

March 16, 2015
Municipal Building
121 Evergreen Road
New Egypt, NJ 08533

The Special Meeting of the Township Committee was called to order by Mayor Trotta at 7:00 P.M.

STATEMENT: “This meeting is being held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act. It was presented for publication to in the Asbury Park Press and the Trenton Times and posted on the bulletin board”. The purpose of the meeting was to conduct a public hearing on the defeated 2015 Fire District budget.

THOSE OFFICIALS PRESENT WERE:

COMMITTEEMAN LOTITO COMMITTEEMAN WYSONG MAYOR TROTТА
COMMITTEEMAN MARINARI BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR DANCER
DEPUTY CLERK HENDRICKSON CDC LEUTWYLER

Deputy Mayor Sorchik was in attendance via telephone.

Mayor Trotta asked everyone to stand for the flag salute. Trotta introduced the professionals at the dais.

Mayor Trotta turned the meeting over the Fire District #1 for the Public Hearing on the defeated Fire District #1 Budget. Gene Pullen of the Fire District said he had nothing prepared. Pullen said that because the budget was defeated at their election by statute it comes to the Township.

Trotta said that he would open up the public hearing on the defeated Fire District Budget. He asked for public comments.

Irvin Carter of Long Swamp Road said he the Fire District budget had been voted down three years in a row. He said he never felt so low as last year when this committee over rode a public vote in this country. What gives the Township Committee the right to over ride a vote? As far as the Fire Budget they ask for more every year, why don't they really help the community and make some cuts and save the taxpayers some money. The Committee thanked him for his comments.

Mayor Trotta said he has been on the Committee since the middle of 2010 this is the fourth time the budget has come before him. In 2011 the Township Committee cut \$43,000 from the Fire Budget; 2012 it passed; 2013 the Committee cut their budget \$75,000; last year there was nothing cut, according to State law the Committee can leave it as it is. Trotta asked for any additional comments.

Luisa Erich-Carr, 12 Holmes Road. Erich-Carr said she has the same complaint as Mr. Carter, said you have to put a stop to this. It is outrageous, Dave Rogers no longer works there, she said she doesn't know what the Committee is thinking. None of the residents come to the meetings because what for the Committee will pass it anyway. Trotta reiterated his previous comment. Erich-Carr said if it is voted down than the answer is no she asked which part of no doesn't the Committee know. Trotta said last year there wasn't a penny to be cut. Erich-Carr said there is money to cut, she does accounting, she knows figures and figures don't lie. Trotta said that was her opinion. Erich-Carr said the Committee has no idea what to look for, Trotta said he does know what he is looking for. There was more discussion on Erich-Carr's and Trotta's ability to do accounting. Trotta continued to say that the Township followed the law and the Committee cut what they felt necessary to cut. Erich-Carr said they could bring people down from Newark and they could do a better job than this Committee, Trotta said that was her opinion.

Trotta asked for additional comments.

Irvin Carter said he spoke to the fire chief in Belmar they have three firehouses, they have a budget of \$900,000, Plumsted has one firehouse with over a \$2,000,000 budget. Carter said think about that when you say there is nothing to be cut here.

Trotta asked if there were any additional comments.

There were no further questions or public comments on the budget. Trotta asked if the Committee had any comments.

Committeeman Lotito asked for numbers for the budget. Trotta said last year the Fire District raised by taxes \$1,554,758, this year the proposed tax was \$1,581,327 an increase of \$26,569. Lotito asked for the record what was the last public sanctioned tax levy, Trotta said in 2012 they raised by taxes \$1,287,000. Committeeman Wysong asked the Commissioners, looking at the budget's Total Other Revenue which comes from EMS, in 2014 \$396,000 was budgeted and actually you took in \$388,000, this year \$378,000 which is \$10,000 less than taken in. Wysong asked why was the revenue going down and also explain the balanced billing from other towns.

