

The April 13, 2009 special budget meeting was called to order by Mayor Petillo at 7:03 p.m. in Firehouse #3, Hopatchung Road, Hopatcong, NJ.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT STATEMENT: This meeting is held in accordance with the 1975 Open Public Meetings Act, NJSA 10:4-6 et seq., special notice having been forwarded to the New Jersey Herald/New Jersey Sunday Herald, the Daily Record, The Star Ledger, and posted on the bulletin board maintained in the Municipal Building for public announcements.

ROLL CALL - Councilmembers present: Richard Bunce, Michael Francis, Marie Galate, Madeline McManus & John Young. Absent - Robert Modick. Others present: Acting Administrator John Eskilson, Auditor Dave Evans, CFO Kelleyanne McGann & Clerk Lorraine Stark.

MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- Web Page Format Discussion - Mayor Petillo introduced Bill and Karen Beck who designed our new web site; Bill is a photographer and Karen an artist, who provided their services free of charge. Karen showed an example of what the new home page & Masthead would look like; she and Bill did the work because they wanted our town to stand out. Karen Beck offered suggestions on how to improve the web site including special pages for our service men & woman, and photos of people working at Borough Hall. Several residents also provided suggestions. Mayor Petillo informed those present that Karen has also filmed a video that beautifully depicts our lake. She thanked the Becks for their work.
- 2009 Budget Discussion
 - Health Department Consolidation with Sussex County - Mayor Petillo remarked that the County representatives are present this evening because she invited them here to discuss the services that are offered by the County. Herb Yardley the Director of County Health Services introduced several of his staff: Ellen Phelps, Public Health Nursing Director & Emmett Seabolt, Chief Sanitarian. Mr. Yardley explained the County's mission was to protect and promote the health of County citizens. Currently 23 of the 24 municipalities are part of the County services, and explained the services that are provide to the communities. Ellen Phelps spoke about her well trained staff and the clinics, vaccinations, screenings, and educational programs they provide throughout the County. Many services are provided locally, and she thought that Hopatcong would be used as a regional site for several activities. Mr. Seabolt noted his

experience with septic systems and wells, and spoke about permit procedures for septic systems, and his understanding of the problems faced by Hopatcong residents. He revealed that customer service was of utmost importance. Mr. Seabolt also discussed other programs, and the future of electronic licensing forms as well as web site inspection of restaurants. Mr. Yardley informed those present that the staff attends local monthly Board of Health meetings, and that the County holds two annually. Hopatcong could retain their Board of Health. Councilperson McManus said that she did not know how Hopatcong would be receiving these services. Mr. Eskilson said that the County is passionate about their Health Department, and is regarded as one of the best within the State of New Jersey. Mr. Yardley spoke about the flexibility of the services offered, and that in fact Hopatcong residents would be receiving more services than they are now receiving. They would work with Hopatcong, and their Board of Health to work out the details for the programs, and would provide excellent service to the residents. Mayor Petillo remarked that she met with Mr. Yardley last week, and discussed clinics, as well as using Hopatcong as a regional site for Byram & Stanhope; the County would be providing more services, and have a staff of medical specialists that would bring knowledge to Hopatcong in additional areas of expertise.

A resident inquired as to why we were changing. Mayor Petillo said that what initiated the change was the financial crisis, which the Borough was facing. Mr. Eskilson remarked that the savings in 2009 for a half a year would be \$52,000. Whereas, the savings in 2010 was \$329,000 budgeted and \$190,000 tax savings; residents would be paying a County Health Tax for the services. He also reported that the County under Title: 26 would employ all of the medical staff, and that the clerical staff would stay on to perform duties either associated with health or move over to administration. Council President Galate said that she spoke with Sparta Seniors who are using the programs, and they reported that they were very surprised at how much care they received, and were very happy with the level of services the County provided.

Mr. Eskilson explained the process for joining a Shared Services with the County, noted that time was short, but they could work quickly to incorporate Hopatcong into the County system.

Mayor Petillo characterized the Shared Services with Sussex County as a “win, win” situation, because it provides more services at a savings to the taxpayers.

Mr. Eskilson thanked the County Health personnel for their presentation, and for taking the time out of their schedules to be here this evening.

- Garbage Discussion – Mayor Petillo said that she invited Mr. Evans here this evening to explain a proposal that would impact garbage. Mr. Evans commented that we are one million dollars over our CAP levy and that a CAP waiver is required from the State. There is a strong likelihood that this waiver would not be granted. Currently the projected budget increase for 2009 is 12%. Mr. Evans spoke about a garbage fee of \$5 per week or \$65 per quarter paid by residents, this would result in a net adjustment of \$2 per year in taxes and would avoid us asking for a tax waiver in 2009 and maybe 2010. This would be a new fee providing revenue for the Borough. Council President Galate said that this fee would preserve our current DPW structure and employees. Mr. Evans remarked that this proposal was an alternative. Mrs. Haines asked if the DPW employees would still have to provide givebacks. Mayor Petillo responded that we would still be a little short, and that she was grateful to Dave Evans for putting this idea together. A resident inquired if there was a way to write off the garbage fee in taxes. Mr. Evans responded no. Mr. Eskilson explained that this proposal get to the root of the budget problem, lost of revenue & over CAP, and would provide the Borough with a more sustainable budget because of the new revenue being generated and the reduction in the CAP. The governing body members thanked Mr. Evans.
- 9-1-1 Dispatching Services – Mr. Eskilson revealed that the original cost savings model, which showed a savings of \$121,000 did not account for pension and unemployment for 7 full time employees. There would be savings over the long term, but not in year one. In addition, our two customers have not signed their 2009 Contracts, because they are exploring other alternatives. The new State standards would begin within the next couple of years, 65,000–population base for a 9-1-1 Center, which would mean regional centers. Mr. Eskilson remarked that if we proceeded with a change in Dispatching services in 2009, it would not provide a savings. Therefore, a change in our current operations is not warranted at this time.
- General Discussion – Mr. Eskilson comments that several weeks ago they reviewed a draft budget, and changes are still

being made; two minor changes include the reduction in the number of Police vehicles from two to one (\$30,000 cut); reduction in tipping fees for the 1st Quarter (\$75,000 cut), looked at the trends and the first quarter is always light. Currently we anticipate a downward trend since the new regulations were adopted. With the reduction in Health & Garbage Services the 2009 tax increase appears to be roughly 11 percent, placing the Borough in a better position financially.

No additional public comments were forthcoming.

Mayor Petillo thanked everyone for coming, especially the County Health Department personnel and Mr. Evans.

Councilman Bunce moved Resolution for Closed Session at 9:45 p.m., seconded by McManus. Those present voted affirmative. Absent – Modick. Mayor Petillo announced matters to be discussed pertained to personnel and contract negotiations.

Continue open at 10:34 p.m.

Council President Galate moved to adjourn at 10:35 p.m., seconded by Bunce. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted: