

**MINUTES
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
TOWNSHIP OF MONROE
NOVEMBER 13, 2012**

A.) OPENING CEREMONIES & ROLL CALL

The regular scheduled Work Session Meeting of the Monroe Township Council was called to order by **Council President, Frank J. Caligiuri** at approximately 7:05 PM in the Conference Room on the first floor 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, Courier Post and the Sentinel of Gloucester County). A copy of that notice has been posted on the bulletin board at the Municipal Complex.

SALUTE TO OUR FLAG – **Cncl. Daniel P. Teefy** led the Assembly in the Salute to Our Flag.

ROLL CALL OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Cncl. Walter Bryson	Present	
Cncl. Marvin Dilks	Present	
Cncl. Rich DiLucia	Present	
Cncl. Ronald Garbowski	Present	
Cncl. William Sebastian		Excused
Cncl. Daniel Teefy	Present	
Cncl. Pres., Frank J. Caligiuri	Present	
Mayor, Michael Gabbianelli	Present	
Business Admin., Kevin Heydel	Present	
Solicitor, Charles Fiore	Present	
Engineer, Dave Cella, ARH	Present	
Dir. of Finance, Jeff Coles		Excused
Dir. of Public Safety, Jim Smart		Excused
Dir. of Code Enforcement, George Reitz	Present	
Dir. of Public Works, Bob Avis	Present	
Municipal Clerk, Susan McCormick	Present	

B.) MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

• **2013 Compliance Plan – Gloucester County Tax Assessor Office**

Cncl. Pres., Frank Caligiuri indicated that representatives from the Gloucester County Tax Assessor's Office were scheduled to attend this evening to advise council members on a Compliance Plan that is to be submitted to the Gloucester County Board of Taxation by November 15th. The municipality was contacted just earlier today and advised the representatives would be unable to attend. **Cncl. Pres., Caligiuri** then recommended that this matter be sent to the Finance Committee (*DiLucia, Bryson, Dilks*) for a thorough review. After which the committee will bring their findings back to the full council. He explained he would like the committee to review the 2013 Compliance Plan in conjunction with the Gloucester County Tax Assessor's Office and bring back to council just exactly

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B.) MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION (cont'd)

what our options are and what they intend to do. **Cncl. Rich DiLucia, Chairman of the Finance Committee** will coordinate through the Business Administrator's office in setting a meeting time for the committee and county reps to meet.

Cncl. Walter Bryson questioned if this Compliance Plan was intended to take the place of a reassessment. **Cncl. Pres., Caligiuri** responded that it was kind of an adjustment in valuation. The mayor noted he had a problem with a plan of this nature; because the *township* will come up short-handed. When we went to the county we were promised to have reassessments performed and he thought it was last year one should have been done. He felt sending it to the finance committee was a good thing. There was a brief discussion on when the township was supposed to have been reassessed.

Cncl. Daniel Teefy questioned Mr. Heydel on just what kind of impact this plan would have. **Business Administrator, Kevin Heydel** explained we are losing one hundred and thirty million dollars. Perceptual wise it will look as if there would be a 7% to 8% tax increase in the next year on properties that *do not* get an adjustment. The dollar amount represents an approximate decline in the ratable base of approximately 4.50%. He was unsure on the impact to those who already have the adjustment. Again, there was some discussion on real estate values as well as adjustments that should have been made, etc. **Cncl. Pres., Caligiuri** then explained our budget (*total of county, school, and municipal taxes*) is divvied up over the value of real estate in the township. There a few select businesses that decided to apply for a revaluation, they got their taxes reduced but our budget remained the same, therefore those savings were divvied up among all the residents that did not file for an appeal. He proceeded to note that way back he was the one that proposed an idea to cut the valuation of all properties (*throughout the township*) across the board by 15%, thus eliminating all the appeals. The mayor, although he agreed with **Cncl. Pres., Caligiuri**, advised we cannot do this, as we (*township*) do not have a say in this, the county assessor has the say. **Cncl. Caligiuri** advised it looks like this (*15% across board*) is what they (*county*) has in mind now. **Cncl. Daniel Teefy** noted the information submitted to council from the county assessor looks as if it will be pick and choose as to areas being reviewed, thus a poor man's revaluation. **Business Administrator, Kevin Heydel** noted it is a pick and choose in the areas that have the highest differential in values. For example, if you look into developments where one would have sixty homes and fifteen of them filed appeals, the other forty-five will now be coming down for true valuation within that particular development. **Cncl. Rich DiLucia** questioned Mr. Heydel on what he had heard from the county tax assessor's office on what they are going to do to rectify the situation dealing with people actually subsidizing their taxes by other people who did not file an appeal. **Cncl. Pres., Caligiuri** indicated they (*county*) have picked out some key locations where they feel the differential between the assessed value and the actual values of the homes are significant enough to make an across the board adjustment in a particular area, principally in developments as opposed to rural areas. The Compliance Plan submitted by the County Tax Assessor indicated there were twenty-seven (27) neighborhoods that will require adjustments, for uniformity. Discussion continued with respect to those who actually filed appeals as opposed to those who did not. **Cncl. DiLucia** then questioned if there would be a short fall in the budget revenue.

