

**MINUTES
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
TOWNSHIP OF MONROE
DECEMBER 13, 2011**

A.) OPENING CEREMONIES & ROLL CALL

The regular scheduled Work Session Meeting of the Monroe Township Council was called to order by **Council President, Marvin G. Dilks, Jr.** at approximately 7:03 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. 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. Rich DiLucia	Present
Cncl. Ronald Garbowski	Present
Cncl. William Sebastian	Present
Cncl. Daniel Teefy	Present
Cncl. Pres., Marvin G. Dilks, Jr.	Present

Mayor, Michael Gabbianelli	Present
Business Admin., Kevin Heydel	Present
Solicitor, Charles Fiore	Present
Eng., Chris Rehmann, ARH	Present
Dir. of Finance, Jeff Coles	Present
Dir. of Public Safety, Jim Smart	Present
Dir. of Code Enforcement, George Reitz	Present
Municipal Clerk, Susan McCormick	Present

B.) MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

• **Tax Matter – Binkowski**

Tax Collector, Joan Rumpf referred to a letter dated November 18, 2011 from Betty Ann Binkowski in reference to a property Block 10603, Lot 17 (*Hancock Avenue*). Ms. Rumpf advised that this property was listed as an unknown property since 1984. Ms. Binkowski purchased her home, in Franklinville, in 1990. In 1989, this property went up for tax sale as a municipal lien and just recently, it was to be foreclosed on by the township. In conducting a search on the property the solicitor determined that this small piece of property, in fact, belonged to Mrs. Binkowski, located just behind her property in Franklinville. The tax collector then notified her and when she came into the office she was

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advised there was a municipal lien from 1989 that had to be paid. Mrs. Binkowski feels that since she never received a bill and she was not aware of this that she should not have to pay this fee. **Solicitor Fiore** then explained his office had sent a letter initially and she responded to it, quite frankly anytime under the law you foreclose on someone's property or you lien the property you must notify them but this was on the tax records from at least the 1980's as an unknown property. Rightfully, she would not have been given notice of any delinquent taxes; therefore, our ability to collect is slim to none, as she was not provided with due process. There was a question posed if the property was land locked. The solicitor explained her residence is in Franklin Township and there is a little piece in Monroe (*actually all one parcel, not a separate piece*). **Engineer, Chris Rehmann** noted it would be sub-divided by the township line but one deed. Usually, the township tax assessor's get together and they decide who is going to pay the taxes on the parcel. The solicitor then indicated the total amount in question is \$935.14 based upon taxes, interest, and foreclosure fees. It was the consensus of council members to authorize a waiver and to have the solicitor draft a resolution for approval at the December 27, 2011 council meeting.

• **Towing Update**

Director of Public Safety, Jim Smart advised we had a little bit of a discrepancy this year, in that, the towing applications were turned in and no one knew who exactly would be handling the review on these. However, Officer Burton did an excellent job in going through the entire process and conducting a thorough review. The properties were inspected, the vehicles were inspected. There were a few issues that came up on the yard/truck inspections and everyone was given ample opportunity to correct such. When we got to the application part we tried to make a determination just who was to be taking a look at them. Officer Burton then did come across a few applications that were incomplete and most of the people have the same violation throughout, with the exception of one, that has multiples and as of today they are still not up to date. Midway is in no way, shape or form going to make it for 2012. Officer Burton was available for questions, comments, etc.

Cncl. Frank Caligiuri then questioned if the hold harmless clause was previously included in the submittals from all the providers. **Mr. Smart** noted that actually there was a letter last year regarding the 15-day that **Captain Weimer** had noticed and made the Chief aware of however, he was unsure if there was a response to it and he did not believe it was ever included with the packet submittals (*at least last year*). **Mr. Smart** then responded that "yes" this (*hold harmless clause*) was required in the past. **Officer Burton** responded it was *always required* to be included with the application, but he would not have the answer of whether it was actually included in previous years, as this is the first time he reviewed the applications.

