

March 3, 2022  
121 Evergreen Rd  
New Egypt, NJ 08533

The Plumsted Township Committee meeting of March 3, 2022 was called to order by Mayor Bowen.

**STATEMENT:** "This meeting is being held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act." It was presented for publication to the Asbury Park Press and Trenton Times and posted on the Bulletin Board.

Clerk Witham read the following statement regarding remote meetings:

Please be advised that this meeting is being held in person and remotely according to DLGS guidelines as presented in Resolution No. 2020-351 that was adopted at the December 28, 2020 Township Committee meeting. Participants' audio will be muted until the public comment portion of the meeting. We ask that each participant mute themselves as well to avoid any interference in the recorded meeting.

There will be an opportunity for public comment during the meeting which shall be limited to 5 minutes per person. At the time you wish to make public comment, you may unmute yourself accordingly.

Should there be any disruption from the public during the meeting, they will be warned and should the conduct continue, they will be muted or removed from the public meeting.

Thank you for your cooperation.

**STATEMENT:** "This meeting is being held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act." It was presented for publication to the Asbury Park Press and posted on the Bulletin Board.

**THOSE OFFICIALS PRESENT:**

COMMITTEEMAN CALABRESE    COMMITTEEMAN CUOZZO    COMMITTEEMAN GRILLETTO  
DEPUTY MAYOR MARINARI    MAYOR BOWEN    ATTORNEY ZABARSKY    CLERK WITHAM

ON MOTION OF COMMITTEEMAN CALABRESE, SECONDED BY COMMITTEEMAN GRILLETTO, RESOLUTION NO. 2022-123 AUTHORIZING THE CONVENING OF AN EXECUTIVE SESSION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT WAS ADOPTED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES.

The committee returned from Executive Session. Mayor Bowen called the Workshop/Regular Session to order. A second roll call vote was taken. Mayor Bowen asked everyone to rise for the flag salute followed by a moment of silence for long-time resident and volunteer Ken Carson and the people of Ukraine that are facing a humanitarian crisis and then the invocation led by Pastor Vinsen of the Vision of Promise Church.

Mayor Bowen discussed the agenda which includes two presentations tonight; one from the Chief of Police and the other from the Historical Society. He said that we have been making progress with EMS for our community.

Deputy Mayor Marinari spoke about the fireworks on July 9<sup>th</sup> that will be provided by three local businesses, Animals and Gardens Unlimited, the Marketplace and Big Woods. No taxpayer money will be used.

Committeeman Grilletto, as part of Pride in Plumsted, will be looking for volunteers for Paradise Park.

Cuozzo spoke about the upcoming rally about those against mandates, the truckers in solidarity. It will be starting in Mahwah and then making their way to New Egypt Speedway Saturday afternoon. Speakers are lined up. It should be patriotic, peaceful and non-partisan.

Calabrese had some updates on recreation. Opening days are coming up. There has been some vandalism at the recreation fields; he has been working with the police department.

Bowen touched on five upcoming events: Memorial Day, the Fireworks in July, National Night Out, Trick or Treat on Main Street and the Christmas Tree Lighting.

Grilletto spoke about the flag box being placed by the scouts in front of the municipal building in about a month.

#### **MINUTES TO BE CONSIDERED FOR APPROVAL:**

ON MOTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR MARINARI, SECONDED BY COMMITTEEMAN GRILLETTO, THE WORKSHOP/REGULAR/EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING MINUTES OF 11/3/2021 WERE APPROVED AS AMENDED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES WITH COMMITTEEMEN CALABRESE AND CUOZZO ABSTAINING AS THEY WERE NOT ON THE COMMITTEE AT THAT TIME.

ON MOTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR MARINARI, SECONDED BY COMMITTEEMAN GRILLETTO, THE SPECIAL BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES OF 11/18/2021 WERE APPROVED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES WITH COMMITTEEMEN CALABRESE AND CUOZZO ABSTAINING AS THEY WERE NOT ON THE COMMITTEE AT THAT TIME.

ON MOTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR MARINARI, SECONDED BY COMMITTEEMAN GRILLETTO, THE WORKSHOP/REGULAR/EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING MINUTES OF 12/1/2021 WERE APPROVED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES WITH COMMITTEEMEN CALABRESE AND CUOZZO ABSTAINING AS THEY WERE NOT ON THE COMMITTEE AT THAT TIME.

ON MOTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR MARINARI, SECONDED BY COMMITTEEMAN GRILLETTO, THE WORKSHOP/REGULAR/EXECUTIVE SESSION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF 12/27/2021 WERE APPROVED AS AMENDED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES WITH COMMITTEEMEN CALABRESE AND CUOZZO ABSTAINING AS THEY WERE NOT ON THE COMMITTEE AT THAT TIME.

#### **CORRESPONDENCE:**

Mayor Bowen read the Letter of Resignation from David Leutwyler who will be taking a job with the MUA effective 3/4/22.

ON MOTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR MARINARI, SECONDED BY COMMITTEEMAN GRILLETTO, THE RESIGNATION OF DAVID LEUTWYLER WAS ACCEPTED WITH REGRETS. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES.

#### **PRESENTATIONS:**

Margaret Neuman, President of the New Egypt Historical Society, came forward to accept a plaque from the Township to commemorate the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Plumsted. Neuman invited everyone to come to the Historical Society building to see all of the things they have.

Chief Earl Meroney came forward along with Lieutenant Jason Reilly. Meroney presented a power point presentation, which was also online for those on Zoom. He spoke about the organization, structure and history of the police department. Twenty-four hour service has been provided by the Plumsted Police Department since 2002. Prior to that, the police department would close at 2:00 am and the State Police would respond to emergency calls in the township. The police department began patrolling 24 hours a day in 2002 because of the number of burglaries, etc. occurring after 2:00 am. The department currently has 13 officers, plus the chief and the lieutenant.

Meroney spoke about the current organizational chart; the shifts that are worked; the patrol unit; the detective bureau; sample calls for services; motor vehicle stops; motor vehicle accidents; fatal crashes; domestic disturbance calls; and psychiatric calls. He said there is a two officer minimum when responding to calls. The township relies on backup units from other municipalities when township officers are tied up with serious calls.

Reilly spoke about some of the psychiatric calls they have responded to. He also spoke about missing person calls, particularly involving children. Meroney spoke about the procedures to be followed in the case of a missing person; Amber Alerts; the use of a missing person checklist; and communication with surrounding agencies.

The Chief said that his and the Lieutenant's goal is to increase officer training. There are directives from the State Attorney General's Office that include mandatory training, which takes hours off the road. Training is ongoing. An officer has to be knowledgeable about all different types of situations. Officers have to be more of a counselor, rather than just locking someone up and taking them to jail. They need to treat people like human beings and make sure they get the help that they need.

Meroney outlined the chain of command; the Chief is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the police department and is the department's liaison to the township; the Lieutenant oversees the direct control of the sergeants; and the Sergeants act as immediate supervisors over the activities of patrol officers.

Meroney said his five year plan for manpower included getting to an 18-19 officer department, so there would be three officers on a shift, plus a sergeant. This would eliminate the need for officers splitting a shift and working 18 hours each. He said one officer has just left for Toms River and four more officers will be leaving the 1<sup>st</sup> of April. He spoke about the number of officers he would like to hire to replace the officers who are leaving; the number of officers who have left since he has worked for the department and the low salaries that motivate officers to leave. He provided a breakdown of the salaries of the departments where officers have left to go to work.

Reilly said the two most important things are training and supervision. The high turnover in the department creates a deficiency in those two areas. The amount of time that has been put into training officers who have been here for five years, seven years, ten years who are replaced with someone from the academy, increases risk management. Their job is to minimize mistakes. When training and experience is replaced, the risk goes up, chances for mistakes go up, there is less supervision on each shift, which cause deadly situations, very costly situations. The department needs officers who are trained and will stay and pass along their training.

Meroney said the department is not that large. His goal since he took charge in 2018 is to make sure the officers know the community and the community knows the officers, so there is a working relationship. The community should know who is coming to their house. It used to be "who is coming to my house today?...Oh, I don't know..." Sometimes you didn't get anybody when we closed at 2 o'clock. The State Police dispatchers would ask what was going on and tell people that someone would come out at 7 o'clock in the morning when Plumsted came on. They would come out if there was an active domestic, an active fight, and so forth. If your car was broken into, they would tell you that Plumsted is back on at 7 o'clock in the morning...give them a call then. He said wants to eliminate the revolving door where officers leave every two years.

