

June 4, 2009, GENERAL MEETING MINUTES
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE BOROUGH OF MT. EPHRAIM

MEETING CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Wolk called the meeting to order at 8:05 pm.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG:

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

ROLL CALL:

	<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Commissioner Gilmore	_____X_____	_____
Commissioner Greenwald	_____X_____	_____
Mayor Wolk	_____X_____	_____

OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Borough Solicitor – Joe Marrazzo
Borough Engineers – Joe Federici & Doug Akin
Police Chief – Ed Dobleman
Borough Clerk – Terry Shannon
Tax Collector/Dep. Clerk – Marie Darlington
Borough Consultant – Richard Schwab
Borough Auditor—Rob Inverso

“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

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

Minutes from the following meetings of the Board of Commissioners were distributed and are now subject to approval:

1. March 24, 2009 Caucus Meeting
2. April 2, 2009 General Meeting

A motion was made by Commissioner Greenwald and seconded by Commissioner Gilmore to approve the aforementioned minutes. The motion carried.

VOUCHER APPROVAL:

Vouchers were submitted and the Bill List total of \$737,675.64, were submitted for approval. On a motion by Commissioner Greenwald, second by Commissioner Gilmore, the Bill List was approved with the following poll vote: Greenwald-yes; Wolk-yes, Gilmore-yes. Motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARING AND SECOND READING OF ORDINANCES:

ORDINANCE NO. 07-09 ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF MOUNT
EPHRAIM AMENDING THE STORMWATER
CONTROL ORDINANCE IN THE BOROUGH CODE

Mayor Wolk opened the public hearing.

As there was no public comment, a motion was made by Commissioner Greenwald and seconded by Commissioner Gilmore to close the public hearing. The motion carried.

On a motion made by Commissioner Greenwald and seconded by Commissioner Gilmore, the ordinance was adopted with the following poll vote: Greenwald-yes, Wolk-yes; Gilmore-yes.

BUDGET RESOLUTIONS:

RESOLUTION NO. 32-09 AUTHORIZING THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
TO CONDUCT THE LOCAL BUDGET
EXAMINATION

RESOLUTION NO. 33-09 AUTHORIZING THE 2009 MUNICIPAL BUDGET TO
BE READ BY TITLE AT TIME OF PUBLIC HEARING

On a motion by Commissioner Greenwald, second by Commissioner Gilmore, the budget resolutions were approved with the following poll vote: Greenwald-yes; Wolk-yes; Gilmore-yes.

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE 2009 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Mayor Wolk opened the public hearing on the 2009 Budget. He requested that each resident stand and provide their name and address for the record.

Stan Alcavage, 13 Remington Avenue, asked what increase in taxes this would cost the average taxpayer. Mayor Wolk responded that the increase was about ten cents which on the average of assessment of \$98,000 would cost \$98.00 per year or less than \$25

per quarter. Mr. Alcavage then asked about the school budget. Mayor Wolk responded that we would discuss the school budget after we have completed the public hearing on the municipal budget. Mr. Alcavage then asked what shared services the Borough has looked at. Mayor Wolk responded that the most recent one we have entered into is with the Borough of Barrington for the sharing of municipal clerk services. We also share a CFO with Voorhees. Commissioner Greenwald added that we have been sharing services with Bellmawr for several years. We are using them for road projects, borrowing of equipment, and we are sharing the services of their licensed superintendent and sewer operator. Commissioner Gilmore added that when they came into office they established the shared service with Oaklyn for municipal court and that is still ongoing. Mr. Alcavage asked if we have looked into consolidating towns. Mayor Wolk answered that it needs to come from the top down and the State needs to order towns to merge.

Carl Ingram, 15 2nd Avenue, asked about the County tax. Mayor Wolk answered that the County has not struck their rate yet. He added that Mr. Ingram's question from the last meeting about a local wage tax was investigated but it cannot be done. Joe Marrasso added that legislation would have to be enacted at the state level allowing municipalities to impose a wage tax.

Theresa Ingram, 15 2nd Avenue, asked for clarification about Richard Schwab's position. She asked if he and the clerk share a position. Mayor Wolk explained that Richard was a consultant to the Borough. When they took office, four years had passed and there were some problems that needed to be addressed. Richard had been the administrator in Haddonfield for many years and has expertise. When the Borough had to let the prior clerk go, they asked Richard to help with the search for a new clerk and to explore shared services as well as to get problems straightened out. Between what we are paying for Richard and the shared service for the clerk's position, we are saving a lot of money and we will continue this way for at least the next two years.