Cncl. Ronald Garbowski questioned when the towers were notified about their violations or is this something that just came up. **Officer Burton** was not sure when **Captain Weimer** did the notifications on getting the applications in. Every year they are due by November 1st and nothing had changed. They were all advised that nothing had

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changed. When the applications came in they sat for a while until it was determined who would do the review. Officer Burton went on to note the applications were given to him just last week and between his workload and his schedule he had them completed over the weekend. **Cncl. Garbowksi** then questioned if the towers were aware of the deficiencies. Officer Burton indicated he just finished his last report and "no" the individual towers were not contacted on their compliance/non-compliance relating to the application.

Solicitor Fiore noted that even though some ordinances are silent, prior to taking any action that would affect someone's license you want to give prior notice. Per the statements of Officer Burton as well as the Director of Public Safety there has been a review of the applications, there are some deficiencies and we are required to establish a list of certified wreckers. Based upon the fact there is an issue as to some of the minor items, give the applicants one last opportunity to cure their particular deficiency as they must adhere 100% to the ordinance. He suggested to perhaps take no action on the matter this evening, schedule it again for the meeting of December 27th. The Director will notify each of the towers and include a copy of the check list and give them an opportunity to cure their individual deficiency, including language they must comply or they will not be included on the tower's list.

Director of Public Safety, Jim Smart then indicated he will meet with the Chief, Captain Weimer and Officer Burton on the "Towing Ordinance" and will request to meet with the Ordinance Committee to try to get some of the gray areas with respect to the application process ironed out.

Cncl. Daniel Teefy noted that although he agreed with placing the matter on the agenda for December 27th he felt we cannot go into the year with possibly just two (2) people doing the towing, we need to get them up to par and get the insurance matter straightened out.

It was the consensus of council members to take no action on the towing list and to place it on the agenda of December 27, 2011.

Director of Public Safety, Jim Smart noted for clarification purposes the towers whose applications that are deficient would receive a letter. **Solicitor Fiore** noted even the ones that are complete should be notified as well, indicating they have satisfied all the criteria and will be recommend to be included on the towing list.

- **Tree Grant - Update**

John Imperatore, Monroe Township Environmental Commission updated Council on the tree initiative program that began with the 2008 Environmental Commission. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the New Jersey Tree Foundation program addresses management of trees and other vegetation. If a town continues with the program it gets liability protection from the State for hazardous tree situations and would have the opportunity to apply for a \$25,000.00 piggyback grant to

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purchase equipment related to trees. The program helps promote the proper care and maintenance of trees and it sets up goals for the township as a positive thing to attract businesses. In December 2008 the Environmental Commission applied for and was awarded a \$3,000.00 Green Communities Grant with the condition the township match it with \$1,500.00. The Environmental Commission was able to match it and received the \$3,000.00, which enabled them to bring on a consultant to help develop a Community Forestry Management Plan that was approved by the State in August 2010. Since that time two Environmental Commission members have been trained in the identification and care of trees, a preliminary survey was begun to look for problem trees that may need attention, last year Arbor Day was proclaimed and the commission began the process of applying for Tree City USA designation. The commission is setting the stage for a \$25,000.00 grant that will hopefully in the future be utilized to purchase a bucket truck that could not only be used for the maintenance of trees but help the township in other ways as well. The requirement for this program is that an annual expense and accomplishment report be sent, that the township keep working towards the Community Forestry Management Plan, that two or more individuals to be trained on an annual basis, that Arbor Day be proclaimed on an annual basis and that the township apply for the Tree City USA designation. Mr. Imperatore requested Council and the Mayor support the commission in this endeavor. **Cncl. Caligiuri** questioned whether Mr. Imperatore was asking for an accounting of what Public Works does as far as tree trimming, removal and maintenance so that some dollars can be attributed to that. Mr. Imperatore replied one aspect of it is the expense associated with Public Works maintaining trees and another is any venue discussing new developments where trees will be planted or open space initiatives concerned with trees, as that will help show the township is spending time on this. **Cncl. Caligiuri** questioned whether Mr. Heydel would be able to create a line item to break down Public Works expenditures for trees. Mr. Heydel advised Public Works does very little maintenance or removal of trees, as there are very few trees that come down on township property. **Cncl. Caligiuri** noted there is a minimum accounting requirement of X number of dollars for every resident in town and he questioned whether there was anything we could do to account for that. Mr. Heydel felt that number was around \$70,000.00 and the time the Public Works Department spends in pruning and cutting down trees is minimal. **Cncl. Caligiuri** spoke of some trees being removed in one of the developments during the hurricane and noted those types of expenditures are all management of trees. Mr. Heydel explained the township receives many calls about trees hanging over roadways but when they are on private property we cannot do anything even though they are hanging over the road. Mr. Imperatore explained that is where this program will benefit the township because once proactive measures are developed those types of situations can be avoided before they become emergency situations. **Cncl. Caligiuri** requested Mr. Imperatore to develop a list of eligible expenses that could help the Business Administrator with what the township has expended in time and expenditures. **Cncl. Walter Bryson** spoke of calling the utility company about hazardous trees sitting on wires on Rt. 322 just west of our Public Works garage and another on Corkery Lane. The utility company did nothing with those trees and if they fall there could be real problems. He questioned whether that was something that could be included in the commission's program as that could be a way to get those trees down. **Cncl. Sebastian** questioned whether the County

