

FAIRFIELD TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
REGULAR ACTION MEETING
MARCH 20, 2024

The Regular Action Meeting of the Township Committee of Fairfield Township was held on March 20, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. in the Committee Chambers Room, 70 Fairton-Gouldtown Road, Fairton, New Jersey 08320 with Mayor Marvin Pierce, Jr. presiding.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Marvin Pierce, Jr. called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Pierce read the OPMA Statement into the record as follows:

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT STATEMENT

This meeting of the Fairfield Township Committee shall come to order. The New Jersey Open Public Meeting Law was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have advanced notice of and to attend the meeting of the public bodies at which any business affecting their interests are discussed or acted upon. This meeting held on this 20th day of March 2024 is held pursuant to notice having been submitted to The South Jersey Times and The Daily Journal on January 8, 2024 and duly posted on the Township website and Bulletin Board.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG / MOMENT OF PRAYER

Mayor Pierce led the flag salute followed by a moment of prayer given by Deputy Mayor Mike Peterson.

ROLL CALL

The roll call was recorded as follows:

Committeeman Stephen M. Bateman, present; Committeewoman Julia Burrus, present; Deputy Mayor Mike Peterson, present and Mayor Marvin Pierce, Jr., present.

ALSO PRESENT

Township Administrator Michael Burden, Township Solicitor Albert K. Marmero and Township Clerk Linda M. Gonzales.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

WORK SESSION ACTION MEETING MARCH 6, 2024

Deputy Mayor Mike Peterson moved to approve the Work Session Action minutes of March 6, 2024 as written seconded by Committeeman Stephen M. Bateman. Roll Call Vote: Committeeman Bateman, yes; Committeewoman Burrus, yes; Deputy Mayor Peterson, yes and Mayor Pierce, yes.

Mayor Pierce announced that Neil Young, Chief Financial Officer and Nancy Sbrolla, Municipal Auditor are present tonight to go over the 2024 Municipal Budget.

ANNOUNCEMENT / PRESENTATION / DISCUSSION / 2024 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

NEIL YOUNG, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

NANCY SBROLLA, MUNICIPAL AUDITOR, FORD SCOTT & ASSOCIATES

Nancy Sbrolla, Partner at Ford-Scott and Associates, an outside audit firm for the Township hired to do the fiscal work for the year ending December 31, 2023 approached the Township Committee with the 2024 Municipal Budget. She reported that the budget has a penny increase this year whereby we did not have one last year with a slight drop in the fund balance, but that we were still at \$1.7 million and that we are still in a strong financial position with all the cost-of-living increases across the board especially with health insurance and all the other insurances is basically where the penny increase came from.

Ms. Sbrolla stated that she is aware that the Township has received several grants in the past couple of years and that helped to keep our costs down. Ms. Sbrolla stated the Township is in a really good financial position and that she knows she has mentioned this before, she was here as our auditor many years ago when the Township was in dire straits and that it is good to see the Township of Fairfield thrive again and if anyone has any questions, to please reach out to her.

Neil Young, Township Chief Financial Officer approached and as Nancy Sbrolla stated the costs of living increases is the biggest thing, health benefits have sky rocketed, the Animal Shelter costs have gone up significantly and we have to get the codification done that we all have spoken about and that in totally we have done our best, we loss some expenses, but we have put on just as much so that is the need for the one cent tax increase. Mr. Young advised that if our fund balance was not going down, we could get

another year with a zero-tax increase, but as our fund balance increases, we have to try to keep up with that.

He stated that it should be noted that this is the 5th year that the Township has had no increase in the tax rate, so excellent job to the Township Committee for keeping the glove on for all that time.

Neil Young asked the Township Committee if they had any questions for him before they introduce the Cap Bank Ordinance and introduce the 2024 Municipal Budget.

There were no questions entertained by the Township Committee.

ORDINANCE FOR INTRODUCTION (FIRST READING) (ONE)

Mayor Pierce read Ordinance No. 2 - 2024 into the record as follows:

ORDINANCE NO. 2 - 2024

AN ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2024 (N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14)

Deputy Mayor Mike Peterson moved to adopt Ordinance No. 2 - 2024 on first reading seconded by Committeewoman Julia Burrus. Roll Call Vote: Committeeman Bateman, yes; Committeewoman Burrus, yes; Deputy Mayor Peterson, yes and Mayor Pierce, yes.

