

**APRIL 6, 2017, COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE BOROUGH OF MT. EPHRAIM  
BOROUGH HALL MEETING ROOM**

**MEETING CALL TO ORDER/OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS STATEMENT**

Mayor Wolk called the meeting to order at 8:00pm and announced that this meeting has been advertised and posted in accordance with the "Open Public Meetings Act". He then led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

**ROLL CALL**

The Clerk called the roll with Commissioner Gilmore, and Mayor Wolk present. Commissioner Tovinsky had an excused absence as he was out-of-town.

**OTHER OFFICIALS ON THE DAIS**

Borough Solicitor – Eric Riso  
Borough Engineer – Marty Sander  
Borough Clerk – Terry Shannon

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

Mayor Wolk asked for a motion to approve the minutes February 21, 2017, caucus meeting and the March 2, 2017, commission meeting. On a motion by Commissioner Gilmore, second by Mayor Wolk, the minutes were approved with all in favor.

**APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS**

Mayor Wolk announced that vouchers in the amount of \$743,319.66 were submitted for approval. On a motion by Commissioner Gilmore, second by Mayor Wolk, the vouchers as submitted were approved with the following poll vote: Gilmore-yes; Wolk-yes.

**ORDINANCES FOR PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION**

Mayor Wolk announced that Ordinance 02-17, Amending Chapter 94 of the Borough Code Entitled "Vehicles and Traffic" and Ordinance 03-17, Calendar Year 2017 Ordinance to Exceed the Municipal Budget Appropriation Limits are on for public hearing tonight. He then opened the public hearing and asked anyone who has questions to state their name and address for the record. Diane Vilardo of Lincoln Avenue asked for an explanation about the CAP Bank. Clerk Shannon explained that by ordinance, municipalities are allowed to increase appropriations by 3% but any excess over the normal 2% CAP that is not needed can be banked. Rick March of George Street asked about the changes to the parking restrictions. Chief Conte explained we are extending the left-turn lane on Kings Highway which resulted in additional parking restrictions on Kings Highway.

Seeing further public comment, on a motion by Commissioner Gilmore, second by Mayor Wolk, the public hearing was closed. On a motion by Commissioner Gilmore, second by Mayor Wolk, Ordinances 02-17 and 03-17 were adopted with the following poll vote: Gilmore-yes; Wolk-yes. Ordinances are adopted.

**RESOLUTIONS**

Mayor Wolk asked the Clerk to read the following resolutions for approval by Consent Agenda.

- 36-17 Authorizing Self-examination of the 2017 Municipal Budget
- 37-17 Authorizing Advertisement for Requests for Qualifications for Selection of Professionals under a Fair and Open Process
- 38-17 Authorizing Approval of 2017 Mercantile Licenses
- 39-17 Authorizing Submission of the 2016 Recycling Tonnage Grant Application
- 40-17 Authorizing Participation in the Educational Services Commission of New Jersey Cooperative Pricing System

On a motion by Commissioner Gilmore second by Mayor Wolk, the resolution consent agenda was approved with the following poll vote: Gilmore-yes; Wolk-yes.

**PUBLIC HEARING ON THE 2017 MUNICIPAL BUDGET**

Mayor Wolk opened the public hearing on the 2017 Municipal Budget. It was introduced last month and posted. He then read the budget message reporting taxes will go up by less than 90 cents per week. He added we will be continuing with all of our shared services and this budget allows us to get to a full complement of police officers. The annual increase on the average assessment is less than \$50 per year. Mayor Wolk asked if there are any questions or comments. Rick March of George Street asked for clarification regarding the total assessments and the clerk explained it is over 276 million. Mr. March asked if the total value of the town is down, why are taxes up? Clerk Shannon explained that when total assessments go down, the tax rate goes up. We still need to collect the same amount of money to cover the budget. Mr. March said he understood. Clerk Shannon added that if anyone wanted to see more details, the whole budget is on the borough website.

Seeing no further public comment, on a motion by Commissioner Gilmore, second by Mayor Wolk, the public hearing was closed. On a motion by Commissioner Gilmore, second by Mayor Wolk, the 2017 Budget was adopted with the following poll vote: Gilmore-yes; Wolk-yes. The Budget was adopted.

**REPORTS AND COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Gilmore read highlights from the Mount Ephraim Police Department report for the month of March. He reported they had over 800 calls and assigned 420 case numbers and read highlights of the offenses. He also reported they had 44 adult arrests and read highlights of the arrests. They also had two juvenile arrests—one for criminal mischief and one for controlled dangerous substances which is disturbing. He did not have the fire department report as the chief is out-of-town. That concluded his report.