Meroney asked if there were any questions.

Deputy Mayor Marinari spoke about drug addiction in the schools and in the general population. His understanding is that there has been at least a twenty percent increase in addiction nationwide since Covid. He asked what the police are doing to combat the increase.

Meroney said they used to have the Dare program. He sent an officer to "Law Enforcement Against Drugs" program training. It is a new program in New Jersey. The officer was supposed to go in and teach the fifth grade classes. Covid came and now there is no way to get the officer into the schools because it is a ten week dedicated class and the officer who was going to do the training is on maternity leave and the other officer who was trained is going to leave and go to Toms River. Eventually he would like to get the program up and running again. He is in constant communication with the school. Officer Talty works with the counselors. If they need something, she is available. He is also available. They have his phone number.

A member of the audience said Meroney's five-year goal was to have 18 officers...is that even going to be remotely possible. Meroney said to ask him in five years.

Reilly said that he believes it is a concern when you are replacing half of your agency with inexperienced officers. You run a risk of mistakes. Mistakes happen with no experience and a lack of supervision, and it is not a road that he wants to go down.

There was a comment from the audience about investing time and resources in officers just to have them leave and have to start all over again.

Reilly said that one of the officers that the department is hiring...his previous department is already asking for him to come back. We are going to train him and they are going to take him.

An audience member asked how to decrease the turnover rate. Meroney said neighboring law enforcement agencies have higher salaries. That is why officers are leaving. Officers look at our current salary guide...in five years they will be making more at another department than they do in seven years at our department.

An audience member commented that the Chief's five-year plan is really an exercise in futility because he is never going to reach his goal...the department needs twice as many people as it has now. Meroney said that is his five-year plan...the finance part is not his area.

A member of the audience asked who takes care of Upper Freehold Township since they do not have a police department. Meroney said the State Police handles Upper Freehold. There was a



discussion about Plumsted Police responding to Upper Freehold and holding down the scene until the State Police arrive. Meroney said Plumsted Police do not patrol Upper Freehold.

An audience member asked why the State Police cannot help us. Meroney said that the State Police do not have barracks at Fort Dix anymore. They are out of Hamilton, and are running bare minimum themselves. It can take up to twenty minutes for them to respond to Upper Freehold because their area goes all the way up to 287. Most of the time the State Police do not respond to Upper Freehold unless it is an active call.

Another audience member said that two officers per shift is inadequate. She was a nurse and used to work sixteen hour shifts, so she knows what he is talking about. You bring in new people; accidents happen, things go wrong...she can fully appreciate what the department is going through. Meroney explained how other agencies will hold down a scene in Plumsted until our police can get there.

Cuozzo asked the Chief, for the sake of review and clarity, what is the current size of the force right now? Meroney said that right now, it is thirteen. Cuozzo said we were fourteen, and then Officer Nani retired, so now we are thirteen. If the resolution were to be passed tonight, it would replace Officer Nani and bring it up to fourteen full-time officers and it would add two more employees, to make sixteen, but those two employees would be part-time. Meroney said they would be part-time until April 1<sup>st</sup>, when two officers will be gone, and then possibly another two will leave on April 12<sup>th</sup>.

Cuozzo said to summarize and be very clear, Meroney's plan is to replace Officer Nani with another full-time employee, going back up to fourteen; and then exceeding where we are currently with two more part-time employees in anticipation of the four that are going to be leaving. Meroney said in anticipation of the two who are leaving on April 1<sup>st</sup> and when those two leave on April 1<sup>st</sup>, so those two part-timers will go into the full-time spots, and then when the two leave on April 12<sup>th</sup>, we will be right back down to twelve. So, we are gaining two for about a week, and then we are losing two.

Cuozzo said just so everybody understands there is a tension that he believes should exist between making sure we have what we need with the police force and keeping the cost of the police force where it needs to be. That tension is a good thing for everybody, but from his understanding, the two part-time employees might actually keep the cost the same because of the amount of overtime during the shift work. He asked if Meroney could talk about how that works as far as adding two more employees and actually keeping the same cost.

Meroney said, for years, when officers would leave, the town wasn't really concerned about it because senior officers were making a lot of money, so if they leave, new officers will be making less. Nani was making \$70,000 when he left; the new officer will be making \$38,200.

Reilly said that the reason we want officers in early is that we have field training program. They are going to be working eight weeks before they can even be counted. We are hoping to get them some training, so when the next officer leaves, they fall in line.

Grilletto said to hire a new officer, let's get this straight, after \$36,000 with pensions and other stuff is \$71,870. If you hire two part-time police officers, instead of full-time, you are looking at less than \$30,000. Meroney said part-time officers cannot work by themselves. Grilletto said he thought they could work by themselves. Meroney said they can work with another full-time officer. A Class II officer cannot work solo. There can't be two Class II officers working

together. So, if a full-time officer calls out, that overtime has to be offered to the full-time officers first. If they don't take it, then it can be offered to a part-time officer.

Reilly said that when an officer is hired part-time, they are immediately seeking work somewhere else because they are not full-time. So they will be here five months, six months, and interviewing in other places. Until they get a full-time job, they are not settling in. So you may do all this work to get this person in and then two months later, they are out the door somewhere else. Then you train someone else for eight weeks, they get another job, and you are constantly running the cycle over and over.

Grilletto said you are going to have a constant cycle....Meroney said until you fix the contract and keep our officers here...officers with six years, seven years, ten years dedicated to the town, are leaving because of low salaries...Zabarsky said this is not the place for contract negotiations...Meroney said he is not negotiating anything....

Bowen asked if there were any other questions for the Chief.

Cuozzo asked if the two part-time officers have been interviewed and if he already knows who they are, or are these just numbers being thrown out there? Meroney said he knows who they are. Cuozzo asked if they would want to go full-time and would they be officers he would consider to replace full-time officers. Meroney said that is the plan. Cuozzo said he likes that plan.

A resident said she does not have a question...she just has a statement...sometimes you get what you pay for...and she thinks when these officers put their lives on the line, we really need to think about taking good care of these officers, and the fire department and the squads.

Bowen thanked the Chief and the Lieutenant for their presentation.

Bowen said that there will be a five minute recess to try and get people in who are trying to get onto Zoom.

Bowen called the meeting back into order.

The next item on the agenda is a public hearing for a therapeutic massage license for Barbara Serbes.

## **PUBLIC HEARING FOR A THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE LICENSE**

Barbara Serbes said she grew up in New Egypt, moved to New York City and then moved to Asbury Park where she owned and operated a successful Pilates, yoga and (exercise) bar studio. She has recently moved back to New Egypt and opened a new studio at 27 Main Street. They would like to offer their clients pain management and massage therapy sessions by Dana DiFrancesco. The studio has a New Jersey State Massage License and Ms. DiFrancesco has her own personal State massage license. They are here tonight asking to be granted a massage license at their new studio in Plumsted Township.

Bowen said that the studio will offer yoga, Pilates and barre on the second floor, and a massage room on the first floor. Bowen said they have successfully completed the New Jersey Office of

the Attorney General criminal background check. They have also provided a copy of their New Jersey State license, registered business license, and professional liability insurance.

Bowen asked if there were any questions from the Township Committee.

Committeemen Grilletto and Calabrese welcomed them to the Township.

Bowen opened the hearing for public comment. There was no public comment. Bowen asked for a motion to close public comment.

ON MOTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR MARINARI, SECONDED BY COMMITTEEMAN GRILLETTO, THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR RESOLUTION 2022-151 ISSUING A THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE ESTABLISHMENT LICENSE TO BARBARA SERBES FOR 2022 WAS CLOSED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES.

Bowen asked for a motion to approve Resolution 2022-151.

ON MOTION OF COMMITTEEMAN CALABRESE, SECONDED BY COMMITTEEMAN GRILLETTO, RESOLUTION 2022-151 ISSUING A THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE ESTABLISHMENT LICENSE TO BARBARA SERBES FOR 2022 WAS APPROVED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES.

### **ORDINANCE: Second Reading/Public Hearing/Adoption**

Bowen asked if there was any public comment on Ordinance 2022-01. There was no public comment. Bowen asked for a motion to close public comment.