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B.) MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION (cont'd)

Cncl. Pres., Caligiuri explained, no because what will happen is the tax dollars will be divvied up on the total valuation if the value goes down, the tax rate goes up. **Cncl. DiLucia** stressed people who already received a tax assessment reduction (*some residents received two*) are already paying less than those who did not file with like properties. Somehow, the township has been subsidizing that loss in revenue. Discussion continued on many items with respect to this matter with the Business Administrator explaining what happened last year with the 2% tax increase and on the township side .75% of that was attributed to the spread of those dollars lost. While the 1.25% was the actual increase in our budget.

Cncl. Walter Bryson referred to the Compliance Plan submitted by the county tax assessor. He noted they covered twenty-seven (27) communities within their plan and one community, in particular, already had an automatic change. He questioned what is going to stop the other communities from filing appeals, almost in bulk. **Cncl. Bryson** then indicated that when he agreed to this joint/shared service with the county we were supposed to have a revaluation/reassessment in this township very shortly after. It was supposed to be in line with other townships. It now appears the county does not want to expend the dollars necessary to complete a reassessment, making it equitable and fair for all our taxpayers and to bring a plan forward such as the one outlined in the Compliance Plan for 2013 is not fair to our residents. The mayor explained we had a schedule and we were reimbursed for some of the costs associated with the initial re-eval. However, we are supposed to be reassessed every three (3) years and last year we were not reassessed. The mayor then gave some background information on what transpired since our former tax assessor, Bruce Coyle left the township. The market at that time went crazy and we would not reassess. The township was then sued by the county but fortunately by the time we did reevaluate the market was somewhat compressed/flattened but still very high.

Cncl. Pres., Frank Caligiuri noted at this point there is much information we still need as we do not have all the facts. Again, he requested the Finance Committee of council (*DiLucia, Bryson, Dilks*) set up a meeting with representatives from the Gloucester County Tax Assessor's office along with Mr. Heydel and prepare to report back to the full council.

Cncl. Pres., Frank Caligiuri spoke to council members on an idea he had involving presenting Certificates of Recognition to certain individuals. He spoke with Cncl. Sebastian whom he felt had a good perspective on it, saying it should be limited to citizens as opposed to department heads or employees. **Cncl. Pres., Caligiuri** noted if council and mayor had any individuals they would like to see receive such a distinction to please submit their information to the Clerk's Office in a timely fashion as he would like to present them at the November 27th Regular Council Meeting.

Cncl. Pres., Frank Caligiuri then noted he received a memo from a resident who lives in the area of the new Walmart. It was in regards to a problem with the landscaping (*trees planted, etc.*) that were to be installed. The mayor explained this is now going through a legal process as the landscaper went bankrupt; however, that area will all be re-

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B.) MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION (cont'd)

landscaped with new plantings. **Engineer, Dave Cella** indicated he has been in touch with the resident and in fairness to him, Mr. Cella has been advising him on the same information he is getting which was this would be completed by the end of September/October. We are now in November and Mr. Cella is still looking for a date for completion. The mayor noted this will be completed as we will set a date that it must be done by or we will go after their (*Walmart*) bond. He added that the solicitor as well as **Engineer, Chris Rehmann** has been advised of this and they are on standing orders to clean up all projects throughout the township. There was discussion on the impact that the Walmart has had upon the traffic conditions in the area. The mayor was emphatic about there being less traffic than anticipated as we thought initially there would be a big impact, there is no impact. He did however note there remains a problem on the other side of the Black Horse Pike at Corkery Lane (*Wawa site*) this has always been a problem, Walmart has nothing to do with this. The mayor then questioned if the speed humps that Walmart was to install along Concord Drive were even necessary at this point, as there is not much additional traffic being generated through that area. Perhaps we should canvas the residents to determine if they want them. The mayor suggested we could take that money and place it in an escrow account, as he does not really believe that speed humps are warranted. He did indicate if we have to we will install them and we will get the money from Walmart. **Cncl. Walter Bryson** indicated he would canvas the area and also noted the street is dug up from the installation of a water main, he felt the practical thing to do is to wait until a new street is installed before placing any speed humps. The mayor noted he doubted if a new street was in the mix.

