

TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE - TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 8, 2013

Mayor Merkt called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Township Hall, Brookside, New Jersey.

ROLL CALL:	Mr. Baumann	Present
	Mr. Strobel	Present
	Mrs. Thomas	Present
	Mr. Tolley	Present
	Mayor Merkt	Present

Also Present: John M. Mills, III, Esq., Township Attorney
Stephen Mountain, Township Administrator
Kathleen Potter, Township Clerk
Timothy Day, Chief Financial Officer

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ADEQUATE NOTICE: Mrs. Potter read the following statement: 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 Star Ledger, Observer Tribune and the Daily Record on January 3, 2013; 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

Mayor Merkt gave a recap of the Committee's post executive session action, which included the adoption of a resolution authorizing tax appeal settlements.

PROCLAMATION – Recognizing Mendham High School Mock Trial Team

Mayor Merkt presented the proclamation to High School Superintendent Mackey Pendergrast.

PRESENTATIONS

Donated Map – Vogel family

The Vogel family was not present at this meeting to present the map.

West Morris Regional High School District Budget

Superintendent Mackey Pendergrast reviewed the high school's standardized test scores. He stated that in 2011 and 2012 Mendham High School was ranked number one in reading and writing scores, adding that five years ago the school did not even appear in the top five. Mr. Pendergrast acknowledged that, while math scores have also increased, there is room for improvement.

Mr. Pendergrast reviewed the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. He acknowledged the gap between the achievements of IB students and achievements of students at the level below IB. He reviewed the percentage of graduates accepted into competitive colleges when in the IB program

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versus other high school programs. The New Jersey Performance Report now compares peer groups. The percentage of students scoring above 1550 at MHS is 75% while the peer average is 67%. Next year the report will also include IB in the metric. Mr. Pendergrast compared MHS with New Providence High School, which ranked number one in New Jersey Monthly.

Mr. Pendergrast reviewed recent accomplishments, which included redesigning the administrative structure, curriculum, technology infrastructure, and the supervision and evaluation system. Moving forward, Mr. Pendergrast hoped for community support. He stated that the school holds tremendous potential and value to the community.

Board of Education member Jacke Schram presented the financial aspects of the budget, including budget considerations, enrollment trends and sources of revenue. The tax impact will be an increase of \$62.50 per \$500,000.00 of assessed value.

There was discussion regarding employee health benefits. Mrs. Thomas questioned advances in special education. Mr. Pendergrast stated that Mendham reached the targeted HSPA goals last year for special education students. He reviewed the programs currently offered.

The meeting was opened to hearing persons present

Cecilia Donato, Ironia Road

Ms. Donato questioned if the school was researching alternative teaching methods, such as ICON academy. Mr. Pendergrast stated that the ultimate goal is student access to the internet and online tools, such as a personal management system. He added that new technology, and ways to fund the technology, is always being researched.

Peter Dumovic, 3 Shelton Road

Mr. Dumovic stated that he was heartened by the presentation and the direction the school is headed. He encouraged officials to often discuss and make residents aware of the accomplishments of the high school.

Diana Brown, Ironia Road

It was confirmed all employees contribute to their health benefits.

Brian Cavanaugh, Mendham Borough

It was clarified that the Board of Education cannot change the funding formula. Mr. Cavanaugh questioned the difference in teacher expenditures at West Morris Central versus Mendham. Mr. Pendergrast explained that the difference is caused because the West Morris Central staff has more years' experience per teacher than Mendham and is therefore paid more. Ms. Schram added that transportation costs are also higher at West Morris Central due to geography and location of the schools.

Mr. Cavanaugh asked if constrained resources stunted better educational quality. Mr. Pendergrast stated that there are currently no obstacles stopping the school from being the best in the country, adding that quality education comes from proper hiring and management.

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

Mr. Strobel thanked the Board for correcting the perception problem caused by the IB program not being acknowledged by New Jersey Monthly rankings. He commended Mr. Pendergrast for continuously working to improve all aspects of the district. He hoped that all members of the Board and the community can join in the effort to deliver value and results.

Mr. Baumann supported the school's focus on quality education. Mrs. Thomas encouraged the Board not to forget the average child. Mr. Pendergrast stated that active steps toward improvement will be taken this year.

Mayor Merkt stated that the Committee supports only efforts to enhance education.

