

MINUTES
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
TOWNSHIP OF MONROE
JUNE 1, 2011

A.) OPENING CEREMONIES

CALL TO ORDER

The Special Council Meeting of the Township of Monroe was called to order at 6:55 PM by Council Vice-President, Frank Caligiuri in the Second Floor Meeting 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.

SALUTE TO FLAG

Cncl. Walter Bryson led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to our Flag.

ROLL CALL OF TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS

Cncl. Walter Bryson	Present	
Cncl. Frank Caligiuri	Present	
Cncl. Rich DiLucia	Present	
Cncl. Ronald Garbowski		Excused
Cncl. Daniel Teefy	Present	
Cncl. William Sebastian	Present	
Cncl. Pres., Marvin Dilks		Excused
Solicitor, Charles Fiore	Present	
Deputy Clerk, Sharon Wright	Present	

B.) RESOLUTIONS SCHEDULED - PUBLIC PORTION

Cncl. William Sebastian made a motion to open the Resolutions Scheduled-Public Portion. The motion was seconded by Cncl. Rich DiLucia and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance. With no one wishing to speak Cncl. Rich DiLucia made a motion to close the Resolutions Scheduled-Public Portion. The motion was seconded by Cncl. William Sebastian and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

R:116-2011 Resolution Authorizing The Renewal Of Certain Plenary Retail Consumption, Plenary Retail Consumption With Broad Package Privilege, Plenary Retail Distribution And Club Licenses Within The Township of Monroe, County Of Gloucester, State of New Jersey

The Deputy Clerk explained that Geet's Diner was not included on Resolution R:116-2011 as the Clerk's Office has not received their Tax Clearance Certificate from the State as of 3:00 PM this afternoon. The Clerk had contacted the owner of Geet's and he advised that there was a problem that he is trying to get resolved with the State.

Cncl. William Sebastian made a motion to approve Resolution R:116-2011. The motion was seconded by Cncl. Walter Bryson and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

C.) GENERAL PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Cncl. Daniel Teefy made a motion to open the General Public Discussion portion of the meeting. The motion was seconded by Cncl. Walter Bryson and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance. With no one wishing to speak Cncl. Rich DiLucia made a motion to close the General Public Discussion. The motion was seconded by Cncl. Daniel Teefy and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

MINUTES
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
TOWNSHIP OF MONROE
JUNE 1, 2011

D.) MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

Cncl. William Sebastian proposed Council adopt a resolution requesting that the school budget formula establishing the cost per student be revised. He suggested a formula that would divide the number of students into the total budget, as that would equal the real number/cost per student. He explained this was discussed during the meeting held with the school board and they were not opposed to it. Right now there are too many hidden numbers in the three formulas utilized to determine the cost per student and the district uses whichever one suits them best for whatever argument they are in. The district excludes certain costs such as busing, administrative salaries, school maintenance, office supplies etc. saying they are associated costs that do not actually go towards teaching the students. The district wants to get a figure of what the actual cost of education is and that is understandable but there should be a fourth formula that provides a total cost as well. Cncl. Sebastian explained some school districts are top heavy with administrators, cafeteria workers etc. and those costs are not figured into the formula so districts say they are only paying \$1,000.00 per student while the cost is actually \$8,000.00 per student. Cncl. Caligiuri questioned whether Cncl. Sebastian was proposing a resolution that would be circulated to all the other towns in New Jersey. Cncl. Sebastian replied yes and if those towns agree, they could also send it to the State requesting that this simple formula be added to the other three formulas. Cncl. Caligiuri agreed and went on to speak of how some school districts apply certain exempt costs while others chose not to, which causes comparisons to be flawed. **Cncl. Dan Teefy** felt the other three formulas should be eliminated so all districts throughout the State would be utilizing the real numbers for the cost per student. Cncl. Sebastian felt all the formulas should not be eliminated, as the districts want to know what the actual cost of education is. Cncl. Teefy suggested the Education Committee meet to compile the resolution Cncl. Sebastian proposed. Cncl. Caligiuri polled Council and all in attendance were in favor of the Education Committee scheduling a meeting to draft language for the resolution.

