

Work Meeting
January 14, 2013

A Work Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Wanaque was held on Monday, January 14, 2013, at 7:00 P.M. in the Wanaque Municipal Building.

The Mayor called the meeting to order.

On roll call, the following Council Members responded: Balunis, Cortellessa, Leonard, Pasquariello, Pettet and Willse. The Mayor declared a quorum. The Borough Attorney and Borough Engineer were present.

The Mayor read the following Sunshine Statement: This is a Work meeting of the Mayor and Council and adequate notice thereof has been given by advertising the date, time and place of the Work meetings in the Suburban Trends and the Herald News newspapers and was e-mailed to these papers on December 28, 2012, and a notice thereof has been posted on December 28, 2012 on the bulletin board in the Wanaque Municipal Building, 579 Ringwood Avenue, Wanaque, New Jersey and a copy thereof has been on file in the office of the Municipal Clerk.

MINUTES:

December 11, 2012

ORDINANCES:

Introduction of Ord. #1-0-13:

Re: Appropriating CDBG Funds and Sewer Capital Funds – Monroe Street and Jefferson Street Sewer Upgrade

The Borough Administrator explained the Ordinance.

Councilman Cortellessa said how much is the grant.

The Borough Administrator said there are two grants for one hundred thousand dollars each and it is four hundred thousand dollars.

Councilman Cortellessa said there is still two hundred thousand dollars needed.

Councilman Willse said how much in capital funds.

The Borough Administrator said one point eight million dollars.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Councilman Balunis:

Councilman Balunis reported the First Aid Squad Installation Dinner is this Saturday and it is the fortieth anniversary of the squad.

Councilman Cortellessa:

Councilman Cortellessa reported there is a lot going on in the Water and Road departments. Vegetative waste is still ongoing and Christmas trees are being picked up. Potholes are being repaired and there are a number of minor water leaks and sewer

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backupshappening and the flushing of the water lines is necessary. A fire hydrant was hit on Father Hayes Drive and Ringwood Avenue and is being paid by the persons insurance. And they are cleaning up the booster station area.

Councilman Leonard:

Councilman Leonard reported there is nothing for Recreation. Two Education Foundation members were elected to the Boards of Education. One member to the Wanaque Board of Education and one member to the Lakeland Regional High School Board of Education.

Councilman Pasquariello:

Councilman Pasquariello read the police report and the letter from the Police Chief.
Councilman Cortellessa said how much is the overtime costing us.
The Borough Administrator said I have the numbers in my office.
Councilman Cortellessa said we'll meet with the Finance Committee and look at the number for staffing. We need to look at it.
Councilman Willse said need to look at the overtime costs and what a salary would be.
Councilman Cortellessa said the Chief has been making recommendations for a long time and it should be looked at.
The Borough Administrator said we are working on the Budget and there is a two percent salary cap.

Councilman Pettet:

Councilman Pettet reported that Lakeland Regional High School has a new Board Member and they will miss Marie Mahler as a Board Member.

Councilman Willse:

Councilman Willse reported there is no Fire Department report. The Health Department had the rabies clinic and two hundred seventy five animals were vaccinated for rabies. Two food establishments have issues but everyone else is approved.

The Borough Engineer said with regard to Fourth Avenue AJM Contractors is to begin the drainage work soon. The asbuilts for Wanaque Reserve were sent back with comments and we are still waiting on that.

The Borough Administrator said we are working on the Budget waiting for the Auditor to come in with the numbers. An application for a waiver for 10 Warren Hagstrom Boulevard was submitted and we are waiting to hear back on that. The Hagstrom field we are waiting for the Department of Environmental Protection to get back to us to hear what they will allow us to do and what we will be able to do there.

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The Borough Attorney said there was a termination of the litigation on Lexon for the developers. Regarding the property donation to the Borough for 9 Algonquin Path the Borough Engineer should look at it and we should do a title search and possible survey for the property for tax revenue. There are wetlands there and you can't make any development on it. If the Borough accepts the property it is not taxable.

The Borough Administrator said we will have the Attorney do the title search on it and take it from there.

Councilman Cortellessa said are there other properties up there.

The Borough Administrator said there are a couple of other properties and if the Borough would take the property it would not be able to be developed.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION:

The Mayor opened the Public Discussion.

Michael Rock, 8100 Warrens Way, Wanaque said we had a briefing by Dominick Cortellessa and we looked at the selling prices and assessment values. Are we under assessed or over assessed. Wanaque Reserve took a big hit because of not being the same as other residences.

