

Township of Mantua
Committee Meeting
November 13, 2023
Mantua Township Municipal Building
6:00 P.M.

On the above date the Township Committee of the Township of Mantua held a Committee Meeting in the Mantua Township Municipal Building, 401 Main Street, Mantua, New Jersey 08051.

Mayor Zimmerman called the meeting to order. The time was 6:00 p.m. Mayor Zimmerman asked everyone to rise for the Flag Salute and remain standing to observe a moment of silence. Mayor Zimmerman delivered the Sunshine Notice as required by the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act.

Roll Call: Pamela LeVine, Township Deputy Clerk, Committeeman Layton, Committeeman Legge, Committeewoman Lukens, Mayor Zimmerman, Deputy Mayor Scirrotto, Mrs. Jennica Bileci, Township Administrator, Mrs. Pamela LeVine, Deputy Township Clerk, Mr. Justin Strausser, Solicitor, Mr. deMers, Public Works Superintendent, Erika Covely, Engineer, Lt. Hauss

Approval of Minutes:

Approval of the October 16, 2023, minutes.

Motion to approve: Deputy Mayor Scirrotto, 2nd Committeewoman Lukens,

Roll Call Vote: 5 yes votes.

Engineering Report:

Mrs. Covely noted that the following items: Police Holding Cell project was awarded to Marino Contracting and is on the agenda this evening for approval. In addition, the West Mercer project had its bid opening and Paving Plus was the low bidder and are anticipating this to be on the December agenda if all documents are approved. In addition, Erika advised that today the DOT advised that the township has been awarded \$121,825 for the 2024 project of McCarthy Avenue. Committeeman Legge mentioned that the Bergen Ave looks great, and a nice job was done by the contractor. Mayor Zimmerman inquired about the East Essex project. Mrs. Covely noted that the quotes were sent over and that this is the same contractor as West Mercer. It will probably not start until the spring as the weather is getting colder.

Department of Public Works Report:

Mr. deMers noted that the department is two weeks into the leaf season and we are making our way through the leaf routes with no issues. We've almost made it through everything at least twice so far. We are just waiting for the leaves to drop and for the residents to get them to the curb. And just another reminder, green carts will not be picked up any longer this year. Glenn discussed the update on our trash truck, we have contacted Grand Turk who has advised that they are still waiting on the truck chasis from International Truck and a new ETA is the middle of January, 2024. In addition, Glenn mentioned that the department has completed the DEP clean up of our mulching facility and is waiting on the final paperwork from DEP to confirm this. Mayor Zimmerman asked why the leafer trucks are out on Saturdays noting that this concern came from a

resident. Mr. deMers noted that this past week was a bulk week and the same men that drive the trash trucks also drive the leafers. In order to keep up on the leaves, it becomes necessary to have the trucks out on Saturday to get through the routes. In addition, Glenn mentioend that by the end of November early December the men will work every Saturday in order to keep up. Mayor Zimmerman also noted that on the social media page Mantua 08051 on 11/4/2023 posted by an anonymous person. That they love the public works deparmtent and all that they do and there was photo of two of the public works men working with the leafer. He also noted that there were 287 likes and 64 comments. This is overwhelming positive and thought that the deparmtent should know. He noted that the deparmtent should keep up the good work.

Police Department Report:

Lt. Hauss discussed that everything went well for Halloween and Mischief Night with only minor issues and that the department did give officers candy to hand out to everybody. He noted that it was Lt. Hayes' idea several years ago, so all credit should go to him. In addition, he mentioned that the department is allowing officers to grow facial hair for No Shave November. Any officer who wants to participate must donate money to be used towards a men's health related charity. The Lt. discussed the following items: the Pre-PT assessment is this week for our two officers who will be attending the class two academy, the three newest sergeants have completed Supervision School, Ptl. Wolfsgruber is still doing well in the K9 academy, the Officers were on the range last week and will have one more day this week. The Lt. noted that the department is finishing up with the required active shooter training at the old Underwood hospital. He noted that Lt. Murphy is the active shooter trainer and will be training other departments in the area. He noted that the department had been advised that the Ford vehicles that we ordered in 2022 will not be built until 2024. The Detective Bureau has been very busy and proactively searching for and responding to whatever they can get into, on top of helping the patrol shifts, when needed due to the high volume of shoplifting that has been going on through the county.

