

WESTAMPTON TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

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

April 4, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM with all present.
Resolution 4-4-16 was adopted to go into Executive session to discuss potential litigation.

The meeting was again called to order and reopened at 7:06 PM by Mayor Daniels. Requirements of the Sunshine Law were read. This meeting was advertised in the Burlington County Times on January 14, 2016. The flag was saluted. There was a moment of silence. The Mayor commented that on April 4th, 48 years ago, Martin Luther King Jr. was felled by an assassin's bullet. He asked for a moment of silence for Trooper Cullen as well.

Roll Call:

Committeewoman Chang	Present
Committeeman Lopez	Present
Committeewoman Smith-Hartman	Present
Committeewoman Teleisa	Present
Mayor Daniels	Present

Al Marmero, Solicitor, was present.

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

Approve 4/4/16 Agenda – motion to approve by Mr. Lopez; second by Ms. Teleisa. All voted yes.

Closed Session Meeting Minutes 3/21/2016 – motion to approve by Mr. Lopez; second by Ms. Smith-Hartman. All voted yes.

Regular Meeting Minutes 3/21/16 – Ms. Teleisa had a correction to one of the votes in the minutes; motion to approve as corrected by Mr. Lopez; second by Ms. Smith-Hartman. All voted yes.

Public Comments on Agenda Items

Vernita Jones, 20 Amara Lane – wants to appeal to Mayor Daniels regarding Ordinance 7-2016. She stated if there is reduction in the EMS force that this is the last thing that we need. She wants him to reconsider his opinion and to come up with another solution other than reducing the force. This is the most she has seen attend a meeting; the room is clearly divided.

Lori Hustus, Kanabe Drive – this is a big turn out and it's great, she wishes it would be like this all the time, however she wonders how many live in town that are here tonight.

Nancy Burkley, Olive St. – there were other times when we have had a full house; she doesn't want taxes raised; enough is enough. It isn't all one sided; there are many that don't want an increase.

Stephanie Toplinski – as a resident of Westampton she doesn't want to see any layoffs of any staff; she would prefer a tax increase.

Mr. Daniels – this is a democracy; there is a full room tonight; everyone will have an opportunity to speak their voice; please refrain from bickering and be courteous.

Mr. Maybury – wants to speak about the EMS Ordinance that eliminates 2 positions; Fire Chief and Deputy Chief. He has lived here a long time and is a certified firefighter. Both positions have been here since at least 2007, prior to him taking office. The structure is there for a reason; EMS is the only department that brings 50% of its revenue back in by the service it performs. There is no gain in doing this. He doesn't disagree with keeping taxes low; please look at all options. We can ask for voluntary layoffs and share the burden; it's not fair to attack one employee. He requests that this Ordinance be tabled and they move in a different direction.

Jonathan Wright, Glasgow Road – expects Mr. Daniels to hold his position on this matter; his allegiance is to Westampton and Westampton residents; not people that don't live here. It matters to the seniors and the middle class that live here, not the people here tonight that aren't residents but are in support of this. It should have no bearing on the decision the Committee makes. He hopes he sticks to his values and asked the audience to stand and applaud the Police and Fire/EMS for all they do. Please listen to your constituents. He wanted to know why Jason Carty wasn't a member of the local Fire Chief Association and the Emergency Service Council. He wanted to know why he has been seen many times at the Mt. Holly MUA. Jason Carty said he chooses to dedicate his time here in Westampton; the Chief's Association is mostly for volunteers; his Deputy Chief attends the meetings. They have been working on a shared service agreement with Mt. Holly MUA which is the reason for him being over there.

Ronald Chang, Roberts Drive – has heard much emotion going back and forth this evening. He stated that false information can lead to wrong conclusions. The loss of firefighters and EMS workers is a huge loss to the community. He asked if they would be saving \$100K for the consolidation of the EMS position and \$40K for a public works employee which would be cut. Per diem employees will also be taking a hit according to Mr. Lopez; Public Works will cut some hours; Police also are taking some of the cuts. Layoffs didn't come into the picture until very recently and weren't in anyone's vocabulary.

Ms. Chang – stated that the budget gap is \$146K.

Ronald Chang – he read the newspaper article and understands that the EMS Dept. received a grant; if we go below 15 employees we run the risk of losing that grant. Mr.

Lopez answered that this is incorrect; the staffing levels will be 14 as submitted in the FEMA grant. The tax hike according to the newspaper is only about \$50/resident/year; it sounds to him that there is a political issue going on.

