

**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 FEBRUARY 23, 2012**

Mayor Gaechter 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 Gaechter, Committeeman DeBoer, and Committeeman Bassani. The following members were absent: None. Also Present: Township Attorney Michael Garofalo.

Mayor Gaechter 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."

Mayor Gaechter led the assembly in the salute to the American Flag.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Gaechter requested that the members of the Committee review the Consent Agenda.

Mr. Bassani requested the Bill List be removed from the Consent Agenda for separate consideration.

Mayor Gaechter requested action on the Consent Agenda, excluding the bill list.

Mr. Bassani moved to approve the following applications:

- Raffle application RA12-05 to PTO Sussex Wantage, to conduct an on premise merchandise raffle on 4/27/12
- Raffle application RA12-06 to PTO Sussex Wantage, to conduct an on premise 50/50 raffle on 4/27/12
- Raffle application RA12-07 to Woman's club Sussex, to conduct an on premise merchandise raffle on 3/22/12
- Raffle application RA12-08 to Woman's club Sussex, to conduct an on premise 50/50 raffle on 3/22/12
- Raffle application RA12-09 to Beemerville Presbyterian Church, to conduct an off premise merchandise raffle on September 27, 2012

Mr. DeBoer seconded the motion. Upon roll call,

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

Mr. Bassani moved to confirm authorization for Mayor to sign the Developer's Agreement with Christian Leone Properties, in accordance with recommendation of the Township Attorney. Mr. DeBoer seconded the motion. Upon roll call,

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

Mr. Bassani moved to approve municipal consent for Coin Toss by Colesville Fire Company on Route 23 for May 25 through May 28; June 30 through July 2; and August 31 through September 3, 2012, provided proper State NJDOT use permits are obtained.

Mr. DeBoer seconded the motion. Upon roll call,

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

Mr. Bassani moved to authorize refund of \$1,906.64 to US Bank, for a tax lien redemption on Block 44 Lot 31. Mr. DeBoer seconded the motion. Upon roll call,

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

Mr. Bassani moved to authorize refund of \$ 4,060.52 to William S. Winters, Esq, for a tax appeal on Block 42.05 Lot 15. Mr. DeBoer seconded the motion. Upon roll call,

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

Mr. Bassani moved to authorize refund of \$ 615.49 to Richard & Paulette Touw, for reimbursement of a tax overpayment on Block 130 Lot 6.08.

Mr. DeBoer seconded the motion. Upon roll call,

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

Mr. Bassani moved to authorize refund of \$8,500.00 to Royal Tax Lien Services, for tax sale premium on Block 133 Lot 17.03. Mr. DeBoer seconded the motion. Upon roll call,

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

**CONSENT AGENDA, Continued**

**Mr. Bassani moved to authorize renewal of Soil Removal Certification for Foothill Acres Farms for 2012. Mr. DeBoer seconded the motion. Upon roll call,**

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

**Mr. Bassani moved to authorize renewal of Soil Removal Certification for Lois H. Wright for 2012. Mr. DeBoer seconded the motion. Upon roll call,**

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

**Mr. Bassani moved to authorize renewal of Soil Removal Certification for Charles & Audrey Sargent for 2012. Mr. DeBoer seconded the motion. Upon roll call,**

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

**Mr. Bassani requested Mr. Doherty and Ms. La Starza work diligently to address the need for greater clarity and explanation on the proposed bill lists. Mr. Doherty agreed to do so.**

**Mr. Bassani moved to approve the Bill List for the meeting of February 23, 2012, not including the bill for Check #17843. Mr. DeBoer seconded the motion. Upon roll call,**

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

**Mr. Bassani moved to approve the Bill for Check #17843, being a bill to Bassani Power Equipment, LLC in the amount of \$49.61. Mr. DeBoer seconded the motion. Upon roll call,**

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

**ADMINISTRATOR REPORT**

**Vacancy on Recreation Commission: Mr. Doherty invited Mayor Gaechter to address several vacancies on the Board of Recreation Commissioners.**

**In accordance with the powers vested in the office of Mayor by municipal ordinance, Mayor Gaechter appointed Mario Poggi to replace Kevin Carey as Regular Board member, with the term ending 12/31/2012, and Kristy Tuper to replace Evelyn Baig as Alternate #2 on the Recreation Commission for a term running through 12/31/2014.**

**Release of Executive Session Minutes: Per the recommendation of Mr. Doherty, Mr. Bassani moved to release the following Executive Session Minutes:**

**11/10/11: partial release.**

**10/27/11: partial release**

**10/20/11: full release.**

**09/29/11: full release.**

**05/12/11: partial release.**

**Mr. DeBoer seconded the motion. Upon roll call,**

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

**Auditor Input on Tax Collection Rate:**

**General review and consideration was given to a suggestion by the Auditor concerning the tax collection rate to be utilized in the 2012 municipal budget, and the impact that would follow on the 2012 municipal tax burden. No action was taken at this time, with the governing body members agreeing to revisit the issue at the meeting of March 8, 2012.**

**Laser I Request: General review took place regarding a letter from Edward Mainardi dated February 16, 2012, which requests that a referendum question be placed on the ballot for the November 2012 election regarding the New Jersey Amusement Games Licensing Law. After general review and discussion, the members of the governing body requested Mr. Doherty invite Mr. Mainardi to the next meeting on March 8, to further discuss the request being made.**

**Staffing in Assessor Office:**

**At Mr. Doherty's request, Mr. Bassani moved to accept, with regrets, the resignation of Colleen Ragnetti from employment with Wantage Township.**

**Mr. DeBoer seconded the motion. Upon roll call,**

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

ADMINISTRATOR REPORT, Continued

Mr. Doherty requested an executive session to review proposed changes to staffing which would affect the terms and conditions of employment of several current employees of the Construction Department and Land Use Board. Mr. Doherty stated for the record that Rice Notices had been presented to all employees involved in this discussion, and they would be invited to be present for these said discussion in closed session, in accordance with the requirements of law.