Commissioner Pullen said in preparing the budget it was in the opinion of the accountant and the commissioners that they wouldn't see the revenue that they saw in 2014. Pullen said in regard to the balanced billing they were going to go after balanced billing outside of Plumsted. Wysong asked if there had been any balanced billing this past year, Captain Jodi Byrne said they did balanced billing outside of their primary response area. Mayor Trotta said that Byrne wasn't in attendance at a recent meeting with the Commissioners and said he was very upset to learn at that meeting that the Fire District wasn't balance billing everyone outside of Plumsted. It was his understanding that they were balance billing everyone outside of Plumsted. Trotta said they have to look at balance billing or look into some sort of payment from the other towns. It is not fair to Plumsted's taxpayers. The Commissioners said they didn't disagree with that it was a source of constant discussion. Trotta said he wants to contact the Mayors from the other municipalities to let them know that Plumsted needs a contribution because it is not fair for our fire district to be paying for everything. The commissioners thanked him for that. Wysong asked how many calls have they balanced bill and how many they have not balanced billed outside Plumsted. Byrne said they didn't have that breakdown, she said usually they receive a report from the billing company they forward her anything that has balance bill on it, past practice has been that anyone who is a resident or in the primary area doesn't get balanced billed. She pulls the residents out of that report and the rest are sent to a collection agency. Byrne said they not only have a billing agency they also have a collection agency. Wysong said what he understands is the primary area in the other Townships are not balanced billed. He said he was under the impression the last time the committees met anything outside of Plumsted was balanced billed. Wysong said he was disappointed that this wasn't happening.

Committeeman Lotito said in regard to the primary area that the Township serves, how is that set-up, he asked if it was set up with a contract. Byrne said what was done by the First Aid in the past has been carried over to the career staff, there is a written agreement with North Hanover Township that doesn't expire; New Hanover Township has always been a verbal agreement for the first aid volunteers but since Plumsted has gone to an all career staff they get their usual donation \$10,000 donation; Upper Freehold has a verbal, they only cover a portion of that Township. Lotito asked how many miles does this add to their coverage, Plumsted is about 42 square miles with the other municipalities it is 60 square miles, Lotito said it was about a third of what they cover.

Commissioner Pullen said one thing to keep in mind in regard shared services and the agreement with North Hanover Township is they fuel their vehicles at their school. That is a significant savings to the department. The fire district purchases their fuel from there they do not ask for any maintenance fees for the upkeep of that facility.

Committeeman Wysong asked if the Fire District would be going back to the beginning of the year to balance bill the residents in the other municipalities. Wysong asked if this would be a significant increase in the budget, Pullen said it would be something but he didn't know how much. Wysong asked Byrne how many calls they had in 2014 Byrne said 1,590 this year so far they have had about 330. Committeeman Marinari said the handshake agreement no longer works in today's society. Marinari said they need a hard copy of all of the agreements. Pullen said they try to get agreements every year but it is a very torturous process, the other entities chose to give them as little as they can. Marinari said he understood but Plumsted's residents are being short changed this has to be tightened up. Marinari continued by saying the Mayor and Deputy Mayor met with the Commissioners. The Mayor has some recommendations which has been discussed. Marinari said they do a great job and there isn't anyone who would disagree with that.

Deputy Mayor Sorchik said in regard to their recent meeting with the Fire Commissioners, he Mayor Trotta, the Business Administrator and Dave Leutwyler met on Saturday. Sorchik said going back to the vote it was agreed the increase in the tax revenue the Township would recommend the money collected by the Fire District would be the same this year as it was last year and the budget would be reduced accordingly, the number was \$26,569.

Committeeman Lotito said it has been a couple of years since the public has sanctioned a budget, have the commissioners put any thought into what a bare-bones budget would be in response to some of the taxpayers concerns. Lotito asked the Mayor to correct him if he was wrong, that the Committee could potentially roll back to a public sanctioned budget (2012).

Lotito asked if the Commissioners had any idea what the number may look like. Commissioner Pullen said under this budget there is 24/7 EMS coverage, if it rolled back to the 2012 budget there would be no 24/7 EMS coverage, there would be no coverage at night. Lotito asked in terms of dollars what would that be, Mayor Trotta said that it would be \$267,058. Pullen said there would have to be more cuts that would only be one of them.

