

REGULAR MEETING
LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING
COUNCIL MEETING ROOM – UPPER LEVEL

January 20, 2015

The following are the Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Lawrence Township Council that was held on Tuesday, January 20, 2015 at 6:30 P.M.

The meeting was opened with the Inspiration and Pledge of Allegiance, led by the Municipal Clerk.

At the commencement of the meeting Mayor Lewis read the following statement of proper notice:

STATEMENT OF PROPER NOTICE: “Adequate notice of this meeting of the Lawrence Township Council being held on Tuesday, January 20, 2015, has been provided through the posting of the annual meeting schedule of said Council in accordance with Section 13 of the Open Public Meetings Act.”

The roll was then called as follows:

Present: Councilmembers Brame, Kownacki, Maffei, Powers and Mayor Lewis.
Absent: None.

Also, in attendance were Richard Krawczun, Municipal Manager and David Roskos, Municipal Attorney.

Special Proclamations, Recognitions and Presentations

Chief Ubry welcomed and gave special recognition to the following dignitaries and distinguished guests – Joseph Pica, Jr., West Windsor Chief of Police and President of the Mercer County Chiefs of Police Association, Lieutenant Matt Kemp, West Windsor Police Department, Major Mark Marranko, NJ State Police - CJIS Division, Lieutenant Richard Frascella, Mercer County Prosecutor’s Office, Chief William Straniero, Mercer County Prosecutor’s Office, Detective Gary Wasko, Mercer County Prosecutor’s Office - U.S. Marshals Division, Angelo Onofri, First Assistant Prosecutor Mercer County Prosecutor’s Office, Anthony Ritter, Managing Director iXP Corporation and Thomas Macheda, Retired Lawrence Township Police Officer. Additionally, he applauded Detective William Chester, Retired Lawrence Township Police Officer, for his decorative career, street smarts and investigative skills that were second to none in closing cases and the Lawrence Township Police Department who

remained ever vigilant and visual last year despite police man power levels being at a 30-year low and indicated he recently submitted the reported crime numbers for Lawrence to the New Jersey State Police Crime Reporting Unit and he is proud to announce that all of their hard work, dedication to duty and professionalism has resulted in a 15-percent decrease in crime in the township as the crime rate is at the lowest level it has been in over 25 years and proceeded to highlight some of the changes and promotions that have taken place within the police department over the last several months. Thereafter, he provided a brief background history for each of the recently promoted officers and Mayor Lewis administered the Oath of Office as follows: (Additional comments were made by some of the officers and members of Council)

Timothy Drew	Police Lieutenant
Richard Laird	Police Sergeant
Steven Simon	Police Sergeant
James Smith	Police Sergeant
Michael Whitmore	Police Sergeant
Dylan McClister	Police Officer
John Stever	Police Officer

Public Participation (5-minute limitation per speaker)

Mr. Mislan, 4 Sunset Road, stated that he has been a resident of Lawrence for 45 years and the new group of police officers this evening were very impressive and they are very fortunate to have such a good group. He then proceeded to discuss the technical advancement as it relates to Microsoft's new operating system, Microsoft 10, which was just introduced and is being applied to handheld devices to enhance the purchase and pay process for merchandise and bills paid online, which will ultimately change the entire makeup of the retail world and they should expect big changes and suggested that they hire a Technical Director to keep up with the broad changes and technical advances going forward.

Mr. Mislan further discussed both the Business Administrator and Comptroller handling the finances of the Township and suggested a slimdown as he feels the Township does not need two people to handle the finances of the town, and indicated that brings him to his next point of discussion regarding Senator Sweeney's S-1 Bill regarding shared services and the consolidation of municipal services for a more efficient, cost-saving operation of local government services and urged the Council to support the S-1 Bill and put it into practice. Additionally, he spoke about free speech and freedom of religion as it relates to democracy and constitutional rights in the United States and the senseless killings and murders that have taken place in France because of it and suggested that the Council contact the Department of Justice to get clarification on two very important issues - free speech and freedom of religion - so that they can be defined and worked into peoples' daily lives and continued to discuss the unresolved issue of immigration and America being the land of opportunity for many immigrants.

Review and Revisions of Agenda

The Municipal Clerk requested that the Agenda be amended to officially adopt Resolution 35-14 (18-X) – Authorizing the Renaming of the Twin Pines Soccer Fields to the “Steven J. Groeger Soccer Fields” and to do the Appointment for the Ewing-Lawrence Sewerage Authority.

On a motion by Mr. Powers, seconded by Mr. Brame, the Agenda was amended to include the above revisions.

Same was carried on the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Councilmembers Brame, Kownacki, Maffei, Powers and Mayor Lewis.
Nays: None.

Adoption of Minutes

There was no adoption of minutes.

Awarding or Rejecting of Bids

There was no award of bids.

Introduction of Ordinances

Mayor Lewis read by title an ordinance entitled, “ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS IN AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF LAWRENCE, IN THE COUNTY OF MERCER, NEW JERSEY, APPROPRIATING \$2,014.00 THEREFOR AND DIRECTING THE SPECIAL ASSESSMENT OF THE COST THEREOF”

Mr. Krawczun stated that the Ordinance establishes the special assessments for sidewalk/concrete improvements to specific property locations. The aggregate amount of the assessment is \$2014.00. The property owners participated in the sidewalk improvement program for locations contiguous to Princeton Pike and Lawn Park Avenue during the road repaving project. Owners can opt to participate for concrete improvements as part of the public bid of the Township for similar work in this project location and owners will pay for their own individual work.

