

**MAY 6, 2010, GENERAL MEETING MINUTES**  
**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE BOROUGH OF MT. EPHRAIM**

**MEETING CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Wolk called the meeting to order at 8:02pm.

**SALUTE TO THE FLAG**

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

**ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT**

**ABSENT**

Commissioner Gilmore	_____X_____	_____
Commissioner Greenwald	_____X_____	_____
Mayor Wolk	_____X_____	_____

**OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT**

Borough Solicitor – Joe Marrasso  
Borough Engineers – Doug Akin  
Police Chief – Ed Dobleman  
Borough Clerk – Terry Shannon  
Tax Collector/Dep. Clerk – Marie Darlington

**“OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS LAW” ANNOUNCEMENT**

This Meeting has been advertised and notices posted in accordance with the “Open Public Meetings Act.”

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**           None

**PROCLAMATIONS**       None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

1.     April 1, 2010, General Meeting

A motion was made by Commissioner Greenwald and seconded by Commissioner Gilmore to approve the aforementioned minutes. Mayor Wolk abstained from approving the Caucus minutes as he arrived late to the meeting. The motion carried.

**VOUCHER APPROVAL**

Vouchers were submitted and the Bill List total of \$1,040,342.94 was submitted for approval. On a motion by Commissioner Greenwald, second by Commissioner Gilmore, the Bill List was approved with the following poll vote: Gilmore-yes; Greenwald-yes, Wolk-yes. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC HEARING AND SECOND READING OF ORDINANCES:**

Ord. 05-10 Amending Chapter 89, Taxation, in the Borough Code

Ord. 06-10 Accepting Dedication of Block 32, Lot 1.31, also Known as the Kingsway Station Clock Lot

Mayor Wolk opened the public hearing on these ordinances.

Seeing no public comment, on a motion by Commissioners Greenwald and Gilmore, the public hearing was closed.

On a motion by Commissioners Greenwald and Gilmore, the ordinances were adopted with the following poll vote: Gilmore-yes; Greenwald-yes, Wolk-yes.

**INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES** Mayor Wolk read the following ordinances.

Ord. 07-10 Bond Ordinance Authorizing Drainage And Related Street Improvements On Bell Road In The Borough Of Mount Ephraim, County Of Camden, New Jersey; Appropriating The Sum Of \$755,000 Therefore; Authorizing The Issuance Of General Obligation Bonds Or Bond Anticipation Notes Of The Borough Of Mount Ephraim, County Of Camden, New Jersey, In The Aggregate Principal Amount Of Up To \$755,000 Making Certain Determinations And Covenants; And Authorizing Certain Related Actions In Connection With The Foregoing

Ord. 08-10 Bond Ordinance Authorizing Streetscape Improvements On Kings Highway In The Borough Of Mount Ephraim, County Of Camden, New Jersey; Appropriating The Sum Of \$290,540 Therefore; Authorizing The Issuance Of General Obligation Bonds Or Bond Anticipation Notes Of The Borough Of Mount Ephraim, County Of Camden, New Jersey, In The Aggregate Principal Amount Of Up To \$290,540 Making Certain Determinations And Covenants; And Authorizing Certain Related Actions In Connection With The Foregoing

On a motion by Commissioner Greenwald, second by Commissioner Gilmore, the ordinances were approved on first reading with the following poll vote: Gilmore-yes; Greenwald-yes; Wolk-yes.

Mayor Wolk explained that this was first reading and second reading and public comment will be at next month's meeting.

**RESOLUTIONS:**

The Clerk announced that the following resolution would be approved separate from the Consent Agenda:

RESOLUTION NO. 35-10                      Resolution Amending Agreement With the Civil Engineering Firm For Bell Road Fire Station Project

On a motion by Commissioners Greenwald and Gilmore, the resolution was approved with the following poll vote: Gilmore-yes; Greenwald-yes; Wolk-abstain.

The Clerk then announced that the remaining resolutions would be approved as a Consent Agenda.

RESOLUTION NO. 36-10                      Resolution Authorizing the Advertisement for Bids for the Replacement of the Bell Road Fire Station

RESOLUTION NO. 37-10                      Resolution Authorizing a Shared Service Agreement by and between the Boroughs of Audubon, Audubon Park, Mount Ephraim and the County Of Camden

RESOLUTION NO. 38-10                      Authorizing Refund of Landlord Registration Fee Received

RESOLUTION NO. 39-10                      Authorizing Advertisement for RFQ's for Selection of Professionals under a Fair and Open Process

RESOLUTION NO. 40-10                      Implementing a Fair and Open Process for the Selection of Various Professional Service Providers

RESOLUTION NO. 41-10                      Authorizing Business Associate Agreement with Conner Strong

RESOLUTION NO. 42-10                      Approving a Temporary Capital Budget

RESOLUTION NO. 43-10                      Authorizing Warranty Agreement with USA Warranty for Police Car Maintenance

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

The Clerk announced that one additional resolution was being added to the agenda tonight:

RESOLUTION NO. 44-10                      Certifying the School Tax Levy for the Mt. Ephraim Board of Education

Mayor Wolk explained that the governing body met with Superintendent Rafferty prior to the commission meeting and they agreed to a reduction of the School Budget, which had been defeated by the voters, in the amount of \$105,000. This was a reduction of the proposed tax rate of six cents.

