



**MINUTES
BOROUGH OF EMERSON
MAYOR AND COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING/
BUDGET WORKSHOP
FEBRUARY 2, 2010
7:30 P.M.
Borough Hall-Council Chambers
Emerson, NJ 07630**



Call to Order

Mayor Lamatina called the meeting to order at 7:36 pm. The Mayor asked the entire audience to lead the salute to the flag followed by a moment of silent thought.

O.P.M.A. Statement

Mayor Lamatina read the Sunshine Statement announcing that the meeting of February 2nd, 2010 had been adequately noticed and was in compliance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Law. Further, that the meeting was included in the Annual Meeting Notice Resolution sent to the Bergen Record and Ridgewood News and advertised in said newspapers; posted on the bulletin board in the Borough Hall, Municipal Place, Emerson, NJ 07630 and has remained continuously posted as the required notices under the Statute. In addition, a copy of the notice was on file in the Office of the Municipal Clerk and had been available to the public since its approval by the governing body.

Roll Call:

Mayor Louis J. Lamatina-Present
Councilman Steven Bair –Present
Councilman Browne - Present
Councilman Hoffman – Present
Council President Lazar- Present
Councilman Rivers – Present
Councilman Shaw – Present

Also present were Borough Clerk Carol Dray, Borough Attorney Phil Boggia, Business Administrator Joseph Scarpa and CFO Catherine Henderson.

III. PROCLAMATIONS & CITATIONS

National Wear Red Day for Women

Mayor Lamatina read a proclamation setting February 5th as National Wear Red Day for Women to call attention to the magnitude of cardiovascular disease in women.

IV. APPOINTMENTS/RESIGNATIONS

- Environmental Commission
 - ✓ Resignation of Michelle Pierce as a regular member effective immediately
 - ✓ Appointment of Bernard Silverberg as a regular member for the unexpired term ending 12/31/11

The Mayor stated that he reluctantly accepted the resignation of Michele Pierce from the Environmental Commission effective immediately and happily appointed Bernard Silverberg as a regular member of the Environmental Commission for the unexpired term ending December 31, 2011.

- Library Board of Trustees
 - ✓ Resignation of Elizabeth Craig from the Library Board of Trustees effective immediately

☞ **Motion** to accept the resignation of Elizabeth Craig from the Library Board of Trustees effective immediately was **moved** by Councilman Bair, **seconded** by Council President Lazar and carried by roll call vote.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- GovOffice – Councilman Browne requested that this item be postponed until the next meeting.
- Consolidation of Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment – Councilman Bair stated that it was something that they should do and added that the savings of approximately \$7000.00 per year would be significant over time. Councilman Hoffman asked if all the members of the Zoning Board were aware of this change. Mayor Lamatina said that he had spoken with Chairperson Bernard Silverberg who had spoken with most members. Councilman Hoffman stated that if the Borough ever wished to change back to reinstating a Zoning Board, it would have to be done by referendum. In addition, he said that the Class II member, Brian Lacey, would need to be found a spot on the Planning Board. Councilman Bair said that he was aware of these points, and noted that it was the right move for the Borough. Councilman Rivers stated that at least one member of the Zoning Board was not happy with this decision and asked if anyone else had feedback. Councilman Hoffman said that he had spoken with one member who thought it was a good idea. Councilman Rivers expressed that he would like to hear concerns from Zoning Board members so that the Governing Body could make the right decision. Mayor Lamatina said that everyone on the Planning Board was comfortable with the extra work they would encounter. Councilman Shaw agreed that it was a good idea. Councilman Bair and the Mayor asked that Mr. Boggia should write the ordinance for first reading at the next meeting.

