

**COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING
430 WESTFIELD AVE., CLARK, NJ**

August 2, 2021

7:45 pm

ROLL CALL:

Present: Council Members Albanese, Mazzarella, O'Connor, Smith, Toal, Hund

Absent: Minniti

Also Present: Salvatore Bonaccorso, Mayor; James F. Ulrich, Business Administrator; Richard Huxford, Township Attorney; Edith L. Merkel, Township Clerk

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG: MOMENT OF SILENCE

Dispensed

This meeting is in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act (Chapter 231, P.L.1975) as adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by mailing the Annual Schedule of meetings to the Star Ledger, Union County Local Source, and TAP into Clark, by posting such Annual Meeting Schedule on the bulletin board in Town Hall reserved for such announcements, as well as the Official Website of the Township, and the proper filing of said Notice.

RESOLUTIONS:

1. Authorizing the Mayor and/or Business Administrator to enter into a five (5) year contract from January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2026 for Animal Control Services with Associated Humane Societies, Inc. (NJSA 40:48-5.1)

Discussion: None

Council President Hund asked for a mover and second on this Resolution

Motion: O'Connor Second: Smith

2. Authorizing the Business Administrator and Clerk to execute a Shared Services Agreement with the Clark Board of Education for the planning and construction of the Arthur L. Johnson High School Athletic Field Improvements

Discussion: None

Council President Hund asked for a mover and second on this Resolution

Motion: Smith Second: O'Connor

3. Award of Contract for the Collection and Disposal of Leaves – Bid Opening August 3rd 10 am

Discussion: None

Council President Hund asked for a mover and second on this Resolution

Motion: Mazzarella Second: O'Connor

4. Authorizing the Mayor to sign an agreement with Union County for Leaf Composting at a rate of \$4.00 per cubic yard loose or \$6.00 per cubic yard compacted

Discussion:

Township Clerk: You see a blank (area) on there (the resolution) for now. We have a “not to exceed” number, until the bids come in on the leaves, to see where we are going. Jim (Ulrich) and I have had a number of discussions.

Council President Hund asked for a mover and second on this Resolution

Motion: Mazzarella Second: O’Connor

5. Appointing Thomas Ronan as a member of the Clark Volunteer Fire Department

Discussion: None

Council President Hund asked for a mover and second on this Resolution

Motion: O’Connor Second: Smith

Township Clerk: If I may, I have two more potential resolutions to add. We are also opening bids tomorrow for the Capital Road Project and the NJDOT Road Project. They may be awarded depending on how they come in on the 16th as well.

Motion: Mazzarella Second: O’Connor (on both projects)

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Each person addressing the Council shall first give his/her name and address to the Clerk. All remarks shall be addressed to the Council as a body and shall not exceed 10 minutes in duration.

Delia Collins, 72 Georgia Street: Good evening. I am here to talk about resolution #1, regarding Associated Humane becoming Clark’s animal control. I know that you are aware of my feelings about Associated Humane. I wanted to let you know that as of November 13, 2020, I know that it is almost a year ago, Associated Humane let two animals die with neglect. It was a Star Ledger report. The State of New Jersey did not go in. They had previously gone in back in 2017, when they brought charges against Roseann Trezza, who was the president of the shelter. She had a plea agreement and she is no longer with the Association. Now, I understand that they did not have to put a bid in because of N.J.S.A.40:48-(inaudible) which says, “within 5 years a bid does not have to be sent into the town.” Prior to this we had another contract with them for 5 years. The original contract was for one year, I think that it was either 2016 or 2017, we had a no bid contract with them for 5 years. I was wondering how many years can those five years go on? I mean is that contract the same contract that they gave us in 2015? 2016? Is it the same contract? Did you have to negotiate anything with them?

Mr. Ulrich: The contract term wise is the exact same. There was an increase; I believe that was a thousand dollars a year. Yes, it was a thousand dollars a year we negotiated with them. I have to bring up the old contract.

Delia Collins: Okay. Do you know that the City of Plainfield has pulled out, and the Township of Hillside has pulled out? Plainfield has gone to Plainfield Humane and Hillside has gone to Saint Hubert’s in Madison.

So, there is no change in the contract in the past 5 years?

Mr. Ulrich: Correct.

Delia Collins: Okay. They changed their policies on certain things, they brought things in... Have you ever been there?

Mr. Ulrich: No.

