



Borough of Swedesboro Council Meeting
Swedesboro, NJ 08085

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
April 21, 2008

APPROVED MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Borough Council was held on the above date in Council Chambers with the Honorable Thomas W. Fromm presiding. Councilman Dryden was absent, all others present.

A moment of silent prayer was followed by the flag salute.

Mayor advised that the meeting was being held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Law.

Mrs. Gage moved to approve the minutes of 4/7/2008, seconded by Mr. Casella. Vote all yes.

Deputy clerk read the following resolution: (Temporary Appropriations) Mr. Weeks moved to adopt the resolution, seconded by Mr. Casella. Roll Call Vote-Dryden absent, all others yes.

Deputy clerk read the following resolution: (Approving Change Order for Borough Hall repairs). Mr. Casella moved to adopt the resolution seconded by Mr. Weeks. Roll Call Vote-Dryden absent, all others yes.

Deputy Clerk read the following resolution: (provides that the budget can be read by title only) Public Hearing was held. Mr. Weeks opened the meeting to the public, seconded by Mr. Flaherty. Roll Call Vote-Mr. Dryden absent, all others yes.

Public hearing was held on the budget and nobody from the public spoke.

Mrs. Gage moved to close the public hearing, seconded by Mr. Casella. Vote all yes.

Deputy clerk read the following resolution: (Performance bond reduction of Block 50, Lot 1.) Mr. Weeks moved to adopt the resolution, seconded by Mr. Casella. Roll Call Vote-Mr. Dryden absent, all others yes.

Deputy clerk read the following resolution: (Appointing Deputy Municipal Court Administrator) Mrs. Gage moved to adopt the resolution, seconded by Mr. Weeks. Roll Call Vote- Mr. Dryden absent, all others yes.

Mr. Casella moved to open the meeting to the public, seconded by Mr. Weeks. Vote all yes.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION



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Mr. Holstrom- President of the PBA local 122 questioned at length what is happening with the Swedesboro Police Department in light of firing of a police officer and police clerk. He also made comment that there were people out in the hall that could not come in and should be able to. The Mayor stated that the meeting could be postponed and further discussion could be held at next meeting.

The Mayor stated that the officer that was let go was a probationary officer and by majority vote of the council members present it was decided not to appoint him as a permanent officer. The Mayor was very clear that the decision to not appoint the officer was not related to any budget issues. The Mayor spoke at length about the fiscal status of Swedesboro and that the elimination of the Police Clerk position was a fiscal decision and that other employees of the borough in the past were let go. The Mayor also spoke about the possibility of merging with Woolwich Twp. The borough is applying for discretionary aide and the first question is what is being done about the police. The Mayor emphasized there is no decision made and that they are discussing it.

Mr. Casella also spoke and stated that discussions will include the PBA and the Chiefs of each town. He stated that the Chief was fully aware of this and that discussions occurred two years ago. He stated that they are just looking into this and that it would have to benefit the town or he will personally not support it. Mr. Casella also stated that Chief Dupper was aware of the situation about the probationary officer and the clerk position.

Three times in the last three years this council and committee has been approached by Chief Dupper recommending a merge. Also two of the officers have made it known that in their opinion the two departments should merge.

Mr. Holstrom also questioned if the grievances by the Police Department are being addressed. Mayor stated that the holiday grievance was taken care of. The Mayor stated that the other grievance is in the hands of the solicitor.

Michael Kramer Member of the PBA local 122 asked if they were paying for a salary to an individual that was going to the academy and wanted to know why that individual was not let go instead of a working patrolman. Mayor and Council stated that they were not at liberty to discuss personnel matters in an open meeting.

William Eslo-1447 Kings Highway stated that the bottom line is that council should not consider the money, but to consider the safety of the kids and felt that by leaving an officer go, safety was going to be an issue. He also commented on Woolwich police officers speeding through town.



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The Mayor stated that we are being pressured to look into this and that no decisions have been made. The Mayor stated that the State is making this inevitable and that someday they may even pressure us to consider merging towns and the only hope of keeping some identity is to do shared services.

Kim Barber-319 Broad Street spoke on behalf of the police and the handling of her Children who have been in trouble with the law.

Ray DeMeo- 6 Maybrook Avenue spoke on behalf of the police department and how well they handled the situation with his parents.

Chief Glen Sheetz Borough of Wenonah Police Department/ Gloucester County Police Chiefs Association spoke on behalf of working in a small town and how important it is to know the residents. He understands the situation economically, but would like small town police departments to be close with the residents. He also commented on the importance of keeping everyone aware of the facts.

The Mayor stated that they are only in the discussion phase and that no decisions have been made. Mr. Casella also spoke and said it is his intention to keep all parties informed.

Ed Rieger-216 Broad Street stated that the street he lives on is a drug infested street and that it would not have been like this under Chief Demora.

Mr. Casella commented to the crowd that they should write their legislators and the Governor and tell them how they feel and about restoring aide to the towns.

