

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE MAYOR
AND COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WANTAGE, HELD AT THE WANTAGE
TOWNSHIP BUILDING, 888 STATE ROUTE 23, WANTAGE NJ, ON
JULY 14, 2016**

Mayor Bassani called the meeting to order, and requested that the Clerk call the roll. Upon roll call, the following members of the governing body were present: Mayor Ronald Bassani, Committeeman Jon Morris, and Committeeman William Gaechter. Also present: Municipal Attorney Glenn Kienz, Deputy Clerk Christine M. Von Oesen.

Mayor Bassani stated, "This meeting is being held in compliance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, Public Laws 1975, Chapter 231, it has been properly noticed and certified by the Clerk."

Mayor Bassani invited all those in attendance to join in the Salute to the Flag.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Bassani requested the governing body review the Consent Agenda. Mayor Bassani requested a motion to approve the following:

1. Approval of Bill List for June, 2016.

2. Approval for filing the following reports:

Municipal Clerk Report for June 2016.

Registrar Report for June 2016.

Tax Collector Report for June 2016.

Board of Health Report for June 2016.

Land Use Board Report for June 2016.

Housing Report for June 2016.

Zoning Report for June 2016.

3. Resolution authorizing Refunds as Follows:

\$14,984.10 to US Bank for Block 18 Lot 36.06 for Tax Sale Certificate 15-03.

\$53,359.17 to Actlien Management for Block 140 Lot 1.02 for Tax Sale Certificate 13-40.

\$26,100.00 to Actlien Management for Block 140 Lot 1.02 for Tax Sale Certificate 13-40.

4. Award of Contracts as follows:

Tilcon New York, Parsippany, NJ in the amount of \$410,361.45.

Denville Lone Striping, Rockaway, NJ in the amount of \$9,322.62.

General Foudries, New Brunswick, NJ in the amount of \$5,451.00.

5. Award of Contracts as follows:

Cliffside Body Corp., Fariview, NJ in the amount of \$24,760.

Motion by Mr. Morris. Second by Mr. Gaechter.

Ayes: Gaechter, Morris, Bassani

Nays: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

REPORTS:

Clerk Report: Reuben Kline and Tim Dougherty, of Gran Fondo National Championship Series, wrote a letter thanking Wantage Township for its part in making the 4th Annual Highlands Gran Fondo a success. They would like to continue this event and ask that June 11, 2017 be reserved for next year's event.

Wantage resident Marilyn Cotter wrote a letter commending Wantage Animal Control Officer John Abate for his outstanding responses to recent animal control calls, during which he proved himself to be both professional and compassionate. She adds that he is a credit to Wantage Township.

The Recreation Department asks for further clarification regarding the Lake Neepaulin aeration fountain. As this has gone back and forth from Rec to Committee, I suggest that the township ask electrician Wayne DenHyer for an estimate for the placement of the fountain, start to finish. Mayor Bassani says to go ahead with this plan.

Administrator's Report: Court clerk Joanne Klippel has resigned, effective today. Ms. LaStarza asks for an Executive Session to discuss replacement options. Mayor Bassani said that Executive Session would be held at this meeting. DOT has issued a stop work order on road projects on July 8, 11:59 PM, due to lack of funding for road projects. This means that section 4 of the Pidgeon Hill Road Project is now on hold. The annual audit was received and all is good, with the exception of an update to the general ledger, which is now complete.

Attorney's Report: None.

Committeeman Morris: None.

Committeeman Gaechter: Mr. Gaechter asks how the Committee feels about proposed gas tax increase, and indicates that other towns have passed resolutions opposing same. Mr. Morris sees both sides of the issue. Mayor Bassani wrote Senator Oroho expressing that this may not be in the best interest of Wantage residents and he would like further information. Mayor Bassani will hear Senator Oroho at an informational meeting which is not open to the public. Mayor Bassani would like to hear Senator Oroho and then decide on the resolution. Mr. Gaechter warned that something could be passed in the meantime, and his sentiment was met with agreement from members of the audience. Having read the supporting documents, Mr. Gaechter is shocked that a representative of Sussex County would favor a gas tax increase for this commuter population, and further, he feels that the dysfunction of the DOT been addressed, which, in part, he witnessed directly from his Sussex business on Route 23. He sees great waste by DOT. Mr. Morris opposes the gas tax, but acknowledges that money is needed for crumbling infrastructure. He agrees that DOT is wasting money. The committee questions the DOT's

choice of projects, including Route 23, the wall in Sussex, the Rt. 15 median. Mayor Bassani asks that the Committee allow him to write a resolution opposing the gas tax increase, with the assistance of Attorney Keinz, which can then be discussed at the next meeting.

Mayor Bassani asked for a motion authorizing the Mayor, with the help of Attorney Keinz, to write a resolution in opposition of the implementation of the proposed increase to the gas tax.

Motion by Mr. Gaechter, Second by Mr. Morris.

Ayes: Gaechter, Morris, Bassani Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None

Mayor's Report: 27 resumes have been received for the position of administrator. This will be discussed in tonight's Executive Session.

Mayor Bassani reiterated that the audit and corrective action has been discussed.

Property maintenance is an issue. Ms. Von Oesen has supplied information about property maintenance resolutions approved by other towns whereby banks are penalized when properties they own are unkempt or in disrepair. Mayor Bassani does not feel that resolutions penalizing banks are workable, and asks Attorney Keinz to investigate other methods by which a property maintenance resolution might be based.

