

**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
May 9, 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: Acting Administrator Mrs. Jeanne McBride.

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."

Public Hearing of 2019 Budget

Mayor Bassani requested a motion to adopt resolution #63-2019 adoption of 2019 Municipal Budget.

Tom Ferry from Ferraioli, Wielkocz, Cerullo & Cuva Auditors office and Michelle LaStarza Wantage Township CFO joined through speaker phone. Page 2 Mr. Ferry talked about the Net Value Taxable, Tom mentioned between this year and last year there was an increase of \$2,500,000 or .21%. The 2019 budget is \$6,300,000 and last year's budget was \$7,400,000 decrease of \$1,100,000 there was no loss of any money just anticipated grant money, the decrease was due two grants \$800,000 and \$333,000. Tom stated one tax point equates to \$120,000 and explained how it pertains to a household increase.

On page 3 Tom Ferry spoke about the Analysis of Budgeted revenues and stated we anticipated \$137,400 less in fund balance, and in local revenues anticipated \$31,000 less. Tom stated local revenues are court, fees and permits. The State Aid \$789,000 has not changed and hasn't changed in about fifteen years. Tom spoke about shared services there is \$74,000 more coming in. Public and Private revenues were down due to the one-shot grant received. Delinquent taxes are up \$24,000 due to lower tax collection rates. The Amount to be raised by taxes in 2019 is \$3,600,000 last year was \$3,500,000 Tom explained how the increase was broken down \$10 increase per \$100,000 \$20 per \$200,000 assessed value.

On Page four a pie chart depicted Wantage Township revenues.

Page 5: bulk, of appropriations are municipal purposes, salary and wages, this year's other expenditures, \$3,300,000 last year it was \$3,500,000. Other operations stayed the same, shared services are up \$49,000, public and private grants decreased \$1,026,000. The Capital improvement fund has less money going into that \$206,000, debt increased \$180,000, deferred charges or emergency charges decreased \$44,000. Uncollected Taxes is a statutory required appropriation. The State of New Jersey requires us to put a dollar amount in, Tom stated the municipalities are the collection agencies for the School and the County. At the tax collection rate of 97.5% we have to raise \$768,000 in Reserve for Uncollected Taxes.

On Page 7 the 5 Year analysis of tax collection rate is at 97.36% last year 98.06% which looks like the highest over the past 5 years.

Page 8 is the estimated rates and dollar amounts that needs to be collected for the County and Schools and explained the actual tax collection for 2018. The Municipal purpose tax is \$3,642,000 and last year was \$3,520,000. The assessed value this year is \$.30 and last year was \$.294 an increase of \$.009 tax increase is not near the 2% allowable increase. The bottom of the page shows the 5-year analysis with the last 4 years being actual and this year being an estimate. In 2015 our tax rate was \$.295 and in 2019 it was \$.305. Tom Ferry spoke about his favorite schedule and recommended every tax collector have one hanging on their window, a breakdown on how dollars are spent, it was explained \$.1147 goes towards Wantage Township operations, \$.19 goes towards Open Space, \$.22 goes to the County and \$.66 goes towards the Schools.

Tom Ferry spoke about the Water budget, on the revenue side there is \$1,700 less and on page 10 it shows Sewer rents in and Sewer rents out to SCMUA, page shows the expense amount to SCMUA \$128,000.

Tom Ferry handed out a cheat sheet and it's a basic breakdown on what was presented, 5 year break down on what fund balance was. 2013 fund balance was \$904,000 and 2018 \$921,000. Fund balance has been up and down and hasn't changed in the last 5 years. The average assessed home in Wantage Township is \$254,452 and in 2018 the assessed value was \$254,616, 1 tax point on each assessed home was \$25.04. The taxes on the Average house just municipal was \$747.62 not including County and School, the 2019 Introduced Budget would be \$771.53 or \$23.91 annually or \$1.99 a month. Tom ferry explained that Wantage Township is the fifth lowest in the county for tax rate.

Tom Ferry talked about the Township Debt, it has increased slightly and has always been around the \$5,000,000 mark. Tom Ferry explained that the state is way behind and some municipalities can't adopt because the state has not reviewed their budgets. Mr. Ferry mentioned once the Public hearing is over Wantage can Adopt the resolution to approve the 2019 Budget

Mayor Bassani asked if there were any questions from the board.

