

STILLWATER TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

April 21, 2015

Regular Meeting

A REGULAR MEETING of the Stillwater Township Committee was called to order by Mayor Scott at 7 p.m. noting the meeting date, time and place were duly published in the New Jersey Herald and posted at the Town Hall and advised those present that this meeting was being held in compliance with provisions of P.L. 1975, Chapter 231, Sections 4 & 13.

Roll Call was taken and the flag was saluted.

PRESENT: Mayor Scott, Committeewoman Chamblings, Deputy Mayor Fisher, Committeeman Gross, Committeewoman Straway, Municipal Clerk Lynda Knott, Township Attorney Richard Stein.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

After the reading of the following Resolution to enter into Executive Session, a **motion** was made by Ms. Chamblings, seconded by Mrs. Straway and carried by roll call vote to adopt the resolution permitting the Committee to go into Executive Session at 6 p.m.

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975 permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting under certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Stillwater, in the County of Sussex and State of New Jersey as follows:

1. The public shall be excluded from that portion of this meeting.
2. The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows: Personnel; Litigation/Potential Litigation
3. As nearly as can now be ascertained, the matter or matters to be discussed at this time will be disclosed to the public when such matters are resolved.

There being no further business to attend to, a **motion** was made by Mr. Gross, seconded by Mr. Fisher to conclude the Executive Session at 6:35 p.m., unanimously carried by roll call vote.

Regular Session:

PROCLAMATION: Commending Northwest NJ Community Action Partnership, Inc. celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Community Action

CONSENT AGENDA:

ALL MATTERS LISTED BELOW ARE CONSIDERED ROUTINE IN NATURE AND WILL BE ENACTED BY ONE MOTION. THERE WILL BE NO SEPARATE DISCUSSION OF THE ITEMS. IF ANY DISCUSSION IS DESIRED, THAT PARTICULAR ITEM WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA AND WILL BE CONSIDERED SEPARATELY ON THE REGULAR AGENDA.

RESOLUTIONS: 2015-055 Authorizing Refund of Overpaid Taxes – Paxton
2015-056 Mayor's Appointment of Mathew Cleaver as a Junior Member of the Stillwater Township Volunteer Fire Department with Committee Concurrence

REPORTS: Stillwater Emergency Rescue Squad Monthly and Monthly Day Calls – March 2015
Stillwater Building Department Report March 2015
Stillwater Tax Collector's Report March 2015

Mr. Gross made a **motion** to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Mr. Fisher.

Roll Call Vote: Ms. Chamblings, yes, Mr. Fisher, yes, Mr. Gross, yes, Mrs. Straway, yes, Mayor Scott, yes

MINUTES: April 7, 2015

Mrs. Straway made a **motion** to approve the regular session minutes of 4/7/2015, seconded by Ms. Chamblings.

Roll Call Vote: Ms. Chamblings, yes, Mr. Fisher, yes, Mr. Gross, abstain, Mrs. Straway, yes, Mayor Scott, yes

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA: Add Resolution 2015-059 Campground License for North Shore House LLC under New Business

Bills List #7: \$131,430.54

Resolution 2015-057: Payment of Bills

Mrs. Straway made a **motion** to approve Bill List #7, Resolution 2015-057, seconded by Mr. Fisher.

Roll Call Vote: Ms. Chammings, yes, Mr. Fisher, yes, Mr. Gross, yes, Mrs. Straway, yes, Mayor Scott, yes

Open Public Session:

At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public.

John Nelson, Crandon Lakes Association for Property Owners, asked for an update on the snow removal issue with respect to 2013 and 2014 reimbursements, temporary storage shed and grit. He provided a background on the matter to this point. Mr. Stein would follow-up with the DPW Supervisor who is in charge of reviewing the records and providing the calculation, and who was also authorized to move forward with the shed and was obtaining pricing.

There being no further members of the public wishing to speak, this portion of the meeting was closed.

OLD BUSINESS:

ADOPTION OF THE 2015 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

RESOLUTION 2015-058 Resolution of the Mayor and the Township Committee of the Township of Stillwater Authorizing Reading of the Amended Municipal Budget by Title and providing for public hearing on the amended budget adoption.

Mrs. Straway made a **motion** to open the meeting for public comment on the 2015 Municipal Budget, seconded by Mr. Fisher.

Roll Call Vote: Ms. Chammings, yes, Mr. Fisher, yes, Mr. Gross, yes, Mrs. Straway, yes, Mayor Scott, yes
There being no public comment this portion was closed.

Mrs. Straway made a **motion** to adopt the 2015 Municipal Budget, Resolution 2015-058, seconded by Mr. Gross.

Roll Call Vote: Ms. Chammings, yes, Mr. Fisher, yes, Mr. Gross, yes, Mrs. Straway, yes, Mayor Scott, yes

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution 2015-059 Issuance of Annual Campground License to North Shore House LLC.

Mrs. Straway made a **motion** to adopt Resolution 2015-059, seconded by Mr. Fisher.

Roll Call Vote: Ms. Chammings, yes, Mr. Fisher, yes, Mr. Gross, yes, Mrs. Straway, yes, Mayor Scott, yes

ORDINANCE 2015-003 Fix Salaries and Wages of Officers and Employees of the Township of Stillwater (Public Hearing/Adoption 5/5/15)

Mrs. Straway made a **motion** to introduce Ordinance 2015-003, seconded by Ms. Chammings.

