



Borough of Swedesboro Council Meeting
Swedesboro, NJ 08085

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES of April 19, 2010

Approved on May 3, 2010

Corrected May 17, 2010

A regular meeting of Borough Council was held on the above date in Council Chambers with the Honorable Thomas W. Fromm presiding. All Council members were present.

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

Mayor asked for a Roll Call of Council. All members were present.

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

Mr. Weeks moved to approve the minutes of 4/19/10, seconded by Mr. Ayers. Vote all yes.

OPENING COMMENTS

Mayor Fromm indicated that the modifications for the Shared Services grant have been made and submitted as requested.

Mayor Fromm announced that the local taxes for Swedesboro are going to go down .15 cents with a savings ranging from \$150.00 to \$450.00 for the homeowners of Swedesboro. Mayor Fromm stated that it was due to smart choices and tough decisions over the past 5-6 years that allowed for this reduction.

Mayor Fromm stated that the town will be making major improvements in 2010 and will still be planning for the future and building up surplus.

Mayor Fromm also spoke about the Media attention featured on Fox 29 news and the positive spotlight on the town. The report was very positive and a good promotion for the town.

Mayor Fromm mentioned that there were a lot of people to thank some of those in attendance at the meeting and is very proud of the fact that the local taxes in Swedesboro are going down.

Before going into public portion the Mayor asked for a motion to allot each individual to a five minute discussion.

Mr. Casella questioned this motion and felt that five minutes was not long enough for the individual.



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After further discussion, Mr. Weeks motioned to allot each individual five minutes for discussion, seconded by Mr. Ayers. Roll Call Vote. Mr. Casella no, Mrs. Gahrs no, Mr. Zappala no, Mr. Weeks yes, Mr. Ayers yes, Mrs. Hale yes, and Mayor Fromm yes. The motion was passed by a 4 to 3 count.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

Helen Fromm-Weatherby Avenue-Mrs. Fromm stated that it was excellent news that the taxes were going down.

Mrs. Fromm Reminded everybody to vote at the school elections on 4/20/10.

Mrs. Fromm provided a phone number available to citizens to call to help reinstate educational funds. (609-292-6000).

Mayor Fromm stated that he contacted the Governor's office today to invite him to Swedesboro to see how well the town is being managed.

Nathaniel Dupree-626 Auburn Ave. Great that the local taxes are going down, however, still concerned about the overall taxes going up. He questioned what the schools were doing about their budgets and expressed concern that they were not doing their part in lowering the taxes.

Mayor Fromm stated that Mayor and Council did not have anything to do with the school taxes/budget, but encouraged everyone to vote. Mayor Fromm did state that if the budget fails that it would then go to the local mayors and they will do what they can to cut the school budget.

Mayor Fromm did comment that our school district is the lowest cost per pupil in the State.

Mr. Casella asked the residents to contact the legislature's office and the Department of Education. Our school districts are growing and we have an increasing number of students, but we are receiving less money. The state needs to change the formula on how to distribute school funding.

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



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CORRESPONDENCE:

- Mayor and Council were provided the information for the Memorial Day Service.
- A thank you note from Dolores for attending her retirement party was noted.

REPORTS

- Fire Company-reports were distributed
- Construction-reports were distributed

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance-The budget is being introduced tonight.

Public works- Mayor Fromm stated that the manholes are still a problem and that issue is still being looked into.

Public Safety- The issues on Broad Street are being addressed and the residents are happy with the response.

Economic Development- Walking tour brochures have been distributed and requests are coming in for more. Economic development meeting is scheduled for 4/22/10.

Fire Mrs. Gahrs will speak to Robert Jonas again about the traffic problem outside of the firehouse. It seems the problem is that people are trying to judge where to stop.

Mrs. Gahrs is also contacting Karen Viereck at the Newtown Press for the fire company.

Mrs. Gahrs attended a workshop meeting on Sunday on how to write grants.

Garbage & Recycling- Mr. Ayers spoke about metal pick up being on the first and third Friday's and that residents are to call borough hall to schedule pick up. The information is on the website and an ad will be placed in the Newtown Press.

Street lighting/public celebration- Nothing to report



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Parks and Recreation- Mr. Zappala commented that fun day preparations are underway and will be held on May 22, 2010.

