

**CITY OF ESTELL MANOR
CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 23, 2011**

Pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act adequate notice of this meeting was sent to the Official Newspaper and was posted on the City bulletin board and website. Mayor Venezia called the meeting to order at approximately 7:30 pm.

Roll call: Present: Barbetto, Haesar, Teasenfitz, Wiker and Venezia
Solicitor Scerni was not in attendance.

Resolution No. 41-2011 A Resolution Providing for a Closed Session Not Open to the Public in Accordance with the Provisions of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12, Regarding a Potential Land Sale Transaction

Motions made by Mayor and Teasenfitz to close the public portion of the meeting for executive session.

Motions were made and executed to go back into open public portion of meeting. The Mayor then summarized what was discussed in closed session.

The Mayor made a motion to accept the State's offer of \$107,000 to purchase certain city owned land minus 6 lots listed due to private interest in purchase, seconded by Teasenfitz. Teasenfitz added all sales subject to the Solicitor's review and approval.

Roll call, all in favor.

The Mayor made a motion to contact the interested party regarding Block S.44, Lot 8-13 will be sold through ordinance at a minimum of \$10,000, seconded by Teasenfitz with the same stipulation for attorney review.

Roll call, all in favor.

Councilman Barbetto questioned who would attend the FEMA meeting on Friday, February 25, 2011. The Mayor stated it should be someone from Emergency Management or the City's CFO who has experience with FEMA. Barbetto stated that Kim Hodson, the City Clerk has attended the meetings for the last two storms. After a brief discussion it was decided that the City Clerk would attend the meeting.

BUDGET WORKSHOP

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The Mayor stated the City is late in passing the budget, but so are many other towns. He plans to introduce the budget at the March meeting but can always amend.

Jud Moore, CFO advised Council on the budget after meeting with the auditors. The Auditor is drafting a document after applying formulas to check if we are within the 2% CAP.

Councilman Haesar questioned the City's revenues. The Mayor stated how important the PILOT program is to the City and other small municipalities. Mayor stated for the record we can thank Senator VanDrew for supporting the PILOT program continuing.

The CFO stated revenues will be using \$200,000 of surplus; he proceeded to review line items. The total for revenues is \$540,251 not including tax figures.

Carol McAllister, the City's Auditor was present to answer any questions Council had regarding the budget. Some proposed changes were as follows:

- Reduction in Tax Collection S&W
- Reduction in Employee Health Insurance
- Add Money to Unemployment
- Move LOSAP outside the CAP
- Remove \$25,000 from Capital Improvement Fund
- Remove DPW equipment purchase funds

A brief discussion ensued regarding LOSAP and the 911 Dispatch service. The Mayor has concerns about removing funds from DPW equipment purchase line item.

Carol McAllister stated the City has several reserve accounts that could be transferred if needed as well as old budget accounts that could be cancelled and re-appropriated.

Councilman Haesar questioned the \$9,000 budgeted for road improvements, whether it should be taken out completely from the budget since we have \$42,000 in reserves. Councilman Teasenfitz stated it would be advisable to leave it alone rather than eliminate it and find out we may need to add to it later.

Councilwoman Wiker asked what council would have to do to present a zero percent tax increase. Mr. Moore stated we would have to decrease the budget by \$22,000 to get a zero increase.

The Mayor asked Ms. McAllister if Estell Manor was eligible for any transitional aid. She stated no, we did not fit the criteria. McAllister cautioned council about using all but \$50,000 of surplus because it won't replenish and next year there won't be any left to plug the gap.

Discussions ensued on the possibility of changing City Hall to a four day work week. Concerns were expressed regarding the amount of overtime paid out in 2010. For the record the overtime was paid out for public works mostly to cover the snow storms. The City Clerk stated for the record that Estell Manor did recoup some of the overtime expense through FEMA. Council, the CFO and the Auditor continued to go over several line items to discuss the possibility of more budget cuts.

The City Clerk stated the City's fee ordinance is terribly outdated and should be updated because the City is losing out on revenue we could be making.

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Mr. Barbetto stated he became aware this evening that the City Solicitor's payments are being held on the advice of the Mayor. He stated that the Solicitor is performing his job so he needs to be paid. The Mayor stated the Solicitor was not present tonight. Barbetto responded that he is not required to attend tonight's workshop meeting according to his contract.

Councilman Haesar stated that our Solicitor was instrumental in encouraging Council to add a workshop meeting for the purpose of getting debate and discussion out of the way and be able to get more business done at the regular meetings. He stated workshop meetings should truly be cordial discussions about our direction for this town. Instead it has turned into two business meetings a month.

The Mayor stated for the record he had a candidate for the Solicitor position who would attend all meetings of Council in addition to serve on the Governors Council and update our City's code book for \$20,000 but the rest of Council voted no. Councilwoman Wiker, Councilman Barbetto and Councilman Haesar all agreed that the current Solicitor should be paid for his services rendered regardless of difference in opinion on his quality of service.

Motion made and executed to go into Public Portion of meeting

Diane Pogue commented on development rights and infrastructure. Mrs. Pogue also commented on The Nature Conservatory purchasing property at the end of Third Ave.

Seeing no one else wanted to make public comment.

Motion made and executed to close Public Portion of meeting

The Mayor stated he wants a resolution the next meeting agenda to appoint a Solicitor for the City of Estell Manor even if we have to go back to square one and re-interview again. He stated he believes we truly need a new Solicitor.

Motions made and properly executed to adjourn meeting at approximately 10:28 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Accepted

Fern A. Brown, Acting City Clerk

Mayor Joseph Venezia