

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP
OF WANTAGE, HELD AT THE WANTAGE TOWNSHIP BUILDING, 888 STATE ROUTE 23,
WANTAGE, NJ, HELD AT 7:00 P.M. ON
March 14, 2019**

Mayor Bassani called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and requested that the Clerk call the roll. Upon roll call, the following members of the governing body were present: Mayor Ronald Bassani, Deputy Mayor Jonathan Morris and Committeeman William Gaechter. Also, present: Administrator/Clerk Debra Millikin and Mr. Glenn Kienz, Esq.

Mayor Bassani stated, "This meeting is being held in compliance with the provisions of the Open Public Meeting Act, P.L. 1975, Chapter 231. It has been properly noticed and certified by the Clerk."

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Bassani requested a motion to approve Resolution #44-2019 through Resolution #46-2019, and monthly reports for February: Board of Health, Clerk, Construction, Dog, Driveway, Escrow, Housing, Land Use, Property Maintenance, Registrar, Tax Collector, and Zoning.

A motion was made Mr. Morris and seconded by Mr. Gaechter

Upon Roll Call:

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

TOWNSHIP OF WANTAGE

RESOLUTION #44-2019

RESOLUTION APPROVING BILLS AND VOUCHERS FOR PAYMENT

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Wantage in the County of Sussex that payment is hereby approved for all vouchers that have been properly authenticated and presented for payment, representing expenditures for which appropriations were duly made in 2018 and 2019 Budgets adopted by this local Governing Body, including any emergency appropriations, and where unexpended balances exist in said appropriation accounts for the payment of such vouchers.

TOWNSHIP OF WANTAGE

RESOLUTION #45-2019

AUTHORIZING REFUND OF LAND USE FESS FOR BLOCK 18,
LOT 43

WHEREAS, the Land Use Secretary has recommended the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Wantage reimburse funds for a completed Land Use Application.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Committee of the Township of Wantage, County of Sussex, does hereby authorize the refund of

\$39.00 to RBND, LLC, Block 18 Lot 43, Route 23, for Land Use Application L-15-12.

TOWNSHIP OF WANTAGE

RESOLUTION #46-2019

AUTHORIZING REFUND FOR REDEMPTION OF TAX SALE CERTIFICATE
FOR BLOCK 46, LOT 7

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector has recommended the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Wantage reimburse funds for redemption of a tax sale certificate.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Committee of the Township of Wantage, County of Sussex, does hereby authorize the refund of

\$21,317.33 to US Bank Cust For PC5 Sterling National, Block 45 Lot 7, 720 Route 23, for tax sale certificate 16-10.

REPORTS

Clerk/Administrator – Mrs. Millikin advised there were 20 OPRA request in February. Most were routine. This number includes the two OPRA requests received by Mr. Caggiano. He was sent a letter regarding the information the Township fulfilled for his request and the money owed for the paper work. As of tonight, the Township still has not received payment for the information. Discussion ensued on this matter.

Mrs. Millikin stated she had forwarded information to the Township Committee regarding the New Jersey Herald feature on Sussex/Wantage and wanted to know if the Township was interested in doing something. Mrs. Millikin suggested calendar of events advertisement. Discussion ensued and it was agreed to just provide the calendar of events for 2019 at a cost of \$105.00.

Mrs. Millikin advised she got the information requested on the sign in front of the Municipal Building. Mayor Bassani stated that the information that was provided the size is small as well as concern about the graphics. He was also concerned about the lumens control. The Committee would like to explore other options.

Mrs. Millikin questioned if anyone planned on attending the SCLOM event on the Legalization of Marijuana Forum. Mayor Bassani advised he will be attending.

Mrs. Millikin advised she will be at Clerk Seminar on the 21st of March. She will be out of the office on March 22nd going to Nashville, TN on the 22nd till the 24th.

Attorney – Mr. Kienz has nothing to report.

