

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

Monday, April 16, 2012

Council President Louis Fontana called the meeting to order at 9:00 p.m. with the following members present: Mercedes Gonzalez, Pamela Porter, Joseph Sisco and John Vantuno. Also present were Mayor Darlene Post, Township Attorney Lawrence Tosi, Township Auditor Gary Higgins, Municipal Clerk William Wilk and Township Administrator Joanne Bergin.

Absent: Township Engineer Dennis Lindsay

Township Employees present: Police Chief John Dmuchowski, DPW Superintendent Phillip Simone, CMFO/Treasurer Kathryn Albanese, William Schaffner, Tax Collector Denise Whiteside, Fire Chief Jack Sweezy, Fire Department President Michael Burke and Deputy Municipal Clerk Cynthia Meyer

Following the Salute to the Flag, the Statement of Public Notice was read.

STATEMENT OF PUBLIC NOTICE: Take notice that adequate notice of this meeting was 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 April 5, 2012; 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.

PUBLIC PORTION

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

Poll: Ayes: Gonzalez, Porter, Sisco, Vantuno and President Fontana
 Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.

Louis Fernandez, 54 Harrison Street, said he was shocked at the amount of bonds the Township continues to approve. He was informed by former Mayor Kulick that the Township currently has \$21 million in bonds. He also informed that the average tax appeal will be around \$400.00.

Al Attianese, 27 Dewey Avenue, referred to Resolution [A] on the agenda and asked how the members of the public can get a copy of the proposed Budget so they can understand the budget prior to coming to next week's meeting.

Rosemarie Bello-Truland, High Court, wished to address a topic from a prior meeting regarding Fire Company #1. She explained that these members have to go for EMT School and also for Fire Academy One. Without both of these training courses, they cannot be a regular member of the company; this is an issue. She commended Mrs. Bergin on the amount of work that was done on this topic so far. However, she would like to see some efforts on trying to revive the fire company and its volunteer status. There may be people in town who are interested in being a volunteer, but do not have the time to go through both training courses; they should have the option to do one or the other.

Al Attianese, 27 Dewey Avenue, in last week's PV Today, there was an article regarding Woodland Park, who recently approved their budget. He pointed out that Woodland Park has nearly the same overall population as Little Falls and provide the same services, but they have managed to keep their budget fairly low.

Ray Klepar, 8 Douglas Drive, questioned what will be done with the old Police Station. He asked if it would be demolished, and whether this was calculated into the costs of the current building construction.

Brian Reynolds, 7 Notch Road, referred to EMS issue and said this should have been stopped long ago; it should have been reviewed further before proceeding. Referring to the Police Station, he asked why the Council didn't know about any of the extra costs that they are now looking to bond. He voiced concern that the town shouldn't be spending any more money. He also pointed out that there are many important issues which have been brought to the Council's attention, but have not been addressed.

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

Poll: Ayes: Gonzalez, Porter, Sisco, Vantuno and President Fontana
 Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.

Council President FONTANA agreed with Mr. Fernandez's comments regarding bonding for the Justice Complex, but said they must do this.

Mr. Wilk explained that budgets have been available in the Clerk's Office for the past month. He explained that the introduction of the amendment to the Budget will be available to any member of the public starting tomorrow morning in his office.

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Council President FONTANA pointed out that Chief Sweezy agreed to look into the issues with Fire Company #1. He also commended Mrs. Bergin on all of her hard work so far.

Council President FONTANA said the old police station will require a lot of money to get it up and running again.

At this time, Mr. Tosi wished to comment that there was nothing illegally done regarding the EMS ordinance. He commended Chief Sweezy for putting this together.

REGULAR AGENDA

The following items were individually considered.

Waiver of Reading In Full of 2012 Budget – It was moved by Councilmember Gonzalez, seconded by Councilmember Porter, that the Council approve the following:

RESOLUTION [A] 12-04-16 - #1

Resolution Re: Waiver of Reading in Full of the 2012 Budget

WHEREAS, N.J.S. 40A:4-8 permits that the Budget as advertised may be read by its title providing that at least one week prior to the date of the hearing a complete copy of the approved budget shall

- a) be posted in a public place where public notices are customarily posted and at the free public library; and
- b) is made available to each person requesting the same during said week and during the public hearing; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Little Falls has complied with the aforesaid requirements.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Governing Body, the reading in full of the 2012 Budget be dispensed with.

