

**TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE - TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 25, 2014**

Mayor Thomas called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., Township Hall, Brookside, New Jersey.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Baumann Present (arrived at 7:00 p.m.)
Mr. Merkt Present
Mr. Strobel Present
Mr. Tolley Present (arrived at 6:45 p.m.)
Mayor Thomas Present

Also Present: John M. Mills, III, Esq., Township Attorney
Stephen Mountain, Township Administrator
Kathleen Potter, Township Clerk

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

ADEQUATE NOTICE: Adequate notice of this meeting of the Township Committee of the Township of Mendham was given as required by the Open Public Meetings Act as follows: Notice was given to the Daily Record, Observer Tribune and the Star Ledger on January 7, 2014. Notice was posted on the Bulletin Board in the Township Offices and Notice was filed with the Township Clerk.

RECAP ON POST EXECUTIVE SESSION ACTIONS

RESOLUTION 2014-57

AUTHORIZING DISCUSSION WITHOUT THE PRESENCE OF THE PUBLIC

Matters pertaining to:

Loss mitigation & litigation strategy

Mayor Thomas read the resolution by title and called for a motion. Mr. Strobel so moved. Mr. Baumann seconded. All members voted to approve.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Committee entered executive session at 6:35 p.m.

The Committee returned from executive session at 7:15 p.m.

RECAP ON POST EXECUTIVE SESSION ACTIONS

Mayor Thomas announced that there was no action taken.

PRESENTATIONS

Mosle Plan Follow-Up Report – Lori Dent & Clare Button
A report will be presented at the next meeting.

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2014 Budget Presentation – Steve Mountain & Tim Day

Mr. Mountain reviewed the following 2014 budget goals:

- Interactive/ transparent process
- Maintain service levels of all areas
- Stimulate growth in municipal fund balance for future years by stabilizing surplus
- Hold line on operational costs to minimize the impact on municipal tax levy
- Identify areas for further operational improvements
- Continue implementing long term strategy for municipal debt reduction.

The local tax climate was reviewed. The municipal portion makes up about 18% of resident taxes. The tax rate history from 2012 to 2013 was discussed. There was little of no increase over the four year period as the Committee made a concerted effort to keep the tax rate low. Mr. Mountain reviewed tax appeals and the reserve of uncollected taxes.

Budget restraints include a declining tax base, limited surplus regeneration, a zero increase in State Aid and declining local revenues. The impact of the winter storms was reviewed. Mr. Mountain discussed cost reduction initiatives, which include restructuring of full time positions, restructuring of health insurance and pension costs, continued exploration of shared services, and maintaining discretionary operating expenses at levels close to or below prior year.

Mr. Day summarized appropriations, revenue and capital improvements.

The result of the budget process is an increase of just under 1.8% resulting in a municipal tax rate of .358 per \$100.00 of assessed valuation. The impact on the average Township home worth \$910,918.00 will be \$160.51.

Mr. Tolley noted that there has been a history of overreliance on capital expenditures and one budget objective is to reduce dependency on debt. The Committee worked in an aggressive yet defensive mode. Mr. Merkt agreed that there is nothing more important to the long term welfare of the community than tackling the debt problem. He added that this is a responsible budget that reflects the best outcome under the current economic circumstances.

The meeting was opened to the public.

Norm Preston, West Main Street

Mr. Preston applauded the Committee for their effort to reduce debt service.

There being no further comments hearing persons present was closed.

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BUDGET INTRODUCTION

ORDINANCE 2-2014

EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS
& ESTABLISH A CAP BANK

Mayor Thomas read the ordinance by title and called for a motion. Mr. Tolley so moved. Mr. Strobel seconded. All members voted to approve. Second reading and public hearing is scheduled for April 14, 2014.

RESOLUTION 2014-58

INTRODUCTION OF THE 2014 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Mayor Thomas read the resolution by title and called for a motion. Mr. Strobel so moved. Mr. Merkt seconded. All members voted to approve. Budget public hearing is scheduled for April 29, 2014.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Thomas called for a motion to move the regular and executive session meeting minutes from March 10, 2014. Mr. Tolley so moved and Mr. Merkt seconded. All members voted to approve.

Mayor Thomas called for a motion to move the regular and executive session meeting minutes from March 12, 2014. Mr. Merkt so moved and Mr. Tolley seconded. All members voted to approve.

Mayor Thomas called for a motion to move the regular and executive session meeting minutes from March 18, 2014. Mr. Tolley so moved and Mr. Merkt seconded. All members voted to approve.

DISCUSSION

Mayor Thomas suggested hosting a public meeting between the Township and Mendham Borough to discuss future plans. The Committee agreed that it would be advantageous to speak freely and gain public opinion. Mr. Merkt recommended setting an agenda to guide discussion and Mayor Thomas agreed to discuss possible agenda items with Mayor Neil Henry.