ON MOTION OF COMMITTEEMAN GRILLETTO, SECONDED BY COMMITTEEMAN CALABRESE, THE PUBLIC HEARING ON ORDINANCE 2022-01 - AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF PLUMSTED, COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AN ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2022 (N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14) WAS CLOSED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES.

Bowen asked for motion to approve Ordinance 2022-01.

ON MOTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR MARINARI, SECONDED BY COMMITTEEMAN CALABRESE, ORDINANCE 2022-01 - AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF PLUMSTED, COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AN ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2022 (N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14) WAS APPROVED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES.

Bowen asked if there were any questions from the Committee on the Consent Agenda. Cuozzo stated it would be a conflict of interest so he will abstain from Resolution 2022-132, regarding escrow amounts for the Bible Baptist Church.

Grilletto asked if the Kuzyk Road culvert replacement in Resolution 2022-146 is permanent. Witham said it is permanent. The culvert needs to be replaced and the township is trying to do it as an emergency.

Calabrese asked if the programs in Resolution 2022-126 and Resolution 2022-127 use off-duty police officers or on-duty police officers. Meroney said they are traffic grants in which the police are allowed to work as an off-duty detail. It does not affect on-duty hours.

Cuozzo asked that Resolution 2022-148 be pulled for separate consideration.

Calabrese asked that Resolution 2022-147 be pulled for separate consideration.

**RESOLUTION CONSENT AGENDA:**

**THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTIONS ON A CONSENT AGENDA ARE CONSIDERED ROUTINE AND SHALL BE ENACTED BY ONE MOTION. SHOULD ANY MEMBER OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE SEEK SEPARATE DISCUSSION OF ANY ITEM, THAT ITEM SHALL BE REMOVED AND DISCUSSED SEPARATELY. THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTIONS WILL BE VOTED ON IN ONE VOTE.**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-112** – REJECTING ALL BIDS FOR THE EMS SERVICES PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 40A:12-14

**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-124** – AUTHORIZING THE TOWNSHIP OF PLUMSTED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY, LAW ENFORCEMENT SUPPORT OFFICE, 1033 FEDERAL PROGRAM TO ENABLE THE POLICE DEPARTMENT TO REQUEST AND ACQUIRE EXCESS DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE EQUIPMENT

**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-125** – AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TOWNSHIP OF PLUMSTED AND CELEBRATION FIREWORKS INC.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-126** – AUTHORIZING A SHARED SERVICES AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TOWNSHIP OF PLUMSTED AND THE COUNTY OF OCEAN FOR THE FY2021/22 MOVE OVER LAW ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM  
(M.O.L.E.P.)

**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-127** – AUTHORIZING A SHARED SERVICES AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TOWNSHIP OF PLUMSTED AND THE COUNTY OF OCEAN FOR THE FY2022 PROSECUTOR'S PROGRAM

**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-128** – AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF SEWER LOANS

**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-129** – AMENDING THE TEMPORARY BUDGET FOR THE YEAR 2022

**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-130** – AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF CHECKS FOR THE REDEMPTION OF TAX SALE CERTIFICATES

**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-131** – AUTHORIZING THE DONATION OF K9 LOCK TO OFFICER RYAN NANI

**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-132** – AUTHORIZING THE RELEASE OF REVIEW AND INSPECTION ESCROW POSTED BY THE BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF NEW EGYPT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW CHURCH LOCATED AT 98 LAKEWOOD ROAD ALSO KNOWN AS BLOCK 74, LOT 13.04, ON THE TAX MAP OF THE TOWNSHIP OF PLUMSTED

**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-133** – AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE AN APPLICATION FOR A BLUE LIGHT PERMIT

**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-134** – APPOINTING JODY MAZEALL AS THE BUILDING INSPECTOR FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF PLUMSTED

**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-135** – APPOINTING KEVIN SCHMALZ AS THE CONSTRUCTION OFFICIAL FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF PLUMSTED

**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-136** – AMENDING RESOLUTION NO. 2022-79 APPOINTING MARK BUTERA AS THE ALTERNATE ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR IN THE ABSENCE OF RALPH ROSAMILIA



**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-137** – APPOINTING BENJAMIN SIKOWITZ AS THE MOBILE HOME INSPECTOR FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF PLUMSTED

**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-138** – AMENDING RESOLUTION NO. 2022-96 REAPPOINTING BENJAMIN SILKOWITZ AS ALTERNATE PLUMBING INSPECTOR FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF PLUMSTED

**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-139** – AMENDING RESOLUTION NO. 2022-104 APPOINTING MARCEL RENSON AS ALTERNATE ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR IN THE ABSENCE OF RALPH ROSAMILIA

**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-140** – AMENDING RESOLUTION NO. 2022-29 APPOINTING RALPH ROSAMILIA AS THE ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR/SUBCODE FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF PLUMSTED

**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-141** – AMENDING RESOLUTION 2021-369 APPOINTING KEVIN SCHMALZ AS THE FIRE SUBCODE OFFICIAL/INSPECTOR AND PLUMBING SUBCODE OFFICIAL FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF PLUMSTED

**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-142** – AMENDING RESOLUTION NO. 2022-116 APPOINTING MATTHEW RACK AS THE BUILDING SUBCODE/INSPECTOR FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF PLUMSTED

**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-143** – APPOINTING THOMAS BANYACSKI AS ALTERNATE FIRE INSPECTOR IN THE ABSENCE OF KEVIN SCHMALZ

**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-144** – AUTHORIZING THE RENEWAL OF A CONTRACT WITH AETNA FOR EMPLOYEE DENTAL COVERAGE IN 2022 FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF PLUMSTED

**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-145** – AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND TOWNSHIP CLERK TO EXECUTE THE AGREEMENT FOR THE 2022 NEW EGYPT HIGH SCHOOL BANNER

**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-146** – AUTHORIZING THE TOWNSHIP CLERK TO ADVERTISE FOR THE RECEIPT OF BIDS FOR THE KUZYK ROAD CULVERT REPLACEMENT PROJECT

**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-149** – AUTHORIZING THE TOWNSHIP OF PLUMSTED TO EXPLORE A SHARED SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH SURROUNDING MUNICIPALITIES FOR EMS SERVICES

**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-150** – AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF UNUSED VACATION AND HOLIDAYS FOR RYAN NANI

ON MOTION OF COMMITTEEMAN CALABRESE, SECONDED BY DEPUTY MAYOR MARINARI, RESOLUTIONS 2022-112 AND RESOLUTIONS 2022-124 THROUGH 2022-150 ON PAGES TWO AND THREE OF THE AGENDA, NOT INCLUDING RESOLUTIONS 2022-147 AND 2022-148, WERE APPROVED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES WITH COMMITTEEMAN CUOZZO ABSTAINING FROM RESOLUTION 2022-132.

There was discussion about Resolution 2022-147. Bowen said that the snowplowing budget for 2021/2022 has been depleted. The resolution increases the budget for snowplowing from \$51,500 to \$133,000. This provides that funds will be available if they are needed. Marinari commented that it is difficult to estimate a budget for snowplowing because it depends on the weather. Calabrese's comment is almost a plea to the committee. Since we are earmarking \$133,000 then his comment or plea to the committee is that should we not need that, if we don't have a drop of snow or need for salt, can we consider using the remaining portions that will already be earmarked here for work on the recreation building at the recreation facility? He is making that plea because it is an extremely important building that has been neglected for a very long time. A large amount of the population here uses that for 7-8 months of the year, nights, weekends. It is a representation of this town from other towns coming in and it is almost to the point where it will be condemned or somebody is going to get hurt there. He would hate to see that and he knows we have grants in for other parts of that. The basketball court is near condemned as well and he thinks it's time to get it done for the people of this town. Bowen said

that this money is there until November when we can move it. Grilletto said the last three months. Bowen said that we do transfers of any additional funds at the end of the year but that concern can certainly be addressed with our budget. Calabrese said that he understands the amount and snowplowing it's just that the money is there, he saw it and if the funds were approved and there, it would go a long way. We are talking about our youth. The Deputy Mayor was talking about the drug pandemic and that we have a problem there. This is an outlet, a place where families can go. It is a destination for people in this town on weekends and weeknights. Bowen asked him to include this when we do our budgeting. Calabrese thanked the committee.

