

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

Monday, September 12, 2022

Council President Sgobba called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the following members present: Christine Hablitz, Albert Kahwaty, Tanya Seber, and Christopher Vancheri. Also present were Mayor James Damiano, Township Engineer Tom Lemanowicz, Township Administrator Charles Cuccia, Deputy Clerk Melissa DePiro, and Municipal Clerk Cynthia Kraus.

Absent: None.

Township Employees present: Deputy Police Chief Bryan Prall.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

STATEMENT OF PUBLIC NOTICE:

Take notice that adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in accordance with N.J.S.A. 10:4-8 and 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 March 11, 2022. A copy of the notice was mailed 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. **A link and a telephone number to join the meeting virtually can be accessed on the Township website at www.lfnj.com. Electronic provisions have been established for the public to participate during the public comment portion of the meeting.**

At this time, Mayor Damiano reported the Township has received \$4.7 million in grant funds over the past five years. Mayor Damiano then provided an update on the water main improvement project in Town, noting the restoration for Main Street is slated for September 19, 2022. The Mayor then discussed a recent water issue in the areas between Browertown Road through Lower Notch Road, and Jacobus Avenue and Morningside Circle which have been impacted by low reservoir levels creating brown water.

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH PROCLAMATION- At this time, Mayor Damiano read the Proclamation recognizing the month of September 2022 as National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month in the Township of Little Falls.

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH PROCLAMATION – Mayor Damiano read the proclamation recognizing September through October 2022 as Hispanic Heritage Month in the Township of Little Falls.

LIBRARY CARD SIGN UP MONTH PROCLAMATION – Mayor Damiano then read the Proclamation recognizing the month of September 2022 as Library Card Sign-Up Month in the Township of Little Falls.

CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH PROCLAMATION – Lastly, Mayor Damiano read the Proclamation recognizing the month of September 2022 as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month in the Township of Little Falls.

PUBLIC COMMENT – GENERAL MATTERS AND AGENDA ITEMS

Anyone wishing to address the Township Council may do so through the Council President. Please give your name and address for the record. Comments are to be limited to three minutes, however, if appropriate, you may be granted additional time in the sole discretion of the Council President.

Members of the public who have joined the meeting virtually and desire to provide comment shall raise their virtual hand in the Zoom application. The Meeting moderator will queue the members of the public that wish to provide comment and the Council President will recognize them in order. Members of the public who have joined the meeting by calling in must press *6 to mute and unmute themselves and *9 to raise their hand. Members of the public who have joined the Meeting via the Zoom application must click the Reactions icon and then the Raise Hand icon. Please give your name and address for the record. Once the process is complete, we will return to the regular order of business.

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

Poll: Ayes: Hablitz, Kahwaty, Seber, Vancheri and Council President Sgobba
 Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.

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

Poll: Ayes: Hablitz, Kahwaty, Seber, Vancheri, and Council President Sgobba
 Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.

ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED:

MAYOR/ADMINISTRATOR:

1. TAX REFUND RESOLUTION – Mayor Damiano explained the routine nature of this Resolution.

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2. RESOLUTION AWARDING CONTRACT FOR MAIN STREET STREETScape SECTION 2-PROJECT (UNION AVENUE TO LITTLE FALLS METHODIST CHURCH) – Mayor Damiano explained this is the next section of the Little Falls Streetscape that will be underway shortly.
3. RESOLUTION OPPOSING PROPOSED INCREASES TO SHBP – Mayor Damiano elaborated that the rate of increase in the cost of the State Health Benefits is far greater than general increases seen in other areas. The Mayor thought it prudent that the Township voice its opinion that the increases are offensive. The Mayor explained this Resolution requests this Council oppose the increases to the SHBP.
4. ORDINANCE NO. 1445 – PROHIBITING PARKING ON SECTIONS OF MAIN STREET – Mayor Damiano explained that upon review of this Ordinance it was discovered a short section existed between Union Avenue and the railroad tracks where parking is permitted. Additionally, the current signage does not match the Ordinance, therefore the Mayor requested the Council update the Ordinance.

