

COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING
430 WESTFIELD AVE., CLARK, NJ
February 3, 2020
7:30 pm

ROLL CALL:

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

Also, Present: Sal Bonaccorso, Mayor John Laezza, Business Administrator; Mr. Triarsi, Township Attorney; Edith Merkel, Township Clerk

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG: MOMENT OF SILENCE

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 and the proper filing of said notice.

RESOLUTIONS:

1. Authorizing the sale of \$500,000 Special Emergency Notes of the Township of Clark, in the County of Union, New Jersey and providing for other matters in connection therewith

Discussion:

John Laezza: The state is going to be good to local governments when they mandate any such of this nature. They allow you to put it in your regular budget and then you only have to pay return at one fifth a year for five years. So, you have five years to generate the cash (tape inaudible) in the budget or this gives us two authorizations, we can either go to the bank or use our own money.

Council President O'Connor asked for a mover and second on this Resolution
Mover: Mazzarella Second: Albanese

2. Award of Contract to Appraisal Systems, Inc. for the Revaluation of all Real Property within the Township

Discussion:

John Laezza: We have gone out for proposals from every evaluation companies throughout the State of New Jersey. We've received two proposals, one from Appraisals Systems and one from Realty Appraisals. It was a substantial differential between the prices and quality of work for each of the firms. We will be awarding the contract to Appraisals, they will prepare the contract, once we get the contract it has to go to the State Division of Taxation for their approval before we can award.

Council President O'Connor asked for a mover and second on this Resolution
Mover: Smith Second: Hund

3. Appointing Albert C. Bauer, III as a Class II Special Law Enforcement Officer

Discussion: none

Council President O'Connor asked for a mover and second on this Resolution

Mover: Hund Second: Barr

4. Authorizing the Director of the Clark Public Library to submit a grant application for the project entitled the New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act

Discussion:

John Laezza: The bond issuance was passed in 2017, the State just got around to generating the rules. The library needs a replacement in the entirety of a HVAC and basically (tape inaudible) and the library will be part of this project and a few other miscellaneous items that the director and I have been working on. Once we get the grant application, we will be waiting for State approval or whatever the application is we have to match half of it. So, we're working on that.

Councilwoman Albanese: We'll get fifty cents on the dollar. Many people will be applying but we should definitely be in for it.

John Laezza: The maximum you can apply for is twelve million five hundred thousand dollars, but we're not even going to get that.

Council President O'Connor asked for a mover and second on this Resolution

Mover: Entire Council Second: Entire Council

5. Establishing Goals for Contracting with Veteran owned Businesses, Hiring Veterans in the Municipal Workforce and Recognizing the Military Service of Residents in the Civic Affairs of the Township of Clark

Discussion: none

Council President O'Connor asked for a mover and second on this Resolution

Mover: Entire Council Second: Entire Council

COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS AS THE MUNICIPAL POOL UTILITY:

6. Award of Contract for Pool Maintenance for the 2020 and 2021 seasons (Bid opening Feb. 5th)

Council President O'Connor asked for a mover and second on this Resolution

Mover: Smith Second: Hund

7. Award of Contract for the Operation of the Pool Concession Stand (Bid opening Feb. 5th)

Council President O'Connor asked for a mover and second on this Resolution

Mover: Smith Second: Albanese

8. Authorizing and Directing the Council President to enter into Pool Employment Contracts

9. Authorizing the Pool Rates and Fees to be charged for the 2020 Season

Council President O'Connor asked for a mover and second on this Resolution
Mover: Smith Second: Hund

CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS:

- 10.** Authorizing the Chief Financial Officer to refund overpayment of 2020 sewer fees in the amount of \$140.00
- 11.** Authorizing the Chief Financial Officer to apply sewer account balance adjustments as credit in the amount of \$20,212.90

Council President O'Connor asked for a mover and second on this Consent Agenda
Mover: Toal Second: Albanese

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.

