

REGULAR MEETING
TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

March 19th, 2014

Chairperson Stanzione called to order a regular meeting of the Township Committee of the Township of Deerfield, County of Cumberland and State of New Jersey, at the Municipal Building, 736 Landis Avenue, Rosenhayn, at 7:00 p.m.

Chairperson Stanzione led the flag salute.

The Clerk was at a Joint Insurance Fund Meeting in Mays Landing, and the Deputy Clerk, Cheryl Tramontana, filled in for her.

The Deputy Clerk took roll call and members present included Mr. Danna, Mr. Spatola, Mr. Laurella, Mr. Lauer mann and Mr. Stanzione.

Departmental Reports

The Deputy Clerk presented reports from the Construction Office, Zoning/Housing Officer, Tax Collector, Emergency Management Coordinator and Fire Marshal.

Mr. Laurella made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lauer mann, to accept and file the Departmental Reports. The Committee approved.

Ordinances

The Deputy Clerk presented Ordinance #2014-3 Providing For Salaries and Compensation Of The Officers And Employees Of The Township Of Deerfield, Cumberland County, New Jersey.

Mr. Laurella made a motion, seconded by Mr. Spatola, to adopt Ordinance #2014-2 On First Reading, To Set Wednesday, April 2nd, 2014, For Second Reading, Public Hearing And Final Adoption. Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Danna	Yes	Mr. Lauer mann	Yes
Mr. Spatola	Yes	Chairperson Stanzione	Yes
Mr. Laurella	Yes		

The Deputy Clerk presented Ordinance #2014-2 A First Reading To Exceed The Municipal Budget Appropriation Limits And To Establish A CAP Bank (N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.14).

Mr. Spatola made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lauer mann, to adopt Ordinance #2014-3 On First Reading, To Set Wednesday, April 2nd, 2014, For Second Reading, Public Hearing And Final Adoption. Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Danna	Yes	Mr. Lauer mann	Yes
Mr. Spatola	Yes	Chairperson Stanzione	Yes
Mr. Laurella	Yes		

The Deputy Clerk presented an Introduction Of The 2014 Municipal Budget Of The Township Of Deerfield In The Sum Of \$1,662,923.75.

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Mr. Danna made a motion, seconded by Mr. Spatola, to adopt the Introduction Of The 2014 Municipal Budget Of The Township Of Deerfield In The Sum Of \$1,662,923.75, To Set Wednesday, April 16th, 2014, For Public Hearing And Final Adoption. Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Danna	Yes	Mr. Lauermann	Yes
Mr. Spatola	Yes	Chairperson Stanzione	Yes
Mr. Laurella	Yes		

Resolutions

The Deputy Clerk stated that there were no Resolutions this evening.

Old Business

Mr. Spatola stated that the Recreation Committee met last night and they have an Architect that is drawing and proposing a plan for the new stage renovation to increase the size of the roof to fully cover the stage that will be fourteen (14) feet high. He stated that he has a copy of the specs with drawings, floor plans and a couple of elevations and at this point it is out for review. Mr. Spatola stated that the Recreation Committee did look at the plan last night and he received a call today about the sizing of the posts and Roy Spoltore, Chairman of Recreation, stated to him that he had spoken to Alby, the sound guy, and his truck is exactly eight (8) feet high but does not have a fold down ramp, so they will try to make it about ten (10) feet high on the North and South side for him. He stated that he will leave the plans here at the Municipal Building in case any of the Committee Members would like to look at it, and upon everyone agreeing to this, the Architect will finish this up which would be at no cost to the Township in lieu of an advertisement at the time of the Harvest Festival.

Mr. Laurella stated that the Committee had spoke about the Septic System out front and today the Mayor and himself along with the Administrator opened up the bids and they all came under what was proposed by our Engineer and under what was budgeted.

Chairperson Stanzione stated that Pierce came in at Seventeen Thousand One Hundred and Nine Dollars (\$17,109.00), Regalbuto was Eighteen Thousand Dollars (\$18,000.00) and Brago Excavating was Sixteen Thousand Eight Hundred Twenty Eight Dollars (\$16,828.00).