Lt. Hauss went onto discuss that the senior population should not be giving out any of their personal information. These organized groups are praying on these people as well as shoplifting in the major box stores. Mayor Zimmerman noted that he appreciates the monthly crime logs and would like to ask that maybe we can do this weekly and get it to the Sun paper so that the seniors that don't have computers or access to social media can know what's going on in town with the department.

Pursuant to Resolution R-32-2023, there is a time limit of five (5) minutes per person. Mayor Zimmerman discussed the new rules of the public session.

Public Participation:

Mayor Zimmerman discussed prior to the public session that as of 4:00 pm today there were a total of 5,002 votes regarding the GCL question that was on the ballot on Election Day. He noted that there were 1,575 votes in favor (31.5%) and 3,424 votes not in favor (68.45%) this included the vote by mail ballots as of this time. The mayor noted that until the election has been certified which should be around the 27th of November and the

township is advised of this that a resolution should be on the December agenda. The mayor noted that he will not compromise and do a resolution prior to the certification.

Ryan Campbell – 223 Hunterdon Ave – Mr. Campbell noted that the GCL matter has been 3 years in the making. He congratulated Committeeman Legge on his win of the election.

Mayor Zimmerman took this opportunity to discuss the matter that Mr. Legge does in fact pay taxes within the township. The mayor went on to list the taxes on the three properties that Mr. Legge owns and feels that it is necessary to make the people be aware that this is all public record if they were to inquire.

Fred Cruz – 139 Mockingbird Lane – Mr. Cruz noted that he is the president of the HOA for both Cedar Grove and Maplewood Village mobile homes. He discussed the rent increase that was discussed at a rent levelling meeting and the concerns of the residents of these two mobile home parks. Mayor Zimmerman thanked Mr. Cruz for bringing the concerns to the committee and allowed the Administrator to respond. Mrs. Bileci noted that the issues in both the communities are on a punch list and is awaiting confirmation from the owner that they have all been completed. To date the township has not heard from anyone. Mrs. Bileci noted that they felt it best to deal with the safety deficiencies and that no inspections have been done at this time as they are waiting on the owner to complete the punch list. Mrs. Bileci noted that once this is completed, she will then reach out to the HOA to schedule a meeting with the township and hopefully the owner to address the remaining concerns. Solicitor Strausser noted that after reviewing the ordinance there is nothing in the code that stated the rent increase should be retroactive as Mr. Cruz noted. In addition, there has been no approval for any rental increase currently. This would need to be approved by the Rent Levelling Board and to date it has not. Deputy Mayor Scirrotto noted that these matters have been going on for well over 30 years with this owner.

Carolyn Rhodes – 106 Breakneck Rd. – Mrs. Rhodes noted several matters that included the public portion is minimal and that all residents should be allowed to speak regardless of time, she inquired as to why the amount of money that the township is spending on the fossil park was inaccurate and if the green carts could be picked up year round rather than just at certain times during the year. Mayor Zimmerman noted that everyone has an opportunity to speak at the meetings. The only change was the total amount of time being spent on the public portion. In addition, the mayor noted that at each reorganization, the township adopts this resolution regarding the public portion. Regarding the amount of money being spent on the fossil park, the Administrator provided this information and if it is incorrect, we will correct that and let everyone know.

Julie Taylor – Cedar Grove – Ms. Taylor noted that she is the secretary of the HOA for the mobile parks and wanted to let the committee know that all the residents want are answers. She noted that she has sent certified letters to the solicitor and left many voicemails but has not heard back from them. Mr. Strausser noted that he has responded to all correspondence and noted that if there is nothing to report, then they would not hear back from their office.

Tony Alavario – 522 Delaware St. Woodbury – Mr. Alavario noted the there was never any question that the committee would do a resolution once the voters had their say about the GCL.

Josie Ladd – 124 Carriage Hill – Ms. Ladd discussed the effects of social media and how she herself has been an advocate for social media. She also noted that she feels the committee is doing an amazing job. Mayor Zimmerman noted that he is only facilitating the information on behalf of the entire committee, and he wants accurate and factual information going out on social media.