Cncl. Walter Bryson noted at the next Council Meeting Cncl. Pres., Dilks is going to ask Council if they would like to adopt the resolution from Washington Township in Warren County dealing with the fair distribution of state aid for education. Cncl. Bryson felt it would be a good idea to pass that to every municipality in the State.

Cncl. Rich DiLucia noted distribution of state aid goes beyond Abbotts-Burke. He noted the legislators should be investigating the reason why there are education deficiencies in those areas instead of fighting over or throwing more money into those districts without knowing why those kids are not learning. Cncl. Sebastian noted the original law included a cutoff date to terminate the program if it was found after a period of time that it was not working but rather than doing that, they extended the time period and gave them more money. Cncl. Bryson spoke of Council sending a resolution to legislators and all municipalities within the State several years ago requesting changes to the Abbotts-Burke regulations and noted no response was ever received. Cncl. DiLucia felt that could happen with this resolution as well unless we take another approach such as getting all the municipalities that feel as we do to hold a meeting to develop an approach to demand change because legislators do not react on an issue unless they are threatened by a vote. This issue is an economic one that must be stopped. Cncl. Bryson spoke of how the legislators changed the funding to provide an equitable situation for every school district that had special education needs. Those districts received extra money including Monroe Township but there was a time limit of three years on that. Now the three years are up and advocates of the 31 Abbotts-Burke districts are fighting to get more money. Our school district will get nothing from the State fund because the Abbotts-Burke districts are going back up to the original percentage of 67% of eight billion dollars instead of the 57% they received over the last three years. **Cncl. Sebastian** questioned whether it would behoove Council to request proof from the State that the project is working because they are putting dollar after dollar into it without saying what the return on the dollar is. Cncl. Caligiuri questioned whether Council wanted to adopt the Warren County template resolution, modify it or take a different approach. Cncl. DiLucia noted he was opposed to just saying "me too" because by just getting additional funding does not solve the core problem of those districts underperforming and they will end up getting more money, which will escalate taxes. He agreed with Cncl. Sebastian noting we need to find out the reason why there are issues in certain areas such as in inner cities. He noted it needs to be known whether the children could be inferior or whether the funds are being mismanaged in those areas and he felt an investigation needs to be done to find out. Cncl. Caligiuri noted as a legislative body Council

MINUTES
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
TOWNSHIP OF MONROE
JUNE 1, 2011

D.) MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION (cont'd)

has options and that is to individually write letters, write one as a legislative body to the people who administer Abbotts-Burke, adopt the template resolution or modify it. Cncl. DiLucia noted Council should demand from whoever the appropriate authority is the reasons for the deficiencies in those areas and he felt letters are much more effective than a resolution. Cncl. Sebastian agreed a letter could be sent as well as the proposed resolution from Warren County because if one fails the other might be able to get something done. Cncl. Caligiuri felt devising questions to be sent to Trenton is another job for the Education Committee. Cncl. Teefy spoke of Council's previous actions that made a difference over the three years and of how a couple of judges made a decision to put Abbott-Burke back in place. He noted a resolution would show that the judges failed to notice what was in the original law twenty years ago and that their decision was wrong. Cncl. DiLucia felt the only way to stop this now is if they cannot substantiate the inferior education results and until we attack the problem, taxes will continue to rise. He noted the system is flawed because those school districts have equal opportunity, as students get the same kinds of books, computers and tenured teachers as other schools but fiercely underperform. He noted in many of these districts there is not a check and balance system, involvement or oversight but there is a lot of leakage and things that happen that are wasteful and that is what no one is willing to address. Cncl. Sebastian noted no matter how much money is spent, students cannot be forced to read, study or learn. Cncl. Caligiuri suggested the Education Committee develop some questions to prepare in the form of a letter from the governing body to substantiate the expenditures and get some statistical data regarding Abbotts-Burke. He polled Council and all were in favor of his suggestion. Cncl. Bryson requested the Committee question why the same 31 districts continue to be Abbotts-Burke districts, as no one is looking at other poorly run districts to become an Abbott district or removing districts that have excelled under the program. Cncl. Caligiuri requested the deputy clerk to send an email to Cncl. Garbowski, Chairman of the Education Committee, requesting him to schedule a meeting of the committee to address these issues.