Mr. Laurella stated that they were close and they all had the exact print. He stated that at the next meeting it would be put on the agenda and provide the resolution at the meeting to award the bid.

Mr. Lauermann stated that the Dog Clinic was this past weekend and everything went well. He stated that the floor plan was changed around and it seemed to be a lot better than it has been in the past few years. Mr. Lauermann stated that he wanted to thank Cheryl for helping out this year because the Township needed an extra hand and he really appreciated what the girls did. He stated that the County had someone there who actually was helping the vet with the needles that is administered to the animals. Mr. Lauermann stated that he wanted to say thank you to Karen, Cheryl, Annette and Ron Shinn and hopefully in the years to come everything will work out as smooth as this year. He also stated that quite a few people had to be turned away due to some issues with advertisement. Mr. Lauermann stated that apparently one of the smaller newspapers put that the clinic was open until 1:00 p.m. and some of the residents came later because of this error.

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Mr. Spatola stated that Mr. Lauermann was going to prepare specifications to some degree for the surveillance that the Township was going to upgrade in the building. He stated that he would like to know the outcome.

Mr. Laurella stated that Mr. Lauermann and himself are working on it and right now they are soliciting quotes and there will be one tomorrow morning and the Mayor, Maintenance Man and himself will be meeting with him. He stated that so far Mr. Shinn, Maintenance Man and himself have met with the other two individuals because Chairperson Stanzione was out of town. He stated that once they receive the quotes, which should be available for the next meeting, they would be discussed at that time.

Mr. Spatola stated that he thinks this is a great example of this Board using a resource. He stated that there are five (5) different people here that are great at five (5) different things and he would like to thank Mr. Lauermann and Mr. Laurella for meeting with the people on this project. Mr. Spatola stated that this is what the Township Committee needs to do and he thinks it is a great asset because now we will know what we need to do, what we can do and then can decide what can be done financially and at least everyone that looks at this system will be looking at the same specs.

Before going into New Business, Chairperson Stanzione asked the Trooper to come forward since he was here this evening and the Committee did not want to hold him up.

Sergeant Ponte, Bridgeton State Police Barracks, came before the Committee and stated that he compiled February's statistics here in Deerfield Township and stated that it was proactive and reactive. Sergeant Ponte stated that there were One Hundred Forty Five (145) calls for service, they stopped One Hundred Thirty Five (135) cars in this Township for MV violations which is a pretty proactive stop ratio compared to the rest of the Townships that the State Police patrol around this area. He stated that they answered seventeen (17) investigation calls; one (1) burglary was investigated with no arrest but no other significant events. Sergeant Ponte stated that there were no fatalities in this Township and no big arrests but (90) ninety DWI arrests. He also stated that the last time he was at a meeting one of the Committee Members had asked him about a problem with tagging on Kenyon Avenue. He stated that after posing this question to our Station Detectives there is no related gang activity in Deerfield at this time, and what the Detectives explained to him was that it was likely a bunch of kids and was a criminal mischief issue as opposed to a gang related issue. Sergeant Ponte stated that there are a lot of burglaries right now in Pittsgrove and Hopewell Township along with Stow Creek and Greenwich. He stated that he pulled the time frame when the calls were coming through their printer and they were occurring between the hours of 12:00 noon and 3:00 p.m. along with a lot of alarm calls coming in at the same time so make sure your homes are secure before leaving for the day.

New Business

Solicitor Testa stated that he was asked to prepare an opinion letter regarding the Carmel Fire Hall. He stated that it sets forth the procedure that was requested by Mr. Spatola to provide.

Mr. Spatola stated that he has given a lot of thought to the Carmel Fire Hall Building and Karen and Cheryl have been gracious enough to provide us with some financial information. He stated that everyone should have a cumulative or expense sheet showing the last five (5) years totaling approximately Twenty One Thousand (\$21,000.00) and basically he feels that the building is beginning to be in disrepair because there are a lot of problems with it.

