

COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING
430 WESTFIELD AVE., CLARK, NJ
March 2, 2020
7:30 pm

ROLL CALL:

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

Also, Present: Sal Bonaccorso, Mayor; John Laezza, Business Administrator; Mark Dugan, 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.

PROPOSED ORDINANCES:

- 1. 20-11 BOND ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE UNDERTAKING OF THE 2020 CAPITAL ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM IN, BY AND FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF CLARK, IN THE COUNTY OF UNION, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF \$750,000 TO PAY THE COST THEREOF, TO MAKE A DOWN PAYMENT, TO AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF SUCH BONDS**

Discussion:

Mr. Laezza: Basically, Council President and Members of Council these are five roads that are in the 2020 Capital Program, Picton Avenue, Evans Terrace, Linda Lane, Post Road and Circle, and Rainbow Drive, they are all through roads.

Councilman O'Connor: Thank you.

Mr. Laezza: We will have another ordinance later on in the year for NJDOT Project which we will be Wilson Drive, Emerald and Emerald Court.....

Councilman O'Connor: Thank you.

Mr. Laezza: We will have another ordinance later on in the year for the New Jersey DOT Project will be Wilson Drive, Emerald and Emerald Court. That will be another \$750,000 with a \$329,000 grant from the State of New Jersey. That will also include a traffic light on Westfield Avenue.

We have another Bond Ordinance this year predicated on what kind of grant we'll get for the library. We estimate that should be a \$550,000 ordinance with a 50% grant from the State of New Jersey. If we get the grant, we'll write the ordinance.

No further discussion

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

Mover: Mazzarella Second: Smith

1A. 20-12 BOND ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE UNDERTAKING OF VARIOUS IMPROVEMENTS TO PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, FIELD AND RELATED IMPROVEMENTS IN CONNECTION WITH CLARK BASEBALL PROGRAMS IN, BY AND FOR THE TOWNSHIP OF CLARK, IN THE COUNTY OF UNION, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF \$200,000 TO PAY THE COST THEREOF, TO MAKE A DOWN PAYMENT, TO AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF SUCH BONDS

Discussion:

Mr. Laezza: This is for the "Park and Recreation Program" ...basically, (inaudible) to match whatever grants we get from the county. We have a \$42,000 grant from the county. Basically, it is predicated for the use of improving the areas around the baseball field, parking lot, dugouts, and fencing. One of the major improvements to a field that's been there for many years and that needs upgrading.

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

Mover: Smith Second: Hund

RESOLUTIONS:

1B. INTRODUCTION OF THE 2020 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Discussion:

Councilman O'Connor: The Finance Committee met with the Business Administrator regarding the budget. We took a look at it and it was a good budget, as usual. Mr. Laezza, do you have any more comments on it?

Mr. Laezza: Basically, it is a budget that accommodates the new salary contracts. We have contracts for White Collar and Police through 2023. We amended the DPW budget and we told them if the other two unions got more, we would adjust theirs. Now we have equal increases for equal work predicated on what everybody gets. The budget has some items in it usually done as capital items, they will not be recurring next year. We have been able to build up rainy funds of 4½ million-dollar surplus over the years. We are using some of that surplus to maintain a non-tax increase for municipal purposes this year.

Councilman O'Connor: Right, a non-tax increase for municipal purposes.

Mr. Laezza: It is probably less because the 2.30 tax rate includes the library. So, the municipal purposes will be a refund and it will be less than it ever was.

Mayor Bonaccorso: A reduction.

Mr. Laezza: A reduction.

Mayor Bonaccorso: How much John? Right now, the 2.30 tax rate including the library tax.

John Laezza: Probably 1.1 cent decrease. It has nothing to do with the grant for the library.

Mayor Bonaccorso: When you talk about the library, is there tax on that?

John Laezza: Yes, a library tax.

Councilwoman Albanese: It has to be separately stated on the tax bill.

Mayor Bonaccorso: That's good to hear.

Council President O'Connor: Yes, and in my opinion, I guess it shows how well the administration works for the residents of Clark.

Councilman Smith: Will the county follow suit?

Mayor Bonaccorso: Some of these PILOTS such as Walnut Avenue Valley Road apartments we are going to finally reap what we are supposed to get. Without sending to the county, we will finally reap some of the benefits for the years that we scraped and saved and have to provide tax appeals that the school and the county did not have to pay, we paid. All that stuff that we have been doing here for 20 years I think that we will be in a pretty good shape in the next few years. Like I said when we made a deal with one of the developers so far, a lot of the money is coming back into the community, to our budget.

