

**MINUTES
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
TOWNSHIP OF MONROE
FEBRUARY 25, 2013**

A.) OPENING CEREMONIES & ROLL CALL

The regular scheduled Work Session Meeting of the Monroe Township Council was called to order by **Council President, Daniel Teefy** 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.: South Jersey 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. Ronald Garbowski** led the Assembly in the Salute to Our Flag.

ROLL CALL OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Cncl. Walter Bryson	Present
Cncl. Frank Caligiuri	Present
Cncl. Marvin Dilks	Present
Cncl. Rich DiLucia	Present
Cncl. Ronald Garbowski	Present
Cncl. William Sebastian	Present
Cncl. Pres., Daniel Teefy	Present
Mayor, Michael Gabbianelli	Present
Business Admin., Kevin Heydel	Present (Arrived 7:10PM)
Solicitor, Charles Fiore	Present
Engineer, Chris Rehmann	Present
Dir. of Finance, Jeff Coles	Present
Dir. of Public Safety, Jim Smart	Present
Dir. of Code Enforcement, George Reitz	Excused
Dir. of Public Works, Bob Avis	Present
Municipal Clerk, Susan McCormick	Present

B.) MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

- **Tax Refund Request – 210 Oak Street – Block 11902, Lot 15**

Cncl. Pres., Daniel Teefy advised this was a COAH property and a request was received for a refund from the property owner as it was not assessed correctly. The resident is seeking a refund for the years 2008 through 2012 when her assessment was in the amount of \$143,900.00. The letter indicated she has been advised through the County Tax Assessor that her assessment for 2013 will be at \$65,900.00. The solicitor was concerned from the standpoint, that normally when dealing with a tax appeal you have

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B.) MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION (cont'd)

two (2) years with which to file an appeal. **Mayor Gabbianelli** noted that Dan Kozak did some research and he received an email from him today, where the state advised to pay the resident back, but it did not specify for how long. The mayor then noted the county tax assessor's office (*Gerry Mead*) advised not to give back the money. The mayor seemed to agree with the solicitor, saying if we are to give back the money, give back a year or two. He went on to note this is not entirely the fault of the municipality; it is partially the resident's fault. The solicitor again noted it is different from a moral standpoint, than a legal standpoint as you may be setting a precedence. The statutory period is a two-year reimbursement and that may be why Mr. Mead advised the municipality not to pay/reimburse. **Cncl. Pres., Teefy** questioned where it is determined that it is a COAH property, is it indicated on the Deed. The mayor responded yes, as COAH properties are deed restricted. Along Oak Street most of the homes are deed restricted as they were involved in some process. **Cncl. Pres., Teefy** noted a reassessment was done in 2008, were those reassessments done correctly. **Director of Finance, Jeff Coles** noted the staff of tax assessor's office at the time, were paid increased hours to review the work done by the assessing company and it was missed at that time. The assessing company is going out to assess properties; they are not checking the deeds. That was the responsibility of the staff. **Cncl. Richard DiLucia** agreed with perhaps limiting the amount to be reimbursed but he felt we should take a look back. His recollection is that we have already paid someone more than a couple of years. **Cncl. Ronald Garbowski** questioned who was looking into doing a review of the COAH properties, because if we don't look into this now we will have more coming down the road. Mr. Coles felt a list could be generated from Mr. Kernan and this would be sent to the county tax assessor so that all properties could be changed appropriately and files updated to include COAH designation. He noted this particular request did not go through the appeal process, it was shown as a mistake and the assessor's office just struck it off the books (*it was not a formal appeal*). **Cncl. Walter Bryson** stressed we do need a list of COAH properties for a couple of reasons, one being if and when the state ever decides that they want to have some type of compliance. The mayor assured that there is a list and **Cncl. Pres., Teefy** noted that he along with the Solicitor, Mr. Kernan and Mr. Kozak will work on getting the list, check it for accuracy and determine if any precedent may have been set after which it will be delivered over to the county assessor's office. **Cncl. William Sebastian** suggested this information be sent to our Tax Collector as well, then you will have a cross reference. **Mr. Coles** then questioned just what portion of the taxes will be refunded, county and school or just the municipal portion. The Mayor noted the problem with that is we already paid the county and school taxes; it is our problem now, that's life. Mr. Coles then noted another problem is that Gerry Mead advised Dan Kozak that the property could have been moved up to be assessed at \$94,000.00, the question being why the county did not move up the assessment. If it had been we would have owed less money. The Mayor suggested we table this matter for a week or so until all involved have an opportunity to compile a few more answers and do some research. There will be update on this at the next council work session.