Committeeman Benjamin Byrd, Sr. arrived at 6:06 p.m.

ORDINANCE FOR PUBLIC HEARING (SECOND READING) (ONE)

Mayor Pierce read Ordinance No. 1 - 2024 into the record as follows:

ORDINANCE NO. 1 - 2024

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING AND SUPPLEMENTING CHAPTER 406 OF THE TOWNSHIP OF FAIRFIELD, CUMBERLAND COUNTY, ENTITLED "TAXATION" SPECIFICALLY CREATING SECTION 406-11 ENTITLED "MUNICIPAL OCCUPANCY TAX"

Mayor Pierce entertained a motion to open Public Hearing on Ordinance No. 1 - 2024

Committeeman Benjamin Byrd, Sr. moved seconded by Deputy Mayor Mike Peterson. Roll Call Vote: Committeeman Bateman, yes; Committeewoman Burrus, yes; Committeeman Byrd, yes; Deputy Mayor Peterson yes and Mayor Pierce, yes.

There being none, Mayor Pierce entertained a motion to close the Public Hearing.

Deputy Mayor Mike Peterson moved seconded by Committeeman Benjamin Byrd, Sr. Roll Call Vote: Committeeman Bateman, yes; Committeewoman Burrus, yes; Committeeman Byrd, yes; Deputy Mayor Peterson, yes and Mayor Pierce, yes.

Mayor Pierce entertained a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 1 - 2024 on final reading.

Deputy Mayor Mike Peterson moved seconded by Committeeman Benjamin Byrd, Sr. Roll Call Vote: Committeeman Bateman, yes; Committeewoman Burrus, yes; Committeeman Byrd, yes; Deputy Mayor Peterson, yes and Mayor Pierce, yes.

REVIEW OF BILL LIST PROVIDED BY CFO

Mayor Pierce asked the Township Committee if they had any questions and or conflicts on the bill list provided by the Chief Financial Officer. There were none.

RESOLUTIONS

Mayor Pierce read Resolution No. 64 - 2024 into the record as follows:

RESOLUTION NO. 64 - 2024

A RESOLUTION OF FAIRFIELD TOWNSHIP, CUMBERLAND COUNTY AUTHORIZING THE PAYMENT OF TOWNSHIP BILLS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$381,714.81

Deputy Mayor Mike Peterson moved to adopt Resolution No. 64 - 2024 seconded by Committeeman Benjamin Byrd, Sr. Roll Call Vote: Committeeman Bateman, yes; Committeewoman Burrus, yes; Committeeman Byrd, yes; Deputy Mayor Peterson, yes and Mayor Pierce, yes.

Mayor Pierce read Resolution No. 65 - 2024 into the record as follows:

RESOLUTION NO. 65 - 2024

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE 2024 BUDGET TO BE READ BY TITLE ONLY

Committeeman Stephen M. Bateman moved to adopt Resolution No. 65 - 2024 seconded by Deputy Mayor Mike Peterson. Roll Call Vote: Committeeman Bateman, yes; Committeewoman Burrus, yes; Committeeman Byrd, yes; Deputy Mayor Peterson, yes and Mayor Pierce, yes.

Mayor Pierce read Resolution No. 66 - 2024 into the record as follows:

RESOLUTION NO. 66 - 2024

INTRODUCTION TO THE 2024 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Committeeman Benjamin Byrd, Sr. moved to adopt Resolution No. 66 - 2024 seconded by Deputy Mayor Mike Peterson. Roll Call Vote: Committeeman Bateman, yes; Committeewoman Burrus, yes; Committeeman Byrd, yes; Deputy Mayor Peterson, yes and Mayor Pierce, yes.

