

## TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG

### COUNCIL MEETING

October 1, 2014

The Meeting of the Lopatcong Township Council was called to order at 7:30 pm by Mayor Steinhardt. The meeting was held in the Municipal Building located at 232 S. Third St., Phillipsburg, New Jersey 08865.

Mayor Steinhardt stated “adequate notice of this meeting has been provided indicating the time and place of the meeting in accordance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975 by advertising a Notice in The Star Gazette and The Express-Times and by posting a copy on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building.”

A prayer was offered followed by the Oath of Allegiance.

Present: Mayor Steinhardt, Council President Ciesla, Councilwoman Schneider, Councilman Belcaro and Councilwoman McCabe. Also present was Attorney Campbell and Engineer Sterbenz.

Resolution No. 14-116 - was passed to hold an Executive Session. Attorney Campbell stated that Council discussed CBA Contract, SCC Advisors, Sale of Township Property, and personnel. Motion to go out of Executive Session by Councilwoman Schneider, seconded by Council President Ciesla. All in favor.

#### **Special Presentations:**

Mrs. Rainie Roncoroni, Superintendent of Lopatcong School district – Good evening Mayor Steinhardt and Council Members. I’m here this evening with some of my staff members to present to you some information about the kindergarten expansion question. On November 4<sup>th</sup> Lopatcong residents will have the opportunity to decide if they would like to support a full day kindergarten program in our school district. The expansion question reads – in addition to the regular advertised budget the Board of Education will seek approval from the districts legal voters to raise an additional \$355,000.00 for the expansion of our kindergarten program to a full day program. The additional levy will provide funds for three new teachers, eight part-time aids supplies, text books and the employee benefits related to the new positions. The taxes, if raised, will be used exclusively for this purpose. Approval of these taxes will result in a permanent increase in the districts tax levy. These proposed additional expenditures are in addition to those necessary to achieve the common core. So I’m here this evening to provide for you some information and facts about a full-day kindergarten program. 90% of Warren County Schools currently offer full-day programs. 76% of schools in New Jersey have full-day programs and the rigorous common core state standards require more instruction to meet them than a half-day program would allow for. The research states that a full-day program increases school readiness, leads to higher academic achievement, supports literacy and language development, improves student attendance, benefits children socially and emotionally and decreases the costs by reducing retention and remediation rates over time. The programs, we are only one of two school districts in the county that do not offer a full-day program at this time. I’d also like to talk to you a little bit about the difference between what a half-day program offers and a full-day program. Briefly, in just the areas of literacy and math, our program currently allows the students to have up to 40 minutes four times a week for literacy. A 90 minute uninterrupted block of time would increase that time 50 minutes per day of just literacy instruction. In addition, mathematics is currently only able to be instructed 30 minutes per day. The additional full-day program would give them 30 extra minutes. Currently, our literacy and math programs are designed for full-day programs. We are currently using them and we are implementing them in the half-day to the best of our ability. I’d like to quote the Harvard Graduate School of

Education by stating, “The goal of insuring that every American student is college and career ready requires greater attention to the early years of education that establish the foundations for learning”. Insuring that high quality full-day kindergarten is an integral part of the Pre-K through third efforts providing a bridge between early childhood and early elementary years should be a top priority for every state and school district. At this time, I would like to ask Mr. Gallant to speak about the cost impact to the residents.

Mr. Gallant – As Mrs. Roncoroni mentioned the total cost of this will \$355,000.00 that we are voting on. The owner of a house that is assessed at \$230,000.00 which is the median value for a house in Lopatcong will see an annual tax increase of \$92. This works out to \$1.77 per day. Also I just wanted to say that the reason I think that this program will be a success is that our new Superintendent, Mrs. Roncoroni, was previously the principle at the Early Childhood Center in Phillipsburg which had ten full-day kindergartens. So she knows very, very well what it takes to make a successful program and she’s been on the forefront of implementing and designing what the new program will be, so thank you.

