

**BOROUGH OF BERLIN
CAUCUS MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2011
7:00 PM**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY MAYOR ARMANO.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG LED BY THE MAYOR.

SUNSHINE NOTICE: Adequate notice of this meeting has been given in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act pursuant to Public Law 1975, Chapter 231. Said notice has been advertised in the Courier Post and Philadelphia Inquirer noting the date, place and time of said meeting.

ROLL CALL: Mayor John Armano, Council President Scott Scelso, Council members Maccaroni, Chance, Bilella, Kupchik and Pearce were all present.

PRESENT ALSO: Solicitor George Botcheos, CFO Stephen Miller, Tax Collector Lisa Eggert, Tax Assessor Terry Stagliano, DPW Superintendent Mark Mauger, Police Chief Robert Cararra.

PRESENTATION: George DiAngelo from Vital Statistics in Trenton, N. J., gave a brief summary of the recent revaluation done in the borough stating that the revaluation was completed. Assessor Stagliano stated she filed the tax book with the County this past Monday. DiAngelo stated the new value went from approximately \$410 million to \$780 million where it should be. The \$410 million was only about 52% of market value. Assessor explained that all added assessments by her would be put on books by October; however, many new items were picked up when the field work was done by Vital. The council's consensus is they would like to see a progress report of what was accomplished. DiAngelo explains that usually 1/3 of assessments go up, 1/3 goes down and 1/3 stays the same. The procedure that follows now explains Assessor is that all residents will get a post card of what their value of assessment is. The post card is self-explanatory and if they desire to file an appeal they will have until May 1. The normal dead line is April 1; however, it extends to May 1 when a revaluation was done.. DiAngelo stated that there were approximately 800 inspections done during the revaluation which is basically 1/3 of the properties.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS, DISCUSSION ITEMS, COUNCIL REPORTS:

· MAYOR JOHN ARMANO

Mayor Armano asks for the consensus of the council on the completion of the well # 10 project as to whether ERI should finish or Pennoni, our new engineers should finish. The council feels that due to fact that a pre-con meeting was already held and the administrative part is complete, Pennoni should take the project from here.

He attended a most recent Freeholder meeting with Chief Carrara where there has been discussion on county policing. He feels at this time the County is not coming up with any numbers that show a savings. /Governor's office called and advised him that Berlin has been

approved for a transportation grant for South Arlington Avenue in the amount of \$160,000. /County has committed to purchasing the school zone flashing light by adding this cost to the repaving of Franklin Avenue. /He met with Chris Norman from the Law Firm of Normal and Kingsbury regarding the progress of well # 12 litigation. Norman's firm is trying to get the case moved from Camden County to Burlington County due to the fact that the case has been tossed out of the Camden County Courts on several occasions. We are still on hold since the second. Complaint has been re-instated./He asks the council to consider the resolution on agenda to waive the permit fees for the VFW so they can have a badly needed roof installed on the building at Chestnut Avenue./He met with this year's 4th. of July committee stating that volunteers are badly needed for the parade. He will be asking the County Freeholders to help with the cost of the fireworks he would like put back into the budget as the county has not sponsored this end of the county for a while.

Mayor asks the council to review the paperwork given to them from the tax collector's office on several properties in the borough that are up for foreclosure and to see if there is any interest in purchasing these properties as the liens are not being picked on them. The council will be given a better list by the collector so they can review before the council meeting and come up with a decision. Tax Collector Lisa Eggert explains that all of these properties went to tax sale but there were no bidders. If the borough does foreclose we have the option of selling the property.

CFO Steve Miller explained Resolution R2-7;2011 on agenda called the 125 Cafeteria Plan that the borough has been in for the AFLEC plan, however, we are now opening up the plan to health benefit payments and dental deferral. In short, when the 1.5% of health payments come into effect from borough employees, the 125 Cafeteria Plan allows the money they have to contribute to health benefits to be tax deferred. There is no cost to the borough to administer this plan other than the original one time fee the borough had to pay Bowman and Company to set up.

In reference to the most recent banking proposals the borough went out to bid for. He explained that the borough, in the cash management plan at re-organization, has already named several banks besides TD that they could opt to deal with. When bids were out, only one bank replied, that being Susquehanna Bank, local branch, Atco, N. J. Susquehanna is offering 60 basis points versus 23 that TD gives the borough along with all the other amenities we want. His recommendation would be to go with Susquehanna Bank.

- BUILDINGS & GROUNDS, Chairman Scott Scelso will give a report at the council meeting.
- STREETS & ROADS, Chairman James Bilella reported that he had a meeting in regards to the road program. /In regards to street lights in the borough. He states that there are certain specific lights out that are costly replacements, especially for the fixtures. He is looking into replacement costs. /He is getting prices for traffic light (signals) heads on led modules. He is suggesting that a determination of what is an emergency traffic light out versus a non emergency traffic light out is being looked into so Central Dispatch does not call out Gibson Electric (the company who changes the traffic light bulbs) at a rate of \$203.50 during regular hours versus \$480.00 plus after 5 pm. There was a discussion at this point on who and why traffic light repairs are being paid for by the borough versus the County.