Bowen asked for a motion for Resolution 2022-147.

ON MOTION OF COMMITTEEMAN GRILLETTO, SECONDED BY DEPUTY MAYOR MARINARI RESOLUTION NO. 2022-147 – AMENDING RESOLUTION NO. 2021-296 EFFECTUATING A CONTRACT TO PROVIDE 2021-2022 SNOWPLOWING/SALTING SERVICES FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF PLUMSTED TO FREIBERGER EXCAVATING, LLC WAS APPROVED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES.

Bowen asked for discussion about Resolution 2022-148.

Cuozzo read a portion of page 1 of the proposed State Legislation: “...unless an extension is authorized by the Legislature...” He feels that we have runaway gubernatorial powers when it comes to this and he is very thankful. This is a bipartisan bill. It is good for our local government to support this legislation.

Bowen asked for any other comments from the committee. There were none. Bowen asked for a motion for Resolution 2022-148.

ON MOTION OF COMMITTEEMAN CUOZZO, SECONDED BY COMMITTEEMAN GRILLETTO RESOLUTION NO. 2022-148 – OPPOSING THE CONTINUED EXTENSION OF EXECUTIVE ORDERS BEYOND PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY AND SUPPORTING SENATE BILL NO. 1200 LIMITING THE GOVERNOR’S UNILATERAL EMERGENCY POWERS WAS APPROVED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES.

#### **ADD-ON RESOLUTIONS:**

Committeeman Cuozzo commented that he has heard good things about Randy Priest and is very thankful to have him as an employee. He thinks that the town will be well-served.

ON MOTION OF COMMITTEEMAN GRILLETTO, SECONDED BY DEPUTY MAYOR MARINARI RESOLUTION NO. 2022-152 – APPOINTING RANDY PRIEST AS MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR WAS APPROVED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES.

ON MOTION OF COMMITTEEMAN GRILLETTO, SECONDED BY COMMITTEEMAN CALABRESE RESOLUTION NO. 2022-153 – APPOINTING RANDY PRIEST AS MUNICIPAL RECYCLING COORDINATOR WAS APPROVED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES.

Grilletto said the police chief is looking for one full-time police officer and two full-time police officers. Grilletto said he is also on the finance committee so he is also looking at the budget. It would cost almost \$72,000 for the new police officer, plus according to the fiscal officer, we are paying for Nani’s pension for the next two years, and any other police officer who is retiring. His question to the chief is if we hire three part-time police officers, would that work for you, instead

of the one full-time officer? The next question is April 1<sup>st</sup> you said two more officers will retire? Is that definite or are they proposing to leave? Did they give you notice that they are leaving as of April 1<sup>st</sup>? Meroney said they gave him verbal notice that they are leaving on April 1<sup>st</sup>. They are waiting on the other agencies. Grilletto said they gave you verbal notice...they didn't give you a written notice that they are leaving April 1<sup>st</sup>...just a verbal...Meroney said that is correct. Bowen asked if there is normally a two-week notice. Meroney said yes.

Grilletto said his next question is what if we hire three part-timers and you would fill in as these people leave...would that work for you? Meroney said if you bring them on part-time at \$15 an hour, they are not going to leave where they are currently working part-time making more money. Everybody comes to this job wanting a full-time salary, so if you are asking to bring them on part-time at a minimum number of hours at \$15 an hour, you are not getting anybody without knowing that they are going full-time.

Grilletto asked Meroney if he will definitely be hiring two officers. Meroney said yes, because April 1<sup>st</sup> they are going to slide into that full-time slot. Grilletto said yeah, if they leave. Meroney said they are leaving. Grilletto said instead of hiring a full-time officer, can you hire three...it would be less one...taking those two, filling in two full-time slots. Meroney said a part-time officer cannot fill in for a full-time officer. Grilletto said, but once they are trained, they can. Meroney said no, the officer has to be full-time. If a shift comes available, a full-time officer has the option of taking the overtime first. And then the part-time officer can fill in if they don't take it.

Grilletto said no, he is saying if the officer quits, you can hire a full-timer from a part-time officer. Meroney said yes, that's his plan. Grilletto said that is what he is saying. Instead of hiring a full-time officer and two part-time officers...Meroney said he is not going to agree to hiring three part-time officers because they need a full-time officer...everyone is worrying about budgets...his overtime budget over the past three pay periods is \$22,000...it is up to the committee as to how you want him to handle it...do you want him to raise his overtime budget or do you want him to bring in an officer to work minimal time that they won't take off so we can get them trained to represent the department and have pride in the agency and the township or do you want part-time officers that are just going to continue to leave...Grilletto said but if they know they are going full-time in the near future, then they won't be leaving. Meroney said he has made his recommendation; the rest is up to the committee. He has put his recommendations in and his plan as to where we need to be with the new development coming in...Grilletto said he understands that, but let's go back to 2016...Meroney said now we are going to go backwards...he said he has a five-year plan to move forward and Grilletto wants to go back to 2016. Meroney said he is not trying to be disrespectful but if we are going to go backwards, why not just close at 2 o'clock in the morning...Grilletto said we have not had any large crime increases since 2016...we spoke to the Sheriff...

Meroney asked if Grilletto knew why they haven't had any increases...it's because he has officers out and they are patrolling. Grilletto said in 2016 people were clamoring for more police officers and people said they wouldn't mind spending money from their taxes for more police officers. They put it up for a vote and when the vote came in, the ballot was overwhelmingly defeated. Meroney said that was before he was chief and the verbiage...Grilletto said it was State verbiage...it was not from us. Meroney said it is all about the explanation. He was not chief then. He has given you his recommendation and it is up to the committee to do whatever they want to do...no disrespect intended...Grilletto said Meroney is entitled to his opinion.

Bowen said the question was...is it an option to hire three part-time officers, instead of one full-time officer and two part-time officers and Bowen thinks the answer to the question is no.

Bowen asked if there were any other questions on Resolution 2022-154. There were none. Bowen asked for a motion to approve Resolution 2022-154.

ON MOTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR MARINARI, SECONDED BY COMMITTEEMAN CALABRESE RESOLUTION NO. 2022-154 – AUTHORIZING THE APPOINTMENT OF MICHAEL MISERENDINO AS A PROBATIONARY (FULL-TIME) REGULAR POLICE OFFICER FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF PLUMSTED WAS APPROVED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES, EXCEPT GRILLETTO VOTED NAY.

Bowen asked if there was any discussion about Resolution 2022-155. There was none. Bowen asked for a motion to approve Resolution 2022-155.

ON MOTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR MARINARI, SECONDED BY COMMITTEEMAN CALABRESE RESOLUTION NO. 2022-155 – AUTHORIZING THE APPOINTMENT OF KEVIN LUXICH AS A PART-TIME SPECIAL LAW ENFORCEMENT CLASS II POLICE OFFICER FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF PLUMSTED WAS APPROVED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES.

Bowen asked for discussion about Resolution 2022-156. There was none. Bowen asked for a motion to approve Resolution 2022-156.

ON MOTION OF COMMITTEEMAN CALABRESE, SECONDED BY DEPUTY MAYOR MARINARI RESOLUTION NO. 2022-156 – AUTHORIZING THE APPOINTMENT OF TYLER JACKSON AS A PART-TIME SPECIAL LAW ENFORCEMENT CLASS II POLICE OFFICER FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF PLUMSTED WAS APPROVED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES

Bowen asked for comments on Resolution 2022-157 which awards a contract to Gentilini Chevrolet, LLC, for a police pursuit vehicle. Meroney said the vehicle is replacing one of the old Chargers that has about 150,000 miles on it. It has used up a lot of the vehicle maintenance budget for the past few years. Also, the new vehicle will take the Charger out of commission. Funding for the vehicle is coming out of the off-duty trust fund and does not affect the regular budget. Marinari asked how many more Chargers the police have. Meroney said this is the last one. The police have spent \$25,000-\$30,000 to repair Chargers over the past two years.