Mayor Wolk read highlights from the Public Works report for March as Commissioner Tovinsky was absent. He reported trash tonnage was 178.75 tons and single stream recycling 93,400 pounds. The cost for trash disposal was \$12,094.30. He reported on other Public Works activities including pothole repairs, clean-up at parks, electronic recycling and brush, grass and weeds and metal collection and sewer jetting. The construction office issued 35 permits and collected \$2181.00 and vacant properties registered were nine for a total of \$10,791.00 and 17 CO's were issued for a total of \$2040.00.

Engineer Marty Sander was sitting in for Joe Federici and reported the Grant Avenue project started today. Winthrop Avenue pre-construction meeting is scheduled for April 18 at 10am. Bid opening for Lowell and Harding is scheduled for April 26. Kings Highway striping will be done on April 19 at 8am. Chief Conte added that it will not impact rush hour. It will actually start around 9am-9:30 and will take approximately five hours to complete.

Mayor Wolk read the Tax Collector's report for the month of March reporting that total receipts were \$348,425.96 and lien redemptions were \$8,922.12. He added that Little League opening day is Saturday. Chief Conte said it starts at 8:45am and reported the parade route starting at Mary Bray School. Mayor Wolk wished everyone a Happy Easter and Passover. Our next workshop is April 25 at 3pm and the next general meeting is May 4 at 8pm. Newsletter will be coming out shortly.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mayor Wolk opened the meeting to the public and asked that residents state their name and address for the record.

Leslie Koller-Walker, Superintendent of Schools, invited the governing body and the public to their strategic planning sessions on April 11, 25 and May 17 at 7pm. They want borough officials, business owners and parent to participate. The purpose is for planning for the future of our schools. What is it that people like and what would they like to see for the future. The first two sessions will be to gather the information and the third session will be to develop an action plan. Discussions will include curriculum, buildings and grounds, the arts and any other issues the public would like to address. This information has been posted on their website and letters were mailed out to government and business owners. Diane Vilardo from the school board added that the last time strategic planning was done was 1991. That is how the additions to Kershaw School came about. We need input from the community as to what they want to see from our schools for the future.

Sam Bonavita, 721 Lambert Street, spoke about the intersection of Lambert and Hartka. He thanked the governing body and police chief for the recent traffic study. He strongly believes a stop sign is needed. There was a recent serious accident on March 7 that resulted in serious injuries and major vehicle damage. He understands we have to go through the process but he believes the accident on March 7 could have been avoided if there were a stop sign at the intersection. Chief Conte said he will evaluate the data to prepare for application to the DOT. Mayor Wolk said he wants the stop sign installed. Bonavita added there was no braking at all during the collision. He knows the traffic study shows increased traffic. He would be willing to pay for the signs. Commissioner Gilmore said he applauds his concern but usually traffic control devices are supported by statistics. We have had one serious accident there in who knows how many years. Bonavita added that Chief Conte was surprised by the increase in traffic revealed by the traffic study. When that accident occurred, there were 16-20 kids nearby. This is a major intersection. He has seen numerous near-misses. Are we waiting for someone to die there? Mayor Wolk asked Solicitor Riso what steps we need to take. Solicitor Riso said if you want your engineer to make an application to the DOT, it will require a resolution with two affirmative votes. Mayor Wolk said we will discuss this further at our next caucus meeting.

Rick March of George Street added that in addition to Lambert and Hartka, they need a stop sign at Hill and E. Buckingham. People use these streets as cut-throughs and traffic has increased. He also reported a drainage property behind his property on the borough property that surrounds the ballfields. People drive back there when it is wet creating deep ruts. The

property does not drain properly and creates hazards. Please ask police and public works vehicles not to drive back there when it is wet. Would it be possible to install a channel box or dig a hole and put in stones to help with drainage? It is a mosquito and walking hazard. Mayor Wolk said we will report the situation to Commissioner Tovinsky.

Diane Vilaro, 11 Lincoln Avenue, reported there was police activity around White Avenue because her daughter came home to SWAT activity in her back yard. Should the immediate public have been notified? Chief Conte said we weren't looking for anyone dangerous—we were providing an assist to another community. If there had been a danger, we would have utilized the reverse 9-1-1 system. They were actually looking for a victim. Vilaro said people in the immediate area should have been notified. They saw people in their backyards with rifles. Chief Conte said there was not an immediate need for rifles so he was not sure why they were deployed. He was at the command post. Vilaro concluded that information should have been shared at least with the neighbors in the immediate vicinity.

Chief Conte reported April 29 is the Craft Fair and Car Show. Kings Highway will be shut down from 6am to 4pm. Grant Avenue will actually start tomorrow morning. He also reported they now have Deterra Bags available for residents to dispose of prescription drugs. You pour your prescriptions into the bag, add water and then you can dispose of the bag. The bags are available at the police department.

Seeing no public comment, on a motion by Commissioner Tovinsky, second by Commissioner Gilmore, the public portion was closed and the meeting was adjourned at 8:54pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Terry Shannon*  
Municipal Clerk