Mayor Pierce read Resolution No. 67 - 2024 into the record as follows:

RESOLUTION NO. 67 - 2024

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING CUMBERLAND COUNTY NABB AVENUE EXTENSION PROJECT

Committeeman Benjamin Byrd, Sr. moved to adopt Resolution No. 67 - 2024 seconded by Committeewoman Julia Burrus. Roll Call Vote: Committeeman Bateman, yes; Committeewoman Burrus, yes; Committeeman Benjamin Byrd, Sr., yes; Deputy Mayor Peterson, yes and Mayor Pierce, yes.

Mayor Pierce read the Consent Agenda into the record and asked the Township Committee if they had any questions. There were none. Mayor Pierce entertained a motion to adopt the Consent Agenda Resolution No. 68 - 2024 to Resolution No. 71 - 2024.

CONSENT AGENDA

(RESOLUTION NO. 68 - 2024 THROUGH RESOLUTION NO. 71 - 2024)

The Consent Agenda includes items of business which are not controversial & do not require individual discussion. A motion approving the Consent Agenda is moved, seconded, and voted upon as one item by the Township Committee. If any discussion is requested on a Consent Agenda item, it is removed from the Consent Agenda to the Regular Agenda

RESOLUTION NO. 68 - 2024

CERTIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE UNITED STATES EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

RESOLUTION NO. 69 - 2024

A RESOLUTION OF FAIRFIELD TOWNSHIP, CUMBERLAND COUNTY ENDORSING THE SUBMISSION OF A RECYCLING TONNAGE GRANT APPLICATION

RESOLUTION NO. 70 - 2024

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CHANGE ORDER #1 TO THE CONTRACT FOR HAWTHORNE AVENUE, HIRES AVENUE AND MERCHANT STREET RECONSTRUCTION

RESOLUTION NO. 71 - 2024

A RESOLUTION OF APPROVAL OF 2024 BUSINESS REGISTRATIONS

On a motion by Committeewoman Julia Burrus to approve the above Resolutions by Consent Agenda Resolution No. 68 - 2024 through Resolution No. 71 - 2024 seconded by Committeeman Benjamin Byrd, Sr. Roll Call Vote: Committeeman Bateman yes; Committeewoman Burrus; Committeeman Byrd, yes; Deputy Mayor Peterson, yes and Mayor Pierce, yes.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Committeeman Benjamin Byrd, Sr. stated that he would like to put on the record, that we should revisit the Township's Noise Ordinance to try to tighten it up as Township residents should enjoy their peace.

COMMITTEE REPORTS / REMARKS

Committeeman Stephen M. Bateman had no report or remarks to make at this time.

Committeewoman Julia Burrus had no report or remarks to make at this time.

Deputy Mayor Mike Peterson thanked everyone for their hard work on the preparation of the 2024 Municipal Budget, especially Nancy Sbrolla and Neil Young and the Township Committee for keeping the budget flat for the past 5 years.

Committeeman Benjamin Byrd, Sr. stated that he was thinking the same thing that the Township Committee and everyone involved did an outstanding job for 5 years without a tax increase. He stated that the Township was able to get new vehicles and other things and that the Township Administrator did a good job on the grants and thanked the residents for attending tonight's meeting and also apologized for being a little late as he was paving a road all day in Cape May.

MAYOR'S REPORT / REMARKS

Mayor Pierce read the Public Comment on Current Agenda Items & Non-Agenda Items into the record as follows:

PUBLIC COMMENT ON CURRENT AGENDA ITEMS & NON - AGENDA ITEMS

In order for the Committee to conduct the business of the Township in the most productive manner possible, meeting attendees will be given five (5) minutes, all-inclusive to comment on any agenda item(s) without comment or question from the Committee and any non-agenda items including all dialogue, questions, and responses from both the speaker and the Committee for the designated public portion of the meeting. There may be no transference of a speaker's time to other attendees. Please step up at the appropriate time and state your name and address for the record.

Mayor Pierce entertained a motion to open Public Comment on Current Agenda Items & Non-Agenda Items.

Deputy Mayor Mike Peterson moved seconded by Committeewoman Julia Burrus. Roll Call Vote: Committeeman Bateman, yes; Committeewoman Burrus, yes; Committeeman Byrd, yes; Deputy Mayor Peterson, yes and Mayor Pierce, yes.

