the Township start up an Economic Development Advisory Committee for underutilized retail areas in the area. He stated that money is a consideration and that we are always looking for ways to bring more money and businesses into the township.

Eileen Kuriskin, 4 Oak Tree Court, mentioned that the cut through traffic through Irick Woods is becoming excessive, and people are speeding through to avoid traffic lights. She noted that the kids speed through after school, and she asked if speed bumps could be placed in the development to slow down traffic.

Ron Kuriskin, 4 Oak Tree Court, noted that there has been an increase in truck traffic on Rancocas Road and Route 541. If we add a warehouse in Westampton, it will only increase the amount of truck traffic, and make it nearly impossible to get anywhere within the township in a timely manner. He also commented on the tax revenue for warehouses versus the residential area of Deerwood, mentioned at the last meeting, and noted that he did not think they were paying their fair share.

Amber Pingitore, 71 Sherwood Lane, wanted to comment on the purchase of the new vehicles. She agreed with Mayor Henley's comment about employees getting into an accident with their private vehicle, and that although their private insurance will pay for it, they will utilize subrogation to recap the lost money. Although she agrees with the reasoning for purchasing the vehicles, she suggested that in the future, the township consider purchasing a green or environmentally friendly vehicle to help with the pollution issue.

Rebecca Eller, 11 Devonshire Drive, thanked the committee for listening to her concerns and putting in the crosswalk that leads into the school exiting area. She asked if the Township would consider taking it further by putting a weighted crosswalk sign in the middle of the crosswalk for extra signage, since people still speed through there during school hours.

All in favor to close public comment.

Administrator's Report:

Township Administrator Wendy Gibson addressed the comments made during the last meeting. She stated that someone had made a comment regarding mistakes that had been made and addressed the Committee and residents that she is not infallible and continues to learn and grow to make Westampton stronger and better.

Ms. Gibson then commented on the proper procedure for the introduction and adoption of Ordinances, and that the document is considered to be contemplative and deliberative

until it is introduced to the public. She stated she is trying to implement proper procedures going forward. She stated that she recognized the sensitivity of the zoning Ordinance, and therefore provided it to the public in advance of the introduction.

She also provided an update that the Spring Meadows playground installation will break ground in the spring, and that the Fire/EMS department was the recipient of a \$33,000 grant.

Lastly, she stated that she has no issue providing a newer vehicle to the Recreation department if that is what the Committee wanted, but there are two additional part time employees who would otherwise be utilizing the new vehicle.

Dates to Remember:

Next Township Committee Meeting March 21st at 7PM, Land Development Board Meeting April 5th at 7PM, Historic Commission March 22nd at 7PM, Recreation Committee Meeting March 8th at 7 PM, Easter Egg Hunt April 1st, with a rain date of April 8th starting at 9AM.

Committee Liaison Reports/Comments:

Committeewoman Burkley respectfully disagreed with the Administrator, and stated that everyone has gone to college, and provided her guidance on how the first reading of an ordinance should be introduced, by her interpretation of the law. She asked for the Committee to discuss more transparency and made a motion to have the process changed.

Township Solicitor Robert Wright advised that Ms. Burkley cannot make a motion during Committee comments, as the business portion of the meeting has ended, and that she may do so at the next meeting.

Ms. Burkley also congratulated the Court Administrator on her retirement. She attended her retirement party, and noted she did an excellent job in her 14 years working for Westampton Township.

Committeewoman Burkley is looking forward to reading the black history essay writing contest from the students in 7th and 8th grade. She was honored to read to a kindergarten class for black history month.

With regard to the senior citizens, they are planning a lunch and music festival for some time in the spring, details to come soon. She would also like to again request that the committee has a workshop to go over goals and priorities they each have for the township.