ACTION ITEMS:

It was moved by Councilmember Hablitz, seconded by Councilmember Seber to approve Resolutions A through D:

Tax Overpayments on Several Properties

RESOLUTION [A] 22-09-12 - #1

WHEREAS, the following properties in the Township of Little Falls, New Jersey have overpaid real estate taxes; and **WHEREAS**, the Tax Collector is requesting that the Township Council direct the Treasurer to refund said amounts overpaid listed below;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Council of the Township of Little Falls, of Passaic, State of New Jersey that the following listed tax refunds be made by the Township Treasurer:

Tax Year & Qtr.	Block Lot/Q	Taxpayer/ Location	Payee	Reason	Amount
2022/3	81/37	Elizabeth Bell 3 Garden Street	Realty Solutions, JV LLC 25 Hughes Place Summit NJ 07901	OP	\$1,552.27
2022/3	88.05/1 C210	Mary Dickerson 300 Main St #210	Mary Dickerson 300 Main St Unit 210 Little Falls NJ 07424	OP	2,175.03
2022/3	85.05/1 C913	William Spector 300 Main St #913	William Spector 300 Main St Unit 913 Little Falls NJ 07424	OP	2,556.13
2022/3	98/7	Samir Egusquiza 10 Walnut St	Corelogic Centralized Refunds PO Box 9202 Coppell TX 75019-9760	OP	2,480.92
2022/3	168/23	Laura Ramirez- Bezi 52 Hudson St	Corelogic Centralized Refunds PO Box 9202 Coppell TX 75019-9760	OP	1,799.85
2022/3	178/7	Peter & Mary Loveras 145 Long Hill Rd	Peter & Mary Loveras 145 Long Hill Rd Little Falls, NJ 07424	OP	<u>1,163.51</u>
Total Refunds					\$11,727.11

Award of Contract to Grade Construction

RESOLUTION [B] 22-09-12 - #2

ACCEPTING BID AND AWARDING CONTRACT FOR 2022 NJDOT MUNICIPAL AID PROGRAM MAIN STREET STREETScape SECTION 2 PROJECT

WHEREAS, pursuant to advertising duly made, bids were received by the Township of Little Falls on July 6, 2022 where no bidders responded and on August 2, 2022 where one bidder responded for 2022 NJDOT Municipal Aid Program Main Street Streetscape Section 2 Project; and

WHEREAS, the bid submitted was 29% above the Engineer’s estimate and rejected on the grounds of excessive cost; and **WHEREAS**, according to the Local Public Contracts Law, following two unsuccessful bidding attempts, the Township is permitted to negotiate for pricing; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the negotiation process, this office received a proposal from Grade Construction in the amount of \$662,911.40 and a proposal from Zuccaro who was the original bidder, in the amount of \$671,770.00; and

WHEREAS, Salamone Brothers, Inc. declined to participate; and

WHEREAS, the award is subject to the Availability of Funds and certification of same in the 2022 budget; and **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Township Council of the Township of Little Falls as follows:

- 1) That the proposal of
Grade Construction
10 Pennsylvania Avenue
Paterson, NJ 07503

in the amount of

\$662,911.40

be and the same is hereby accepted; and

- 2) That the Mayor and Clerk be and they are hereby authorized to execute a Contract in a form approved by the Township Attorney for the designated services at the bid price hereinabove cited, subject to the successful Contractor’s filing the required form of Affirmative Action compliance and Payroll Certification for Public Works Projects

Opposition to Proposed Increases to SHBP

RESOLUTION [C] 22-09-12 - #3

RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE PROPOSED INCREASES TO THE STATE HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the State Health Benefits (SHBP), governed by N.J.S.A. 52:14-17.25 et seq., offers medical, prescription drug, and dental coverage to qualified State and participating local government public employees, retirees, and eligible dependents; and

