

WEST AMWELL TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING
May 5, 2021
Regular Meeting – 7:30 PM

CALL TO ORDER AND STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

The regularly scheduled meeting of the West Amwell Township Committee was called to order at 7:30 PM. Present were Mayor Stephen Bergenfeld, Deputy Mayor James Cally, Committeemen John Dale, Gary Hoyer and Lucas Lyons along with Township Clerk Maria Andrews.

Clerk Andrews announced that this meeting is called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Notice of this meeting was faxed to the Hunterdon County Democrat and Trenton Times on January 14, 2021, was posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building on that date and has remained continuously posted as required under the Statute. A copy of this notice is and has been available to the public and is on file in the office of the Township Clerk.

AGENDA REVIEW BY TOWNSHIP CLERK

Clerk Andrews noted there were no changes to the posted agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following announcements were made:

- Kindly Turn Cell Phones Off During the Meeting
- The Township's NEW Website went Live on 5/3/21

PRESENTATION OF MINUTES

A motion by Hoyer, seconded by Dale to approve the Committee's 4/21/21 open session minutes, as revised and closed session minutes with no revisions noted was unanimously approved by voice vote.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC/TOPICS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Mayor Bergenfeld opened the floor to public comment. Sean Pfeiffer of 74 Rocktown-Lambertville Road spoke up from the public and commented he will be building a home on Stymiest Road soon and asked if there is any language in the cable franchise agreement that would compel Comcast to provide service in areas of the Township that are not currently covered. Mayor Bergenfeld noted that he believes the BPU regulates the service but indicated he will reach out to the Township Attorney on the matter and suggested Mr. Pfeiffer contact Comcast's Construction Department for information on getting service run to the property on Stymiest.

Hearing no other members of the public speak up, Mayor Bergenfeld closed the floor to public comment.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Reports by Department Heads – Recycling Update by Director Rollero

Director Rollero highlighted the following points:

1. West Amwell has successfully transitioned to full privatization for garbage and recycling
2. The township collected 264.52 tons of solid waste and 159.48 tons of recycling in 2020
3. Improvements were made to the loading docks, traffic circulation and waste containers in 2020
4. The projected net cost in 2021 is \$14,000
5. Total revenue in 2020 was \$96,150 and total costs were \$82,424

Mayor Bergenfeld asked if there were any capital expenses coming up. Director Rollero indicated a single axle dump truck that can be used for plowing and paving. It was noted the cost is \$150,000 - \$170,000 with the 4x4 option costing an additional \$20,000.

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STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Open Space: John Cronic came forward as Chairman of the Open Space Committee and indicated the Committee supports the proposed PSE&G project along the easement on Alexauken Creek Road to install plantings that will promote pollination. Mr. Cronic also noted that the Committee had reached out to the Runkle's regarding their barn construction and commented they were appreciative of the information that was given to them.

B. Environmental: No report given.

C. Ag Advisory: No report given.

D. Finance Committee: No report given.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Update: PennEast Status – It was noted for the record that no update was provided.

NEW BUSINESS/OTHER

Appointment: Cathy Urbanski to the Technology/Community Outreach Committee

Mayor Bergenfeld appointed Cathy Urbanski to an opened spot on the Technology/Community Outreach Committee for an unexpired term ending 12/31/21.

Resolution #51-2021: Hiring of CFO J. Mustafa

RESOLUTION #51-2021

WHEREAS, the Township of West Amwell advertised for the position of Chief Financial Officer; and

WHEREAS, interviews were conducted; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee has determined that Joanna K. Mustafa is best qualified for said position; and

WHEREAS, Joanna K. Mustafa has accepted the Township's offer of an annual salary of \$40,000 which includes \$38,500 for CFO and \$1,500 for Certifying Officer of Pensions; and

WHEREAS, this position is not subject to health and pension benefits; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Joanna K. Mustafa be appointed Chief Financial Officer (CFO), effective June 15, 2021; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this appointment is for a 4-year term running from January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2024 per the statute which states, "The term of office shall be four years, which shall run from January 1 in the year in which the Chief Financial Officer is appointed."

Certification

I, Maria Andrews, Township Clerk of the Township of West Amwell, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey, hereby certify this to be a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Township Committee on May 5, 2021.

Maria Andrews, Township Clerk, RMC

A motion by Cally, seconded by Hoyer approving Resolution #51-2021 was approved by roll call vote.

Cally: Yes, Dale: Yes, Hoyer: Yes, Lyons: Yes, Bergenfeld: Yes

Discussion: Big Bear Gear, LLC

It was noted for the record that an email was received from property owner Michael Ehrenreich (1872 River Road) requesting clarification on why he needs to obtain a music festival permit per Chapter 117 of the Township Code, for his "Quarry Summer Concert Series" outdoor music entertainment on Saturday evenings during the months of July and August.

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It was noted for the record that the Committee suggested Mr. Ehrenreich seek site plan approval for all of the activities taking place on the property.

