

**MINUTES
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
TOWNSHIP OF MONROE
JANUARY 25, 2011**

A.) OPENING CEREMONIES

CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Council Meeting of the Township of Monroe was called to order at approximately 8:30 PM by **Cncl. Pres., Marvin Dilks** in the Court Room of the Municipal Complex located at 125 Virginia Avenue, Williamstown, New Jersey.

This meeting was advertised pursuant to the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act (NJSA 10:4-6 thru 10:4-21). Notices were placed in the official publications for Monroe Township (i.e.: Gloucester County Times, the Courier Post and the Sentinel of Gloucester County). A copy of that notice is posted on the bulletin board at the Municipal Complex.

Cncl. Pres., Marvin Dilks stated the Clerk has placed a sign in sheet at the rear of the Court Room. If anyone would like to address Council during the Public Portion, please sign in and you will be asked to come forward to the microphone. Kindly state your name for the record.

SALUTE TO FLAG - INVOCATION

Cncl. Rich DiLucia led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to Our Flag and **V.J. Agnesino** offered the Invocation.

ROLL CALL OF TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS

Cncl. Walter Bryson	Present	
Cncl. Frank Caligiuri	Present	
Cncl. Rich DiLucia	Present	
Cncl. Ron Garbowski		Excused
Cncl. William Sebastian	Present	
Cncl. Daniel Teefy	Present	
Cncl. Pres., Marvin Dilks	Present	
Mayor Michael Gabbianelli	Present	
Solicitor, Charles Fiore	Present	
Business Adm., Kevin Heydel	Present	
Engineer, Chris Rehmann	Present	
Dir. Finance, Jeff Coles	Present	
Dir. Of Code Enforcement, George Reitz	Present	
Dir. Of Public Safety, Jim Smart		Excused
Dir. Of Community Affairs, Cassandra Dilks		Excused
Township Clerk, Susan McCormick	Present	

B.) APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Cncl. William Sebastian made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted of the Work Session Meeting and Regular Council Meeting of January 11, 2011. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Frank Caligiuri** and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

C.) CORRESPONDENCE

- **Raffle Licenses** - Our Lady of Peace-RA:4 & Whitehall Elementary School PTO-RA:5

Cncl. William Sebastian made a motion to approve Raffle License RA:4 for Our Lady of Peace and RA:5 for Whitehall Elementary School PTO. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Walter Bryson** and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

- **Approval Certificate** - Used Car Dealership - Certified Auto Outlet, LLC

Cncl. Walter Bryson made a motion to approve a used car dealership certificate for Certified Auto Outlet, LLC. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Rich DiLucia** and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

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D.) RESOLUTIONS SCHEDULED - PUBLIC PORTION

Cncl. Frank Caligiuri made a motion to open the Resolutions Scheduled - Public Portion. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Daniel Teefy** and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance. With no one wishing to speak **Cncl. Frank Caligiuri** made a motion to close the Resolutions Scheduled -Public Portion. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Daniel Teefy** and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

Solicitor Fiore noted Council has consented to handle Resolution R:32-2011 individually. Resolutions R:33-2011 through R:46-2011 will be handled by Consent Agenda with a roll call vote and Resolution R:47-2011 will be removed from the agenda.

R:32-2011 Resolution Establishing Interest Rate And Penalties On Delinquent Taxes

Cncl. Walter Bryson made a motion to Table Resolution R:32-2011. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Rich DiLucia**.

ROLL CALL VOTE TO TABLE RESOLUTION R:32-2011

3 AYES (Bryson, Caligiuri, DiLucia), 3 Nays (Sebastian, Teefy, Dilks) 1 ABSENT (Garbowski)

Tally: 3 Ayes, 3 Nays, 0 Abstain, 1 Absent. Motion to Table Resolution R:32-2011 failed.

Cncl. Daniel Teefy made a motion to approve Resolution R:32-2011. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. William Sebastian**.

ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE RESOLUTION R:32-2011

3 AYES (Sebastian, Teefy, Dilks), 3 NAYS (Bryson, Caligiuri, DiLucia) 1 ABSENT(Garbowski)

Tally: 3 Ayes, 3 Nays, 0 Abstain, 1 Absent. Motion to approve Resolution R:32-2011 failed.