Committeemen Gaechter spoke about the Debt Service increase and how we were doing temporary bonding at a low rate and the rates more than doubled, Tom Ferry mentioned he was seeing 2% or 3% for Bonding. Committeemen Gaechter asked if we didn't have an increase in our debt service that our tax rate would've been flat or even lower. Tome Ferry responded absolutely. Committeemen Gaechter asked how do we keep an eye on this with fluctuating rates and thought we should've been locked in at a permanent lower rate rather than have it double in one year. Tom Ferry asked Michelle via speaker phone if we had a financial adviser and Mrs. LaStarza responded with no and Mr. Ferry mentioned about Phoenix Advisors. Tom Ferry stated that he doesn't really deal with Bonding an that a financial advisor does it all the time and we should get an advisor to give watch the markets for us. Mr. Ferry spoke about Wantage is at the \$7,000,000 mark which is a good chunk of money and a lot of people would be putting offers in. We need to do an offering statement to open up to more brokerages. Mayor Bassani stated we need to stay on top of it. Committeemen Gaechter stated it is very disappointing that we work very hard to keep costs down and we are actually spending less but our taxes are going up because of forces that are beyond our control, and when

we are dealing with \$7,000,000 with a slight fluctuation you are dealing with more money. Committeemen Gaechter asked if a financial advisor would give recommendation on what to do or are, they in control of that \$7,000,000 Mr. Ferry stated they give you recommendations and due Bond and Note sales all the time. Mayor Bassani mentioned when Michael gets backs have him get back to committee about possible Financial Advisors.

Mayor Bassani opened the discussion to the public for the 2019 Budget.

Allison Orsi asked the Committee to explain Debt Service. Mayor Bassani and Committeemen Gaechter both responded and discussion ensued. Mayor Bassani stated we bond that money and pay it back over time, but we have to pay it back plus interest. Mayor Bassani explained that interest rates went up and that hit us and hit us o the tune that we had to raise taxes. She then asked about uncollected taxes Mayor Bassani explained that unfortunately about 2.5% of taxes that we need to collect will not come in on time. Committeemen Gaechter stated we have to pay the Schools and County tax and that they get their money regardless.

Mayor Bassani closed it to the public.

Mayor Bassani asked for a motion for Resolution #63-2019 Adoption of Wantage Town Municipal Budget. A Motion was made by Committeemen Morris and seconded by Committeemen Gaechter.

Upon Roll Call:

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

TOWNSHIP OF WANTAGE

RESOLUTION #63-2019

RESOLUTION ADOPTING 2019 WANTAGE TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUDGET

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Wantage in the County of Sussex Adopting the 2019 Wantage Township Municipal Budget in the amount of \$6,154,844.00, which results in an increase tax rate of .303.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this is a true copy of a Resolution duly adopted by the mayor and Committee of the Township of Wantage at a meeting held on May 9, 2019 in the Wantage Township Municipal Building, 888 Route 23, Wantage, New Jersey.

Jeanne M. McBride, Acting Municipal Clerk

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Bassani requested a motion to approve Consent Agenda excluding Purchase Order #16179 for Bassani Power Equipment in the amount of \$288.06

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

Upon Roll Call:

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

Mayor Bassani requested a motion to pay Purchase Order #16179 to Bassani Power Equipment LLC in the amount of \$288.06

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

Upon Roll Call:

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

TOWNSHIP OF WANTAGE

RESOLUTION #-2019

AUTHORIZING REFUND

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector has recommended the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Wantage reimburse funds for tax overpayments resulting from veteran's deductions allowed for 2019.

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

\$2,324.07 to Alexander Razumov, Block 45 Lot 17.05, 71 Neepauln Drive for tax overpayment.

\$327.34 to John Lewis, Block 21 Lot 3, 53 Walnut Street, for tax overpayment.

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CERTIFICATION: I hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a resolution duly adopted by the Township Committee of the Township of Wantage, in the County of Sussex, New Jersey, at a meeting held on May 9, 2019.

