

TOWNSHIP OF WASHINGTON
BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY
SPECIAL MEETING-BUDGET
Monday, May 11, 2020 – 7:30 P.M.

**☞PLEASE NOTE THIS IS A VIRTUAL MEETING
WITH REMOTE PUBLIC COMMENT☞
DUE TO CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

CALL TO ORDER: Council President Feeney

STATEMENT:

Welcome to the Special Public Meeting of May 11, 2020 of the Township of Washington Township Council. Adequate notice of the meeting was given in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act by the Township Clerk to at least two (2) newspapers on May 5, 2020, and this notice has been posted on the Township Bulletin Board and on the Township Web Site.

Proper notice having been given; the Township Clerk is directed to include this statement in the minutes of this meeting.

The purpose of this meeting is to conduct the following business and any other items that may be on the agenda.

2020 Budget Meeting

Formal Action may or may not be taken at this meeting.

SALUTE TO FLAG: Council President Feeney

ROLL CALL: Via Conference Call

Councilmen Cascio, Cumming, DeSena, Councilwoman Morgan, Council President Feeney. Let the record reflect also participating via conference call Robert Tovo, Administrator and Township Clerk Witkowski. Please note not in attendance/participating, Mayor Peter Calamari.

Council President Feeney stated based on the information just received it is in the best interest of the Council to push the LVH vote until Monday, May 18th and also introduction of the budget, she stated information was received today, she feels it is in the best interest if everyone has time to review it, then we can discuss it on Monday. Councilman Cascio asked what information was lacking? Council President Feeney replied the amount of the surplus and also the LVH resolutions

for tonight. Councilman Cascio asked what is the amount of the surplus? Council President Feeney replied 1.6. Councilman Cascio asked that is what we are going to have in the reserve? Council President Feeney replied no, the reserve is over four-million-dollars. Councilman Cascio asked how did the surplus go from 1.6 to 1.5? Council President Feeney replied she doesn't have that answer, there should be a response from Administrator Tovo, but again she thinks the vote should be pushed until Monday, so if everyone can review it and if they have any additional questions those questions can be answered.

Councilwoman Morgan stated that is fine with her. Councilman DeSena asked who authorized LVH to increase this? Council President Feeney replied she can get that by Monday, if not sooner. Councilman Cascio stated he doesn't recall the Council making that request. Council President Feeney stated she doesn't have all the answers, she is trying to get the answers so everyone has the right information for Monday. Councilman Cascio stated the question is who authorized this to approve that budget line, surplus, only Council can change that number. Councilwoman Morgan asked was it changed or was it a recommendation? Council President Feeney replied it was a recommendation, the number was 1.45 on the revenue page from day one, so let us be clear, the change is 1.5 to 1.6, we need to find out who made the recommendation to LVH, or did LVH make that recommendation, we need to get that answer, Administrator Tovo can you work on that. Councilman Cascio asked if Administrator Tovo made that change? Administrator Tovo replied it is not a yes or no answer. Councilman Cascio asked did Administrator Tovo authorize that change, it is a very simple question, he would like an answer? (inaudible) Council President Feeney asked Councilman Cascio to please let Administrator Tovo respond. Administrator Tovo replied he and the Mayor asked LVH to run three different scenarios 1.5, 1.6, and 1.7 in an effort to bring it more in line with the school increase, the 1.6 number did in fact accomplish that. Council President Feeney stated LVH was asked to review, Administrator Tovo is going with the 1.6 recommendation made by LVH to keep it more in line with the school, is that correct? Administrator Tovo replied correct. Councilman DeSena asked when was LVH elected to this Council? Councilman Cascio stated LVH doesn't have a say in the budget, nor does the Administration, this is a Council decision. Councilman DeSena stated Council was never showed the 1.6 or 1.7. Council President Feeney stated Administrator Tovo is now saying that LVH was asked to run the three different scenarios, the email received from LVH showed that that is the scenario. Councilwoman Morgan asked is the position of Councilmen Cascio and DeSena that although LVH is the advisor, they should not have had any input into the budget at all? Councilman DeSena asked Councilwoman Morgan when she was told of the input prior to tonight, making the change from 1.5 to 1.6, she responded that we just received presenting for tonight. Councilman DeSena stated that this document was presented as a final document changing to 1.6 million, delivered on Thursday, and he questioned when it was discussed (inaudible conversations) Township Clerk Witkowski

