

**RARITAN TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING  
RARITAN TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 15, 2017**

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**MEETING CALLED:** Mayor Gilbert called the special meeting to order at 6:02 P.M.

**ROLL CALL:** The following were present: Comm. Richard Chen; Comm. Michael Mangin; Comm. Craig O'Brien (arrived at 6:15 p.m.); Comm. Louis Reiner; and Mayor Karen Gilbert. Also present were Administrator, Don Hutchins; Municipal Clerk, Lisa Fania; Chief Financial Officer, William Pandos; Attorney, Paul Rizzo (for Township Attorney, Jeffrey Lehrer); Public Works Superintendent, Brion Fleming; Township Engineer, Tony Hajjar.

**MEETING NOTICED:** Mayor Gilbert advised that the meeting was noticed on August 9, 2017 in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act by providing notice to the Courier News, Star Ledger, Trenton Times, Express Times and Hunterdon County Democrat and was posted on the municipal bulletin board and the Township Website.

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**DISCUSSION: BOND ORDINANCES**

Mayor Gilbert explained that the purpose of tonight's discussion was to come to a consensus regarding bonding. Mayor Gilbert recapped the timeline of events regarding previous bond ordinance discussions including the following:

- \*four (4) budget planning meetings for which all members of the Township Committee were present;
- \*final planning meeting included discussion of bonding;
- \*ambulance was removed per Rescue Squad request;
- \*Township Committee agreed to consider referendum;
- \*two (2) DPW items were added and acknowledged by the entire Township Committee;
- \*budget passed 4-0 (one Committee Member was absent);
- \*bonding ordinance introduction postponed (one Committee Member was absent);
- \*bonding ordinance revised for which two (2) separate ordinances were created, one focused on roads, the other on equipment and vehicles;
- \*both bonding ordinances passed upon introduction 4-1;
- \*both bonding ordinances were defeated upon final adoption 3-2

Mayor Gilbert added that the deadline for purchasing 2017 vehicles had passed; that the budget included the five percent (5%); and that the quote for the purchase of Self-contained Breathing Apparatus (SBA) tanks for the First Aid and Rescue Squad and Fire Company was good only through the end of August.

Discussion was held ordinance by ordinance.

**Ordinance #17-10**

**Acquisition of a four-wheel drive vehicle for the Police Department** – Police Chief, Glenn Tabasko, spoke on the urgency of this purchase as the department had only three (3) vehicles for use in heavy snow. He also advised that another vehicle would be reaching the 150,000-mile mark in February and will need to be replaced and that he will be seeking a third vehicle in next year's budget.

Mayor Gilbert asked for objections to the purchase of a four-wheel drive vehicle for the Police Department. There were no objections.

**Acquisition of equipment for Public Works including a sander, mower, slab saw, mortar mixer, roller and multi-use mower/snow machine and acquisition and installation of a pole building -**  
Committee Member Reiner inquired whether the pole building could be delayed.

Public Works Superintendent, Brion Fleming, responded that acquisition of the pole building could be delayed but advised Committee Members of safety hazards with walking lanes and storage of equipment regarding the existing garage. Mr. Fleming commented that the equipment could not be stored outside. Mayor Gilbert asked for objections. There were no objections.

**Acquisition of a pick-up truck for the Public Works Department** – Discussion was held regarding the true period of usefulness for Public Works and Police vehicles and the SBA tanks.

Steve Wetter, former Fire Chief of the Raritan Township Fire Company, commented that the SBA tanks had to be put out of service after fifteen (15) years and that they could not be used one day past the expiration nor could they be refurbished. He continued to explain that all of the tanks were purchased at once fourteen (14) years ago for both Fire and Rescue.

At this time, Committee Member Chen referred to the five-year (5) plan proposed for the replacement of SBA tanks.

Attila Huebscher, president of the Flemington-Raritan First Aid and Rescue Squad, added that the tanks expire over a three (3) year period with a majority expiring in 2018.

Discussion continued regarding the implementation of the five-year plan for replacement of the SBA tanks. Mayor Gilbert reminded Committee Members that the Township was advised by Counsel that future committees cannot be tied by spending authorizations of the present Committee. Mr. Hutchins reiterated the same.

Mr. Hutchins explained that the Rescue Squad is in need of forty-four (44) tanks and that according to the present quote the Township would receive twenty-eight (28) tanks free of charge.

