

**WORKSHOP MEETING
OF THE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LITTLE FALLS WAS
HELD THIS EVENING IN THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

Monday, March 12, 2018

Council President Anthony Sgobba called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the following members present: Maria Cordonnier, William Liess, Tanya Seber, and Chris Vancheri. Also present were Mayor James Damiano, Township Attorney Joe Wenzel, Township Engineer Christopher Wright, Township Administrator Charles Cuccia and Municipal Clerk Cynthia Kraus.

Absent: None.

Township Employees present: DPW Superintendent Philip Simone, Police Chief Steven Post.

STATEMENT OF PUBLIC NOTICE: Take notice that adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in accordance with N.J.S.A. 10:4-10 as follows: A notice of the meeting was prominently posted on the bulletin board at the Municipal Building, located at 225 Main Street, Little Falls, N.J. on January 2, 2018. A copy of the notice was faxed to the North Jersey Herald and News and The Record on the same date. Additionally, a copy of the notice was filed in the office of the Township Clerk on said date.

LITTLE FALLS SCHOOL BOARD PRESENTATION

Councilmember CORDONNIER welcomed Board of Education members President Lauren Verdi, Thomas Breitwieser, Rachel Capizzi, Frederic DeMarco, Diana Kribs, Michael Murphy, Michael O'Neil, Superintendent Traci Marinelli, Business Administrator Carol Delsandro, and Principal of School No.1 Mr. Philip Ligus. The Board of Education meeting was then called to order at 7:06 p.m.

Mayor Damiano and the members of the Board of Education then conducted a presentation concerning parking issues. A solution that was presented involved a trading of land that the Township could then make improvements to. The Mayor indicated the involved area near the corner of Stanley Street and Ridge Avenue. The municipality would have access to it on weeknights and weekends and the space would enhance downtown parking. During the weekdays, the lot would net the school 25-30 additional spaces. By improving lot, the school within its confines, and the parking spaces along Ridge Avenue, would be able to accommodate all school employees and personnel.

Mayor Damiano elaborated upon the legal portion of what the proposal would entail. The lot lines would be shifted so that the school could retain the building and its facilities. The municipality would assume responsibility for this lot that would eventually be paved. The area would be designated for school personnel only along with parking spaces on Ridge Avenue from 7am and 4pm. In doing so, any actions necessary to ensure the safety of the children, such as fences or shrubbery, etc., would be installed in keeping the area beautiful and safe at the same time. The lot would be maintained by the municipality. Improvements would be made to the now existing small park area near School No.1. The municipality would also assume it as one of its municipal parks. During school day the park would be available for school children and then at night be made available for the municipality. Funding was addressed as part of budget discussions.

Following the Mayor's presentation, public comment was opened to matters pertaining to the lot improvements. A question was raised as to how the municipality would monitor compliance with use of the park during school hours. Mayor Damiano stated the Township is intended to move to a camera system throughout the municipality in all of its municipal lots. The Mayor addressed another question regarding improvements to the grass and maintenance of the area.

Mayor Damiano also discussed moving the school buses to the former municipal lot also known as the Old Police Station, availing 12-13 more spaces to accommodate school staff and personnel.

Another resident questioned whether the portion of the playground area could ever revert back to the school. Mayor Damiano explained that if open space dollars are used to make improvements to that playground area then it cannot revert back to the school; it must remain open space. However, the parking lot area that is being discussed would be municipally funded. That property could then be sold or transferred back to the school if need be. Mr. Cuccia added that local dollars could be used to improve the park which would not be considered open space, and would not remain that way in perpetuity.

In response to a resident question regarding the face value of the lots, Mayor Damiano responded that a formal appraisal was not obtained because there is no monetary transfer, and because it would be a lot line adjustment.

Mr. Cuccia then explained the next steps which included an agreement between the School Board and Township for the transfer of the lots with the anticipation of the change of the lot line. The Township would have to go through the Planning Board to get the lot line approved. Mr. Wenzel asked for clarification and added that there would have to be some subdivisions before the Planning Board.

Mayor Damiano proposed the improvements be done during the summer as to not to impact the school as much as possible.

Mr. Wenzel announced that technically at this time, the School Board meeting is in session now. Public comment for the Council meeting will occur later in the meeting.