Cncl. Daniel Teefy requested the Director of Finance to explain what will happen now that Resolution R:32-2011 was not adopted. **Director of Finance, Jeff Coles** explained the Tax Office will continue collecting the interest under last year's resolution, as that is still in effect until the interest rates are changed by a new resolution. If the interest is changed the Tax Office will need to reimburse that money to individuals by issuing checks or by crediting their taxes. **Cncl. Bryson** questioned whether those interest rates go up to 26% as in Resolution R:32-2011. Mr. Coles replied that it would, as that is the interest rate that has been charged for the last 25 years. He went onto explain the interest rate is 8% on balances under \$1500.00, 18% on balances above \$1500.00 and at yearend if \$10,000.00 is owed in taxes, the property owner receives a 6% surcharge. **Cncl. Frank Caligiuri** noted this matter is being handled by the Council Committee of Bryson, DiLucia and Dilks and that committee has not yet held a meeting to discuss it. When they do meet, Mr. Coles will be in attendance to provide some advice and presumably there will be a consensus among the members of the committee. Mr. Coles indicated his major concern is replacement of revenue because the goal is to not increase the budget. He added the township needs that revenue without it expenses will need to be cut or a new source of revenue found and that can be difficult to do. **Cncl. Caligiuri** added those types of things need to be discussed in committee and hopefully a decision will be made that is mutually beneficial for people affected by delinquent taxes as well as the rest of the township, the majority of which is not involved in delinquent taxes. Mr. Coles recommended the committee schedule a meeting as soon as possible, as the Tax Office will continue collecting delinquent taxes but if the rate is changed that could cause a problem. **Cncl. Rich DiLucia** noted (*for the record*) that he did not have the opportunity to discuss this resolution prior to the vote being taken as he wanted to and he was concerned that people watching the meeting on television would be confused with what was taking place since they did not have the benefit of hearing the Work Session discussions dealing with this resolution. **Cncl. DiLucia** noted in the Work Session Meeting he asked why this resolution was before Council and whether the 6% penalty was something new in addition to the 18%. The CFO answered yes it was a change, so on that basis he voted to table the motion, not to kill it, but to have an opportunity to discuss in detail what he was going to vote on. He noted the table motion was not carried so he had no choice but to vote against approving it, purely on the basis that he did not understand it since no one said whether this indicated a change in the resolution on the books. He noted once a committee meeting is held to get some clarity from the CFO regarding what this resolution changes he will have a better