The Fire District Attorney Braslow said as the Township Committee knows it isn't easy to put a budget together and every year expenses go up. He continued by saying what the District presented is what they feel is a reasonable budget and as stated any cuts to this budget would comprise some of the services provided. Committeeman Wysong said he sees an increase in revenue once they start the balancing billing from January on. Wysong also said the Chief EMS who hasn't been paid since the beginning of the year but his full salary is budgeted in this budget. Braslow said there will be continuing litigation, you have to preserve the money. Wysong said possibly there could be some savings in that line item. Trotta said any savings that they have there or increases in revenue that will help for next year.

Wysong said they are using \$78,500 from the fund balance and asked what was left. Pullen said he didn't have that number. Braslow said the accountant wasn't there but you have to have a certain amount of surplus. Committeeman Marinari said if there is a budget meeting to discuss the budget, the accountant must be present. Mr. Braslow said they didn't disagree but the accountant had a prior commitment. He also said they continue to work to get the community out to vote on the budget, it was very disappointing this year. Committeeman Lotito said they need to encourage support for the budget. Lotito said he personally finds it disconcerting that the Township Committee is asking questions to help justify a dollar amount that the Fire Commission puts on a ballot and the Committee is not getting answers. Lotito said he is all for what they do but the Committee is supposed to be good stewards of what they are giving the public. Lotito said he has lived here since 1985 his taxes have more than doubled, his income hasn't doubled, property values haven't doubled. The Township has to justify the dollars that are being spent and they can't articulate in preparation for a vote or for a meeting such as this that puts everyone in a deficit. Lotito said he can hear the emotion, he senses the frustration and senses the anger on both sides. Braslow said this district went beyond what the Statute requires, they had a special meeting for the public regarding the budget and almost no one showed up. They had a budget meeting almost no one showed up. Lotito said with all due respect his wife runs the local news list, she was never sent a notice. There is almost a 1,000 people on that list. Jodi Byrne said she had forwarded the notices to his wife and was told it wasn't in the proper format, so Byrne resent it in the proper format. Lotito said that has to be worked on, he personally didn't see it. Lotito said he was unaware of an election. Committeeman Marinari suggested that they reach out to the other organizations to spread the word. A resident said the School Board makes phone calls. He continued by saying he didn't know about the meeting tonight until someone told him, no one he knows knew about this meeting. Nobody is ever notified of it, he noticed the Fire Company was here in full force but the handful of those present who found out about the meeting was by accident. He continued by saying there has to be a better way, as far as the vote this year, it was defeated.

Ms. Erich-Carr once again expressed her concerns that both the Fire District meetings and Township Committee meetings are on the first Wednesday of the month. Attorney Braslow said this Fire District reached out to Assemblyman Dancer to have legislation drafted to change the election to November. He said they hope the legislation gets through.

Committeeman Wysong asked, at the end of 2014 what was the surplus, there was very little, once again Marinari said this is why the accountant should be present. Committeeman Lotito asked what the time limit was on this, Trotta said something has to be tonight, something has to be done within 30 days and that date would be March 21st. Lotito asked what if the Committee couldn't act on this tonight there wouldn't be enough time for noticing another meeting. Lotito said in the spirit of trying to reach a beneficial and reliable solution doesn't it make sense to get answers to the questions, he said he thought if they had the answers to these questions it would elevate some of the concerns of the taxpayers and at the same time look at some opportunities with contracts and other things. Lotito said he would like to know in more detail of what some of the items so they can get back together post another meeting and reconvene to approve the budget.

Mayor Trotta asked Committeeman Wysong what his thoughts were, he said to move for the vote. Committeeman Marinari asked how much difference were they talking about, Trotta said there wouldn't be that much of a difference. Trotta asked Deputy Mayor Sorchik if he had any comments on Lotito's suggestion. Sorchik said they looked at the numbers on Saturday and his position hasn't changed, they are anticipating additional revenues with the secondary billing. Sorchik continued by saying understand that there is no obligation for the insurance company or the parties that are backed bill to come forward with any money chances are more money will be coming in there is no way to predict if that is going to be a significant increase he said he would

be hesitant to do that. Sorchik said he understands they currently have a salary line item that isn't being used however they are going to have to have additional personnel so that is going to be obligated to personnel. Sorchik said he thinks it is a realistic approach to go back to the amount of money that was raised last year in taxes and reduce this year's proposed budget by the amount rolled back to the 2014 amount.