2013 Municipal Budget

Mr. Mountain reviewed budget goals as follows:

- Hold operational costs to minimize impact on municipal tax levy
- Maintain service levels
- Implement long term strategy for reducing municipal debt
- Identify potential areas for operational improvements and/or additional costs savings/revenue
- Stimulate growth in municipal fund balance

Budget constraints and cost reduction initiatives were reviewed. Mr. Mountain emphasized that the Township continues to restructure municipal operation to reduce expenses without sacrificing services.

Chief Financial Officer Tim Day reviewed appropriations versus revenue, as well as the long term plan to reduce capital debt and open space debt.

Mr. Mountain stated that the budget will have a \$.06 increase on the municipal tax rate. The impact on the average home valued at \$912,202.00 will be \$54.55.

Mr. Strobel noted savings realized in salary and wages, and complimented the service level in town hall. Mr. Baumann questioned the biggest driver of the Township's debt and Mr. Mountain stated that the acquisition of Pitney Farm and construction of the emergency services building were two large expenditures that drove up the debt.

Mr. Tolley stated that it was a difficult budget and the Township will continue to see challenges in the next couple of years.

The meeting was opened to hearing person present.

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Michael Merritt, 73 Mountainside Road

Mr. Merritt noted the tremendous time and effort put in by the Township OEM during and after the storms. He stated that the planned replacement of Brookside Fire Company Truck #5 was necessary since the vehicle was becoming unsafe.

Peter Dumovic, 3 Shelton Road

As a member of the Pitney Farm Transition Committee, he suggested setting expectations regarding available funding for each committee and board.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Merkt called for a motion to move the regular meeting minutes from April 1, 2013. Mr. Tolley so moved. Mrs. Thomas seconded. All members voted to approve.

Mayor Merkt called for a motion to move the executive session meeting minutes from April 1, 2013. Mrs. Thomas so moved. Mr. Strobel seconded. All members voted to approve.

DISCUSSION

Review of Planning Board Comments of Proposed Land-Use Ordinances

- Sign Ordinance
- Building Height Ordinance

This discussion was tabled to the April 23, 2013 meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Baumann encouraged residents to visit the Township website for recreation events.

HEARING PERSONS PRESENT

Cecelia Donato, Ironia Road

Ms. Donato promoted the Fourth of July Parade, which will have a "Brookside is Jersey Strong" theme.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Resolutions

RESOLUTION 2013-55

AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF BILLS

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

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**RESOLUTION 2013-56
REFUND TAX OVERPAYMENT**

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

**RESOLUTION 2013-57
PLACING NON-BINDING REFERENDUM QUESTION ON
THE NOVEMBER GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT**

Mayor Merkt read the resolution by title and called for a motion. Mrs. Thomas so moved. Mr. Baumann seconded. Mayor Merkt wished to delete the reference to tax reduction. Mr. Strobel wished to include that funds will be expended, if necessary.

Mrs. Thomas amended her motion to include the changes and Mr. Baumann seconded.

Mrs. Thomas stated that there should be a funding cap noted if funds are being addressed. Mr. Tolley stated that the financial component does not need to be stated and that the question should be kept simple.

Mrs. Thomas amended her motion to include the removal of the tax reference, but not to include reference to the possible expenditure of funds. Mr. Baumann seconded. All members voted to approve.

**RESOLUTION 2013-58
ESTABLISHING SALARY – BROOKSIDE BEACH STAFF**

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

**RESOLUTION 2013-59
APPOINT RICHARD CABRI PERMANENT
MEMBER OF DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

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

DISCUSSION

Mrs. Thomas stated that, in light of recent events, it is important to move forward with the introduction of the land disturbance ordinance.

HEARING PERSONS PRESENT

Norm Preston, West Main Street

There was clarification regarding a fee paid to Island Tech Services.

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Peter Dumovic, 3 Shelton Road

Mr. Dumovic applauded the Committee for their vision to place a referendum on the ballot. He questioned the cost to do so and Mr. Mountain stated that there is no cost associated with placing a question on the November ballot.

Mr. Dumovic questioned the percentage of affirmative votes needed in order to move forward with discussions with Mendham Borough. Mayor Merkt stated that the Committee is currently just looking for a consensus.

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

ADJOURN

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

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Potter, Township Clerk