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was aware that the State was trying to preserve trees with this program since the Gloucester County Soils Conservation Department allows people to clear cut their entire land before building or selling the property. Mr. Imperatore noted the County is not included but it would be good to include them in the program list. He went onto explain sometimes clear cutting is not always a bad choice, as it depends on the species, the varieties and the quantity of trees on a property. **Chris Rehmann** questioned whether the expenses associated with the township's major undertaking of collecting leaves could be utilized as a way to encourage residents to keep their trees because if they had to pay to have those leaves removed they may decide to cut down their trees. Mr. Heydel noted he could calculate those expenses for the Commission.

• **Health Insurance**

Cncl. Rich DiLucia explained approximately six months ago when the budget shortfall was discussed he and Cncl. Sebastian talked about how the township could save money to circumvent possible layoffs. Since the second biggest budget line item is five million dollars for employee health insurance they took it upon themselves to try to get some competitive bids. Employee health benefits are through the HIF, which is a joint health insurance fund and their first preliminary numbers for 2012 was a 12% increase in the premium, which represented \$600,000.00. Cncl. DiLucia noted unfortunately because the township belongs to the HIF insurance companies involved with them will not bid against them. Right now Blue Cross is the only company that will bid but if the township pulls out of the HIF, in the future, other insurances companies will be able to provide bids. Cncl. DiLucia explained he requested the BA to meet with him and Cncl. Sebastian to discuss his feelings and get his input on this issue. A meeting was then held with the Finance Committee, representatives from the HIF, Conner Strong (broker for the HIF) and Jim DeMarco, the broker working with Blue Cross. Presentations were made by both parties. The first concern of the Finance Committee is that whatever is done will not diminish or lower employee benefits and whatever bids were received would not be for a watered down plan to get a cheaper rate. Blue Cross submitted a letter stating their benefits would be as good or better. Particular areas pointed out were there would no longer be a point of service doctor, employees will be able to go to any doctor they choose, no referrals are needed for specialists and the network is larger. Another benefit is that employees will save money since according to the present State legislation they must contribute a percentage for their health insurance premium. Some premiums are \$21,000.00 for husband/wife coverage so if just 1% is saved that will save the employees a lot of money. Initially the HIF increase was 12% and Blue Cross came in at 5% but after reviewing their numbers the HIF came back with a final number of 9.47%, which would have represented a \$460,000.00 increase over the existing cost of \$4,858,000.00 for medical, prescription and dental coverage. Blue Cross came in with a 5% increase but after they were advised that on January 1st the employees were going to a \$10.00 co-pay as opposed to a \$5.00 co-pay, they came back with a 2% increase over last year if the township moved to Blue Cross by March 1st. The change cannot be made by March 1st because the township has a contract with the HIF that requires a 90 day notice to withdraw. If the notice is given to the HIF no later than December 31st the earliest we could move the coverage to Blue