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opportunity to weigh his decision and cast his vote in a meaningful way. **Cncl. William Sebastian** noted he was originally confused but when the question came up it was said the 6% is according to State Statute and the percentage is the variable number from the township. **Mr. Coles** noted that was correct; the township only puts the variable on the 8% and the 18%. **Cncl. Sebastian** noted whether the 6% is in our resolution or not, it still must be collected according to State Statute but if the committee wants to reduce the percentage, they can bring that forward to Council. **Mr. Coles** advised this resolution is done yearly, normally at the Reorganization Meeting each year. **Cncl. Sebastian** explained he voted to approve the resolution so it would be on the books and collections could take place and then if the committee wanted to make any changes to the initial percentages it could again be presented to Council. **Cncl. Daniel Teefy** noted during these difficult times, which the township is also in, we need to find every kind of revenue we can and to change a resolution that would lose revenue is not a position we want to be in. The majority of people pay their taxes on time and when people don't pay taxes revenue is lost, which causes everyone to pay more and this is not the time to raise taxes. **Cncl. Teefy** noted we need to keep all the revenue we can, which is why he voted yes to approve the resolution. **Cncl. DiLucia** noted he did not think this forum was to debate the issue; he thought the question was whether to table the resolution and then whether to approve it when there was some clarification needed. He noted now that the issue has been opened up he felt compelled to speak on it because he does not want anyone to think that his vote against it was a vote to reduce revenue or that all people delinquent in their taxes are irresponsible. Many of the people delinquent in taxes are neighbors who have paid their taxes for years and years but now are experiencing hardships due to the economy, which is affecting everyone. He noted this issue deals with whether this Council should keep an 18% penalty against people who, through no fault of their own, are having financial problems because of unemployment or underemployment. **Cncl. DiLucia** noted everyone is entitled to their opinion and everyone will have their say, but he did not want anybody to think that this is in some way an endorsement for people to be irresponsible and not pay their taxes. He added he comes from the premise that the reason they are not paying in a timely manner is because they have financial problems. **Cncl. DiLucia** noted this can only be done for one year; it is not a way around paying taxes. It is not something that will fester, encourage or foster the continuation of not paying taxes because those people will pay 18% interest for delinquent taxes under the present resolution and that is very expensive. He noted the issue is whether the township is getting too much return on delinquent taxes or not enough and that question will be decided by a majority of Council after due deliberation and everyone has had the opportunity to discuss the issues. **Cncl. Bryson** concurred with **Cncl. DiLucia**; noting this issue was not brought up as a debating issue; it was brought up because this country has never been in this kind of situation and it is difficult to penalize people 18% plus 6% for not paying taxes, which is what the committee and the CFO are going to address. We are not debating whether we are taking revenue away, because we do not want to do that, but on the other hand we do not want to gouge our citizens either. **Cncl. Pres., Dilks** noted that would fall under the Finance Committee, which **Cncl. DiLucia** chairs. **Cncl. DiLucia** apologized for the delay in scheduling the committee meeting; noting he was unable to schedule it because his wife was in the hospital but he would expeditiously schedule a meeting to address this issue. **Mr. Coles** noted this is a major portion of the budget and Council should look at it as the whole budget for the town for the entire year; it should not be looked at as one issue. He noted this issue cannot be debated because we can all sympathize with people out of work but we also need to pay our own expenses.

CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTION R:33-2011 THROUGH R:46-2011

R:33-2011 Resolution Adjusting Township Of Monroe Tax Records

R:34-2011 Resolution Authorizing The Township Of Monroe To Enter Into A Contract With The Municipal Engineer Of The Township Of Monroe For A Period Of Three Years From January 1, 2011 To December 31, 2013

R:35-2011 Resolution Awarding A Contract For Professional Services To The Municipal Engineer For Landfill Compliance Monitoring For The Township Of Monroe, County Of Gloucester, State Of New Jersey, For The Year 2011

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R:36-2011 Resolution Awarding A Contract For Professional Services To QC, Inc. For Groundwater Analyses And Reporting Associated With The Monroe Township Landfill For The Township Of Monroe, County Of Gloucester, State Of New Jersey, For The Year 2011

R:37-2011 Resolution Authorizing The Execution Of A Contract For A Public Defender Of The Municipal Court Of The Township Of Monroe For The Year 2011

R:38-2011 Resolution Authorizing The Execution Of A Contract For A Prosecutor Of The Municipal Court Of The Township Of Monroe For The Year 2011

R:39-2011 Resolution Awarding A Contract For Professional Services To A Municipal Bond Counsel For The Township Of Monroe For The Year 2011

R:40-2011 Resolution Authorizing The Mayor Of The Township Of Monroe To Enter Into A Contract With Township Physicians For Workers' Compensation For The Year 2011

R:41-2011 Resolution Authorizing The Mayor To Enter Into A Contract With The Township Physician For The Year 2011

R:42-2011 Resolution Of The Township Council Of The Township Of Monroe Authorizing The Mayor To Execute An Interlocal Services Agreement Between The Township Of Monroe And The Monroe Township Municipal Utilities Authority

R:43-2011 Resolution Approving The Bill List For The Council Meeting Of January 25, 2011

R:44-2011 Resolution Authorizing The Township Of Monroe To Enter Into A Contract With The Substitute Public Defender For The Township Of Monroe Municipal Court For The Year 2011

R:45-2011 Resolution Authorizing The Mayor Of The Township Of Monroe To Enter Into A Contract For An Alternate Township Physician For The Year 2011

R:46-2011 Resolution Authorizing Closed Executive Session Of The Township Council Of The Township Of Monroe To Discuss An Active Litigation Matter (*Blaze Mill Development*)

Cncl. Walter Bryson made a motion to approve Resolutions R:33-2011 through R:46-2011. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. William Sebastian**.

**ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE RESOLUTIONS R:33-2011 THROUGH R:46-2011
6 AYES, 1 ABSENT (Garbowski)**

Tally: 6 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 Abstain, 1 Absent. Resolutions R:33-2011 through R:46-2011 was duly approved for adoption.

R:47-2011 Resolution Of The Township Council Of The Township Of Monroe, County Of Gloucester, State Of New Jersey Calling On Governor Christie To Sign S-1 Into Law
REMOVED FROM AGENDA

E.) ORDINANCES

Cncl. Pres., Dilks turned this portion of the meeting over to **Ordinance Committee Chairman, Cncl. William Sebastian**. **Cncl. Daniel Teefy** made a motion to open the Public Hearing for Ordinances listed on the agenda for Second Reading and Public Hearing. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Frank Caligiuri** and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance. With no one wishing to speak **Cncl. Walter Bryson** made a motion to close the Public Hearing. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Pres., Marvin Dilks** and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

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E.) ORDINANCES (cont'd)

O:01-2011 An Ordinance To Amend The Code Of The Township Of Monroe Fixing And Establishing Salaries And Rates Of Compensation Of Officers And Employees Of The Township Of Monroe, In The County Of Gloucester, State Of New Jersey

Second Reading: The above ordinance was published in an official publication for the Township of Monroe. This portion was opened to the public.

Cncl. Daniel Teefy made a motion to approve Ordinance O:01-2011 for Second Reading and Public Hearing. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Pres., Marvin Dilks**.

ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE ORDINANCE O:01-2011 FOR SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING - 6 AYES, 1 ABSENT (Garbowski)

Tally: 6 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 Abstain, 1 Absent. Ordinance O:01-2011 was duly approved for Second Reading and Public Hearing.

O:02-2011 An Ordinance To Amend Chapter 239 Of The Code Of The Township Of Monroe Entitled "Refuse Collection And Recycling"

Second Reading: The above ordinance was published in an official publication for the Township of Monroe. This portion was opened to the public.

Cncl. Walter Bryson made a motion to approve Ordinance O:02-2011 for Second Reading and Public Hearing. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Daniel Teefy**.

ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE ORDINANCE O:02-2011 FOR SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING - 6 AYES, 1 ABSENT (Garbowski)

Tally: 6 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 Abstain, 1 Absent. Ordinance O:02-2011 was duly approved for Second Reading and Public Hearing.

O:03-2011 An Ordinance Of The Township Council Of The Township Of Monroe To Amend Chapter 74 Of The Code Of The Township Of Monroe, Entitled "Fees" (*Emergency Transport Fees*)

Second Reading: The above ordinance was published in an official publication for the Township of Monroe. This portion was opened to the public.

Cncl. Frank Caligiuri made a motion to approve Ordinance O:03-2011 for Second Reading and Public Hearing. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Pres., Marvin Dilks**.

ROLL CALL VOTE TO APPROVE ORDINANCE O:03-2011 FOR SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING - 6 AYES, 1 ABSENT (Garbowski)

Tally: 6 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 Abstain, 1 Absent. Ordinance O:03-2011 was duly approved for Second Reading and Public Hearing.

O:04-2011 An Ordinance Of The Township Council Of The Township Of Monroe Authorizing The Execution Of A Redeveloper's Agreement With Williamstown Square Urban Renewal, LLC For Block 3601, Lots 11-18 Inclusive And Lots 43-46 Inclusive
(Second Reading and Public Hearing) **REMOVED FROM AGENDA**

O:05-2011 An Ordinance To Approve Long-Term Tax Exemption, Amended And Restated Financial Agreement Between The Township Of Monroe And Williamstown Square Urban Renewal, LLC And The Issuance Of A Redevelopment Area Bond By The Township Of Monroe (Second Reading and Public Hearing) **REMOVED FROM AGENDA**

F.) REPORTS AND OTHER MATTERS

Cncl. Daniel Teefy reported attending the Parks and Rec and Local Emergency Planning Council (LEPC) Meetings. Jim Bonder, Department Head of the Parks and Rec Department gave a presentation at both meetings regarding the Main Street Music Festival that