WHEREAS, all SHBP plans are self-funded meaning that the money paid out for benefits comes directly from a SHBP fund supplied by the State, participating local employers, and member premiums; and

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WHEREAS, the Division of Pensions and Benefits is responsible for the daily administrative activities of the SHPB, the State Health Benefits Commission is the executive organization responsible for overseeing the SHBP; and

WHEREAS, the State Health Benefits Commission comprised of state officials and union representatives, annually consider the calendar year premium levels for the Local Government Employer Group of the SHBP based on recommendations found in the Rate Setting Recommendation Analysis of the Local Government Employee Group; and

WHEREAS, the preliminary rate increase for 2023 Local Government Employer Group is 22.8%, which includes a 21.6% increase for Active, a 13% increase in Early Retiree, and a 0.7% increase for Medicare Retiree; and

WHEREAS, subsequent news accounts has Department of Treasury noting "rates for active members and early retirees would like be increase between 12-20% across the various plans for the upcoming year"; and

WHEREAS, such proposed exorbitant rate increases will fall upon local property taxpayer along with the local public employees at a time where there is record inflation, and

WHEREAS, the proposed premium increase for most active employees will take thousands more out of their paychecks annually and lead to huge costs for local governments that will translate into higher property tax bills for struggling families; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the governing body of the Township of Little Falls in the County of Passaic call up the State Health Benefit Commission to reconsider the rate increase and strike a rate increase that is appropriate in the current economic conditions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the governing body of the Township of Little Falls in the County of Passaic urge the legislature to adopt legislation expanding the composition of the State Health Benefits Commission to include representatives from both municipal and county government management; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Governor Murphy, State Treasurer Muoio, Senate President Scutari, Assembly Speaker Coughlin, Senators Kristin Corrado and Joseph A. Lagana, Assemblywoman Lisa Swain, Assemblymen Christopher T. Tully, Christopher DePhillips and Kevin J. Rooney, and New Jersey State League of Municipalities.

Bill List

RESOLUTION [D] 22-09-12 #4

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: Hablitz, Kahwaty, Seber, Vancheri, and Council President Sgobba
Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.

APPLICATIONS

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

RAFFLE, ST. GEORGE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH, ON -PREMISE 50/50, 10/01/22, 7:00 P.M. – 11:00 P.M., 237 LONG HILL ROAD, LITTLE FALLS

RAFFLE, ST. GEORGE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH, TRICKY TRAY, 10/01/22, 7:00 P.M. – 11:00 P.M., 237 LONG HILL ROAD, LITTLE FALLS

RAFFLE, OES CHAPTER #224, LITTLE FALLS, ON-PREMISE 50/50, 10/16/22, 1:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.

RAFFLE, OES CHAPTER #224, LITTLE FALLS, OFF-PREMISE 50/50, 10/16/22, 1:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.

RAFFLE, LITTLE FALLS FOOTBALL PARENTS ASSOCIATION, OFF-PREMISE 50/50, 10/22/22, 7:00 P.M. – 8: 00 P.M. 160 PATERSON AVENUE, LITTLE FALLS

BLUE LIGHT PERMIT, RYAN TOLOMEO, LITTLE FALLS FIRE DEPARTMENT

Poll: Ayes: Hablitz, Kahwaty, Seber, Vancheri, and Council President Sgobba
Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

Ordinance No.1445 - It was moved by Councilmember Kahwaty, seconded by Councilmember Hablitz, that there be introduced and the meeting of October 3, 2022, set as the date for the public hearing of the following:

ORDINANCE NO. 1445

ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL OF LITTLE FALLS, COUNTY OF PASSAIC, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, FURTHER AMENDING THE TOWNSHIP OF LITTLE FALLS CODE CHAPTER 7, ARTICLE I, SECTION 7-13, "PARKING PROHIBITED AT ALL TIMES ON CERTAIN STREETS"