- WATER & SEWER, Chairman Lynn Kupchik no report.
- HEALTH & RECREATION, Chairman Jim Pearce states the floor is almost completely done at the community center. He has been visiting different venues and centers to get ideas for our own facility and in an effort to have the center make a profit. He will be reaching out to all of the sports organizations for their feed back. Mayor Armano states he agrees with being able to make a profit to pay for the overhead. He will be meeting with the Rotary Club to accept their donation of \$2000. that will be put towards padding in the gym with the Rotary's name on it. /He will be meeting with Lonaconing Camp Director Eileen Johnson..
- PUBLIC SAFETY, Chairman Dennis Chance would like a letter to go out to residents along Franklin Avenue to remind them to remove snow from their sidewalks after a storm. The Mayor is asking Solicitor Botcheos to look into the ordinances on the books and amend them to be clearer for residential and businesses about snow removal. Botcheos will work on getting new ordinance (s) in place and present them to the council for review.
- FINANCE, Chairman Nick Maccaroni states the auditor's have started their auditing for budget purposes. Early projections show the borough having a surplus for which he would like to spread out over a three year period. Tax collections were good coming up 1% more than last year at this time. /On another note he would like any council member to report vehicles that are in the site triangle at Diamond Auto Sales at the point on Route 30 that are blocking and obstructing visibility noting they have been warned several times. He stated the car lot on Linden Avenue has had to be sited again due to non compliance.
- SOLICITOR, George Botcheos has reviewed a letter the clerk received from Spring Oaks in regards to them wanting the borough to give the facility trash pick up services. He will look into this letter and get back to us. /In regards to the Busbee Landfill case. He stated that Rohm and Haas have settled with the State for \$400,000. Dispositions are on going in Trenton on this case.

Councilman Chance stated that the Jehovah Witnesses would like to purchase some of the property behind the VFW. Dennis feels that the VFW leases this property from the borough. Botcheos states the property would have to go to public sale subject to the lease for a possible sub-lease. An agreement can be done not to exceed the term of the lease.

- ADMINISTRATOR, Charleen Santora states that an animal census will have to taken this year and has posted the position. /Resolution on agenda for new drug free zone maps due to Solid Rock Church being in area.

ORDINANCES:

ORDINANCE NO. 2011-01, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING AND SUPPLEMENTING CHAPTER 306 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF BERLIN ENTITLED, "TOWING".

RESOLUTIONS:

RESOLUTION R2-1;2011, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE FIVE (5) MONTH UTILITY PAYMENT PLAN FOR 224 CLEMENTON ROAD, BLOCK 703, LOT 3, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$742.75.

RESOLUTION R2-2;2011, A RESOLUTION APPOINTING TERRY STAGLIANO, CTA, TAX ASSESSOR, THE AUTHORIZED AGENT TO REPRESENT THE BOROUGH OF BERLIN FOR TAX APPEALS FOR THE YEAR 2011.

RESOLUTION R2-3; 2011, A RESOLUTION TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION FOR PROGRAM YEAR 33 (2011-2012) NAMED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT FOR THE SUBMISSION OF AN APPLICATION THAT THE APPROXIMATE FUNDING OF \$28,672.00 BE USED FOR SENIOR BUS TRANSPORTATION.

RESOLUTION R2-4;2011, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING REFUNDS TO DENNIS QUINN AND LYNDA STRAUB OF BERLIN BOROUGH FOR KEY FOB REFUND IN THE AMOUNT OF \$20.00 EACH.

RESOLUTION R2-5;2011, APPROVAL FROM BOROUGH COUNCIL TO WAIVE PERMIT FEES FOR THE VFW OF BERLIN FOR THE REPLACING OF A NEW ROOF AND THE MOVING OF A GAS LINE AT THE VFW FACILITY, 34 CHESTNUT AVENUE.

RESOLUTION R2-6; 2011, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF A RECYCLING TONNAGE REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2010 TO THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION.

RESOLUTION R2-7; 2011, A RESOLUTION ADOPTING AMENDMENTS TO THE BOROUGH SECTION 125 CAFETERIA PLAN.

RESOLUTION R2-8; 2011, AUTHORIZATION FROM COUNCIL TO APPROVE BIRDSALL ENGINEERING'S PROPOSAL TO UPDATE THE DRUG FREE ZONE TAX MAP FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$500.00.

Motion to adjourn made by Scelso seconded by Chance. All were in favor.

Charleen Santora, RMC