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Mr. Spatola stated that he did ask our Solicitor to do this and greatly appreciates it and if the Township does decide to go forward with this sale he feels that the Township should do this in the right way. He stated that the Township has put so much money into this building and that real estate is an asset in this community, he thinks it is time in lieu of the fact that financing and surplus being what it is, but did want to say that the Township is doing very well by making up our surplus every year, credits everyone here for doing this, but the lack of funding and subsidizing from the State and the Federal Government is dwindling to nothing. He stated that when he rides by the Carmel Fire Hall and sees something that the Township just keeps taking care of, and keeps pumping money into it and we are virtually storing things there along with paying to heat the building and he does not understand why. Mr. Spatola stated that the building was tax assessed at around Three Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$300,000.00) so in his mind he believes that the Township can sell this property, take a portion of that money, expand our capacity here in the back whether it be a pole barn or metal building and the Township will not even need to heat it but store things in. He stated that he would like the Township Committee Members to give this some really serious thought and at the next meeting decide if this is something we want to vote for and have more discussion that night.

Mr. Danna stated that he believes that Mr. Spatola had good thoughts and was also approached by a couple of people that were interested in that building and location and wanted to know what the Township was doing with it because there was no revenue coming out of it and it must cost money to maintain it. He stated to them that he would bring it up and see if the Township wants to sell it and if the Committee chose to do that it would be advertised.

Mr. Lauermann stated that the Township has to be run like a business and Mr. Spatola was not speaking his opinion, he was giving the Committee facts. He stated that the facts are that it costs the Township a lot of money to keep the Carmel Fire Hall Building and in the next five (5) or six (6) years and he has been through the building many times, it is going to need a roof, windows, siding, along with the water issues in the basement that has had the walls cave in and had to be fixed. Mr. Lauermann stated that if the Township was able to sell this property which should not be a problem given its location, from a business stand point only, not an opinion of him or anyone else, not one taxpayer dime would be spent to accommodate the storage space that is there to move it to a different location here to centralize as Mr. Spatola had mentioned. He stated that you have to be careful when you mention what is an asset because when things cost you money it is not necessarily an asset and he definitely feels that the Committee should move forward on this and get it done so the Committee could move on to something else.

Mr. Laurella stated that he did not know if the Township could sell this property because it was donated for Recreation purposes and a Fire Hall. He stated that if someone were to buy this building, like a church, where is our ratable and if someone buys it for a gas station would he take out an excess amount of money out not knowing that he is going to get the approval with his type of business on that property. Mr. Laurella stated that the property is approximately eleven hundred feet long and about three hundred feet wide so it would have to be subdivided and part of the ground belongs to Green Acres. He stated that it has been said that it has cost the Township a lot of money to maintain the building but there was no maintenance put into the building last year and to sell or not to sell it he has never be approached except one time for a church and that was to rent it not buy it. Mr. Laurella stated that if we want to put a building in the back, we need to look and see how long this property is and along side the garage there is a septic system and would like to know will they be going in and out of this building and encroach on the septic system. He stated that he is not sure at this time if he would like to sell it or not.

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Mr. Laurella stated that he would like to know how much of this property is Green Acres and everything else needs to be looked into before his mind is made up.

Solicitor Testa stated to the Deputy Clerk that he would need to have a copy of the Deed to see if it is Deed restricted because according to Mr. Laurella he believes it was a donation by one of the April's to the Township to build a Fire Hall and Recreation Park.