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Cross would be April 1st so they recalculated their numbers and came in with a 3% increase. Cncl. DiLucia explained in a 12 month period the municipality could save \$314,000.00 but because the HIF would not waive the notification period the township will pay the additional rate to the HIF for the first three months of 2012. The next year we can assume that 9.5% will become about 17% because historically the HIF renewal has been 8%. In the first fifteen months with Blue Cross there will be a guaranteed savings of \$420,000.00. Blue Cross has a much better plan with a larger network, no referrals and will reduce out-of-pocket costs to the employees. For all those reasons the Finance Committee voted to recommend the move to Blue Cross based upon the savings. The one overriding question and concern is once we move what will happen in the future. For the first fifteen months we will have a guaranteed rate but in the renewal period Blue Cross will not guarantee a rate in writing. However, both the broker and Blue Cross have almost assured us that their renewal rate would be no higher than what the HIF increases their average rate to. If that is the case going out twenty-seven months the municipality would save almost three quarters of a million dollars and that is worth making the move especially since it will not adversely affect the employees. Cncl. DiLucia noted he also found out about an additional benefit that involves retirees. He explained retired employees getting health benefits from the township take no government prescription coverage and Federal Law allows employers apply for and receive a percentage reimbursement for saving the Federal Government money in prescription coverage for retirees. He noted the person who informed him of this has a much larger group of approximately 800 people and they received over half a million dollars last year from that. He noted we will not get anything near that amount but whatever we get will be on top of our other savings. Cncl. DiLucia explained during the meeting with the insurance representatives the Finance Committee questioned if they could guarantee what their renewal rate will be in the future and both the HIF and Blue Cross said they could not, as there are no guarantees in health insurance. The closest thing we have to a guarantee is the broker and Blue Cross representative felling strongly that the rates would at least be kept at a neutral rate with the HIF going forward, which would give us a three quarters of a million dollar saving over a period of twenty-seven months. Cncl. DiLucia noted the Business Administrator's packet addressed municipalities that did not have good experiences when pulling out of the HIF but by the same token, the Coastal HIF formed a year ago by municipalities in Cape May and Cumberland Counties increased their rate by 19.7%, almost 20%. So for every reasonable rate there is a horror story, which shows no one in the insurance industry is our friend; they are there to generate jobs and profits. He felt the savings the township could realize is reason enough to move forward, as it will save money for the taxpayers and the township will not need to cut employee benefits as a way to cut costs. Cncl. DiLucia noted twenty-seven months from now, if we are hit with a high premium we can go to all major insurance companies to get bids. Cncl. Sebastian added after three years the township could even get back into the HIF. Cncl. Caligiuri questioned when they did the cost comparison did the Finance Committee take into consideration the HIF rebates. Cncl. DiLucia explained he reviewed what the average rebates/dividends amounted to and the fact that there is no guarantee the township will receive one. This year we received \$130,000.00, which was the largest rebate the township ever got and he felt that was because the HIF was trying to preempt us from pulling out. Cncl. Caligiuri noted that would mean there is half a million dollar difference in cost versus

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\$130,000.00 rebate. Cncl. DiLucia explained assuming we are going to take the guarantee of fifteen months, there is \$440,000.00 in sure savings and assuming we lose that dividend we still need to factor in the government reimbursement for retirees. That amount is unknown as Blue Cross and the Federal Government calculate that through a formula and then passes it on to the township. Cncl. DiLucia noted the HIF stated they would allow us to forego or at least postpone one payment. If that was done when we do pay, it will be in future dollars compounded on principle, which would not be a prudent thing to do, as it would be like mortgaging our future. The township would be better off bonding, as it would be much cheaper than compounded cost of living increases on that \$400,000.00 payment over several years. The HIF also says they have \$45 million dollars that belongs to municipalities and 1.7% of that is ours. He explained that money is in reserve for lag payments. If we get out of the HIF lag payments will be made because for two or three months claims will be coming in and they will have no way of paying that other than from the reserve account. That will diminish the reserve and the money we will get seven years after we pull out of the HIF. Cncl. DiLucia noted he forgot to ask them if the township could get that in a lump sum or will be paid over a period of time. He noted he strongly recommends the move, as it will be a substantial savings, a better plan with a better network and it gives us a better ability to be more competitive in the future by bidding one insurance company against another if increases are above what the norm is.