Cncl. Rich DiLucia spoke of Council voting on May 10th to cut \$325,000.00 from the defeated school budget and of how the school superintendent and business administrator knew at that time that there was a bid just opened that could potentially save approximately \$500,000.00 for the district. He expressed his concerns that Council was not told of this prior to voting on the school budget, as they may have made additional cuts if they were aware of that potential savings. Much discussion ensued with Cncl. DiLucia noting he felt like Council was manipulated by the School Board while he, as the Council liaison to the Board, defended them and was always upfront with them on every issue. He indicated going forward he will never have a relationship with them because he does not trust them. Cncl. Frank Caligiuri explained how the bidding process identifies the apparent low bidder at the time bids are opened, how low bids can be disqualified for various reasons and how the solicitor must review and certify the opened bids. Cncl. DiLucia noted when he became liaison to the school board the superintendent and business administrator asked him for cooperation from council and for the last few years Council has cooperated with them and had a gentlemen's agreement to be upfront with them on everything. He noted he told them he could only conclude that they knew of the bid when they met with Council regarding the school budget and they should have disclosed the potential half a million dollar savings because that would have allowed Council to vote in a more intelligent manner. He noted he told them that during the last Council Meeting he was considering making a motion to reconsider his vote on the school budget, which he had the right to do under Parliamentary Procedure, because he voted in the affirmative. He noted there may have been a question as to whether that was done in a timely manner but he felt it would have been and he would have made a convincing argument regarding his right to reconsider his vote. He explained he elected not to do that, as it would have created a political uproar but Council should remember this incident next year if the school budget comes before them. Cncl. DiLucia also expressed his concerns for the bus drivers who have driven for this district, some for twenty years that are now out of a job. Some of these people are single mothers, but all are taxpayers of this township who are now unemployed.

Cncl. Frank Caligiuri referred to the proposed CKE Remediation Project for Williamsburg Village and questioned the location of that project. Solicitor Fiore advised the project is located in an area of the development where Cncl. Bryson and Cncl. Garbowski live.

MINUTES
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
TOWNSHIP OF MONROE
JUNE 1, 2011

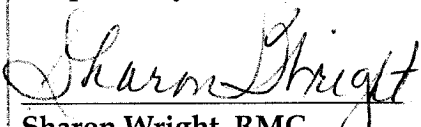
D.) MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION (cont'd)

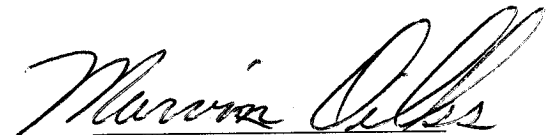
Cncl. Caligiuri also questioned whether the guaranty for Serenity Woods is still in place. Solicitor Fiore replied yes and that he has gotten very little response from the developer who has three lots left and needs to tie up loose ends. Cncl. Caligiuri also requested Mr. Fiore to send him an electronic version of the interrogatories regarding Meadowview. Mr. Fiore indicated that he would and that all the tax appeals are now being handled by the County.

E.) ADJOURNMENT

With nothing further to discuss Cncl. Daniel Teefy made a motion to adjourn the Special Council Meeting of June 1, 2011. The motion was seconded by Cncl. Walter Bryson and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

Respectfully submitted,


Sharon Wright, RMC
Deputy Clerk


Presiding Officer

These minutes were prepared from excerpts of the tape-recorded proceedings of the Special Council Meeting of June 1, 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 _____ SM _____ Date 6/28/11
Approved as corrected _____ Date _____