WHEREAS, due to concerns regarding the health and safety of motorists and pedestrians in the Township, the municipal council of the Township (the "Municipal Council") seeks to amend the provisions of the current code section; and

WHEREAS, in furtherance of the proposed amendment to the Township Code of General Ordinances (the "Code") concerning the parking vehicles on the Township Roadways; and

WHEREAS, the Municipal Council has determined to amend Chapter 7, Article I, Section 7-13 of the Township Code to read as follows;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDINATED by the Municipal Council of the Township of Little Falls, Passaic County, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The aforesaid recitals are incorporated herein as though fully set forth at length.
2. The Municipal Council hereby amends Chapter 7, Article I, Section 7-13 of the Township Code to read as follows:

§7-13 Parking prohibited at all times on certain streets
A. No person shall park a vehicle at any time upon any streets or parts thereof described.

Name of Street	Side	Location
Main Street:		
c.	North	From a point 220 feet west of the easterly curbline of Center Avenue to William Street
j.	South	From the easterly curbline of William Street to a point 105 feet east of the easterly curbline of Center Avenue

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- 3. If any section, paragraph, subdivision, clause, sentence, phrase or provision of this Ordinance is declared unconstitutional or invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the remaining portions of this Ordinance.
- 4. A copy of this Ordinance shall be available for public inspection at the offices of the Township Clerk.
- 5. This Ordinance shall take effect after twenty (20) days of its final passage by the Municipal Council, upon approval by the Mayor and publication as required by law.

Poll: Ayes: Hablitz, Kahwaty, Seber, Vancheri, and Council President Sgobba
Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.

COUNCIL TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

Councilmember VANCHERI thanked everyone who participated in the 9-11 ceremony. He then discussed the planning of the Italian American Heritage Month flag raising in October. Lastly, he wished the athletes, coaches, and families the best of luck with the upcoming football and soccer seasons.

Councilmember SEBER announced the upcoming performances at the Farmers Market. Councilmember SEBER then reviewed the methods to sign up for the 5K which will occur on October 3, 2022.

COUNCILMEMBER KAHWATY requested motorists mind their speed as school is in session. He also commented on the first night football game on the turf this weekend. He then recalled attending a Town Hall meeting in Manville with Council President Sgobba on the spending of federal disaster relief money. Councilmember KAHWATY added the Township has sought a grant to aid the stabilization of the Peckman River banks.

Councilmember HABLITZ highlighted upcoming events at the Library including a free interactive workshop for neck pain on September 27th, a Book Club meeting on October 4th and 5th, and the New York Speaker Series tomorrow. Councilmember HABLITZ encouraged everyone to stop at the Library or Farmers Market on September 25th to obtain a library card. She then reviewed methods to sign up for the Townwide garage sale this Saturday. Lastly, on September 25th the Little Falls Biz will host the Fall Festival at Wilmore Park.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT SGOBBA reported the Pastabilities event hosted by the Senior Advisory Board was a great success. He announced Janet Cohen will be leaving the Senior Advisory Board and thanked her for all of her hard work. Lastly, the Harvest Moon Dance will be held on October 21st at the Civic Center.

Deputy Chief Bryan Prall reminded everyone that school is session and to be especially cautious of driving habits. He reported on a kickball event at the Little Falls school between the Police Department and the Teachers. He also reminded residents to follow the Police Department on FaceBook to see events and announcements. In response to Council President SGOBBA, Deputy Chief Prall noted that anything an individual can do to increase their visibility while walking or riding a bike or motorcycle is a good idea.

PUBLIC COMMENT – AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

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

Poll: Ayes: Hablitz, Kahwaty, Seber, Vancheri, and Council President Sgobba
Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.

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

Poll: Ayes: Hablitz, Kahwaty, Seber, Vancheri, and Council President Sgobba
Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, it was moved by Councilmember Kahwaty, seconded by Councilmember Vancheri, that the meeting be and it was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Cynthia Kraus
Municipal Clerk