Planning Board- Nothing to report.

Board of Health- Nothing to report.

Environmental/Shade Tree –Mr. Ayers nothing to report for Environmental. Shade Tree is starting a new management plan as per the state to be done every four years.

School Board Kingsway gave out a letter that was written in the Gloucester County Times, as well as an explanation of the budget. School elections are being held on 4/20/10.

S/W Mr. Fisher is trying to do what they can and are looking into cutting energy costs.

Census- No additional information has been provided. Mr. Casella will contact them to see if there are any numbers in yet for Swedesboro.

Reassessment- Mrs. Gahrs spoke with Robyn and a draft letter has been completed for the reassessment and they are waiting for the tax map approvals from the state.

OLD BUSINESS

Mrs. Gahrs is checking with other towns that have lakes to see if they have a letter that they send to residents about safety on the lakes.

Mrs. Gahrs thanked George for putting the information on the website.

Mrs. Gahrs stated that Jim Six is going to be the Memorial Day guest speaker.

Mrs. Hale stated that the outdoor show is being held on 5/15/10. Some of the exhibitions will include students from GCIT's welding class who will be doing a wrought iron exhibition and will be having pieces for sale. Mrs. Hale encouraged people to buy their pieces and to support local trade schools. There will also be a sand sculpture, a chalk drawing contest, and the Philadelphia zoo will also be doing an exhibition.



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Mrs. Hale also stated that the Swedesboro/Woolwich day committee is in need of volunteers.

RESOLUTIONS

- Clerk read the following resolution: (R-59 Resolution Introducing Current Fund and Utility Fund Budget for Calendar Year 2010). As required a public hearing will be held regarding the budget on 5/17/10.

Mr. Casella expressed his concerns about the fact that members of council had to find out through the news that Swedesboro's taxes were going down. Mr. Casella stated that he asked Mayor Fromm and the CFO for a meeting and that he felt the Mayor and CFO had lied to him about the budget process. Mr. Casella is very disappointed that Council was not informed about the decrease before the news. Mr. Casella feels that there should be better communication.

Mr. Zappala also was disappointed that he learned of the deduction through the news and has the same concerns about not being informed. Mr. Zappala feels that all members of council should be involved.

Mayor Fromm explained that the mayor submits the budget to the finance committee and the CFO. Mayor Fromm stated that 16 towns were interviewed about their budgets not being introduced and he wanted to get the information out that Swedesboro was introducing their budget with a tax reduction. Fox news thought that it was a good story that needed to be told. Mayor Fromm indicating that he had the information to provide to Council at the Meet and Greet and was disappointed in the fact that not everybody was there.

Mayor Fromm stated that he was not sorry that he had the opportunity to get the information out about Swedesboro and that everybody should be proud of the fact that the taxes are going down.

Mr. Weeks moved to introduce the budget resolution, seconded by Mr. Ayers. Roll Call Vote-all yes.

ORDINANCE - INTRODUCTIONS

- Clerk introduced the following ordinance with a public hearing to be held on 5/3/10 (0-7-10 SALARY ORDINANCE TO AMEND ORDINANCE 1976 BOROUGH OF SWEDESBORO WHICH WAS ADOPTED AT A



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REGULAR MEETING OF BOROUGH COUNCIL ON MARCH 15, 1976)

Mr. Weeks motioned to introduce the ordinance, seconded by Mrs. Hale.
Roll Call Vote-all yes.

- Clerk introduced the following ordinance with a public hearing to be held on 5/3/10 (0-8-10 ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK)

Mr. Weeks motioned to introduce the ordinance, seconded by Mr. Casella.
Roll Call Vote-all yes.

ORDINANCE – PUBLIC HEARINGS

A Public hearing is to be held tonight on Ordinance 0-6-10, (ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF SWEDESBBORO AUTHORIZING AN AGREEMENT FOR TAX ABATEMENT WITH SWEDES DEVELOPMENT, LLC FOR THE PROPERTY KNOWN AS BLOCK 50, LOT 1).

Mr. Casella moved to open the meeting to the public for public hearing on ordinance 0-6-10, seconded by Mr. Weeks. Vote all yes.

