

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP
OF WANTAGE, HELD VIA VIRTUAL MEETING 7:00 P.M. ON
DECEMBER 17, 2020**

Mayor Morris called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and requested that the Clerk call the roll. Upon roll call, the following members of the governing body were present: Mayor Morris, Deputy Mayor William Gaechter and Committeeman Ronald Bassani. Also, present: Administrator/Clerk Michael Restel, and Mr. Glenn Kienz, Esq.

Mayor Morris stated, "This meeting is being held in compliance with the provisions of the Open Public Meeting Act, P.L. 1975, Chapter 231. It has been properly noticed and certified by the Clerk."

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Morris requested a motion to approve Resolution #97-2020 to #109-2020

A motion was made by Mr. Bassani and seconded by Mr. Gaechter.

Upon Roll Call:

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

RESOLUTION:

Resolution Reestablishing Annual School Election.

Mayor Morris stated he met with the 4 different Mayors from the High Point Regional High School sending district to discuss moving the School Board Elections from November to third Tuesday in April.

Mayor Morris stated the meeting went well with all the 4 Mayors agreeing to pass a resolution at each respective Town Committee/Council Meeting rather than go out to referendum.

Mayor Morris stated that in recent days 2 of the 4 Towns are now contemplating passing a resolution.

Mayor Morris explained there is a process to move the elections. Mayor Morris stated the townships have to pass and submit their intentions 85 days prior to the third Tuesday in April. Mayor Morris stated the Resolution must be sent to High Point School Board, Sussex/Wantage School Board, Sussex County Clerk, Sussex County Board of Elections and New Jersey Superintendent of Elections.

Mayor Morris explained when Governor Christie was in office, he changed the Elections to November in 2012 and State Statute requires the elections to remain the same for 4 consecutive years before it can be changed

Mayor Morris explained if the resolutions don't pass with the other towns the other alternative would be put on as a referendum.

Mayor Morris stated this process happened in Fredon Township and one resident was able to get enough signatures on a petition to have it out to vote.

Mayor Morris stated the petition would need 10% of the previous general election signatures in order to get on the Ballot. Mayor Morris stated Fredon Townships Referendum was passed by a substantial amount in favor.

Mr. Gaechter stated he agreed with the Mayor and we should hold the School accountable for their actions.

Mr. Bassani stated he agreed with Mayor Morris and the schools should be held accountable for their actions. Discussion ensued.

Mayor Morris asked for a motion to approve the resolution to Reestablish the School Election from November to April:

A motion was made by Mr. Bassani and seconded by Mr. Gaechter.

Upon Roll Call:

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

REPORTS

Administrator/Clerk: Mr. Restel stated this is the final meeting of the year and thanked all his employees and volunteers for all their hard work throughout the year especially with COVID.

Mr. Restel thanked the DPW for their hard work with the storm today.

Mr. Restel spoke about the Wantage Township Tax sale and read the results.

Mr. Restel stated the Township submitted their final part of the NJ CARES reimbursement paperwork.

Mr. Restel spoke about the Long-Term Financing paperwork that was in front of the Committee and Welcomed Wantage CFO Ashley Wilson who was on VIA Zoom.

Mr. Restel stated in front you are 3 different scenarios and Mr. Restel stated himself and Mrs. Wilson agree together that Scenario Number 2 is what is best for Wantage Township Moving Forward to keep a balanced budget.

Mrs. Wilson stated scenario 2 is the best option to move forward towards a balance budget for years to come. Mrs. Wilson stated it's a 2-month process for the paperwork to process and our current bonds mature February 2021. Mrs. Wilson stated a decision should be made tonight to move forward.

Mr. Restel stated Phoenix Advisors asked for an estimated 5-year bond number. Mr. Restel stated he used \$3,000,000 for various improvements, equipment and vehicle purchases. Mr. Restel stated this is just an estimate and can be decreased.

Mr. Restel stated the percent was a full percent less than what Wantage Township received this time last year.

Mr. Gaechter asked if the .75% was a locked in rate throughout the Long-Term Financing. Mr. Gaechter stated he is fine with moving forward with Scenario 2

Mrs. Wilson stated no and that the rates will change every year.