Councilman O'Connor: Good work, thank you. So, council please take a look at the budget and if you have any questions reach out to Mr. Laezza or the Mayor. This will be introduced on March 16th.

Mr. Laezza: It will be advertised on April 2nd and the public hearing and adoption on April 20th.

Councilman O'Connor: Thank you Council.

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

Mover: O'Connor Second: Albanese

1C. Award of Contract to HBK IT for Information Technology and Network Support Services in the amount of \$1,750.00 per month

Discussion: none

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

Mover: Mazzarella Second: Albanese

2. **Council as the Board of Health:** Accepting and Approving the Annual Health Report for 2019

Discussion: none

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

Mover: O'Connor

Second: Smith

3. Discussion: School Board Election Date REMOVED #3

- 4.** Award of Contract for the Operation of the Pool Concession Stand (Bid opening March 4th) Council note: There were no bidders for the February 5th Bid opening. Minimum bid dropped from \$7,500.00 to \$6,500.00 for the second round at the direction of the Recreation Director.

Township Clerk: We went out the first time and did not receive any bids. So, the minimum bid was reduced. This is a new bid; it's been reduced from \$7,500.00 to \$6,500.00 as a minimum. reduced. This is a new bid; it's been reduced from \$7,500.00 to \$6,500.00 as a minimum.

Councilman Hund: Did they not make money last year?

Township Clerk: Last year's vendor paid the township I think eleven thousand dollars and had a rainy season.

Councilman Hund: Okay.

Mayor Bonaccorso: (tape inaudible) Steve. Even during the regular year's, you can't make money up there.

Township Clerk: So, it's something that's kind of in many places going by the wayside because nobody is able to get vendors to do a concession.

Mayor Bonaccorso: Bill, I made a suggestion, you are head of the pool, I made a suggestion to Ralph. Do what we do with travel basketball, get Donna (Dinny's Dinners) to sell chicken sliders there, you can bring them in. Maybe you can get a little pizza oven, some ice cream, soda, water and maybe some candy and chips, hire some kids to work back there when we do at the tournaments. At least you are provided something versus nothing.

Councilman Smith: So, the Pool Utility would buy the food, the refreshments and stuff.

Council President O'Connor: I don't know how that would work with the Board of Health.

Councilman Smith: She will be fine, it's just like a concession at the softball or little league.

Councilwoman Albanese: What about food preparation?

Councilman Smith: There's no preparation.

Mr. Laezza: Let's see what we get from the bids.

Council President O'Connor: So, the worst-case scenario we get no bids for second round and then we negotiate.

Councilman Smith: A few years ago, the guy made money, last year he didn't because it rained,

so, he probably broke out even between the two years.

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

Mover: Smith Second: Albanese

CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS:

5. Authorizing the Chief Financial Officer to refund overpayment of 2020 taxes in the amount of \$2,822.19
6. Authorizing the Chief Financial Officer to apply a sewer account balance adjustment as an additional charge in the amount of \$140.00

Council President O'Connor asked for a mover and second on the Consent Agenda

Mover: Mazzarella 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 opened the public portion of the meeting

Seeing no one coming forward Councilman Smith made a motion to close the public portion, 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: The new hot subject that everyone is worried about is this Coronavirus going around. I watched the Vice President today on TV that they brought in someone who's been around forever doing a great job in helping them. John and I sat Nancy down on Thursday and talked about what we're doing. Basically, as of then the State really didn't put anything out. You know you hear the reports on TV that our flu kills more people than this. I'm sure some of this is you know the election year, it's Trump's fault as always, but it is something that we have to take seriously and we are here in Clark. So, I had Nancy write up a little report on what we are doing so you all can see it and where we are at. And our first concern is of course along with our residents would be our first responders to make sure there are equipped properly if this does become an issue in town. As you can read here, she has an investigated one report from the town and I think it has come back fine. So, you know we are going to have this as time goes on, and we're going to have more investigation I do believe. But at this point I think the simple thing they are saying is to wash your hands, keep your hands away from your face as much as possible. Nancy is on it every day with webinars, meetings and all kinds of stuff, it's listed here right in the report. So, I just want the council and the citizens to know that we are not sleeping at the wheel here in Clark. We are working through our health officer and she will be updating us on a daily basis on what we need to know. If there is anything ever an emergent, we will of course have council notified immediately. If she asks for my assistance if there was a problem with the schools, I said that would not be a problem, at that point it's my call if we ever got to that point. Maybe I'm being hopeful for everyone but I think it's going to be okay as time goes on. You know they said tonight on the news Trump did the right thing by closing the border off, (tape inaudible) flights from

different foreign countries and stuff, he was right on it. So, I'm glad to see that all worked out and we'll see where this goes. We're working on getting more masks for the police department and rubber gloves, stuff like that. Which they need to have God forbid this spread. We don't need our police department dilapidated with twelve guys home with the Coronavirus. So, we'll take care of them first, then our first-aid and everybody else. So that's all on that.