Mayor Steinhardt – Next on the Agenda Item No. 2 is a Resolution to swear in Michael Patricia as Provisional Sergeant in the Lopatcong Township Police Department. I’d like to invite Mr. Patricia and his family to come forth. Mayor Steinhardt swore in Michael Patricia.

R 14-118

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG, COUNTY OF WARREN AND  
STATE OF NEW JERSEY AUTHORIZING APPOINTMENT OF MICHAEL PATRICIA AS  
SERGEANT PROVISIONALLY IN THE POLICE DEPARTMENT PENDING CIVIL  
SERVICE COMMISSION EXAMINATION

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey hereby authorize the appointment of Michael Patricia as Sergeant provisionally in the Police Department pending successful completion of the Civil Service Commission examination ranking number one; and

WHEREAS, Michael Patricia will be paid a salary according to the Collective Bargaining Agreement; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey that Michael Patricia is hereby appointed Sergeant in the Police Department provisionally pending successful completion of Civil Service Exam ranking number one and shall be paid pursuant to the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

CERTIFICATION

I, Margaret B. Dilts, Municipal Clerk of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by Council at a meeting held on Wednesday, October 1, 2014.

Margaret B. Dilts, CMC

Mayor Steinhardt asked for a motion to adopt this Resolution. Motion by Council President Ciesla, seconded by Councilwoman Schneider. Roll call vote:

AYES: Councilman Belcaro, Councilwoman McCabe, Council President Ciesla and Mayor Steinhardt.

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: Councilwoman Schneider

**Proclamation** – Retired Sergeant William Spencer. Mayor Steinhardt announced that William Spencer retired from the Lopatcong Police Department on September 1, 2014 and presented a Proclamation to him. All of Council thanked Will for his many contributions.

**Public Comment** – Agenda Items – none.

**Old Business:**

**Minutes** – Approve Minutes of August 6, 2014. Motion by Council President Ciesla, seconded by Councilwoman Schneider. Roll call vote:

AYES: Councilwoman Schneider, Councilman Belcaro, Council President Ciesla.

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: Mayor Steinhardt, Councilwoman McCabe

**Ordinance No. 14-08** – First reading to Amend, Revise and Supplement Chapter 227 entitled “Vehicles and Traffic”, including Section 25 “Multi-Way-Stop Intersections” relative to the Intersection of Baltimore Street and South First Street.

ORDINANCE NO. 14-08

ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG, COUNTY OF WARREN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY TO AMEND, REVISE AND SUPPLEMENT CHAPTER 227 "VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC", INCLUDING SECTION 25 “MULTI-WAY STOP INTERSECTIONS” RELATIVE TO THE INTERSECTION OF  
BALTIMORE STREET AND SOUTH FIRST STREET

WHEREAS, Chapter 227 "Vehicles and Traffic" of the Code of the Township of Lopatcong contains various parking and traffic regulations; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to amend provisions relative to multi-way stop intersections to include the intersection of Baltimore Street and South First Street to improve safety; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey that Chapter 227 "Vehicles and Traffic", Section 25 be amended, revised and supplemented as follows:

**SECTION 1**

The portion of 227-25 relative to multi-way stop intersections shall be amended to add the following intersection:

Intersection

Stop Sign On

Baltimore Street and South First Street

Baltimore Street (both legs) and South First Street (both legs)

**SECTION 2**

Severability. The various parts, sections and clauses of this Ordinance are hereby declared to be severable. If any part, sentence, paragraph, section or clause is adjudged unconstitutional or invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this Ordinance shall not be affected thereby.

**SECTION 3**

Repealer. Any ordinances or parts thereof in conflict with the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby repealed as to their inconsistencies only.

#### **SECTION 4**

Effective Date. In accordance with the provisions of NJSA 39:4-8, and due to the proximity of the multi-way stop intersection to Route 22, this ordinance shall not go into effect until the ordinance is reviewed by the New Jersey Department of Transportation and either approved or deemed inconsequential to the highway.

