

SPECIAL WEST AMWELL TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

July 29, 2013 – 5:30 p.m.

The West Amwell Township Committee met on the above date at 5:36 p.m. Present: Mayor Rich, Committeemen Molnar and Fisher and Clerk Lora Olsen. Also in attendance at various times were Linda Jacukowicz, Susan Dalrymple, Tom Carro, Jeff Ent (6:30 p.m.), Joe Ent (7 p.m.), Chris Rose and Regina Taylor.

In compliance with the Public Meetings Act, Mayor Rich announced that this Special Meeting was called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act with notices faxed to the Hunterdon County Democrat and the Trenton Times on July 25, 2013. 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 open portion of the meeting was recorded via digital recording system.

CLOSED SESSION:

RESOLUTION #122-2013

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:
PERSONNEL (Interviews)
3. It is anticipated at this time that the above stated subject matter will be made public when the matter has been resolved.
4. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

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

The meeting returned to Open Session at 6:30 p.m.

FIRE TRUCK – Continued Discussion with Chief Ent:

The available options were presented by Mayor Rich as: 1) do nothing, 2) refurbish/repair, or 3) purchase new. Item #2 is the present direction with an estimate price tag of \$30,000. Jeff Ent relayed the various issues with the truck, noting that the extent cannot be determined until things are opened up. The manufacturer of the leaking tank is out of business so that lifetime warranty is useless. Couplings and clamps are holding things together. There is also a front suction problem that needs to be looked at. Discussion ensued over what the lifespan would be with proposed repairs, with Mr. Ent offering that the truck would lack safety upgrades.

Mr. Molnar noted that payoff on the other truck is scheduled for 2016. This is past the 2015 State contract period for the truck under consideration, the base cost of which is \$407,000. Mr. Ent continued that full insurance replacement value stops at 15 years so if totaled, there is no replacement value. It is the only truck not fully insured at this point and with the missing safety features, the Township is liable should something happen. The repair can make it viable for a couple of years but not five or more. The Fire Company has a 10 year plan as to replacement vehicles and this is included in the annual budget requests. They try to get replacements prior to expiration so as to not face these types of problems.

A question from the mayor as to the distance of similar equipment, Mr. Ent relayed that their biggest truck carries 1500 gallons and that Stockton would be the closest. The 518 truck was purchased deliberately smaller due to the valley road conditions. The three levels of alarm calls was relayed as to which are handled by the Fire Company vs those requiring mutual aid. Mr. Rich also inquired about the level of reciprocal response from mutual aid partners as other department do not appear to be as active as West Amwell. Mr. Ent gave assurance that there is such activity and gave an overview of the mutual area territory, explaining that calculations for coverage are based on times when the least amount of manpower is available. The County is working on a future dispatch plan whereby there can be better designation of personnel.

Mr. Molnar inquired about the anticipated repair time. As this is predicated on making a new tank to the original specifications, and is an unknown, is why they did not want to entertain this option. Mr. Ent also noted that the truck is in need of brakes and the tires must be replaced because they are too old. As for a plan B during down time, mutual aid will be relied upon. The ladder truck holds 300 gallons of water plus 50 gallons of foam, giving it a 1000 gallon fire

fighting capacity. However, it needs another truck hooked to it for water. Moving the 518 truck to Mt. Airy is not anticipated as there is a quicker response time from the main station. Also, most of the firemen live primarily between the two stations and can go either way for needed equipment.

The consensus of the Committee was for a repair to which Mr. Ent was agreeable as it is preferable to fix what they have than to purchase someone else's problems. A lease during the repair time was mentioned and could be a possibility but was not followed up on as this would be an operational expense. To borrow equipment from other departments would leave those communities unprotected as no one in the County has equipment in reserve.

Mr. Fisher questioned the call volume per month. Mr. Ent stated that they have approximately 16 per month with an average of 87 for the year to date. The average yearly call volume runs 160-200, the majority of which are in West Amwell. A monthly report of that activity was requested and agreed to.

Returning the repair issue, Mr. Fisher questioned what entities are contacted for service work, with the response being Fire Apparatus of Trenton. They do the majority of the contracted work on the trucks; provide emergency service; and, do a yearly inspection (as per PEOSHA requirements) on all trucks except command vehicles. A report is generated as to needed repairs of which most can be completed on site. However, the work under discussion will require that the truck be taken to their shop in Trenton. Mr. Ent was advised to plan on proceeding with a repair and to submit a plan of action for the time frame and coverage issues.

Attention was then turned to financing the cost of the repair due to the quote/bid thresholds involved. CFO Carro noted that as this would be a big job, the capital account would be used. Otherwise, it's an operating transfer in November. He underscored the quote/bid requirement as the Township will be paying the bill. Mr. Ent inquired about a reimbursement to the Fire Company in November if they front the repair cost. Mr. Carro urged caution on this approach. Mr. Ent concluded that they will have Fire Apparatus go over the truck and provide a report, which will be shared with the Township Committee. He further stated that this company is an honest, fair and reasonable firm with good emergency response. An inquiry will also be made concerning the three quote requirement and how the company has handled it in the past. Also noted by Mr. Ent was that when the time comes to sell this truck, which is owned by the Township, that the Fire Company be permitted to market it as they will get a better dollar number. Those monies could then be used as a down payment on a new truck.

As for the radios that were put off due to the anticipated purchase of a new truck, Mr. Ent advised that these are a must for next year. It was requested that the cost of this item be placed in the January 2014 temporary budget. A reminder that the Township still owes the Fire Company money from the loan for air packs was relayed.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

Chris Rose and Regina Taylor requested as closed session to discuss the proposed day-time hours and the employment situation.

RESOLUTION #123-2013

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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:

PERSONNEL

3. It is anticipated at this time that the above stated subject matter will be made public when the matter has been resolved.

4. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

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

The meeting returned to Open Session at 7:51 p.m. with the following result. An ad for part time help in the Construction department will be placed. This will be for 4-8 hours/week, hopefully from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The person should be computer literate and be available a couple evenings for training.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:00 p.m. on motion by Molnar.

Respectfully submitted,

Lora L. Olsen, RMC
Township Clerk

APPROVED: August 28, 2013