Mr. Higgins explained that the date of the public hearing on the Budget was amended to take place this evening . He also explained that the waiver of the reading of the Budget is something that can be done if the budget has been provided to the Public Library for inspection at least one week prior to the hearing and also made available in the Clerk’s Office.

Poll: Ayes: Gonzalez, Porter, Sisco, Vantuno and President Fontana
Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.

Councilmember SISCO asked how it is possible to prepare a budget with over 400 pending tax appeals. Mr. Higgins pointed out that most other municipalities are dealing with tax appeals as well. He provided an explanation in detail, noting that the Division of Local Government Services is well aware of the current issues with tax appeals in NJ. This is a statewide problem and they will need to monitor the situation over the next few months to make sure they are within budget.

Mayor POST said they are also in the process of finding out from the State if they will be able to do a total reassessment in Little Falls. Councilmember SISCO voiced concern that many of the homes in town are for sale due to high taxes.

Mr. Higgins said there will be a public hearing on the introduced Budget this evening, which will consist of an approximated \$80 increase per home. He pointed out that this budget has the potential to be much higher. He also informed that there would be an amendment to this budget, which will be advertised in the newspaper this Friday. There will then be a public hearing on the amendment only next week. From that point, they will be able to adopt the Budget. He also made a suggestion that the Council increase the capital improvement fund by \$10,000 before approving the amendment this evening.

Public Hearing on 2012 Municipal Budget – It was moved by Councilmember Gonzalez, seconded by Councilmember Porter, that the public hearing on the 2012 Municipal Budget, be and it was opened.

Poll: Ayes: Gonzalez, Porter, Sisco, Vantuno and President Fontana
Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.

Brian Reynolds, 7 Notch Road, said the only way to stop the tax increases in town is to cut items in the Budget. He also said that the Police Station construction has gotten out of hand, and said a reassessment won’t do anything to help the residents.

Rosemarie Bello-Truland, High Court, explained that a reassessment would cut the cost and the problem of tax appeals. She also questioned the need for an ambulance in the Capital Budget.

No one further having come forward to be heard, it was moved by Councilmember Sisco, seconded by Councilmember Gonzalez, that the public hearing on the 2012 Municipal Budget be and it was closed.

Poll: Ayes: Gonzalez, Porter, Sisco, Vantuno and President Fontana
Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.

Council President FONTANA explained that there isn’t a lot to cut back on in the Budget; they are doing the best they can. Mayor Post pointed out that when you do a total reassessment, your County and School taxes are adjusted accordingly, so they too would be decreased if the town decided to do this.

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Poll: Ayes: Gonzalez, Porter, Sisco, Vantuno and President Fontana
 Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.

Award of 5-Year Fair and Open Contract to Grinnell Recycling for Vegetative Waste – It was moved by Councilmember Gonzalez, seconded by Councilmember Sisco, that the Council approve the following:

RESOLUTION [C] 12-04-16 - #3

WHEREAS, on February 24, 2012, the Township received proposals for the transportation and disposal of vegetative waste; and,
WHEREAS, on March 19, 2012, the Township awarded a 5 year (1/1/2012 to 12/31/2016) contract to Grinnell Recycling of Sparta ,
NJ for said transportation and disposal; and,

WHEREAS, upon submittal of documents following the award, Grinnell Recycling opted to change the disposal location and offer a new operator,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, because the new information does not conform with what was submitted in the proposal package, the Township Council does hereby cancel the award of March 19, 2012 and directs the Superintendent of Public Works to seek new proposals for the transportation and disposal of vegetative waste.

Mr. Wilk provided an explanation of this resolution.

Poll: Ayes: Gonzalez, Porter, Sisco, Vantuno and President Fontana
 Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.

Payment of Air Permit Fee to the NJDEP – It was moved by Councilmember Gonzalez, seconded by Councilmember Vantuno, that the Council approve the following:

RESOLUTION [D] 12-04-16 - #4

WHEREAS, the Township of Little Falls requires an air permit from the NJDEP for a gasoline storage tank; and

WHEREAS, payment must be supplied to the NJDEP before the permit can be issued;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Treasurer is hereby authorized to make payment to the NJDEP in the amount of \$410.00 for an air permit for a gasoline storage tank.

Poll: Ayes: Gonzalez, Porter, Sisco, Vantuno and President Fontana
 Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, it was moved by Councilmember Gonzalez, seconded by Councilmember Vantuno, that the meeting be and it was adjourned at 9:46 p.m.

William E. Wilk
Municipal Clerk

Cynthia Meyer
Deputy Municipal Clerk