#### **NOTICE**

NOTICE is hereby given that the foregoing Ordinance was introduced to pass on first reading at a regular meeting of the Council of the Township of Lopatcong held on October 1, 2014 and ordered published in accordance with the law. Said Ordinance will be considered for final reading and adoption at a regular meeting of the Township Council to be held on November 5, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. or as soon thereafter as the Township Council may hear this Ordinance at the Municipal Building, 232 South Third Street, Phillipsburg, NJ at which time all persons interested may appear for or against the passage of said Ordinance.

Margaret B. Dilts, CMC

Mayor Steinhardt asked for a motion to adopt this Ordinance on first reading. Motion by Councilwoman Schneider, seconded by Council President Ciesla. Roll call vote:

AYES: Councilwoman Schneider, Councilman Belcaro, Councilwoman McCabe, Council President Ciesla and Mayor Steinhardt.

NAYS: None

#### **New Business:**

**Coordinated Health Developer's Agreement** – Mayor Steinhardt asked for a motion to approve the Developer's Agreement. Motion by Councilwoman Schneider, seconded by Councilwoman McCabe. Roll call vote:

AYES: Councilwoman Schneider, Councilman Belcaro, Councilwoman McCabe and Council President Ciesla.

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: Mayor Steinhardt

**Coordinated Health Request for Sewer Allocation** – A letter of request received from Coordinated Health to approve sewer allocation of 345 gallons per day with conditions. Motion by Councilman Belcaro, seconded by Councilwoman McCabe. Roll call vote:

AYES: Councilwoman Schneider, Councilman Belcaro, Councilwoman McCabe and Council President Ciesla.

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: Mayor Steinhardt

**Police Department Off-Duty Weapons** – Mayor Steinhardt asked for a motion to approve the purchase of off-duty weapons for the Police Department at a cost of \$2,506.00. Motion by Council President Ciesla, seconded by Councilman Belcaro. Roll call vote:

AYES: Councilwoman Schneider, Councilman Belcaro, Councilwoman McCabe, Council President Ciesla and Mayor Steinhardt.

NAYS: None

**Rt. 57 Pump Station Project – Dulaine Contracting** – Approve payment in the amount of \$128,595.80 for work completed pursuant to USDA approval. Motion by Council President Ciesla, seconded by Councilman Belcaro. Roll call vote:

AYES: Councilwoman Schneider, Councilman Belcaro, Councilwoman McCabe, Council President Ciesla and Mayor Steinhardt.

NAYS: None

**Consent Agenda:**

The following agenda items were moved by Councilman Belcaro, seconded by Councilwoman Schneider. Roll call vote:

**Delaware Crossings Bond** – Approve release of Bond No. 0396731 held on Delaware Crossings pursuant to conditions outlined in Engineer Sterbenz Report dated September 24, 2014.

AYES: Councilwoman Schneider, Councilman Belcaro, Councilwoman McCabe, Council President Ciesla and Mayor Steinhardt.

NAYS: None

**Retired Srgt. William Spencer** – Approve purchase of off-duty police weapon from the Township upon his retirement.

**Resolution No. 14-117** – Authorize grant application for South Second Street Road Improvement Project and grant agreement with the NJDOT.

R 14-117

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWNSHIP ENGINEER TO SUBMIT A GRANT APPLICATION AND AUTHORIZING THE TOWNSHIP MAYOR AND CLERK TO EXECUTE A GRANT AGREEMENT WITH THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR THE SOUTH SECOND STREET ROAD

IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG, WARREN COUNTY, NJ

WHEREAS, the NJDOT makes funds available to municipalities and counties for road improvement projects through the municipal aid portion of the New Jersey Transportation Trust Fund;

WHEREAS, the Township Engineer has recommended that the Township Council apply to the New Jersey Department of Transportation for funds that are available under the New Jersey Transportation Trust Fund Authority Act, Fiscal Year 2015 Municipal Aid Program for the purpose of constructing improvements to South Second Street in the Township of Lopatcong;

WHEREAS, the Township Council has considered this recommendation;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Council of the Township of Lopatcong formally approves the grant application for the above stated project.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Township Engineer is hereby authorized to submit an electronic grant application identified as MA-2015-Lopatcong Township-00114 to the New Jersey Department of Transportation on behalf of the Township of Lopatcong.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and Clerk are hereby authorized to sign the grant agreements on behalf of the Township of Lopatcong and that their signature constitutes acceptance of the terms and conditions of the grant agreement and approves the execution of the grant agreement.