Roll Call Vote: Ms. Chammings, yes, Mr. Fisher, yes, Mr. Gross, yes, Mrs. Straway, yes, Mayor Scott, yes

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Swartswood Fire Department Coin Toss – May 22-25, 2015

Mr. Fisher made a **motion** authorizing the coin toss, seconded by Mrs. Straway.

Roll Call Vote: Ms. Chammings, yes, Mr. Fisher, yes, Mr. Gross, yes, Mrs. Straway, yes, Mayor Scott, yes

At this point, the Committee spoke individually with the Swartswood and Stillwater fire departments as part of a fact finding mission on the possibility of merging the two and/or utilizing resources in a different way.

Stillwater Fire Department: All members present signed in.

Chief Justin Francomacaro spoke on behalf of the Stillwater Fire Department responding to questions by the Committee regarding the pros and cons of merging the fire departments.

Pros - merging would simplify all the aspects of providing fire protection for Stillwater Township, quicker response time, safety accountability on a fire scene would be simplified – knowing who is where, better for the taxpayers

Cons – equipment differences would initially increase costs; time period to become acclimated with each other

Mr. Francomacaro indicated 85 to 90 percent of the department is in favor of it; however an official vote would be necessary.

Bob Scrudato, Treasurer, asked about financing a merged operation and whether the funding would be cut in half if merged. Mrs. Straway stated the goal is not to cut the funding but to fund so as to invest wisely.

Mr. Gross noted State law allows for a maximum of \$60,000.

Joe Sugar, President, spoke on future plans for the firehouse including building renovations and updating that is needed. He felt the merger would be good for the taxpayer but difficult for the members.

Mrs. Straway referred to risk management and briefly discussed the differences in equipment and fit testing, stressing the importance of having the same equipment and skills when responding to a fire. She noted drills should also be done jointly so everyone is on the same page.

Chief Francomacaro indicated they are having minor issues with the dispatch service.

He stated costly equipment purchases due to a merger would include air packs and gear.

Swartswood Fire Department: All members present signed in.

Joe Bonvita, Deputy Chief spoke on behalf of the Swartswood Fire Department responding to questions by the Committee regarding the pros and cons of merging the fire departments.

Pros – faster response time, same equipment

Cons – expensive to replace the air packs that were obtained through grant funding; purchasing new gear would be costly

He felt about 95 percent of the department was against the merger and there is apprehension based on change. Training for the two departments is the same and the building itself does not need any major improvements. He spoke on renovations that have been done in the past, noting it would basically be maintenance at this point. There have been problems with dispatching that have been improving with time and communication. Mr. Bonavita further explained that the apprehension with merging is due to the pride and time put into their department. They do not want to lose their identity and what they have built to this point.

The Committee provided a history on why the merger discussion is taking place indicating it is for fact finding purposes. Funding costs are increasing and there is a need to see if it can be funded differently into the future.

Rebecca Dey, Swartswood FD member, initially did not have an issue with the merger until tonight seeing the inappropriate behavior in the audience. She felt there would be a lack of respect between the departments.

Neil Baczek, Swartswood FD probationary member, felt the larger company would be able to out vote the smaller company and it would be uneven right from the beginning. Mrs. Straway explained that each fire house would still have their own set of officers.

Mr. Fisher felt there was a need for protocol, procedures and a plan for a merged department. Ms.

Chammings commented that the by-laws for each department are completely different and this would need to be addressed prior to any merger as it needs to be consistent.

Bob Wehrenberg, Treasurer, Stillwater FD, suggested looking at the Wantage fire department, which used to be Colesville and Beemerville. They are two companies merged with one chief and two deputy chiefs, one for each company.

Open Public Session:

At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public.

John Nelson, asked if either of the fire departments serves a part of Hampton. The Committee indicated the Swartswood Fire Department used to but no longer does.

There being no further members of the public wishing to speak, this portion of the meeting was closed.

Attorney Report:

Mr. Stein was contacted by the Zoning Board Attorney regarding an upcoming application involving a cabin that will be demolished and replaced with a new structure. He asked if a COAH fee would be applicable in this case. Following a discussion, the Committee agreed the COAH fee would be required.

At this point, Ms. Chammings stepped down from the Committee.

Lisa Chammings, 928 Mt. Holly Road, indicated her family would like to purchase back the property they donated to the township located off of Middleville Road. The township has not used it for 13 years and the

permit has expired. There is an offer from a recreation organization to spend money to develop it; however she felt instead of using those funds to build a field to be used by adults, they could be used to improve the existing fields or develop the Aldersgate field. Open space funding could not be used toward this property as it was donated. The family believes the contract was violated as it was never developed and the permit has expired. She spoke about concerns with removing it from the ROSI and indicated the town owns 59 acres adjacent to it that could be used for the trade to do so. If sold back to her family, the property would be back on the tax rolls and the purchase money could be used to further develop Veteran's Park. She asked the Committee to consider the request.

There being no further business, Mrs. Straway made a **motion** to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Chamings. In a voice vote, all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Wunder