Mrs. Gahrs-110 Thompson asked if any other property applied for tax abatement and did Council approve any other property for tax abatement. Mrs. Gahrs asked if there was a separate ordinance for the auto spa and that she could not find anything in the minutes.

Mayor Fromm stated that tonight is approving the retail stores and believed that the auto spa was already approved for abatement.

Mayor Fromm explained the abatement process with 20% increases each year over a five year period.

Mr. Weeks moved to close the public portion of the public hearing, seconded by Mr. Ayers. Vote all yes.

Mr. Weeks motioned to adopt ordinance 0-6-10, seconded by Mr. Ayers.
Roll Call Vote. Vote all yes.

Clerk – Ordinance 0-2-10 is an open ordinance that needs to be addressed. Mr. Weeks was provided additional information regarding this and after review will introduce at the meeting of 5/3/10.



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NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Weeks advised anybody holding events to forward the information to him and he would put the information on the website.

Mayor Fromm stated that any member of council who has questions about the budget to put in writing and forward to the finance committee.

Mrs. Hale thanked those who helped on Sunday with cleaning and repainting the urns. The plants from Platt's will arrive in a couple of weeks.

Over the past four weeks several more businesses have come into town.

Mayor Fromm commented that the speeding on Church Street issue is not resolved and that Tractor Trailers are still going fast on this road. Chief Marino stated that he will increase patrol in that area.

Mayor Fromm spoke with Mike Boyle, a business owner and indicated this issue is still a problem.

Mayor Fromm stated the old borough owned properties that were foreclosed on are being cleaned up and that the old buildings are being torn down. These properties will eventually bring revenue into the town.

Mr. Weeks reminded everyone that there is a neighborhood watch program that meets the third Wednesday of every month at 7:00 pm.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

Eric Voight-208 Helms Avenue reported that (2) emergencies were declared for the snow storms and that through FEMA we would be getting back 75% of our cost due to the 12/19/09 storm and we are still working on the data for the February storm.

Mr. Voight also stated that there was money available through FEMA for small businesses and homeowners for low interest loans to help those repair their properties.



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Mrs. Hale asked what could be submitted for recovery and Mr. Voight did explain what was submitted.

Mayor Fromm asked if the tiles on the roof could be claimed under this and Mr. Voight stated that the damages would have to exceed \$1,000 as that is the deductible amount.

Mike Murray-423 Weatherby Ave. Thanked Mayor Fromm and the finance committee for their efforts with the budget.

Mr. Murray stated that it was a great week for Swedesboro and is disappointed with members of council bringing out issues in public. He feels that these issues should be addressed in private.

Mr. Casella stated that he heard two stories and felt that he was being lied to and that "he was going to get to the bottom of it".

Mayor Fromm referred back to five years ago when members of council started the gradual progress to the reduction of this year's budget noting that the Public Works Department has already been contributing to their health care insurance.

Mayor Fromm stated that everyone should be proud that great things are happening for Swedesboro.

Dave Flaherty- East Avenue commented that the Library needs support as State Aid for library funding could be cut by 75%. There is a website and information at the Library to help get involved in supporting library funding.

Mr. Flaherty commended the wonderful job on the budget.

Lucille Stewart-Auburn Avenue asked if there was any ordinance against yard sales on Sunday.

Mayor Fromm stated that there was nothing stating that a yard sale could be held on Sunday, but there are issues with the ordinance that are going to be addressed.

Mrs. Stewart also wanted to note that the trash collectors are not putting the cans back and are throwing them in the street and requested that we call them and ask them to put them back.

Mrs. Stewart also stated that the manhole on her street is very loud.



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Mrs. Stewart thanked Council for the agenda.

Karen Murray- 423 Weatherby Ave. Stated that it was amazing to see Swedesboro on the news and is very proud to live in Swedesboro.

Carol Gahrs-110 Thompson informed everybody that in the library they have cards to fill out to support library funding that will be hand delivered to the State.

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

Mayor Fromm thanked everyone for coming and apologized to those who did not feel included, but is not apologizing for promoting the town and his tremendous pride in the town.

Mr. Weeks moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Ayers.

Mayor adjourned the meeting at 8:25.