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Louis Fernandez, Harrison Street, questioned what taxpayers gain by the project and commented that taxpayers are limited as to when they can use the park. Ms. Marinelli stated this project is providing parking for everyone in the Township. Residents can enjoy the park after school hours, on weekends, and during the summer. Mr. Fernandez questioned who would be liable should an incident occur on the property. Mr. Wenzel explained after the parking lot is put in the Township would have liability.

The public comment pertaining to the lot improvements was then closed.

At this time, Councilmember CORDONNIER also welcomed Principal Nicole Dilkes from School No. 3 and Principal Jill Costaldo from School No. 2.

Mayor Damiano read a letter into the record at this time from Mr. Simone regarding two DPW workers, Arthur Savage and Brian Mistrette, who were commended for rescuing a resident and her dog from a fire on Riverview Circle. Mayor Damiano thanked Mr. Simone and the DPW Department for all of their hard work.

PUBLIC COMMENT – GENERAL MATTERS

It was moved by Councilmember Vancheri, seconded by Councilmember Cordonnier, that the meeting be and it was opened to the public.

Poll: Ayes: Cordonnier, Liess, Seber, Vancheri, and Council President Sgobba
Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.

Troop 14 Boy Scouts, Senior Leader, Joe Gianduso 69 Center Avenue, asked for the Council’s help with access and/or relocation of a storage container utilized by the scouts. Council President SGOBBA stated the Council will work together to find a new location for the storage container.

No one further having come forward to be heard, it was moved by Councilmember Cordonnier, seconded by Councilmember Seber, that the meeting be and it was closed to the public.

Poll: Ayes: Cordonnier, Liess, Seber, Vancheri, and Council President Sgobba
Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.

WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY PROCLAMATION – Mayor Damiano read the Proclamation to recognize World Down Syndrome Day in the Township of Little Falls on March 21, 2018.

RESOLUTIONS

It was moved by Councilmember Cordonnier, seconded by Councilmember Vancheri, to approve the following:

LOSAP Volunteer Member List

**TOWNSHIP OF LITTLE FALLS
PASSAIC COUNTY NEW JERSEY
RESOLUTION [A] 18-03-12 - #1**

**APPROVING CERTIFIED LIST OF LOSAP ELIGIBLE VOLUNTEER
MEMBERS OF THE LITTLE FALLS VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT**

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Little Falls, that the attached certified list of volunteer members of the Little Falls Volunteer Fire Department eligible to participate in the Little Falls Length of Service Award Program is hereby approved.

Bill List

RESOLUTION [B] 18-03-12 #2

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Little Falls the Council having received the Treasurer’s certification of the availability of funds for payment of all bills presented, that payment of all bills approved by the Finance Committee be and is hereby authorized, subject to the availability of funds and subject to the appropriate and available appropriation in the line item.

Poll: Ayes: Cordonnier, Liess, Seber, Vancheri, and Council President Sgobba
Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.

ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED:

MAYOR/ADMINISTRATOR:

1. PROPOSED FLOOD BOARD ORDINANCE -Mayor Damiano highlighted several modifications to the ordinance including the addition of Totowa Mayor John Coiro, assignment of five members from each of the three municipalities, and designation of Little Falls as lead agency.
2. BUDGET TRANSFERS – Mayor Damiano stated the budget transfers are standard and will be presented at the March 26, 2018 Regular Meeting.
3. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SUBMITTAL OF GRANT APPLICATION WITH NJ DOT FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY PROGRAM – Mayor Damiano explained the grant provides for enhanced corridor safety along Route 46 route, allowing the Police Department to bring in extra officers and patrol Route 46 for speeding, DWI, and any other traffic related offenses. The Mayor added that the grant has been applied for in the past and the Township has received approximately \$30,000 a year.

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4. TAX APPEAL SETTLEMENT RESOLUTION – Mayor Damiano explained tax appeals are settled throughout the course of the year and refunds are provided for those who prevail on a tax appeal.
5. TAX REFUND RESOLUTION – Mayor Damiano emphasized that refunds and settlements are not related to any individuals in the Township who prepaid their first and second quarter taxes for the 2018 calendar year in 2017 in an attempt to avoid the SALT reduction cap. Council President SGOBBA suggested applying overpayments to the next tax cycle instead of sending out refunds. Mayor Damiano agreed that the Council may consider a revised tax bill for overpayment of taxes by individuals throughout the Township. Rather than refund overpayments each month or every several months, this would authorize the Tax Collector to issue a revised tax bill to those residents whose future taxes would be reduced. Mayor Damiano will examine the suggestion and follow-up.
6. PROPOSED FEE ORDINANCE AMENDMENT – RECREATION DAY CAMP FEES – Mayor Damiano explained the proposed amendment increases the day camp fees from \$500 to \$550. The extended session would have a fee associated with it of \$300 for the entire month. Councilmember CORDONNIER stated she is pleased the Township has the extended hours and questioned what the financial outcome was last year. Mayor Damiano stated the Township funds most of the Recreation Department programs throughout the year, and that the fees are in line with what other municipalities are charging. Councilmember CORDONNIER questioned whether non-residents are allowed in the programs and whether a different fee schedule was applied. Mayor Damiano responded that while Little Falls residents are given preference, if availability permits, the program will accept non-residents. Councilmember VANCHERI asked whether extended hours could be expanded to 4 p.m. or 5 p.m.. Mayor Damiano also suggested a more in-depth analysis of the program addressing these areas be conducted after this year's camp has been completed.