stated everyone is mumbling tonight, she doesn't understand why, maybe Council members are on speaker phones, but she normally doesn't have a problem, but tonight she is having a problem, she can hardly understand what is being said. Councilman DeSena stated he and Councilman Cascio are asking when were all of these different alternatives presented to Council, which they were not, that is the question, he does agree with them if they want to save the tax impact, no one is denying that, but the problem is LVH are not the elected officials, we are, these are things Council should have discussed before we were presented with a final document with the changes. Councilman Cascio stated these are final documents. Councilwoman Morgan stated we can go back and ask for changes, we can go back to the table and state we don't agree with this, it wasn't on there, correct? Councilman DeSena stated that is what he and Councilman Cascio are doing. Councilwoman Morgan stated it doesn't have to be this all-out war, Councilman DeSena, the message is getting lost in the delivery. Councilman DeSena stated Council was given a final packet, with huge change in it without Council's knowledge. (inaudible conversation) Council Cumming questioned where the document is, Councilman DeSena stated these are the final documents, large municipal data sheets, for introduction of the 2020 budget for tonight, we are going to table it until we get the answers, the question is who gave authorization to LVH the authorization to change the Council's, agree with Council President Feeney's.. (inaudible) for the 1.6 or 1.7. Councilwoman Morgan stated she is not disagreeing, the Council President is not pushing this because she also is not 100% clear on it, it is the approach and the message that Councilmen DeSena and Cascio jumped all over is where it gets lost, it is not something we agreed on, approved or had prior knowledge of, we can agree with that, you guys have to stop fighting so much, we are not going to get anything done, do what is right, not be so horrible to one another, this is such a divided group. Councilman Cascio stated we have the right to ask questions, get answers and not be cut off or put off, the questions are simple, not difficult, he looks at some of these documents they are still all over the place, it is not the way it should be, that is why he has an issue, he has been doing this for a long time, he is not new to the game. Councilwoman Morgan stated there is value to that, but it gets lost in the delivery. Councilman Cascio stated he is sorry she doesn't like the delivery. Council President Feeney stated we will open the Public Discussion and the best interest is to move the vote for the budget and LVH until Monday.

PRESENTATION: Video Conferencing Update

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: None

GENERAL PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Council President Feeney advised there is a five-minute-time limit.

****TO PARTICIPATE IN THE GENERAL PUBLIC DISCUSSION PORTION OF THE MEETING, PLEASE DIAL IN ON 201-664-4659. YOU WILL BE ASKED TO STATE YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS FOR THE RECORD, AND WE ASK THAT ONLY ONE PERSON SPEAK AT A TIME. PLEASE NOTE THAT AT THE END OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC DISCUSSION, NO MORE CALLS WILL BE ACCEPTED****

A motion was made by Councilman Cascio, seconded by Councilman Cumming, to open the general public discussion.

Ayes: Councilmen Cascio, Cumming, DeSena, Councilwoman Morgan, Council President Feeney.

Nays: None.

Council President Feeney asked Township Clerk Witkowski to take notes during the Public Discussion, since she is having a hard time with the sound.

Michael Ullman, 2 Clark Avenue – Mr. Ullman asked where was the use of the surplus discussed previously, where we were at the 1.5, and the alternates of 1.6 and 1.7 were requested, he would like to go back and listen to familiarize himself with the discussions? (As per her request, Township Clerk Witkowski repeated Mr. Ullmans question to Council President Feeney). Council President Feeney replied she believes this was not discussed earlier, it will be discussed Monday, May 18th. Mr. Ullman asked what other auditor firms were considered, was there a panel of council or a committee who performed the interview. Since Lerch, Vinci are performing advisory, we are introducing quite a bit of conflict with them providing advisory and performing their audit services, in looking at the January agreement between Lerch, Vinci and Township, which was executed by Mayor Calamari. He is not following, we have an auditor Lou Mai, and advisor, Lerch, Vinci, now we want Lerch, Vinci to be our auditor, he has not seen an appointment of advisor, he is confused on how this is moving forward, if they are advising the Council on budget issues, if they are performing reconciliation, perform review and reconciliations of the General Ledger, review and reconcile Tax Collector, bank rec, invoices from prior period, assuming leg work is continuing, we are appointing them as our auditor, where are we obviating the conflict of interest between the advisory, consulting and auditing, is an advisory and consulting going to be appointed by the Mayor. Council President Feeney stated she only heard about half of the comment. Township Clerk Witkowski stated she doesn't understand what is going on tonight with the sound. Mr. Ullman stated with apologies to Township Clerk Witkowski, he is not saying she is the reason, but how are we having a meeting if no one can understand each other, public and Council cannot be heard, it is actually ridiculous, he doubts this complies with the Open Public Meetings Act because no one can hear a thing. Council President Feeney stated it does meet the Open Public Meetings Act, we are looking into a different video platform, however (inaudible) it is not

