

The following are notes, not official minutes. For an official transcript, go to the Delanco Municipal Building at 770 Coopertown Rd.

Township Committee March 3, 3008

Devinney, Hinkle, Templeton (absent), Ouellette, Fitzpatrick

Also Present: Steven Corcoran, Twp. Administrator, Mr, Kearns, Twp. Solicitor; Janice Lohr, Municipal Clerk; Karen Zimmermann, Deputy Municipal Clerk; Denton, Township Engineer; John Fenimore, Public Works ; Mrs. Fegley, Township Planner, Lt. Sacalis, Delanco Police

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SPECIAL PRESENTATION RESOLUTION 2008-47 RESOLUTION
HONORING JACKIE DICARLO Passed unanimously

MAYOR'S PROCLAMATION – READ ACROSS AMERICA honoring Dr. Seuss's birthday by promoting reading among our students

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Resident of Pennington Ct. – crews seen marking utilities – *Burlington County Times* indicated that bypass is going through the corn field this summer. Do we know that for sure?

Hinkle: No.

Corcoran: Didn't get anything on that.

Resident: Tri-county agreement – is rework of Newton's Landing basin part of it?

Corcoran: Triparty agreement... Basin is tied to the bond.

Resident: What is the latest snowfall in NJ?

Fitzpatrick: April

MEETING CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC

CORRESPONDENCE - none

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. MANSION UPDATE Corcoran:

-mold remediation - needs \$2,160 for engineering oversight and final inspection, final clearing sample analysis and final report. It is FEMA reimbursable.

Passed unanimously

Work should be under way next week

2. TRI-PARTY AGREEMENT

Ouellette: Swap of Pennington Park property and retention basins at Newton's Landing.

Fitzpatrick: Freeholder's correspondence asking if we plan to keep Pennington or let that go.

Ouellette: we would have to pay \$42,000.

Fitzpatrick: to Freeholders

Corcoran: yes, to widen the path

Fitzpatrick: That we are donating to the county. County is willing to retain the land at Pennington Park. At this time, we aren't in the position to pay them \$42,000 since we are

looking at properties in town to fill DYSA needs with schools and the property at West Ave.

Devinney: I agree to defer at least until our budget is set.

Fitzpatrick: We intend to improve Pearson and Walnut St. fields. I'm asking Mr. Denton to take another look at West End following my meeting with DYSA – We were originally looking for a bigger field, but now could use a smaller field or decent T-ball field.

Ouellette: We aren't interested?

Fitzpatrick: We should hold the letter for a month. If we decide not to take the land swap, we should ask the county if they could help us in another way.

Corcoran: Not the county's intention to put pressure on the Township Committee – just want an idea of where you are now. They want you to know that the decision is totally up to the Township. Not a problem to hold it and say it is still under study.

Devinney: When we reply, we should indicate that our response is heavily influenced by our financial position.

3. MUNICIPAL BUDGET PREPARATION UPDATE

Ouellette: It's not looking pretty. Committee has been working very hard. State and governor – it's like walking on a plank. We have serious work to do and it's going to hurt. We have to look at all of the programs and services. Maybe weekly trash pick-up instead of bi-weekly. Meeting on Thursday with Corcoran, Stewart, and Templeton – League of Municipalities – communities under 10,000 not going to see anything. \$318,000 is the number that we won't be seeing.

Corcoran: Expenditure cap controls expenditures and there 4% cap on tax levy. Over cap when we started \$514,000 – now \$222,630.55. Now the Committee is at the wall. Tax levy was \$825,000 over and reduced to \$200,000. State aid – loss \$290,000. Committee has to reduce spending by \$250,000 and they have already reduced it by \$500,000. State isn't helping.

Significant problem is loss of \$500,000 in surplus. My personal opinion is that it's the loss of the surplus, loss of state aid, and cost of the mansion. If this Committee doesn't sell or go to permanent financing on the mansion \$162,5000 will need to be assumed – doesn't include operating expenses of \$75,000 a year.

Options:

-One option is referendum on March 26 to allow citizens to vote to allow Township to exceed cap – 60% would have to vote for a budget with an increase of 21 cents.

-Two positions won't be filled – one in public works and one in police

-Township Committee is committed to selling the mansion by March 31. Then state will allow us to leave the \$162,000 financing cost out of the budget.

-Another option is using school tax to artificially inflate the surplus. Sooner or later, you have to make up that amount of money. It's a bit of smoke and mirrors.

-Cap waiver is the last option. We would need to meet with DCA. Auditor and I have called Trenton. They are in no mood to allow cap waivers – governor's appointed board. We thought we had a loophole since we hadn't been told we lost state aide formally, but the state said it wouldn't allow that.

