

**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 14, 2013**

Mayor Ron Bassani 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 Bassani, Committeeman DeBoer, and Committeeman Gaechter. The following members were absent: None.

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."

**FLAG SALUTE**

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

**DISCUSSION: HIGH POINT REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL**

At this time, the members of the governing body held general discussion with Paul Derin, the President of the Sussex Wantage Board of Education, regarding the anticipated budget and tax impact for 2013 from the High School, and various initiatives and programs being pursued. Mr. Derin was joined by Alice Bressett, Business Administrator; Dr. Terrance Brennan, Acting School Superintendent; and Board members Kyle Vealey and Robert Genetelli.

Mr. DeBoer initiated a discussion on the topic of the Vocational Technical schools curriculum, costs, and impact on public high schools.

Mr. Gaechter initiated a discussion on the anticipated impact that the inclusion of Montague's students into HPRHS will have. Dr. Brennan stated his expectation that everyone will wind up a winner by assimilating Montague's students into the High Point High School. Mr. Derin stated that the phase in would begin in September of 2014.

Mayor Bassani expressed an interest in reviewing areas of cooperation between the Township and the school district, including shared service ventures and grant writing opportunities. Dr. Brennan agreed this would be beneficial to review and consider.

Mayor Bassani complimented the Board on achieving a school budget that would have a zero tax impact on the 2013 taxpayer compared to 2012. Dr. Brennan pointed out that this was done without having to negatively affect any existing programs at the high school.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor Bassani requested that the governing body Review the Consent Agenda.

Mr. DeBoer moved to approve the following reports for filing:

- Registrar Report for February 2013
- Construction Report for February 2013
- Tax Collector Report for February 2013
- Board of Health Report for February 2013
- Municipal Clerk Report for February 2013

Mr. Gaechter seconded the motion. Upon Roll call,

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

Mr. DeBoer moved to authorize the refund of \$25,199.27 to US Bank, Block 163 Lot 23.01 for Tax Sale Certificate 12-39, and \$8,900.00 to US Bank, Block 163 Lot 23.01 for Tax Sale Premium. Mr. Gaechter seconded the motion. Upon Roll call,

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

**CONSENT AGENDA, Continued**

Mr. DeBoer moved to amend the minutes of the meeting held on January 31, 2013, as follows:

WHEREAS, the draft minutes of January 31, 2013 had included the following summary of statements made during the open public session:

“Douglas Ricker, Beemer Road, spoke with respect to Mr. Gettler’s manner of presenting himself when speaking, offering statements of support for Mr. Gettler’s attention to details, such as the compliance plan issue from last year.”, and

WHEREAS, upon consideration at the meeting of February 12, 2013, the governing body was given reason to believe that this paragraph was incorrect and therefore amended the draft minutes prior to approval to read:

“Douglas Ricker, Beemer Road, spoke with respect to Mr. Gettler’s manner of presenting himself when speaking, offering statements of support for Mr. Gettler’s attention to details.”, and

WHEREAS, upon further review of the recorded statements from that meeting, it has become clear that the original wording of the draft minutes was in fact correct;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Committee of the Township of Wantage in the County of Sussex does hereby amend the subject paragraph within the minutes of January 31, 2013 to read:

“Douglas Ricker, Beemer Road, spoke with respect to Mr. Gettler’s manner of presenting himself when speaking, offering statements of support for Mr. Gettler’s attention to details, such as the compliance plan issue from last year.”

Mr. Gaechter seconded the motion. Upon Roll call,

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

Mr. DeBoer moved to Endorse the Application of Colesville Fire Department to conduct Coin Toss Fundraiser on various dates during the year 2013 on State Highway 23.

Mr. Gaechter seconded the motion. Upon Roll call,

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

**Administrator’s Report**

Mr. Doherty announced that two essays have been submitted under the Louis Bay II Future Leaders Scholarship Contest, and that Mayor Bassani shall be naming a review committee to select a Wantage representative for this contest.

Mr. Doherty offered an update of various activities planned by the Recreation Commission.

Mr. Doherty requested the governing body review their schedules to see if any of them are able to attend the Sussex Wantage Little League Opening Day Parade and Ceremonies. Mayor Bassani has already indicated he has a prior commitment on the day of this event.

Mr. Doherty summarized the response that he provided to a request by the YMCA for consideration of mobile food markets being set up in Wantage. Mr. Doherty informed the YMCA that while Wantage appreciates their efforts to promote a healthy diet and lifestyle, this particular concept would come into conflict with the already-established and successful farmer’s markets of Wantage Farmers.