saying this should not be used, that's been the recommendation from the Administration and the IT Department that this can be used for the meetings, we can look into other platforms such as Zoom, but due to the recent security issues, it was recommended not to use Zoom, she will have some further information on Monday for another platform. Township Clerk Witkowski requested Council President Feeney to go back on a landline. Mr. Ullman stated he doesn't believe this meets Open Public Meetings Act. Township Clerk Witkowski stated unfortunately tonight it is not working as it has been working, yes, we have glitches now and again, it is a secure line Council can speak on, it is going right into our recording, which is going right into our server, so in that respect we do need it, unfortunately tonight it is garbled. Mr. Ullman stated he understands, but does it meet the requirements of an Open Public Meeting. Council President Feeney stated she is sorry, Mr. Ullman's five minutes are up, she does want to be fair if anyone else is waiting on the line.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Morgan, seconded by Councilman Cumming, to close the general public discussion.

Ayes: Councilmen Cascio, Cumming, DeSena, Councilwoman Morgan, Council President Feeney.

Nays: None.

Council President Feeney stated she would like to postpone the remainder of the meeting to May 18th. Councilwoman Morgan stated that is fine. Township Clerk Witkowski asked if everyone received the proposal via email this afternoon? Council members replied yes. Council President Feeney stated she did not receive a proposal from Lou Mai. Township Clerk Witkowski stated she will forward the 2020 proposal she received from Lou Mai to Council, Administrator Tovo, Mayor Calamari and Attorney Poller. Councilman Cumming asked are we postponing the ordinance, as well as the two resolutions until next Monday. Township Clerk Witkowski replied yes, she asks Council look over emails which were sent out with additional information on the budget. Council President Feeney asked she would like to push the introduction of the budget until May 18th so everyone has enough time to put their questions forward, and review information received by email late today, we should be fine with the introduction date of Monday, May 18th, which is a regular meeting, but Township Clerk Witkowski will call to make sure, Council President Feeney did discuss it before the meeting started to make sure it was not a problem.

Councilman DeSena stated can someone ask LVH discussions on drainage projects in our budget, we voted it down, on private property, in the Capital Budget they show unused appropriations being bonded for drainage projects, he would like to understand that. Councilman Cumming would like to understand as well. Council President Feeney asked if Administrator Tovo can get that information before Thursday. Administrator Tovo replied he can but did not recall this being voted down. Councilwoman Morgan stated we are speaking of

