

FLORENCE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL EXECUTIVE SESSION

October 8, 2014

8:00PM

CALL TO ORDER & FLAG SALUTE

Council President Lovenduski called the meeting to order. The **Royal Rangers** led the **Salute to the Flag**.

SUNSHINE STATEMENT

The Opening Statement was read by the Township Clerk: Notice was sent to the Register News for information; posted on the municipal bulletin board; placed on the web-site on January 9, 2014; and advertised in the Burlington Co. Times on January 12, 2014.

ROLL CALL

Present: Frank Baldorossi, Paul Ostrander, Jerry Sandusky, David Woolston, Ted Lovenduski

Also present: Mayor Craig H. Wilkie; Richard A. Brook, Township Administrator; Thomas A. Sahol, Assistant Administrator; Kelly Grant, Esq., Township Solicitor; James Biegen, Township Engineer; Russell Trice, Township Water & Sewer Engineer; Joy M. Weiler, Township Clerk

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Council President Lovenduski opened the meeting to the public.

Dwayne, one of the Royal Rangers, asked if his group could clean up Florence Township parks this weekend?

It was the MOTION of Sandusky, seconded by Baldorossi to approve the request. Roll call vote - all ayes.

Assistant Administrator Sahol will make sure the needed supplies are provided.

MOTION was made by Ostrander; seconded by Sandusky, to close the public comments. Roll call vote – all ayes.

BUSINESS

David Lebak, Safety Director: “Put Safety on Your Agenda – Safety Coordinator Review”

Director Lebak said the Joint Insurance Fund (JIF) requires that once a year, the Safety Committee update Mayor and Council regarding the committee. The committee meets quarterly throughout the year. One thing they do is perform job site observations for various departments. A narrative is then provided. It is a way to improve how people are working.

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They also perform accident reviews. The committee analyzes accident reports and looks for ways to prevent them.

There are annual inspections by the JIF checking for deficiencies. There was a spot inspection this year and some items were found that needed to be addressed. Florence Township tries to be proactive.

There are Safety Incentive funds that are based on the performance of the safety program. This year Florence Township received about \$4,000 for safety related equipment and projects. The township used the funds for improved stop signs for the crossing guards and improved protective hearing devices for the Police Department. Railings were repaired at the sewer plant and the snow plows were equipped with safety quick disconnects. Hopefully these things will help employees do their job more safely.

Another facet of the Safety Program is the **Wellness Program**. This year there was a weight loss challenge that was successful. There was also a pedometer challenge. Employees wore pedometers and tracked their steps. He said it was “a neat kind of competition.” Competition is always good in Florence.

There was also an employee luncheon as a result of **Nancy Erlston** winning a **Special Recognition Award** for the activities she spearheaded. She made sure it was a healthy lunch under the Wellness Program.

There was also a **Health Fair** held again this year. It included blood pressure screenings, blood sugar screenings, blood donations, respiratory checks, flu shots and other information.

Council Member Sandusky said he was glad there is such a strong Wellness Program but he inquired about smoking cessation. Mr. Lebak said there was much information on that distributed at the Health Fairs that were held each year. Some employees spoke to the representatives distributing the information.

Council Member Sandusky said some new vehicles were recently purchased and he recommended there be a policy that employees cannot smoke in township vehicles.

Mayor Wilkie said that was already a policy for the Police Department, perhaps it was something to look into for all employees.

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At this time Mayor Wilkie left to meet with the Royal Rangers to answer questions and discuss local government with them.

The Royal Rangers presented everyone with a bag of fruit and the Mayor and Council stood for a picture with them.

Administrator Brook called Council's attention to a photo that was distributed of a sewer main that was broken in two locations. The shoring is 10 feet into the ground. The shoring was purchased with safety funds from the JIF that were received as a result of the good hard work of the employees. Florence Township is very fortunate to have an active Safety Committee. It is truly a collective effort and the goal is to prevent claims and keep the employees safe and always evolve and improve. Captain Brian Boldizar suggested the lights for the signs that the crossing guards use. If it is hazy or foggy the crossing guards and children are safer. Director Lebak said the Police Department was held to a little bit of a higher standard and they help and share some of the standards they have. He has learned from them over the years. He enjoyed interacting with them on that level.

Council Member Woolston asked if the township had invested in hard hats yet? Mr. Lebak said the township is working on getting them. They need to be replaced every five years.