John Mumbower, Lancaster Drive – it may only be \$50; but it isn't the only increase we will experience; everything else goes up. The Mayor needs to hold the line on this; don't disappoint us.

John Endicott, 153 Nantucket Trail, Medford – met Jason Carty 11 years ago. He returned from Iraq and had a wonderful welcome home thanks to him. Westampton is safer today because of Jason Carty.

Jane Phillips, Sharpless Blvd. – husband was over in Iraq; she lost him to PTSD and has had a very hard time making it financially. \$50 is a lot to her.

Mary Weston, 104 Church St. – she will make the sacrifice in order to have a better place to live. We need quality people to serve in our town.

Lori Hustus – not everyone can afford to have their taxes raised, especially those on a fixed income.

Steven Boonstra, 209 Oxmead Road – this is a business they are running; there is a budget and cuts have to be made. These are the times we are living in now; he doesn't want to be in the Committee's shoes. If the cuts can be made safely and the two positions can be consolidated into one; we need to do it. Either make cuts or increase taxes; it's been 7 years of tax increases.

Sheryl Delgardo, 915 Holly Lane – we are all here because we are concerned about the budget and safety of the residents. She follows both departments on Facebook – 90% of what she sees shows things that aren't happening in our town. There are other towns that have volunteer departments that run very well. Why can't we have more volunteers in our town than paid members? Why do we need a Chief and a Deputy Chief?

Larry Fox, member of Mt. Laurel Firefighters Association, resident of Mt. Laurel – has worked with our department for 18 years. You cannot make cuts in any branch of emergency services without impacting safety.

Jose Sosa – expressed his appreciation for all public servants; he has a son who for many years was a volunteer firefighter with Westampton. We are dealing with a redundancy issue; this is a budget issue and not a political issue. The Committee is trying to do right by the residents.

Ryan (last name unintelligible), 87 North Hill Drive – is against any kind of layoffs; he thinks arguing over \$50 is trivial; he doesn't think it is a lot of money.

Molly Boonstra, 209 Oxmead – this is definitely not political; we have so many homes in foreclosure and in short sale; families cannot afford to live here any longer. She is a realtor; the neighborhoods are getting run down. If we are going to keep raising our taxes it is going to become harder to maintain our properties. She asked Mr. Daniels to please stay on point with what he initially intended.

Tammy Granata, 202 South Hill Drive – is against layoffs, the safety of her family means more to her than raising taxes.

Carlos Caminero, 27 Augusta Drive – please stay the course and don't raise our taxes. We can't afford any more tax increases; we are paying more than what our properties are worth. He hopes no one gets laid off but he has been on both sides.

Linda Wittman, 413 Country Club Drive – wanted the Committee to address if taxes are held stable would their safety be compromised; Mr. Daniels answered that it would not.

Steve Boonstra – cuts are hard; he has been through this. A cut is not the end of the world.

Doug (last name unintelligible), Holly Lane – asked why we would terminate the person who has secured the SAFER grants. Obviously he is a budget conscious individual; why eliminate him and not the other position.

Joann Morris, Orchard Lane – she just got laid off after 15 years; she wants to know how we are safer with two redundant jobs.

Janet Curran, 123 Main St. – has lived here all her life; has watched the Fire Department grow along with Westampton Township. She is tired of seeing taxes raised.

Dave Barger, 212 Olive St. – likes hearing the words no tax increase; he appreciates the Committee's efforts. It's nice to know that this can be attained. There have never been issues with one person manning the Department; he doesn't understand why this position was created. It seems as if he is filling a position that was created for him. He believes that this is indeed political. He doesn't think there will be any diminishment in service or safety if this redundant position is eliminated.

Mr. Daniels thanked everyone for expressing their opinions. With no further comment, the meeting was closed for public comment.

New Business

None

Resolutions

31-16 Payment of Vouchers – motion to approve by Mr. Lopez; seconded by Ms. Teleisa. All voted yes.

32-16 Appoint Township Administrator – motion to approve by Mr. Lopez; seconded by Ms. Smith-Hartman. Ms. Chang and Ms. Teleisa voted no; Mr. Lopez, Ms. Smith-Hartman and Mr. Daniels voted yes.

33-16 Cancel Taxes, Block 604, Lot 16– motion to approve by Ms. Teleisa; seconded by Mr. Lopez. All voted yes.