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B.) MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION (cont'd)

- **Request to Purchase Access to Lot 9, Block 2401**

Cncl. Pres., Daniel Teefy advised a letter was received from Allan and Sylvia Fuller requesting mayor and council members entertain a request to authorize access to the above referenced lot and block. This is open space dedicated to the township and they are looking for enough access for a driveway approximately 50' wide by 60'. Cncl. Frank Caligiuri posed a question to the township engineer, inquiring if this lot is adjacent to the detention basin. Mr. Rehmann responded that yes, it was, he explained the retention basin is located on Lot 4 (*Saddlebrook*) which is a township owned parcel. He presented a map of the area explaining Lot 9 was land locked when they built the subdivision and the adjacent Lot 8 is also owned by the Fuller's. Mr. Rehmann was not sure why lots 8 and 9 would not have been combined at some point. There was discussion back and forth regarding deeds, frontage on Dartmoor Avenue, etc. The solicitor then questioned if they could get access on Lot 8. Mr. Rehmann responded yes they can. Mr. Rehmann noted he would send a letter to the Fuller's making a suggestion they place an easement over Lot 8 to access Lot 9. He will also go out to the location and do a physical inspection of the area. This matter will be discussed further at the next council work session with a report from Mr. Rehmann.

- **O:03-2013 An Ordinance Of The Township Of Monroe Establishing Regulations For Wind Energy Systems And Solar Energy Systems**

Cncl. Pres., Teefy noted after review of the ordinance did any council members have questions on it. With no questions or comments, it was noted that the ordinance would be voted upon for first reading and publication at the regular council meeting.

C.) PUBLIC PORTION

Cncl. Marvin Dilks made a motion to open the Public Portion. The motion was seconded by Cncl. Ronald Garbowski and unanimously approved by all members of Council. With no one wishing to address council members Cncl. Ronald Garbowski made a motion to close the Public Portion. The motion was seconded by Cncl. Richard DiLucia and unanimously approved by all members of Council.

D.) NEW BUSINESS - None

E.) OLD BUSINESS - None

F.) COMMITTEE REPORTS

Cncl. Frank Caligiuri noted what he wished to speak on would have been better served under "*New Business*". He then went on to speak on how we are going into a

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F.) COMMITTEE REPORTS (cont'd)

