

**MAY 2, 2013, GENERAL MEETING MINUTES
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE BOROUGH OF MT. EPHRAIM**

MEETING CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Wolk called the meeting to order at 8:03pm.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

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

ROLL CALL

The Clerk called the roll with Commissioner Gilmore, Commissioner Greenwald and Mayor Wolk all present.

OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT

Borough Solicitor – Stuart Platt
Borough Engineers – Joe Federici and Doug Akin
Borough Clerk – Terry Shannon
Tax Collector/Dep. Clerk – Marie Darlington
Police Chief—Brian Beppel

“OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS LAW” ANNOUNCEMENT

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Mayor Wolk asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the April 4, 2013, commission meeting and the February 26, 2013, caucus meeting. On a motion by Commissioner Greenwald, second by Commissioner Gilmore, the minutes were approved with all in favor.

VOUCHER APPROVAL

Mayor Wolk announced that vouchers in the total amount of \$1,163,276.85 were submitted for approval. On a motion by Commissioner Greenwald, seconded by Commissioner Gilmore, the vouchers were approved with the following poll vote: Gilmore-yes; Greenwald-yes; Wolk-yes.

PUBLIC HEARING ON ORDINANCE BEING CONSIDERED FOR ADOPTION

Mayor Wolk read the following ordinance for public hearing and adoption:
Ordinance 03-13, To Exceed the Municipal Budget Appropriation Limits and to Establish a CAP Bank for Calendar Year 2013. Mayor Wolk then opened the public hearing. Seeing no public comment, on a motion by Commissioner Greenwald, second by Commissioner Gilmore, the public hearing was closed. Mayor Wolk then asked for a motion to adopt the ordinance. On a motion by Commissioner Greenwald, second by Commissioner Gilmore, the ordinance was adopted with the following poll vote: Gilmore-yes; Greenwald-yes; Wolk-yes. Motion is carried.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

Mayor Wolk announced that we have an ordinance for introduction on first reading. He asked the Clerk to read the title of the ordinance to be introduced as follows: Ordinance 04-13, Establishing the Salaries of Non-union Officers and Employees of the Borough of Mount Ephraim. On a motion by Commissioner Greenwald, second by Commissioner Gilmore, the first reading of this ordinance was approved with the following poll vote: Gilmore-yes except for recusal as to his own salary; Greenwald-yes except for recusal as to his own salary; Wolk-yes except for recusal as to his own salary. Mayor Wolk then announced that this ordinance will be posted and the public hearing will be during the June 6 commission meeting.

RESOLUTIONS

Mayor Wolk announced that the resolutions would be approved as a Consent Agenda and asked the Clerk to read the resolutions as follows:

- 40-13 Authorizing Submission of a 2012 Recycling Tonnage Grant Application
- 41-13 Designating Professional Appointments for May, 2013 - May, 2014
- 42-13 Amending the Appointment of the Tax Assessor
- 43-13 Authorizing the Budget to be Read by Title Only at Time of Public Hearing
- 44-13 Authorizing Waiver of Sanitary Sewer Connection Fees

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.

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE 2013 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Mayor Wolk announced that at this time we will have the public hearing on the Municipal Budget. We introduced the Budget last month. If you have any questions or comments, please state your name and address for the record.

Stan Witkowski, 106 4th Avenue, said he had some comments. He wanted to acknowledge the efforts on the budget and that it is a bare-bones budget that does not sacrifice services to the residents. He knows that our increase is \$41.00 per year based on the average assessment but do we know how much the school budget is increasing? Mayor Wolk said he did not know if their budget was adopted and deferred to Diane Vilardo who was in the audience and is on the School Board. She responded that their budget had been adopted but she did not know the impact to the average assessment and told Stan that there is a meeting Monday night that he can attend. He can also ask the school administrator. He then asked if we knew about the County but the Clerk responded that their budget has not yet been finalized. Stan then said that in his review of the budget, he noticed that the only source of additional revenue was the