Mayor Trotta said they had Resolution No. 2015-131 in front of them the 2015 the tax levy would be the same as last year \$1, 554,758. Mayor Trotta asked for a motion to approve the resolution.

Before the vote on the resolution Business Administrator Dancer clarified the numbers on the resolution. Dancer said if the taxes are reduced by \$26,569 that brings it down to \$1,554,758 so the total budget would be \$2,043,148. Committeeman Wysong said he was in agreement with that reduction as he believes there are some savings that can make up that reduction of \$26,569. Committeeman Marinari asked that there be contact between the Commissioners and the Township Committee so the Committee knows when things are happening. This process has to be corrected, right now it is not working. Mayor Trotta said on Saturday he was more than a little upset when he found out they were not getting balanced billing from the other towns and he said they have got to get monies from those towns one way or another, they have to make some kind of contribution. Trotta said he was going to go to the other towns and he is hoping there is going to be a fair budget for the whole area that is served. Marinari asked for numbers from all of the areas they serve.

Commissioner Pullen said a few years back there was an All Boards meeting where the various boards met.

ON MOTION OF COMMITTEEMAN MARINARI AND SECONDED BY COMMITTEEMAN WYSONG RESOLUTION NO. 2015-131, A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF PLUMSTED, COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, ESTABLISHING THE AMOUNT TO BE RAISED BY TAXATION FOR THE PLUMSTED TOWNSHIP BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS, FIRE DISTRICT NO. 1 BUDGET WAS APPROVED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES, WITH COMMITTEEMAN LOTITO VOTED DUE TO THE LACK OF INFORMATION PROVIDED.

The Fire Commission thanked the Township Committee.

Mayor Trotta called for a short recess.

The meeting returned to Open Session to conduct a Budget Workshop meeting.

CFO Madden said she had provided the Committee with revenue, budget and capital budget papers. Madden provided a revised page 8 of the budget, she said some things are changing very rapidly. Madden said a recent Local Finance Notice that said two of the storms, one on January 26 and the other on March 5 were consider extraordinary and declared an emergency by the State. A portion of those expenses can go outside the CAP. The change on page 8 of the budget reflects that. Madden reviewed the snow removal/salt budget from January through March 5th, Vernon Dancer's bill was \$85,238.75, Ocean County \$57,040., EME \$5,652 for an amount of approximately \$147,933. Business Administrator Dancer said this has more than doubled from last year. Madden said looking at that amount of money she looked at the balances in Snow Trust there was approximately \$17,000 in the proposed budget inside CAP \$72,000, Schedule "C" \$15,000 and Snow outside CAP is \$29,331 this adds up to \$134,139. Madden said they have fallen short she asked to do a transfer of \$30,000 into the Snow Trust. That would be \$18,000 out of group health insurance, \$2,000 out of unemployment and \$10,000 out of legal. The appropriation reserve is now \$190,000 which is healthy. Madden continued this would give \$164,000 right now approximately \$148,000 has been spent this will leave a little cushion to get through to December. Dancer said the max inside the CAP is assuming the Township Committee will do a COLA ordinance, Dancer said he didn't think the Committee had much of a choice. Madden suggested doing a cancellation the transfer resolution was briefly discussed this will not be done at this meeting because it wasn't advertised. A special meeting will be scheduled later in the month to do the transfer.

Madden explained how she determined the dollar amount for snow removal. Mayor Trotta said he and Leutwyler along with another committee person would be sitting down in the middle of the year to discuss snow removal for the end of this year and the next budget year. Brining and salt/sand mixture will be discussed they will be looking at options. Committeeman Lotito asked if brine would be more cost effective, Trotta said other towns think it is more cost effective. Apparently the snow plow vendor has farm equipment that would enable him to do the brine process. Wysong said the Public Works Supervisor in Jackson suggested doing a shared service for brine.