Dan Preziosi, 707 W. Kings Highway, asked if we know how much funding we are getting from the state. Mayor Wolk answered that yes, we know how much we are getting and it is included in the budget. Dan asked how we know how much aid we are getting if the state has not finished their budget. Rob Inverso stated that we have been confirmed as to how much aid we are getting and that we are approved to adopt the budget.

Seeing no further public comment, on a motion by Commissioners Greenwald and Gilmore, the public hearing on the 2009 budget was closed.

Mayor Wolk then called for a motion to approve Resolution 34-09, to Adopt the 2009 Municipal Budget. On a motion by Commissioners Greenwald and Gilmore, the budget was adopted with the following poll vote: Greenwald-yes; Wolk-yes; Gilmore-yes.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES:

Mayor Wolk asked the clerk to read the ordinances for introduction.

ORD. 08-09: BOND ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE COMPLETION OF VARIOUS ROAD AND RELATED IMPROVEMENTS IN THE BOROUGH OF MOUNT EPHRAIM, COUNTY OF CAMDEN, NEW JERSEY; APPROPRIATING THE SUM OF \$86,400 THEREFOR; 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 \$82,080 MAKING CERTAIN DETERMINATIONS AND COVENANTS; AND AUTHORIZING CERTAIN RELATED ACTIONS IN CONNECTION WITH THE FOREGOING

ORD. 09-09: BOND ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE COMPLETION OF VARIOUS IMPROVEMENTS TO BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS IN THE BOROUGH OF MOUNT EPHRAIM, COUNTY OF CAMDEN, NEW JERSEY; APPROPRIATING THE SUM OF \$50,700 THEREFOR; 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 \$48,165 MAKING CERTAIN DETERMINATIONS AND COVENANTS; AND AUTHORIZING CERTAIN RELATED ACTIONS IN CONNECTION WITH THE FOREGOING

ORD. 10-09: BOND ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE COMPLETION OF SEWER UTILITY IMPROVEMENTS; APPROPRIATING THE SUM OF \$71,000 THEREFOR; 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 \$67,450 MAKING CERTAIN DETERMINATIONS AND COVENANTS; AND AUTHORIZING CERTAIN RELATED ACTIONS IN CONNECTION WITH THE FOREGOING

ORD. 11-09: BOND ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ACQUISITION OF VARIOUS PIECES OF CAPITAL EQUIPMENT FOR THE BOROUGH OF MOUNT EPHRAIM, COUNTY OF CAMDEN, NEW JERSEY; APPROPRIATING THE SUM OF \$311,000 THERFOR; 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 \$295,450; MAKING CERTAIN DETERMINATIONS AND COVENANTS; AND AUTHORIZING CERTAIN RELATED ACTIONS IN CONNECTION WITH THE FOREGOING

ORD. 12-09: AMENDING CHAPTER 99, ZONING, APPLICATION AND ESCROW FEES

ORD. 13-09: AMENDING CHAPTER 99, ZONING, PERMITTED FENCE HEIGHTS

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

Mayor Wolk explained that the public hearing on these ordinances would be held during the June 4 regular meeting and that the public would be heard on these at that time.

RESOLUTIONS: The Clerk announced that the following resolutions would be read and approved as a consent agenda.

- RESOLUTION NO. 35-09 DESIGNATING RECIPIENT FOR THE CAMDEN COUNTY HOUSING REHABILITATION PROGRAM
- RESOLUTION NO. 36-09 AUTHORIZING ADVERTISEMENT FOR RFQ'S FOR SELECTION OF PROFESSIONALS UNDER A FAIR AND OPEN PROCESS
- RESOLUTION NO. 37-09 AUTHORIZING APPLICATION TO THE CAMDEN COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR 2009 STIMULUS SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDS
- RESOLUTION NO. 38-09 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SALE OF CERTAIN LAND NO LONGER NEEDED FOR PUBLIC USE BY THE BOROUGH OF MT. EPHRAIM (324 DAVIS AVENUE)
- RESOLUTION NO. 39-09 TO AFFIRM CIVIL RIGHTS WITH RESPECT TO ALL EMPLOYEES, APPOINTEES, OFFICIALS, VOLUNTEERS, CONTRACTORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC
- RESOLUTION NO. 40-09 AUTHORIZING BOROUGH ENGINEER TO PREPARE AND SUBMIT A FISCAL YEAR 2010 DISCRETIONARY AID APPLICATION TO THE NJDOT
- RESOLUTION NO. 41-09 AUTHORIZING THE BOROUGH ENGINEER TO ADVERTISE AND RECEIVE BIDS FOR THE NJDOT FISCAL YEAR 2009 LOCAL ROAD PROJECT (RESURFACING OF CEDAR AVE)
- RESOLUTION NO. 42-09 AUTHORIZING THE BOROUGH ENGINEER TO PREPARE AND SUBMIT A FISCAL YEAR 2010 TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT AID