Council President O'Connor opened the public portion of the meeting

Seeing no one coming forward Councilman Toal made a motion to close the public portion of the meeting, seconded by Councilman Hund

Council President O'Connor directed roll call: All Ayes
Aye: Albanese, Barr, Hund, Mazzarella, Smith, Toal, O'Connor

MAYOR, COUNCIL AND PROFESSIONAL COMMENTS:

Mayor Bonaccorso: Yes, thank you Mr. President. In your packets you have a nice write up, obviously you saw it already, but I'm just reminded you to take that out and put it aside about the appraisal and revel, because if the citizens call you, you can scan it and email it to them, it's pretty self-explanatory. As you see in the resolution, we were for the record mandated by the Union County Board of Taxation to go ahead with the revel. We pushed this off for many years. Clark's last revel was in the 80's, so we are well, well overdo. You know it seems like it's a (tape inaudible) where a third of a house is maybe adjusted downward, a third maybe the property stays the same and it could be a third that go upward. Council we can't help that, this is the law we live in, we are elected to follow laws, that's our duty, that's our job and we have to do what we need to do. We have pushed this off for quite a bit. John talked about this back in 2000 when we won and we first started and then we had the Rahway Valley Sewerage debacle in 2006, and we said how much more can we do, you know it just keeps getting pushed along the way. So, finally they came in and mandated it and we are going to follow the law and do what they need to do.

The thing is John is going to be on this and we had a long conversation, the end result is if you don't like the assess that you have, there will be a meeting date where you can go either here or to the courthouse depending where we set that venue at and they can argue their case.

Other than that, we've had a blessed winter without any snow and ice and problems. We had two salting events this year so far, no big deal, it didn't hurt anything. Everything is just moving along fine. John has the budget almost done which we'll be giving it to you soon. The police station... the real work should begin very shortly, so we're waiting for that. I'm sure the day we dig the foundation we'll have snow and ice, so we'll see what happens, but everything is moving along good. Any questions?

Councilwoman Albanese: Just on the revaluation. So, what's the time frame, like when do you start, how does it work?

John Laezza: Well, we start as soon as the Division of Taxation approves our contract. So, I would say if we award the contract in March and if we send it down to them in March, we'll probably get a response back by April 1st. The company will start April 1st, it's usually a 9 to 10-month operation.

Councilwoman Albanese: So, we'll go in when the taxes change (tape inaudible).

John Laezza: No.

Council President O'Connor: But they anticipate in (tape inaudible) appeals.

John Laezza: No, the contract that we have (tape inaudible) finish the projects, the citizens complain to us, we set up appointments for all of the citizens, they listen to them and they make their adjustments if they agree or disagree and then they certify to the Division of Taxation when completed. If it's not complete by January 6, 2021, it can be in the 2021 budget, the assessment should be completed by October 1 of each year of the prior year. So, we'll get these done sometime in 2021. The contract with the Appraisal Systems is they have if there are appeals subsequent to us striking the rate. We have two years to use their assessors to be our support against the Division of Taxation upon their appeals. There ratings over the years on their own contracts that they have say that there right eighty-six percent of the time on any new appeals. So, it's a pretty good track record. And so, it should help our subsequent appeals other than what we are getting now a days.

Councilwoman Albanese: In the Division of Taxation why do they have to review the contract, is it the amount?

John Laezza: They want to make sure that the contractor is giving us the right work. We had to make sure that...they are the oversighting agency for everything. And that's why this is taking so long because we had to renew our tax maps to be digital tax maps, they put in a lot of new work so it costs us probably over the last...we've been doing this out of our budget for the last three years and it's costs us close to three hundred thousand dollars.

Councilwoman Albanese: and the other bidder, how much was it?

John Laezza: The other bidder was five hundred and thirty-seven thousand.

Councilwoman Albanese: Just thanking the council for supporting resolution for the library to get that funding. Unfortunately, it had taken many years for the State to even get the forms out and I don't know how long it will take to get them back.

