

SPECIAL WEST AMWELL TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING
April 21, 2010 – 4: 30 p.m.

The West Amwell Township Committee met on the above date at 4:35 p.m. Present: Mayor Molnar, Committeemen Masterson and Fisher, Attorney Faherty, CFO Luhrs, Lt. Bartzak, Patrolmen Vanselous, Goccia and Skillman and CO Rose

In compliance with the Public Meetings Act, Mayor Molnar 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 April 19, 2010. 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 not recorded.

Patrolman E.J. Skillman led the group in the pledge to the American flag.

CLOSED SESSION:

RESOLUTION #71-2010

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:
PROTECTING THE SAFETY AND PROPERTY OF THE PUBLIC
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 Masterson.

Returning to Open Session, the Mayor was unanimously authorized to sign a police agreement.

BUDGET WORKSHOP:

It was agreed that the implementation of the 15% cut will begin May 1st. Mr. Fisher re-iterated his proposal to have the Construction Office revenue neutral but the 15% cut to the department is \$2000 short. There's also the possibility of a shared services agreement with Lambertville. An idea was floated about having deeper cuts to the department that would be restored to the 15% level should revenues brought back up. Mrs. Luhrs advised that this would involve another amendment to the Salary & Wage resolution but there would have to be money in the appropriations line in order to pay. Any revenue brought in would go into surplus. It would not be available to be used in this year's budget but could be anticipated next year.

The shortfall in the Construction department budget line was discussed the Chris Rose. It was explained that the upcoming furloughs mean that salaries on May 1st will be 15% less than on January 1st. How this will be handled by one-person departments is still to be worked out. Mr. Rose reviewed the budget sheets supplied earlier and agreed that other than cutting salaries, there was not much else that could be done. He suggested that the Township could adopt the mechanical code, which would reduce the number of inspections on such things as furnaces and boilers from two to one. This would reduce the Fire sub-code official's work, and salary, as the inspections could be completed by Mr. Rose. This was not accepted. The elimination of whatever was left of the mileage reimbursement agreed upon.

A discussion ensued about Open Space money and the Toll property. The latter will need full time work to mow and deal with the holes. The trees can't be removed for sale until fall, so there needs to be a push to sell the property...which requires that it be fixed up. As for the possibility of increasing the \$20,000 already earmarked for mowing open space properties—Hewitt, Calton, and Toll—concern was raised that there will have to be more than one person involved to get to the dollar amount allotted; there's a limited time frame for these activities to take place; and, the time has to be documented.

The decision was to take the remaining \$1500 shortfall in Construction from the Legal line. The Technical Assistant's current 16 hour work week will be reduced by 2 ½ hours.

Commission Lori Grifa will be contacted for a possible Friday meeting with the mayor. A COPS grant will be pursued. A calculation of sick and vacation time payouts has to be compiled. The proposed letter for State Police coverage was shelved. An official notification to employees concerning the 15% cut as of May 1st reviewed. As all employee work circumstances are different, the notice will have to be re-worked.

Mr. Molnar relayed that the DPW will once again be closed on Fridays. The Planning Board secretary will no longer have posted hours. A brief discussion concerning municipal offices hours concluded that these will be Monday through Thursday.

If the two township-owned houses can be sold quickly and budget introduction is held, the cash received can be utilized this year. Pertinent information concerning the Perrine property has been forwarded to the attorney and the assessed value of the Hancock Street property will be provided. Attorney Faherty will have estimated minimum auction prices for these properties ready for the May 5th meeting.

Mrs. Luhrs noted that the Open Space and Capital budgets are outstanding items. Once the budget packet is formulated, it will be sent to the Auditor for review and preparation of the reserve for uncollected taxes. Introduction, however, will be held off in light of the situation in Trenton.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

A fax was received from South concerning the defeated budget. Their first available meeting dates are the week of May 3rd. The Committee's preference for either a full meeting or providing a representative only was discussed. The week of the 10th was the earliest date for the former and Mr. Molnar volunteered for the representative spot, if that's the direction of the other municipalities, and offered May 12th. Mrs. Olsen will make contact with the other municipalities involved to determine how they wish to proceed.

Open Space and a five-person committee will be on the agenda for the next meeting for discussion about referendum.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 6:30 p.m. on motion by Molnar, seconded by Masterson.

Respectfully submitted,

Lora L. Olsen, RMC
Township Clerk