Mr. Bassani stated this could be an annual gamble with the rates. Mr. Bassani stated that Both Scenarios 1 and 2 are similar in nature with Scenario 1 paying more towards principal but with fluctuation and Scenario 2 pays more towards interest but keeps a flat number for an extended period of time. Mr. Bassani stated he is fine with moving forward with Scenario 2 and we should try and negotiate the interest rate.

Mr. Restel thanked Lockburner Construction for the light up Sussex County Star in front of the Building.

Mr. Restel wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Attorneys Report: Mr. Kienz spoke about the lawsuit that has been filed against Wantage Township from Town Center on Route 23.

Mr. Kienz stated the information should be sent to insurance and shall be handled through the claim.

Mr. Kienz spoke about a suit that was filed from Sussex Borough and multiple towns including Wantage Township pertaining to SCMUA charges.

Mr. Restel explained while serving as Administrator in Sussex Borough the suit started against SCMUA pertaining to the way they charge the municipalities different amounts.

Mr. Restel explained that he spoke to the Rate Engineer and Attorney assigned to the suit that Wantage Township does not charge a user fee and only collects money from 2 Property Owners for allocation which is billed through Wantage. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Restel state his recommendation is to pull from the suit.

Committeeman Ron Bassani: Mr. Bassani Congratulated Mayor Morris on his election win.

Mayors Report: Mayor Morris thanked the Recreation Advisory Committee and all the Volunteers for the tree lighting and thanked John Abate for being Santa.

Mayor Morris sated he would like to see the Draft Nuisance Ordinance for the January Meeting to move forward with a compromise.

Mayor Morris spoke about the bill that was paid to Hardyston for their construction department. Mayor Morris stated it might be time to bring back the construction department discussion ensued.

Mayor Morris spoke about the Marijuana legislation and the possibility of it could be a tax ratable in Wantage Township discussion ensued.

Deputy Mayor: Mr. Gaechter thanked Mayor Morris for his hard work and also his work throughout COVID.

Committeeman Bassani: Mr. Bassani thanked all the Volunteers on the various boards for their hard work throughout the year.

Mr. Bassani thanked all the employees for their hard work throughout the year.

Mr. Bassani thanked the DPW for their hard work during the storm.

Mr. Bassani would like Wantage to see in 2021 a Request for Proposal for Engineer and Planner. Mr. Restel stated the engineer contract ends in 2021 and the Planner is in process.

Mr. Bassani spoke about the Open Space Meeting and look forward to 2021 meeting to go over final plan for Berry Road Property.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

A motion is in order to approve the minutes of the November 12, 2020 Mayor and Committee Regular Meeting.

Mr. Bassani made a Motion and was seconded by Mayor Morris.

Upon Roll Call:

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

OPEN PUBLIC SESSION:

Donna Pollard Oil City Road: Mrs. Pollard asked about where to obtain a citizen request form. Mr. Restel stated the form is online and to submit to myself.

Mark Wallace 3 Oil City Road: Mr. Wallace spoke about the possible Nuisance Ordinance and would like to see harsher penalties and penalties for useless complaints.

Warren Wisse Valley View Trailer. Mr. Wisse thanked Mayor Morris and Nicole for their presence and hard work at the tree lighting.

Donna Rockefeller 25 Oil City Road: Mrs. Rockefeller thanked everyone for their hard work.

Adrian Vroegendewey Old 84: Mr. Vroegendewey stated there was a brief reprieve from the noise but on the noise escalated shortly after.

Mr. Vroegendewey stated the speakers now point towards the houses and doesn't understand why they can't face the speakers towards the establishment. Discussion Ensued.

Kathy Gorman Fernwood: Mrs. Gorman stated she agrees 100% with the committee passing the School Board election resolution and asked if the Sussex Wantage School was part of the Resolution.

Mr. Bassani stated yes Sussex Wantage School is on the resolution.

Mrs. Gorman stated she would like to see if the resolution is not passed by all 5 municipalities a drive for a referendum. Discussion ensued.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Morris requested a motion to adjourn. Mr. Bassani made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Mr. Gaechter.

Upon Roll:

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

Meeting Adjourned 8:15PM

Respectfully submitted by

Michael L Restel

Administrator/Acting Clerk