

March 23, 2010, CAUCUS MEETING MINUTES
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE BOROUGH OF MT. EPHRAIM

MEETING CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Wolk called the meeting to order at 3:00pm.

SALUTE TO FLAG:

All present pledged their allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

<u>ROLL CALL:</u>	<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Commissioner Gilmore	_____x_____	_____
Commissioner Greenwald	_____x_____	_____
Mayor Wolk	<u>arrived late</u>	_____

Mayor Wolk is expected to arrive late as he had an appointment.

OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Borough Solicitor –Joe Marrazzo
Borough Engineers – Joe Federici and Doug Akin
Rich Schwab—Borough Consultant
Police Chief – Ed Dobleman
Marie Darlington –Tax Collector/Deputy Clerk
Ken Jones, Chris Fitzgerald and John Wenner representing Public Works
Paul Bibik representing MEPRI

“OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS LAW” ANNOUNCEMENT:

Mayor Wolk announced this Meeting has been advertised and notices posted in accordance with the “Open Public Meetings Act.”

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Administration & Finance—Rich Schwab reported on the following items

1. CFO responsibilities

As a follow up to last month’s report, we recruited and hired Dottie Jones as our new Bookkeeper to assist the CFO. She is handling the data entry, general ledger and bank reconciliations for him. Dottie is a former Mt. Ephraim CFO and has extensive

experience with the financial software we use. Her salary is set initially at \$100 per month but will be adjusted (probably “up” three or four times) based on actual hours calculated at \$20 per hour. Mayor Wolk will negotiate a new salary for the CFO (currently set at \$12,000 per year) to offset whatever the costs are for the Bookkeeper and reflect the change in his job responsibilities. This will be a more efficient way to provide the financial services.

2. 2010 Budget status

We now have the Governor’s state aid numbers which shows a loss of another 16% or \$78,500. (from \$492,211 to \$413,704). There are also new rules on how we handle our budget that may result in the loss of another 5% or \$20,685. Further, we received a bill from the CCIA for \$5000 for administrative fees related to the Fire House borrowing. This is beyond the interest cost. This year our first principal payment of \$90,000 is due so with the added interest our overall cost for debt service is up \$168,000 plus the \$5000. A rough budget proposal will be finalized in the next week or two and submitted to the Commissioners for preliminary review. Although the State still says there is a March 31 deadline for budget introduction, that will not be realistic for us and there is no real penalty for missing that deadline. It makes more sense to schedule discussion at your April 27 Work Shop meeting with plans for the introduction for your May 6 meeting. Mayor Wolk added that the Governor wants municipalities to use all their school aid but the problem is that we will not be able to replace it.

3. CVS Streetscape Escrow

During the audit, we discovered that in 2006, CVS made a \$57,145 payment towards the costs of the then planned streetscape project on Kings Highway in front of their renovated store. It was a condition of their site plan approval by the Planning Board. Remington & Vernick came up with that amount based on light fixtures, brick sidewalk and curb work. As we know, that area is part of the Streetscape Phase III portion and we only were funding for Streetscape I in 2008 and now Streetscape II for 2010. Unless anyone has any other ideas, it must sit in escrow until the area in question is improved. Mayor Wolk asked that the original resolution be checked to see what the stipulations were.

The Clerk reported on the following items.

4. Fines for failure to obtain dog licenses

Last year, we sent summonses to 12 residents who failed to obtain dog licenses. A few of them came in, got their license and paid their fines but we still have a handful who did not. We need to determine how we want to handle these residents. Obviously, we do not want to issue warrants as it seems heavy-handed but we need to take some action or there is no incentive for these residents to comply with our ordinance. Also update on current licensing and results of rabies clinic. Marie suggested that we have a police officer knock on the resident’s door. Joe Marrazzo asked why warrants were not issued to the folks who last year failed to appear. Chief Dobleman said he would follow-up with court to find out why warrants were not issued. The Clerk also reported that 105 people attended the rabies clinic.

5. Update on Mercantile Licenses—Marie reported that we will have the same problem as last year. We have more than two thirds licensed so far and we have sent

reminders to those still outstanding. We will have outstanding issues regarding unpaid taxes again this year.

6. Intent to Foreclose and Foreclosure Actions begun—legislation was passed requiring notice on foreclosures be sent to Clerks. Since this started we have received about 32 notices. Marie also reported that delinquencies are a little higher than in prior years.

7. Possible Ordinance for fee to be imposed on requests for multiple lien redemptions—a new Local Finance Notice allows municipalities to adopt an ordinance to charge a fee when a redemption calculation has been requested multiple times on the same property. If the governing body agrees, we can introduce the ordinance at the April meeting. The governing body did agree and the ordinance can be introduced.

8. Resolution authorizing Clerk to sign State vouchers regarding OLU grant Captain Beppel has to submit reports every time a checkpoint is run showing the payroll expense incurred as a result of the operation. I signed the form verifying the payroll calculation but the State returned as I am not authorized to sign for the CFO. We simply need to pass a resolution authorizing me to sign the forms for the CFO.