Grilletto asked why the price of this vehicle is higher than the one purchased last year. Meroney said he calls and get quotes and gives them to finance. Grilletto asked who the quotes were from. Meroney said it is a State contract. Grilletto asked if it is the same State contract that the police used last year. Meroney said the new vehicle is sitting on the lot and the dealership is holding it for us. It will be ready to go in a matter of weeks instead of waiting for a year like we did for the last vehicle we purchased. Grilletto said he knows that the prices of cars have gone up, but \$14,000 is a lot of money. Meroney said it is a basic car without anything in it; you only have interior lights. Meroney listed the extra items that have to be purchased for the vehicle. Calabrese said we are lucky that one is available.

Bowen asked for a motion to approve Resolution 2022-157.

ON MOTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR MARINARI, SECONDED BY COMMITTEEMAN CALABRESE, RESOLUTION NO. 2022-157 – AWARDING A CONTRACT TO GENTILINI CHEVROLET, LLC FOR THE PURCHASE OF ONE (1) 2022 FORD UTILITY K8A AWD POLICE PURSUIT VEHICLE FOR THE



PLUMSTED TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT THROUGH NEW JERSEY STATE CONTRACT #47-CPCPS WAS APPROVED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES

### **REPORTS OF DEPARTMENTS AND PROFESSIONALS:**

Mayor Bowen asked if there were any comments on the Bill List of March 3, 2022.

Bowen said he has a question about #386, the roadway assessment report. He said an analysis was done by the township engineer of all township roads which would allow us to rate and get specific information on the condition of all of our roads. A preliminary report was done in December, but we have not received the final report. Bowen's recommendation is to approve the bill, but only as per the contract. If the contract stipulates that payment is made after we receive the final report, then we should wait. Dewberry has indicated that they will not complete or give us the report until we pay the bill because they had to pay a third party to help with the assessment.

Witham said the information from the engineer is that he cannot complete the report without getting the sub-consultant paid. The work was completed months ago, but the engineer needs access to their program to complete the report. They will not give it to us until they are paid.

Zabarsky said the contract would have to be reviewed to see if it allows Dewberry to hire a sub-consultant and how they would be paid.

It was decided that Bill #386 would be approved pending review of the terms and conditions of the contract by the township attorney.

Bowen asked if there were any other comments on the bill list. There were none. Bowen asked for a motion to approve the bill list.

ON MOTION OF COMMITTEEMAN GRILLETTO, SECONDED BY COMMITTEEMAN CALABRESE, THE BILL LIST OF MARCH 3, 2022 WAS APPROVED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES WITH THE CAVEAT THAT BILL #386 WOULD BE APPROVED PENDING REVIEW OF THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE CONTRACT BY THE TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

**REPORTS SUBMITTED FOR COMMITTEE REVIEW:** CONSTRUCTION REPORT – Plumsted & New Hanover January 2022; TAX COLLECTOR REPORT – January 2022; FINANCIAL REPORTS – Revenue Summary by Month January 2022; Abbreviated Summary Budget Account Status January 2022; Treasurer's Report January 2022; POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT –January 2022 Stats; PLUMSTED BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS DISTRICT #1 MEETING MINUTES – 1/3/22; PLUMSTED TOWNSHIP MUA MINUTES – none

Marinari said that he suggested at the last meeting of the Environmental Committee that their minutes be included in our reports on a monthly basis.

Calabrese commented that it was good to see construction revenues up \$12,000 over last year. It is a positive trend in the right direction. Hopefully another step toward putting Covid behind us. He saw a good amount of sewer hookups versus loans. He just wanted to let people know that the loans are available and that they are not missing it.

Bowen asked for any old business.

Marinari suggested that the use of Zoom be discontinued for meetings since Covid is reduced and people are attending meetings in person. There have been many issues with Zoom.

There was a discussion about eliminating Zoom and streaming meetings versus going back to live meetings only. If the meeting is streamed, people would have to send their comments to the Municipal Clerk ahead of time.

Bowen asked if there were any other comments. There were none.

Bowen asked for any new business.

Meroney spoke about the anticipated effect on traffic from Saturday afternoon's Freedom Convoy. The goal is to get them into the Speedway safely without blocking roads and interfering with residents and commuters.

Robert Krohn from the fire company thanked the township committee for all of the work they have done in the last month to work toward a resolution to keep EMS service in the town.

Mayor Bowen asked for public comment.

Eric Sorchik, 104 Hawkin Road, came forward. Sorchik has some unfinished business regarding an issue we addressed before he left (the committee) regarding an appointed member on one of our township boards who used his position to garner special privileges for an entity that he had an ongoing business relationship with. It's in clear violation of our township ordinances. He expressed his concerns before he left office. He is asking what has been done about this as members of the board. He has concerns as a citizen, you can't have appointed individuals trying to leverage their position as he sees it.

Mayor Bowen said that he received counsel's response today. Zabarsky said that it is attorney-client privilege; he submitted a memo to the committee for review. At this point, the committee is not ready to respond. Zabarsky recommends it be reviewed by the appropriate sub-committee for action. Sorchik said he anticipated that. He wants to be sure it's followed up on as it's important that citizens have confidence that folks aren't going to use their position inappropriately.

A second concern he has involves him personally. He addressed Mr. Cuozzo stating he has publicly used his position to call him a liar and indicated that in some ways he has committed a criminal act. He is reading a document, which are Cuozzo's words, not his. A document he prepared and stated that he was lying about Cuozzo and his family online. For the record, Sorchik has no social media. The only thing he participates in is a professional site called Linked In, the third most popular site but he rarely uses it. He has never made a comment about Cuozzo. He is asking Cuozzo to educate him about how and when he lied about him and his family, specifically what lies he told and what they consisted of. But more importantly, Cuozzo said that his actions are criminal. That is a challenge to Sorchik. He doesn't know specifically what Cuozzo is referring to in this matter. Cuozzo states in the same document that the township clerk has harassed him and that she is also a criminal. He can tell you that he served for 15 years and with Jennifer as long as she has been here and she has never done anything like that in his presence. Cuozzo indicates that Marinari should support and endorse Cuozzo and if he considers resigning, he should do so, so that the governing body and county committee could appoint someone else.

Zabarsky interrupted and said this is not about his personal life, it's about comments with regard to township business. Sorchik said yes, he will get to that. Zabarsky continued this should not be about any personal attacks or issues, it is not proper for the governing body. This should be a comment regarding township business. Zabarsky asked him to limit his comments accordingly. Sorchik apologized. However, he is going to provide that document to the clerk as a matter of reference. Sorchik was going to give Witham the document but Zabarsky stopped him and said he should properly file it with the clerk so that there are no issues.

Sorchik said that he has a concern about whether committee members are allowed to use their position on the governing body and their position of authority to make false statements. Sorchik thinks that affects the community and the way the public perceives your ability to do your job. Zabarsky thanked him for his comment.

Kate Tallon, 53 Oak Lane, said her first comment is that the committee can raise her taxes and pay the cops more. She thinks they do a fantastic job and that \$38,000 as a starting salary for someone who has to carry a gun on their hip is appalling. It should at least be \$70,000 starting out.

Tallon said she would also like to comment on Zoom. As a working mom, she actually appreciates the Zoom option because it allows her to participate. She has a very busy life, with two little kids, and the Zoom option allows her to still contribute to her community and sit at home and cook dinner while listening in. Marinari said he agrees with her; he just disagrees with being able to have conversations that you really can't hear. Tallon said that continuing forward with transparency and the Zoom option is a benefit for people like her. It does cause some conflict because it can be hard to hear.

She said her last comment is in regard to the interrogation of the Environmental Committee at the February 2022 meeting. Committeeman Cuozzo stated that he could not vote in favor of a committee that would partner with a group that could put the community at risk. However, after that meeting several people reached out to her regarding her public comment. She put in an OPRA request based on some of the comments and conversations she had with people after that. It was very interesting how many police reports there were against Dominick Cuozzo and his campaign manager Ryan Kertis. To be accused of not doing background checks with people that we partner with for community projects made her wonder if the committee does background checks on people. There were a lot of police reports and they were threatening. They were harassing. Frankly, they were incredibly upsetting to read. She has copies of them all. She could read them out loud, but she will not bore everyone with that. Cuozzo requested that they be read out loud. Tallon said it will take her more than five minutes to read all of them because there are quite a few police reports. Zabarsky said it has to be about township business and not about personal matters. Tallon said that she finds this is township business because there were two votes that she commented on that were voted on by committeemen up there for personal grudges against people in the community, and they did not vote with the community's best interest.