issues in the street, not private property. Councilman Cumming stated Council was to get an engineering report. Administrator Tovo stated he received it on Friday, he will send it out tomorrow. Council President Feeney stated that will assist with the answers, my notes on that line item state awaiting additional information, engineering reports. Councilman DeSena stated he has zero, if this is not figured by tonight, the budget could not have been introduced tonight, we did take a vote. Township Clerk Witkowski stated she will check her notes, she doesn't have them with her tonight. Councilman DeSena stated we had a final budget; we cannot get that information at 4:45 on the same day. Council President Feeney stated the engineering reports will be forwarded tomorrow. Councilman Cascio asked we have two budgets, one with the number one without, this budget was going to be introduced, we haven't discussed it, how can we put forward the budget. Council President Feeney stated she doesn't have the answers from LVH, that is why she asked Township Clerk to reach out for another extension, she doesn't have an answer of what is going to happen until she has the other information. Councilman DeSena asked will Council also be provided with the 1.6 and 1.7 analysis of the surplus. Council President Feeney asked if Administrator Tovo can forward that to Council? Administrator Tovo replied yes, he can. Councilman DeSena stated since Administrator Tovo already has that, it can be forwarded quickly, correct? Administrator Tovo replied yes. Council President Feeney stated her recommendation, if anyone has any questions or concerns on the documents, please email them by Thursday, so she can take a look and see exactly where we stand for Monday, if additional time is needed in order to introduce the budget, is everyone okay with that? Councilman Cascio stated we are going to need one more meeting after next Monday. Council President Feeney stated let us see what the questions are. Councilman Cascio stated let's say we all have a question, you can't do a consensus without having a public meeting, there needs to be another meeting after Monday, there are open line items. Council President Feeney asked if you can send a list of the open line items outside of the surplus that would be great, Administrator Tovo has the surplus, additional questions please send them in writing so there is nothing misconstrued or misunderstood, so we can move quickly to get this closed. Councilman DeSena stated he agrees with Councilman Cascio, it cannot be introduced if drainage issue... Council President Feeney stated we keep on rehashing the same statements a hundred times, wouldn't it be proactive and productive to get the questions in writing, then have a final list, know exactly where we stand. Councilman DeSena stated all he is saying he agrees with Councilman Cascio, the budget cannot be introduced on Monday night if we all agree that the drainage issues are on private property that number has to come out, so the budget percentage would have to change. Council President Feeney stated she didn't disagree with anyone, all she asking is everyone submit their questions, we will get the engineering report, if you feel it should come out or stay in, that is all she is saying. Council now has the information in front of them, submit any questions see where we stand, let us be proactive, productive, put the questions in writing get them out to

Administrator Tovo, Mayor Calamari, if we have more questions, need more information, if we have our questions down, we will not have this back and forth, we will have our questions answered, this is how we are going to get this closed. Councilman DeSena stated we need to discuss it; we need a budget extension. Council President Feeney stated no one said it would not be discussed, we will have the answers to the questions, she didn't say the budget was going to be adopted on Monday. Councilwoman Morgan stated she is not saying we are going to adopt it on Monday, she is saying have all of your questions, so they can be discussed at the next meeting. Councilman DeSena stated we need a budget extension because we are not going to make Monday. Council President Feeney stated she already has discussed this with the Township Clerk about calling, she asked Township Clerk Witkowski to confirm that she had this discussion with her. Township Clerk Witkowski replied yes, we did speak about an extension, she stated if it doesn't get introduced tonight, she needs to call, she will have the conversation with the DCA, they will ask why, she will reply because we need to. Councilwoman Morgan stated Council has more questions. Council President Feeney asked again, if everyone would submit their questions so we will have the answers to discuss further, that is the whole point of what she is saying if we have the questions/answers in writing, Council is aware of those answers there will not be any confusion, misunderstanding and nothing will be misconstrued. Councilwoman Morgan stated that works for her. Councilman Cumming stated that is good, as long as we get the information before 4:45 p.m. on meeting night. Council President Feeney stated Administrator Tovo will have the information to Council by Thursday, that is why if Council can get their questions out tomorrow, we can have the answers by Thursday, that would be great, please submit them to the Township Clerk, she will forward the questions to Council and Administrator Tovo. Councilman Cumming stated as soon as he gets the description of the drainage project, he will formulate the questions. Council President Feeney asked is everyone clear on what is needed. Councilman DeSena stated yes, an extension from the State. Councilman Cumming stated he believes that is correct. Council President Feeney asked Council to please submit their questions, if questions are not received, we will not be able to move forward, so please make sure if Council has any questions, they are submitted so answers can be received by Thursday.

ORDINANCES

Adoption, 2nd Reading: None.

Introduction, 1st Reading: *TABLED, Monday, May 18th.*

Ordinance No. 20-06

CALENDAR YEAR 2020 ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK (N.J.S.A. 40A-4-45.14)

COUNCIL APPOINTMENT: *TABLED, Monday, May 18th.*

Resolution No. 20-215 Award of Contract to Gary J. Vinci of Lerch, Vinci & Higgins as the Township Auditor

BUDGET RESOLUTION: *TABLED*

Resolution No. 20-216 Introduction of 2020 Township Budget

A motion was made by Council President Feeney, seconded by Councilman DeSena to adjourn.

Ayes: Councilmen Cascio, Cumming, DeSena, Councilwoman Morgan,
 Council President Feeney.

Nays: None.

Time noted: 8:18 p.m.

/s/ Susan Witkowski
Township Clerk

/s/ Arthur Cumming
Council Vice-President

Approved: August 17, 2020