

**MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COMMITTEE OF
THE TOWNSHIP OF WANTAGE, HELD AT THE WANTAGE TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL
BUILDING, 888 STATE HIGHWAY ROUTE 23, WANTAGE, N.J.,
ON MARCH 31, 2011**

Mayor DeBoer called the meeting to order, and requested the Clerk to call the roll. Upon roll call, the following members of the governing body were present: Mayor DeBoer, Committeeman Gaechter, Committeeman Bassani. Also present: Township Attorney Michael Garofalo. The following members were absent: None.

Mayor DeBoer stated, "This meeting is being held in compliance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, Public Laws 1975, Chapter 231. It has been properly noticed and posted to the public, and certified by the Clerk."

FLAG SALUTE

Mayor DeBoer invited all persons present to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag.

SCHOOL BUDGET PRESENTATIONS

Sussex Wantage School District: School superintendent Dr. Edward Izbicki and School Business Administrator Ms. Christina Riker offered a presentation of details regarding the proposed 211-12 School Budget of the Sussex Wantage Consolidated School District. Dr. Izbicki offered a summary of activities from the prior year, including technology upgrades, capital projects including indoor and outdoor repairs, and then offered a current review of curriculum. Ms. Riker offered a presentation on the proposed course of action for the coming school year, including revenue projections, appropriation updates, and Tax Levy comparisons.

Mayor DeBoer inquired regarding student enrollments, and the status of teacher retirements in the upcoming school year; Dr. Izbicki offered a response.

Mr. Bassani asked for clarifications on items of state aid, revenue details, capital expense details, the cost of salaries for instruction, and employee benefits. Dr. Izbicki offered a response.

Mr. Bassani asked if the Board would be pursuing aggressive negotiations for the next contract term, since so much of the budget revolves around teacher salaries and benefits. Dr. Izbicki responded in the affirmative.

General discussion took place on the topic of whether or not to open the meeting to the public at this time. After consideration, the governing body agreed to open the meeting to the public for any questions or comments they may have regarding the school budget, with the stipulation that the school representatives may take the input and questions back to the Board for their consideration, rather than to offer a response this evening.

Mayor DeBoer opened the meeting to the public.

Diane Snure, Mt. Salem Road, asked for clarifications on the topic of empty classrooms, retirees, solar panels project, and class size. Dr. Izbicki offered a response. Ms. Snure asked regarding the status of compliance with "No Child Left Behind". Dr. Izbicki stated he would bring this question back and provide a response to Ms. Snure in the future.

William Gettler, Gemmer Road, offered his input on the figures presented in the school analysis regarding an average Taxpayer; and questioned student population figures.

There being no one else wishing to address the governing body at this time, Mayor DeBoer closed the meeting to the public and the governing body returned to the regular order of business.

High Point Regional High School District: School Business Administrator Ms. Linda Alvarez offered a presentation of the proposed High School Budget for the coming year. Ms. Alvarez highlighted student accomplishments in the areas of sports and academics, and explained that in the proposed budget, expenditures are down 1.5%, the tax levy is up 1.8%, and state aid is increased over last year by more than \$227,000, but that is on the heels of last year's state aid reduction which was over \$1 million. Ms. Alvarez offered an explanation of "where the money goes", as well as tax analysis charts. Ms. Alvarez highlighted shared cooperative ventures, grant fundraising, and an analysis of staff reductions.

HPRHS Board of Education members Chuck Musilli, Edward Vander berg, and Ken Nelson offered input on their efforts and goals in preparing the proposed budget. Mr. Musilli pointed out the extremely large decrease in state aid these past several years, and pointed out that the board has eliminated over \$2 million from the school budget in the last two years. Mr. Nelson pointed out the negative impact of the Sussex Technical School's decision to assess tuition fees, and thanked the governing body for their efforts to protest this action. Mr. Vander berg expressed frustration with the challenge of maintaining student education standards in the face of severe and continuous resource depletion and budget cuts.

Mayor DeBoer observed that it is a very difficult economic environment for the general public right now, and it is difficult to accept seeing teacher salary increases in situations where others are losing their jobs and suffering so severely.

Mr. Musilli pointed out that at the time the current multiyear contract was negotiated, the settlement was below the then-county average for teacher contracts. Mr. Musilli stated it is understandable in hindsight to see what the Mayor is saying, but at the time, negotiations were conducted in good faith and achieve positive results based on the known conditions at that time.