☞ **Motion** to authorize the Borough Attorney to draft an ordinance to consolidate the boards was approved by voice vote.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

I. 2010 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

- **Library** – Mayor Lamatina said that he had attended the Library Subcommittee meeting the previous evening and said that his wife, Jeanine Lamatina, had been asked and agreed to join the subcommittee as well. He had explained at that meeting that it was a new budget year and that the bond money set aside for general building issues last year was not available and urged them to move forward with drafting documents and getting bid specs ready so that the Council could see how much money they may or may not need. He stated that as of last year, they wanted to reserve as much as six months of operating money of their surplus. The Mayor emphasized that this plan was not acceptable; CFO Catherine Henderson agreed. She added that if the Library ever had an emergency, the Borough would work with them. The Mayor also noted that he had urged them to fix the ceiling and lighting first and then see what additional work needed to be done. He closed by stating that the Borough would have to keep a tight watch on them.

The Mayor asked Mr. Scarpa and Ms. Henderson about the budget situation for 2010. Mr. Scarpa said that he explained that the Borough was trying not to do any new bonding this year. He explained that there was \$11,000.00 left from the old bond; with Borough Engineer Andy Hipolit's estimate of \$50,000.00 for engineering/redevelopment of Kinderkamack Road and estimated land acquisitions costs of another \$50,000.00, the Borough was looking at a \$90,000.00 bond overall. The Mayor noted that this would be a \$4,500.00 hit on the budget. Mr. Scarpa detailed some of the budget requests from various departments including turn out gear for the Fire Department, a snow plow for the Department of Public Works, a police vehicle and money for road projects. Ms. Henderson listed expected cost increases such as a \$50,000.00 increase from the Bergen County Utilities Authority, a health insurance increase of \$50,000.00, and an approximate increase in Police salaries of \$160,000.00. Based on a question from Councilman Browne, Mr. Scarpa said that Police overtime was kept to \$100,000.00. He noted that if a replacement officer was not hired, that additional overtime could accrue, and projected that overtime would amount to about \$60,000.00 if a new officer was hired. The Mayor and Mr. Scarpa discussed instituting payroll deductions for employee health insurance as well as researching the State insurance plan, New Jersey Direct, which might allow the Borough to save some money. Mr. Scarpa said that he anticipated receiving a report in a week or so. Ms. Henderson stated that on the revenue side, the Borough lost about \$60,000.00 due to reductions in interest payments, with a one year reduction from \$80,000.00 to \$22,000.00. She detailed cable franchise fees from the cell tower. The Borough was done with the tax appeal payments to United Water. The Governing Body asked about tax appeals; Ms. Henderson stated that about \$75,000.00 was pending. Mr. Scarpa reviewed prior year legal settlement bills, totaling approximately \$80,000.00, noting that this year they plugged in \$55,000.00 lawsuits. Mayor Lamatina asked about surplus numbers, but the figures were not yet available. Mr. Scarpa noted that the number would be less than last year's figure of \$700,000.00, perhaps a half million or less. The Governing Body and Mr. Boggia discussed the Joint Insurance Fund and the funds expended in Borough lawsuits. In

addition, Mr. Scarpa noted that the vehicle insurance deductible had recently increased from \$1000.00 to \$2,500.00 per incident. Councilman Rivers questioned State Aid figures for 2010 and asked Ms. Henderson for an estimate of the taxes for an Emerson resident. Mr. Scarpa estimated that there would be at least a 3 point increase. Councilman Rivers stated that the Council must find innovative ways to raise revenue in the Borough because costs will never go down. Mr. Scarpa stated that the garbage contract would be up for renewal this year. Mayor Lamatina expressed interest in Washington Township's approach of having residents pay for their own collection and bags which allowed garbage to come out of the tax rate. Councilman Shaw stated that the cost of garbage collection to an Emerson resident was \$13.80 per month. Mr. Scarpa estimated that the cost to a resident to use a private hauler would be \$40.00 per month which would make no sense. Councilman Lazar suggested having residents use a private hauler and paying for their own sewer service and see what happened at the next election. Councilman Rivers opined that it was at least worth looking into it. Mr. Scarpa said that Westwood picked up their own garbage and that he would talk to other Administrators about these suggestions. The Mayor asked Mr. Scarpa to see which other contiguous towns had their garbage contract up for renewal to allow for sharing this service. Councilman Shaw suggested being proactive in discussing cost reductions and increasing revenue and asked about a mechanism to get resident feedback. Mayor Lamatina agreed with Councilman Shaw, adding that the Borough needed innovative ways to control costs and increase revenue. He emphasized that they could never lower taxes, but instead could slow it down, but that there was no easy answer. Ms. Dray stated that a lost potential in the Borough was the train station, which if there was enough land, could allow for the creation of a Parking Authority which would bring in a lot of revenue. Mr. Scarpa said that 40% of the Borough's budget was for the Police and the school was 60% of overall taxes. The Mayor emphasized that ratables were very important to the Borough. Councilman Rivers said that residents on fixed incomes were concerned about rising taxes and that they had to figure out ways to increase revenue to the Borough to offset rising costs otherwise Emerson would not flourish the way it should. Councilman Bair said that with the improvements to Kinderkamack Road, there would be momentum in the downtown, but that it was important to do it in a cohesive manner.