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will be held on Saturday, June 4th. The Music Festival will kick off with a 5-K run at approximately 4:00 PM and will include the band "Don't Call Me Francis", a small number of vendors and a better selection of food. The Music Festival is being held in the evening when the weather is cooler to encourage more residents to come out. Mr. Bonder will attend a future televised Council Meeting to give the same Main Street Music Festival presentation for residents. Cncl. Teefy noted LEPC consists of the Public Safety Departments (*police, fire, EMS*) and they hold meetings four times a year to go over strategies utilized during emergency/crisis situations as well as township events such as the July 4th fireworks. Members of LEPC will also be involved with the Main Street Music Festival to deal with safety issues such as first aid, and to ensure parking is available with the proper access in and out of the area. Cncl. Teefy explained LEPC must be made aware of events such the Little League State Championships, which are being sponsored by the Monroe Township Little League at the Church Street Baseball Complex where state of the art lighting has just been installed. The LEPC must make plans to deal with the thousands of people that could be attending that event. Cncl. Teefy suggested utilizing some of the money the township receives from the Comcast technology grant to update the LEPC GPS systems because the existing ones are on different levels. The LEPC members would like to have GPS systems with updated maps that include the new developments. The OEM Coordinator, Frank McLaughlin is going to inventory what everyone has and try to get all the emergency services equipment on common ground. Cncl. Teefy spoke of the comments made during the last Council Meeting in regards to Wagner Field not being productive and noted he suggested to the Parks and Rec Commission that they think about what could be done at that field that would be positive for the township and honor Marvin Wagner and present their ideas to Council.

Cncl. William Sebastian referred to Cncl. Teefy's comments regarding the GPS maps and explained emergency service departments going on calls sometimes have a difficult time reading street names or numbers on mailboxes especially when numbers are located only on one side of the mailbox and the emergency vehicle is coming from the other direction. He urged residents to make sure their house number is in a location where it can be seen from the street. It should be located on both sides of the mailbox and if possible illuminated at night so it can be seen by emergency services coming from either direction because sometimes, there are only minutes to save a person's life.

Cncl. Rich DiLucia reported attending the School Board Meeting where the ROTC gave a slide presentation of the various activities they are involved in. Cncl. DiLucia noted he was quite impressed with the contribution this group of students gives to the community and the fact the membership in the high school has almost doubled in the last six years from 90 to 160 members. Cncl. DiLucia noted the senior ROTC member that gave the presentation was articulate, well prepared, well spoken and did not even look at the slide presentation as he spoke. He noted the presentation was very impressive and was an indication that the youth in Monroe will be well educated leaders in whatever they do. Cncl. DiLucia noted lately while driving on Sicklerville Road he has noticed people walking wearing all black clothing, which is very dangerous because it makes them hard to see. He noted there have already been a couple of fatalities on that road and he urged residents if walking on roadways to wear clothing that drivers can see. Cncl. DiLucia spoke of a Courier Post article regarding Governor Christie's town hall meeting in Chesilhurst and noted the article talked about some elderly people who were swayed into voting for the governor because of his promises to cut their taxes. Cncl. DiLucia noted the governor cut homestead rebates for those people costing them about 23% while wealthy people making \$400,000.00 a year or more were rewarded by only being required to pay taxes equal to the homestead rebate revenue. Cncl. DiLucia noted the governor has convinced people that workers in municipal government and in the school systems have abused the retirement system but he neglected to say at the Chesilhurst meeting, that the State has not put one dime into the pension system for fifteen of the last eighteen years. One thing people should be aware of is that those people contributed to their pension plan, which is a defined plan that requires employees to make contributions and then they are guaranteed a certain amount each month for life. The municipality also contributes to the pension fund each year and those contributions draw interest over the employee's career. However, the State has not contributed one penny to that defined benefit plan for over fifteen years and that plan cannot survive without those contributions. Cncl. DiLucia noted the governor is still saying he may not contribute again this year so how can he blame the workers, who are contributing each year,