Cncl. Daniel Teefy questioned if we go into this April 1, 2012 would the coverage renew April 1, 2013. Cncl. DiLucia replied yes, it is a fifteen month guarantee because we know we will be paying the HIF 9.7% for the first three months of 2012 and then 3% to Blue Cross for the next twelve months. Cncl. Teefy questioned after the first quarter of 2013 will we need to renegotiate every year. Cncl. DiLucia replied yes, the broker will go out and in addition to getting Blue Cross renewals he will see if we can get something cheaper from other companies. Cncl. Teefy noted twelve month contracts might benefit the township and he requested Mr. Heydel's opinion on that. Mr. Heydel noted for the last five months he has been reviewing this and he cannot argue the savings. He noted he wrote his report on the way he believes the system works and if Council chooses to believe verbal comments that the cost will not go up they can do that. But the HIF is our money, as we made a \$38 million dollar investment over the last eleven years and got equity back of over \$2 million dollars, which is a 6% return. If we averaged over that period of time an 8% increase with a 6% return the net effect is a 2% increase each year. He noted he cannot argue the initial savings or the fact that we will be able to go out for bids but the HIF has never been designed as a short term fix, it is designed as a long term process and self insured program. The concept of joint insurance funds is the most successful shared services approach in the State of New Jersey. Cncl. Teefy noted this is a risk because we could go out to bid for three companies and they could all come back with a 16% increase. Cncl. DiLucia noted we would still be ahead because even if they raised it 15% and we are paying 8% or 9% we will still have \$440,000.00 in the bank, which is about 9%, so we would still be 9% ahead in the game after fifteen months. Even if they eat up that 9% we have another two years to go out and get some competitive bids. He noted he has sat in on enough insurance situations where policies were bid out and he understands we are at their mercy but when we only have two entities to bid from, which is the HIF and Blue Cross, the most prudent thing to

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do is to open up that universe. If in the future Blue Cross is charging more than we feel they should, there will be others that will under bid them. Monroe Township is the biggest entity in the HIF, we put more money in it than any other municipality, which is one of the reasons they came down from 12% to 9.5% and we got back a \$130,000.00 dividend. They do not want to lose us, as that amounts to \$5 million dollars in business that they do not want to lose. Blue Cross is not as compelled to save \$5 million dollars but they are a business the HIF has been raiding and are making a statement by getting our business and we can take advantage of a market that is right now, lean and mean. Our school district did it and just saved three quarters of a million dollars in one year with Blue Cross so that tells us that company is out there being aggressive.

Cncl. Walter Bryson noted this is a competitive situation and no one whether it be the HIF or Blue Cross, can control the cost of health care and that is what is driving rates up. He felt Blue Cross can be more competitive when it comes to bidding because they have a pool of customers that the HIF does not have.

Cncl. Pres., Marvin Dilks noted a new resolution regarding this matter was distributed to Council.

C.) PUBLIC PORTION

Cncl. Ronald Garbowski made a motion to open the Public Portion. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Walter Bryson** and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

Cncl. Sebastian called for "*a point of order*" and questioned whether the insurance resolution was on the agenda. **Cncl. Pres., Dilks** advised that it is on the Regular Council Meeting agenda for consideration.

Jack Simmermon, A-Jack's Towing noted the Towing Ordinance includes the word "*shall*" and that word is always mandatory and not merely a directive. He went on to read Chapter 262-3, "*All completed applications and information required shall be forwarded to the Division of Police no later than November 1st of each year. If an application is deemed insufficient by the submission date of November 1st the application shall not be considered for the upcoming year*". **Solicitor Fiore** advised he gave his opinion and his recommendation to Council is to give the towers an opportunity to be heard since they did not receive notification of any issues. Mr. Simmermon noted this is the fifth year and he questioned how long are we going to hold people's hands before they learn how to do their paperwork. Mr. Simmermon asked **Cncl. Teefy** if he ever drove a tow truck and if not, how he knows two tow companies cannot handle this township. **Cncl. Teefy** replied he never drove a tow truck but, he felt it would not be efficient for the township just to have two companies doing the work done for a number of years by ten. Mr. Simmermon noted the Police Department went from 65 officers to 55 and the roads are still safe. **Cncl. Teefy** agreed to that statement but did not agree that towing should be monopolized by two

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companies. Mr. Simmermon noted it would not be a monopoly and Council should stick by the rules they made. Mr. Fiore noted there was some misdirection of the applications because of retirements within the Police Department and in fairness to the towers they should not be punished for that. Mr. Simmermon questioned why Captain Wiemer was not in attendance this evening because as head of the traffic division he should be here to address this matter. Mr. Fiore indicated he had no idea why he was not in attendance. Mr. Simmermon noted a couple of weeks ago it was fine when Cncl. Sebastian explained why Chapter 69 should be amended to change the word "*shall to may*" so the Police Department would not be required to have 70 officers. Mr. Fiore noted that is a different issue and it only works when you are trying to give due process to somebody.