CFO Madden said she has one last thing to do, she has to back through the salary and wage spread sheet for the departments to make sure that is okay. In Finance and in Building and Grounds there is training going on. She just wants to make sure that they are okay in all of the Departments with what has been budgeted. If not, she hoped there would be some room to lower them but hoped that nothing has to be raised because we have to keep a tight rein on the budget.

Madden lowered Financial Administration from \$83,000 to \$78,000. She feels there will be some cost savings there. She has budgeted for the entire of the year for the Assistant Treasurer even though she didn't start until March. There were no changes on page two, on page three there is some health insurance change she increased it from \$400,162 to \$410,162 if someone changes their plan there will only be \$10,000 left and explained that some of this is inside and some outside CAP which affects the amount to be raised by taxes.

Road Repairs was increased from \$20,250 to \$22,000 in the miscellaneous category and does not raise Schedule C. She said as the Township goes through the year that out of Snow Trust, which is for debris removal and repairs some of it can be used for repair to potholes from snow damage. She noted there was a limited amount of money and the repairs to roads need to be monitored this cannot be raised any more. Snow Removal was increased from \$40,000 to \$72,000 inside of CAP which was \$50,000 at the last Budget Meeting.

Recycling Salary and Wages was decreased because it was needed in other areas. On page six Madden adjusted the Municipal Court Salaries and Wage and other expenses. Under Prior Year Invoices she budgeted for JL Automotive invoices which were not approved before the work was done and also for transmission work on a police car. Administrator Dancer asked where the money would be coming from, Madden said it would be from the police line item, vehicle repairs. Administrator Dancer asked if STS had dropped off any estimates, Madden said no.

Madden said on the last page Mayor Trotta has suggested paying down some of the debt service. This represents \$74,000 additional. Dancer said the \$94,000 amount came from the encumbered amount for subcontractors when the Municipal Building was built this will go into Capital Surplus.

Snow Removal – State of Emergency is \$29,331. Reserve for Uncollected Taxes this will be adjusted once the auditor looks at the numbers. Madden reviewed the Capital Outlay line item.

Madden moved on to the revenue sheets and was only going to review the changes. The amount to be raised by taxation was changed by \$29,331 for the Snow Removal – State of Emergency this directly hit the amount to be raised by taxes. Surplus was lowered. Cell Tower Revenue will start to come in. Tow yard fees even though they were down has been a big plus to the budget. Madden said in moving forward in years to come more revenues need to be generated or reduce the budget. Dancer said the budget is being balanced with deferred school taxes of \$353,500, this is actually a deficit until the debt service is reduced. Madden said that only \$240,000 is being used from surplus even though school deferred school taxes go into that “pot”, you don't want to use more surplus than you can regain or replenish in the next year. Madden said she is hopeful this can be recouped or most of it. A deferred tax resolution will be done before the budget is introduced. State Aid is flat.

Capital Budget – The Capital Budget reflects the \$74,000 and includes the break down this can still be changed and adjustments can be made. If anything has to be adjusted now is the time. Madden said the budget is at the levy CAP max with the max there is only a one cent tax rate increase. What the governor is trying to accomplish by the 2% CAP is working for the taxpayers.

Committeeman Wysong asked if anything had been anticipated for when the Police go into shared services agreements for the Enforces program Madden and Dancer said no, you have to have an agreement in place to enter it into the budget.

Madden reviewed the Capital Budget. Madden said possibly the Police phone and Police radios could go one this year and one next year there isn't enough money to do both this year.

Committeeman Wysong asked about a previous discussion on weapons. Administrator Dancer said he had talked to the State about weapons and he was told that weapons doesn't fall under Capital the money has to be found in the Police Budget. Madden said the police had submitted a requisition to do all of their guns with an exchange and suggested that they do some this year and some over the next few years. Trotta said he thinks this can be done on a rotating basis. Madden said it would be about \$150 a gun with the trade in. Madden asked if the Committee was okay with these items in Capital. Trotta said something has to be done with the Police locker room. Leutwyler said the police want fencing where the trailer was for security. Wysong

said there was fencing around the tow yard that was taken down and this could be used. The maintenance department could put it where the police want it.

