

BOROUGH OF BERLIN
WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JANUARY 30, 2018
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
59 SOUTH WHITE HORSE PIKE
BERLIN, NJ 08009
7:00 P.M.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

SALUTE:

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 posted on the Borough Hall Bulletin Board showing the date, place and time of said meeting.

ROLL CALL: Mayor Jim Bilella, Council President Rick Miller, Council Members Pearce, Badolato, Rocco, Buchanan & MacDonnell.

PRESENT ALSO: Solicitor Howard Long, RMC Lois J. Sahina and CMFO Michael T. Kwasizur, Theresa Stagliano, Tax Assessor and Tax Attorney, Chris Long

COUNCIL DISCUSSION:

- **BUILDINGS, PARKS, & RECREATION, Chairman Len Badolato**
- On Thursday, 2/2/18 or Friday 2/3/18 I will be meeting with Anthony Mazer at 4:00 pm at the ballfields to discuss the drainage problem. I would like Councilman Rocco and Pearce to also attend this meeting as they too are on this committee.
- The paint color has been selected for the hotel part of the Library and it is expected to go out to bid in February.
- I met with Cindy Williams and our Clerk Lois Sahina at the Borough Hall the other night to discuss the signage problem in the Borough Hall. We walked through the entire building and discussed what and where we needed more professional signing put up.
- I spoke with Debbie Simone about the Community Center attendant issue. There was an event held last week and there was not enough coverage with attendants for a function of over 200 people. There was a problem in the restrooms. Debbie suggested that whoever rents the community center for usage that they should be responsible for paying the attendants. She also suggested that the security deposit be increased to \$200.00. The usage times of the facility must be posted.
- At this time, both Councilman Rocco and Pearce are working on a way for the Berlin Community School to take over the Community Center, since they use it every day for basketball practices and after school programs. We can't transfer green acres property to the Board of Education because they are on the list of who can own this land. Another way the borough could transfer the building to the school is if the land is subdivided. This will be looked into as to how much acreage the community center sits on including the hockey and soccer fields.

- There was new parking lot light installed by Atlantic Electric near the old small post office building. This light should have been installed 50 feet away inside of the exiting parking lot. This expenditure will be approximately \$10,000.00. The library is also looking into installing two more of the exiting lights that are on the perimeter of the parking lot.
- The new pole for the borough sign will be arriving shortly. It was a special order and is coming from California.
- In honor of the Eagles Football Team, I had DPW line the copula with green paper to show our support as they go to the Super Bowl on 2/3/18.
- The two lights that are at the front of the library are now fixed and workable.

TAX ASSESSOR PRESENTATION

*** AT THIS POINT, THE AGENDA WAS TAKEN OUT OF ORDER TO LISTEN TO THE PRESENTATION OF THERESA STAGLIANO (OUR TAX ASSESSOR) AND CHRISTOPER LONG, ESQ. TAX ATTORNEY TO EXPLAIN THE NEW EVALUATION FOR 2018 AND THE NEW TAX RATES AND ASSESSMENTS UNDER THE 2% CAP FOR BERLIN BOROUGH**

Theresa Stagliano explained why we were up by \$2 million dollars from last year.

Chris Long is from Wade, Long, Wood, Long LLC who concentrates on tax appeals explained that he will be working with Theresa on the new tax appeals process and laws. The housing stock is under 10,000 in Berlin. There are a lot of programs from the State to deal with the effects of the housing stock. It will happen over a period of time and could be an issue within the next five years because of the new tax laws. The number of appeals has gone down in Berlin. Most people don't want to go through the process of having to go before the board of Commissioners to appeal.

Theresa Stagliano- We had over two million in total assessments due to new construction. Approximately \$350,000 to \$400,000 per new build is represented in the figures for this past year. The acquisition of the Dill House and the subdivision of Simone Farms which is alone accounts for \$1 million dollars of this total, less the old farm house and \$100,000 will be transferred to exempt. This report is not certified by the Board yet. It is a net evaluation of approximately \$7,390,000.00 up almost one million from the last year. Totally disabled vets who spent 14 days in the combat zone since Desert Storm will be exempt. There will be a lot of these exemptions. Looking forward, the Royal Farms will also make a difference in retables.

Mr. Howard Long- What is the reassessment of the Farmers Market since all of the improvements and upgrades they have done?

Theresa Stagliano- The Market has not been reassessed yet. They are still making a lot of improvements to their buildings and grounds. They want to add storage buildings on the newly acquired ten acers and after they are completed a total new assessment will be done.

Mayor Bilella- Theresa please come back in September to give another update of the status of assessments. According to the Best Practices Work Sheet the Assessor has to meet with the Mayor and Governing Body at least 2x year.

PUBLIC WORKS, STREETS & ROADS, Chairman Dan MacDonnell

- The new 2018 Road Program is currently in the design stage.
- The deadline for accepting applications was January 12, 2018 for the open position at Public Works. John is currently reviewing the applications and will start interviews.
- A resolution of new hire will have to be created to put on the agenda for our upcoming 2/8/18 meeting.

Mr. Long – Councilman MacDonnell, in regards to the Road Opening Ordinance change, do you want to change the whole ordinance or do you want to have it read curb to curb?

Councilman MacDonnell – I will look at it, but believe it will be curb to curb. I will email you.