Councilman Barr: Thanked the council for authorizing the firefighter.

Councilman Hund: no comments.

Councilman Mazzarella: no comments.

Councilman Smith: The Clark Travel Basketball Tournament starts February 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th, Presidents' weekend. So, they will take over the building that weekend. I just want to thank the council and the administration and the town for allowing them to do that for the kids.

Mayor Bonaccorso: 221 teams.

Council President O'Connor: I'm sure that that does a lot for Clark economy with regard to local businesses.

Mayor Bonaccorso: Well you know it does, even though we have a concession stand down there with great food, you do see people going to Manny's, going to some of the burger places and stuff like that. So yes, it does, it definitely helps the economy around local businesses. And you know it also says a lot about our facility. Bill and I and Steve coached basketball for many years and if the facility stinks you are not going back first of all, but people like our facilities here and they really get into it, so it's fun.

Councilman Smith: We actually use the two gyms here, the two gyms at the high school and at St. Agnes and Kumpf.

Councilman Toal: Thank you Mr. President. The issue of the revaluation. I was on Council in 1985 when we did it. The biggest issue back then with the residents was that they knew nothing about it. It's a different age now without a computer and everything else back then, Mayor Nucera sent out a flyer to everyone and notification that it is coming, be prepared, get your permits up to date. It was just the people's basic complaint back in 1985, many years ago, that they were never notified of it. That was their biggest complaint back then.

John Laezza: Well you'll probably have the same thing this year. We will be sending out letters but when I talked to the Appraisal Systems, we'll be going on television to talk about it and explain.

Mayor Bonaccorso: Brian, let me tell you something about that. When we in 2006 went to the Sewer Utility, John and I did a whole TV program on it. I did a presentation at a Council meeting, we did it at another Council meeting, there had to be five Star Ledger news article on it and maybe more than that in the local papers. And the day those bills went out we had a line from here to Manny's Diner saying what the heck is this all about. So, there are some people no matter what you do, they are never ever going to pay attention to what you send them.

Councilman Toal: The other issue I had is two roads; Washington Street, I need to get public works down there, there's a dangerous and I mean this word, dangerous, pothole right just before the apartments. If you can get somebody out there. I know the weather becomes back to where we are filling potholes. And the other question about when we had the street done, like we had Mildred Terrace a year or two ago, the street is falling apart. And if we can get back the vendor to look at the street and do a new revaluation.

Mayor Bonaccorso: What the problem is Brian and I agree with you no doubt. We have the State of New Jersey with our clean water, clean this, clean that, it has changed the mix of the blacktop and taken a lot of oils out of the blacktop. Streets that when we were kids were paved, they were

good for forty years. It's like we can't get around fast enough. Streets we did ten years ago we got (tape inaudible) it's a crying shame. It's not to work with you buddy, it's the material.

Councilman Toal: You know where I'm concern about Mildred Terrace and the school. It's crazy in the morning.

Mayor Bonaccorso: Not only that buddy, it's everywhere, and I've complained in the past and O'Connor and I have no reason to doubt him on this said to me, Mayor, it's what they are not putting in the material and a lot of the things they are doing now is they are recycling the old blacktop and reusing that, reheating it and remixing it, and that's not working out as well. So yeah, we are in trouble, I mean everybody, it's not just Clark. We all order the blacktop from the same place and it's all over.

Councilman Toal: I totally understand that. But again, take a look at Washington Street.

Council President O'Connor: Just one clarification, when the Mayor referred to O'Connor, he referred to Rich O'Connor.

John Laezza: no comments.

Attorney Triarsi: I have no comments.

Township Clerk: no comments.

Council President O'Connor: My comments will be held until the public meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

Council President O'Connor asked for a motion to adjourn

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

ROLL CALL: All Ayes

Aye: Albanese, Barr, Hund, Mazzearella, Smith, Toal, O'Connor