The Mayor stated that the information for the legislator's office will be on the website and they could also Google the information.

A question was asked about how much the new deputy court clerk was making and it was replied approximately \$10.00 per hour and why Alfred was not considered for that job. The audience was informed that this was not a new position they were filling, but a vacant position.

Mr. Flaherty spoke about all the money that has been invested in the police department and the safety of the residents.

Mrs. Gage spoke about the problems on Broad Street and how there is a major problem with drug dealers and she wants comfort knowing that the Swedesboro police will be there. Mrs. Gage also spoke about how she does not agree with the firing of the Police Clerk Alfred Worrell.



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Michael Kramer PBA local 122 again asked about the firing of Officer DeNick and not the recruit and the Mayor again stated that personnel matters will not be discussed in an open public meeting.

Mel Kramer Retired from PBA 122 wanted to know if he was laid off because of budget issues. Mayor responded no.

Margaret O'Keefe-Kingsway Apartments just wanted to comment on how the police officers are needed and how they are counted on for safety.

The Mayor stated that it is the number one priority that the residents of this town are safe.

Daniel DeMora-793 Mayhew Avenue commended council about the middle of town and how it looks good, but asked why they could not merge public works with the county and leave the police department alone. The Mayor stated that this is not feasible and that it is not an option. The Mayor went onto state that all of the services that have been shared services have been to provide better service to the taxpayers and if this is not the case with merging the police then it will not go any further.

A resident from the audience spoke out of turn and stated that the Mayor should fight for the safety of the town.

Christine Luscan- 200 Helms Avenue got very emotional about personal problems and how the police always respond and make her feel safe. She commented that she would pay the additional tax money knowing her kids are safe.

Joseph Slusar 1850 Kings Highway talked about the possibility of other shared services and asked if additional money was being brought in by the new homes for taxes.

The Mayor spoke about how everything is being considered and that the main problem is the cut in State Aide and the increased budget of the police department.

Mr. Casella also commented that it was the State Aide that really hurt the town.

John Chambers PBA 122 senses a different reaction to PBA Members and residents, and wants the council to tell the residents that they feel comfortable stating that there will not be a reduction of services.

Mr. Weeks commented that the police department has been increased over the years and even with the recent reduction of an officer there are still more officers than we had.

Margaret Lafferty - 403 Second Street is a new resident and loves the town, but she can tell distain towards the police department. She feels that another meeting should be held in a larger facility so all can speak. She also stated that she would like to understand more



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when Mrs. Gage talks about the drugs on Broad Street. Bottom line is to do the right thing for the borough.

As a resident was speaking members of the audience got up and left while she was talking and Mayor noted that this was rude.

Wayne from local 122 apologized and stated that they were just giving others that were out in the hall the opportunity to come in.

Deborah Morris- Kings Highway wants Mayor and council to re-evaluate the importance of the police department and how her kids feel safe with the police department.

James Illo-1930 Kings Highway feels that Woolwich will not enforce Swedesboro Laws because they come speeding through town. He feels that Woolwich will look at Swedesboro residents as second class. He stated that he would pay the increase to keep the force.

Elizabeth Eslo-1447 Kings Highway works at heritage and states that she feels safe walking home at night when the store closes because of the police department.

Dennis Cheega -1329 Kings Highway complained about cars blocking his driveways and how when he calls the police there is someone there to answer the phone and feels that someone should be available to answer police calls.

Comments were made from Mr. Cheega about Alfred only making \$10.00 per hour and that money is being wasted on redevelopment fees, appraisers etc.

Brian Slusar 1611 Kings Highway understands rising costs and budget cuts, but feels that Woolwich should come asking Swedesboro.

Lucille Stewart- 4 Richardson Avenue stated that there are two meetings every month and wanted to know why nobody there ever attended any other meetings leading up to this.

Christine Vasta - 521 Park Avenue remarked how she knows the police and how they respond immediately. She noted the importance of a small town and the police knowing everybody. She said put the money aside and look at the safety of the residents.

Andrea Ascalon-614 Auburn Avenue understands the difficulty of mayor and council, but hopes that they will explore all the possibilities in keeping the police clerk and leaving the other officer on the street. He would be willing to pay additional taxes for keeping the force intact.



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Kirk Geringer - 403 Second Street commended the police department and feels that they would get second rate service with Woolwich.

Cindy Kershaw 1667 Auburn Road spoke about the tragedy of a young boy being struck and killed by two motor vehicles. She received a letter from the school asking for donations to help with the burial costs. The Mayor stated that the town would not be able to do anything. The Mayor advised that he was in contact with the county and got a positive response. The Mayor suggested that all avenues be looked at including donation jars in local business, churches, etc. Mrs. Kershaw stated that donations can be made to The Bank in memory of Elijah Young. Mr. Weeks also commented that he got e-mails from the boy scouts and other organizations willing to help.

Mr. Weeks moved to close the meeting to the public, seconded by Mrs. Hale. Vote all yes.