Delia Collins: Take a ride one day, go inside and see what it is like, they have animals in the basement that never see the daylight. These are not city dogs, they handle Linden, they handle Rahway, they handle Winfield Park, they handle Roselle and Carteret. So, I hope someday they will open it up to a bid so you can see what other towns offer. I hate to say that cost should be a factor. In Plainfield they had such a problem that they were not letting people retrieve their own dogs because people did not have a way to get to Newark, they did not have the money to get their dogs back, people started GoFundMe pages for these people that had their own dogs taken into Newark and they couldn't get there to retrieve them. So, people offered them rides and GoFundMe money to get their dogs out of there. I would appreciate it if you have a Sunday afternoon, you can go to Newark on a Sunday, and you can see how this place operates. I know that you won't, but I am just giving you, my opinion. I have friends that have worked on getting that place shut down, the state has been in there and they tried to shut them down. It is a hell hole, and I want to put it on record. I know that your (the mayor) dog got loose last year, many of you own pets and they wind up in Newark...

Councilman O'Connor: Delia, I know how you feel but I think our township does a really, really good job of getting dogs to the people.

Delia Collins: Oh, the police, they do, oh yeah. I understand that and I have a good rapport with them and the dispatch.

Councilman O'Connor: I know that you do a lot of work.

Delia Collins: I have no problem with the Clark Police Department or anyone in Clark. I am just saying that unfortunately, if an animal should wind up down there... Say that you are on vacation, there have been plenty of animals that have been lost by pet sitters (Councilman O'Connor: Unfortunately, you are right.) this time of year you have lawn guys that come in and forgets to lock the gates, especially that we have people that are out doing the revaluations on our homes, they are going in people's backyards. Who knows? I mean nothing has happened. I give kudos to the Clark Police and the dispatch, and we have the "Union County Lost Pets" (site) that is on it right away. So, that is just my opinion.

Another thing that I brought up at one of the meetings was that when we had this original contract, back before this one coming up, that was the time that they were brought up with charges, from the Department of Health, and I had asked the attorney at the time, and I don't think it was you (Richard Huxford), if they violate state law and they are brought up on charges and they are convicted can we as a township pull our contract from them?

Richard Huxford: Ms. Collins it was not me, it was Mr. Dugan or Mr. Triarsi. I will check with Mr. Dugan and I will have an answer for you at the next meeting.

Delia Collins: I never really got a true answer regarding them violating state law, and were brought up on charges.

Mayor Bonaccorso: (Inaudible) There is nothing wrong with what you are saying at all. If they violate state law, maybe the State of New Jersey should close them down.

Delia Collins: They have tried.

Mayor Bonaccorso: If you or I did something to violate the state law they would be down our throats so quick that you wouldn't know what hit you. But it seems like that because it is the City of Newark and the political ramifications that come with it, they all know how to keep an arm's length away. There are a lot of agencies that get hit with violations for different reasons in different areas, not just animals, that I am talking about. In the state, if it is a violation, they have to come in and correct it, or they can be subject to fines and closures. I mean even our old jails at the police department were out of compliance with the state law. The fact is we could never fix them, we would have to do what we did and build a new building. So, the state would fail them every year and we would continue to use them every year. Not necessarily meaning that they are inoperable, but what they are telling me is that they need to be improved when we go and build another building, like we did, we had to make changes.

Delia Collins: I understand. I haven't been in this (building) in a long time.

Mayor Bonaccorso: I know. I respect you because I know you know your stuff about animals and I appreciate that.

Delia Collins: Again, I give kudos to the Clark Police because they send me notices.

Mayor Bonaccorso: We had very little interaction for a year but we had to have somebody so...

Delia Collins: Sadly, there are not that many out there because it becomes a big political issue, it becomes an OPRA issue, and it becomes a demonstration issue.

Mayor Bonaccorso: They had a (inaudible) person a couple of weeks ago and we asked that question. Why doesn't the county open up any animal rescue? They just did away with the jail in Elizabeth, they seem to be involved with everything, and that would be something that...

Delia Collins: I know. I brought that up at a Freeholders meeting one night, just saying that they got rid of the Juvenile Detention Center in Linden, and that went right over their heads.

Mayor Bonaccorso: That is something that we can use as a shared service.

Delia Collins: I know. Springfield denied it because they said that they don't want to deal with any kind of OPRA requests. You know, "Don't put that in my neighborhood"...