budget season and there has been a committee meeting to talk about EMT services which comes up every year as we are always looking for every possible opportunity to save money. He spoke of being a pretty down-to-earth guy and he felt anyone who walked into his office over the past eight years notices the sign on his door "It is nice to important, but it is important to be nice". He added he was an earthy, crunchy kind of guy who goes out there and helps 4H when they decide they want to do a clean-up. **Cncl. Caligiuri** then added that he does take his job here very seriously and he gives every matter a lot of thought. He felt council should be credited for looking past "the politics" which is pretty hard to do when you are a politician and looking at what is actually best for the voting public and for our neighbors. After we had the meeting we said, you know the EMT's are actually costing us about \$150,000.00 per year and part of that is because we don't bill if the insurance company doesn't pay, we kind of let the residents go because they are our neighbors. He did point out something, something he did not want to point out that being we are blessed with having our health insurance benefits paid for and it is a really expensive package. **Cncl. Caligiuri** noted he did not take that benefit but that he really should because the health insurance benefit he has through his work is an 80/20 plan, with a \$2,500.00 deductible. He added it costs him an awful lot more to take that plan but he takes that plan because what it would cost would be the entire tax revenue from five (5) of his neighbors just to pay his health insurance through the township (*that is a lot of money*). Our salaries are the tip of the iceberg. He went on to note he contacted a council member in Washington Township and he advised that they voted to void their own health insurance. He went on to say he knows we have to make some pretty tough decisions, and we are very critical of the governor because the governor does some things that are stupid. Politicians are always accused of being self-centered and self-serving people and he did not consider himself as self-serving. When he came here, he came here for all the right reasons and he urged everybody to consider that. He went on to say it is a blow but when you have to make difficult decisions sometimes you have to make decisions to take people off boards and sometimes you have to make decisions that takes money out of your own hip pocket. **Cncl. Caligiuri** then noted he was willing to make that decision, stating it doesn't bother me at all. It is money out of his hip pocket too but I'd rather not look down my street and know that five (5) of my neighbors are paying for my health insurance package. In my case, they are not because I don't take it but in some cases it is an awful lot of money. He noted he just wanted to bring it up under new business, as it is something for us to think about going into the New Year, as it is a very expensive proposition and just not fair based upon the fact that we are actually part-timers, we are actually stipended employees. Our handbook does say that only full-time employees are entitled to health care. **Cncl. Caligiuri** added that he did not feel we should do for ourselves what we are not willing to do for any other part time person. He wanted to bring it up and put it on the table so that we can actually give it some thought.

Cncl. Pres., Teefy questioned if the budget committee had discussed this matter. **Cncl. Caligiuri** responded no, it did not come up as a committee item and I suspect we will talk about it a little, just to see how our taxes look going into next year and if the taxes look nasty then we probably want to take a look at that.

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F.) COMMITTEE REPORTS (cont'd)

Cncl. William Sebastian indicated that the budget committee (*Caligiuri, DiLucia, Sebastian*) will do the review and if anything has changed as far as the health insurance is concerned that requires an ordinance change. This would then go before the ordinance committee. **Cncl. Walter Bryson** recalled that last year Cncl. DiLucia (*along with others*) put a good amount of time into reducing the premium for health benefits close to \$300,000.00 he felt this was pretty significant as a savings.

Cncl. Frank Caligiuri continued saying that our stipend is around \$7,000.00 per year and the health insurance cost for the average family is somewhere around \$21,000.00 per year. This is not a piece of our salary; it is three times our salary, for those who take it. He added he did not deny anybody the right to take it. It is a benefit and he would love to have that benefit because in his case he would save a ton of money as he gets clobbered with costs. He would take that benefit in a minute if he could feel comfortable with it. Cncl. Caligiuri then noted the same thing happened when I voted to waive all the fees for connecting the water and sewer in my neighborhood. I voluntarily went in and paid my own fees. I don't do for myself in this job, and I don't think we should. **Cncl. William Sebastian** noted as a point of edification, if you took that \$21,000.00 (*health insurance premium*) plus the \$8,000.00 (*salary*) and divided it by the number of hours we put in, we are getting less than minimum wage. **Cncl. Caligiuri** then commented that he felt this was true of the council people in Washington Township also and they have a significantly larger budget but they voted themselves out of their health care plan. He again stressed this would be a tough thing to do. **Cncl. Pres., Teefy** felt a review of this matter should be directed through the budget committee to go over the numbers. **Mayor Gabbianelli** spoke on an option discussed in the past, that was to raise the salaries (*comparable to health care cost*) then you take either the health care or you take a salary (*not both*). He went to speak on what had transpired in the past adding that his benefits come from his retirement, not from being mayor and they will continue to come from his retirement when he is done being mayor. He then explained he had the opportunity to, like prior council people, take township benefits or the buy-out. **Mayor Gabbianelli** stressed he does not take the buy-out and has never taken a buy-out because perceptually it is ugly (*not right*).