On a motion by Commissioners Greenwald and Gilmore, the resolution was approved with the following poll vote: Gilmore-yes; Greenwald-yes; Wolk-yes.

**MERCANTILE LICENSE APPLICATIONS / RENEWALS**

Mayor Wolk read the following into the record:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>
613 Corporation (Fantasy Lounge)	710 N. Black Horse Pike
Innovative Auto Service, LLC	601 W. Kings Highway
Midas Muffler (JoJess Automotive, Inc.)	160 N. Black Horse Pike

On a motion by Commissioners Greenwald and Gilmore, the licenses were approved with the following poll vote: Gilmore-yes; Greenwald-yes; Wolk-yes.

**BINGO/RAFFLE LICENSES:** None

**REPORTS:**

Commissioner Gilmore read highlights from the Police Department monthly report for April. He also read the highlights from the Fire Department report for the month of April. He added congratulations to the Police Department on a job well done this past Tuesday involving a domestic violence situation with weapons involved. The Critical Incident Team was called out to assist and an arrest was made without any injuries.

Commissioner Greenwald read the highlights from the monthly report from the Public Works department reporting that there were no safety violations or accidents for the

month of April. He also read highlights from the April Construction Office report. We had single stream recycling of over 76,000 pounds. He reported that Public Works is working with the Borough Engineer on a sewer line problem along Linden Avenue. The spring flags were put up along Kings Highway and they are working with the Little League folks on a drainage problem at the senior field. The employees attended Right-to Know training. Also, the DPW guys helped set up and breakdown the Craft and Auto Show. Commissioner Greenwald also thanked everyone involved with the Celebrations Committee, Police, Fire, EMS and DPW for making the day a big success. It gets bigger and better every year. He closed by wishing everyone a happy and safe Memorial Day.

Doug Akin from Federici and Akin, Borough Engineers, reported that the Delaware Avenue project is scheduled to be done this summer. They completed the fieldwork and are now working on the design. The Streetscape Project Phase II will begin next week and will also be completed this summer. The USDA application is still being worked on as they finally received the information they needed from NJAWC and the application will be ready to be submitted to the Governing Body soon.

Mayor Wolk read highlights from the Tax Collector report for March. He added that we are working on the Municipal Budget. We will hold a special meeting on May 13 to continue working on the Budget. We are in the process of negotiating reopening contracts with the Police Department and Public Works and everyone is cooperating. We still need to reduce the budget by \$250,000. Our goal is to get the budget down as low as possible. These are very difficult times for public employees. We hope to introduce the Budget at the June meeting. The Mayor then read a letter from the American Legion outlining the Memorial Day celebration and he hopes the public comes out to the Memorial Triangle where the procession will begin at 9 am.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

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

Theresa Ingram, 15 Second Avenue, asked about the Fantasy Showbar. She saw that we approved the mercantile license and wanted to know what the situation is. Joe Marrazzo, Borough Solicitor, explained that they properly applied for their mercantile license and the Borough so issued. Commissioner Greenwald added that we still do not know what their long range plans for the property are but they are legally zoned at this point and we had to approve their license. Theresa went on to ask if we can change the zoning to make such an establishment illegal. Joe Marrazzo explained that you cannot change your zoning ordinance just to eliminate this type of business as it is protected by the Constitution. We can limit geographically where these businesses can be located but we cannot prohibit them.

Carla Bonamassa, from 627 Charles Street, asked about the railroad ties that were left along Station Avenue. Who will remove them? Also, PSE&G, at the corner of

Northmont and Reading, left a huge pole that needs to be removed. Also, the railroad crossing at Station and Northmont has a terrible hump and the railroad ties need to be replaced. Mayor Wolk answered that we have asked several times that Conrail remove the ties and we will again follow-up. Commissioner Gilmore added that he spoke to PSE&G about the poles and was told that removal of the poles will be done by Verizon.

