

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

Saturday, February 11, 2012

Council President Darlene Post called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. with the following members present: Louis Fontana, Mercedes Gonzalez, Joseph Sisco and John Vantuno. Also present were Township Attorney Joseph Trapanese, Municipal Clerk William Wilk, Township Administrator Henry Underhill and Township Grant Writer Joanne Bergin.

Absent: Township Engineer Dennis Lindsay

Township Employees present: Police Chief John Dmuchowski, Officer John Vanak, Officer Edward Drweiga, DPW Superintendent Phillip Simone, OEM Coordinator Alfred Batelli 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 bulleting board at the Municipal Building, located at 225 Main Street, Little Falls, N.J. on February 9, 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.

Council President POST asked Councilmember Fontana to act as the Council President for the duration of this meeting.

Councilmember FONTANA explained that the purpose of this meeting is for the Council members to be able to interview the candidates for Interim Mayor. He said the public would be able to give their remarks during the public portion.

PUBLIC PORTION

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

Poll: Ayes: Fontana, Gonzalez, Post, Sisco and Vantuno
 Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.

Ralph Nuzzo, 100 Woods Road, thanked former Mayor DeFrancisci, explaining that he did a wonderful job. He was proud of the way the Mayor and Council worked together. He explained that he doesn't have a problem with a current official being chosen as the interim mayor, noting that they are elected officials already. He also voiced his opinion that candidates having a financial background will not help, as there are professionals to assist in the budget process. He said he was impressed with Councilmember Post and thought she should be chosen.

Bill Natusch 133 William Street, referred to flood mitigation and explained that he would like to stay in Little Falls, but doesn't wish to be bought out. He wished to thank Mr. DeFrancisci, Mrs. Bergin, Mr. Hans Prell, Mr. Paul Huggins and everyone else who has worked to relieve flooding issues in town. He urged the Mayor and Council to continue to focus on flooding remedies and suggested that a current elected official be chosen to be the interim mayor.

Arnold Korotkin, Long Hill Road, said there are questions about the process to select an interim mayor, but was appreciative that this meeting was open to the public.

Hans Prell, 119 William Street, explained that he has lived in Little Falls for many years and is the Chairperson of the Flood Board, who has made some major accomplishments. He was proud of former Mayor DeFrancisci for all of the things he has done to help alleviate flooding; he commended Mrs. Bergin for her efforts as well. He voiced his support for Councilmember Post to be chosen as interim mayor, noting that he believes her focus will stay on the flooding issues.

Alfred Attianese, 27 Dewey Avenue, explained that he is one of the candidates being considered for interim mayor. He wished to clarify that all of the candidates are elected officials, as they have been elected to serve on the County Committee.

Cindy, Bangaree, 54 Zelif Avenue, thanked former Mayor DeFrancisci and Mrs. Bergin for all of their efforts with regard to flood mitigation. She hoped the Council would continue to work on this no matter who is chosen to fill the seat of interim mayor.

Louis Fernandez, 54 Harrison Street, voiced his opinion that the majority of the residents would like to see Councilmember Post chosen to be the interim mayor. He explained that she has been leading the town since Mr. DeFrancisci resigned and said the taxpayers of Little Falls had elected her. He expressed his support for Councilmember Post.

Lynn Nuzzo, 100 Woods Road, voiced her opinion that the highest member of the governing body should be the person chosen to fill this seat, noting that she is in support of Councilmember Post.

Phyllis Dillon, 25 Riker Avenue, explained that she is not concerned with who is chosen to be interim mayor, as long as that person's main focus is to continue working on the flooding problems in town. This is a very important issue.

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

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Poll: Ayes: Fontana, Gonzalez, Post, Sisco and Vantuno
Nays: None

The Council President declared the motion passed.

Councilmember FONTANA wished to clarify that each of the candidates presented to the Council for interim mayor are elected officials. He explained that each voting district has individuals who represent the democratic or republican parties. These candidates make up the Republican Committee.

INTERVIEW, NOMINATION AND APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM MAYOR

Alfred Attianese

Mr. Attianese respectfully declined to answer any additional questions this evening. He wished for his comments to be entered into the record. From the onset of this process, he has felt that the procedures have been manipulated. He explained that there were people who wished to be selected as a candidate for interim mayor who did not follow the correct procedure. Rather than coming before the Republican County Committee, they went directly to members of the Council to seek their support. He informed that an unexpected guest, from the Office of Scott Rumana, who said he was legal counsel, showed up to the Republican County Committee meeting, where their task was to discuss and listen to those wishing to be considered for interim mayor. This gentleman was told to attend the meeting to provide legal advice should it be needed. Mr. Attianese pointed out that this gentleman's advice was not sought or given during the meeting. At the end of the meeting, the gentleman commended the committee on an open discussion, giving everyone a fair and equal opportunity. Mr. Attianese said this gentleman's purpose was to act as Mr. Rumana's eyes and ears to report the outcome of the meeting and the discussions that took place.

He also pointed out that the Council has been given erroneous information regarding this process from the Office of the Township Attorney in recent weeks. The first issue was of who was to be Acting Mayor until an interim mayor was chosen. The former mayor wished for Mr. Underhill to fill that role, rather than the highest elected official, and the Township Attorney supported this idea. However, when his interpretation was challenged, he re-read the statute and reversed his position. During the last Council meeting, the Township Attorney informed that the Council had 30 days from the date in which the list of candidates was received, to take a vote and install an interim mayor. This too was questioned and subsequently corrected the following day.