Mayor thanked all for coming.

Mayor asked for a 5 minute recess at 8:20 while the crowd left.

The meeting resumed at 8:25.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Streetscape is scheduled to start later this week or early next week starting on the Bethesda side.

PARKS & RECREATION

Mr. Flaherty stated that there will be a Green Day coming up. He also stated that he will get the information on who is being appointed to the Parks and Recreation Committee for the next meeting. Mrs. Gage commented that it was supposed to be done at this meeting. Mr. Flaherty motioned to appoint Lisa Tarcona of Franklin Street to the Parks and Recreation Committee, seconded by Mrs. Gage. Vote all yes.

SHADE TREE:

Arbor Day celebrations were a success and trees were planted and mulched. Mrs. Homan asked if the Borough can water the trees. The Mayor stated that he did not feel that the borough men should have to do this and that shade tree should reach out to the residents asking them to water the trees. Mrs. Gage asked why the borough men could not water the trees when they water the hanging baskets.

It was brought up again about the complaint from Mrs. Lewis on Glen Echo Avenue. Mrs. Gage stated that the tree is on private property and shade tree can not do anything



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about it. Mrs. Gage suggested that maybe Dan Orbanus could send a letter making them take the tree down.

Mrs. Gage stated that the next parks and recreation meeting is on 5/21/08 at 7:00 for fun day and the regular parks and recreation meeting is on the first Wednesday of the month. Movie night is scheduled for May 9th.

School budgets were defeated and meetings are scheduled.

FIRE

A 110th Anniversary celebration is being held on 8/8/08 proclamations will be done, etc.

There are complaints about the driveways of the fire company being blocked because of the new traffic light. Mr. Casella will be in touch with the engineer.

The roof repair is moving forward and Dolores sent the letter to begin starting the project.

There are complaints from the residents that the fire whistle is going off to frequently and is way to loud. Edie Barber will look into it.

POLICE

Car 7 is back in service. Officer Frato is now certified in firearms and is out on the street. Gregory is still in the academy. National night out is being discussed and lieutenant Kemp is in charge of this. It will possibly be held the first week of August.

The mayor commented that he executed the agreement and the buildings on General Harker will be demolished.

Mrs. Gage moved to accept the resignation with regret of Frank Lusch, seconded by Mr. Weeks. Vote all yes.

Mr. Flaherty moved to appoint Mr. Hale as the Clean Communities Coordinator, seconded by Mr. Weeks. Vote all yes.

OLD BUSINESS

Mrs. Gage was following up on the proclamation for Kings Things. Mr. Weeks will do the proclamation and forward to Mayor electronically. There is a luncheon on the 26th.

Mr. Flaherty spoke to Marge and they will be doing a power point presentation on the library expansion.



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Mrs. Hale asked if we could do the resolution of support regarding the County of Gloucester Regional Economic Planning Program phase two.

Deputy clerk read the resolution assigned 08-64 (Regional Economic Planning Program). Mr. Flaherty moved to adopt the resolution, seconded by Mr. Casella. Roll Call Vote-Mr. Dryden absent all others yes.

Mrs. Hale stated that economic development will be holding a town wide yard sale on 6/7/08. She would like for the cost to be \$10.00. She asked if the borough would wave their fee. This is being looked into.

The Mayor commented the borough hall project is looking good and that the change order had to be done for additional repairs.

Mr. Casella moved to open the meeting to the public, seconded by Mr. Weeks. Vote all yes.

Joanna Gahrs asked what was the incentive of charging \$10.00 for the town yard sale instead of the normal charge of \$5.00. Mrs. Hale explained that this price would include advertising for the sale, town maps being distributed for those who participate, etc.

Mrs. Gahrs also asked if the firehouse roof would be done in time for the Memorial Day celebration being held on 5/26/08. Mr. Casella spoke with Ed Barber and they will try to get the deadline for completion.

Mrs. Gahrs also wanted to know about the status of the downtown parking and was informed nothing further has been determined. Mrs. Gahrs also questioned if Swedes Inn would be included in the project.

The mayor advised her that all things are being discussed and that the hope is for there to be parking from Swedes Inn to Botto's.

Dennis Cheega 1329 Kings Highway concerns about the taking of his property. He also stated that his driveways are being blocked by cars and in emergency situations he needs to get out. He was advised to call the police and for them to issue tickets for illegal parking.

Elaine Edwards Auburn Avenue. She asked about the Teledyne property being taken for parking and was told that this building is for sale.

Lucille Stewart 4 Richardson Avenue. Thanks the police for their support.



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Mr. Casella moved to close the public portion of the meeting, seconded by Mrs. Gage.
Vote all yes.

Mrs. Gage moved to pay all duly authorized bills, seconded by Mr. Casella. Vote all yes.

Mrs. Gage moved to approve sick pay benefits as long as they had the time, seconded by
Mr. Weeks. Vote all yes.

Mayor moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:38 p.m.

Tanya L. Goodwin
Deputy Borough Clerk