Tallon said that when reading the police reports about these people, it was very clear that there are issues with harassment against certain individuals, problems with women standing up for themselves. It was disgusting. If you want, she can post all of them on Facebook so you can read them at a later date. What she has seen from the committee members is a lack of faith in your community. It is disconcerting coming from someone who is dead set on pushing their vile

theologies regarding transgender people and women on this community. It's really upsetting. And now to hear that you're not just harassing women in the community, you are harassing people who work for you. That's appalling.

Anthony Michael Francis Plaag, 189 Hemlock Drive. He has lived in New Egypt his entire life. He was a class president at the New Egypt High School. He did the shows and everything. He is also a member of the queer community in Plumsted Township and he is very, very concerned because recently Governor Greg Abbott of Texas passed a law that criminalizes any medical professional, or any adult, that assists a transgender child. As a transgender and queer person in this community, he is very concerned for the people in Texas and he is wondering what it is the committee is doing to protect transgender kids here. He would like to hear from everybody about what they are doing now, what they plan to do and, if they are not doing anything, why is that?

Zabarsky said this is an opportunity for public comment and not to ask questions of the committee. If you do have a question, you can raise your question. He suggested the committee consider his question in their sub-committee and, if they think it's appropriate, provide a response at the next public meeting. Zabarsky said you can pose your questions; just so you know, they will not be answered tonight. It would be inappropriate at this time. It can be reviewed, discussed and if they believe an answer can be put forward, they will at the next meeting.

Plaag said that would be better. He would prefer that they take the time to consider this. It is probably the first time anyone has actually spoke about transgender issues in this facility, so he would love it if the committee took the time to consider this and get back to him at the next meeting on April 7<sup>th</sup>. Zabarsky said if it is appropriate for them to give a response at that point, they will respond.

Plaag asked Zabarsky, as far as "appropriate to give a response"...what does that mean? Zabarsky said if they believe the governing body as a legislative body can give you a response. Plaag asked...they can refuse to do so if they don't believe it's appropriate. Zabarsky said if they don't have anything to say, they are not going to give a response. You posed a question and they will review it and if they think they can give a response, they will. Plaag said that he is satisfied with that.

Ed Vienckowski, 256 East Colliers Mill Road, said he is troubled by the discussion that took place earlier about the police officers, particularly the resolution for the full-time police officer. He said, "Mr. Grilletto your actions tell me that you didn't understand what that resolution was about." That was to replace a full-time police officer who has already left. The part-time resolutions that followed that are in anticipation of losing more, come April. That's why they are going to be part-time until April. He was troubled that Grilletto, as chairman of the finance committee, didn't seem to understand that.

Grilletto said he understood it very well. He is just looking at the financial aspect of it. Right now, the police budget is more than half of our total salary budget....and the pension costs right now run at \$260,000 compared to the rest of the pension at \$86,000-\$87,000. He is watching that. His question wasn't that. His proposal was to hire three part-time officers at less than half the cost of the full-time and then push them into the slot.



Vienckowski said that Grilletto was saying that, come April, they could be turned over to full-time. Grilletto said yes. Vienckowski said the need for the full-time officer is today. Actually, last week because Officer Nani has already left the department. Grilletto said he understands that, but he's sure that the chief can manage with one less officer. You can even ask the Sheriff's office...we were at the Sheriff's office in January and he was willing to support our units with Sheriff's officers...which is done in Allentown...he has been travelling Allentown now for 43 years and every time he passes by Allentown...right now, there's always a Sheriff's officer on Main Street...539...along with the regular police vehicles with the township police.

Vienckowski said he will leave it that he is still troubled by the discussion that took place earlier and the lack of support for our chief and his department. Grilletto says he understands that. He is in support of the chief. He's done a great job and so has the lieutenant. Vienckowski said "Sir, thank you very much."

Calabrese asked if he could say something really quick in response to the gentleman (meaning Anthony Plaag). Every single person in this town, no matter how you identify or what race, religion, creed, or anything...you in my eyes are an equal member of this community and you will be afforded the same protections as every single other person in this community. Thank you.

Cuozzo said before we take another comment, he would like to summarize things. It's kind of what he does. He appreciates the tension when it comes to finances versus the sworn police. He does not think there is a misunderstanding as far as Committeeman Grilletto is concerned. There is a definite goal. Grilletto never got to finish his story about "bc—before chief" back in 2016. But the story was, there was once a time when there were twelve, now there are fourteen...and how that happened was the hiring of the police officers that used to work at the high school, and so, what committeeman Grilletto said is not a misunderstanding at all...what he is kind of recommending is a reduction in force back to the twelve over time, with the part-timers and all the rest. That's simply what he is proposing. That's his opinion. It really is not a matter of Grilletto not understanding. He did a very good job explaining these things to everyone. Cuozzo is sorry that it wasn't explained well to you. He just wanted to make a comment because the comment was that Grilletto didn't really understand...Cuozzo believes Grilletto does understand. Grilletto's goals are just slightly different...and that's okay...that's his opinion...he wants to save the town money...he thinks that's a noble goal...but as we voted tonight, we like the chief's plan...Cuozzo said he is glad we went with that...it's not a misunderstanding on Grilletto's part...it's an actual goal to reduce the size back, as Grilletto was starting to say...and Cuozzo doesn't know how Grilletto got interrupted from his story back in 2016...but that resolves the whole thing...hopefully it brings clarity to everybody.

Grilletto said because in 2016...he said, let me just finish...when it was put out to the voters do they want to hire more police officers...it was unanimously voted down...he's not saying, fine, we should go back to that level...he was looking to cut down on at least one officer for right now until our budget can adequately support it...that was his position....he understood completely the finance and stuff for the police officers as recommended...he was just going a different way. A member of the audience said it did not come across that way to the audience. Grilletto said he's sorry...that it's his fault for not bringing it across.

Chief Meroney, 2 Cedar Street, and also a resident, said if you want to go back to 2016, he has numbers for overtime from 2017 to 2018. Our overtime budget with 12 officers before we increased the number of officers was \$66,000 within that year. In 2018, it was \$73,500. Since

the chief and the lieutenant took over, overtime has been \$46,000...\$42,000. This year it is \$58,000 because he is losing five officers. Grilletto said thank you...he's not saying you are doing a bad job...Meroney said Grilletto is trying to go back, and he is not going back. Grilletto said he also wants to say that we have police negotiations and EMT stuff what we need to address financially.

Carol Reed, 61 Brindletown Road, said she attended the Land Use Board Meeting on Tuesday night. The warehouse that was proposed was voted down. Thank goodness. The vote was 4 to 5. Some of the board members voted for it, but the majority voted against it. This is not the end of this issue. Somebody else is going to come back and look at this piece of land and perhaps try to do the same thing. So, since she can't ask a question...her comment is this...she's tried to do her homework and she hopes she's not wrong in this...in 1975, there was a land use law that went into effect about the master plan that was to be reviewed every ten years...is she correct? Zabarsky answered yes, the land use law went into effect in 1975; it was originally six years and it has now been amended to every ten years. Reed asked if our master plan has been reviewed within that time period...Bowen responded that it has...every ten years...Witham said all of the master plans are on the website. Reed wondered if an ordinance could be looked at to put more teeth in this ordinance for another applicant to come along and want to build a warehouse...not just here, but they might find another place in Plumsted Township they could build a warehouse. As you can see, she is totally against warehousing. She just feels as though, if we can, we should maintain the character of our township.

Holly Potter, 94 Sanders Lane, said she agrees with Kate Tallon about Zoom, including having comments available to give virtually. She thinks it is good for people who work late...people who have kids...she's a full-time student and she barely makes it to these meetings. She thinks it's good for those people to speak their mind as well and have their comments read as well. Even if they can't physically be here or they have some conflict to be here in person. She thinks if we could get the technology together, it's important to keep that option open on Zoom.

Cuozzo asked if he could make a comment. There was some pretty disparaging remarks made about him. Bowen asked if this was about a previous commenter. Cuozzo said yes. Bowen said it is not appropriate after they have left the stand.

Cuozzo said he wants to make a public comment to everyone. He has Department of Defense credentials, he has State credentials from a background check, and he has a firearm license, and he would not have been able to get any of these things...some of them recently...if there was any police report about him. He said he does not know if that is libel or what...he has documented proof that there has never been a complaint with the police about him. He does not know what in the world those comments are or what's being said, but he's been thoroughly vetted by many different agencies...these are the facts and everything else is very strange to him.