Mr. Attianese informed that a recent article in the Passaic Valley Today Newspaper contained information regarding the background of each of the candidates. In the article Councilmember Post stated that her experience as a small business owner has given her the financial background to act as mayor. He informed that Mr. Radcliffe's background was also cited, noting his accomplishment's as follows: Master's Degree in Business Administration from Dartmouth University, Certified Public Accountant, partner in an accounting firm and providing assistance in the preparation of the Municipal Budget during the term of former mayor Eugene Kulick. He informed that he himself has a degree in Business Management and he took a whole year of accounting in college. However, he has realized that he is not the right person for this job, given the facts about finances. It has made him realize that they need a person with the strongest financial background to keep things in order. He hoped the Council would be logical and choose the person most capable of performing the job.

Darlene Post

Councilmember SISCO said he has been on the Council for eight years and has the most experience. However, because of his political party affiliation, he was not chosen as a candidate for interim mayor. He said he will vote on the candidate who has the background needed to get the job done. He also pointed out that he has been through four floods, and explained that Little Falls is becoming too expensive for Senior Citizens, which is a concern. He explained that he doesn't need to interview anyone, and said he would choose the candidate who he feels will be best for the position.

Councilmember GONZALEZ referred to the comments regarding flooding and voiced her opinion that everyone is in agreement that this is a very important topic. However, she explained that the town is also having some financial issues that need to be addressed right now, noting that they need someone who has the experience of working with the Budget. The financial issues must also be addressed.

Councilmember VANTUNO asked Councilmember Post what she would like to get done as interim mayor. Councilmember POST said she would like to start working on the Rose Street property, pointing out that the town needs more ratables. She explained that there are some items in the budget that need to be cut, adding that she always has the best interest of the town in her heart. She said she is willing to work with everyone together as a team to achieve a lot more.

Councilmember VANTUNO asked Councilmember Post what she would do to encourage shared services and Councilmember POST explained that although this is regularly discussed, the execution of shared services never seems to happen. She informed that there are some personal issues she would like to address should she become mayor, concerning shared services. She would also like to encourage shared services with the School Board.

In response to Councilmember FONTANA, Councilmember POST explained that there is a lot that can be done in the next ten months, noting that she is here to see things through. She also said that they need to have a better understanding of what is happening with the Justice Complex construction. She suggested meeting with department heads in Town Hall to discuss some items that can be accomplished.

Councilmember FONTANA asked Councilmember Post for some positive feedback regarding what has been done in town over the past few years. Councilmember POST listed a couple of recent accomplishments, including flood mitigation billboards, the fire call agreement with MSU and the 300th Anniversary Celebration.

In response to Councilmember VANTUNO, Councilmember POST informed that she plans to run for the seat of Mayor in the November election, noting that she loves serving Little Falls.

In response to Councilmember GONZALEZ, Councilmember POST agreed that she felt ready to confront every aspect of the town and said she will be strong enough to say no when necessary.

Donald Radcliffe

Councilmember SISCO said he served with Mr. Radcliffe and he respects him and his qualifications. He thinks he is the person they need, since he has no political agenda. He also pointed out that the obstacles he will face as interim mayor will not negatively impact him, as he will not be running for a mayor or council seat in November.

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Councilmember GONZALEZ said she didn't know Mr. Radcliffe before she ran for Council. She reiterated Councilmember Sisco's comments that Mr. Radcliffe will not be running for a political seat in November. She clarified with him his intention to take care of what needs to be done as interim mayor, and Mr. Radcliffe assured that he has no aspirations to run for any seat. He said he is doing this because he thinks he can make a difference in the town. He has a solid background in finance and management and he is willing to take the time out of his life to help the Township and make it a more affordable town. Councilmember GONZALEZ asked if he has any message for the flood victims. Mr. Radcliffe agreed that flooding is a top priority in Little Falls that he will certainly address.

Councilmember VANTUNO asked what short and long term projects he would aim to have completed over the next ten months. Mr. Radcliffe informed that contract negotiations are coming up and said he is familiar with this process. He added that these contracts will affect the town for the next couple of years, noting that the contracts must be fair to the employees and the taxpayers. He informed that there are several expenses that he would like to reduce to save money. In this way, he will be able to generate more surplus to affect next year's budget.

In response to Councilmember VANTUNO, Mr. Radcliffe agreed that shared services are a necessity. He would like to address shared services with the schools, the neighboring communities and MSU. They need to spend more time and effort with the college to benefit the town. He also referred to a bill in Congress regarding fees being assessed to students in the colleges. He doesn't think it is fair that they take up so much of the town's land, with no benefit to the Township. He thinks these tasks would be better accomplished by someone who doesn't have a political agenda so they can be objective. He reiterated that he will not run for Mayor in November.

Councilmember FONTANA asked if there is something big he would like to accomplish over the next ten months. Mr. Radcliffe said he would like to reduce expenses and labor negotiations, since this will have a long lasting impact on the town. Councilmember FONTANA asked Mr. Radcliffe what he thinks the town has done right over the past couple of years. Mr. Radcliffe said there has been progress made with flooding, although there are still areas that can be improved. He also said that the 300th Anniversary Celebration was a good thing for the town, as well as the billboards.

At this time, Councilmember Gonzalez nominated Donald Radcliffe. Councilmember Sisco seconded the nomination.

Poll:	Ayes:	Gonzalez and Sisco
	Nays:	Fontana and Vantuno
	Abstain:	Post

The Council President declared the motion passed.

Mr. Trapanese advised that an abstention does not count as a positive vote, and said they should move onto the next nomination.

Councilmember Fontana nominated Darlene Post. Councilmember Vantuno seconded the nomination.

Poll:	Ayes:	Fontana, Post and Vantuno
	Nays:	Gonzalez and Sisco

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 11:51 p.m.

William E. Wilk
Municipal Clerk

Cynthia Meyer
Deputy Municipal Clerk