The Mayor said it was the fair market value for the revaluation as of October 1st.

Michael Rock said I don't know about the rest of the town.

The Mayor said there is a website for the revaluation company and the sales are listed for 2011 and 2012.

Michael Rock said it is a highly emotional process and will we be able to sell the properties. We see more defaults and people have to walk away from the properties. The burden is going to be on the seven hundred fifty five units and that will have to carry the town.

The Mayor said anyone who appealed in years prior to the revaluation they went down but everyone else went up. I asked the Assessor about the appeals from the Wanaque Reserve and the Ramapo Mountain Drive areas. There were spikes in the rates and people that appealed got a reduction but only temporary and they went back up right after. We looked at the Reserve specifically and the Colfax units. Pulte was giving give backs in furniture and other things. We are going to talk to the appraiser and the appraisal company.

Michael Rock said I was the first homeowner there what will the taxes be. A letter went back and forth and there was an agreement to keep taxes down to sell the units.

The Mayor said there is no such agreement. The sales people tell you things to make a sale.

Councilman Leonard said the appraiser said it was a high appraisal.

The Mayor said we can meet with the company and go over the issues.

Councilman Cortellessa said we can meet with them and whether the process is fair or not and if the methodology they used is right. The process has to be corrected if need be.

Michael Rock said I have upgrades in my unit. But people are going to get hurt and they are on the edge. This governing body needs to help us.

Al Nagler, 3407 Warrens Way, Wanaque said given each building the same apartment floors one to four the valuation is different. Between the ten buildings there is a percentage difference.

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The Mayor said that is something the Assessor and Appraiser would handle. The Mayor and Council only approved the company for the revaluation.

Al Nagler said for the same apartments the appraisals should be uniform and the ratios are far off.

The Mayor said Pulte is selling the units and do they charge a premium for the first floor or a higher floor.

Al Nagler said yes but for the same square footage shouldn't it be similar.

The Borough Administrator said in talking to the Assessor and the Appraiser if you take a Colfax unit looking out to the mountains they are grouped different than one looking at the treatment plant. It depends on the building locations and the sales.

Councilman Cortellessa said the data should be looked at for a fair methodology.

The Borough Administrator said we are meeting with them soon. The values are certified by two to one. The property owner received a card with the assessment. The appeal process to file is by May 1st not April 1st with the Passaic County Board of Taxation for Tax Appeals. You should file the application with them and any backup to go with it.

The Borough Attorney said they are located on Hamburg Turnpike in Wayne.

The Borough Administrator said if the Assessor finds a mistake he can file an Assessor appeal also.

The Borough Attorney said anything fifteen percent below fair market value must reevaluate and it is forty seven percent in Wanaque and there are only five companies that do this. The property values had descended in Passaic County and other towns are revaluating also.

Michael Moroze, 5107 Warrens Way, Wanaque said changes of assessment numbers were on the website. There was 2 NorthGate and 19 Dena Drive and the rate was raised more at Wanaque Reserve and we are paying an unfair share of the loss for the town.

The Mayor said the appeals were filed and taxes were lowered already.

Michael Moroze said it is a higher percentage than the rest of the town. The chart said Wanaque Reserve is paying more and we're paying the fair share for the school but we have no children.

The Mayor said the State Taxation sets the rate.

Michael Moroze said we have the bigger increase than anyone else in town by the assessment company.

Matt Leydens, 3414 Warrens Way, Wanaque said I know a lot about real estate tax appraisal and I have tax consulting firm experience. I am concerned about the assessment process and the discrepancies. The Colfax unit on the fourth floor corner unit is three hundred twenty thousand dollars and is assessed at three hundred forty five thousand dollars. Three years ago the tax appeal went down and there was no reassessment and it stayed there was no freeze. To create taxes is the tax rate and the bottom number is the revenue.

The Mayor said the rate came down but the revaluation went up and the revenue remained neutral.

Matt Leydens said is there anyone to talk to about the budget to get that rate down.

The Mayor said the County has a portion of it and the schools and Municipality have other portions of it.

The Borough Administrator said the percentage of County taxes went up due to the Wanaque Reserve. Our percentage was a seven percent increase due to equalization and added

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value. Hopefully we'll see the reduction as in other towns that have revaluated. A decrease in all four budgets would probably reduce the amount. With a two percent cap there is no room to do that. We reduced staff all over and mandated costs from the State. Now it becomes a matter of the tax rate. We can only control the Municipal portion of the budget.