Kate Tallon said she would like to reply to Cuozzo because his comments were directed at her. Zabarsky said he apologizes, but she has given her five minutes of comment...if you want to come back up and give public comment, it will be at the next regular meeting.

John Neyenhouse, 22 Lakeview Drive, said he wants to echo the concern for our police and first responders. He thinks we need to look at our taxes...how we can fund the police and make it a reasonable salary. Quite a lot has changed in the discussion from last month's meeting to this month's meeting. Last month, the committee was commenting about we haven't lost any

officers. There was public comment that was brought up about how we can fund our police properly...how we can stop from losing more officers.

Neyenhouse said he would like to commend Chief Meroney for the excellent job he's done keeping officers as long as he has. There's been a lot less turnover...and even that was echoed at last month's meeting. It's very concerning to hear from last month to this month how many officers are now looking to leave. He believes it was Committeeman Cuzzo who made a comment about how the town's not looking to defund the police. He would like to make a request to please fund the police. Let's not even have a discussion about defunding. Let's just fund the police and figure out how we can fund them.

Neyenhouse said a lot has changed in this town since 2016. He said he's been a resident here for over twenty years. Decisions have been made over the past couple of years to add approximately 450 age-restricted houses in our new senior community. The population of the town has changed drastically since 2016 to now. It's going to keep growing. As was just stated, we have applicants looking to build warehouses in the town and a lot of other building stuff that has never been talked about in town before. And to talk about going back and cutting the number of police or shifting to State police support or going to part-time officers is very scary. We really need our first responders. It's a critical aspect of our community and if we don't have a safe community, we're not going to have a community that people are going to want to live in. He definitely does not want to live in a community where he's afraid that somebody's not going to be there to help when he calls 911. So, please do what you can to fund the police and our first responders. Think about how the whole community needs that.

Grilletto commented that he just wants to say that with the first responders, we've been working quite diligently to make sure we don't lose our first responders. We've been working with the union, the fire district...meeting with them. We hope that we have a plan that will work out that we are not going to lose our first responders.

Robert Krohn, is a resident of Beachwood and President of the FMBA Local 89, which represents the career firefighters and EMTs in Plumsted Township. Several months ago, they received notice that a couple of our firefighters would possibly get laid off and service was going to be halted on your ambulance service for the township. He took it upon himself with the union to meet with the township to try and fix the problem. He thinks they've made a lot of headway in the last sixty days. The township committee, as far as the EMS and fire services, have been working diligently to make that happen. The road is not stopping. Where we came up with the goal, March 31<sup>st</sup>, is the day EMS was supposed to end for your town. We worked very diligently, along with the fire district, to make sure this is happening.

Krohn said he will announce his salary...he makes \$59,000...he's been working for the town for ten years as a career firefighter/EMT. That's pretty much the average salary of most of the guys who have been here for a long time. We have the same exact problem as the police department...it's a giant rotating door...people come to Plumsted as a stepping stone and move out. He can't afford to live in Plumsted...he can't even afford to live on his own.

Krohn said the township is working hard to make sure they are keeping their jobs and that we are looking at a future plan to keep moving forward. They formed a committee two weeks ago that will keep meeting and trying to make it better for your fire and EMS. The police chief is also involved with the committee.



As a whole, our emergency services are in trouble in the United States. He is the Deputy EMS Coordinator for this zone, which covers Jackson, Manchester, Plumsted and Lakehurst. The county as a whole is in giant jeopardy for first responders. The volunteer world is going away. He is an active volunteer for the Borough of South Toms River and Toms River Township, so he is not hating on volunteers. He has volunteered every day of his life. He has been the EMS chief volunteer for ten years in South Toms River and still holds the position.

Paid organizations are the way of the future and shared services is the way of the future. He wishes that we could do it all on our own, but we physically can't do it. As a town, there is possibly a question coming up in the future that you are going to have to make a decision to keep your services active in this town. Unfortunately, as someone said before, you get what you pay for.

There was a chance, if we didn't come to the township, that we wouldn't really have an answer for an ambulance service after March 31<sup>st</sup>. We've made a lot of headway between the fire district, the township, the DCA and a lot of other people to make this work. Just keep in mind most of your first responders do not live in town because we can't afford to live here. We have a vested interest in your community and we want to keep providing service to your community.

He loves the town he works for...he likes the people...he likes going to Wawa and everybody knows who they are...and that's what they want to keep going. You get a private service, whether it's fire or EMS, the Sheriff's Department, the State Police...you could get Trooper John today and Trooper Mary and never see them again a day in your life versus you get to have a rapport with your first responders. It makes a difference.

You earn that public trust and that's what their job is about...having public trust. When they come in your house...oh, that's Matt, that's Rob...he has dealt with them a couple of times...they are phenomenal people and he knows he can trust them...that includes the police department.

They are not just on the ambulance; they are your firefighters as well. Your fire department is volunteer at night and on the weekends, and you have a career fire department during the day—6 am to 5 pm, five days a week. A lot of people don't know that. When you call 911 during the day for an ambulance or fire truck, you're getting a career firefighter and EMT, and your ambulance service 24 hours a day, seven days a week is staffed by two career firefighters who are also EMTs. This service is a lot more than just giving somebody a ride to the hospital or showing up when your smoke detector battery dies.

Grilletto said with the 55 and over community, we are probably going to need a lot more EMS services most of all because they need the services more than crime. Crime is important, but EMT is needed for older people. Krohn said that in the southern part of the county, over the last three days, people have had to wait 45 minutes plus for an ambulance. If you live in Little Egg Harbor, they have an ambulance from Surf City and an ambulance from Barnegat Light. That's a thirty-minute ride. The area where you live in Plumsted is very detrimental because you only have Jackson who can help. Manchester has requested mutual aid over a thousand times last year because they could not handle the volume. Keeping service in town is what you want...and you want people that represent your town.

Fran Grilletto, 41C Highbridge Road, said she would like to speak for the senior citizens in New Egypt. She is one of them. Her taxes have gone up from the time she's moved here; they've doubled. She would like to continue to live in New Egypt as long as she can. She wishes we



could pay our police officers, whom she loves, \$100,000 starter pay...and our EMT and our firemen. But she also knows that she is being taxed out. She almost can't afford to live in New Jersey because she's being taxed out and her income is not going up. She's on a fixed income. There are many senior citizens that live here in our town and it's a concern. She hears the police, they want more police. She remembers when we got a cops grant and we had extra police because we had grant money...the grant money was great for one year, then it went by-the-by...the government of New Egypt does not make any money. The money comes from citizens who live here, through our real estate taxes. We don't really have services. Other townships have their sewers, their garbage collection in their taxes. We don't...we pay separately...so she's thinking, great we want to have more police, we want to have additional fire workers...we want to pay for everything...who's paying for it? We are! Can we afford to live here and keep adding more and more and more onto the local taxpayer...because our school is empty and we're paying for that...we needed a school, but they built three of them...but now one is empty and we're paying for that. Like she said, she has nothing but high regard, praise and admiration for any person in blue putting their life on the line all the time, but at this particular time, she is concerned she is not going to be able to afford to live in the town at the rate the taxes are going up...and that's her comment.

Barbara Diblin, 12 Terrace Avenue, said she would like to thank the township committee for their work on EMS and ambulance, fire...she knows all of them...she's spoken to all of them and she commends them for their character, their integrity and their transparency...that she can have a conversation with them...they are welcoming...and she is just grateful for this township committee, which is doing an excellent job of truth and honesty...all of them are appreciated. She had conversations with all of them about different concerns and they have been nothing but gentlemen and kind...and want to work with the citizens here...and they get paid nothing...is that correct? They said no, they get one dollar. Diblin said they volunteer...how many hours do they spend on township committee work...she knows they do a lot...hours and hours of reading and questioning...and she really appreciates it...she said thank you very much for your volunteer contribution...when she was a child, she just wants to say that her dad served on the first aid squad...there was so much more volunteerism when she was growing up...and people thought nothing of it...because it made their town better...their country better...their State better...hopefully, people can come back to god and come back to serving...serving and loving people...she knows that all of them do...she's just grateful that this township committee is here.