**Attorney Report** None

**Township Committee Member Reports**

Mayor Bassani offered information regarding the upcoming route 23 Realignment project through Sussex Borough, which will have an impact on traffic flow in Wantage.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Early Voting Bill Opposition**

At Mayor Bassani’s request, Mr. Doherty offered an update on the status of consideration by the State Legislature on a proposed bill which would create early voting locations within each county.

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Mr. Gaechter moved to adopt the following resolution:

**A RESOLUTION OPPOSING SENATE BILL S-2364 AND ASSEMBLY BILL A-3553 WHICH PROPOSE TO EXPAND THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR REGISTERED VOTERS TO CAST THEIR BALLOTS AT AN ELECTION WITHIN THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY.**

WHEREAS, Senate Bill S-2364 and Assembly Bill A-3553 propose to expand the opportunities for registered voters to cast their ballots at an election within the State of New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, the goal of accommodating voters in pursuit of greater participation in the democratic process is a worthy goal; but

WHEREAS, the said bills as they are currently drafted involve proposals that would increase workloads, add more costs to the election process, and ultimately serve to confuse voters more than it would accommodate their needs; and

WHEREAS, the opportunity for "Early Voting" already exists in the State of New Jersey through the Vote by Mail ballot process.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Committee of the Township of Wantage in the County of Sussex does hereby oppose Bill S-2364 and Bill A-3553 for the following reasons:

1. These proposed bills, if adopted into law, will create conflicts with already-existing statutory requirements of the election process as found in NJSA Title 19 and Title 40A.

2. The requirement that various polling places must be kept open throughout the County in excess of 80 hours a week, 7 days a week for two weeks before an election will create additional expense on County Boards of Election, who will be required to staff this said polling place with poll workers who will be required to handle voters that come from several voting districts within numerous municipalities as opposed to a single voting district at each polling place on election day.

3. The Sussex County Board of Elections points out that the average age of Poll workers in Sussex County is 72 years. The Bills would require complete re-training of poll workers on how to handle Early voting Elections; many current poll workers will not be interested or physically capable of staffing polling places for such extended periods of time; hiring new poll workers and training them will be required; costs will be incurred in transporting election materials to and from each early voting location every day in order to maintain chain of custody for protecting the integrity of the ballots cast; overtime costs would be incurred for staffing the Board of Elections offices each day and each evening, all of which adds up to excessive additional expense.

4. These Bills create an excessive conflict creating an unreasonable and unrealistic 80 hour work week for Municipal Clerks who are required, by law, to be in their offices during the hours that polls are open for an election. Additionally, many municipalities now rely on their Public Works employees to set up and take down polling places, which will have to be done 27 times during the course of a year if these bills are adopted into law, compared with the twice a year work load currently in place. This will create overtime issues on municipalities.

5. The use of a municipal building for seven (7) days a week, for two (2) weeks prior to the election, for up to 12 hours a day in order to accommodate the requirements of early voting locations, will create an inherent conflict with already-scheduled court sessions, meetings of governing bodies, meetings of various boards such as Planning Boards, Zoning Boards, Recreation Commissions, and Boards of Health, which will require re-scheduling and postponing hearings on applications before those bodies, in turn creating inconvenience for the general public and increased costs for the municipality.

6. The Bill Sponsors themselves estimate that tens of millions of taxpayer dollars will have to be spent annually if these bills are adopted into law, and it will be done to address a need that does not exist. Current state law allows a voter to download a Vote By Mail Ballot application (or receive one by mail), mail in that application, receive a Vote By Mail ballot, and cast their ballot, without ever having to leave their own home or business location.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Township Committee of the Township of Wantage does hereby call upon its representatives in the State Legislature to oppose the adoption of these bills.

AND, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution shall be sent to the Office of the Governor, the Sponsors of Bill S-2364 and Bill A-3553, Senator Stephen Oroho and Assemblywoman Alison McHose and Assemblyman Space, the Sussex County Board of Elections, and the New Jersey League of Municipalities

Mr. DeBoer seconded the motion. Upon Roll call,

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

**Introduction of Ordinance 2013-05**

Mr. DeBoer moved to introduce on first reading, Ordinance 2013-05 entitled "AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION FOR THE PREPARATION AND ISSUANCE OF A COMPLETE PROGRAM FOR REASSESSMENT OF REAL ESTATE FOR USE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WANTAGE TAX ASSESSOR", with a final hearing date set for March 28, 2013.

