

**NOVEMBER 25, 2008 CAUCUS MEETING**  
**MINUTES**  
**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE BOROUGH OF MT. EPHRAIM**

**MEETING CALL TO ORDER:**

Mayor Wolk called the meeting to order at 3:03 pm.

**SALUTE TO FLAG:**

All present pledged their allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

**ROLL CALL:**

**PRESENT**

**ABSENT**

Commissioner Gilmore	___x___	_____
Commissioner Greenwald	___x___	_____
Mayor Wolk	___x___	_____

**OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT:**

Borough Solicitors –Eric Riso & Joe Marrazzo  
Borough Engineers – Joe Federici & Doug Aiken  
PW Supervisor – Ken Jones  
Zoning Officer – Chris Fitzgerald  
Police Chief – Ed Dobleman  
Fire Department President – Rich Holmes

**“OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS LAW” ANNOUNCEMENT:**

Mayor Wolk announced this Meeting has been advertised and notices posted in accordance with the “Open Public Meetings Act.”

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

None

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

None.

**DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS/DISCUSSIONS:**

Administration & Finance:

A proposed policy for employees desiring to take courses was reviewed and discussed. The policy will address both Borough and employee responsibilities with respect to training programs. The proposed policy will cover training required for certifications as well as programs which are elective in nature. The proposed policy will be presented for adoption at the December 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The Acting Clerk reported that a recommendation on a policy governing medical insurance dependent coverage and opt-out rules was not yet completed.

The Acting Clerk reported that New Jersey American Water Company had been contacted to determine if they could assist the Borough in collecting delinquent payments on three water accounts previously serviced by the Borough, but not within the geographical limits of the Borough. It was noted that the properties could not be included in the Mt. Ephraim Tax Sale for that reason. The Acting Clerk advised that there would be follow-up on this problem before the next caucus meeting. Other options for legal follow-up were also discussed.

Mayor Wolk reported on the status of plans to ensure that the Borough is in compliance with COAH regulations. He reported that Tara Martin has been designated as the Borough representative and will be taking the necessary COAH courses to enable her to enter data for the annual reports on our housing plan and development fee trust fund. The Mayor will contact Bill Harris to ascertain where we are at this time and what we will need to do before the end of the year and in the coming months.

The Mayor noted that preparations for the 2009 budget will soon be under way. He requested that department heads begin to plan for their needs for the upcoming year, particularly with regard to capital projects. He emphasized that if agreement could be reached in a timely manner on the capital projects to be undertaken, it would enable the Borough to get started on some of the projects in the early spring under the temporary budget, rather than to have to wait until much later in the year for the adoption of the final budget. The PW Supervisor, Commissioner of PW, and the Engineers were asked to get together early so they could get estimates and propose approximate timetables. The Mayor advised that budget sessions will begin on December 23<sup>rd</sup> at 1:00 P.M. prior to the regular caucus meeting to enable department heads to present their requests.

Mayor Wolk also reported that the Mt. Ephraim Board of Education has requested that the Borough Commissioners attend a public meeting scheduled by the school district for the purpose of providing information to the Commissioners on the school budgeting process for the coming year and discussing the anticipated budget difficulties with them. The Acting Clerk was asked to contact the Borough Auditor to ensure his attendance.

The plans regarding the accessibility plans from the architect were discussed. The Mayor noted that it would be necessary to budget some local funds in addition to the state grant. The Fire Company President suggested that it might be prudent to think about how the Lambert Avenue facility could be used most effectively. He raised the notion that, before completing the current plan at the existing Library and having to budget additional funds, perhaps thinking outside the box might enable the Borough to develop a more comprehensive use of the Lambert Avenue facility. Additional discussions with the Librarian were suggested. Mayor Wolk was to check with Dave McPeak regarding the final date by which the grant money must be utilized.

The Acting Clerk indicated that, in past years, the Borough has placed a half page ad in the Gloucester City News for the holiday edition. It was agreed to place a half page ad in for the edition before the Christmas Holidays.

The proposed meeting schedule for 2009 was discussed. A resolution will be presented at the December 4<sup>th</sup> meeting to adopt the schedule presented and advertise it in the newspaper in December.

Police:

Commissioner Gilmore reported that the bid price for a replacement patrol vehicle came in within the budgeted amount after the initial bid was rejected and the specs for the vehicle were re-advertised. Approval for the purchase of the new police vehicle will be on the agenda for the December 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Commissioner Gilmore reported that the Borough will include an additional police officer in its budget plans for next year, but is not adding a new officer at this time.

The Chief previously promised to check with the School District concerning the plan for a security camera at the Mary Bray School to monitor the Monument on Kings Highway. He has made an initial contact with the school district and is awaiting a response from them.

The Chief reported that the Light Duty particulars are still under review and a recommendation will be forthcoming.

There was a discussion about road work which will be taking place at Market St. and Northmont Avenue. The work will involve a manhole reconstruction and will affect traffic flow in the area. The Chief anticipates that Market Street traffic can be handled without closing the street entirely, while Northmont will be barricaded during the construction. With the cooperation of the County, Ken Jones was able to secure low prices so that the project can be done quickly and within budget.

The Chief requested permission to add an additional substitute crossing guard and there was no objection. He will advertise through the school in the hope that he will be able to find a local resident who could fill in on short notice when needed.

Chief Dobleman advised that the Annual Christmas Parade will be held on December 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 P.M. The Chief also reported that the vest grant was approved.