Jeanne McBride, Acting Clerk/Administrator

RESOLUTION #65-2019

BUDGET SELF EXAM

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A-4-78b has authorized the Local Finance Board to adopt rules that permit municipalities in sound fiscal condition to assume the responsibility, normally granted to the Director of the Division of Local Government Services, of conducting the annual budget examination, and

WHEREAS, N.J.A.C. 5:30-7 was adopted by the Local Finance Board on February 11, 1997, and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:30-7.2 through 7.5 the Township of Wantage has been declared eligible to participate in the program by the Division of Local Government Services, and the Chief Financial Officer has determined that the local government meets the necessary conditions to participate in the program for the 2019 budget year, so now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the governing body of the Township of Wantage that in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:30-7.6a & band based upon the Chief Financial Officer's certification, the governing body has found the budget has met the following requirements:

- 1 That with reference to the following items, the amounts have been calculated pursuant to law and appropriated as such in the budget:
 - a. Payment of interest and debt redemption charges
 - b. Deferred charges and statutory expenditures
 - c. Cash deficit of preceding year
 - d. Reserve for uncollected taxes
 - e. Other reserves and non-disbursement items
 - f. Any inclusions of amounts required for school purposes
- 2 That the provisions relating to limitation on increases of appropriations pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A4-45.2 and appropriations for exceptions to limits on appropriations found at 40A:4-45.3 et seq. are fully met (Complies with the "CAP" law)
- 3 That the budget is in such form, arrangement, and content as required by the Local Budget Law and N.J.A.C. 5:30-4 and 5:30-5.
- 4 That pursuant to the Local Budget Law:
 - a. All estimates of revenue are reasonable, accurate, and correctly stated,

- b. Items of appropriation are properly set forth
 - c. In itemization, form, arrangement, and content the budget will permit the exercise of the comptroller function within the municipality.
- 5 The budget and associated amendments have been introduced and publicly advertised in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Local Budget Law, except that failure to meet the deadlines of N.J.S.A. 40A:4-5 shall not prevent such certification.
- 6 That all other applicable statutory requirements have been fulfilled. Certification:

I hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a resolution duly adopted by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Wantage, New Jersey at a meeting held on April 26, 2018.

Jeanne McBride, Acting Administrator/ Clerk

TOWNSHIP OF WANTAGE

RESOLUTION #66-2019

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.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this is a true copy of a Resolution duly adopted by the mayor and Committee of the Township of Wantage at a meeting held on May 9, 2019 in the Wantage Township Municipal Building, 888 Route 23, Wantage, New Jersey.

Jeanne McBride Acting Clerk/Administrator

TOWNSHIP OF WANTAGE

RESOLUTION #67-2019

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY QUALIFIED PURCHASING AGENT AND ESTABLISHING BID THRESHOLD FOR SAME

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A40A:11-9 et seq, regulates the requirements of the Qualified Purchasing Agent, and

WHEREAS, the Township of Wantage desires to appoint a Temporary Qualified Purchase Agent, and

WHEREAS, the Township of Wantage desires to keep the bid threshold remaining at the current maximum.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that by the Township Committee of the Township of Wantage, County of Sussex, does hereby appoint Michael Restel Temporary Qualified Purchasing Agent and authorizes the bid threshold for the Township of Wantage remain at the current maximum.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this is a true copy of a Resolution duly adopted by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Wantage at a meeting held on May 9, 2019, in the Wantage Township Municipal Building, 888 Route 23, Wantage, New Jersey.

Jeanne McBride, Acting Clerk/Administrator

REPORTS

Clerk/Administrator- None

Attorney- Referred to Mayor Bassani about Mr. Wargacki Property still in discussions with Mr. Wargacki and the cleanup of the property and have been debating back and forth the amount of escrow that we should keep in place, Mayor Bassani stated that Mr. Wargacki said he cleaned up the bricks and that the only thing left behind was the big I Beam.

Mr. Morris- None

Mr. Gaechter- None

Mayor Bassani met up with Senator Oroho, Assemblymen Space and Assemblymen Hal Wirths and they gave their quarterly update of District 24 issues positive and negative and their frustrations. Mayor Bassani said the Representatives are looking for our push back of some of the things that Governor Murphy has enacted that are painful for us taxpayers.