Mayor/Committee – Mayor Bassani stated that him and Mrs. Millikin met with Eastern Concrete regarding their future plans which will be 20 to 30 years more of mining. They are planning on buying some parcels around the property on Blair including one of Bicsak

parcels. Mayor Bassani advised that he did question the ever greens planted on Route 23 and requested there be more plantings. Eastern would look into this matter but they lease this parcel from Bicsak. Mayor Bassani indicated the product on Route 23 will be gone by the end of 2019 and everything will move to the back parcel. Mrs. Millikin advised this will be going in front of the Land Use Board for approval. Mr. Gaechter questioned regarding the sewer utilization. Mrs. Millikin advised that it is my understanding that some of the sewer would be purchased with the Bicsak Parcel.

Mayor Bassani also advised that the closing for the Berry Road parcel is scheduled for March 21st. Mayor Bassani discussed the new legislation being proposed regarding C-1 streams and the effect that the buffer will be increased from 150 to 300 feet. He advised the Township reached out to Green Acres and they advised that the legislation will take a couple of years and that from their standpoint to move forward with the purchase of this property and still committed to the purchase of the Berry Road parcel. Discussion ensued on this matter. Mayor Bassani advised that the Township is working on public comment regarding the pending legislation and supply why we feel this property should be excluded.

Mayor Bassani stated that with Mrs. Millikin leaving he is appointing Joseph Konopinski to replace Mrs. Millikin for the remainder of the year or until the new Administrator decides to sit on the Lane Use Board.

Mayor Bassani also stated the Township received a very professional letter from Mr. Haggerty. Thanked him for his many years of service for Wantage.

Mayor Bassani stated there was a piece in the Herald regarding obesity in the County. He wanted to congratulate Deb Fisher who is a nurse at Wantage School for her efforts. Mayor Bassani stated some statistics out of Sussex County Elementary School Children out of 6,867 students observed. 2,143 were overweight, 1,042 were obese, and 713 were morbidly obese. Mrs. Fisher has adopted this program race to good nutrition to help these children.

Mayor Bassani had one last item has been speaking with the owner of an old cemetery on Route 23 were a Mr. Howe was buried. The Open Space Committee is looking at the potential of this property and maybe working with a potential Historic Society.

Committeeman Morris – He was unable to attend the SWAC Meeting, but is part of a subcommittee regarding NJDEP Issues.

Committeeman Gaechter – None

OLD BUSINESS - none

NEW BUSINESS

PROCLAMATION

Mayor Bassani read this into the Record.

PROCLAMATION
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

WHEREAS, child abuse and neglect is a complex and ongoing problem in our society, affecting many children; and,

WHEREAS, every child is entitled to be loved, cared for, nurtured, feel secure and be free from verbal, sexual, emotional and physical abuse, and neglect; and

WHEREAS, child abuse and neglect not only directly harm children, but also increase the likelihood of criminal behavior, substance abuse, health problems, and risky behavior; and

WHEREAS the effects of child abuse are felt by communities as a whole, and need to be addressed by the community; and

WHEREAS, effective child abuse prevention programs succeed because of partnerships among families, social service agencies, schools, religious and civic organizations, law enforcement agencies and the business community;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Township of Wantage does proclaim April as Child Abuse Prevention Month, and calls upon all citizens, community agencies, faith groups, medical facilities, and businesses to increase their participation in our efforts to support families, thereby preventing child abuse and strengthening the communities in which we live.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE

Mayor Bassani stated a motion is in order to approve on first reading Ordinance #2019-03 ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2019 (N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45,14)

A motion was made by Mr. Morris and seconded by Mr. Gaechter.

Upon Roll Call:

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Bassani stated a motion is in order to approve the minutes of the Mayor and Committee Special Meeting February 28, 2019, Regular Meeting, February 28, 2019 and Executive Session Meeting on February 28, 2019.

A motion was made by Mr. Morris and seconded by Mr. Gaechter.

Upon Roll Call:

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

OPEN PUBLIC SESSION

Mayor Bassani opened the meeting to the public.

Mr. Wisse – Valley View, the Easter Egg Hunt is coming up on April 7th at Woodbourne Park. The Elks March 23 Casino Trip and Salute to Veterans on May 19th.