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for this. He noted the governor would have people think municipal and state pensions are \$100,000.00 to \$120,000.00 a year when most pensions average \$19,000.00 a year. He noted he cannot understand why the people in Trenton, who know the truth, are not speaking out on this and can allow it to continue. Cncl. DiLucia noted they are now starting to talk about the cost of healthcare and the governor is now saying the 1.5% employees are required to pay for their health benefits is not enough. He noted maybe that is not enough and the days of free insurance is over but the governor and Insurance Commissioner, who works under the governor's direction, have not said one word about stopping the runaway inflation insurance companies are charging, which is the reason health insurance is so expensive. Insurance companies are uncontrolled while senior citizens in this State are living on the same Social Security as in 2009. Cncl. DiLucia noted he could guarantee that we will not find an insurance company in this State providing health coverage that has not averaged a 7% to 10% annual increase and we need to start asking the governor what he is going to do to control that cost. Our municipality's insurance rates are going up 8% this year while insurance companies are cutting reimbursements to doctors and hospitals. He questioned why should our municipality pay an additional 8% for something that the cost of living says should be zero. He felt the governor should investigate those kinds of numbers, as that would be doing something constructive for the State. He expressed concern that the governor is going to cut additional funding to municipalities and school districts while expecting representatives of municipal government to keep taxes down. Cncl. DiLucia noted mathematically that makes no sense. He added he wants to hear from the governor, not what the problems are, but what the solutions are.

Cncl. Frank Caligiuri reported attending the Reorganization Meeting of the Planning Board on January 13th. After reorganization Penn Reality, the developer for the Wal-Mart Shopping Center presented an application that proposed some minor changes in their lighting plan. Cncl. Caligiuri reported attending the Environmental Commission Meeting on January 24th where a number of different issues were discussed including a Tree City Plan that would result in grants. Strategies were discussed on how to fulfill our requirements under the plan. Cncl. Caligiuri spoke of the Vineland Veteran's Home allowing veterans to bring their spouses to live with them and if the veteran passes away, the Veteran's Home will continue to care for the spouse after his passing. Cncl. Caligiuri noted that is a wonderful feature and he urged residents to make a donation of \$5.00 or \$10.00 to the Veteran's Home. Cncl. Caligiuri reported attending the Gloucester County Improvement Authority Meeting on January 20th where a report was made that the tires on the two Tuckahoe Road sites were cleaned up under budget.

Cncl. Walter Bryson reported attending the Board of Health Reorganization Meeting where Rose Otto was selected as Chairperson. During the meeting the topic discussed was the new trash pickup schedule, how residents are required to call the Public Works Department for bulk item pickup, dumpsters being required for house cleanouts and how summons for non-compliance will be issued. Shoveling pavements after snowstorms was also discussed. It was noted pavements should be cleared as soon as possible after the storm and definitely within ten hours. Cncl. Bryson urged residents to help elderly neighbors clear their pavements. He also reported Susanne McKee was selected president of the Historical Society at their first meeting of the year. The Historical Society will host many activities this year with the first being a seminar regarding the Lenni Lenape Indians. This event will be held in the Reading Room on February 5th at 9:30 AM. On February 26th at 9:30 AM, also in the Reading Room, Joan Michaels will present a seminar regarding genealogy and on April 9th a fashion show and luncheon will be held. As that event gets closer additional details will be available. Cncl. Bryson noted last year the township provided the Historical Society with a scanner to archive documents and he urged anyone with computer knowledge, who would like to help with this project to call him or the Historical Society. Cncl. Bryson referred to his request for residents to provide suggestions for real estate tax relief and went onto read the following statement into the record:

The time has come, here in New Jersey, to stop putting the blame for the highest real estate taxes in the Nation upon local governments and school districts. Both have been doing an amazing job of reducing their costs while having to deal with State legislative and State court mandates as well as unrealistic State funding cuts and bogus caps. Your tax increase last year, here in Monroe, was due to politicking alone, not due to lavish spending locally. Our municipal government's overall budget was more the a million dollars less than the year before even after the State cut \$1.2 million from our aid. Without the cut we would have had no tax increase. As I mentioned earlier both sides of the aisle in Trenton, as well as our governor, need a reality check on this issue as far as real estate taxes are concerned. Mr. Christie and all the legislators, the real problem does

