

WEST AMWELL TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

January 6, 2010

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

The regular meeting of the West Amwell Township Committee was called to order at 7:05 p.m. Present were Mayor Molnar, Deputy Mayor Frank P. Masterson III, Committeeman George Fisher and Attorney Philip J. Faherty III. Also in attendance were Jason Fuhr, Bob, Sally & Rob Fulper, Bernie Meader, Betty Jane Hunt, Hal Shute, Cathy Urbanski, Ruth Hall, Joe Kowalski, Zach Rich, Kate Buttolph, Dave Beaumont and reporter Linda Seida.

Mayor Molnar announced that this meeting is called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Notice of this meeting was included in the Resolution faxed to the Lambertville Beacon, Hunterdon County Democrat and Trenton Times on January 1, 2010, was posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building on said 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 Municipal Clerk.

The meeting was recorded via digital recording system and a copy of the CD is on file in the Office of the Municipal Clerk.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG

The assembled group was led in the pledge of the nation's flag by Township Clerk Lora Olsen.

AGENDA REVIEW BY TOWNSHIP CLERK

The following items were added: 9. Unfinished Business: Thank you letters; 10. New Business: Website Review, Twp Dinner, Garbage & Trash spot checks.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Molnar made the following announcements:

- PSE&G Power Line Mowing in Various ROWs – Through March 31, 2010
(map on file in Clerk's office)
- Township Offices Closed – January 18th for MLK Day
- Next Regular Township Meeting – February 3rd
- 2010 Dog Licenses are Due
- Please Come to the Table if You Wish to Address the Committee
- Kindly Turn Cell Phones Off During Meeting

PRESENTATION OF MINUTES

The December 30, 2009 Regular and Closed Session and the January 1, 2010 Re-Organization minutes were unanimously approved on motion from Fisher, seconded by Masterson.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC/TOPIC NOT ON THE AGENDA

Rob Fulper came forward on behalf of the Fulper family to relay that the family is still interested in discussions; in finding a way that they could meet with the town to bring resolution to the litigation; and, stopping the spending on it. He noted that there were some who thought this would be over in September but it's now January, and as the elections centered on the Fulper family, the litigation and community-related concerns, the thought was to approach the new committee to see if they would be willing to discuss the situation.

Mr. Molnar offered that he has been saying for past few months that he would like to see this resolved, possibly out of court, and wants to work in that direction. How this can be done is not known, but he will speak with Attorney Faherty to ascertain the 'if and how' of this direction. Mr. Molnar continued that the litigation has put a financial strain on the Fulper family, the taxpayers, and the employees last year, so, if it can be resolved ASAP he's all for it. Mr. Fulper offered that they are available any time.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE AND/OR PUBLIC HEARING AND/OR SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Municipal Alliance: Jason Fuhr reported that the next meeting of the Alliance will be held on January 25th in the municipal building and issued a blanket invitation to all in attendance to join them at 7 p.m. The Alliance is not particularly active in the winter months but that soon there will be preparations for the annual art show and golf tournament. Mr. Fuhr again thanked the governing body for their interest; use of the building; and, for taking on the part of treasurer for the flow through of Alliance funds. Appreciation was returned to Mr. Fuhr for this leg work in the venture.

SPECIAL AND/OR STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Open Space

- *Authorization for the Mayor to Sign the SADC Grant Agreement for the Toll Project:* Kate Buttolph stated that she was standing in for Sean Pfeiffer for any questions but that the revised agreement, discussed with the Committee on December 30th, has not been received from the SADC. All parties are trying to get to closing but the revised agreement has to be approved first. Mrs. Olsen relayed that Mr. Pfeiffer was concerned that the SADC would make additional changes and that any authorization for the mayor to sign be subject to attorney review or that a special meeting be called. Mr. Fisher expressed some concern about the former but Attorney Faherty offered that the agreement had been reviewed by the Township Committee and that any changes by the SADC would be shared with them and that Attorney Dragan would also be reviewing the document prior to any signature being affixed. Fisher motioned to authorize the Mayor to sign the SADC grant agreement for the Toll project, subject to attorney review and Masterson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

- *Authorization for Mayor & Clerk to Sign Toll Closing Documents, when available:* Authorization given on motion by Fisher, seconded by Masterson and carried unanimously.

TLC

Cathy Urbanski brought forward her information on this committee as it has recently been dissolved. Included in the materials were a map of the property, the block layout with acreage, a plot plan showing the portion of the property that's on the Green Acres ROSI, the proposal for the farm property; and, her correspondence with Kevin Appelget at DEP Green Acres concerning how to have trails without including same on the ROSI.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Continuation of 2010 Appointments – The following appointments were offered:

Affordable Housing Board – (2) unexpired 3 years terms: Karen Baldino
Joan Van Der Veen

Ag Advisory (1) unexpired 3 year term – Gary Bleacher

Historic Preservation – (2) 3 year terms – Ruth Hall, Martha Shea

Local Historian – 1 year term – Ruth Hall

Open Space Committee – (2) 3 year terms – Glenn Baran & TBD

Planning Board Class II Member – 1 year term – Lonnie Baldino

Recycling Committee – 1 year terms – Ken Hart, Randy Hoagland, Jeff Slowik
(env rep)

Zoning Board of Adjustment – (1) 4 year term – John Dale

Alt #2 (unexpired) 2 year term – John Hoff

The appointments were unanimously approved on motion by Fisher, with a second by Masterson.