billboard and he proposed that more revenue could be generated by reviewing the fee schedule and fines imposed on rental properties. He has a rental next to his property that has five rental units. If you have a volume of rental properties they should be monitored to insure compliance with borough ordinances. It present staffing does not allow that, we should consider hiring a consultant to monitor rental properties and it should pay for itself through fees and fines. Abandoned properties are being vandalized. Cherry Hill recently adopted an abandoned property ordinance. We should consider adopting one as well. Abandoned properties are dangerous as they attract vandals and they become an eyesore due to dilapidated conditions are trash. This becomes a quality of life issue for those of us who do take care of our properties. Commissioner Greenwald responded that we do have a rental inspector but we have over 400 rental properties. Every 24 months they are supposed to be re-inspected or upon change of tenant. The problem is that we need to be informed of a tenant change. We have a registration of landlord that is required and that generates the inspection which is redone every 24 months. We need residents to be our eyes and ears. Regarding the abandoned properties ordinance, we have been discussing this and we obtained a copy of the ordinance from both Cherry Hill and Gloucester City. Our solicitor advised us that there may be some legal issues with such an ordinance and they are reviewing. Stan reiterated that he thinks we should hire someone to monitor rentals and that hopefully the revenue generated would cover the cost. He said he can call when he sees a new tenant or when he sees tall grass but three months later the problem will still exist. This problem effects the entire community. We need someone to be out there monitoring this problem exclusively. This could also generate additional revenue for the Borough. Mayor Wolk responded that we understand this is a quality of life issue and is not unique to Mount Ephraim. We just have to be careful because what we want to do and what we are allowed to do are two different things. Solicitor Stuart Platt added that the incentive for landlords to register with the town is that enables them to initiate eviction procedures when needed. Regarding the Cherry Hill ordinance, we are currently looking at it. We need to make sure it is authorized under state statute. There is a question as to if the revenue generated from registrations and fines would be enough to cover the cost for enforcement and if it would have a material effect on the budget. These are quality of life issues and we can't base revenue on court fines. My office is researching the ordinances from Cherry Hill and Gloucester City and we will advise the governing body as to if we can adopt a similar ordinance. Stan then asked if we can at least secure a property so it is not accessible to vandals. Stuart responded that we already have the legal authority to do this but there is a legal procedure we have to follow in order to access a property including a court order. We are looking at these ordinances and will make recommendations to the governing body. Mayor Wolk added this is a tough time of year as grass is growing. Anyone who sees property that is overgrown should call us.

Seeing no further public comment on the Budget, on a motion by Commissioner Greenwald, second by Commissioner Gilmore, the public hearing was closed.

Mayor Wolk then read Resolution 45-13, to Adopt the 2013 Municipal Budget. He added that Richard Schwab was here and asked if the State has approved our Budget

and Richard responded that yes, the State has approved. On a motion by Commissioner Greenwald, second by Commissioner Gilmore, the resolution was approved with the following poll vote: Gilmore-yes; Greenwald-yes; Wolk-yes. The Budget is adopted.

BINGO/RAFFLE LICENSES FOR APPROVAL

Mayor Wolk read the following raffle licenses for approval:

RA-390 Storm Watchers (casino games held at Emmaus Catholic Community)
RA-391 Storm Watchers (50/50 held at Emmaus Catholic Community)

On a motion by Commissioner Greenwald, second by Commissioner Gilmore, the raffle licenses were approved with all in favor.

REPORTS

Commissioner Gilmore read highlights from the Mount Ephraim Police Department report for the month of April. They received a total of 465 calls and issued 391 case numbers. He read some of the highlights including 42 ambulance assists; 15 alarm calls; 8 animal complaints; 5 assaults; 4 burglaries; 5 criminal mischiefs; 14 domestic violence incidents and others. There were 12 motor vehicle accidents; 36 adult arrests; 4 juvenile arrests; 233 motor vehicle summonses were issued. The Mount Ephraim Fire Department report for April included 33 calls, 240 staff and 105 man hours. He then expressed condolences to Chief Beppel on the tragic death of his mother and welcomed him back. Last Saturday was the building dedication at the firehouse and there was a nice turnout and a beautiful day. Nice effort by the fire department.