In Rem and Property Sale Recommendation:

The members of the governing body expressed consensus for Mr. Doherty and Mr. Garofalo to proceed with the process of In Rem Tax Foreclosure and subsequent sale of Township-owned property, as recommended by Mr. Doherty.

ATTORNEY REPORT: None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Mr. Bassani asked for an update report on the transition from Jan Mar Alarm to ABCode Alarm. Mr. Doherty offered that update report, explaining the transition is scheduled for the termination dates of the current Jan Mar contracts.

Mr. Bassani asked if the FEMA Storm Cost reimbursement funds had yet been received. Mr. Doherty responded that they have not.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS

Approval of Minutes

Mr. DeBoer moved to approve the Regular and Executive Session Minutes of the meeting held on February 9, 2012. Mr. Bassani seconded the motion. Upon roll call,  
Ayes: DeBoer, Bassani, Gaechter    Nays: None    Absent: None    Abstain: None

OPEN PUBLIC SESSION

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

Mr. William Gettler, Gemmer Road, informed of a meeting he was holding on March 3, 2012 at the Library to discuss the Compliance Plan; expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of several public employees; reviewed issues from the Consolidation Study process; reviewed issues from the Airport Study; and reviewed issues from the Compliance Plan, all of which Mr. Gettler suggested leads to the need to terminate the employment of Wantage Township Administrator Jim Doherty. Mr. Gettler also offered comments regarding the details of a recent Government Records Council decision on a complaint Mr. Gettler filed regarding the handling of various OPRA requests by Mr. Doherty from the year 2009. Mr. Gettler and Mr. Garofalo engaged in discussion regarding the details of that decision. After several minutes of discussion over this matter, Mayor Gaechter thanked both individuals for their input.

Mr. Gettler stated that, based on an article he read in the NJ Herald, it appears the Wantage governing body is eligible for pension benefits after having raised their salaries to \$6,000 each last year. Mr. Gettler stated that this was not made known to the public at the time the salaries were raised last year.

Mr. Scott Sorensen addressed the governing body at this time, offering a presentation of efforts by the Sussex Wantage Swim Club to re-open the Lake Neepaulin Swimming Pool. Mr. Sorensen requested consideration of the Township in forgiving some or all of back taxes owed, explaining that the group is a tax-exempt Non-profit group, and if they had filed the correct paperwork with the Assessor the amount of taxes due would have been reduced or eliminated.

**PAGE FOUR OF THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 23, 2012**

General discussion and review of this request took place at this time among the governing body members, Mr. Garofalo, Mr. Sorensen, and Ms. Karen Merritt.

Mr. Bassani asked if the group could provide a business plan to verify the likelihood of short term and long term sustainability. Mr. Sorensen explained various goals of the group.

The members of the governing body expressed a desire to give further review and consideration to this request prior to making a decision.

Mr. Gettler asked if the property being discussed above was a swamp. Mr. Sorensen answered that it was not.

Ms. Diane Snure, Mt. Salem Road, initiated a discussion regarding the need for members of the public to obtain permits for already-installed wood burning stoves. Mayor Gaechter and Construction Official Patrick Stefanelli explained that the goal was to protect public safety and help residents avoid insurance coverage complications in the event of a fire.

Ms. Merritt offered input on this topic as well.

Mr. Rocco Russo asked about how to handle a situation in which a wood burning stove was already installed at the time a house was purchased, but the new owner is not sure whether or not a permit was ever obtained. Mayor Gaechter and Mr. Stefanelli suggested that the Township would have a record to verify whether a permit was ever obtained. Mr. Bassani suggested that in the absence of any definitive knowledge, it would be wisest to act on the side of caution and have an inspection done.

Mr. Gettler inquired regarding the details of an inspection for a stove. Mr. Stefanelli offered a response.

There being no one else present wishing to address the governing body at this time, Mayor Gaechter closed the meeting to the public.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mr. Bassani 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 matters: Matters affecting the terms and conditions of employees within the Construction Department and Land Use Office.

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. DeBoer seconded the motion. Upon roll call,

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

After meeting in closed executive session, Mayor Gaechter declared the meeting reconvened in open session and the governing body returned to the regular agenda.

Mr. Bassani moved to approve the proposed staffing changes discussed in closed executive session in accordance with Mr. Doherty's recommendation, including an interdepartmental transfer of Kim Moore from the Construction Department to the Assessor Department; Acknowledging formal sharing of work duties for Stella Salazar jointly for the Land Use Office and the Construction Office; and authorizing Mr. Doherty to contact the White Collar Union Representative for the purpose of negotiating a salary adjustment for Rosanne Werner.

Mr. DeBoer seconded the motion. Upon roll call,

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

**ADJOURNMENT**

**There being no further items for the attention of the governing body, Mr. DeBoer moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Bassani seconded the motion. Upon roll call,  
Ayes: Bassani, DeBoer, Gaechter Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None**

**Mayor Gaechter declared this meeting adjourned.**

---

**James R. Doherty, Municipal Clerk**