Certified as a true copy of the Resolution adopted by the Council

On this 1st day of October 2014.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Margaret B. Dilts, CMC, Township Clerk/Administrator

My signature and the Clerk's seal serve to acknowledge the above resolution and constitute acceptance of the terms and conditions of the grant agreement and approve the execution of the grant agreement as authorized by the resolution above.

ATTEST and AFFIX SEAL

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Clerk)  
Margaret B. Dilts  
CMC, Township Clerk/Administrator

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Presiding Officer)  
Douglas J. Steinhardt, Mayor

**Resolution No. 14-119** – Approve permanent appointment of Jonathan Eriksen and Louis LaFord as Sergeants in the Police Department per Certification of Eligibles PL 141145.

R 14-119

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG, COUNTY OF WARREN AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY AUTHORIZING APPOINTMENT OF JONATHAN ERIKSEN AND LOUIS LAFORD AS SERGEANTS IN THE POLICE DEPARTMENT PURSUANT TO CERTIFIED LIST OF ELIGIBLES NO. PL141145 FROM THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey hereby authorize the appointment of Jonathan Eriksen and Louis LaFord as Sergeants in the Police Department per Certified List of Eligibles No. PL 141145 from the Civil Service Commission; and

WHEREAS, Sergeants Eriksen and LaFord will be paid a salary according to the Collective Bargaining Agreement; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey that Jonathan Eriksen and Louis LaFord are hereby appointed Sergeants in the Police Department and shall be paid pursuant to the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

CERTIFICATION

I, Margaret B. Dilts, Municipal Clerk of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by Council at a meeting held on Wednesday, October 1, 2014.

Margaret B. Dilts, CMC

**Resolution No. 14-120** – Imposing a lien for costs incurred by the Township DPW to remedy violations on property known as Block 86.07, Lot 61 in the amount of \$312.07.

R 14-120

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG, COUNTY OF WARREN AND  
STATE OF NEW JERSEY IMPOSING A LIEN FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

WHEREAS, the property owner of Block 86.07, Lot 61 is in foreclosure; and

WHEREAS, there are unpaid charges in the amount of \$312.07 outstanding on said Block and Lot representing the costs incurred by the Township of Lopatcong to remedy violations occurring on said property which the Township Council has examined and found to be proper.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey that it does hereby place a lien on the premises listed in the amount listed for the purpose of collecting unpaid charges due to the Township of Lopatcong.

CERTIFICATION

I, Margaret B. Dilts, Municipal Clerk of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren an State of New Jersey do hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the Council of the Township of Lopatcong at a meeting held on Wednesday, October 1, 2014.

Margaret B. Dilts, CMC

**Resolution No. 14-121** – Imposing a lien for costs incurred by the Township DPW to remedy violations on property known as Block 81, Lot 14 in the amount of \$312.07.

R 14-121

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG, COUNTY OF WARREN AND  
STATE OF NEW JERSEY IMPOSING A LIEN FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

WHEREAS, the property owner of Block 81, Lot 14 is in foreclosure; and

WHEREAS, there are unpaid charges in the amount of \$312.07 outstanding on said Block and Lot representing the costs incurred by the Township of Lopatcong to remedy violations occurring on said property which the Township Council has examined and found to be proper.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey that it does hereby place a lien on the premises listed in the amount listed for the purpose of collecting unpaid charges due to the Township of Lopatcong.

