Township of Franklin  
Township Committee Meeting Minutes  
July 23, 2019

Call to Order:  
Time: 7:30 PM  
Ms. Vassallo: Present  
Mrs. Petsch-Wilson: Present  
Mrs. Flaim: Present  
Mayor Deegan: Present  
Mr. Bruno: Absent  

Salute to the Flag:  
The Mayor led the Salute to the Flag.

Open Public Meetings Act Statement:  
Pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, adequate notice of this meeting was forwarded to the official Township newspapers, posted on the bulletin board and Township Website on January 3, 2019. This meeting is being videotaped and will be on Channel 9.

Finance: No questions on the bills.

Engineers Report: Mayor Deegan and Ms. Vassallo will meet with the Engineers tomorrow about road projects.

Community Center: Mr. Yusko said residents were happy the Community Center was open as a cooling center. The HVAC is still being worked on. Mr. Yusko said all trash taken to the Community Center has to be bagged.

Public Works: Mr. Gemenden, Crew Leader, said potholes are being addressed. Branches that are down from the storm should be called in.

Police Department: Mr. Zimmer said a DUI checkpoint will be in August. National Night out is August 7. There has been an increase in accidents lately. He encouraged the public to take their time while driving. He said that there is a need for a crossing guard at Cleery school in September. There is also a need for Class II officers.

Administrator: Ms. Brent said there is a position for Tax Collector available. Mr. Zimmer asked the Administrator for a conditional officer of employment for an officer. Ms. Adams will be retiring as judge in December. The AFSCME contract is being signed tonight. Ms. Brent thanked the negotiating committee. There is a 2% increase in salary and 2% decrease in health care premiums. There will be an increase in a clothing allowance. It was agreed that the health care premium decrease will be effective on July 15. Mayor Deegan thanked Mr. Bruno and Ms. Vassallo along with Mrs. Petsch-Wilson for negotiating.

First Public Portion:  
Motion to Open: Petsch-Wilson  
Second: Flaim

Mr. Bill Morris, Oak Avenue, asked that the budgets be placed online earlier for the residents.

Motion To Close: Petsch-Wilson  
Second: Flaim
All in Favor: Unanimous

Motion to Approve Correspondence and Reports  
Motion: Petsch-Wilson  
Second: Flaim
All in Favor: Unanimous

Motion to Approve Bill List  
Roll Call:  
Ms. Vassallo: Recuse  
Mrs. Petsch-Wilson: Yes  
Mrs. Flaim: Yes  
Mayor Deegan: Recuse for Lunch for Seniors  
Mr. Bruno: Absent

Motion to Approve Minutes July 9, 2019  
Motion: Petsch-Wilson  
Second: Flaim
All in Favor: Unanimous
Motion R-106-19 Authorizing a Closed Executive Meeting for the Township Committee of the Township of Franklin-Personnel,
Motion: Petsch-Wilson
Roll Call:
Ms. Vassallo: Yes
Mrs. Flaum: Yes
Mr. Bruno: Absent
Second: Flaim
Mrs. Petsch-Wilson: Yes
Mayor Deegan: Yes

Motion R-107-19 Authorizing the Mayor to Sign the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Contract on Behalf of the Township of Franklin including Addendum
Motion: Petsch-Wilson
Roll Call:
Ms. Vassallo: Yes
Mrs. Flaum: Yes
Mr. Bruno: Absent
Second: Flaim
Mrs. Petsch-Wilson: Yes
Mayor Deegan: Yes

Motion R-108-19 Public Hearing on the 2019 Township of Franklin Budget
Motion: Petsch-Wilson
Roll Call:
Ms. Vassallo: Yes
Mrs. Flaum: Yes
Mr. Bruno: Absent
Second: Flaim
Mrs. Petsch-Wilson: Yes
Mayor Deegan: Yes

Ms. Coleman gave an overview of the entire budget. There was a .3 percent decrease from last year’s budget. The average resident spent $6,000 on taxes where 58 percent went to the local schools and 22 percent went to the County. Ms. Vassallo asked why there was a $550,000 increase in housing and that was explained as Community Champions. Ms. Vassallo asked about the police salary and wages. She suggested looking at all the salary and wages in case of under budgeting. She also said that public works salary and wages also seemed to be under budgeted.