DPW SUPERINTENDENT:

1. RECYCLING MARKETING BIDS –Mr. Wenzel stated the bid is now stale and the matter will be reviewed for potential re-bid.
2. SUMP PUMPS – Mr. Simone expressed the need to re-visit the issue of sump pumps due to the amount of snow and rain this year leading to increased use. Mr. Simone estimated that out of the 3,000 households in the Township, 75% have sump pumps. Of those, about 50% of the sump pumps are tied into the sanitary sewer system, which is against DEP and Passaic Valley Sewerage regulations. Only polluted water can be discharged through the sanitary sewer; storm water, rainwater and ground water are not permitted in the sanitary sewer. Mr. Simone explained even the largest pump is not equipped to manage the amount being pumped into the sanitary sewer, which may lead to back up. Mr. Simone proposed a substantial penalty for those who have their sump pumps tied into the sanitary sewer to deter unauthorized use of the sanitary sewer system. He suggested letters be delivered to every house, starting with the Singac area, providing a 90 day period for residents to correct the pump connection. Mr. Simone offered to draft and forward a proposed ordinance for attorney review. In response to Councilmember SEBER, Mr. Simone estimated that there are about 300 unauthorized sump pumps in the Singac area. Councilmember SEBER also questioned how residents would know if their sump pumps were noncompliant. Mr. Simone stated that in the past, the DPW had offered to visit residents to educate them on whether the sump pump was in compliance or not. Councilmember SEBER questioned whether there were any checks and balances to prevent unauthorized hook up of sump pumps when a home is sold. Mr. Simone explained the process of inspection when a home is sold. In response to Councilmember SEBER, Mr. Simone estimated the financial implications of correcting the sump pump to be in the range of \$500-\$1000. Councilmember VANCHERI suggested offering an educational meeting such that residents with sump pumps can learn about the impact of improper hookup and what steps need to be taken. In response to Councilmember CORDONNIER, Mr. Simone responded that often municipalities with a sewer authority have an ordinance related to sump pumps. Councilmember CORDONNIER agreed that an ordinance is necessary to discourage noncompliance, and thanked Mr. Simone for raising the issue. In response to Mayor Damiano's query regarding the budgetary impacts, Mr. Simone elaborated upon the age of the system, bearing on the pump stations, controller parts, and force main, resulting in less longevity, and increased possibility of a sewerage backup. Council President SGOBBA requested Councilmembers forward their comments to him to discuss with the Mayor prior to moving forward. Mr. Simone to draft proposed ordinance.

COUNCIL TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

Councilmember VANCHERI stated he is co-chairing the Memorial Day parade with Councilmember Liess. A Transportation Committee will convene on March 15, 2018. On March 19, 2018, the Passaic River Advisory Board is scheduled to convene.

Councilmember SEBER stated the Municipal Alliance was unable to convene due to the inclement weather. The Little Falls Athletic Club is working on a 100th anniversary that includes events such as a food truck festival and a 5K race.

Councilmember CORDONNIER explained the purpose of County's Corridor Enhancement Fund and that Little Falls has accrued funds which must be used on County Roads. She suggested funds be utilized on decorative lighting for the Municipal Building as well as some other possible projects. Councilmember CORDONNIER stated she has been collaborating with the County on the Artwalk scheduled for April 28, 2018 along with the Little Falls Business Association, Historical Society, School No. 1, and the Little Falls ABC.

Councilmember LIESS stated the Memorial Day parade is planned for May 26, 2018. The Senior Advisory Committee will convene on March 13, 2018 to discuss upcoming events.