Commissioner Gilmore noted that the Court has insufficient funds for supplies at this time. He will meet with the Court Administrator to discuss this further, but the Solicitor advised that the Borough Interlocal Agreement must be considered when contemplating any changes in funding operations.

#### Fire:

Rich Holmes reported that approximately nine sets of plans for the new Fire facility were reviewed in order to maximize benefits and reduce costs. Considerable progress is being made on the plans. Dave McPeak from the County and Steve Bessica, the architect, are scheduled to meet next week to monitor the progress of the plans. A resolution will be presented at the December 4<sup>th</sup> meeting to award the contract for the low bid on the Phase I environmental review which is must be completed prior to the property transfer. The awarding of the contract will be subject to confirmation that the low quote from Earth Engineering for \$2,175 includes all three properties involved.

It was reported that three new recruits would be joining the Fire Department. Rich Holmes also noted that there has been an increase in the number of females serving.

#### Other Public Safety Items:

The Police Chief advised that Captain Beppe has been working on bid specs for towing services for the upcoming year. Following some fine tuning of the bid specs, authorization will be sought to advertise for bids.

#### Public Works:

Commissioner Greenwald indicated that a review of the Redevelopment Plan has been under way. On December 15<sup>th</sup>, the Planning Board is expected to submit recommendations on the plan which they will submit to the Board of Commissioners. The Commissioners will then review the recommendations of the Planning Board and either adopt those plans suggest further revisions.

It was further reported that the representative from T-Mobile cell phone Company did not appear to be interested in speaking to groups of residents in support of his company's interest in erecting a cell phone tower in the proximity of the girls' softball field. As of this point in time, building of the tower is a moot point.

Zoning Officer, Chris Fitzgerald informed the Commissioners that written notification was hand delivered to the home of Edward Dolan approximately a week ago, notifying him that the illegal storage of construction equipment on property owned by him was in violation of Borough ordinances. To date, there has been no formal response from Mr. Dolan, who was given 30 days in which to respond. The Zoning Officer will report back next month on any progress.

It was also reported that Joe Nardi was to send a letter to Mt. Ephraim Dodge with regard to addressing complaints about the lighting at the car dealership as well as the failure to properly file plans.

Chris Fitzgerald also advised that the use of a residential property owned by the Milano family for parking for their commercial business has not been resolved. It was recommended that Mr. Milano apply to the Zoning Board for a variance so the issue could be resolved there. Mayor Wolk advised that he will review both sites.

The possibility of conducting a new State municipal energy audit was discussed. While the State will reimburse the municipality for a fairly large proportion of the audit cost, there would still be a significant portion of the improvements for which the Borough would be responsible. The Borough would also have to appoint a person to be responsible. Given the current economic climate, there did not appear to be strong support at this time.

Engineer:

Borough Engineer Joe Federici advised the Commissioners that the engineers are currently working on the design of the back-up power generator for the Harding Avenue pump station and electrical upgrades. When those plans are completed, quotes will be needed on upgrading the electrical system and bid specs will have to be prepared for the generator and its installation.

He also reported that the PW Department has not yet been able to complete painting the additional street markings to warn of the speed humps because of trying to complete the leaf collection schedule prior to the Thanksgiving holiday.

Joe Federici and Ken Jones reported on their attempts to resolve a sewer backup issue near Linden and Adams Avenue. Ken Jones said that they were able to identify where and why the backup was occurring. It was determined that some further research would have to be done regarding existing easements. It will also require the introduction of an ordinance approving an easement at 42 Linden Avenue which would allow placement of a pipe through the property. Joe Marrazzo is to order a title search on an additional property, Block 81 Lot 1.04, in order to move forward. The Engineer and PW Supervisor both felt that it would be possible to reduce or eliminate the impact of the sewer problems in the area. They will report back on any progress at the next meeting.

There was some discussion about the Kingsway Station construction as it relates to access by emergency or fire vehicles. Rich Holmes questioned whether the width of the access road would be sufficient to accommodate emergency vehicles. This is to be reviewed by the Engineer.

Joe Federici also acknowledged receipt of a 2009 State Aid award for Cedar Avenue in the amount of \$125,000.

In response to the State's request to return \$6,580.55 in unused funds from the \$112,000 awarded on the 2006 Green Avenue project, Mayor Wolk is to contact Joe Robert's Office in an effort to try to enable the Borough to apply those funds to the 2007 or 2008 projects which exceeded the State Aid Grants and for which the Borough has to expend local funds. He will report back after speaking with Joe Roberts.

Solicitor:

Solicitor Eric Riso reported that the process of the Borough foreclosing its tax title lien on the property at 324 Davis Avenue is progressing. He reported that there are still some procedural details which must be completed.

It was also reported that regulations regarding Family Leave and Light Duty are nearing completion.

Commissioners: Other Items

The Commissioners and Tax Collector reported on their attendance at the NJ State League of Municipalities Conference in Atlantic City. Mayor Wolk spoke of a proposal from Governor Corzine to defer a percentage of pension payments to help reduce the especially harsh economic impact that municipalities will be experiencing this budget year. It was agreed by all the attendees that the message from the State resonated loud and clear. Money is tight and municipalities will have to do more with less.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION: None**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

A motion was made by Commissioner Gilmore and seconded by Commissioner Greenwald to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 5:02 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Darlington  
Acting Borough Clerk