CERTIFICATION

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Margaret B. Dilts, CMC

**Resolution No. 14-122** – Imposing a lien for costs incurred by the Township DPW to remedy violations on property known as Block 86.01, Lot 2 in the amount of \$312.07.

R 14-122

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG, COUNTY OF WARREN AND  
STATE OF NEW JERSEY IMPOSING A LIEN FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

WHEREAS, the property owner of Block 86.01, Lot 2 is in foreclosure; and

WHEREAS, there are unpaid charges in the amount of \$312.07 outstanding on said Block and Lot representing the costs incurred by the Township of Lopatcong to remedy violations occurring on said property which the Township Council has examined and found to be proper.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey that it does hereby place a lien on the premises listed in the amount listed for the purpose of collecting unpaid charges due to the Township of Lopatcong.

#### CERTIFICATION

I, Margaret B. Dilts, Municipal Clerk of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren an State of New Jersey do hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the Council of the Township of Lopatcong at a meeting held on Wednesday, October 1, 2014.

Margaret B. Dilts, CMC

**Resolution No. 14-123** – Imposing a lien for costs incurred by the Township DPW to remedy violations on property known as Block 2, Lot 41 in the amount of \$312.07.

R 14-123

#### RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG, COUNTY OF WARREN AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY IMPOSING A LIEN FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

WHEREAS, the property owner of Block 2, Lot 41 is in foreclosure; and

WHEREAS, there are unpaid charges in the amount of \$312.07 outstanding on said Block and Lot representing the costs incurred by the Township of Lopatcong to remedy violations occurring on said property which the Township Council has examined and found to be proper.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey that it does hereby place a lien on the premises listed in the amount listed for the purpose of collecting unpaid charges due to the Township of Lopatcong.

#### CERTIFICATION

I, Margaret B. Dilts, Municipal Clerk of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren an State of New Jersey do hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the Council of the Township of Lopatcong at a meeting held on Wednesday, October 1, 2014.

Margaret B. Dilts, CMC

**Resolution No. 14-124** – Authorizing refund on overpayment of sewer tax on Block 106, Lot 33.01 in the amount of \$45.00.

R 14-124

#### RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG, COUNTY OF WARREN AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY AUTHORIZING TO REFUND OVERPAYMENT ON SEWER TAX FOR TAX YEAR 2014

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey that warrants be drawn to REO Accounting Department of Century 21 listed

below in the designated amounts representing an overpayment on tax payments as follows for the tax year 2014.

<u>Account</u>	<u>Name of Payee</u>	<u>Amount</u>
15840 40 Bradford	Century 21 Worden & Green	\$45.00

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey have approved the refunds made rather than applying these payments to the future 2014 sewer taxes due.

#### CERTIFICATION

I, Margaret B. Dilts, Municipal Clerk of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren an State of New Jersey do hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the Council of the Township of Lopatcong at a meeting held on Wednesday, October 1, 2014.

Margaret B. Dilts, CMC

**Resolution No. 14-125** – Authorizing refund from County Tax Appeal Judgment on Block 102, Lot 9.01 in the amount of \$34,108.07.

R 14-125

#### RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG, COUNTY OF WARREN AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY AUTHORIZING TO REFUND OVERPAYMENT FROM A COUNTY TAX APPEAL JUDGMENT ON TAXES FOR TAX YEAR 2014

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey that warrants be drawn to the property owners listed below in the designated amounts representing a refund on tax payments from a Warren County judgment on property as follows for the tax year 2014.

<u>Block &amp; Lot</u>	<u>Name of Payee</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Block 102, Lot 9.01	Phillipsburg Mall LLC	\$34,108.07

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey have approved the refunds made rather than applying these payments to the future of 2015 property taxes due.

#### CERTIFICATION

I, Margaret B. Dilts, Municipal Clerk of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren an State of New Jersey do hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the Council of the Township of Lopatcong at a meeting held on Wednesday, October 1, 2014.