Cncl. Bryson questioned if ten towers were mandated. Solicitor Fiore advised ten are not mandated. He noted his recommendation is for everyone to be provided with notice of how they are deficient and once that is done if in two weeks it comes back that only two or three towers are in compliance, his recommendation will be for those two or three. Mr. Simmermon is correct, we have been operating under this ordinance for four or five years so everybody knows what is required and if the director's recommendation is for two, seven or one, we will move upon that list. If they do not have the required insurance endorsement on their policy that is a clerical type matter that only takes a call to their insurance agent to correct and they should be put on notice and given their fair opportunity to adhere to the ordinance. Cncl. William Sebastian questioned whether there was a waiting list to get on the towing list, as there was in previous years. Mr. Fiore was not aware of a waiting list.

Andy Pease, Chairperson for the Monroe Township Police Officer's Association spoke on behalf of many police officers that were in attendance regarding the proposed changes to Chapter 69. Cncl. Sebastian explained the ordinance was being amended as the ordinance states the Police Department "*shall consist of*" a number of officers and in the opinion of most people discussing the issue it was felt that word would mandate the municipality to have 70 police officers whether they were needed or not. Council had an opportunity to change the ordinance to reduce the number of officers to the current force or to just change the wording from "*shall*" to "*may*" so additional officers could be hired in the future. Officer Pease noted his concern is for the safety of his officers and he questioned whether anyone was aware that in 1998 we had 68 officers. The Mayor noted no one is more aware of that fact than him and no one is more aware of the economic times than him and if the township could afford them we would have more cops. Officer Pease agreed the Mayor and Council have been supportive of the Police Department but their concern is with the intent behind the ordinance amendment since the police never pursued the issue or mandated 70 police officers on the street. He noted they are looking to be sufficiently staffed right now so they can properly do their jobs and ensure the safety of the taxpayers. He spoke of reading the minutes from the Ordinance Committee Meeting and noted the concerns of Council seemed to be the enforcement complaints for speeders or the generation of revenue from the red light cameras. He noted much more that that is being handled by an understaffed department. The Traffic Unit consists of two men, the number in the Detective Division has been reduced to six and the Patrol Division is

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constantly forcing overtime upon officers because they are not properly staffed. The calls are not what they used to be, they are legitimate and are endangering not only the officers but also the residents. Within the past two weeks there have been five gun related calls; one on Prosser Avenue involved four people being arrested, one with a hand gun. Another incident involved the driver of a stolen vehicle that had been confronted by a Gloucester Township officer, pulling a gun and fleeing into a house in the Glen Eyre Development. In another incident an officer initiated a car stop and found drugs as well as a pistol. Jules Maioriano handled a call for an armed robbery suspect and he apprehended the person with a nine millimeter handgun. These are growing trends. In the past the Police Department was properly staffed to effectively do our jobs. Gang activities are now happening along Main Street in what is referred to as the triangle, which includes the area of Main Street, Blue Bell and Chestnut Street. The police department has conducted three searches in a day each one revealing narcotic activities and guns have been pulled out of those searches. Officer Pease spoke of how a couple of weeks ago he was in his office viewing the red light cameras when a lady came into the lobby area by the traffic bureau frantic reporting that her son may have killed someone in Washington Township and she wanted him to turn himself in. Washington Township had not yet received the call when the mother came in. All available people were deployed and we only had four or five cops working our streets. **Cncl. Caligiuri** questioned whether Officer Pease had any statistics to support whether or not each patrolman is handling more calls today than he did. Office Pease replied yes, that issue was addressed during the last contract negotiations. Right now we are up 33,000 to 34,000 calls a year. In 2000 there were 400 calls per officer per year and two years ago there were 700 to 800 calls per officer in the field. Officer Pease did not know the current statistics but he felt there was a lot more and the calls are more complex, plus a lot of paperwork is involved. He noted to address the speed complaints he is one of two in the Traffic Unit. With two fatalities back to back last week officers are so busy that they cannot even address the red light cameras and there is probably \$60,000.00 of potential revenue sitting there. He noted Officer Burton has been tied up with the Towing Ordinance and his unit has been asked to support the Patrol Division because they are understaffed. Officer Pease noted the Police Department or the Chief have never requested full compliance of Chapter 69 and he felt it was odd that before contract negotiations this matter is coming up. He spoke of three or four pending retirements, which will decrease the force to 55 officers next year and noted they did not work with 55 officers in the early 1990's and they cannot do it now. The structure of the Police Department was expanded in 1993 to one Chief, two Captains, seven Lieutenants and ten Sergeants. Today we have a Chief, two Captains, six Lieutenants, four Sergeants and 11 Corporals. A Deputy Chief is included in the ordinance but we have not had one since 2002. The Police Department has not expanded and has not pressed this issue but is asking for consideration and for someone to sit down with the Chief of Police to see what he needs. He noted his committee asked the Chief last week if he was aware Council was changing the ordinance and he advised that he knew it was being reviewed but was unaware that it was going forward for Second Reading. Office Pease noted the officers are working with the township and doing more with less but now there are concerns with the calls the department is receiving. Officer Pease referred to Officer Derrick Jacobus of Traffic Enforcement and spoke of how he was involved in a motor vehicle accident two weeks ago, how committed he is, how he has a Master's Degree, is a