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not need nifty servants, like toolboxes, nor does it need partisan formulas to fund distribution, nor does it need urban preferences. All New Jersey needs is State official to first recognize that the real problem is real estate taxes in this State, and act responsibly and equitably to find a solution once and for all to our real estate tax crisis. And this is a real estate tax crisis, wakeup. Why do you think businesses are moving out, seniors are going bankrupt and families are losing their homes; because we have such outlandish real estate taxes. Now, why do we have them; that is a good question which they should be asking. Well, we have them is because the State leaders have not given us the time and effort to find a real and permanent solution or solutions. For longer than I can remember taxes have been initiated and modified with the intent to abate the taxes on our homes but somehow these new revenues have found other recipients. From a local elected official's point of view and a property tax payer, enough is enough. We definitely need to cut State government spending, that's the first thing and they are doing that right now but is it enough. They need to cut the cost of government in general, reduce the cost of supplies, merge district offices so democrats and republicans share constituencies and definitely merge departments in government with like or duplicate services or functions. Get rid of the departments that have not served a reasonable or equitable function for all New Jerseyans. Limit the use of State vehicles, hold State vendors, insurance agents and professionals, increased costs and fees to the mandated cap that has been given to us or reduce them. Whatever meets the need, stop blaming the problem on labor alone, as Cncl. DiLucia brought up. It is not labors problem. Look at what and where we tax, gambling, personal income, corporate income, sales tax, inheritance tax, environmental tax, open space tax, farm preservation tax, utility tax, fuel tax and even an exit tax. Come on, where is all this money going and why hasn't anyone in Trenton to date, including our new legislators and governor, been able to find a way to end high real estate taxes. This is the question asked by almost all of us and all of my constituents, so maybe, we the people need to provide some ideas to our leaders and State so they can pass them on to their academic government, financial and economic experts for a solution to our real problem. So here are a few of the ideas that I have gotten; put together a non-partisan volunteer investigative committee with a three month time limit to look into financial structures of other states with low real estate taxes that are not in the same deficit distress. That is a very simple solution, then use their recommendation to make the needed corrections to our tax system setting a time limit for legislative action. Make public any comments from politicians who buck the recommendations that help us, the citizens. Act as a legislative body to eliminate the court imposed decisions that cost municipalities and school districts so much to administer and fund. Programs like COAH, the Pinelands and Abbott-Burke. Replace these narrow minded utopian court decisions with equitable legislation and utilize existing Federal guidelines and programs to accomplish the same goals. Other states do it, they all have these things. Redirect the revenue we already receive, give local governments a fair share of motor vehicle fines for them to use to reduce the local cost of public safety and therefore reduce local property taxes. Currently we as a township receive less than \$30.00 for any motor vehicle violation other than a local ordinance. We should be getting more than that, suppose it is a \$200.00 speeding fine, we get \$30.00 while we do all of the enforcement. Redirect the sales tax to make it uniform statewide, no more low and no tax districts and then share the two to three percent with local government and mandate that this money be used to reduce property taxes. This cuts the cost of the most expensive local government and tax outlay, school costs and the reality is it reduces property taxes, because it is a mandate. Eliminate property tax for being used to fund public schools. Why don't we get this, it doesn't make any sense. Make the State totally responsible for funding the schools. Take the responsibility from local government and school districts. Replace property taxes with another existing tax, casino tax, income tax, utility tax, etc. After all it is the State that mandates the educational programs, so therefore it should be their responsibility for full funding. Maybe then the State would see the importance of all students not just the ones in urban areas and distribute funds equitably. One of our Councilman Frank Caligiuri, had a great suggestion, building on this idea he suggested a wage tax be instituted to replace, and I use the word replace, local property taxes for public schools. This way the burden of taxation would fall on many more of the residents in the State and municipality; not just the homeowners in the State. Those who really use the schools would be paying for it too. Funding would truly reflect economic conditions and population growth. Homeowners and especially ones retired, on a fixed income, can no longer afford to live in New Jersey. This kind of tax would replace the property tax for schools and is not a tax increase. This kind of general tax would also aid seniors who recently have had to bear the burden of almost a 30% tax increase, as Cncl. DiLucia had mentioned. At a minimum school districts should be merged at the County or even State level without the lobbying of local administrators or special interest groups. This would reduce the cost of services and would reduce the cost of overhead as well as the high cost of administration, reducing the overall property tax burden, if the property tax still existed. If not it would facilitate the use of other tax income sources. Keep your inputs coming to me. I plan to take them for the next three months, report them to you and forward them monthly to Assemblyman Paul Moriarty, Domenic DiCicco and our fine Senator, Fred Madden. They all want to help resolve the property tax burden on all of us. After the three months I will propose a resolution including the suggestions made to our Council and once approved it will be sent to the governor, all legislators and court justices. They will hear you the people. Thank you.