Margaret B. Dilts, CMC

**Delaware Park Engine Co. No. 1** – Approve membership for Cody Kolb and junior membership Kaitlyn Taggart.

**Announcements:** Halloween is Friday, October 31, 2014 from 5:30 to 7:30 pm.

## Council Reports –

Councilwoman Schneider – Leaf season and the DPW will begin to pick up leaves the week of October 6<sup>th</sup> and leaves only. No brush, garbage, grass clippings, garden or flower clippings, just leaves and the County roads need to bag their leaves. They must be bagged. Our guys will not be taking those off the street they have to be bagged. It looks like fall cleanup was a success due to the overloaded dumpsters that were out in the parking lot, so all got rid of their stuff. The Board of Education, the last meeting we had a little bit of fun watching the ALS bucket challenges being done by our Superintendent, Ms. Roncoroni. She got a nice big bucket of ice dumped over her and also administration, the teachers, um; it was a really cute thing to watch. They videotaped everything. All the elementary school teachers lined up outside and they picked a child from their class and they dumped water over their heads. My daughter was actually involved in that. She was a little skittish cause only in the first days of school and she didn't know her teacher, she was afraid to do it but, uh, they did it and it was a really nice thing to do and their donations speak so much for who we have on our Board of Education so, uh, that's it for my reports. I do have just a small bit of old business that, um, still has yet to be taken care of. Um, our March 11<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes and video still have not been posted on our website. Um, I have asked quite a few times and, uh, I'm just a little bit concerned as to why they are not up. Um, I've also asked for a copy of the, um, spreadsheet that was produced that evening. Um, so here we are in October and March is still not up. I'd like maybe some clarification on that.

Council President Ciesla – I'm also the web person for the LAA and they had a lot of problems this month and actually I was talking to Katrina and just didn't have enough time to convert the video it takes a few hours so I'm getting to it. I do this, you know, free of charge for the town and for the LAA and like I said their website was not working so that was a first priority.

Mayor Steinhardt – Thank you.

Councilwoman Schneider – Um, actually the first priority is for the taxpayers, um, you know,

Mayor Steinhardt – Their both for the taxpayers so that is an unfair statement.

Councilwoman Schneider – Yeah well, you know

Mayor Steinhardt – She does it on her own time. When it gets done she gets it done.

Councilwoman Schneider – Well you know, I shouldn't have

Mayor Steinhardt – If you want to pay somebody to do it or we can pay somebody to do it.

Councilwoman Schneider – I've been asking for quite a bit of time and you know, it, this really

Mayor Steinhardt – She just explained to you why it wasn't done. To suggest to, that it's, it's what's the comment that you made, sort of obvious but, and it's a taxpayer thing, that's fine, but like I said

Councilwoman Schneider – It is.

Mayor Steinhardt – So the alternative is to spend taxpayers money and have somebody do it so the fact of the matter is she said she's working on it.

Councilwoman Schneider – Okay.

Mayor Steinhardt - I'm sure it'll get posted. If it is not posted soon, if you want to hire somebody to go out and do it then we can do that but in the mean time we have someone who is volunteering to do it but for one meeting uh, has done a pretty good job of putting everything else up there and I do know for a fact since I deal with the LAA on a fairly regular basis, that she's done a good job of taking care of that stuff for them too. So to sit here and suggest that one meeting in a vacuum and how long have you been doing it?

Council President Ciesla – Almost two years.

Mayor Steinhardt – Two years is a little unfair.

Council President Ciesla – I'm paying for stuff myself as well.

Mayor Steinhardt - Quite frankly a little bit out of line so, you know, again when you have a volunteer, in my experience, it's nice to say thanks and appreciate the effort rather than to throw stones at her for not putting a single meeting up. I know we talked about the spreadsheet, um, and don't know where the spreadsheet ended up because it was somebody else's personal work product and they took it and left. It wasn't a Township document, um, so I don't know where the particular spreadsheet would get to but, uh, you know,

Councilwoman Schneider – It is a little bit confusing as to why April, and May and June and July minutes were all put up but March 11<sup>th</sup>'s specifically not put up.