Ms. Cindy Merckx, The Sentinel, 330 Oak Avenue, asked about the housing inspection fee. Ms. Coleman said it was not anticipated this year but it went to surplus last year. A vacant property fee is assessed and the mortgage company pays it yearly. Ms. Merckx asked about anticipated grants and that it was decreased by $113,000. Ms. Coleman said as the grants come in they are added to the budget. The senior lunch program does not have an anticipated cost because it is new. The offsetting expense is health and human services and has been increased to $60,000. The interfund capital expenses did not go out to bond and were used out of the current fund. The BANS closed last week and the fund was reimbursed. Ms. Merckx asked when the last salary ordinance was adopted. She said the last one she saw online was adopted in 2015. Ms. Vassallo said that a salary ordinance stays in effect but Mayor Deegan said it has to be updated to stay in range. Ms. Merckx asked about road paving. Mayor Deegan said a capital project plan has not been developed yet. Once one is decided, the ordinance will then be revised. Dutch Mill Road has been approved via a grant. Next year, Pennsylvania Avenue and the rest of Dutch Mill is scheduled pending the approval of the grant. Ms. Merckx said there is $20,000 in park improvements but Mayor Deegan said no plans have been finalized yet this year.

Mr. Joe Petsch, 2370 Stanton Avenue, asked if there is a tax increase. Ms. Coleman said there is a .03% decrease in local taxes. He credited the finance committee with putting together a great budget. .58 of all taxes go to local schools, and .22 goes to County government. Mayor Deegan said the salaries will be looked at again and changes can still be made before adoption.

Close the Public Hearing on the 2019 Township of Franklin Budget
Motion: Petsch-Wilson
Roll Call:
All in Favor: Unanimous

Public Portion:
Motion to Open: Petsch-Wilson
Second: Flaim

Mr. Bill Morris, Oak Avenue, asked about the Nutriserve contract. Ms. Brent said it was signed by the Administrator and Nutriserve.
Mr. Harry Kennedy, 1578 Fries Mill Road, congratulated the Township Committee on no new tax increase. He credited shared services and he said shared services are the way to go to save money for the taxpayers. He said the schools are now trying to do this also with busing.

Mr. Fred Plaskett, 532 Little Mill Road, said people are passing on double lines and driving too fast. He said he doesn’t see any police officers around patrolling the area. He said there are potholes that are filled on Swedesboro Road that keep washing away. Mr. Plaskett asked about Channel 9 and said it was off over the weekend. He said that access to the school building is spotty and the equipment is being moved back to the Municipal Building so that access to the equipment is available 24/7. Mayor Deegan has been working with Comcast for the past six months to get Comcast to move the equipment. He asked how to make the lakes swimmable again. Mayor Deegan said the major problem is the geese. It is very expensive to treat and doesn’t always work. The cost of lifeguards compared to the amount of use will have to be examined. Ms. Brent said that Ms. Flaim is working on the dog park slated for Malaga Park which might help with the geese.

Ms. Brent, 579 St. George St, said that on August 3 and 4 there is the Feast of Assumption in Malaga. There will be rides, music, food, and is a fun event. Ms. Brent thanked Mayor Deegan for using his own resources to make sure that the Senior Center at the Community Center was open as a cooling station.

Desiree Miller, Delsea Drive, said that she thinks the lakes should be reexamined to swimming. She mentioned the tree lighting and the community events that are held there. She suggested updating the playground. Ms. Vassallo said the environmental impact is to be considered but she also would like to see the lakes open too.

Ms. Renee Pistilli-Leopardi, E. Grant Avenue, asked if there was a way to do a wellness check for the seniors during the hot days. She suggested a Class II officer go out and check on them. Ms. Brent said some people who delivered meals on wheels last week bought water for the seniors. Mayor Deegan said he stopped and made sure that a resident out walking knew that the senior center was open. He will give her suggestion to the Senior Advisory Commission.

Committee Reports:

Mrs. Flaim: She said that Mrs. Petsch-Wilson and herself have been at the NJSLOM and have been trying to find ways to rid the lakes of the geese so that the lakes could be used. She said there are dog chasers who she has talked to who grew up in Malaga. She said they were used at Medford Lakes and are brain storming to get something in place. She said it has been a goal of hers and Mrs. Petsch-Wilson. Mayor Deegan said the County had to close Scotland Run because of the geese problem also.

Mr. Bruno: Absent

Ms. Vassallo: She said that she is looking at land use ordinances that do not have farmland use allowed and solar fields based on meeting minimal acreage. They are two uses that give a huge advantage to the taxpayers.

Mrs. Petsch-Wilson said she is proud of the .03 percent tax decrease. She thanked her fellow committee members also.

Mayor Deegan said he attended the library meeting last week and said they have a lot of children’s programs throughout the summer. His grandchildren attended some events that they really enjoyed. There are events for adults also. Tomorrow night, Incredibles 2 will be shown at the hockey rink. Bring a blanket or lawn chair.

Motion for Closed Session: Petsch-Wilson Second: Flaim
All in Favor: Unanimous

Motion to Adjourn to Closed Session:
Motion: Petsch-Wilson Second: Flaim
All in Favor: Unanimous

Motion to Close Closed Session and Reopen Regular Meeting:
Motion: Petsch-Wilson Second: Flaim
All in Favor: Unanimous
Motion to Adjourn:

Motion: Petsch-Wilson
Second: Flaim
Time: 9:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Freijomil, Municipal Clerk