Mr. Spatola stated that Mr. Laurella asked what if a buyer put a church there and he stated that there were twelve (12) churches here in Deerfield Township so lets take the whole ratable thing and the residual income out of the picture and the church would still be bidding against three (3) or four (4) other entities. He stated that if the church pays Three Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$300,000.00) for the property, the Township would still get this amount of money if even the Township does not make another dime on this property. Mr. Spatola stated that the Township needed to be aware that the basement in the Carmel building has walls that are cracking and it has extreme water damage along with a dirt floor. He stated that this building is so substandard it is bad and the Township could not afford to bring that building up to what it needs to be. Mr. Spatola stated if the Township gets Three Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$300,000.00) for the building and the Township has to subdivide the Green Acres off, it would not cost the whole amount to subdivide this property. He stated that if there is One Hundred Forty Six Feet or One Hundred Forty Feet to the back of the property from the back of the building, and the Township needs Fifty Feet from the back of the building for rear setback, this would leave Ninety Feet (90). He stated that even if nothing else positive comes from this, if you take the Three Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$300,000.00), the Township could budget the size of our expansion based on what income was received from the Township. Mr. Spatola stated that if the Township can do a 30 X 30 then so be it, but if we have to do a 24 X 30 then we do that and this will become an asset. He also stated that the septic is totally out of play because there is already a driveway that goes all the way around the building and it certainly bypasses the septic. Mr. Spatola stated that the entrance to the storage would be evenly accessible to either side of the building and you could even put a door on both sides and make it a drive through barn. Mr. Spatola stated that he appreciates all the points that Mr. Laurella brought up because they needed to be discussed but he wants to come to a decision because he honestly believes that there is money sitting there. He stated that the Committee all know by the Ordinance adopted by First Reading this evening the sacrifices it took financially in this Township and was personally taken by all of us, and is being taken year after year to maintain a low tax rate. He stated that this year the Township did very well and last year we barely moved it and did excellent by coming within Sixty Thousand Dollars (\$60,000.00) of replenishing 100% of the surplus that the Township took out which is amazing. Mr. Spatola stated that the budget is less this year and the Township will not have to raise taxes but that takes a whole lot of work and everyone on this Committee worked very, very hard with Financial Advisors and Auditors.

Mr. Laueremann asked our Solicitor if the Township would be able to restrict the use where the Township would not have a church over where the Carmel Fire Hall is and his response was that a church would be very hard to restrict. Solicitor Testa stated that the Township can compose restrictions for the use of the land but he wants to say that he thinks you would be contributing on dangerous grounds to say that the Township would not allow a church. Solicitor Testa stated that you could restrict where the Township is not going to allow a junk yard or things that may be or are against the health and welfare of the taxpayers but not something that is not going to be a detriment. Solicitor Testa also stated that Mr. Laurella also raised some issues that have to be looked into because they are the threshold issues.

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Solicitor Testa stated that the first one is that the Township has to determine that you do not need it for public use and once you get past that threshold question then you have to determine whether or not these other restrictions like Deed or Green Acres are going to apply and prevent the Township going forward. Solicitor Testa stated that as soon as he receives the Deed he would be able to look into this.

Mr. Lauermann stated that every time the Township has an idea we can not talk about all the issues involved, we need to take care of these to find out if it is correctible to what the Township wants to do or not but move forward.

Chairperson Stanzione stated that Mr. Spatola and Mr. Laurella have covered a lot on this matter but he thinks that the Township needs to consider the people in Carmel because number one, the Township does not have a property in Carmel and he feels that the Township should reach out to them first before the Township sells this property to any business. Mr. Lauermann asked Chairperson Stanzione why and he stated that they should have an opinion because maybe they want that park and building there. Mr. Lauermann stated that the Township did not ask their opinion when the Township decided to close the Fire Hall. Chairperson Stanzione stated that the Township did ask for their opinion but their opinion was wrong. He also stated that the Township needs to think about what they want to do and there are going to be a lot of questions that need to be answered. Chairperson Stanzione stated that the Township may get Three Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$300,000.00) for that property in Carmel but he went through this with the County. He stated that what is happening is that you will have this money and then you are going to spend it and end up with nothing and you are right back where you started. Chairperson Stanzione stated that he would like to know if selling all the pieces of property in our Township is the answer.

Mr. Spatola stated no and he has totally isolated this piece of property from all the other ones. He also stated that there was a lot of talk about selling flag lots that are all back in the woods that could make absolutely nothing and would not create rateables but this property is completely different from the rest. Mr. Spatola stated that this property is old and dismal and if it was not costing the Township anything and it was worth money then yes, but it is actually costing the taxpayers money not the Township Committee.

Chairperson Stanzione stated that he is still going to reach out to the people in Carmel and see how they feel about it.