-Many hours of discussions on shared services – Township has shone at this in public works and police. As a member of Shared Services Board, I've observed that there are some savings, but it's unrealistic to expect to save hundreds of thousands of dollars.

-Governor wants townships like Delanco to go away – wants small towns to merge with adjoining communities. You eliminate duplicity of roles though a lot of positions would remain the same. Takes a long time for townships to merge – wouldn't impact the budget in 2008. Would take time to allow people to vote.

Still have to remove \$223,000. Gas, fuel, and health care costs keep rising – Committee has no control over them. A lot of rumors will fly – Committee has decided that everything is on the table.

Devinney: Thanks to Steve for putting that all so clearly. Shocked at the idea that governor thinks that after the taxes we pay, the state can cut the spigot off and spend our money somewhere else. The die is cast on this budget.

Hinkle: My eighth budget. This is painful. We are going to continue to try.

Fitzpatrick: Let's be proactive re the governor. We need a Resolution and a petition signed by residents for you to take to your meeting. Tax problem in NJ has been with us for a long time. I brought a group down here in 2002 –SMART Save Money and Reform Taxes. I can't believe that we are still talking about it. It's time for us not to go over the caps. It's like your budget at home. You have to adjust items you can no longer afford. Every department needs to share in that if at all possible. Maybe the same percentage from each department can be cut. More cuts can be made cooperatively – send back to departments and tell them we need your help. We can't continue to raise taxes for this amount. The only way is to stop living over the caps and try to cut back. Maybe trash pickup once a week or leaf pick-up once a year. Some of the services can be cut, but programs should stay – kids need places to go and we need our library.

Hinkle: need a resolution

Kearns: [The meeting Thursday] is a briefing. We can do a resolution .

Fitzpatrick: More people need to come forward and speak up for us. It just doesn't seem legal to me.

Kearns: It's obvious state is trying to compel consolidation of towns smaller than 10,000. State legislature have a bill – citizens would get no vote on it at all. I'm not convinced that merging would save all kinds of money.

Fitzpatrick: SMART was about income tax. If you are making it, you should be paying it. When you are starting out and when you retire, you aren't making the same amount of money. People can't afford to be here.

Corcoran: Legislature is moving rapidly on 12 weeks of pay for employees of the state for personal reasons. How are we supposed to address that as a small municipality? Pick up the phone or email your legislature and tell them it has to stop.

Devinney: Property tax increases run well above inflation. It's a run-away situation.

Income tax is a fairer way than charging you on the basis of your house. If you look at studies of income tax, NJ's don't go up as much – rate is ½ of PA.

Open to Public:

Resident of Pennington Ct: We have to have a referendum on tax increase with data about consequences.

Resident of Delaware : Could we get garbage disposals if we have one day a week trash pick-up?

Hinkle: No

Resident of McCay: Trash once a week in winter and twice in summer. Can you explain what a penny is on the taxes?

Corcoran: Average house in Delanco – right now – 20.6 cents = \$460.

Fitzpatrick: Idea of referendum – would have to have had everything ready and budget prepared. If it passed, we couldn't change it. If it didn't, we would have to cut another ½ percent plus the cost of the referendum. There won't be a referendum this year.

Resident of Shipp's Way: \$222,000+ - is it inclusion of state funding?

Corcoran: Exclusive. Not affected by state aid.

Resident: You have to cut \$222,000 and make up state funding.

Corcoran: \$222,000 has to be reduced. That's the key element right now.

Resident: Do you have to make up for the state money you are not getting?

Ouellette: Already included.

Resident: You have eliminated \$600,000 from the budget, possibly. You need \$222,000 with the cooperation of the community

Fitzpatrick: That would be in cap. There would still be an increase. What would that be?

Corcoran: 15 cents - \$300 for average house.

Resident: What will the state say regarding schools and fire taxes?

Ouellette: If the long-term goal is for the small communities to merge, it will encompass the schools and fire departments.

Resident: When you go to the meeting, can you address that? School budget is in two weeks. Fire already got an increase.

Corcoran: Of your tax dollar, only 20 cents stays in municipality to all the entities you are referencing.

Resident: Can you go to the county for help?

Fitzpatrick: Wrote to the county for library. They said they would provide things they are providing for and said they had given a 10% increase. I'll have to check with the treasurer of the library. We pay \$130,000 to county library. Some towns have consolidated with county system – county isn't doing that any more. County can't afford it. Delanco decided to keep the library. We have a 15 year agreement with the school. We pay a lease.

Hinkle: It's a five year contract

Lohr: Expires December 2009.

Fitzpatrick: That's been a good venture.

Ouellette: Good example of shared services. School and town share the library.

Resident of Pennington Ct: If you don't sell the Columns, you will have to include that money resulting in further increase.

Corcoran: Yes

Resident: Do we have a prospective buyer?