Mr. Gaechter questioned regarding out of district special needs tuition; impact of coaching staff reductions in relation to teacher position reductions; Alternate Education Program details; and loss of transportation services. Ms. Alvarez offered a response.

Mr. Bassani, Mayor DeBoer, Mr. Vander berg and Mr. Musilli continued discussions regarding teacher salaries and the negotiated contract.

Mr. Bassani sought clarifications on the topics of the use of state aid, staff reductions, and Vice Principal positions. Ms. Alvarez offered responses.

Mayor DeBoer, Mr. Musilli, and Ms. Alvarez discussed the problem of substance abuse in high schools, and methods for combatting this.

Mr. Gaechter requested a clarification on the status of the existing teacher contract. Mr. Musilli confirmed that they are in the third year of a 3-year contract, so the next round of negotiations will be coming up.

Mr. Bassani requested clarification on the number of board members on the HPRHS Board of Education. Mr. Vander berg responded that the number was nine, and offered the break out by municipality of board representation.

Mayor DeBoer opened the meeting to the public.

William Gettler, Gemmer Road, offered comments regarding the county budget, cost distribution of the sending districts for the high school, and offered his input regarding the figures for per-town percentage contributions for the school budget break out.

Diane Snure, Mt. Salem Road, inquired if any thought had been given to including Montague students into the High Point Regional System. Ms. Alvarez stated that such discussions have been held in the past and are currently being discussed.

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Kevin Craig, Wantage resident, commended the school boards and the governing body for their efforts and accomplishments in dealing with difficult budget restrictions during troubling economic times.

There being no one else present wishing to address the governing body, Mayor DeBoer closed the meeting to the public and the governing body continued with the regular order of business.

Mr. Cliff Doll and Mr. Chuck Maillet of PPC Design offered a presentation on the solar panel roof project currently being pursued by the Sussex Wantage school system and the Sussex Fire Department. Mr. Doll reviewed options for the Wantage governing body if they wished to enter into a shared service agreement with the school for this project at the Wantage municipal complex site.

General questions and answers took place among the members of the governing body and Mr. Doll. After review and consideration, Mayor DeBoer directed Mr. Doherty to place this topic on the agenda for further consideration and action at the April 7 meeting of the governing body.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor DeBoer requested that the members of the Committee review the Consent Agenda. Mr. Bassani requested separate consideration for items #4 and 5 on the proposed consent agenda. There being no other comments on the proposed Consent Agenda, Mayor DeBoer requested approval of the Consent Agenda items # 1, 2 and 3.

Mr. Gaechter moved to approve the following Recycling Tonnage Grant Resolution:

WHEREAS, The Mandatory Source Separation and Recycling Act, P.L.1987, c.102, has established a recycling fund from which tonnage grant may be made to municipalities in order to encourage local source separation and recycling programs; and

WHEREAS, It is the intent and the spirit of the Mandatory Source Separation and Recycling Act to use the tonnage grants to develop new municipal recycling programs and to continue and to expand existing programs; and

WHEREAS, The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection has promulgated recycling regulations to Implement the Mandatory Source Separation and Recycling Act; and

WHEREAS, The recycling regulations impose on municipalities certain requirements as a condition for applying for tonnage grants, including but not limited to, making and keeping accurate, verifiable records of materials collected and claimed by the municipality; and

WHEREAS, A resolution authorizing this municipality to apply for the 2010 Recycling Tonnage Grant will memorialize the commitment of this municipality to recycling and to indicate the assent of The Mayor and Committee of Wantage Township to the efforts undertaken by the municipality and the requirements contained in the Recycling Act and recycling regulations; and

WHEREAS, Such a resolution should designate the individual authorized to ensure the application is properly completed and timely filed.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Wantage that Wantage Township hereby endorses the submission of the recycling tonnage grant application to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and designates James R. Doherty to ensure that the application is properly filed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the monies received from the recycling tonnage grant be deposited in a dedicated recycling trust fund to be used solely for the purposes of recycling.

Mr. Bassani seconded the motion. Upon roll call,

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

Mr. Gaechter moved to approve rescinding authorization to release Clove Hill Manor Escrow funds re: SP-04-01. Mr. Bassani seconded the motion. Upon roll call,

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

Mr. Gaechter moved to approve 2010 Appropriation Reserve Transfer Resolution in the amount of \$750.00. Mr. Bassani seconded the motion. Upon roll call,

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

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After general discussion and review, Mr. Bassani moved to authorize Foley, Incorporated to act as the Authorized Installer of the NJDEP Diesel Retrofit Program on behalf of Wantage Township. Mr. Gaechter seconded the motion. Upon roll call,

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

After general discussion and review, Mr. Bassani moved to approve 2011 renewal of Soil Removal Certification for Foothill-Acres Farm (Hamming).