A bond has been pulled to finance the road work that is being done at the Rolling Hills subdivision.

Mayor Bassani received an email from Louis Karp which indicates ShopRite would like to concurrently engage Sussex and Wantage in discussion about moving the project forward. Sussex Boro has had the vehicles on the Sussex section of the property removed. That said, Mayor Bassani asks Ms. LaStarza to contact Patrick Stefanelli to confirm what the next and best step should be for Wantage. The PILOT program, payment in lieu of taxes, must be in place before signing any contracts.

The Zika virus is getting much attention. There is a mosquito information table in the entrance hall of the Wantage building.

A letter was received from Houser Engineering regarding the forced sewer main and Sussex Boro water treatment.

Mayor Bassani continues his investigation of possibly withdrawing Wantage from Civil Service. The clerk must receive requisite signatures on a petition and it then must be brought to ballot. It is likely an expensive proposition which will probably be fought by Civil Service.

Mayor Bassani applauds Wantage resident Joseph Mitchell, who recently achieved the level of Eagle Scout, and Mayor Bassani will be present at the August 13 ceremony at High Point State Park that will commemorate same. Mayor Bassani will present a plaque to Mr. Mitchell at the event.

Sussex Fire Department will hold its 96th Annual Inspection Day and Parade on October 1. This is the 120th anniversary of the Sussex Fire Department. The Wantage Mayor and Committee have been invited as Guests of Honor to partake in an 11 am buffet, followed by a 1 pm parade.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Mayor Bassani asked for a Motion to approve the Minutes of the June 23, 2016 Wantage Township Committee meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Morris. Second by Mr. Gaechter.

Ayes: Gaechter, Morris, Bassani Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None

2. Mayor Bassani asked for a Motion to approve the Certification of the Governing Body of the Annual Municipal Audit.

Motion made by Mr. Gaechter. Second by Mr. Morris.

Ayes: Gaechter, Morris, Bassani Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None

3. Mayor Bassani asked for a Motion to accept the Corrective Action Plan.

Motion made by Mr. Gaechter. Second by Mr. Morris

Ayes: Gaechter, Morris, Bassani Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None

OPEN PUBLIC SESSION:

Cathy Gorman asks where the (Sussex side) Snouffer cars have been moved. She states the cars parked near Laser One make for an ugly entrance to Wantage Township. She also feels that the Bicsak mining operation is not an attractive entrance to Wantage Township. Ms. Gorman states that the stagnant Lake Neepaulin pool is a breeding ground for mosquitos. She asks if Fish and Game has talked about stocking Lake Neepaulin. Ms. Gorman asked about funding to revitalize the area. She agreed with Mayor Bassani that she could gather a subcommittee to investigate revitalization options.

Ann Smulewicz advises the Bicsak business continues to coat her property in dust from their operation. Ms. Smulewicz advises that Vernon real estate is selling, and that no one wants to move to Wantage Township. Mayor Bassani responded that real estate agents tell him that the market is beginning to pick up in Wantage Township. Ms. Smulewicz feels that Wantage does not need an Administrator. She says that they should save the money. Mayor Bassani feels that Wantage does need an Administrator. Ms. Smulewicz states that she attended the April 19 Land Use Board meeting where Bicsak representatives were also in attendance and specific to Bicsak, no action was taken. She then attended the May LUB meeting and was told that action had been taken. She feels that something not in accordance with the Sunshine Law may have taken place between the two meetings. Ms. Smulewicz is pleased that the Committee is against the gas tax increase. She feels that the DOT should designate the money coming in at the tolls for the transportation fund.

Jackie Espinoza provided JCP&L electricity usage and costs handouts for those in attendance. She advises that there will be a JCP&L safety demonstration at the Sussex County Office of Emergency Management on July 27 at 7 PM. A lineman demonstration will also be held at a September meeting of Sussex County Fire Chiefs. The demonstration may also be seen at JCP&L monthly meetings in Morristown. Mayor Bassani asks about a electricity cost cooperative, or third party supplier, recently suggested by Wendy Molnar. Ms. Espinoza advises that JCP&L would continue to be the energy provider should Ms. Molnar's proposition be accepted.

Ann Smulewicz advises that Sussex Boro recently received another grant, by Bruno Associates, and asks if Wantage can do the same for Lake Neepaulin restoration. Mr. Morris states that the Wantage Fire Departments have been routinely turned down for grants, while the Sussex Fire Department win the ones they apply for. Grants are often awarded, or not awarded, based on the qualifications of the community.

Mayor Bassani Closed Open Public Session.

Mayor Bassani asked for a Motion to return to the Public Meeting, from Executive Session.

Motion by Mr. Morris. Second by Mr. Gaechter.

Ayes: Gaechter, Morris, Bassani Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None

Mayor Bassani asked for a Motion to approve to allow the Wantage Court to contract with Joanne Klippel, as needed, at the rate of \$60 per evening court session.

Motion by Mr. Morris. Second by Mr. Gaechter.

Ayes: Gaechter, Morris, Bassani Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None

Per attorney Keinz, all other Executive Session discussion shall not be made public at this time.

Mayor Bassani asked for a Motion to Adjourn.

Motion by Mr. Gaechter. Second by Mr. Morris

Ayes: Gaechter, Morris, Bassani Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine M. Von Oesen
Deputy Clerk