New Business

PROCLAMATION

Mayor Bassani read the May Proclamation for Lyme's Disease.

ORDINANCES

2nd Reading & Public Hearing

A motion is in order to Adopt the Amendment to Ordinance #2019-04 An Ordinance of the Township of Wantage, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, Repealing Chapter 23 of the Municipal Code of the Township of Wantage Entitled "Soil Removal" & Replacing It With a New Chapter 23 of the Municipal Code of the Township of Wantage Entitled "Wantage Township Soil Importing and Exporting".

Mayor Bassani spoke about the Frankford Ordinance and likes how they allow free movement without permit in Frankford and throughout the County making it easier for the Excavator and landscapers within the town in order to operate, they are not allowed to go outside the county without an import soil permit, as long as they are just moving it within the county. People are seeing it as the problem is not within the county, more towards New York City area. Mr. Morris asked how do you regulate it and how do you know it's moving within the County? Unless you go through the permit process like we have in place, we will have no idea if soil is being moved from Spaces pit or Brooklyn. Mayor Bassani asked if Patrick Stefanelli would speak. Mr. Stefanelli spoke about the issue on Compton Road. Mayor Bassani said I know we can always amend and amend as many times as we want, but my desire is not to amend so many times and people don't know where we are at. Mayor Bassani mentioned to Mr. Morris you brought up a good point on how to make it easy to the local landscaper to operate within the town to the people that we trust and not to overburden them while they try and make a living, but at the same time protect us from importing. Mr. Kienz said the suggestion is to have them register once a year, have a record who they are. Mayor Bassani is going to do a newsletter all about this ordinance. Mayor Bassani suggested they log onto our website; we will make a page to document. Mr. Gaechter asked where the Compton Road issue was, Acting Administrator/Clerk responded 11 and 12. Mr. Gaechter asked Mr. Stefanelli if it was recent and the response was yes. Mayor Bassani will put on the newsletter if you see something say something. Mr. Morris would like to see a full time Enforcement and figure out a way to afford a full time Enforcement Officer. Mr. Gaechter asked Mr. Morris if he was saying to hire a full-time Zoning Official and are you suggesting replacing Patrick. Mr. Morris said we will talk to Patrick and he will be part of the decision making. Mayor Bassani would like Mike to spearhead the possibility of hiring a full-time Zoning Officer and we would like to look into numbers and evaluate everything to possibly bringing it back. Mayor Bassani spoke about the upcoming meeting with the NJDEP Head Commissioner McCabe and explained how the Vernon Meeting went.

Mayor Bassani opened it up the Public

John Diffily Pidgeon Hill Rd: Agrees with an annual registration Mr. Diffily 23-2.4.1 explained his view on this section and the filling of the foundations. There shouldn't be a blanket on that. Attorney Kienz asked why a resident on Pidgeon Hill needed 100 loads of fill for filling in a foundation. Mr. Stefanelli stated the loads of dirt were brought in and put approximately 100 feet away from where the new septic system is going. Discussion ensued. Mayor Bassani recommended that in the site plan there should be a spot where to say how much fill to be used. Mr. Gaechter stated we have construction officials going out there and if you see 100 truck loads not near the site its an obvious violation. Discussion ensued between Mayor Bassani, Mr. Kienz and Mr. Stefanelli. Mr. Morris asked if you could redact fill for building foundations and leave septic's because they are regulated by the County. Mayor Bassani said there is another way to approach it is to just set a limit on this

up to so many yards of material and keep the whole thing in place and just set a limit. Mayor Bassani and Mr. Kienz discussed a possible footprint and find out what the reasonable limit for it. Mr. Kienz discussed various options to the Ordinance and stated being to tough will not hurt us, we may get a complaint now and again but then we could go back and fix it. Mr. Stefanelli explained once we get an application in and see the topo we will know. Mr. Diffily asked for a retroactivity in this ordinance and asked if we do have a known place prior to the enactment of this ordinance and asked them do you know where the fill came from and can you provide the certification and if the answer is no and the zoning officer goes out and looks at it and comes up with reasonable cause that we should test it. Mrs. McBride asked how long it would be retro and Mr. Kienz said it would be problematic and will look into it and it's a great suggestion but doesn't think we can do it. Mayor Bassani said everyone would claim grandfather. Mr. Diffily explained that if you want an effective ordinance than we need enforcement and have to pay for it. Mayor Bassani said he agreed and we need the publics help even in we had two full time guys we have 65 square miles and a lot of this stuff takes unfortunately in the wee hours and weekends.