Mr. Gaechter seconded the motion. Upon roll call,

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

Administrator's Report

SOIL REMOVAL OPERATIONS: Mr. Doherty referred the governing body to his status report on soil removal operations within Wantage Township, stating that all operations will need to renew their application fee and obtain a positive report from the Township Engineer.

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE FORMS: Mr. Doherty reminded the governing body to file their disclosure forms.

CIVIL SERVICE UPDATE - COURT STAFF: Mr. Doherty stated that actions to comply with civil service regulations are ongoing.

OGDENSBURG ANIMAL CONTROL: Mr. Doherty reported that negotiations with Ogdensburg are ongoing.

NEGOTIATIONS: Mr. Doherty reported that the collective bargaining agreements for 2010-2011 are in place with the Office Staff bargaining unit and the DPW bargaining unit. The Township will need to begin negotiations for the next contract at some point this year. Mr. Doherty desires to alert the Union representatives that Wantage is ready to sit and begin negotiations. In order to do so, the governing body will need to discuss strategy and goals at a future meeting.

Mr. Bassani offered to serve as the governing body representative during negotiations.

BUDGET UPDATE: Mr. Doherty suggested placing this matter on the agenda for discussion on April 7.

Attorney's Report: Mr. Garofalo requested a brief executive session on the topic of litigation.

Township Committee Member Reports

Mayor DeBoer initiated a discussion regarding the status of efforts to clean up the Tarrats property on Route 565. Mr. Doherty was directed to look into this.

Mr. Gaechter offered an update report on activities of the Land Use Board, noting that the application of Zummo for property on Route 565 involving composting will be continued at the next board meeting.

Mr. Bassani reported that he has been conducting budget review with CFO Michelle La Starza, and complimented Ms. La Starza on her cooperation and helpfulness.

OLD BUSINESS

CLOVE HILL MANOR IMPROVEMENTS

After general review and consideration, Mr. Bassani moved to call the Letter of Credit for the Clove Hill Manor project in the amount identified by Township Engineer Harold Pellow in his report of March 29, 2011, in order to complete the improvements at the Clove Hill Manor Development. Mr. Gaechter seconded the motion. Upon roll call,

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

NEW BUSINESS:

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Bassani moved to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Wantage governing body held on March 10, 2011. Mr. Gaechter seconded the motion. Upon roll call,

Ayes: Gaechter, DeBoer **Nays:** None **Absent:** None **Abstain:** Bassani

OPEN PUBLIC SESSION

Mayor DeBoer opened the meeting to the public at this time, for any questions or comments involving the good and welfare of the community.

William Gettler, Gemmer Road, offered comments regarding the Solar Panel roof project as it may be affected by wind and/or snow load on roofs; his desire for a tax cut; his view on the closing of the Sussex Wantage Swim Club; the High Point High School budget; and offered a complaint regarding the number of photocopies he was given in response to a recent OPRA request.

Ann Smulewicz, Route 23, expressed concern with the conditions present on the Rachel Manor property.

Mayor DeBoer stated his belief that completion of the Rachel Manor site has been compromised because of the economy, and asked Mr. Doherty to have the Engineer conduct a site visit at Rachel Manor, and take action as may be deemed necessary and appropriate in response to that site visit.

At this time, Mr. Gaechter moved to enter into closed executive session as follows:

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act, P. L. 1975, Chapter 231 permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Wantage, that the public shall be excluded from discussion of the following matter(s):

Pending litigation in which the public body is a party, specifically: Gorman v. Wantage Township.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Minutes will be kept on file in the municipal clerk's office, and once the matter involving the confidentiality of the above no longer requires that confidentiality, then the minutes shall be made public.

Mr. Bassani seconded the motion. Upon roll call,

Ayes: Gaechter, Bassani, DeBoer **Nays:** None **Absent:** None **Abstain:** None

After meeting in closed executive session, Mayor DeBoer declared the meeting to be back in open session.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items for the attention of the governing body, Mr. Gaechter moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Bassani seconded the motion. Upon Roll call,

Ayes: Gaechter, Bassani, DeBoer **Nays:** None **Absent:** None **Abstain:** None

Mayor DeBoer declared this meeting adjourned.