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C.) PUBLIC PORTION (cont'd)

certified paramedic, a certified flight medic and while responding to a cardiac arrest someone pulled out and hit his car. He spoke of how Officer Jacobus saved a kids life after he was found in a swimming pool and of how Officer Maute responded to a 15 year old babysitter's call of a burglary in progress and apprehended the burglar saving the kids. He noted these incidents are being handled not because the department is properly manned but because of the dedication of the officers who are out there doing what is expected of them. Officer Pease noted he and Mark Burton were the highest ticket writers for years because not only was that their main function but it curtails accidents and saves lives. He spoke of Officer Jacobus stopping a driver with a suspended license. In the back seat of that vehicle under a blanket he found a person in handcuffs that had escaped from Winslow Township Police Department. That person, who had been arrested for homicide was found before Winslow even had a chance to advise the surrounding towns of the escape. Officer Pease noted years ago we were ranked one of the top five communities within the State and part of that was because of our crime index. Now, with burglaries we are ranked seven between Camden and Gloucester Counties. Officer Pease went on to speak of an incident in Collingswood where US Marshalls killed a person that our Detective Division had identified as the person doing home invasions in this town. He spoke of the Police Department's collective team efforts, which Mayor Gabbianelli was a part of and is still considered part of it since he is a support network for the department. He spoke of how he, Officer Burton and Lt. Howard Wiemer from the Traffic Division were afforded many opportunities in 2010 to apply for grants for special enforcement and were able to hit the problems on residential streets. During that time there was one fatality in Monroe Township and that has never happened in the township's history. He noted now there have been six people that died in motor vehicle accidents this year. The Police Department would love to address all the speeding issues throughout the township but unfortunately the Patrol Division is not properly staffed, the Detective Division cannot lose any more people and the Traffic Division is working on fatal accidents, red light cameras and everything else that has been bestowed upon a unit that previously had four members. The Detective Bureau previously had eleven, now there are six and the crime index is growing, but that is not due to a lack of commitment from the officers. Sometimes there has been a lack of commitment on behalf of the township, as the department has not been given the proper resources to address all the issues before us today. He spoke of the population growth according to the latest census, the square mileage of the township and how unsafe it is for officers in the southern end of the township when they need backup from officers coming from the opposite end of town. Officer Pease requested Council reconsider amending the ordinance so that it can be first addressed with the Chief and he extended his appreciation to Council for giving him this opportunity to speak.