Mrs. Kathy Gorman – Fernwood Road, questioned if the Township has a cruelty officer. Mrs. Millikin advised she believes this fall's under Sussex County Prosecutor's Office. Based on the issue that occurred at Winding Brook Farm with the cows she wants to make sure the Township is protected.

There being no other public this portion of the meeting was closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Bassani request a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss Personnel, Contract Negotiating & Pending Litigation. Mayor Bassani also indicated when the Committee comes out of Executive Session there will be a discussion on the Budget. Mr. Kienz read Resolution #47-2019 into the record.

TOWNSHIP OF WANTAGE

RESOLUTION #47-2019

EXECUTIVE SESSION MARCH 14, 2019

WHEREAS, the Township of Wantage is subject to certain requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6, et seq.; and

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12, provides that an Executive Session, not open to the public, may be held for certain specific purposes when authorized by Resolution; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary for the Township Committee of the Township of Wantage to discuss in a session not open to the public certain matters relating to the item authorized by N.J.S.A. 10:4-12b and designated below:

- (1) Personnel – Administrator Search
- (2) Contract Negotiations – Blue Collar, Court Shared Service
- (3) Litigation – When Pigs Fly

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Wantage, assembled in public session on March 14, 2019, that an Executive Session closed to the public shall be held on March 14, 2019, at 7:31 PM in the Township of Wantage Municipal Building, 888 Route 23, Wantage, NJ, for the discussion of matters relating to the specific item designated above.

It is anticipated that the deliberations conducted in closed session may be disclosed to the public upon the determination of the Township Committee that the public interest will no longer be served by such confidentiality.

A motion was made by Mr. Morris and seconded by Mr. Gaechter.

Upon Roll Call:

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

A motion to come out of Executive Session was made by Mr. Gaechter and seconded by Mr. Morris. The Committee ended Executive Session at 8:38 p.m.

Upon Roll Call:

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

Mr. Kienz stated no action will be taken on items discussed tonight except the Berry Road Parcel. Mayor Bassani stated the Committee is to take action to continue on the purchase of the Berry Road parcel.

Mayor Bassani requested a motion to reaffirm the procurement of the Berry Road Parcel for Open Space.

A motion was made by Mr. Morris and seconded by Mr. Gaechter.

Upon Roll Call:

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

2019 BUDGET DISCUSSION

Mr. Kienz stated he would leave for this discussion since he is not involved with the budget. Mrs. Millikin advised that the budget needs to be introduced by March 29th or the meeting right after March 29th. She advised that the operation by \$150,000 for this year. In the end the tax rate will be going up from .294 to .303 and an increase of \$24.07 for an averaged assessed home. Mrs. Millikin would provide the averaged assessed value to the Township Committee. Discussion ensued on this matter.

Mrs. Millikin questioned the Township Committee on the budget the way it is presented is due to the bond notes being increased from 1.24% to 3.5% and also the RUT was higher from last year due to the prepaids from 2017. Mayor Bassani stated he was disappointed that the interest rate was not caught prior to it occurring. Mrs. Millikin indicated this maybe why the Township should do permanent finance. Discussion ensued on this matter and how to make sure this is addressed going forward. Mr. Gaechter also stated the bank account interested should be checked since we were only making ¼%

Mayor Bassani stated the Township has continued to work over the past decade to keep taxes down and flat and making a minimum. The Committee has no control over the County of Sussex nor the School Board. Mayor Bassani asked the Committee for comments. Mr. Morris indicated that unfortunately keeping a flat budget you end up with an increase. He discussed that you need to do a small increase yearly so you are not hit with a huge increase. Mr. Gaechter stated general revenues are down. The revenues are down about \$100,000 plus the Bond Note interest and this has been absorbed into the budget. Also, he predicted last year with the tax law changes of all the prepaid. This is not a spending problem, but a revenue problem. Mayor Bassani stated the Committee is ready to introduce the budget for the March 28th Meeting.

Mayor Bassani requested a Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Morris and seconded by Mr. Gaechter.

Upon Roll Call:

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra Millikin, Municipal Clerk