Beach and we wish Officer Danielle Perna well as she is out on maternity leave. Also Det. Sgt. Michael Conte is in the hospital and we wish him well. He expressed kudos to the Celebrations Committee, the Police Department, Fire Department, Public Works and the Camden County Fire Police for a very successful craft fair.

Mayor Wolk congratulated Commissioner on his new grandchild—number eight!

2. Commissioner Greenwald's Report – Commissioner Greenwald reported that single stream recycling in April was over 77,000 pounds. Kenny Jones has been doing a month-by-month comparison to last year and we have saved money every month this year in trash tipping fees indicating that recycling is working. He encouraged folks to tell their friends and neighbors to recycle because it works. He then reported updates on the following projects:

- DPW cleaned up Shining Star Park both before and after the Easter Egg Hunt
- DPW set up, cleaned up and broke down the Craft Show which was a tremendous success
- DPW made repairs to the outfall at Garfield Avenue
- DPW oversaw the paving behind the library which completed the library renovation project
- Market Street, large manhole project was completed within the last month
- We contacted DOT and the major reconstruction project that was scheduled for the Black Horse Pike over 295 this summer has been delayed because of the major work being done on 295.
- Pennsylvania Avenue was supposed to be resurfaced but the weather has not cooperated. We hope to have that done this coming week. That is a shared service with Bellmawr.
- Last Saturday, the Democratic Club with the Celebrations Committee held a town clean-up day. Unfortunately, we did not have a very large turnout but we did clean-up the parks, the railroad tracks and the Celebration Committee did some gardening in front of Borough Hall.

Commissioner Greenwald reiterated that the Craft Fair was a great event and commended the Celebrations Committee and Public Works for their efforts. The Celebrations Committee has more events coming up such as the July 4 baby parade, the kids fishing tournament and the fall festival. If anyone is interested in helping out, they really need the help. They are working short-handed and are getting burned out so please come out to help.

3. Engineers Report – Joe Federici reported on the following:

- An application was submitted to the NJDOT for Fiscal Year 2010 Discretionary Aid for Bell Road drainage improvements \$349,000. We are hoping to receive these funds
- An application was submitted to the CDBG Block Grant Stimulus funding for \$50,000 of barrier free improvements which are up to 26 handicap

ramps to be located in the areas of Park, Linwood and Pennsylvania Avenue

- There will be a bid opening on June 3 for the Cedar Avenue reconstruction project, funded through the NJDOT Local Aid program for 2009. The project will start some time in July.
- We are waiting for word from the DOT on the Transportation Enhancement funding for the Streetscape Project, Phase II, Station Avenue to Green Avenue. This will include trees, benches, and trash receptacles to complete Streetscape Phase I.
- We are also submitting an application for additional Transportation Enhancement funding for Streetscape Phase III, Kings Highway, easterly side of Black Horse Pike.
- We are preparing an application for DOT Local Aid 2010, first priority Delaware Avenue from 2nd Avenue to 4th Avenue, second priority James Street from Kings Highway to Bell Road.

4. Mayor's Report – The Mayor noted that the Tax Collector reported a total of \$171,648.46 was collected during the month of March for tax and various miscellaneous charges (copies attached). We also had four lien redemptions for a total of \$32,172.08. Grand total received in March was \$204,520.54. The Mayor also extended congratulations and thanks to all who participated in the awesome job with the Craft Show. Mayor Wolk recognized senior citizen coordinator, Karen Herman, who was in the audience and asked how the River Sharks trip went. Karen reported it was a fun trip.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

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

Stan Alcavage, 15 Remington Avenue, asked if as part of the road projects we could ask the County to fix the gutters from Market Street down to Kings Highway. They are all torn up. Also, there is a storm drain there in front of one man's house that he has been trying for three years to get the County to fix. Mayor Wolk responded that we would contact the County and ask them to make the repairs.

Theresa Ingram, 15 Second Ave, asked about the financing for the new firehouse. She understood that we would not feel the impact on the tax rate because one debt would be paid down when the new debt payments begin. She asked for clarification on this. The CFO explained that one bond issue was paid off last year and would be replaced by the new debt. Theresa asked if the ten cent increase this year has anything to do with the firehouse financing and the CFO responded that it does not. We do have an interest payment this year but principal payments will not start until next year.