Mayor Steinhardt - Well she indicated that she gets them up and we'll get them up as soon as possible.

Council President Ciesla – I was doing the regular meetings. I wasn't even sure what we were going to do with a workshop like that. I didn't get any direction from anyone

Mayor Steinhardt – All right.

Council President Ciesla - It doesn't, you know, it will get up.

Councilwoman Schneider – I, um, I appreciate that. I also, uh, would like to, you know, in past conversations you said if you could find the minutes, if you could find the video, um, you've not really been very transparent as to where, um, your, uh, where you stand with that I just, you know.

Mayor Steinhardt - I don't how much more transparent a person could be other than to say that she'll put them up there and she's doing it and volunteering her time. I'm not going to sit here and make this a personal attack on anybody Donna. You have any other comments that you want to make?

Councilwoman Schneider - I'm not making it a personal attack

Mayor Steinhardt - If you have any other comments that you want to make relevant to, uh, the town's business, let us know.

Councilwoman Schneider - Well I do, um, I do

Mayor Steinhardt - That's as far as we're going to go and so far as throwing stones at another council member.

Councilwoman Schneider - Well it is town business and, um, I do have an OPRA Request for that particular document since no one seems to be able to find that document, so maybe by handing in an OPRA Request

Council President Ciesla - I don't think it's a Township document.

Mayor Steinhardt – (Inaudible) didn't we talk about.

Councilwoman Schneider - It was produced at the meeting which makes it a Township document

Mayor Steinhardt - That doesn't make it a Township document. What makes it a Township document is it was required to be made or maintained by the Township. So file your request, Counsel will look at it, and we'll deal with it, um, so, is that it?

Councilwoman Schneider - Um, no it is a Township document, it was produced at a Township Council Meeting.

Mayor Steinhardt - The person who's going to determine whether it is a Township document is the attorney that reviews them at the time they review them. So while I appreciate your opinion, uh, it's simply that, your opinion. We'll deal with the legal opinion when it comes back.

Councilwoman Schneider - We'll you are picking and choosing what your putting on the website so you're making decisions for the taxpayer which are not in their best interest

Council President Ciesla - We are not picking and choosing.

Councilwoman Schneider - I do have copies of the minutes if anyone is interested. I would be glad to pass them out or to get you a copy um, if you so choose to want to see them. Thank you.

Councilman Belcaro – Rt. 57 Pump Station is on schedule to be completed by the end of November. We had a couple of bumps which have been taken care of. Um, so just probably back dated by a week or two but still on schedule and then this part is over. That's it.

Councilwoman McCabe – First off, Lou and I are working on the CFO replacement. So we are in the process of reviewing some resumes. We have some meetings scheduled in the upcoming weeks and we hope to make a decision. So we are working on it.

Secondly, EDAC. We did not have a meeting this month, however, our work is continuing as far as we are working on this card and we are meeting with local businesses to see if they want to participate in this discount card offer. It is going to be like credit card type, um, document that you would go into the business and if the business is partaking, they may so, often percent off, or something like that, whatever they are going to agree to if they want to participate. Um, and in light of that, we are going to need some money in order to order these cards. So I would like to, I guess I have to make a motion to request some funds from the general fund to be, I guess, transferred over to us or however it would work. I think we need about \$500. The cards themselves to make is about \$170. There is design fees of about \$50 to \$100 and any excess funds that we would have, we would keep and apply them to, we are planning to have a future networking event for the businesses in Lopatcong. We don't know when, we're sort of, you know, trying to iron out the details and in the long run, range we also want to do a town brochure and get information out about Lopatcong out there to say look, you know, here we are, you know, we're this little town out here, come set up business here and look what we are close to and look what we are near and things like that. So, do I make a motion to ask for money? I'd like to make a motion to request \$500 be transferred over to EDAC, I'm not sure the procedural part of it, but, so I need somebody to second that.