Donna McLean, 86 Ramah Road reported on a section of Ramah Road that has not been paved yet.

She stated that she is aware that it is a county road but that she was coming before the Township Committee tonight because of all the things she has done before and that it was time for the Township Committee to put a little pressure on the County to assist.

Mrs. McLean advised that she contacted the County Road Department about this because part of Ramah Road was paved about 3 ½ years ago. The rest of Ramah Road was not completed because they said the equipment had to be removed from the telephone posts and the poles had to be removed. She advised this has not been done. She stated that at the end of October she contacted the County Road Department and was told by the Secretary that the road would be completed shortly.

Mrs. McLean reported that other residents have called the County Road Department, and that they got the same response as her that the road would be completed shortly. She stated that in November she called the County Road Department again and asked them what the hold-up was and that she was informed that it was Verizon. She requested that the County Engineer contact her, and that she has not received a call from the County Engineer. She stated that she contacted Verizon in November and that she spoke with a representative and that she was then referred to another representative who gave Ms. McLean a ticket number.

She reported that a lineman came to her house and 2 days later the lineman returned to her house and explained about the equipment on the pole. She stated that the lineman told her that it would be completed in 2 weeks, and that they did complete the work on one pole and then she had to have surgery and had not been pursuing this in a continually active manner. She indicated that on March 5th she spoke with a Sherry at Verizon and that she was given an additional ticket number and was informed that she would be contacted later in the day and was contacted via text that the job had been completed and that Comcast had not taken care of their equipment.

Ms. McLean stated that she contacted Comcast and that on March 7th, a lineman came and there was no equipment from Comcast on the posts. She stated that her husband went with the lineman down the road and took pictures and that there are three (3) poles that Verizon has not removed their equipment from.

She stated that yesterday she spent 2 ½ hours on the telephone to get to the person from Verizon again from the technical team and finally this morning she received a telephone call that the lineman was going to be contacted to come out again and look at the equipment.

Mrs. McLean stated that what she is saying is that she is a resident of Fairfield Township and 3 ½ years is a long time to get your road surfaced when the rest of it is done. She explained that if you have ever been

at the end of Ramah Road, it is very uneven and your car rocks and shakes to get down there.

She indicated that she was going next week to the Commissioner's meeting and that she will be there to complain about Ramah Road and that she does not know if she can get the Township Committee's help or for the Township to say something to the County to get this done and to push Verizon because this is ridiculous.

Mayor Pierce and the members of the Township Committee thanked her for her comments.

Mayor Pierce directed the Township Administrator to contact the County and Verizon.

There being no further comments, Mayor Pierce entertained a motion to close Public Comment on Current Agenda Items & Non-Agenda Items.

Committeeman Benjamin Byrd, Sr. moved seconded by Deputy Mayor Mike Peterson. Roll Call Vote: Committeeman Bateman, yes; Committeewoman Burrus, yes; Committeeman Byrd, yes; Deputy Mayor Peterson, yes and Mayor Pierce, yes.

There was no need for an Executive Session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (IF NEEDED)

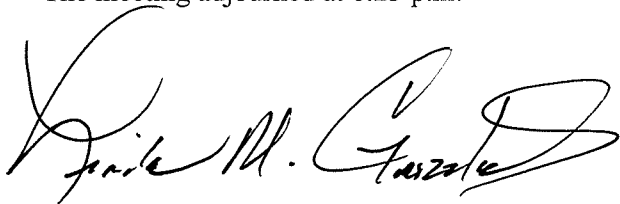
AUTHORIZING TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC (ACTION MAY BE TAKEN)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Township Committee, Mayor Pierce entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Deputy Mayor Mike Peterson moved seconded by Committeeman Benjamin Byrd, Sr. Roll Call Vote: Committeeman Bateman, yes; Committeewoman Burrus, yes; Committeeman Byrd, yes; Deputy Mayor Peterson, yes and Mayor Pierce, yes.

The meeting adjourned at 6:23 p.m.



Linda M. Gonzales, RMC
Municipal Clerk