Open Space Trust – No changes.

Debt Service - Madden asked the committee to look at line 2015 of Ord. 2009-07 (this is the Redevelopment Ordinance) the amount is \$114,000, Madden lowered that payments to \$25,200, by paying the extra \$74,000 has lowered the debt amount. Madden explained that there will be a dramatic decrease in debt service payments in 2016. Administrator Dancer explained the approximate \$175,000 drop in debt service equals to two cents on the tax rate for use in the current budget.

Madden explained the deferred school tax analysis on the next page, she explained this is a floating projection. Madden also reviewed Court revenues and expenses for the last six years.

Committeeman Wysong said in regard to courtesy busing there is a mechanism where the Township can charge the families that use courtesy busing, either the school can do it or the Township can do it. This may be something that the Township may want to look into.

Madden reiterated the need to generate more revenue.

Madden reviewed the Police 2015 Budget Analysis. She said it costs over a million dollars to run the police department this excludes building maintenance and fringe benefits which are big items. She reviewed the offsetting revenues which amounted to about a quarter of the budget (which doesn't include the fringe benefits.) She reviewed possible future shared services such as tow yard and the Enforces system. Committeeman Lotito said there are a number of things that would have to be considered before going into sharing the Enforces system. Madden said it is also important to figure out with the equipment that we have how many towns can be taken on. We need three towns to make it as cost efficient as possible.

Madden reviewed the history of overtime and holiday pays. There was a discussion on the SRO officers. Madden reviewed the police 2014 salaries with overtime. Lotito asked if the comp time could be added to this, the list of comp time for all officers isn't available yet.

Mayor Trotta asked if there were any questions. Administrator Dancer said the auditor will be preparing the budget according to what was reviewed this evening. Madden said the budget would be introduced April 1st, the public hearing will be the May meeting if approved by the State it can be adopted that night if not you can't hold the public hearing or adopt the budget. The temporary budget will need to be amended for the adoption of the budget. Madden said there is just a little over one cent increase in the tax rate. She said she would be available for the budget introduction but will be on vacation for the May meeting.

Mayor Trotta asked for public comments.

Luisa Erich-Carr of Holmes Road asked in regard to trading in the weapons it will take five years to trade in the weapons for the officers here. Madden said no \$800 is budgeted each year for the trade in it would be three years. Erich-Carr asked if this included ammunition, Madden said that is a different line item. Erich-Carr asked if they would need new holsters for the new guns. They asked Deputy Mayor Sorchik the question, he said no the leathers would be the same. Erich-Carr asked what type of gun would they be getting. Sorchik said they would still be Glocks going from a Gen 2 Glock to a Gen Glock 4 40 caliber. Erich-Carr asked how often they went to be qualified, Sorchik said four times, two day time and two night time. They qualify with both handguns and shotguns. Erich-Carr asked what was the outcome of the training with the K-9 dog. Trotta said this was approved but if it can't be sustained it may have to be cancelled. Sorchik said they are looking into ownership of the dog, this will be a separate contract from the PBA contract. The officer and the dog made deadline for the training. Madden said she hasn't gotten a requisition for this. Committeeman Marinari said the money is there and had asked Chief Petrecca to submit a requisition.

Trotta asked for any additional questions.

Lenny Grilletto asked if the SRO's worked full-time for the school, Trotta said yes if schools are off they work for the Township. Madden said they get overtime for anything they work over 40 hours.

Mayor Trotta asked for comments from the Committee, there were none.

Trotta asked for a motion to adjourn.

ON MOTION OF COMMITTEEMAN WYSONG, SECONDED BY COMMITTEEMAN LOTITO,
THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED. ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES.

Respectfully submitted,

Dorothy J. Hendrickson, RMC
Municipal Clerk