We had a three-weekend basketball tournament here, nothing to be really concerned about that, but I will say I looked on Facebook and there was a picture of our gym from someone from Edison and they said "are you kidding me, Clark can provide this and a bigger town like Edison can't?" That made me feel really good that people enjoy our facilities, it's a really good thing to see.

The phone started ringing off the hook in the DPW. I don't know if we are going to have winter this year or not. I'm not optimistic, I still think we are going to get hit. I can't trust New Jersey, today it was almost 70 and you know next weekend will be a foot of snow, so how do you know. In another week you are going to see landscapers dumping out in the street and people are going to start cleaning up their lawn, spring lawn and leaf pickup will be in to do that. So, like I said DPW is starting to pick up pretty good now. They have been out working on our parks and playgrounds getting them all in shape, so we're all in good shape right now in the town. If we don't have any snow, we'll have a lot of salt to sit on and extra money for overtime for plowing. But like you say, what are you going to do, you need it, next November or December we can get clobbered too and that money will come in handy then, hopefully it won't.

Councilwoman Albanese: no report.

Councilman Barr: no report.

Councilman Hund: not at this time.

Councilman Mazza: no report.

Councilman Smith: Just on the basketball tournament, 358 games over fourteen days. It was a big boom for all the local businesses.

Mayor Bonaccorso: It is true guys our local businesses are doing very well with that basketball tournament.

Mr. Laezza: no comments

Police Chief Matos: Just to touch on the Coronavirus, there are a lot of things I plan on implementing should we start seeing confirmed cases come closer to us. I plan on limited type of medical calls the police will be responded to. Right now, pretty much if someone calls 911 looking for medical assistance, the police could probably (tape inaudible) response person (tape inaudible) take a little bit more than usual. If we do implement this, it will be if we get a routine sickness, "I'm not feeling well, and I wish to be transported to the hospital", I think I'm going to limit the police department from responding to those calls because there's no need to risk a police officer getting to be put into quarantine that came into contact with someone (tape inaudible) ... an issue where the police department goes there is really not much we can do expect assist with the ambulance when they get there. So, unless it's medical emergency, obviously if someone is having chest pains that's different. Where the officers can actually do something, maybe an overdose situation or like a heart attack, a possible heart attack or stroke, that an officer can provide some medical assistance. If it's "I don't feel well, I haven't been feeling well for the last several days, I would like to go to the hospital", there's really nothing much that the police officer can do at the

scene. There's really no risk to putting the officer at risk coming into contact with something where it would we think it would put him out of work.

Mayor Bonaccorso: The Chief is correct, because a lot of Chiefs have told me in the past, and unfortunately some of our citizens use our services as a ride to the hospital. So, like I said it's up him to make that call when and if we get to that.

Police Chief Matos: With those type of calls we're going to see...well I'm going to classify them as like non-emergency calls.

Township Clerk: If you know anybody that would like to be a poll worker. I'm going to go to the Senior Citizen meeting on Thursday and try to drum up some business and hand out applications. If you know of anyone who's willing to be on the job at 5:15 and work until 8:30 at night for \$200.00. We are really, really hurting for people. The last election there were tables that we had only two people. This go around we're going to have the mayor running, and President running, and the lines are going to be out the door, if you recall four years ago.

Council President O'Connor: Voters in Clark need to understand it's not Clark's issue, it's an issue all over. Because I know people do get frustrated when they wait on line a long time. I know the last Presidential election, specifically with the second ward with the senior housing, that line was incredibly long.

Township Clerk: Remember we had Hehnly (School) knocked out with the power from the October storm.

Council President O'Connor: Correct.

Township Clerk: We had so many people that were extra in the gym.

Council President O'Connor: That was frustrating. And the more the public know the better it is but again if the TAP into Clark could help recruit people.

Police Chief Matos: I have another question. If someone volunteers from Clark, will they actually work the elections in Clark?

Township Clerk: There's a question on the application that says, "would you accept an assignment other than your hometown?". So, you can check yes or no.

Council President O'Connor: I have no further comments.

ADJOURNMENT:

Council President O'Connor asked for a motion to adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Smith, seconded by Councilman Hund

Council President O'Connor directed roll call: All Ayes

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