Committeewoman Mungo said she is looking forward to finishing up all the details for the Easter egg hunt that will be held at the school for the kids, and she can't wait to see the turnout. Ms. Mungo thanked all residents and employees for coming out to the meeting tonight to express their questions and concerns. She also congratulated officer Sweeney on getting sworn in tonight to the Police department. Ms. Mungo also commended Wendy Gibson, our Township Administrator, on all her hard work for our

township. She stated she thought Wendy was doing everything she could to make the township better.

Committeeman Carr thanked all the residents and employees for coming out to the meeting tonight to express their questions and concerns. Mr. Carr said they are going to be looking into writing a letter to the County about the policies, practice and needs of the community for restrictions on truck traffic as it is called for in the Master Plan, so it can be introduced by Resolution at the next meeting. He also looks forward to the review of the Master Plan.

He congratulated officer Sweeney on getting sworn into the Police department, noting he is under great leadership. He asked the Director of Public Works if he could please look into the weighted crossing walk sign that Ms. Ellar requested.

Committeewoman Wright thanked all the residents for coming out to the meeting tonight to express their questions and concerns, and that their voices matter. She also congratulated officer Sweeney of being sworn into the police department. Ms. Wright also thanked Wendy Gibson, the Township Administrator, for all her hard work and efforts, stating that she has been very helpful and informative, and that she really appreciates it.

Mayor Henley said that the Township does not own the Virtua land. In order to stop warehouses from being built on that land, the township would have to buy it in order dictate what is built. He stated that he doesn't condone warehouses, but we do need a new firehouse that will cost about \$10 million. We also need another firehouse across town that will cost about \$2 million that will need vehicles and equipment. If we increase houses, we need to increase services, and the Township will need to fund those services while keeping the essence of the town.

Mayor Henley discussed Timbuctoo and stated that Guy Weston owns the cemetery, and that the land around the cemetery is owned by the Township. He noted that Mr. Weston can't hold events on the cemetery but needs to utilize the Township's open space surrounding the area. The Timbuctoo Advisory Committee chairperson, Ms. Carolyn Chang and Mr. Weston are supposed to work together to make sure they don't have events at the same time. He also stated that Mr. Weston resigned from the Committee on his own, and that Ms. Chang has taken over planning events for the Committee. It's Mr. Weston's responsibility to communicate with Ms. Chang regarding these events.

Mr. Henley said the Township will not be paying for the new vehicle for the construction department or the recreation department, as the funds for that new car will be coming from a federal grant. He stated that the Edge is smaller and less expensive, and the cars have warranties that will be effective for a longer period.

He also commented on the Economic Development idea and advised that if people want businesses to come to town, then residents need to start supporting the businesses that are already in town.

Mayor Henley advised residents that speed bumps are a bad idea for the Township but agreed that speed issues need to be addressed.

Lastly, Mayor Henley noted that in order to understand how to be a Clerk, he would have to take the classes. He stated that the last Clerk the township had was employed for a long time and things may have changed. He stated that we were making appropriate changes to make sure we were compliant.

He thanked all the residents and employees for coming out to the meeting. He stated that when he interviewed for the Administrator position, that Wendy was the best choice. There were things she had to learn, and she has done a fantastic job. He noted that she's not only being the Administrator and the Clerk, but she's also taking the classes and including completing the budget, which is typically completed by a CFO. He wanted to thank her doing a fantastic job and being a leader.

Executive Session:

a. Resolution No. 03.07.2023 - Resolution Authorizing the Township Committee and Support Staff to Meet in Private Session and Authorizing the Exclusion of the Public From that Portion of the Meeting Dealing with Specific Issues Requiring Non-Public Discussions: Attorney-Client Privilege – Personnel and Pending Litigation: Docket BUR L -001240 22.

Motion to enter Executive Session was made by Ms. Mungo; seconded by Mr. Carr
Motion carried: 5-0

Ayes: Burkley, Carr, Mungo, Mayor Henley, Wright

Naye: none

Abstain: none

All in favor to enter into Executive Session. Meeting adjourned at 8:24PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Gibson, Acting Municipal Clerk