Mrs. Orsi spoke about public outreach on the ordinance and mentioned two ideas one was developing some sort of certification. Mr. Kienz stated its already in the ordinance it's a sign-up program not a certification and explained the process. Mayor Bassani explained that New Jersey has in the works for Soil Ordinance and has Mr. Kienz send our Ordinance to Senator Oroho, Assemblymen Space and Assemblymen Wirths.

Mrs. Gorman stated we need enforcement and what are we going to do when someone gets a dirt delivery on a weekend. Mr. Kienz said the homeowner would need backup paperwork and we need the people, locals or whoever wants to, they sign up in the system and have 30 days for paperwork. Mrs. Gorman how would we know and explained how at her house no one comes through her road. Mr. Gaechter said if you were getting 100 loads of dirty dirt someone would know. Mrs. Gorman if I were getting 100 loads of dirt not everyone would know. Mayor Bassani said he is hoping that once we get the ordinance rolled and people see 100 loads of dirt coming in, they would contact Mr. Stefanelli about it. Mayor Bassani said he is confident that this ordinance is not done and explained how people in this town produce topsoil and do not want to hurt their business. Mayor Bassani said unfortunately there will be some cases where a property owner will get burned and hopefully, they learn from it. Mrs. Gorman we definitely need someone to enforce the ordinances and would like to have someone on call for the weekends. Mr. Morris asked Mr. Kienz if we can redact the excavation and fill for building foundations because there is a loophole. Mr. Kienz said yes, we can and mentioned if someone wants to challenge me in court bring it on. Mayor Bassani asked if Mr. Gaechter are you ok with this. Mr. Gaechter responded yes. Mayor Bassani said I'm ok with it and we will be passing this ordinance with that minor modification previously stated.

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 Meeting April 25, 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.

Mrs. Gorman: discussion ensued about recreation business and purchase of picnic tables through grant monies. Mr. Gaechter spoke about local Boy Scout projects and picnic table projects. Mrs. McBride has been trying for the scouts to build a wooden podium for Wantage Day. Mrs. Gorman commented about Lott Road and mentioned an email sent to Mr. Gaechter. Mrs. Gorman has a comment about the Lott incident and express concerns about how the process went through. Mr. Gaechter stated that he would need insurance and thinks the Town can make an insurance claim against his insurance asked Mr. Kienz if that was fair to say. Mr. Kienz responded that would be a good start. Mayor Bassani said the Prosecutor is really the key guy here and has the say and stresses to the judge what the punishment should be. Mayor Bassani said he already sat with the Prosecutor and made sure he was clearly aware to be aggressive on the soil ordinance issues that we have in this town.

Allison Orsi spoke about possibly forming a Mayor's advisory committee. Discussion ensued about the committee.

Warren Wisse spoke about someone from the High School wants to do a fishing contest and there is no time or date. May 17th meet and greet at the Elks and May 19th Salute to Veterans at High Point Veterans are getting bused in from the Hospital. Mayor Bassani said he replied and will show up to it.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Bassani requested a motion to go into Executive Session for Contract Negotiations and Personnel.

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

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

Mr. Kienz read a statement and said Executive Session will take effect at 8:31PM.

Mayor Bassani asked for a motion to come out of Executive Session was made by Mr. Morris and seconded by Mr. Gaechter. The Committee ended Executive Session at 9:08 p.m.

Upon Roll Call:

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

Mayor Bassani explained that the Contract Negotiation has been pushed out to the end of May and in addition to that we have given permission to our Administrator to investigate and replace a recent employee who terminated their relationship from us which is a part-time/ seasonal position.

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

Upon Roll Call:

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Restel, Acting Municipal Clerk