WATER & SEWER, Chairman Ron Rocco

- Although this has nothing to do with water or sewer, I would like to bring up the topic of the Community Center. I would like Howards input in how the Borough can go about getting the Berlin Community School to take over the Community Center. They use it everyday for after school programs and basketball practices.
- I spoke with Jim Knight about the ongoing problem that he is having with water leaking into his house. Previously, we were able to test out the new sewer camera equipment on this location. It was determined that it is not a borough issue. I am going to have our engineer submit a proposal to provide to the homeowner where the problem is occurring.
- Our newly purchased sewer camera equipment will be delivered this week, much earlier than we had anticipated. Pennoni will survey all areas in town and then prepare a report of their findings and costs associated. We can then move forward with fixing or replacing these areas.
- The design for SCADA has been approved.
- Reports were given concerning the most recent problems with certain wells, watermain replacements and the cost associated to fix them. There are a lot of areas in need of repair. West Berlin has the older part of the system. We plan on fixing these areas with no looping and instead have the piping run straight. In the past, the areas that were looped is where the water couldn't run completely through. Pennoni will be fixing these areas and we will be coming up with a five and twenty-year plan for the areas that need to be fixed in the sewer system. It could cost a total as much as or more than 3 million dollars.

FINANCE, Chairman Mike Buchanan

- On the 30th, our annual debt statement will be completed. This will give us a look at our outstanding long-term debt that the borough has, along with an overview of bonds and anticipated notes that we are not paying interest on yet. It will show us where our strengths and where our money is being used and show the infrastructure and what are costly endeavors or not.

- In regards to the Community Center, since I was on that committee last year, I would like to also agree that whoever rents the Community Center needs to be responsible for paying the attendants. The Borough can't continue to carry this expense.
- I would also like to propose that the number of Board of Health members be reduced from 7 seats to 5 seats. Most of the issues that are involved with the Board of Health don't involve the municipality. They have to go through the County to be approved. An ordinance change would have to be done by Howard. Can we try and get this on the agenda for our next meeting?
- The Berlin Farmers Market is in the process of doing tree clean up on their property.

PUBLIC SAFETY, Chairman Jim Pearce

- The Public Safety Committee met this past week. Once 2/10/18 financial statements are available we can move forward and start working through our finances.
- The Mayor and myself will be meeting with the EMS to discuss the Berlin Township Interborough Agreement. We will also be discussing the building facility. The Borough funds them and they also charge the residents for their services. They can't have both, it is either one or the other. Once a year they must meet with both Mayors and two governing body members from each town to discuss their transactions.
- There is also a trust fund set up for Radko where all donations will be deposited.
- I had a meeting with Chief Miller and they need to upgrade their IT needs for the Police Department. The IT committee members are Dan MacDonnell, Jim Pearce, Jim Bilella, and Chief Miller.
- I also have two proposals to present tonight with the stipulations and charges for outside police and security jobs. These charges are for police/ security where off duty police are needed for police, traffic control or security uses at the Berlin Auction, Hindu Temple, Solid Rock Church, Lucien's and Constantino's Funeral Home. The County roads currently pay a different rate than the Borough. The County pays \$67.75 hour. We need to define the costs for events and their specific time frames when needed. Security jobs should be defined as anything indoor. Outdoor events or anything that demands traffic control should be defined as a police job. I propose we give the security jobs the same hourly rate as the County pays at \$ \$67.78.
- I would like to see Howard put together an ordinance to be put on our next meeting agenda for the rates to be paid for these outside police jobs.

COMMUNICATIONS, Chairman Rick Miller

- The Celebration Committee would like to become a non-profit organization.
Mr. Long - You would have to break away from the Borough and reorganize as a Charitable Non-Profit Entity - 501-C Organization. You need to choose five or six people to be the officers. Council President Miller can be the liaison between Council and the organization, but cannot be a member or officer. An ordinance would have to be created to dissolve the organization.
- Council President Miller- I will be having a Communications Meeting on 2/2/18. We will discuss changes that need to be made to the website and put these procedures in place.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REAL ESTATE, Mayor Jim Bilella

- There are two lots for sale on Rutgers Blvd. We will be notifying the neighbors that are within the 200ft range.
- The Economic Development Committee has not been functioning in the Borough for years. I would like to redirect this committee and position it as a Business Relations Committee instead of an Economic Development Committee. This will be used to help promote businesses to come to Berlin Borough.
- **SOLICITOR, Howard Long** – No report at this time

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, Michael T. Kwasizur

- I agree that there should be an attendant at every Community Center event. The event holder should be responsible for paying for as many attendants as needed determined by the number of participants at the event.
- We are currently working on a Construction Code increase to include open air structures which will be compared to the States standard.
- The Summary of 2017 Revenues include: Revenue of \$75,000.00 from Pro Champs, \$1,500.00 savings using a new time clock, \$22,000.00 for sale of unused Borough equipment and vehicles sold on Gov. Deals, \$181.00 savings per month on Verizon Wireless bill. Starting, April 1, 2018 the 3% Hotel Tax will go into effect.
- I am in the process of collecting the operating efficiencies and revenue reports from the Berlin Baseball and Soccer organizations along with EMS, Fire Company and any other Borough funded organizations.
- There is an ordinance on the agenda tonight for introduction. It is Ordinance 2018-01 Non- Contractual Salaries.

Mayor Bilella - May I have a motion to introduce

Ordinance 2018-01 Non-Contractual Salaries

Motion made by – Councilman MacDonnell

Sec; - Councilman Badolato

All were in favor, except Councilman Buchanan was a Nay

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR: No one from the audience spoke

Councilman Badolato- Before we close, I wanted to ask Mr. Long about putting together a 10year lease for the Dill House. Mr. Long said he would look into this. Also, how can we find out if the Hotel, Post Office & Dill House are listed at the state as historic buildings? And if not, how can we get them listed as historic buildings?

ATTACHED – PROPOSED FEBRUARY 8, 2018 COUNCIL MEETING

Motion to adjourn; Councilman MacDonnell

Sec., Council President Miller

Voice Vote; All were in favor

Lois J. Sahina

Registered Municipal Clerk

January 30, 2018