The Ordinance was introduced and approved on the following roll call vote:

COUNCIL	AYE	NAY	PRESENT	ABSENT	ABSTAIN	MOVE	SECOND
Mr. Brame	X					X	
Mr. Kownacki	X						
Dr. Maffei	X						
Mr. Powers	X						X
Mayor Lewis	X						

Adoption of Ordinances

There was no adoption of ordinances.

Manager's Report –

Mr. Krawczun submitted invoice listings for the month of January 2015 in the amount of \$1,266,496.27.

Mr. Krawczun distributed copies of the recommended budget for the Council to review and proceeded with an in-depth review of the budget in addition to reading the 2015 Municipal Budget Recommendation that included no local tax increase for the proposed \$42.7 million municipal budget that was unveiled. He then thanked the Township Department Directors and the Staff in Accounts and Controls in the Municipal Manager's Office for their professional contributions in developing the 2015 Recommended Budget.

Mayor Lewis stated that the Council will be reviewing the Budget Statement presented by the Municipal Manager over the next several weeks and they will be hearing from the Department Directors as well; but, it appears from Mr. Krawczun's report that they are looking at not only flat taxes for 2015 and a reduced budget but a reinvestment that many municipalities would be envious of and she would dare to say that when they look at the Township's outstanding debt even the State would be jealous given the fact that Lawrence has a decreased existing debt balance of \$7.5 million that includes new Capital Improvements. She then thanked Mr. Krawczun and his staff for the preparation of the 2015 Municipal Recommended Budget, members of Council who had to make the hard decisions that got them to the point and all of Lawrence Township employees who have provided exemplary service to the citizens of Lawrence despite a 19-percent reduction of staff over the last 8 years.

Mayor Lewis also discussed the Commissioner of the Department of Transportation notifying municipalities that he would be putting a freeze on municipal aid because there is no money in the Transportation Trust Fund and asked Mr. Krawczun how would that news impact the Budget that was presented this evening and their ability to do the things they would like do with regards to Capital Improvements this year.

Mr. Krawczun advised that the Administration used the municipal aid from the Transportation Trust Fund for the town's Capital Improvement Programs and the benefit of that funding is that it allows the town to borrow less money and it provides for less of a down payment which in turn lowers the appropriation in the municipal budget that will impact taxes and reduces the debt service for useful life of debt for the roads that are being repaired. And, indicated after seeing that report late this afternoon he looked back over the last 10 years and they received an aggregate amount of just over \$2 million with steady decreases over the last couple of years except when they had a peak in 2011 and 2012 of \$250,000, and the significance of that is that the money was passed on to the taxpayers and now the taxpayers will have to bear the burden of that loss of funding.

A general comment and question period ensued relative to the municipal budget as it relates to "great recession" and how Lawrence Township has rebounded with new businesses coming in and has turned the corner and is now moving forward. Additional comments were made by the Township Council relative to the hard decisions that were made that has placed the Township in a good position, as they can now see the fruits of some of those decisions and commended Mr. Krawczun and Lawrence Township Staff for the fine work and aiding in the success of transitioning out of the recession.

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Mr. Krawczun advised that the timeline for adoption of the 2015 Municipal Budget has been pushed back so the Department Heads will start their budget presentations at the February meetings and that the 2015 Recommended Municipal Budget will be posted on the website tomorrow and once the budget is adopted that will be posted on the website as well.

Attorney's Report –

Mr. Roskos reported that they have moved for a Summary Judgement in the discrimination claim that is still being pursued by Sunrise and that the court date is set for February and he would not be surprised if Sunrise asked for an extension; but he will keep the Council apprised.

Clerk’s Report –

There was no Clerk’s report.

Old Business –

There was no old business.

New Business –

Mayor Lewis advised that the Liaison will be casting a nomination for the nominee appointed to the following:

EWING-LAWRENCE SEWERAGE AUTHORITY – (Harold Vereen – 5-year term ending 1/31/20)

The nomination was approved by the following roll call vote:

COUNCIL	AYE	NAY	PRESENT	ABSENT	ABSTAIN	MOVE	SECOND
Mr. Brame	X						X
Mr. Kownacki	X						
Dr. Maffei	X						
Mr. Powers	X					X	
Mayor Lewis	X						

Public Participation (3-minute limitation per speaker) –

Lieutenant Tim Drew extended an invitation for the Township Council to attend the Police Reception at Mercer Oaks Country Club and thanked the Council for the ceremonial swearing-in of the officers this evening.

Resolutions

Mayor Lewis stated for the record that Resolution 18-X, which is noteworthy, named what was formerly known as the Twin Pine Fields as the “Steven J. Groeger Soccer Fields”.

Resolution Nos. 34-15 (18-A) thru 57-15 (18-X) were approved by the following roll call vote:

COUNCIL	AYE	NAY	PRESENT	ABSENT	ABSTAIN	MOVE	SECOND
Mr. Brame	X						X
Mr. Kownacki	X						
Dr. Maffei	X						
Mr. Powers	X					X	
Mayor Lewis	X						

Cited Resolutions are spread in their entirety in the Resolution Books of the Township of Lawrence.

Council Initiatives/Liaison Reports –

Mr. Powers stated with respect to Steve Groeger’s Retirement Party it was a very touching and heartfelt occasion.

There were no additional Liaison Reports.

Written Communications –

There was no written communication.

There being no further business to come before this Council, the meeting adjourned.

8:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Kathleen S. Norcia, Municipal Clerk

Attest:

Cathleen M. Lewis, Mayor