Discussion continued regarding funding of the SBA tanks including bonding; interest rates; paying cash; expiration date; amount budgeted in Capital for the tanks; minimum quantity required to receive the twenty-eight free; and the deadline for purchase.

It was the consensus to carry discussion regarding the purchase of the SBA tanks to a future regular meeting as the quote was going to change. Mr. Wetter expressed concern for the delay.

Mayor Gilbert recapped that the four (4) Committee Members present at the beginning of this meeting concurred to proceed with a) the acquisition of a four-wheel drive vehicle for the Police Department; b) the acquisition of equipment for Public Works including a sander, mower, slab saw, mortar mixer, roller and multi-use mower/snow machine; c) acquisition of a pick-up truck; and d) acquisition and installation of a pole building and the removal of the acquisition of the SBA tanks. Committee Member O'Brien was absent from the part of the discussion regarding items a, b, c, and d but arrived during the discussion of the SBA tanks.

## **Ordinance 17-12**

**Hampton Corner Road Flood Study Project** – Mayor Gilbert provided an update on the status of the project advising that one property owner does not want the project to move forward. Township Engineer, Tony Hajjar, concurred that the one property owner does not want the Township to proceed with eminent domain and continued to explain that the study needs to be completed first in order to determine exactly how much of an easement is necessary.

Discussion was held regarding the cost of the study; length of time to complete the study; and NJDEP's commitment to the project. Mr. Hajjar advised that the total cost of the project was twice as much due to bridge, culvert and wall design. He added that the study would take approximately one year to complete. Mayor Gilbert further commented that half the amount (\$135,000) was budgeted as that was all that could be completed this year.

Mayor Gilbert inquired as to the reason for Committee Member O'Brien's objection to the proposed ordinance which also included road reconstruction and the guide rail replacement program.

Committee Member O'Brien responded that the Township should start with the recommendation of the Auditor and identify unexpended bond ordinances and use those funds; and also use \$250,000 in the Capital Fund Balance before borrowing any additional money.

Mr. Pandos advised that the current Capital Fund Balance is anticipated to be about \$2.3 million at the end of the year. He continued that at this point, \$243,000 of that fund could be used to fund capital projects or make up budget gaps.

Discussion continued regarding the implications of using all of the Capital Fund Balance. Committee Member O'Brien inquired as to the amount in the Capital Fund Balance of most years. Mr. Pandos explained that the amount is normally not this high. He continued that a resolution can be done cancelling the balances of unexpended funds which would lapse into Capital Fund Balance and that would increase the amount. He commented that there may be another \$300,000 in ordinances that can be cancelled as well.

Committee Member O'Brien voiced opposition to borrowing additional funding and suggested that everything be used from capital surplus and reappropriated bonds.

Mr. Hutchins added that the funds will also be used to offset tax increases for next year.

Mr. Pandos advised against using all of Capital Fund Balance, as it is a valuable resource for balancing the budget. Mr. Hutchins responded that there are some general predictions regarding next year's budget in terms of additional costs and utilizing Capital Fund Balance is a consideration to offset some of those costs.

Debate continued regarding the use of Capital Fund Balance.

Mayor Gilbert stated that Mr. Hutchins and Mr. Pandos have been directed to review and determine the amount in Capital Fund Balance and present a recommendation regarding the cancellation of improvement authorizations and use of unfunded balances at the next scheduled meeting.

Committee Member O'Brien spoke in favor of an emergency appropriation for the police vehicle and the Hampton Corner Road Flood Study project.

Committee Member Reiner spoke in favor of the Hampton Corner Road Flood Study project and using Capital Fund Balance for such; and purchasing the air tanks for Fire and Rescue.

Discussion was held regarding the removal of \$35,000 for the guide rail program from Ordinance #17-12 and \$55,000 for a four-wheel drive vehicle for the Police Department from Ordinance #17-10 and authorizing an emergency appropriation for such.

It was the consensus to proceed with an emergency appropriation totaling \$90,000, of which \$35,000 would be allocated for guide rail replacement and \$55,000 allocated for a four-wheel drive vehicle for the Police Department and take action during the regular meeting.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Gilbert asked for a motion to adjourn the special meeting.

Motion by Reiner, seconded by Chen

**MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**

Meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Lisa Fania, RMC  
Township Clerk