34-16 Rescind Resolution #29-16 – motion to approve by Mr. Lopez; seconded by Ms. Smith-Hartman. All voted yes, Ms. Chang abstained.

35-16 2016 Municipal Budget Notice – motion by Mr. Lopez, seconded by Ms. Smith-Hartman. All voted yes, Ms. Chang voted no.

Ordinances

5-2016 Amend Chapter 232, Vehicles and Traffic – snow parking (second reading) – motion by Ms. Teleisa, seconded by Ms. Smith-Hartman. This was opened to the public for comment. Roger Roslowski, Doral Drive – fully supports this ordinance; many of his neighbors will not remove their vehicles from the street but now they will have to if they will face getting a fine. All voted yes.

6-2016 Springside Urban Renewal financial Agreement (second reading) – motion by Mr. Lopez to postpone the second reading, seconded by Ms. Smith-Hartman. All voted yes.

7-2016 Amend Emergency Services Department (second reading) – motion by Ms. Chang to table the Ordinance, seconded by Ms. Teleisa. A second motion was made by Mr. Lopez to adopt the Ordinance, seconded by Ms. Smith-Hartman. This was opened to the public for comment. Nancy Burkley spoke regarding the FEMA grants that were secured; it is not true that we will lose the grant money if Jason Carty's position is eliminated. Total calls were less in 2014 than in 2013; real calls went down but yet we added 4 positions. She doesn't see how we will be less safe. She disagrees that this isn't political. Why do we have fewer volunteers in this last year than we have had before; what is going on to cause this. She doesn't want taxes raised.

Robert Maybury – Jason Carty was hired to replace an existing Chief; no position was created. This Department became paid in 1999 and had a Chief from the start. We have received \$700,000 in grants since Chief Carty has come in and he needs to be thanked for that.

Jonathan Wright – the Director of EMS/Fire Chief position never existed before; this created a loophole so that Jason Carty could be hired for the position.

Ronald Chang – asked Donna Ryan what the deal was with the dual positions. In July 2015 the position was changed to Director of EMS/Fire Chief. This was a new title that was created as was Deputy Chief although there were always people who had those duties.

Lee Eckert, Bentwood Drive – is retired from Westampton EMS; we did have a Deputy Fire Chief always but we lost volunteers; when he started there were only 4 full time paid employees.

Vernita Jones, Amara Lane – asked Mayor Daniels to table the ordinance; they are truly divided on what the budget needs to be.

John Mumbower, Lancaster Drive – asked why he couldn't just be a Fire Chief; why did he need the extra title of EMS Director; was he not qualified to be hired as a Fire Chief. Mr. Daniels explained that when they voted it was a 3:2 vote to create the position. It was one position at the time; two positions were created.

Gil Gehin Scott, 104 Second St. – read the grant application which said that Mr. Carty is representing to FEMA that we are responsible for 5 municipalities. He doesn't feel it is right that we have a full time paid force and other Townships that we respond to only have volunteers.

Jason Carty – wants to point out a few facts about the grants. We need a minimum of 4 firefighters; 2 in and 2 out. We are the only career Fire Department in the 5 municipalities. It is not true that our volunteer numbers have decreased; these numbers fluctuate normally. There was a time when we had to rely solely on mutual aid; it is give and take. There are times when we miss a call and the other towns back us up. Their Department generated more revenue than any other Department in the Township.

Mr. Lopez – said that the numbers in the SAFER grants are inconsistent. They had a long discussion regarding the staffing levels reported in the grant. Mr. Lopez stated that the application states it is because we are first due in to respond to the other municipalities.

Ms. Teleisa – wanted to run some numbers by everyone; she hopes it will help with understanding staffing. She explained what happened within the Department since 2013. The reason the titles were changed were to reflect the job duties that the employees were actually doing.

Ms. Chang – wants to speak about the ladder truck. She recalls Chief Johnson and Deputy Chief Farnsworth conducting a survey of residents as to whether they wanted a ladder truck. The survey results were that a majority of those polled wanted a ladder

truck. The ladder truck has led to a reduction in resident's insurance policies; a lot of what we have heard tonight is misinformation.

Alison Barger – the number of calls were less than they were the year before; let's listen to what the data and the facts are.

Jose Sosa – asked if a criminal background check was performed on each person interviewed for the position of Fire Chief. He asked if there was a requirement for the candidate to have held that position elsewhere for at least 3 years. There was, before the Ordinance was changed. Jason Carty stated that he resents the accusation that he has some kind of a criminal background. Mr. Sosa commented that it is the responsibility of the Township to have performed a background check. Mayor Daniels stated that under the advice of council he is staying away from this question.

