

**Cape May Court House, New Jersey
TOWNSHIP OF MIDDLE
TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
WORKSESSION AGENDA
March 21, 2016 4:00 PM (prevailing time)**

CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor's Announcement: I hereby declare that notice has been given to the Herald Times, the Atlantic City Press and posted on the bulletin board of the Middle Township Municipal Building, stating the time and place of the following meeting, as required in P.L. 1975, Chapter 231 of the State of New Jersey. (Sunshine Law).

Notice of this meeting was properly given in Resolution No. 18-16 entitled "Establishing Work Session Meeting Nights" which was adopted by Township Committee of the Township of Middle on January 4, 2016.

Members present are Mayor Clark, Deputy Mayor DeVico, and Committeemember Donohue.

Business Administrator Constance Mahon, Township Clerk Kimberly Krauss, Deputy Township Clerk Suzanne Stocker, Municipal Solicitor Frank Corrado & Municipal Engineer Marc DeBlasio.

FLAG SALUTE:**DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS AND PROJECT UPDATES:****Administration:**

ACMJIF Overview

Paul Forlenza of the Atlantic County Municipal Joint Insurance Fund presented the governing body with a "JIF 101" presentation. The purpose of the presentation was to discuss "What is a JIF", "How does it work", "Why does it work", and "Why to stay in a JIF." Mr. Forlenza discussed the statutory authorization provided to create a joint insurance fund between municipalities, and that JIF's were created in response to an insurance crisis. Mr. Forlenza discussed the 1.1 billion dollars saved since the JIF was created, and the organizational structure that encompasses the various boards and panels of the fund.

John Obersella asked how the dividends are calculated.

P. Forlenza briefed Mr. Arsenal on the state statute that regulates dividends and returns, as well as loss ratio and assessments.

Stan Dongar asked about coverage limitations.

Committeeman Donohue recognized the hard work and dedication of Vera Kalish, Connie Mahon, Kim Krauss and Sean McDevitt, who are directly related to our claims and safety initiatives to reduce the township rates.

Finance:

CY 2016 Budget Discussion

Michael J. Welding, Fred S. Caltabiano and John Clifford presented the CY 2016 Municipal Budget, which is scheduled for introduction during the regular meeting that follows.

John Clifford indicated that the levy remained the same as last year and that they are taking less surplus than last year to fund the budget. \$200,000.00 is going into the capital fund over last year and the reserve for uncollected taxes did go up from last year as well with a total appropriation rounded up to 20.5 Million.

Fred S. Caltabiano indicated that the State increased the pension bill by almost \$150,000.00. PFRS went up, where PERS went down.

Michael Welding indicated that they used \$160,000.00 less in surplus, but a little more in delinquent tax collection, as well as a one-time revenue for the reserve of tax appeal monies. Mr. Welding indicated that salary and wages is up \$95,000.00, statutory expenditures (pensions, etc.) are down \$158,000.00, capital expenses are up \$200,000.00, debt service is down \$556,000.00 and the reserve for uncollected taxes is up \$79,000.00. Budget is built like it was in 2014, some things were moved around, but basically everything is being used in the same way.

Fred S. Caltabiano referenced that because the entire Notice of Tax Sale wasn't published some properties were not included in the sale, therefore that hurt the collection rate.

Committeeman Donohue asked particulars regarding the statutory expenditures being down while salary and wages were up. 2% increase.

John Clifford confirmed a 2% across the board for "elasticity."

John Obersella asked about the “windfall from Construction” due to past moratoriums, what are we doing with those proceeds?

Connie spoke about how ratables occur within the budget once CO's are issued and that these revenues are listed in page 6 of the budget. Construction code fees in 2016 \$200,000.00.

J. Obersella would like to see township invest in something, a one-time item, with this revenue that they wouldn't be able to do every year.

Dan Lockwood expressed his concern with the 2016 budget and disagrees with the auditor's statement that “this budget was structured like previous years.” Mr. Lockwood asked for further explanation on the net-fee accounting of construction.

M. Welding spoke of sub-contractor fees and expenditures.

D. Lockwood asked further questions regarding indirect cost to the sewer department and also stipends of billing employees. He expressed concern with the “shell game” in moving around expenses, but stated he realizes that some cost may have to do with the moving around of employees within different departments. Indicated that he believed the dispatch salary line is short. Asked about the PILOT, county shares and school tax. Wants to make sure that the decisions made with this budget doesn't affect future years. Expressed concern regarding allocation of fire funds, or lack thereof, and the possible need to offset fire expenses for Rio Grande Fire Company for new housing projects. Asked if comparison analysis was done between 2015 and 2016 misc. revenue.

F. Caltabiano – 2014/2015 misc. revenue in interfund. Revenues are the same.

D. Lockwood asked about Capital Fund being up \$200,000.00. Asked about the plan. Stated that he saw a huge reduction in debt service.

J. Clifford – spoke about a \$200k payment on note for debt service.

M. Welding commented on upcoming permanent financing options on temporary debt and the ability to skip bond anticipation notes.

F. Caltabiano referenced better interest rates compared to previous years.

Committeeman Donohue asked by debt can't be paid off and why it needs to stay level.

The group commented on the need to maintain infrastructure and that debt never really goes away. In order to finance projects later on, if debt is paid off, would mean having to increase taxes.