Mayor Bonaccorso: That is always the way. We have people ask for "Slow" signs on their street and they say to put it in front of their neighbors.

Delia Collins: With all of the building that they are doing in this area you would think that some of these contractors... it's a dream. It is a dream that they would build an animal shelter in an area where these mega contractors are making all of this money building these units. The towns have no control over it.

Mayor Bonaccorso: Delia, if you followed this, and I know that you do, you are one of our few citizens that do follow us. I said back in 2017, when they talked about all of these mega

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developments that the Fair Share Housing people, which is a lobby group, and the Builders Association, which is a lobby group, lobbied the State of New Jersey for, one word, “money”. And the politicians in Trenton were only too glad to give into it. That is why, and you know, we have very little say what goes on in these big developments, and every town is getting them. It is about the all-mighty dollar, that is what runs Trenton. If you ever think that your vote or my votes runs Trenton, you are wrong, money runs Trenton.

Delia Collins: I know, I read.

Mayor Bonaccorso: I know.

Delia Collins: Even the small borough of Kenilworth is having problems, they have to build affordable housing and they are a built-up town.

Mayor Bonaccorso: So, are we but they don’t care. (Inaudible - microphone was not working) a small percentage of Republican Mayors, which there were only three or four in the county at the time, and Democrat Mayors, and we had some pretty good mayors on both sides. Said to the Governor that this is going to hurt our towns, it is going to hurt our infrastructure, our schools, our traffic, etcetera, etcetera, (inaudible), “I disagree”. Now, if I was sitting in a room and the room was predominantly my party and they disagreed, then they are going to have to get in touch with someone and say, “What is going on here? Is there something wrong? Are we missing something? Are you missing something? What is the story?” Trenton is controlled by money, period, that is what make the clock tick in Trenton. You get more...if you do more...if you reel more power, and that is why our state is (inaudible).

Delia Collins: Okay, if I can pick up more information about Associated Humane, I will bring it up at the next meeting because that is when you vote on this. I am sure once this pandemic...and people get notice about what is happening down there...everybody is worried...they (Associated Humane Societies, Inc.) don’t even bring their van in here anymore, outside (the municipal building) for the spay and neuter (clinic) and that is causing a lot of issues too.

A motion to close the public portion of the meeting was made by Councilwoman Albanese seconded by Councilman O’Connor.

Council President Hund directed roll call: All Ayes

Aye: Albanese, Mazzarella, Smith, O’Connor, Toal, Hund

MAYOR, COUNCIL AND PROFESSIONAL COMMENTS:

Mayor Bonaccorso: Thank you Mr. President. As you can see the police department is done, the parking lot is basically done. The work is being done on Emerald and Waterson to make that into an intersection with a light. I am going to be planning a ribbon cutting probably on a Saturday early in September. I don’t have a date yet; I am waiting for the Chief to get back. This way the public can come see it if they would like to see it and have a grand opening of the building. It will be a quick ceremony if you can be there. I will give you the date well in advance so everyone knows. They are doing work there and hopefully that intersection will be done by the opening of school. There will be a light there and it will freak everyone out.

Councilman O'Connor: Refresh my memory, has it been decided if the light will be functioning 24/7?

Mayor Bonaccorso: So far that is what the plan is.

Councilman O'Connor: So, 24/7?

Mayor Bonaccorso: Yes. It will be the counter where unless the cars come up (to the light) it will just stay continuously green. It just won't turn every five minutes for the fun of it.

That is about it. Recreation (camp) is going well. Ralph is down to two more weeks of the rec program.

Enjoy the rest of the summer and I will see you on the 16th.

Councilwoman Albanese: I will echo what the mayor said, enjoy your summer.

Councilman Mazzarella: No comment.

Councilman O'Connor: No comments this evening, thank you.

Councilman Smith: No comments.

Councilman Toal: No comment.

Township Clerk: No comment.

Mr. Ulrich: The only thing that I want to add is that they are going to be doing the library parking lot on the 4th and the 5th, of this week.

Mr. Huxford: I will reserve my comments for our next meeting.

Council President Hund asked for a motion to adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Toal seconded by Councilwoman Albanese.

ROLL CALL: All Ayes

Aye: Albanese, Mazzarella, Smith, O'Connor, Toal, Hund

ADJOURNMENT