Councilman Cortellessa said the Council is diligent on the expenses of the town and we need to create greater ratables.

Kenneth Stein, 5406 Warrens Way, Wanaque said is one hundred percent of the town revaluated.

The Borough Administrator said yes.

Kenneth Stein said what ways do you have of bringing in ratables.

The Mayor said the development of the Candle Factory property and that is moving forward and will bring in ratables. The property on Ringwood Avenue is waiting for the developer to begin. Holiday Inn wants to build a second hotel and the property to be developed on Union Court also would like to put a restaurant there, the property on Union Avenue we are also looking at and also some extra money we are looking into.

Janice Wood, 6415 Warrens Way, Wanaque said I have been here six years and my unit was appraised at one hundred thirty thousand dollars less and the taxes went from eight thousand seven hundred dollars up to twelve thousand dollars and it is a logic issue. I had a discussion with the Assessor and the significant increase percentage wise doesn't make sense.

The Mayor said the County equalization rate when building begins has been fifty percent and we are trying to get everyone at the same rate.

The Borough Administrator said the values from 2006 have decreased more than your unit and you are picking up that increase and the market value and state of the economy also. We're trying to keep the value of the community up.

Janice Wood said it will affect our sales and drive our prices down. It's a huge burden.

The Borough Administrator said the Mayor and I will be looking at the information to make sure that it is correct this week.

Michael Rock, 8100 Warrens Way, Wanaque said we have to have everything to the Assessor by February 1st.

The Borough Administrator said yes.

Yetta Maidenberg, 6213 Warrens Way, Wanaque said the lighting on Ringwood Avenue by Dunkin Donuts is not good and there are no lines in the roadway. Can we have lines put in and new resurfacing and put delineators there. Also reflectors should be put near the bridge where the lighting is bad.

The Borough Administrator said we will contact the County and the poles are the State Department of Transportation. We have to notify them and we will pass on your request to them.

Councilman Cortellessa said the timing of the traffic light can that be addressed.

The Borough Administrator said yes we will let them know.

The Mayor closed the Public Discussion.

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CONSENT AGENDA:

Resolution #24-0-13:

Re: Credit balance of exempt property at Block 313, Lot 2 in the amount of \$2,060.26

Resolution #25-0-13:

Re: Budgetary Transfers

Two (2) Applications for Raffle Licenses:

Re: Lakeland Regional High School Band Association – RA:828 and RA:829

Two (2) Applications for Amusement Machine Licenses:

Re: 1) Diego Rosario – Roar of the Crowd, 72 Haskell Avenue, Haskell, 2) Joseph Agostino – “Flips” 18 Railroad Avenue, Wanaque

Payment to State of New Jersey, Department of Environmental Protection:

Re: Memorial Field Lighting Replacement in the amount of \$6,691.74

Resolution #26-0-13:

Re: Dedicate playground on Conklintown Road in memory of Councilman George Theoharous

Resolution #27-0-13:

Re: Approve release of Bond Guarantee – Wanaque Urban Renewal LLC

Resolution #28-0-13:

Re: CDBG Application – Phase III Sewer Upgrade

Resolution #29-0-13:

Re: Interlocal Agreement – Animal Control Services – Borough of Bloomingdale

Application for Membership for Wanaque Borough Volunteer Fire Department:

Re: Robert Henry Stelling, Jr. effective immediately

REGULAR REPORTS - PROFESSIONAL REPORTS:

1. Clerk's Receipts for December 2012 -
2. Police Department Report for December 2012 -
3. Tax Collector's Report for December 2012 -
4. Municipal Court Report for December 2012 -

COMMUNICATIONS:

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NEW BUSINESS:

Letter from Raffaele Chirico:

Re: Donation of property to Borough of Wanaque – 9 Algonquin Path, Haskell

Closed Session:

Re: Litigation/Negotiation/Personnel

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

RESOLUTIONS:

FINANCE REPORT:

ADJOURNMENT:

On entertainment of the Mayor, Councilmen Leonard and Balunis moved a motion to adjourn the meeting.

On roll call, all voted yes, and the Mayor declared the motion carried; meeting adjourned at 8:30 P.M.

Katherine J. Falone, RMC, CMC
Municipal Clerk