D. Lockwood expressed that he disagrees with the statement on having to maintain debt and replace “debt with debt.”

Stanley Donager – asked if long term the committee is satisfied that what we are doing would sustain township growth.

Committeeman Donohue – Township had 3-5 year capital plans developed, so long as the funding stays in place. Township Committee thus far has maintained a flat tax rate for 5 years, levy has not gone above the high of 2011. That entails making tough decisions. Every department has had to prioritize in order to keep a flat levy. What we want to be careful of is a bunch of “one-offs” that get us there but may hurt us down the road.

D. Lockwood – asked what the arrangements are for street crimes and whether the 2% increase will allow for contract negotiations for police and also keep street crimes unit going.

Mayor Clark – yes, we are concerned with Public Safety, especially Rio Grande. Doesn't think Street Crimes Unit should have been disbanded, but understands that it was because of budgets. The plan is to keep that in place.

Mayor Clark thanked John, Connie and auditors for hard work on the budget. Proud of this budget and believes township should be.

Public Works & Engineering:

Legal:

Zoning/Planning Board Recommendation - Board Engineer

Committee discussed the recommendation by boards that the board engineer be permitted to meet with applicants at the Zoning Office. They also asked that \$10,000.00 be placed into the budget.

Solicitor Frank Corrado – 1st resolution speaks to board engineer meeting with

applicants at office. The board expressed that it was eliminated by governing body and they are asking it be reinstated.

Committeeman Donohue indicated that he is aware of the previous practice but does not believe the township eliminated the practice. Current Township Engineer did set appointment times aside for township residents; however no appointments were ever made. Applicants that need to speak to an engineer regarding their upcoming projects should pay a user fee to be charged out of escrow, the cost should not be paid for by the taxpayers.

Solicitor Corrado commented on resolution 320-16 which asks that post approval inspections of projects be conducted by the board engineer, not the municipal engineer. Mr. Corrado stated that he does not recommend making any changes to this practice until he was able to further research this topic to "say it is possible." The statute currently reads that inspections are performed by the municipal engineer.

Committeeman Donohue asked where the problem exists with the current inspection process. If the township was to take this action then there should be some dire need. Two sets of eyes on the applications.

Solicitor Corrado spoke of the notion that the current process and the counter argument that the municipal engineer has to review applications that the board engineer has already reviewed and is familiar with.

*Dan Lockwood indicated that unsolicited advice is not normally received by the planning or zoning board. Asked if the Mayor had received a complaint?
(D. Lockwood to Committeeman DeVico – who brought it up at the Planning Board?)*

Committeeman Donohue – Jim McLaughlin

D. Lockwood commented on his opinion as to the rationale behind having two engineers in the process and stated that the board engineer shouldn't be coaching applicants as to what to put on an application in order to gain approval.

Committeeman DeVico asked if that is why the practice stopped.

D. Lockwood indicated that he believes the practice stopped because there was a change in engineers and the planning board engineer wasn't going to continue to do it unless he was paid for it. Believes that the Zoning Official should confirm with the engineers when assisting applicants with their applications.

Solicitor Corrado commented that the Zoning Official confers with the board engineers and solicitors all the time when people come and ask him questions about their properties and applicants. Does not see anything conflicting with a board engineer seeing potential applicants prior to submission but agreed that this is not an additional expense that the township should bare.

D. Lockwood believes the Zoning Officer should be the one to give preliminary advice to applicants.

Committeeman DeVico if it is a large entity they will have their own engineer, however smaller "mom and pop" sometime need assistance with applications.

Tax Collection/Tax Assessment:

Construction/Planning/Zoning:

Recreation:

Police / Animal Control:

Proposed Ordinance Amendment
RE: Shopping Carts

Solicitor Corrado provided a draft update to committee based on their previous comments.

Committeeman Donohue asked the Chief whether or not it was effective in other towns.

Chief Leusner indicated that after some research he received comment from the City of Brooklawn who expressed that it "deters but doesn't stop the act completely. Sometimes they will put the cart on 1 wheel" in order to get around the system. He also spoke to other towns with similar systems that have seen some effectiveness. Some towns also offered recommendations. The cost, as quoted by Gatekeepers, is around \$5,000.00 for most small stores and for larger stores with 150-200 carts around \$30,000.00. Code Enforcement Officer Mike Elias has been actively enforcing the current ordinance, which may yield some results, but he is not optimistic.

Committeeman Donohue spoke of the broken windows theory and Rio Grande being the gateway into Middle Township. He suggested that we invite store owners to a future meeting to discuss this new proposal.

Solicitor Corrado indicated that the proposed ordinance revision does include language for “6 or more carts.”

Chief Leusner spoke of the funding challenge, but they can send letters to the store owners to start the discussion.

Buildings and Grounds:

Sewer:

Economic Development:

Personnel:

Zoning:

Township Clerk:

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS OR DISCUSSIONS:

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Motion to Adjourn Meeting –

1st: Committeeman Donohue 2nd: Committeeman DeVico

Roll Call Vote: Committeeman DeVico, Committeeman Donohue, Mayor Clark

Meeting adjourned at 5:50pm.

Kimberly D. Krauss, Twp. Clerk