Dan Preziosi, 707 W. Kings Highway, asked if the traffic light on Market Street could be adjusted from 8pm until 6am to a blinking light? Traffic is very light during those hours

and when the light turns green, people speed to try and hit the light. He thinks a blinking light would stop this. Commissioner Gilmore said that the state frowns on blinking lights but that we would look into it. Dan added that he understands the difficulty with the school budget but that since it was defeated four to one, it should be looked at very carefully. Our increase seems very high compared to other towns. Mayor Wolk stated that we are reviewing their budget package and are working through the process. The increase will not be 33 cents. There will be a special meeting to resolve the school budget and it will be appropriately advertised. We have to have a resolution by May 19.

Theresa Ingram again stated that she is worried that the 50/50 proposal will cause a large increase next year. Rob Inverso, Borough Auditor, explained that 50% of the school budget has always been raised in the current year and the other 50% in the next year. The budget as introduced had 55% being raised this year and 45% next year to make next year easier. However, if we go back to the 50/50 split, the tax increase would drop to 12 cents for this year. This will mean a large increase next year. Working with the school board we have to come to some middle ground.

Carl Ingram asked that if that is the case, and with the firehouse kicking in next year, are we looking at a problem for next year? Rob Inverso answered that yes, that will probably be the case. Mayor Wolk added that we are under so much pressure because of the cuts in state aid. Relief can only come from the State House. He believes we can come to a reasonable solution with the school board for this year's budget.

Ed Jackowski, 40 Remington Avenue, asked if there would be another meeting. Mayor Wolk reiterated that there would be another meeting that would be advertised.

Erin Small, Linwood Avenue, spoke on behalf of the school district. She said that she is a teacher in another district and our school system is a great system with great teachers. She wants to be a voice for our school system and the full-day kindergarten program is wonderful. She does not want to see it get cut and we really have to value our education system.

Stan Alcavage added that the main problem is that we are mostly residential properties, not enough commercial, and the residents take the brunt of the tax burden.

John McCloskey, 111 Baird Avenue, wanted to agree with Dan Preziosi about the light at Market Street and that he hates that light. He added that he did some research before the meeting and found that we spend \$2000 less per student than the average school district. Also, our teachers make \$8000 less per year than the average. We need to bring younger people into our town. The main reason people move into a town is location and we have a great location. The next reason is the school system. We have to support our schools.

Stan Alcavage asked if we were due for a revaluation. Mayor Wolk stated that, according to our assessor, Steve Kessler, it would not be in the round coming up that leads to 2013, so we have at least until then.

Mark McGarvey, 254 James, as a parent of a student in the schools, he does not think anyone would not support the school system but you can only get so much blood out of a stone. The average increase in our school budgets from 1999-2009 has been between 8 and 10 percent per year. The taxpayers just cannot take anymore and that is the message that came out at this last vote. This will have to be addressed when contract negotiations come up in the next two years.

Mr. McGarvey also stated that the property at 262 James has been vacant for almost a year now and there is trash in the yard, thigh-high grass and weeds and it is a serious problem. Commissioner Greenwald said he would have Ken Jones at DPW follow-up on the property.

Theresa Ingram added that she has always supported the school system but that when they moved here, they did so because it was affordable. We do not attract doctors and lawyers coming to the town. We are a blue collar town making blue collar wages. People are looking for affordability. She does not want her tax bill to be as big as her mortgage payment but there it is. She agrees with Mayor Wolk that the system is broke and we need to think outside the box. We have had eleven foreclosures in the town and people are losing their jobs. We have to start somewhere. Marie Darlington, Tax Collector, confirmed that there has been a rise in foreclosures.

Mayor Wolk said he does not know what the solution is but that in the meantime we will continue to provide the best possible services such as police, fire, etc., to our residents. Perhaps a message was sent to the school board and maybe they have heard it but time will tell.

Laurie McCloskey, 111 Baird Avenue, said she has two kids who are almost out of college and they have been successful because of the Mt. Ephraim school district. We have to speak for the children and you have to be very careful how much you cut the budget as it effects programs. Everything you do affects the kids.

Mayor Wolk reminded the audience that the Memorial Day services will begin at 9am at Lambert Avenue and to please come out.

Seeing no further public comment, on a motion by Commissioners Greenwald and Gilmore, the meeting was adjourned at 9:05.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Shannon
Borough Clerk