At this time, Councilmember VANCHERI commented on the success of the family night at the Library held on March 9, 2018.

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PUBLIC COMMENT – AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

It was moved by Councilmember Cordonnier, seconded by Councilmember Vancheri, that the meeting be and it was opened to the public.

Poll: Ayes: Cordonnier, Liess, Seber, Vancheri, and Council President Sgobba
Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.

Al Attianese, 27 Dewey Avenue, thanked Mr. Simone for providing an explanation of proper sump pump usage and stated his support to take action with an ordinance. In response to Mr. Attianese, Council President Sgobba responded the issue is not with new construction but existing structures. Mr. Attianese questioned whether an ordinance exists to prevent pumping water from sump pumps, leaders or draining of a pool onto another’s property. Mayor Damiano stated the building code does not allow a neighbor to dump water on another’s property. Mayor Damiano to obtain more specific information for Mr. Attianese.

Louis Fernandez, 54 Harrison Street, expressed his opinion that addressing flooding would also address the issues with sump pumps. Mr. Fernandez related a circumstance where his neighbor’s sump pump ejects water onto his driveway. Council President SGOBBA recommended Mr. Fernandez contact the Building Department to follow-up.

Dorothy O’Haire, Turnberry Road, queried the status of a response from the DOT regarding the gauge placement on the Route 46 bridge. Mayor Damiano stated he and Mayor Kazmark met with Rob Field, Aide to Governor Murphy, who is following up on the request. Mayor Damiano then provided detail on the specific issue delaying the installation of the gauge on the Route 46 bridge. Ms. O’Haire stated she forwarded a questionnaire from the Army Corps. of Engineers to Mayors Damiano and Kazmark and requested advisement. Mayor Damiano stated he and Mayor Kazmark have continued sending responsive letters encouraging the Army Corps. of Engineers and the DEP, with respect to the proposed plans, indicating their support of receiving information and continuing the studies to determine whether or not the proposal is feasible for the municipalities. Mayor Damiano indicated concerns he raised had to do with the Peckman flood wall and the levy. Discussion ensued with regard to Ms. O’Haire’s concern regarding a non-structural plan and Mayor Damiano indicating a number of issues that must be addressed. Mayor Damiano responded to Ms. O’Haire’s request for a timeframe, noting Totowa and Woodland Park have introduced their ordinances and will adopt them at the end of this month. The anticipated adoption date for Little Falls would be at the April 23, 2018 meeting.

Council President SGOBBA requested Mr. Simone provide a status report on the excavator designated to clean out the Peckman River. Mr. Simone stated the Superintendent from Woodland Park and the representative from the manufacturer were to meet with him, and that Woodland Park is the lead of the project. Mayor Damiano added that he, Mr. Cuccia and Mr. Simone met with Woodland Park representatives and discussed several issues. One issue identified was that based upon the current grant, the excavator was only to be used for the Peckman River. The Mayor then explained the purpose of the excavator and process to be followed to remove shoals from the Peckman, emphasizing it is a time consuming and costly process. Mayor Damiano expressed the need to redefine the scope of the grant to permit the excavator to be used in conjunction for all flood issues pertaining to the Passaic River, Peckman River, and all of its tributaries. Ms. O’Haire inserted that the original grant included the Passaic River.

No one further having come forward to be heard, it was moved by Councilmember Cordonnier, seconded by Councilmember Seber, that the meeting be and it was closed to the public.

Poll: Ayes: Cordonnier, Liess, Seber, Vancheri, and Council President Sgobba
Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

It was moved by Councilmember Vancheri, seconded by Councilmember Seber, that the Council approve the following:

RESOLUTION [EX]

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 allows for a Public Body to go into executive session during a Public Meeting; and
WHEREAS, the Governing Body of the Township of Little Falls has deemed it necessary to go into executive session to discuss certain matters which are exempted for the Public; and

WHEREAS, the regular meeting of this Governing Body with reconvene;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Council of the Township of Little Falls will go into executive session for the following reason(s) – public safety matters.

Poll: Ayes: Cordonnier, Liess, Seber, Vancheri, and Council President Sgobba
Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.

The Council entered Executive Session at 8:30 p.m.

At 9:17 p. m. the Council returned and it was moved by Councilmember Vancheri, seconded by Councilmember Seber, that the meeting return to Open Session.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, it was moved by Councilmember Vancheri, seconded by Councilmember Seber, that the meeting be and it was adjourned at 9:17p.m.

Cynthia Kraus
Municipal Clerk