Mayor Michael Gabbianelli reported administering the oath of office to the new officers of the Cecil Fire and Rescue Association during their banquet. The Mayor referred to the Christmas snowstorm and extended his appreciation to the residents, Road Department, the MMUA and the ambulance and rescue association volunteers for the work they did during the storm. He noted Resolution R:42-2011 authorized a shared services agreement with the MMUA for snow removal. The Mayor noted our township and the neighboring municipalities of Winslow, Franklin and Washington are all too big to share services so we are sharing services within with the MMUA and the school district. During snow events MMUA trucks will assist the township in plowing streets, the township trucks will assist the MMUA by plowing their properties and the school trucks will be salting and plowing the streets when travelling to each school. The Mayor reported the odd stop trash schedule pickup was modified on January 10th. Bulk trash will no longer be picked up the day after trash day; it will now be picked up on

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F.) REPORTS AND OTHER MATTERS (cont'd)

Fridays and residents must call 629-4444 for pickup. Property owners must now get a dumpster for house cleanouts and contractors are responsible to remove construction debris; the township is not responsible. These changes were implemented due to a decrease (*thru attrition*) in the number of Public Works employees.

Cncl. Pres., Marvin Dilks reported attending the Monroe Utilities Authority Meeting on January 19th where an open public hearing was held regarding rate adjustments for residential commercial sewer and industrial non-residential sewer. No one from the public was in attendance. The MMUA adopted a resolution to increase sewer rates by a little less than \$7.00 annually. Those rates were increased due to the County increasing the MMUA's rates. All MMUA board members were in attendance and discussed and approved a Form A for the Hamilton Green project. A Form A was also discussed for Colonial Estates, which will be connecting to MMUA water in the near future. Cncl. Pres., Dilks reported Our Lady of Peace, St. Mary's Church will hold a Blue Prayer Service on Monday, February 28th in appreciation of our local police, fire and medical departments as well as the New Jersey State Police. Cncl. Pres., Dilks urged everyone to attend this prayer service to give thanks and pray for the continued safety of these heroic individuals from our neighborhoods. Refreshments will be served following the service.

G.) GENERAL PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Cncl. Frank Caligiuri made a motion to open the General Public Discussion. The motion was seconded by Cncl. William Sebastian and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance. With no one wishing to speak Cncl. Frank Caligiuri made a motion to close the General Public Discussion. The motion was seconded by Cncl. William Sebastian and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION

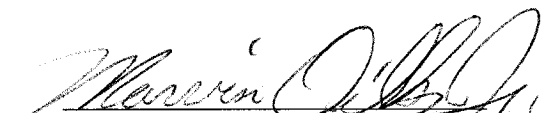
Solicitor Fiore reported Council just concluded a brief Closed Executive Session where the subject matter discussion was the Blaze Mill litigation. There was no action taken during the meeting and no action contemplated in the immediate future.

H.) ADJOURNMENT

Cncl. William Sebastian made a motion to adjourn the Regular Council Meeting of January 25, 2011. The motion was seconded by Cncl. Walter Bryson and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

Respectfully submitted,


Susan McCormick, RMC
Municipal Clerk


Presiding Officer

These minutes were prepared from excerpts of the tape-recorded proceedings of the Regular Council Meeting of January 25, 2011 and serve as only a synopsis of the proceedings. The official tape may be heard in the Office of the Township Clerk upon proper notification pursuant to the Open Public Records Law.

Approved as submitted Am Date 2/8/11
Approved as corrected _____ Date _____