Mr. Gaechter seconded the motion. Upon Roll call,

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

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Introduction of 2013 Wantage Municipal Budget**

Mr. DeBoer moved to Approve for Introduction the 2013 Wantage Township Municipal Budget, with a public hearing date scheduled for April 25, 2013, as follows: Be it Resolved, that the following statements of revenues and appropriations shall constitute the Municipal Budget for the year 2013;

Summary of Revenues	Anticipated	
	2013	2012
1. Surplus	\$ 625,000.00	\$ 648,500.00
2. Total Miscellaneous Revenues	\$ 1,763,475.00	\$ 1,430,688.00
3. Receipts from Delinquent Taxes	\$ 920,000.00	\$ 850,000.00
4. a) Local Tax for Municipal Purposes	\$ 3,318,819.00	\$ 3,352,877.00
b) Addition to Local District School Tax		
Total Amount to be Raised for Support of Municipal Budget	\$ 3,318,819.00	\$ 3,352,877.00
Total General Revenues	\$ 6,627,294.00	\$ 6,282,065.00

Summary of Appropriations	2013 Budget	Final 2012 Budget
1. Operating Expenses: Salaries and Wages	\$ 1,438,940.00	\$ 1,427,448.00
Other Expenses	\$ 2,166,038.00	\$ 2,154,320.00
2. Deferred Charges & Other Appropriations	\$ 422,014.00	\$ 329,800.00
3. Capital Improvements	\$ 430,000.00	\$ 241,850.00
4. Debt Service (Included for School)	\$ 959,705.00	\$ 906,605.00
5. Reserve for Uncollected Taxes	\$ 1,210,597.00	\$ 1,222,042.00
Total General Appropriations	\$ 6,627,294.00	\$ 6,282,065.00
Total number of Employees	24 F/T, 12 P/T	25 F/T, 13 P/T

**2013 Dedicated Water/Sewer Utility Budget**

Summary of Revenues	Anticipated	
	2013	2012
1. Surplus	\$ -	
2. Total Miscellaneous Revenues	\$ 117,725.00	\$ 120,033.00
3. Deficit (General Budget)	\$ -	\$ -
Total General Revenues	\$ 117,725.00	\$ 120,033.00

Summary of Appropriations	2013 Budget	Final 2012 Budget
1. Operating Expenses: Salaries and Wages		
Other Expenses	\$ 117,725.00	\$ 120,033.00
2. Deferred Charges & Other Appropriations		
3. Capital Improvements		
4. Debt Service		
5. Surplus (General Budget)		
Total General Appropriations	\$ 117,725.00	\$ 120,033.00
Total number of Employees	None	None

Balance of Outstanding Debt			
	General	Water Utility	Utility - Other
Interest	\$ 1,811,717.13		
Principal	\$ 1,988,670.16		
Outstanding	\$ 3,800,387.29		

Be it Further Resolved, that said Budget be published in the New Jersey Herald In the issue of April 8th, 2013.

Mr. Gaechter seconded the motion. Upon roll call,

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

**Introduction of Ordinance 2013-06**

Mr. DeBoer moved to introduce on first reading, Ordinance 2013-06, entitled “AN ORDINANCE RATIFYING NUNC PRO TUNC THE AUTHORITY OF WANTAGE TOWNSHIP TO ENTER A CO-BORROWER AGREEMENT WITH THE FRIENDS OF LAKE NEEPAULIN FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE REPAIR OF THE LAKE NEEPAULIN DAM.” Mr. Gaechter seconded the motion. Upon roll call, Ayes: DeBoer, Gaechter, Bassani Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None

**Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Gaechter moved to adopt the minutes of the Regular and Executive Session minutes of February 28, 2013. Mr. DeBoer seconded the motion. Upon roll call, Ayes: DeBoer, Gaechter, Bassani Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None

**OPEN PUBLIC SESSION**

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

Ann Smulewicz, Route 23, requested further clarification on the High School Budget. Mayor Bassani responded that the proposed budget would have a flat tax in 2013 compared to 2012, as would the municipal budget.

William Gettler, Gemmer Road, offered his views on the county portion of the tax rate; requested a copy of the Wantage Township budget; offered views on tax appeals and his efforts to convince people not to submit an appeal because of the pending reassessment; and inquired regarding the status of preparing bid specifications for the Reassessment. Mr. Doherty responded to the question regarding the specifications. A general discussion took place at this time regarding the Township’s procedures for review and approval of bills.

Douglas Ricker, Beemer Road, reported on a matter of illegal dumping, which he reported to the state police; and offered input from Maxx Span Realtors regarding various auctions they have conducted for municipalities involving farmland that was deed restricted prior to sale. Mayor Bassani and Mr. Ricker spoke briefly regarding the status of the Open Space Committee and efforts to find an agreeable meeting date.

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

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

Mayor Bassani declared this meeting adjourned.