Mr. Lauermann stated to Chairperson Stanzione that there is going to be a lot of people in that part of town that is attached to that building from a family standpoint and opinion standpoint. He stated that they still feel that the Township was wrong in closing that Fire Hall. Mr. Lauermann stated to Chairperson Stanzione that if he was going to use that as a barometer on what he feels as though this Township Committee and Township should do, and as a taxpayer we should be looking into, how can you do this as a barometer for people that have a major issue as to what happened there to begin with. He stated to Chairperson Stanzione that no one is looking to hurt anyone over there but our job is to manage this Township like a business.

Chairperson Stanzione stated that he is not one of those people that believes that the Township should be managed like a business. He stated that he feels that Mr. Lauermann has his opinion and he has his own.

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Mr. Spatola stated that the Township Committee Members are stewards of the taxpayer's money so maybe the sale of this building in Carmel to create income and to reduce the liability in debt needs to be on the ballot.

Chairperson Stanzione stated that before the Township Committee does anything we would have to see what Solicitor Testa finds out. He stated that he could start with the Deed and Green Acres and take it from there.

Mr. Laurella stated that he gave a list of fees from various Municipalities to each Committee Member pertaining to fees. He stated that the list shows our Township fees compared to other Municipalities and wanted the Committee to see the differences in prices and also how much lower our Township is compared to others. Mr. Laurella stated that the Fire fees are different. He stated that the Registration Fee has been the same for many years and the Township needs to think about raising this. He stated that he would like to keep it the same but the Township cannot pay our employees if they are going to keep running around back and forth doing inspections.

After a brief discussion, the Committee decided to look the list over and think about updating our fees in the Township.

Chairperson Stanzione stated that he is in the process of setting up a meeting with the Freeholder Director, the Head of Economic Development and the Deputy Mayor and himself to talk about the construction of the Vo-Tech building being made in Vineland. He stated that he would like to ask them if they would have that building available for businesses that would create a rateable in the Township. Chairperson Stanzione stated that since the County has all the buildings in the Township and Deerfield does not get any rateable for now, maybe it is time for them to pass it back to us and bring something in that the Township can get out of especially since the Vo-Tech is the only building that has sewer running to it.

Communications

The Deputy Clerk stated that there were no communications this evening.

The Deputy Clerk presented Resolution #14-81 for the Payment of Bills.

Mr. Danna made a motion, seconded by Mr. Spatola, to adopt Resolution #14-81.
Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Danna	Yes	Mr. Lauermann	Yes
Mr. Spatola	Yes	Chairperson Stanzione	Yes
Mr. Laurella	Yes		

Mr. Spatola made a motion, seconded by Mr. Laurella, to open the meeting to the public. The Committee approved.

There being no comment from the public, Mr. Laurella made a motion, seconded by Mr. Spatola, to close the meeting to the public. The Committee approved.

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Before adjourning the meeting, Mr. Spatola stated that Mr. Stanzione and himself had a meeting with the Clerk Administrator of Upper Deerfield who is the host of our Construction Code Service. He stated that there are some increases this year and after meeting with him, they still need to talk about it so they will be meeting with him again, because it has been said in the past, there is some explaining to do and they will not rush into it. Mr. Spatola stated that this contract with them for the balance of 2014 until the end of the year has some issues and their Clerk is very willing to sit down with them to answer any questions they have but they are generally asking for a Six Thousand Dollar (\$6,000.00) raise and the extra contribution on our part is Insurance Coverage for someone who did not have insurance before and have now entered into a family plan.

Mr. Laurella stated that there is a repeater for our cell phones above the clock in the Community Room and the Township was told that it is no longer needed. He stated that he told our Maintenance Man to disconnect it.

Mr. Lauermann wanted to state before adjourning that going back to what the Township was discussing about the Management of the Township, he has more compassion for the residents of this Township that can be measured. He stated that if you do not mix some type of business sense in with that compassion you will set this Township up for failure and there are some things that the Township has done in the past from a business sense did not make much sense and they did hurt the Township in a short term and in a long term.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Mr. Spatola made a motion, seconded by Mr. Danna, to adjourn the meeting. The Committee approved.

John Stanzione, Chairperson
Township of Deerfield

ATTEST:

Cheryl Tramontana, Deputy Clerk
Township of Deerfield