• Resolution Of The Township Council Of The Township Of Monroe, County Of Gloucester, State Of New Jersey Requesting Governor Chris Christie And New Jersey Legislators To Regulate Contractor Practices In Hurricane Sandy Reconstruction Areas

Cncl. Pres., Frank Caligiuri requested Solicitor, Charles Fiore to elaborate on this.

Solicitor Fiore advised this information was brought forward for consideration by **Cncl. Bryson** who provided the format in legal resolution form. The text of the resolution indicated that a preference be made to unemployed New Jersey workers in the construction trades. Mr. Fiore was uncertain as to whether or not this would take on a life of its own as it is questionable and may be unconstitutional. It is definitely sending a message; unfortunately, it probably would not survive a legal challenge.

It was the consensus of council members to move this resolution forward for consideration at the regular council meeting. This resolution was numbered R:190-2012 and moved forward for approval.

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C.) PUBLIC PORTION

Cncl. Ronald Garbowski made a motion to open the 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 approach council **Cncl. Marvin Dilks** made a motion to close the Public Portion. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Ronald Garbowski** and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

D.) NEW BUSINESS - None

E.) OLD BUSINESS

Solicitor, Charles Fiore reported that under our township code *Chapter 272 - Water* it is incumbent upon the municipality to enforce that ordinance to have individuals tie into the waterline. He advised he was in court last Friday with six (6) of the remaining residents from Williamsburg Village of which five (5) tied in the day before court and the only individual remaining represented himself in court. He was concerned with the impact on his septic system if connected to the municipal water system. Mr. Fiore also noted the resident would be appearing in court with an expert and there will be a very short hearing as to whether this would obviate his obligation under both the grant and the DEP regulations. This hearing is scheduled for November 29th. Mr. Fiore then gave some background information on the resistance of some people to tie into the water system as they indicated there some type of grant available back in 2007, where people tied in at no cost to the residents. Five of the residents then came to the realization this was a different type of grant and different program and it was not applicable to them. However, the other man, Nurettin Senturk, is challenging the fact that because DEP paid before they should be paying now. There were many attempts to explain the situation to the remaining individual, but to no avail. The solicitor noted that unfortunately he might incur more of a cost for the expert to appear than it would cost him to actually tie in. **Cncl. Walter Bryson** then went on to explain certain aspects of a loan program, which was a 0% loan for a period of as much as ten years. He explained how he offered the residents information on this loan and many of them were hesitant to apply due to the fact there would be a lien on their property, until the loan was paid, it was like a second mortgage. If the loan was under \$5,000.00 it would require only one payment per year. **Cncl. Bryson** noted it was an amazing program that most people would not take advantage of due to the second mortgage provision.

Solicitor Fiore advised the Fairness Hearing with regard to the Blaze Mill Settlement Agreement is scheduled for November 28, 2013 at 10:00AM before Judge McDonald in Woodbury.

F.) COMMITTEE REPORTS - None

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G.) QUESTIONS REGARDING RESOLUTIONS SCHEDULED - None

H.) QUESTIONS REGARDING ORDINANCES SCHEDULED - None

REPORTS

Cncl. Pres., Caligiuri noted since there was ample time remaining that Reports and Other Matters would be moved to the work session agenda.

Cncl. Walter Bryson reported on the Ghost Hunt sponsored by the Historical Society that took place on Saturday, November 10th. This event was very well received and it generated donations to the Historical Society.

Engineer, Dave Cella reported the North Main Street sidewalk started today and it should be completed within the next two to three weeks.

I.) ADJOURNMENT

With nothing further for discussion, Cncl. Walter Bryson made a motion to adjourn the Council Work Session of November 13, 2012. The motion was seconded by Cncl. Ronald Garbowski and was unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan McCormick, RMC
Municipal Clerk



Presiding Officer

These minutes were prepared from the tape-recorded proceedings and the hand written notes of the Council Work Session of November 13, 2012 and serves only as a synopsis of the proceedings. Portions of 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 11/27/12

Approved as corrected _____

Date _____