Cncl. Walter Bryson noted that additional information was brought forward to the Parks & Rec Commission regarding the running group (*Badgers*) that was volunteering for some maintenance and clean-up efforts along the bike path. The information was copied to both the Mayor and Cncl. Pres., Teefy who then forwarded the information to our solicitor for his review.

Cncl. Pres., Daniel Teefy reported on the Public Safety Committee where the agenda was to go over EMS, Rescue and 3rd party billing along with a review on the towing list/ordinance. Some items with regard to the towing list were discussed dealing with storage, logistics, etc. One definite item was the need for an application fee to be included in the towing ordinance. Also discussed was the definite need to charge for both rescue and fire. Cncl. Pres., Teefy noted that we went over EMS, we looked at the township budget numbers provided by both Mr. Heydel and the county as well as

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F.) COMMITTEE REPORTS (cont'd)

response time. Discussion on the possibility of going to the county EMS with questions posed on the cost going up and by how much. **Mayor Gabbianelli** then noted the costs would go up if we change over; the problem is we are going to lose response time. **Cncl. Richard DiLucia** explained our costs will go up because we represent 10% of the existing participants. If you take a look at the numbers ½ of the townships belong, but we are 20% of the group which raises the cost for them to service by a proportionate amount. **Cncl. DiLucia** added if we fold up services here that \$11.5 million figure goes up considerably. **Mayor Gabbianelli** noted it will cost not only Monroe, but it will cost everybody. **Cncl. DiLucia** noted it will cost us more because we will lose the revenue we are taking in. **Cncl. Teefy** noted there is also talk of the county possibly sub-contracting. There was also a brief discussion on the collection rate from 3rd party billing. **Business Administrator, Kevin Heydel** noted when you are trying to come up with a certain percentage of what you collect, you must remember for example Medicare may only pay say \$300.00 as opposed to the actual bill of \$500.00. So trying to get a percentage there, he was not sure just how accurate that could be. **Cncl. William Sebastian** spoke on another point if we are losing revenue, if we have four (4) ambulances and only two (2) are in working condition and you have to go to mutual aid, they get the money we don't. The Mayor noted that was correct and that was discussed, the problem is it will cost us at least \$100,000.00 per chassis to repair those ambulances and posed the question do we want to put out \$200,000.00 and go into more debt. **Cncl. Sebastian** then noted this would increase your revenue because you are making the calls. The mayor was unsure if the revenue would be increased enough to cover a \$100,000.00 expenditure. **Cncl. Sebastian** explained that would depend on your time frame, right now you are bringing in close to \$800,000.00 a year on calls. If you increase calls by 10% you pick up another \$80,000.00 and in two years \$160,000.00, it depends on the relationship to the volume. It is the same as rescue, as an example Cecil has Collings Lakes as a backup for rescue, when they come in they bill, not us. There is revenue going out the window because we are not making the calls. The mayor noted Monroe should be the #1 rescue. **Cncl. Walter Bryson** questioned if we have to do anything regarding new equipment, how long would you have to bond for. **Mr. Heydel** explained it would be five (5) years but what we would probably wind up doing is looking to see what existing capital dollars we have left over from projects and try to use money that we already bonded for so you are not getting new money. He was unsure of the figures involved both he and Mr. Coles would have to take a look at that and see what (*if any*) we could scrape up. **Mr. Coles** then noted if were to get rid of the ambulance service; we still have fixed costs that are not being covered by any source of new revenue coming in. Even though we lose that \$800,000.00 in billing for ambulance service, we still have the fixed costs of that ambulance building until 2018.

Cncl. Walter Bryson spoke on a program instituted in Washington Township where they offer a service to pick up patients for doctor visits, etc. The Mayor noted this was a private contractor. **Cncl. Bryson** felt it might be worth looking into a service such as this as a source of revenue. He spoke of an incident that occurred at Sunday mass where a lady had passed out and the superior job that the EMS did in servicing this patient. It is a proud feeling to know we have volunteers that provide that kind of service, adding that the response time was very fast. **Cncl. Pres., Teefy** questioned **Director of**

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F.) COMMITTEE REPORTS *(cont'd)*

Public Safety, Jim Smart if there have been any complaints from other towns with regard to response times. Mr. Smart replied no, but went on to speak on various calls, the number of calls, and the response time. Discussion continued on mutual aid.