Commissioner Greenwald reported that he did not get a Construction Office report for April. Public Works reports that single stream recycling was over 75,000 pounds and they collected 184 tons of trash. They collected trash, cleaned up the parks and monuments, ran jettors through sewer mains and responded to six sewer calls. They have been doing renovations at the Round House including new roof, siding, painted the inside, plumbing repairs, lighting, received three picnic benches from the County and NJAWC is going to install a new water line to increase water pressure. All the improvements were paid for with a County Open Space grant. They had a DEP inspection at the borough garage that went through with flying colors. Harding Avenue pump station had a pump repair with cooperation from Bellmawr. Commissioner Greenwald then wished everyone a happy and safe Memorial Day holiday.

Engineer Joe Federici reported that they had an onsite meeting yesterday at the proposed Taco Bell site to discuss the sanitary sewer line the applicant will be replacing. The applicant has applied to the Borough for a demolition permit and we expect construction will be done this summer.

Mayor Wolk read the receipt totals from the Tax Collector report for the month of March, 2013. He read the details of receipts and reported that total receipts were \$184,328.54. He stated that we have the Memorial Day event before we meet again. We are not sure of the route this time but will get the information out there. The Miss Mount Ephraim

contest is May 21; also we would like to wish all mothers a Happy Mother's Day. Our next workshop is May 28 and the commission meeting is June 6. 710 Black Horse Pike will be history soon and this will be a spectacular day for me to see that building gone.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

Wayne Boyd, 405 Gaskill Avenue, asked Commissioner Greenwald what the Round House is going to be used for. The Commissioner responded it will provide restroom facilities for kids and parents. Clerk Shannon added that it will also be used for storage. Mr. Boyd then brought up a problem with deliveries to Mary Bray school. Originally deliveries were to be by way of Kings Highway. Now, eighteen-wheelers are going down Gaskill Avenue. Diane Vilaro, who was in the audience and is a member of the school board, said she would look into it. Mr. Boyd then said that the street sweeper cannot do Gaskill Avenue when school is in session because of all the cars parked there. He asked if the street sweeper can come before 8am and Commissioner Greenwald said he would discuss with Ken Jones. Finally, Mr. Boyd asked why Station Avenue has to be one-way twelve months per year. Why can't it be two-way after school is done for the year. It is very inconvenient for the residents. Plus the fact that they can't make a left turn onto Kings Highway. He would like to see it one-way just during school hours but at the very least, have it be two-ways after the school year ends. Chief Beppel said that originally there were scheduled hours but it created driver confusion. The prohibited left is for traffic flow and consistency. Commissioner Gilmore said we will absolutely look at it. Mayor Wolk summarized by saying he is very aware of the situation because he lives there. Commissioner Gilmore and Chief Beppel will look at this, at least for the summer months. We will discuss at our workshop and will get back to Wayne.

Jodi Baumgardner, 51 George Street, said he bought a house four years ago and learned there was an in-ground pool that was buried over and not properly destroyed. He needs permission to bring a backhoe across the fields so he can remove the pool. Commissioner Greenwald the back-part of the ball fields are very swampy at this time of year. The time to do it would be in the middle of summer when the ground is more solid. We are concerned if done now it could leave dangerous tracks that would not be safe for the kids. Commissioner Gilmore suggested that he coordinate with Ken Jones of Public Works as to the timing. Commissioner Greenwald said he will forward Mr. Baumgardner's contact information to Ken Jones for follow-up.

Stan Witkoswki asked if we know what the second business as the proposed Taco Bell location will be yet. Engineer Joe Federici said that although there is still a second business as part of the plans, we don't know what that business will be. Commissioner Gilmore said he hopes it is a Long John Silver's as they are in partner with Taco Bell at other locations but we don't know yet other than it will be retail space.

Seeing no further public comment, on a motion by Commissioner Greenwald, second by Commissioner Gilmore, the public portion was closed and the meeting was adjourned at 8:57pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Shannon
Borough Clerk