VII. INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

Mayor Lamatina announced that the following ordinances would be further considered at a Public Hearing to be held on February 16th, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Borough Hall, Municipal Place, Emerson, N.J. and published in the February 5, 2010 edition of the Ridgewood News. He added that this ordinance was on file in the Clerk's Office and posted on the official bulletin board of the Municipal Building where copies would be available to the General Public at no charge.

1393-10 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 247 TITLED STORMWATER MANAGEMENT ADDING ARTICLE VIII ENTITLED PRIVATE STORM DRAIN INLET RETROFITTING

☞ **Motion** to introduce Ordinance #1393-10 on first reading was **moved** by Councilman Hoffman, **seconded** by Councilman Bair and carried by roll call vote:

RC: Council members:

Browne-Yes

Rivers-Yes

Bair-Yes

Lazar-Yes

Hoffman-Yes

Shaw-Yes

1394-10 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 1305-06 CHAPTER 290 ENTITLED ZONING ARTICLE XIII TITLED CBD-E AND CBD-W ZONES §67-71 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF EMERSON TO MODIFY THE RECOMMENDATIONS SET FORTH IN THE 2006 CBD REDEVELOPMENT PLAN - PULLED

1395-10 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CODE OF EMERSON CHAPTER 232 TITLED SIGNS AND AWNINGS § 232-5 ENTITLED FEES AND § 232-6 ENTITLED SIGN INSPECTOR

☞ **Motion** to introduce Ordinance #1395-10 on first reading was **moved** by Councilman Rivers, **seconded** by Councilman Hoffman and carried by roll call vote.

RC: Council members:

Browne-Yes

Rivers-Yes

Bair-Yes

Lazar-Yes

Hoffman-Yes

Shaw-Yes

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Before opening the meeting for comments from the public, Mayor Lamatina reminded everyone to turn off their cell phones, keep their comments as brief as possible and try to limit them only to governmental issues of concern to an Emerson resident. He further requested that if a subject matter was addressed and answered, to please refrain from repeating it unless they had something new to contribute. A five-minute rule was in effect for each speaker at the discretion of the Council. Mayor Lamatina asked that everyone do their part to be civil, to the point and respectful of another's point of view and opinion. He further warned that speaking out without recognition would not be tolerated and a second warning could result in removal from the Council Chambers.

☞ **Motion** to open the meeting for comments from the public was **moved** by Councilman Shaw, **seconded** by Councilman Hoffman and carried at 8:35 p.m.

Seeing no hands, Mayor Lamatina asked for a motion to close the meeting to comments from the public.

☞ **Motion** to close the meeting to comments from the public was **moved** by Council President Lazar, **seconded** by Councilman Shaw and carried.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

With no other business to address, at the request of the Mayor, Councilman Hoffman **moved** to adjourn the meeting, **seconded** by Council President Lazar and carried at 8:36 p.m.

Carol Dray, RMC/CMC/CMR
(Proofed 2/12/10)

February 3, 2010