Cncl. Caligiuri posed a question to Cncl. Sebastian regarding whether the way the ordinance is written would prevent hiring additional officers. Cncl. Sebastian explained the ordinance still allows up to 70 officers, it is just the word "*shall*" that is being addressed. Mayor Gabbianelli noted he was against Council including numbers in the ordinance and he questioned why that was done. Cncl. Sebastian explained the reason the numbers were included is because Council is responsible for budgetary items and dollars and cents. Without having a numeration of ranks within the department there could be

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C.) PUBLIC PORTION (cont'd)

promotions and that would change the budgetary amounts for salaries and Council would have no control over that. The State recommended the number of officers be enumerated by rank and if additional ones were needed that number could be increased. Once the officers were enumerated it gave Council a handle on the total number for budgetary purposes. If the Mayor or Chief came to Council requesting additional sergeants, for example, the ordinance could be amended to add more. Cncl. Sebastian noted the only change being made now is the word "*shall*" to "*may*" and that is being done so that we are not legally required to have that number of officers. By changing the word to "*may*", it does not in any way diminish the number of officers we can have, we can still go up to 70 and that would be up to the Mayor having the funds to support it.

Cncl. Caligiuri noted in the past the Law Committee had met with representatives of the Police Department to hammer out certain items around budget time. Cncl. Sebastian advised he spoke to the Chief and a monthly meeting is going to be set up with him.

Cncl. Daniel Teefy spoke of previous conversations he had with Chief Smart and Detective Stellaccio and their feeling at that time was that retiring officers would not be replaced or new officers properly trained in the Detective Bureau. He noted at that time he said the Police Department should not be cut as there are safety concerns because of the gangs coming to the township. That day has now come and we need to hire more police officers next year and Council needs to wake up and find where the budget can be cut or increased to do that, as safety is a real concern.

Cncl. Walter Bryson questioned could we go above the 2% cap to hire more officers if there are public safety concerns. (*The answer to that question was indiscernible from the tape*).

Officer Pease noted he was unaware of what the Police Department's budget was for this year, but they would like to see retirees replaced because the department is at barebones, officers cannot do their jobs and things are slipping through the cracks.

Mayor Gabbianelli noted we have not hired because we are just barely making the cap. The governor cut our aid and then capped us at 2% so the fact is, we don't know where to go.

Cncl. Pres., Marvin Dilks questioned whether Ordinance Chairman, Cncl. Sebastian wanted to leave Ordinance O:27-2011 on the agenda for Second Reading. Cncl. Sebastian recommended it be left on the agenda as it does not affect the number of officers it is just changing the word "*shall*".

Officer Pease noted the Police Department just wants to make sure the commitment will be there from Council when it comes time to replace officers. Cncl. Sebastian noted they have his commitment and Cncl. Teefy's as long as the dollars can be found there will be no problem with that.

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C.) PUBLIC PORTION (cont'd)

Cncl. Ronald Garbowski made a motion to close the public portion. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Frank Caligiuri** and unanimously approved by all members of Council in attendance.

D.) NEW BUSINESS - None

E.) OLD BUSINESS - None

F.) QUESTIONS REGARDING RESOLUTIONS SCHEDULED

Cncl. Frank Caligiuri questioned whether R:200-2011 increasing the change fund for the municipal court was dealing with the petty cash fund. **CFO, Jeff Coles** explained that department has a lot of people coming in with \$100 bills to pay for \$85.00 tickets and they need additional cash to give the people their \$15.00 change.

Cncl. Caligiuri also questioned why the certification of funds was not included with R:202-2011. The CFO advised he was not asked to provide one but there is money available and he will prepare one. **Solicitor Fiore** noted Council could approve the Resolution contingent upon the certification of funds being provided by the CFO.

G.) QUESTIONS REGARDING ORDINANCES SCHEDULED - None

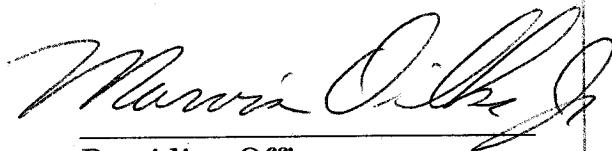
H.) ADJOURNMENT

With nothing further for discussion, **Cncl. Ronald Gabrowski** made a motion to adjourn the Council Work Session of December 13, 2011. The motion was seconded by **Cncl. Walter Bryson** 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 December 13, 2011 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 12/27/11
Approved as corrected _____ Date _____