Mayor Daniels – there are a total of 5 positions that will be affected; no one has mentioned any of the other positions. He has a responsibility to the taxpayers; they had to do this due to the other members of Committee who refused to raise taxes. He was prepared to raise taxes 2.2 cents. We will still maintain all our levels of services even with these cuts. They need to do what is truly in the best interest of Westampton Township.

Steve Boonstra – thinks we should shelve this in light of new information that has come up. The Townships that we respond to should be required to contribute; this is something we have to look at.

Lori Hustus – if this was decided tonight how does this affect the grant. Will there be repercussions. Mr. Lopez stated that we will have to apply for a waiver.

Garfield Harper – this meeting is a waste of time; they are arguing amongst themselves. He hopes that in the future they take a look at what is being spent. Westampton used to be a great town; we haven't had real leaders in this town for a while.

Woman in audience (didn't give name before speaking) - wanted to know what would happen if we were denied the waiver from FEMA, how would we cover it. Donna Ryan answered that we would cover all the expenses. She doesn't think it would be an issue.

Robert Lee, 3 Mayfaire Circle – wanted to commend Mr. Carty who is fighting for what he believes in. The Committee needs to do the best they can with what they've got. There is too much on the table right now to make a prudent decision.

Jonathan Wright – we are beating a dead horse, it's time to put it to bed. Let's vote now.

Jason Carty – the roster was sent to the Mayor. He wants a clarification; he received a RICE notice. Mayor Daniels stated that three people received RICE notices; 5 positions were identified.

Jason Carty – read a statement that he had written aloud. He said their calls rose last year; the statement made saying they decreased was false. They are a model Fire/EMS department.

Ms. Chang – came here in 2011 to this governing body; she saw a Fire Department desperate for leadership. She will never regret her decision to hire Jason Carty; he got the department that was practically a frat house to be a professional department.

Ms. Teleisa – it was such an honor and a pleasure. The fire department prior to Jason Carty did not have a good reputation. With the leadership of Carty and Farnsworth, they brought it to excellence and raised the standards. Westampton now has a very good reputation. We received three consecutive grants in one year which is unheard of. They aren't just operational people, they are active, they are on the trucks and ambulance on calls. She is happy to have voted for him. She understands that this is a democracy and that we aren't all going to agree. She will always vote the way she feels is in the best interest of the town.

A vote was taken on the first motion to table the Ordinance; Ms. Chang and Ms. Teleisa voted yes; Mr. Lopez, Ms. Smith-Hartman and Mr. Daniels voted no. A vote was taken on the second motion to adopt the Ordinance; Ms. Chang and Ms. Teleisa voted no; Mr. Lopez, Ms. Smith-Hartman and Mr. Daniels voted yes. The motion carried.

8-2016 – Amend Chapter 4, Administrator (second reading) - motion by Mr. Lopez, seconded by Ms. Smith-Hartman. This was opened to the public for comment; no comment was made and the meeting was closed. Ms. Chang and Ms. Teleisa voted no; Mr. Lopez, Ms. Smith-Hartman and Mr. Daniels voted yes.

9-2016 Establish a CAP Bank (first reading) – motion to approve by Mr. Lopez; second by Ms. Smith-Hartman. All voted yes, Ms. Chang abstained.

Correspondence

None

Dates to Remember

April 11 – Spring Leaf Pick-up

May 28 – Timbuctoo Day

Pancakes for Pups – WMS

Am Vets – April 16 - Ms. Chang and Mr. Daniels would be speaking here

Rancocas Village – Ham Supper, May 7th

April 19- Ribbon Cutting at Project Freedom

Open to public Comment

Vernita Jones – hasn't heard a word from Ms. Smith-Hartman tonight but she votes. She appeals to Mayor Daniels as a fellow vet; he is laying off a fellow veteran. She appeals to him as a Democrat.

Mayor Daniels – government doesn't appease all the people all the time.

Lori Hustus – thanked the Committee for their hard work.

Nancy Burkley –when a person is on the Committee, they represent all the residents, not just Democrats or Republicans.

Ronald Chang – it's obvious that what is going on here is politics.

Mayor Daniels – called for an adjournment of the meeting.

There were no further comments and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Marion Karp, Deputy Municipal Clerk