Jerry Cohen, 7 Barbee Court, asked if the police wear body cameras? He has seen it on the news recently. Administrator Brook said the new vehicles have cameras that have a 360 degree view. He believes in the future the department will have body cameras. They would protect the officer, the township and the public. He cited incidents shown on the news.

Mayor and Council thanked Director Lebak for his presentation. Director Lebak thanked them for the opportunity to share information on the Safety Committee.

Township Water and Sewer Engineer

Township Water and Sewer Engineer, Russell Trice, said he was working on finishing the design of the holding tank digesters. He said it should be done this week and then he would go over it with Director Lebak. The bid should go out late October or early November.

Administrator Brook said there was an Ordinance adopted earlier in the year regarding the wells. Every five to ten years they need to be rehabilitated because they begin to loose pumping capacity. A timeline was created to do wells #3 and #4.

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Township Engineer

2015 Road Program

Township Engineer, James Biegen, said he was working on plans for the program and they are about eighty-five percent completed. He said there was a drainage challenge on Parish Lane. That would need to be addressed. Also on Railroad Avenue behind the tavern near Pond Avenue, the first thirty feet of sidewalk was in very poor condition. Across Pond Street there was no handicapped access. There needed to be an apron and sidewalk ramp. Administrator Brook said it would be good to add these to the program. There were also a couple alleys that needed to be widened. Florence Township is already looking ahead to 2016, so he asked that Mayor and Council be aware and mention any streets they saw that needed attention. He thinks the program can be larger in 2016, because the Debt Service will be dropping off significantly.

Council Member Sandusky suggested looking at streets that were done ten years ago that are cracked and might need sealing. It could extend the life of the roads. Administrator Brook concurred. He said the parking lots will also be assessed for possibly filling and restriping.

Engineer Biegen said the current program was in-line budget wise even if Parish Lane and Railroad Avenue were added.

Engineer Biegen said near the sidewalk on Railroad Avenue there is a **small plaque** in the grass. Mayor Wilkie said it was for **Jimmy Prokolyshen**. Council Member Sandusky said Wayne Philips, the previous owner of the Bridges at Roebing Station bar/restaurant, had a dedication there because Mr. Prokolyshen passed away and there was a tree planted there. His son is still living in the area.

Mayor Wilkie asked that everyone take a good look at the **2015 Road Program** to make sure all were in agreement with what was proposed. Mayor Wilkie said he wanted Engineer Biegen to make sure the trees on the streets are inspected so property owners would be advised if there was a problem. Administrator Brook said a letter that is sent to the property owners was amended to include that trees will be examined by an arborist and if there was a danger they would be removed and be replaced wherever and whenever possible.

Mayor Wilkie said Water & Sewer, Public Works and the Police would also review the proposed work. Hopefully it could go out to bid soon so the work could start. There were certain streets near Riverfront School that would need to be completed before school started next year. He asked that if there were any changes, he be notified. It should be finalized by November.

Administrator Brook asked for clarification on the streets with cracks. Was Council looking for sealing the cracks and installing a slurry seal?

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Council Member Sandusky said an example was his street. There are more weeds in the street cracks than in the yards. He suggested filling the cracks and coating the road to extend the life.

Bids: Library Roof

Engineer Biegen said the bids were received. Six bidders picked up specs and two submitted actual bids. The first bid was \$383,000 and the second was \$314,000. Both were very high. The original estimate for the project was \$182,000. He made some phone calls after the bid to find out why they were coming in high. Several did not want to bid the project because they were busy at the time of the project. Another reason was that it was two parts. There was a roofing portion and there was some inside work, including some electrical. The bidders that did submit could not put a good price on the electrical component.

He recommended rejecting the bids and re-evaluating how to move forward. He recommended doing some immediate repair work to the roof to get it through the winter at this point. He would like to bid it as two different projects at the same time. The same bidder could do both jobs or it could be two different contractors. It could mean better prices.

It was the MOTION of Sandusky, seconded by Woolston to reject the bids. All Ayes.

A formal resolution will be on next week's agenda for approval.

Council President Lovenduski liked the idea of two separate bids. He asked if it would help or hurt the township? Engineer Biegen thought it could help.

Administrator Brook said the bond ordinance may need to be amended.

Engineer Biegen said the Municipal Aid Grants will be finished next week.