Mayor Thomas suggested holding future meeting at Brookrace and at Ralston Firehouse. She stated that the food pantry is still low on supplies and accepting donations.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Strobel noted that the Environmental Resource Inventory was presented to the Planning Board. He encouraged residents to view the document on the Township website.

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HEARING PERSONS PRESENT

Diana Orban Brown, Ironia Road

Ms. Brown stated that she attended the School Board meeting last Tuesday. Although the Board was introducing the budget there were no other members of the public present. She emphasized the importance of community involvement, adding that the school election has been moved to November so there will be no vote on the budget.

Pat Zimmerman, East Main Street

Ms. Zimmerman noted that the Township Committee meetings and School Board meetings are held on the same night.

There being no further comments, hearing persons present was closed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Committee recognized local sports and academic teams for their accomplishments.

NEW BUSINESS

Ordinance Introduction

ORDINANCE 3-2014

BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR VARIOUS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS IN AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM, IN THE COUNTY OF MORRIS, NEW JERSEY, APPROPRIATING \$837,000 THEREFOR, INCLUDING \$22,000 RECEIVED FROM CONTRIBUTIONS, \$40,000 AS THE DOWN PAYMENT FROM THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND AND \$55,000 AVAILABLE FROM THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT OUTLAY FUND, AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$720,000 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE TOWNSHIP TO FINANCE PART OF THE COST THEREOF.

Mayor Thomas read the ordinance by title and called for a motion. Mr. Merkt so moved. Mr. Strobel seconded. All members voted to approve, except Mr. Tolley abstained. Second reading and public hearing is scheduled for April 14, 2014.

ORDINANCE 4-2014

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM IN THE COUNTY OF MORRIS AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY AMENDING CHAPTER 160 "FEES"

Mayor Thomas read the ordinance by title and called for a motion. Mr. Strobel so moved. Mr. Tolley seconded. All members voted to approve. Second reading and public hearing is scheduled for April 14, 2014.

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Resolutions

RESOLUTION 2014-59

AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF BILLS

Mayor Thomas read the resolution by title and called for a motion. Mr. Tolley so moved. Mr. Merkt seconded. All members voted to approve.

RESOLUTION 2014-60

**APPOINTING KENNETH O'BRIEN TO SERVE AS THE
RECYCLING COORDINATOR FOR MENDHAM TOWNSHIP**

Mayor Thomas read the resolution by title and called for a motion. Mr. Merkt so moved. Mr. Strobel seconded. All members voted to approve.

RESOLUTION 2014-61

AUTHORIZING DISCUSSION WITHOUT THE PRESENCE OF THE PUBLIC

Matters pertaining to:

Litigation – Tax Appeal Settlement

Personnel – Administration

Contract – Public Works Performance Measurement Project

Mayor Thomas read the resolution by title and called for a motion. Mr. Merkt so moved. Mr. Strobel seconded. All members voted to approve.

DISCUSSION

Mr. Mountain announced that this was his last meeting with the Committee. He thanked the Township Committee who first gave him the opportunity at Mendham Township for their initial support to gain needed experience over the years. He also thanked the current governing body for their continued support, as well as the staff, professionals, and the volunteers.

Each Committee member thanked Mr. Mountain for his time and effort, and congratulated him on his new position.

HEARING PERSONS PRESENT

Michael Merritt, Mountainside Road

Mr. Merritt echoed the sentiments of the Committee, adding that Mr. Mountain was a strong advocate for openness and transparency.

Ross Johnson, MTPD

On behalf of the Police Department, Lieutenant Johnson thanked Mr. Mountain for his support and wished him luck.

Patricia Zimmerman, West Main Street

Ms. Zimmerman thanked Mr. Mountain for always helping with her volunteer efforts.

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Norm Preston, West Main Street

Mr. Preston stated that it has always been easy to work with Mr. Mountain. The recycling coordinator position was reviewed.

Diana Orban Brown, Ironia Road

Ms. Brown noted that, while people think the administrator has a desk job, Mr. Mountain was often out in the field completing necessary work.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Committee entered executive session at 9:15 p.m.

The Committee returned from executive session at 9:40 p.m.

RESOLUTION 2014-62

APPROVING SETTLEMENTS OF REAL PROPERTY TAX APPEALS

Mayor Thomas read the resolution by title and called for a motion. Mr. Merkt so moved. Mr. Strobel seconded. All members voted to approve.

RESOLUTION 2014-63

**AUTHORIZING ACCEPTANCE OF A CONTRACT WITH THE CANNING
GROUP, LLC TO PROVIDE SERVICES FOR AN INTERIM ADMINISTRATOR**

Mayor Thomas read the resolution by title and called for a motion. Mr. Strobel so moved. Mr. Merkt seconded. All members voted to approve.

ADJOURN

Upon a motion made and seconded the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Potter, Township Clerk