Brett Anderson, 62 Brookdale Way, Chesterfield, said it is nice to be here amongst neighbors and listen to your meeting. A couple of things were mentioned tonight that he is excited about...he wants to make a comment regarding Zoom...something that he thinks is important for people to realize and he recognizes the challenges of technology, but in the corporate world for example, we are finding that increasingly more and more people are working and traveling while they're working...they are working longer hours because they are working from home...so it's more difficult for them to physically be present. The businesses around the world have to work remotely, even today...that is an increasing part of our society...it is important for townships to continue that virtual component as much as possible. Although there have been challenges, we as a community have proven that it can be done and so he is encouraging that continued participation...even at minimum. Streaming was mentioned as potentially a continued option, which is great to hear. He does agree that if it would be possible to have public comment, it would be great. He knows there are challenges with that, but it's good to hear.

Anderson said, also, there was a mention about warehouses. He is an officer for an organization called Save Old York in Chesterfield...they have been pushing back against the warehouse

project to potentially replace the Old York Country Club. He has done extensive research on the impact of warehousing in the State. Mansfield, as an example, recently passed an ordinance to prevent future warehouses for the time being; to assess and look at the impact and determine if that is really going to be something they might want to introduce in the future. The Chesterfield Township Committee has stated that it is not interested at this time in moving forward with a warehouse project. It doesn't seem right for the town.

Anderson said there are a lot of implications that come with putting in a warehouse. Oftentimes, although there a lot of promises made upfront...lots of money...lowering taxes...unfortunately, it doesn't pan out...there are additional expenses to police and fire and EMS...that's a big topic for tonight...and the number of calls and things that end up coming from those properties really increase those costs for the community. There are definitely some cons that outweigh that.

Lastly, he said he wants to mention that he noticed that there is a social media policy on the Plumsted website. He would strongly encourage the community to expand that, including perhaps a code of ethics policy for the township, not only for its employees, but for its elected officials. He thinks that would address at least some of the concerns that have been raised and would forego any potential future concerns, because that way you have a documented written requirement that elected officials behave accordingly and serve their community as best as possible.

The things that are mentioned in the social media policy today only apply to people who post on social media with the township. If you can reverse that and make sure that the township elected officials and administration have to abide by those rules as well, he thinks it would help our community...looking at some of the things like the police reports that were mentioned earlier...as far as police reports...having been through a background check himself, he can tell you that you would not fail a background check if there have only been police calls, and not arrests or things like that. But that doesn't mean that there aren't calls to the police.

He said there are police reports that are on file. There were specific statements that were made in those police reports and he thinks Kate mentioned that she is going to publish them. But he thinks that type of behavior to him would be a code of ethics violation...to be asked in one of the police reports to stop calling an individual and telling the police officer, I don't think I can stop calling them...and the police officer notifying them that future calls would be considered harassment...those are the types of things you don't want to see be from your staff or elected officials. They are documented. Kate is not the only one who can OPRA records...everybody can, and he encourages them to because it is a very good tool.

Gwen Schwarzwald, 54 Loveman Road, said first of all she would like to ditto what Barbara said...especially about the work that everybody puts in and adjusting to new committee people and getting used to everything and really trying to analyze things and not just go status quo. Because yours eyes want to be open, you want to be transparent to the community, you want to know what's going on and that you're making the right decisions. She appreciates that from all of you.

She would also like to say that she agrees with several of the citizens about Zoom. She likes Zoom...she doesn't like the way it works because you can't hear very well...it's hard to communicate... if Zoom could be fixed so it works well, she thinks it's great...because if we really want to be good citizens, we're supposed to go to fire meetings, school board meetings, town

meetings, and all these different meetings and it's very hard to do it. That makes it a lot easier for the citizens to be a part.

Schwarzwalder said she loves this town and knows a lot of people in this town and she thinks it's okay to have disagreements with people but still be united together as a community because people are not going to all agree, because that's just not how life is...but being able to get along and respect different opinions and talk about it and have a discussion...it saddens her to see what's being said on social media...it just brings division...and she knows that there's been a lot of things said and done to Committeeman Cuzzo that hasn't been brought out, but she's not going to go there.

She just thinks that we could as citizens disagree with each other without having to become vindictive, violent and without thinking that the other side hates them just because they may disagree with them. She sees on the Internet the actual organizers coming into this town because they don't agree with the makeup of this town...are we responsible that so many people voted a certain way...or so many people look a certain way...that now somebody feels they have to come in and bring division...she does not think people are prejudiced...it may not look like another city or another town, but somebody with a purpose to come in and say we're going to do this...and why does your town look this way...you must be a bigot or prejudiced...and we're not...we're really not...we can all get along...she just prays that we can do that...everybody can take a step back, take a deep breath.

She also knows there's political stuff because some people are now no longer on the committee...they've been there for a very, very long time and there's things going on there, but that is all coming out in different areas and it's having an effect on our wonderful town...on all our kids...for so long it's been a great town and she is saddened to see all of the division that is coming in...she just prays that everyone can just hope for and try their best to have unity in this town, whether we agree on things, or don't...

She does support our police...she thinks they are doing a great job and she would love to have what we need to be safe in our community...it's sad to see that some of our school administrators are making triple and almost quadruple the amount of what a police officer is making when our enrollment is at an all-time low...not even using a building...these are things that the community needs to something about too...let's weigh our priorities...she just had to say that there, a little factual information...other than that, she would like to thank all of you.

Ellen Taylor, 29 Story Street, said she does not like to keep coming up here but her heart...she doesn't know if the committeemen here...she appreciates you guys...you're volunteers; you work hours for no money; maybe because you don't care about the town...maybe because you care a lot...but she just has to say...and she doesn't know if this is appropriate or the committee can do something about social media because she honestly feels a little threatened...and she knows one of the committee members up there has been threatened and things have been done...and she feels maybe both sides feel there's a hate group...maybe one side feels that this side hates and I feel that this one hates...I think it's the cause of social media and who is trying to come into our town...our nice town...and split us up...I don't think sexual orientation or race, color, religion...I don't think that that would matter if they came up here with a good cause and asked you to vote on it...I think you would vote yes...the environmental club...it seemed good to her except for certain groups and, again, it's social media.



She said she also has a problem and doesn't know if the committee can do this...there was a great republican club...people voted...people went out...people came in and now there is a duplicate club on social media with almost the same name saying things that are not true about the real republican club...how is this legal? She sees republican club something...no name...and then she makes a comment and she has to put her name...how can she go incognito? It's social media...it's not one group or another group...it's social media....you can't look at a person and see how they feel...you can't talk to a person...you do strange things on social media...there does have to be some kind of standard for New Egypt.

She did get hurt...and you talk about criminal complaints...I am...we were...my family...and I did nothing...and I don't intend to do anything because, again, I am a Christian and I do not think I should be hated because I'm a Christian, just as no one else should be hated because of race or color...I guess that's all I want to say.

This is getting crazy and I'm starting to feel threatened...I already have been...and I know a committee member who has been threatened and continually harassed! And I don't like it as a citizen of this town...it hurts me and angers me and I will come to the next meeting too to see what is going on because I can vouch for each committee member here...I know you...I've spoken to you...I've heard you...and you are honest, good, upstanding men with good character...and it hurts me to see somebody attacking somebody else when it's not true...and a "fake" club...a "fake" social media...let's all try to get together. That's it. Thank you so much.

Marinari said his comment about Zoom was not about closing anything down. His comment was that the system that we have been dealing with for two years stunk. Period. That's it. If anyone knows him, he has never been anyone to shut down comments.


Bowen closed public comment.

Bowen said there is no need to go into a second executive session.

Grilletto said he wants to make a final comment as far as the police hiring at a low rate. In 2020, the lowest ranking police officer earned a little less than \$100,000. His second comment is that he wants to praise the people in the Ukraine—the Ukraine, right before the Russians invaded, they relaxed the gun laws in the Ukraine...he wants to thank this country and founding fathers for giving us the Second Amendment, that we don't have to have a government telling us now you can own a gun. We have that right as a citizen to own firearms! He hopes they change the law in New Jersey that we have a right to carry and I thank god for our founding fathers!

ON MOTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR MARINARI, SECONDED BY COMMITTEEMAN CALABRESE, THE MARCH 3, 2022 MEETING WAS ADJOURNED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Jennifer Witham, RMC, CMR  
Municipal Clerk