The **Old York Road Bike Path** would be going to bid in January; hopefully, it would be awarded by February.

Township Administrator **Best Practices Checklist**

Administrator Brook explained the State of NJ required all municipalities to submit a Best Practices Check List. They look at certain things they believe a municipality could do or should do. There was a form to complete. The state does require that it is discussed with the Mayor and Council.

The State of NJ asked if there was a municipal website and if it was kept up to date? Florence Township does have one and it is kept up to date. Also, it asked if the elected officials are required to attend an instructional course? Florence Township's elected officials do that on a voluntary basis.

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There were questions about the internal accounting control processes. The Florence Township's procedures are very strict and secure and there are numerous checks and balances. Even the Mayor will review purchase orders. Everything is well documented. There was a question asking if the budget is regularly discussed and reviewed? It is very common for the budget to be reviewed on a regular basis. Was the debt statement filed in a timely manner? The answer is yes.

There were two questions that the township had to answer in the negative. The budget was not provided to be introduced and adopted within the state's guidelines. But it was not that far off.

It was affirmative that the elected officials receive quarterly reports on revenues and appropriations. Mayor and Council are given monthly reports. The State of NJ asked about health benefits coverage and a comparison of the insurance rates to the State health plan? They are lower than the state's plan. This benefits the employees and the residents of the community. The township aid will not be impacted for this year. The checklist is meant to make sure municipalities are acting in a way that is consistent with way the state would like to see things run. The checklist will be certified and sent to the State of NJ.

County-Wide Assessment

Administrator Brook said this was an issue that has been going on for a while. Probably in 2016 or 2017 at the latest, all municipalities would have to have a township wide reassessment. After that, the municipality would be required to do twenty percent of the community each year. The goal was to try to keep from having the significant shifts that happen when a re-evaluation was done all at once after a number of years. Florence Township has been fortunate to have compliance plans. There have been adjustments over the last couple years. The next compliance plan will be the row homes. If the township just waits until it is required the impact would be much more noticeable. The township will make an application to Burlington County; hopefully, the county will approve the plan. All were in agreement.

It was the MOTION of Sandusky, seconded by Ostrander to **proceed with the assessment plan.**

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

AYES: Baldorossi, Ostrander, Sandusky, Woolston, Lovenduski

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

Unanimous approval. Motion carried.

Action

**Resolution No. 2014-205
A Resolution Cancelling Taxes on Property
Owned by a totally Disabled Veteran**

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It was the MOTION of Sandusky, seconded by Baldorossi to approve Res. No. 2014-205.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

AYES: Baldorossi, Ostrander, Sandusky, Woolston, Lovenduski

NOES: None

ABSENT: None Unanimous approval. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jack Ulmer, 200 West Front Street, thanked the Mayor and Council on behalf of the Garden Club and Florence Historical Society for installing the wall at the handicapped entrance on the West Third Street firehouse. People love to come in that way. A couple people use walkers and it is a major help.

Jerry Cohen, 7 Barbee Court, said he saw Engineer Biegen at the back of his property looking at drainage issues. Charlie Davies, 6 Barbee Court, called Engineer Biegen to look at it. Mr. Cohen questioned who owns the drains and the pipes that run through the swales? Administrator Brook said he will check but he believes it is the homeowner. He said Guzzi Engineering knew much more about the development. He will consult with Engineer Dan Guzzi to find out for sure.

It was the MOTION of Ostrander, seconded by Sandusky to close the public comments. Roll call vote - All ayes.

Mayor Wilkie read into the record the proclamation that was prepared for the **Rancocas Valley Chapter of The Links, Inc.** The proclamation recognizes its **40th Anniversary** on October 26, 2014. Minnie Henry, a Charter Member, was a Florence Resident.

Mayor Wilkie said Friday the **Florence Township Fire Department** will be holding its annual **Open House** from 6:00pm-8:00pm. It is **Fire Prevention Week**. On Sunday **St. Stephen's Church** will be having a **dedication and services for police, firefighters and EMS**. That is at 9:00am. There will a breakfast following. **St. Nicholas Church** will be having its **100th Anniversary Celebration** service on Sunday at 4:00pm. The Anniversary dinner will follow.

8:52 PM MOTION by Ostrander; seconded by Sandusky to adjourn. Roll call vote – all ayes. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

8:52 PM: Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Joy M. Weiler, RMC/MMC
Township Clerk
/aek