Cncl. Rich DiLucia spoke with regard to "towing" as it was discussed at the Public Safety Committee meeting adding he was under the impression that we were going to look into bidding it out (*in terms of bidding out for service*), more so than charging a fee to apply. **Cncl. Pres., Teefy** noted that Cncl. DiLucia was correct, in that bidding it out was one option being discussed/reviewed. **Cncl. DiLucia** spoke with regard to the rescue truck, he looked at the numbers and he realizes this cost is part of the equation as well as the mayor's concerns with response time as both issues must be a consideration that we are all going to have to make a decision on. He then elaborated on something that made no sense to him involving numbers, that being the estimate of costs where we (*EMS*) show a \$70,000.00 income, there is an estimate of approximately \$200,000.00 for the cost of the bond. He spoke of the bonding for the ambulance facility in the amount of \$1.4 million that was bonded for back in 2001 and we are bonded out to 2018. He questioned how do we charge \$200,000.00 a year for a building for some seventeen years, exactly how much have we paid. **Business Administrator, Kevin Heydel** explained when you receive the budget document you will be able to see each of the bonds and the principal and interest payments made. Then Mr. Heydel explained in that particular bond, that building cost was approximately 20% of that bond. **Cncl. DiLucia** requested that as part of the budget discussions if Mr. Heydel could include a breakdown of how you calculate the building costs attributable to the bond. **Mr. Heydel** noted in actuality that bond is not just the building, it also includes all sorts of equipment and what happens is that I am taking the total (*whole thing*) over the life including all the equipment. Technically, if you were to look at the useful life and apportion that to the payments, the amount of payment would be \$165,000.00 but what happens is, if the bond is back loaded, that \$165,000.00 may be \$280,000.00 next year or the year after. He further explained that he just averages it out. In actuality the amount is \$165,000.00 (*building*) the rest is all other equipment that has been included in the bond for EMT's. **Cncl. DiLucia** explained the point he was trying to make, was in our deliberations when we are looking at income in and income out, if in fact, that becomes the criteria for a decision I just want a breakdown of the bond costs.

Cncl. Pres., Teefy noted he would like to stay on top of this matter and bring the EMS Chief and both Fire Chiefs in to address some questions. He then went on to propose meeting dates for the Public Safety Committee to meet and questioned if next Tuesday, March 5th at 6:30PM would be a convenient time for the members. He will send out an email as a reminder. **Cncl. Pres., Teefy** also advised the Public Safety Committee that Nick Colavita of Cecil Fire has requested the committee meet with him at the facility to reviews issues/concerns with their building (*time set for Wednesday, February 26th at 6:30PM*). At that time, **Cncl. William Sebastian** noted a meeting of the Budget Committee (*Sebastian, DiLucia, Teefy*) must be set up, as Mr. Heydel would like to get this before council shortly. Several dates were discussed and **Cncl. Sebastian**, Chairman of the Budget Committee will notify members with dates and times.

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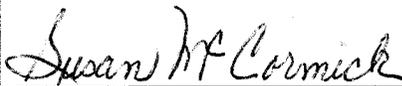
G.) QUESTIONS REGARDING RESOLUTIONS SCHEDULED - None

H.) QUESTIONS REGARDING ORDINANCES SCHEDULED - None

I.) ADJOURNMENT

With nothing further for discussion, **Cncl. Richard DiLucia** made a motion to adjourn the Council Work Session of February 25, 2013. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Marvin Dilks** and was unanimously approved by all members of Council.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan McCormick, RMC
Municipal Clerk



Ralph J. Fedy
Presiding Officer

These minutes were prepared from the tape-recorded proceedings and the hand written notes of the Council Work Session of February 25, 2013 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 smj Date 3/11/13
Approved as corrected _____ Date _____