Discussion: Police Body Cameras

Lieutenant Skillman was present at the meeting and explained that Governor Murphy is requiring that effective 6/1/21 all Police Officers must be outfitted with body cameras. He explained a few options the Township had and noted his recommendation is for L3 police cameras and related server. Lieutenant Skillman noted the cost would be \$34,000 to get set up and he stated his department will cover the cost by holding off on the purchase of a new police vehicle this year. Additionally, he indicated the car cameras will be upgraded as new vehicles get purchased. The Township Committee was in support of Lieutenant Skillman's proposal to get the officers outfitted with the required body cameras.

Discussion: Updated Employee COVID Screening Form

Deputy Mayor Cally noted he and OEM Director Harry Heller had reviewed the daily screening form for employees and made changes to address the updated protocols from the CDC. The Committee took no issue with the amended form.

Discussion: Proposed PSE&G Pollinating Project along Alexauken Creek Road

As discussed by Mr. Cronic under his Open Space report, the Committee supported the plantings of species in the PSE&G easement along Alexauken Creek Road which will promote pollination.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mayor Bergenfeld opened the floor to public comment. Harry Heller of 27 Old York Road inquired about the Arnett deeds that were referenced in the 4/21/21 minutes. Mayor Bergenfeld explained that Mr. Arnett wants to relinquish his interest in various properties to the Township.

Lastly, Mr. Heller asked if a Township employee must use their sick/vacation/personal time to go get a COVID vaccination during their work day. The Committee noted that with the permission of the employee's direct supervisor, a staff member can leave work to get a COVID vaccination without using any of their paid time off but will need to provide proof that they actually received the vaccine if the Township is paying them while doing so.

Hearing no other members of the public speak up, Mayor Bergenfeld closed the floor to public comment.

ADMINISTRATIVE

Resolution #48-2021: Tax Lien Redemption Block 23 Lot 13

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING REFUND OF REDEMPTION MONIES TO OUTSIDE LIEN HOLDER
Resolution #48-2021

WHEREAS, the Township of West Amwell sold at the Municipal Tax Sale held on September 17, 2018, a lien on Block 23 Lot 13, also known as 370 Route 31 North in West Amwell Township, for 2017 delinquent taxes; and,

WHEREAS, this lien, known as Tax Sale Certificate #201803, was sold to Henry Hansch for a 15% redemption fee; and,

WHEREAS, Joseph Helewa, JR, owner, has effected redemption of Certificate #201803 in the amount of \$37,339.86.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Treasurer be authorized to issue a check, and the Mayor, Clerk, and Treasurer be authorized to sign a check in the amount of \$37,339.86 payable to Henry Hansch, 504 Chandler Lane, Whippany, NJ 07981-1439 for the redemption of Tax Sale Certificate #201803.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Tax Collector and Finance Officer.

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By Order of the Township Committee,

Stephen Bergenfeld, Mayor

A motion by Hoyer, seconded by Dale to approve Resolution #48-2021 was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Cally: Yes, Dale: Yes, Hoyer: Yes, Lyons: Yes, Bergenfeld: Yes

Resolution #50-2021: Tax Lien Redemption Block 17 Lot 20.08

RESOLUTION #50-2021

WHEREAS, the Township of West Amwell sold at the Municipal Tax Sale held on October 12, 2017, a lien on Block 17 Lot 20.08, also known as 160 Rock Road West in West Amwell Township, for 2016 delinquent taxes; and,

WHEREAS, this lien, known as Tax Sale Certificate #201706, was sold to West Amwell Township, and

WHEREAS, the amount of \$91.08 has been received from Triax Title Services LLC for the owner of the property for redemption of Certificate #201706,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Treasurer be authorized to issue a check, and the Mayor, Clerk, and Treasurer be authorized to sign a check in the amount of \$91.08 payable to West Amwell Township for the redemption of Tax Sale Certificate #201706.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Tax Collector and Finance Officer.

By Order of the Township Committee,

Stephen Bergenfeld, Mayor

A motion by Hoyer, seconded by Dale to approve Resolution #50-2021 was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Cally: Yes, Dale: Yes, Hoyer: Yes, Lyons: Yes, Bergenfeld: Yes

OTHER

Resolution #49-2021: Closed Session – Personnel/Contracts – Litigation/Affordable Housing

Resolution #49-2021

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975, permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Committee of West Amwell Township, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The public shall be excluded from discussion of and action upon the hereinafter specified subject matter.
2. The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows: Mt. Laurel Litigation, personnel, contracts and subjects falling under Attorney-Client privilege.
3. It is anticipated at this time that the above stated subject matter will be made public when the matter has been resolved.

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This resolution shall take effect immediately.

Maria Andrews, Township Clerk, RMC

A motion by Cally, seconded by Hoyer to approve Resolution #49-2021 and enter into Closed Session was unanimously approved by voice vote.

A motion by Cally, seconded by Dale to return to Open Session was unanimously approved by voice vote.

It was noted for the record that the Committee was in Closed Session from 8:40 PM – 10:00 PM.

Upon returning to open session Deputy Mayor Cally inquired about the surveillance monitor in the Clerk's Office. There was a brief discussion regarding the setup of the monitor and various camera views. It was noted that additional cameras are planned for future installation.

CORRESPONDENCE

It was noted for the record that the Committee ordered the correspondence listed on the agenda to be filed.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Bergenfeld adjourned the meeting at 10:15 PM.

Maria Andrews, Township Clerk, RMC

Approved: 5/19/21