Corcoran: Yes.

Resident of Kansas: Voting in primary – people on the ballot weren't even in the running. Can Township remove names of people who aren't even still running?

Lohr: No one is authorized to touch the ballot

Resident: If we want change, we have to do it ourselves. That's why I'm bringing it up here.

Fitzpatrick: County Board of Freeholders – we will ask them

Resident: Family leave was mentioned. When the governor shut down the state, they all got paid. There was a big turmoil, but everyone there made out good. Thanks to Mr. Feinimore for the good work he's been doing for the past couple of years.

Resident Regarding reducing positions. Consider police – if you have a domestic, you don't have the coverage you need. All my friends with businesses, when they don't have money, they cut at the top first. You may have to cut an administrator. You are between a rock and a hard place. On garbage disposal, treatment facility will only handle human waste, not food waste.

Meeting closed.

Corcoran: Asking for Sewerage Authority to provide permanent forgiveness for \$350,000 for purchase of mansion. That would allow that amount not to be included in our budget.

Resolution to request authorization to request (as above) Passed unanimously

Corcoran: Copy should go to Bob Stewart.

-Coopertown Road – that amount was bonded.

Motion authorizing petition to be prepared by Mr. Kearns in opposition to state budget cuts.

COMMENTS – PROFESSIONALS

Fegley

-Smart Future Planning Grants – Reconnecting the Community – spoke with DCA – Delanco has a grant for master plan due to be finished in July. Since competition is tight and we have a grant, probably wouldn't get anything. I'd recommend not spending money to prepare application.

Denton:

-plan of Walnut Street project – bid in April – changes?

-Rancocas Ave – Pine and (missed it) – too narrow for emergency access – should be 40 foot wide rightaway – doable. Good size for block grant - \$40-60,000

COMMENTS - DEPARTMENT HEADS

1. Police

-Grant for records management – computers are in house and being set up in cars – training April 9.

2. Public Works

-Started work on ball fields

-Brush pick-up starts March 24 – Sept.

-April 7-18 is leaf pick-up – It is the only time you can put leaves into the street. Can't be closer than 10 feet to storm drain.

-Please use your driveway in case of snow. If you leave car in street, we have to go around it and it will be plowed in two times.

-All streets but three were done by street sweeper

- Must clean storm drains – we have 400 and have done 43 so far. Found hubcaps, vacuum cleaner, weight set. It’s unbelievable what is down there.
- Trees came down – flowering pear came down on roof of a car.
- Resident: How do you communicate with the public?
- Fenimore: in *Beverly Bee*
- Devinney: Dates can go on front page on website. Maybe you need a separate page for yourself.
- Fenimore: Need to start working on recycling. \$153,000 for trash in a hole. You have to think about it.

3. Municipal Clerk

- Does Township want to authorize spring family yard sale - \$400 for block ads in *Burlington County Times* and to update the banner? Decision next meeting?

COMMENTS - TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

Hinkle:

- Recycle – *New Jersey* magazine – saw article in which recycle can was bar-coded and residents received credit for what they recycled in coupons for restaurants etc.
- Shade Tree – applying for “Tree City” and planning Arbor Day event

Fitzpatrick:

- Met with Scout for interview he needed to do for a badge on governing. This was before the governor cut our budget; now I feel I may have answered some questions differently. An example of opportunities for youth – great scout program
- DYSA – Richard Furness- new president ; other new officers as well.
- March 5 School Board will present the introduction of budget
- Flower Show – still seats for Friday’s trip
- March 8 meeting with DYSA, John Fenimore and Phil McFadden from Rec to look at the fields.
- Egg Hunt – March 15 – 1-3pm
- National Day of Prayer at 6:30 on May 1(not sure of date)
- Boy Scout Mulch Sale
- letter to Hovnanian – Does township want open space instead of having it go to county? Usually has a basin and they can be a problem. A portion will go to county anyway for bike trail.
- Ouellette: In agreement with county having it
- Devinney: In agreement
- Hinkle: In agreement

Read comments from Mike Templeton:

- Unable to make meeting due to work
- Working on budget -
- Dredging – requested copy of Palmyra Cove agreement and amendment. Not received – will file complaint.
- Train noise – see township website for update. Please call in complaints to township hotline

-Thanks for understanding. Welcomes input.

Ouelette:

-thanks to all for work on budget. More work to go. Saturday work sessions are open to the public.

Resident of Pine: May 17th yard sale – I encourage you to have it. Boy Scouts and EMS use it to raise money – not just a yard sale. Good publicity for town. Jack Towell went to the hospital today. I'd like to see him as the marshall. I'm chairing Sewerage Authority and not commenting on proposal.

Hinkle: There will be a fundraiser for Mr. Towell.

Submitted by Maureen Barrett