Carol Kirby - Main Street – Ms. Kirby said that she is very upset about the possibility of the GCL coming through the town. She noted her concerns and is hoping that the committee fights for the residents to not have this train come through the town. Mayor Zimmerman noted that this is not a township project, and that Ms. Kirby should contact the Governors office, DRPA and notify them of her concerns.

Deputy Mayor Scirrotto made a motion to close it was 2nd by Committeeman Legge. All were in Favor.

RESOLUTION R-176-2023: A RESOLUTION AWARDDING A CONTRACT TO ACME/LINGO FLAGPOLES, LLC FOR FLAGPOLE REPLACEMENT AT THE VETERANS MEMORIAL UNDER NON-FAIR AND OPEN PROCESS

RESOLUTION R-177-2023: A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE APPROVING CHANGE ORDER NO. 1 FOR THE PROJECT KNOWN AS RECONSTRUCTION OF BERGEN AVENUE

RESOLUTION R-178-2023: A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE RELEASE OF A MAINTENANCE BOND FOR THE PROJECT KNOWN AS COUNTRY GARDENS – PHASE 4A STEPPINGSTONE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$85,949.62

RESOLUTION R-179-2023: A RESOLUTION OF THE MANTUA TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE AUTHORIZING A PERMIT FEE (PERMIT #223000410) BE REFUNDED FOR THE PROPERTY KNOWN AS 42 MEADOWLARK AVE., MANTUA NJ IN THE AMOUNT OF \$144.00

RESOLUTION R-180-2023: RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MANTUA AWARDDING A BID IN THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$22,500.00 TO MARINO CONSTRUCTION FOR THE PROJECT KNOWN AS POLICE HOLDING CELL PROJECT

RESOLUTION R-181-2023: RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MANTUA AUTHORIZING THE PUBLIC SALE OF CERTAIN TOWNSHIP OWNED PROPERTIES PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 40A:12-13(a)

RESOLUTION R-182-2023: RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MANTUA CANCELLING TAXES FOR A TOTAL DISABLED VETERAN ROBERT MORENO 73 CANDLEWOOD DRIVE MANTUA, NJ BLOCK 146.08, LOT 40 FOR THE 4TH QUARTER OF 2023 AND 1ST AND 2ND QUARTERS 2024 AND FUTURE TAXES DUE

RESOLUTION R-183-2023: RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MANTUA CONFIRMING PRIVATE LAND SALE

RESOLUTION R-184-2023: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A CONTRACT WITH LISK LANDSCAPING FOR HOLIDAY LIGHTS UNDER NON-FAIR AND OPEN PROCESS

RESOLUTION R-185-2023: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING QUALIFIED PRIVATE COMMUNITY SERVICES AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TOWNSHIP OF MANTUA AND BERKLEY CROSSING

Deputy Mayor Scirrotto made a motion to adopt Resolutions R-176-2023 through Resolutions R-185-2023, it was 2nd by Committeeman Legge. All were in favor.

Remarks from Township Committee:

Committeewoman Lukens wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Committeeman Legge wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and noted that the Veterans Day ceremony was very well attend.

Deputy Mayor Scirrotto wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving as well as congratulated Committeeman Legge on his victory of another term on committee.

Mayor Zimmerman noted at tonight's meeting we adopted a resolution to have lights at both Chestnut Branch Park as well as McCarson Park for the holidays. This year we will be lighting the driveway leading into the park. Once the lights are up, they will be turned on. The mayor also noted several other items that will be going on. This year the township will be having a decorating contest called "Deck the House" with more information to come. The Winter Festival is on November 30th beginning at 5 pm. The Police Department in conjunction with the recreation committee will be bringing back the National Night Out next year sometime in August/September. Mayor Zimmerman wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving. In closing the mayor read a letter to the township regarding the first "Ace" (hole in one) at the new disc golf course.

Deputy Mayor Scirrotto made a motion to approve the bill list; it was 2nd by Committeeman Legge. Committeeman Layton Abstained. All were in favor.

Deputy Mayor Scirrotto made a motion to adjourn; it was 2nd by Committeeman Legge. All were in Favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela LeVine
Township Deputy Clerk