

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF
WANTAGE, HELD AT THE WANTAGE TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 888 STATE
HIGHWAY 23, WANTAGE, N.J. ON JANUARY 17, 2013**

Mayor Bassani called the meeting of the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Wantage to order, and requested the Clerk to call the roll. Upon roll call, the following members of the governing body were present: Mayor Bassani, Committeemen Gaechter, DeBoer. The following member was absent: None.

Also present: CFO Michelle La Starza

Mayor Bassani led those present in the Salute to the Flag.

Mayor Bassani 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."

BUDGET

Mayor Bassani announced that the previously scheduled meeting of January 24, 2013 has been cancelled. The budget work session which had been scheduled to take place on that date will instead take place during the regular meeting scheduled for January 31, 2013.

Mr. Doherty stated that the items for discussion this morning included the Public Works Department, Insurance, Capital and Debt Planning, and consideration of a salary request from the CFO. The governing body members expressed a preference to discuss the salary request in closed executive session under the negotiations exception of the Open Public Meetings Act.

The members of the governing body reviewed Public Works Department budget requests for 2013. Joining the governing body for this discussion was DPW Supervisor Bob Wagner, Assistant Supervisor Mark Little, and Mechanic John Card.

Mr. Doherty reviewed the proposed allocations for operating expenses, vehicle repair and maintenance, safety equipment, and capital projects anticipated for the year.

Mr. Wagner suggested having a contractor do reclamation on the portion of Holland Road that Township engineer Harold Pellow had previously suggested be done in house by the DPW. Mr. Wagner suggested that the scope of the project exceeds the capability of in house work product. The governing body requested Mr. Wagner to contact Mr. Pellow and ascertain what the price would be for this.

Mr. Card suggested the Township add to its capital plan with a purchase of a Used Bucket Truck in 2013, which he estimated might cost \$30,000. The governing body agreed to give further consideration to this request as their budget plans progressed.

The governing body reviewed the cost of placing snow fence on a number of problem area streets within the Township where snow drifts tend to be excessive. Mr. Little presented quotations he obtained from various vendors for the costs of fencing and posts. Mr. Doherty estimated that it would take about \$15,000 to complete such a project, and recommended the money come from the Snow Removal Trust Fund, which currently has a balance of about \$200,000. Mr. Doherty pointed out that the snow fence would not prevent snow drifts from occurring, but would serve as a means by which the extent of those snow drifts could be reduced as a public safety precaution for the general public.

The members of the governing body expressed support for this plan, anticipating that most of the fencing would probably need to be implemented for the winter of 2014 because of the need to contact property owners for permission to put the fence up, and because of weather conditions currently hindering the ability to drive posts into the ground. Mayor Bassani requested if possible, to consider one or two locations for this year, most notably along Pidgeon Hill Road for addressing the safety of the heavy traffic volume involving High Point High School. Mr. Wagner suggested the stretch along Sherman Ridge Road was also a very high priority.

The members of the governing body thanked Mr. Wagner, Mr. Card and Mr. Little for joining them for this meeting.

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Discussion turned to Insurance. The governing body reviewed proposed budget levels for General Liability Insurance, Worker Compensation, and Employee Bonds with Scott Readlinger, Township Risk Management consultant on behalf of the Statewide Insurance Fund.

Mr. Readlinger reviewed two proposed additional coverage endorsements, one for protection against claims involving the Fair Labor Standards Act, and the other for claims arising from business invitees who create exposure to potential harassment claims.

After review and consideration, the governing body expressed consensus for including these additional coverage endorsements in the insurance plan for 2013, at an additional premium cost of \$2,640 total.

The members of the governing body thanked Mr. Readlinger for joining them for this meeting.

Mr. Doherty explained that they were still awaiting confirmation on 2013 budget levels for Health Insurance. Mayor Bassani requested Mr. Doherty to review what potential future budget impact could be expected from Obamacare implementation at the federal level.

Discussion turned to debt obligation. Mr. Doherty stated that, as requested by the governing body, he and CFO Michelle La Starza analyzed the choices of continuing with the current budgeting plan of Temporary Financing through Bond Anticipation Notes, versus pursuing a Permanent Refinancing Bond to solidify all existing debt and take advantage of low interest rates.

Mr. Doherty stated his conclusion was that it would be preferable to keep utilizing temporary financing strategy at least through the year 2014, when current permanent debt will be retired. Mr. Doherty pointed out that utilizing temporary financing allows the governing body to either front-load, back-load, or middle-load debt obligations for given Bond Ordinances over a ten year period, which allows flexibility to maintain a more evenly distributed debt burden in the budget from year to year.

Mr. Doherty pointed out that going to permanent refinancing too soon, before existing permanent debt is paid off, would solidify debt obligations that must be satisfied each year, and would create a yo-yo effect on tax burden over the next eight to ten years as prior permanent debt, new permanent debt, and future bond ordinances collide with their various redemption dates.

OPEN PUBLIC SESSION

Mayor Bassani opened the meeting to the public for any questions or comments.

Ann Smulewicz, Route 23, inquired the names of the DPW employees who were present. The members of the governing body responded. Ms. Smulewicz stated she was impressed with these gentlemen's presentations, especially Mechanic John Card. Ms. Smulewicz then expressed concerns with SECTV Cable Television rates and service levels; the members of the governing body expressed their agreement and understanding with Ms. Smulewicz' position. Ms. Smulewicz then offered comments and observations regarding JCP&L, which prompted general discussion of that topic among the members of the governing body.

William Gettler, Gemmer Road, questioned the need to enter executive session to discuss the CFO Salary request, since it was obvious she would be requesting a salary reduction, and then stated he was only joking.

Mr. Gettler then suggested a desire to see the snow removal budget reduced, suggesting that the worst year of snowfall should be identified, increasing that cost 10 - 15% for inflation, and using that as a base mark for budgeting needs. Mayor Bassani asked Mr. Doherty if he could undertake the analysis suggested for information purposes, and Mr. Doherty agreed to do so.

As there was no one else from the public who wished to address the Committee, Mayor Bassani closed the meeting to the public.

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Mr. Gaechter moved to enter into closed executive session as follows, with the motion being seconded by Mr. DeBoer:

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: Negotiations with CFO Michelle La Starza.

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.

Upon roll call,

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

After meeting in closed Executive Session, Mayor Bassani declared the meeting to be reconvened in regular open session, and the members of the governing body continued with the regular order of business.

As there was no further business to discuss, Mr. DeBoer moved to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Gaechter seconded the motion. Upon roll call,

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

Mayor Bassani declared this meeting to be adjourned.

James R. Doherty, Administrator/Clerk