Mr. Molnar then made the following mayoral appointments:

Board of Health – (1) 3 year term – Ken Hart

Alt #1 (unexpired) two year term – Wendy Williams

Alt #2 – 2 year term – Jim Cally

Environmental Commission – (2) 3 year terms – John Hoff, Jeff Slowik

Farmers Market Committee – (2) 3 year terms – Jim Hurley, Karen Baldino
Planning Board – Class I – Tom Molnar
Class III – George Fisher
(2) Class IV – 4 year terms – Hal Shute, Steve Bergenfeld
Alt #1 – 2 year term – Zach Rich

Update on Police Study Release/Meeting – The proposed meeting has been tentatively set for January 25th, 7 p.m. at East Amwell municipal building, pending concurrence by West Amwell. The Committee had no problem with this date or venue. Mrs. Olsen will so advise Mr. Capabianco and the two other municipalities. The impression is that this is more of a general information session for the public than an actual joint meeting of governing bodies. Mr. Masterson offered that the consultant is very persuasive and is trying to sell something. He urged caution be exercised. A link to the posted study will again be requested and forwarded to the Township webmaster in order to make resident access easier.

E-mail from Rob Tomenchok – Mr. Tomenchok offered concerns about the COAH report given at the last meeting. He strongly objects to the use of trust fund monies as a loan or outright grant for a renter's security deposit; believes there are other alternatives; and, requests that the status quo be maintained until the incoming Governor determines a course of action regarding COAH. A response is not expected to this correspondence but he requested that something be mentioned in the minutes. The e-mail will be shared with Housing Official Walsh.

18th Annual Mayor's Legislative Day – A reminder that this is scheduled for February 24th at the State House Annex was given. This is an unique occasion for local leaders to interact with individuals responsible for setting the agenda for property tax relief, affordable housing and consolidation/sharing of services. Mr. Molnar and Mr. Fisher expressed interest in receiving a copy.

Resolution to Enter Closed Session – not needed

Thank You Letters – Letters of appreciation to Glenn Baran for the wreaths and greens at the municipal building and scout leaders, Jim Cally and Kent Carpenter, for their participation in the January 1st Re-organization meeting were presented for Committee review and mayor's signature. Letters approved and signed.

NEW BUSINESS

Website Review – A link to the NJ Library website, <http://gethelp.njlibraries.org>, was approved for the website. This site has information for residents and businesses on work, financial, housing, health and parental tools as well as tools for seniors to help them during these tough economic times. Other items noted included:

- the scroll is to be removed and a 'news' link utilized
- the Fulper litigation is to be moved off the front page
- a picture of all three committeemen, not just the mayor, be on the home page.
- a message from the Mayor is forthcoming
- link to the police study is to be added as soon as it is available.
- committee lists, in addition to the required boards and commission, will be posted in line with Citizen Leadership legislation
- website needs to be cleaned up to remove the dead ends/under construction
- comments concerning better accessibility of the site need to be addressed, once determined

Mr. Beaumont arrived a little later in the evening and the website requests were shared with him.

Township Dinner – Betty Jane Hunt would like to resurrect the Township dinner believes it can be done at no cost to the Township via a covered dish/pot luck event. The date would be February 5th. She suggested the following arrangement, enough to

feed 8 people each:

- Township Committee & employees - meat dishes
- Boards and committee members - veggies/potatoes/pasta side dishes
- Professional staff – dessert
- Firemen & Auxiliary - beverages

Responsibility for set up would fall to the Township Committee and employees with the Firemen and Auxiliary members doing the clean up.

According to seminars on Ethics attended by the Clerk and CFO, tax money should not be used for this type of an event. This sparked a brief exchange but times are different than they used to be. Therefore an invitation will be developed and e-mailed to current and newly appointed members of boards, committees, and professional staff. The Clerk volunteered to help with the latter outside of work hours. Other offers of assistance were given and will be coordinated by Mrs. Hunt.

Spot Checks for Garbage & Trash – DPW Supervisor Hoagland has suggested that this would be more economically done by Bob Gordon on random Saturdays when recycling is not on the schedule. Mr. Gordon has been asked and is willing to do it, if okayed by the Township Committee. Approved.

There was no one at the DPW last Saturday to issue dog licenses. Mrs. Hoagland will be contacted to be sure the information on the card was correct.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Cathy Urbanski relayed that the Environmental Commission needs to have a Chair appointed.

Betty Jane Hunt inquired if the police study released will be the redacted version. Due to the sensitive nature of some of the information, the answer was in the affirmative.