Debbie Wilson from 12 Grant Avenue asked about the Homestead rebates. Have they been nixed for this year? Mayor Wolk asked Marie Darlington, Tax Collector, if that was correct and she stated that it was. Ms. Wilson added that in prior years, when they received that rebate, they either bought an appliance or took a vacation with their kids. She would like to see the money that used to go to the rebates go to the teachers to protect the music program. Mayor Wolk responded that we have no control over that. They also took money from us and we lost close to \$90,000. We are all in the same boat.

Ed Jackowski from 40 Remington Avenue asked about a tree that fell at 16 Remington Avenue. He believes the property is vacant. The Mayor stated that we have sent letters to the property owner and the mortgage company and we are working on it.

Eleanor Bracey, 20 Glover Avenue, asked if the governing body provides the specific programs they want to see cut when they reduce the school budget. Mayor Wolk asked Joe Rafferty to respond and he stated that they just provide them with the amount and the school board determines where to cut. Ms. Bracey added that she hopes they do not cut the band as it is a great program and we have a lot of kids involved in music. She would not mind paying a little more to keep a program like this. Mayor Wolk added that the school board needs to go back to the teachers' union to re-open them and get some concessions like the borough departments did.

John McCloskey, 111 Baird Avenue, asked about some of the other governor's ideas. Specifically he asked about part-time employees not getting benefits or pension. Mayor Wolk responded that the governing body gave back one third of their salary and they do not get health benefits. They are in the pension system but the amount is small because it is based on their small salaries. Mr. McCloskey added that next year is going to be worse. We have contracts with these employees but now we are going to say the contract is no good? He would rather see taxes be raised then see programs and services cut. We have a great location but if we take away from the schools, we will reduce our housing values. We are not taking care of our children if we take away from the schools.

Theresa Ingram, 15 Second Avenue, asked if she could respond to Mr. McCloskey. She asked him if he was against the pay freeze. He responded that he is a union man and he is against not honoring a signed contract. Theresa said that last year, when we were at a commission meeting and she expressed concern about taxes going up because she had taken a pay freeze at work, Mr. McCloskey said she should get a new job. In this economy that is not that easy. Everyone has to make tough decisions especially in an economy like this. Carl Ingram added that in the Gloucester City News

today it was reported that in Gloucester City, Haddon Township and Haddon Heights they had a tax reduction.

Karen Campanell from 20 Baird Avenue asked about the shared service agreement with Audubon and Audubon Park. Mayor Wolk explained that it was the shared Drug Alliance grant program.

Debbie Wilson asked about the solar panels. Are they to light the street lights? Commissioner Gilmore explained they generate power that will become part of PSE&G's main power system so they can comply with a mandate that 20% of their power come from green sources by 2014. They do not power the street lights and there is no financial benefit to the town.

Ed Jackowski asked why we still have the old poles where the decorative poles were installed. Commissioner Greenwald explained that the decorative lights do not generate enough light to meet the necessary requirements and that in some locations we need both. We are however, installing mercury vapor energy efficient lights in many of the street lights in town which will save the town money.

Diane Vilardo, 11 Lincoln Avenue, asked if there is a tax increase from the school budget. The Mayor answered that the original budget generated a tax increase on the average homeowner of \$141 per year. Now, after the reduction, it will be around \$93 for the average homeowner.

Eleanor Bracey asked about ordinance 08-10, the bond ordinance for the Streetscape Project. Can't that money go to the schools? The Mayor answered that those funds are from a federal grant specifically for that project.

Theresa Ingram asked for a recap of where we stand on the tax rate right now. If the school is now at eight cents and the municipal budget is at 14 cents, it is the first time the municipal tax has gone up more than the school tax. Mayor Wolk stressed that the 14 cents cannot be considered as we are still reducing our budget and when we are done, the rate will be lower than the school increase.

Former Mayor Mike Reader stated that this situation is so tough for everyone. Certainly no one wants to cut a school budget. The commissioners are not the bad guys. You are just the ones that have to deal with the mess. The governor is also trying to deal with the hand he was dealt. State revenues are off 40-60%. Hopefully times will get better and things will come back. As a taxpayer he is just asking for a little shared sacrifice. We all have to make hard decisions. The budget was voted down because people are at their wits end. We have more bankruptcies in town than ever. This is the worst case scenario he has ever seen. We all have to sacrifice in order to get through this. No one wants to hurt the kids. But we do have to figure out how to survive. Joe Rafferty stepped up and took the 1.5% and a wage freeze. Everyone needs to take a step back and work together. We are not asking for a sacrifice forever. Eventually it will

get better. He hopes everyone can see it through. The teachers have a pretty good gig and it is time to give back a little.

Seeing no further public comment, on a motion by Commissioner Greenwald and second by Commissioner Gilmore, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Shannon  
Borough Clerk