9. 2010 Financial Disclosure Forms due—the Clerk reminded everyone that they need to submit their Financial Disclosure forms.

Police: Chief Dobleman will discuss the following items

1. Sale of old vehicles: met with Richard and have the resolution ready. We will do a sealed bid with a min of \$1,000 on each vehicle. Vehicles will be available for inspection until April 21, 2010, at which time we will read bids.

2. Donation of Vehicle: met with Richard and have the paperwork ready to donate an old patrol vehicle to the Camden County Fire Police. Kenny Robertson is aware of same and is working on the paperwork from his end. We will have a resolution authorizing the donation ready for the agenda.

3. New Vehicle: met with Richard and we were able to remove our request for a vehicle out of the 2010 budget and have the monies from the PSE&G project to fund the vehicle line item. Richard has all paperwork that needs to be signed. Also the PD is getting a 2009 left over to also save cost.

4. Warranty Issue on old patrol car: Spoke to Winner Ford in regards to a warranty on patrol vehicle 25-5, a 2006 vehicle in which the factory warranty went bankrupt. They said that they can give the vehicle a 2 year /24,000 mile warranty with a \$200 deductible for \$1,370.00. I spoke to Kenny Jones and he thinks this is a no-brainer and I would like to get the approval on same. He will get all the details to Commissioner Gilmore so the governing body can review.

5. Resolution to appoint a new special officer: As you are aware, we lost a special officer to another town and would like to replace him with another. We have been in contact with Commissioner Gilmore regarding same and he is aware how this officer will

assist in continuing to keep overtime low. Officer's name is John Duus from Sewell, NJ. A resolution appointing him will be on the agenda.

6. Public Records request: Update on the James Keenan records request. The Clerk explained that this is an individual who thinks he is being harassed by the PD. He filed an OPRA request requesting copies of all tickets issued by Sgt. Errigo for the past thirty days as well as a copy of his personnel file, his driving record and other information. We did tell him that the personnel file would not be provided as it is not required under the OPRA laws. We will provide the other documents as requested once Mr. Keenan pays for them.

7. Phase II of the Camden county Bike route: Chief will be attending meeting on 3/24/2010 in Bellmawr.

8. School Lockdown: Chief attended the required class along with SWAT members and will be working with our schools. Also have talked with Fire Chief Gilmore to discuss having hands on training some time in the future.

9. Police Policies: Have reviewed and update volumes 1 through 3 of department policies which require review every 5 years.

10. E-Ticketing: Chief will advise of same. Would like to get thoughts on same and may be an answer to the summons issues from the court.

11. DWI's: Captain Beppel will meet with the Clerk to get information together to set up a meeting with Oaklyn to discuss and resolve.

12. Phase II of Streetscape: Captain Beppel attended a meeting regarding the work and was able to get a work schedule for same. Easter break Station Avenue will be closed for three days while school is on recess. Commissioner Gilmore reported that the Captain spoke with the contractor and they did have money in their proposal to cover flagman. The police will work the overtime and exhaust the funds the contractor has in their proposal but for a lesser fee because it is a borough project. They will accept \$25 per hour for the duration of the project. Excellent job and spirit of cooperation from the PD.

13. Craft Show: Sgt. Conte will meet with the committee in regards to the April 24 craft show and all will be ready for that day.

14. Bank Robbery: Chief will brief you all on the Bank Robbery that occurred at PNC on 3/15/2010. By viewing surveillance videos they were able to obtain a tag number and within five hours they had a suspect in custody.

15. Grant: The Police department was able to obtain a grant for a live scanning machine that takes digital prints as well as mug shots. This was a grant from the state and soon all towns will be required have this machine. The cost of this is about \$20,000

Fire: Rich Schwab reported on the following

1. Bell Road Drainage project

- a. You have authorized and signed the contract with the State for the \$755,000 grant for the drainage project and the question has been asked, are we ready to go? This should mean we have the authorization to spend it and shouldn't have any risk of losing it unless the Governor has the authority to void contracts.
- b. The next step is to authorize the contract with the engineer at your Apr. 1 meeting to design the drainage project. Unless the County adds funds, the \$75,000 design work will have to be charged to the fire station project funds. Mayor Wolk added that he spoke to Dave McPeak and as we are only asking for half of what the County had originally committed, there should be no problem obtaining the \$75,000. Dave is supposed to speak to Ian Leonard and get back to him Rich added that by the time the drainage project is ready for bidding, the fire station should also be ready, perhaps in July. If bids come in within budget, work could start on both in Sept. If the governing body approves the proposal from CES for the design work, the resolution will be on the agenda. It was approved and the resolution will be prepared.
- c. Rob Inverso suggests we borrow \$755,000 to have the cash flow for the drainage project since it is a reimbursement grant. We don't have enough uncommitted cash to handle it otherwise. We pay it off when we get the funds from the State, at the end of the project. Interest rates are under 2% so even with borrowing fees but considering some earnings by investing the funds before actual use, I would estimate this process will add less than \$15,000 to the project. Is there agreement on this financing plan? The governing body agreed and authorized Rich to proceed with the required bond ordinance.