Dave Beaumont presented an update on the recent municipal/school budget meeting. This meeting was more information with discussion of specific issues such as: 1) the State of New Jersey—aid, taxes, etc.; 2) a school budget based with the highest costs per pupil of any other school; 3) is the right approach being used to determine comparisons 4) core programs have to be provided even with low enrollment; 5) an alternate approach to efficiency is needed, e.g., comparison of taxes paid by sending districts to Central vs South. This yielded that a median price home in West Amwell pays the same as one in East Amwell for Central and less than Delaware Township pays to send students to Central. Basically, West Amwell is paying the same amount in taxes as surrounding communities, which is different perspective on the situation. Mr. Beaumont offered that they need to dig deeper to get an expanded view of comparability between schools. The issue of special education and why it's such a high number was explained in light of the fact that this is a K-12 issue, not just a South issue. Students come into the school already classified and students are classified at different grade levels in elementary school. This progresses and adds up so that it winds up with a rate of 25% by 6th grade. Classification stays steady throughout the high school experience.

A brief exchange about the possibility of opening boundaries and what this would take ensued. Mr. Beaumont also relayed that there will be an outreach program this Sunday in an attempt to bring in out-of-district students. He also explained that a team of 4 boards and the County Superintendent are investigating regionalization. To move forward, a feasibility study is needed to ascertain the tax impact on all municipalities. They tried for a State grant but the funding dollars went elsewhere. If money can be found and a feasibility study completed, all towns would have to vote on it unless the State changes the rules. Right now the County super-Superintendents have a directive to come up with a plan by March for K-12 districts. The new governor is school-minded but that direction may change. The big question is if regionalization is the right thing to do and what should be driving the feasibility study. Cost shift and property valuation

also has to be determined. There are many combinations to explore, e.g., an expanded Hunterdon Central, and lots of steps that need to be taken but the group is focusing on regionalization in South county.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Treasurer –

RESOLUTION #32-2010

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:4-58 permits appropriation transfers during the first three months of the fiscal year between line items of the prior year's municipal budget; and

WHEREAS, it has been determined that certain line items are in excess of the sums needed and certain line items have insufficient funds to complete the operation of the fiscal year

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of West Amwell, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey, that the following transfers be made between the Budget Appropriations as follows:

	From	To
Municipal Clerk: Salaries & wages	\$1,000.00	
Farmers Market: Other expenses	\$ 100.00	
Planning Board: Salaries & wages	\$ 400.00	
Police Department: Other expenses	\$5,000.00	
Social Security: Other expenses	\$1,000.00	
Streets & Road Maintenance: Salaries & wages		\$2,000.00
Solid Waste Collection: Other expenses		\$5,500.00
Total	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00

The Resolution was unanimously approved on motion by Fisher, seconded by Masterson.

RESOLUTION #33-2010

WHEREAS, N.J.S. 40A:4-19 provides for appropriation transfers to be made in the temporary budget within the first thirty dates of January;

WHEREAS, it has been determined certain line items are in excess of the sums needed and certain line items have insufficient funds in the 2009 Temporary Budget;

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

	From	To
Workers Compensation Ins: Other expenses	\$ 20,000	\$ 12,000
Police Department: Salaries & wages	\$135,000	\$140,000
Streets & Road Maintenance: Salaries & wages	\$ 50,000	\$ 53,110
Municipal Prosecutor: Salaries & wages	\$ 100	-0-
Buildings & Grounds: Salaries & wages	\$ 10	-0-

The Resolution was unanimously approved on motion by Fisher, seconded by Masterson.

RESOLUTION #34-2010

WHEREAS, N.J.S. 40A:4-19 provides authority for appropriating in a temporary resolution the permanent debt service requirements for the coming fiscal year providing that such resolution is not made earlier than December 20 of the year preceding the beginning of the fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, the date of this resolution is subsequent to December 19, 2009; and

WHEREAS, principal and interest will be due on various dates from Jan 1, 2010 to December 31, 2010, inclusive, on sundry bonds and loan issued and outstanding:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the following additional appropriation be made to cover the period from January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2010 inclusive:

DEBT SERVICE – WEST AMWELL TOWNSHIP

Payment of Bonds	\$290,000.00
Interest on Bonds	\$235,959.00
Interest on Notes	\$ 13,122.00
Payment of Bond Anticipation Note	\$ 70,300.00
Green Acres Loan Payment	\$ 31,092.00
 Total	 \$640,473.00

The Resolution was unanimously approved on motion by Fisher, seconded by Masterson.

Presentation of Bills for Approval: Fisher motioned to approve the evening's bills for payment, seconded by Masterson, and the motion was carried unanimously.

Statement of Cash: As of this date there is a cash total of \$4,302,162.25 between the operating and capital accounts.

Court Report for 4th Quarter 2009 – A total of \$15,700.23 came into Township coffers in the last quarter. Ticket count by officer for the quarter was also provided. The yearly total was \$76,119.15. Mr. Fisher inquired about the comparison to other years. This would have to be researched, if desired.

The reports as submitted were unanimously accepted on motion by Fisher, seconded by Masterson.

CORRESPONDENCE

The correspondence as listed on the Agenda was ordered filed.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:20 p.m. on motion by Masterson.

Respectfully submitted,

Lora Olsen, RMC
Township Clerk