2. Bell Road Fire Station project status

- a. Building - Now that you have authorized the extra funds to the architect, he has begun to move forward with redesign. Rich Holmes is in touch with him on behalf of the building committee. We hope to get a timetable for completing the plans so we can get out to bids. Only then will we know exactly what this will cost. There will a need to include a lot of alternates. In relation to that, we have to learn about a new law that governs how the alternates are used. Hopefully this will all be ready in 60 days to go out to bids by the June meeting.
- b. Demolition of James St. house – TTI has promised to provide the work plan for asbestos removal any day now so we can finalize quotes for the demolition of the James St. property.
- c. Soil Remediation – A resolution has been added to your April 1 agenda authorizing a professional service contact with Earth Engineering to complete the remediation of the contaminated soil per their 2/27/09 proposal for \$19,960. The E_JIF grant will cover \$10,000 of this cost. Their plan is to do the work in coordination with the building demolition so they will work with Becica to include provision for this in his specs.
- d. Lease - We still need to discuss the proposed Bell Rd lease agreement. A separate meeting will be scheduled to finalize the lease language.

3. Lambert Ave Removal of Architectural Barriers project status

There are a few issues with the work MD Remodeling did on the project. We thought they were done but discovered they had not installed some of the toilets and sinks at the proper level and they had to make changes to get our Plumbing inspector's final approval (which they finally got). There were also a number of electrical fixtures that were put in that did not meet specs. The correct ones had to be ordered delaying final completion for another couple weeks. When finally done, the Fire Dept can start their move from Bell to Lambert. Related to these problems, the contractor's error's resulting in more time on the job for the architect than was in their proposal. They are asking for \$1740 additional. We are looking at whether the specs put this cost as the contractor's responsibility.

Other Public Safety Issues

1. Discussion of MEPRI Ambulance situation and Oaklyn shared service agreement. Sgt. Conte reported that the ambulances are up and running. Effective March 29 they will be providing service to the residents. He has worked with Oaklyn on the shared service language. Effective April 1 the shared service will begin and we will be providing coverage to Oaklyn as well. Based on prior year's activity they anticipate they will be self-sustaining.

2. Anthony Stagliano will be present to discuss the changes to the Safety Incentive Program. He explained that the JIF has revamped their incentive program. He highlighted some of the major changes including increased departmental involvement in the safety program. He brought an overview of the program and distributed to the governing body. He covered reporting requirements, dates, regional training programs, and other aspects of the program. He also explained that your critical areas for improvement must be accomplished within a two-year period. He distributed the departmental reporting information to all the department heads. He discussed light duty, roadway signage and walkway programs and accident investigation panels. We need to establish three loss control objectives. He would like to request that a review of the safety program be made part of the caucus meeting.

Public Works, Planning and Zoning:

1. Serious problem with sewer line along Linden Avenue

Ken Jones researched problem with sewer backups in residents' homes and advises that a pipe needs to be run to the CCMUA connection. The cost is \$41,000 but Ken believes this needs to be done as soon as possible. He would like to know if it can be done as an emergency as he feels there is not enough time to advertise and wait for two meetings. Residents are actually getting sewage backing up into their homes. It was decided that the engineer will submit a letter certifying the emergency and Ken will get quotes to get the work done. Terry will follow-up with DCA to see what the requirements are to award an emergency contract.

2. Replacing full-time position currently vacant with part-time employee

Ken would like to replace the full-time position vacated by Bob Wolfe with a part-time employee saving the Borough more than \$18,000 per year. He really needs the help to get all the DPW work done. The governing body did not want to make a decision on this until the budget picture is clearer. Commissioner Greenwald will work with Ken to provide more information.

ENGINEER: Projects and Grants Updates

1. **Streetscape Phase II**—will start April 5. They will get the shop drawings for the benches and receptacles so Commissioner Greenwald can review.
2. **Route 295/76 Agreement**—Joe Marrazzo has been playing phone tag with the representative from the DOT and will provide an update when available.
3. **USDA Grant Program update**—we met with the folks from the USDA and they gave us an overview of the program. We have to submit an application by the end of this month to determine how much funding we would qualify for and how much would be a grant vs. a loan. Best case it would be a 75% grant and 25% loan but we probably won't qualify for that much because our sewer rates are so low. They will submit the pre-application for the work that is needed at the pump stations and we will see what happens.
4. **Delaware Ave update (NJDOT local aid project)**—they were waiting for the weather to break so they can finish up the field work and prepare the plans.

SOLICITOR: Joe Marrazzo reported the following

1. Resolution regarding awarding of public works projects involving third parties and in-house public works departments. Due to a recent court decision, language is being recommended in contracts awarding in-house public works contracts where plans were not reviewed and approved by an engineer. Going forward, in order to have design immunity, specific language needs to be included when awarding such contracts and the sample language was provided by the solicitor.
2. Rt. 296/76 Agreement and list of concerns—he is trying to connect with the DOT representative to address our concerns.

ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion by Commissioners Greenwald and Gilmore, the meeting was finally adjourned at 5:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Shannon
Municipal Clerk