Council President Ciesla – I'll second.

Mayor Steinhardt – Discussion.

Councilwoman McCabe – Thank you any questions?

Councilwoman Schneider – Yeah, I'm just not, the procedure for buying you don't need a purchase order first or a quote, a direct quote before you.

Councilwoman McCabe – I have a direct, I have a quote, I have a handwritten quote here yes, it was about \$170 I'm thinking of ordering 500 cards and there is design fees of another \$50 to \$100.

Councilwoman Schneider – Yeah, no, I heard all that I just didn't

Clerk Dilts – (inaudible) purchase order.

Councilwoman Schneider – I just didn't know how, if you were reading off of, um, just a paper or if you were reading off of a quote that you got from the

Councilwoman McCabe – It's a quote that I got from them but it's

Councilwoman Schneider - Okay, that's fine. Thank you.

Council President Ciesla - They are an approved vendor too

Councilwoman McCabe - Oh good. And then again, anything extra we would apply to some future events that we hope to plan. Secondly, I did attend a Chamber of Commerce meeting networking event in Phillipsburg last

Clerk Dilts – We need a roll call on that.

Mayor Steinhardt – Oh I'm sorry, busy – roll call please.

AYES: Councilwoman Schneider, Councilman Belcaro, Councilwoman McCabe, Council President Ciesla and Mayor Steinhardt.

NAYS: None

Councilwoman McCabe - Lastly, I attended a Chamber of Commerce networking event in Phillipsburg. The Chamber of Commerce, I don't think Lopatcong belongs to this yet, I'm not sure that we do but

Clerk Dilts – We are part of the Warren County Chamber of Commerce.

Councilwoman McCabe – Okay, you know, their goal is to highlight and advertise local businesses and try to increase foot traffic and try to increase sales and things like that and make it known where they are and things like that. Uh, so we may try to incorporate having that, I guess its Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce come in and talk to our business owners and see if there is anything they can do to help us or any ideas to bring in new businesses. We, um, you know, my discussions with residents and with the business owners that I have been talking to, some of them have been coming up with some ideas of like, you know, what we could use some maybe commercial recreation type businesses out here. That would be a great draw for Lopatcong. It would increase traffic, it would increase you know, people coming into the town and then of course taking advantages of the businesses that are already here. Another suggestion

was in my talking to senior citizens, them stating that, you know, there is not a lot of senior citizen housing in this town and that one of the things they would like to see is possibly a development for senior citizens or for assisted living, um, because again we don't have much of it. I think we have Clymer Village over there and from what I've been told it is a long wait if you want to try and move into that that building. So part of our thought is that maybe can get look at our, you know, zoning to see if we can add things in, like, commercial recreation or possibly assisted living and see, you know, what areas we can add those into. Um, you know this might be a good time to to look at, you know our uses and maybe make some changes for, you know, potential future developments.

Council President Ciesla - This maybe a good time to look at our industrial uses as well as we stated we wanted to do.

Councilwoman McCabe – Right, right. We received our report from our planner and I think maybe we can reexamine our industrial uses uh you know we have the reports and maybe we can make some changes there uh again to, to include businesses we see would be potential and beneficial to our town. So

Council President Ciesla - Does that need to go before zoning?

Councilwoman McCabe – Uh that is a good question.

(Inaudible)

Engineer Sterbenz – As far as the Highway Business District which is on Rt. 22, that zone does allow commercial indoor and outdoor recreation uses. The ROM District which is predominantly along Strykers Road it has some frontage of Rt. 22, does not permit that. That is a typical use that is permitted in an industrial zone. I know Hackettstown allows that and your industrial zone that is one example. That would just be a matter of adding, you know, permitted principal use, it is a very easy change to the ordinance. Probably the thing to do would be to send a letter to the Planning Board and ask them for a recommendation on that.

Councilwoman McCabe – Okay, alright. I'll take the lead on that and try to get something (inaudible) alright thanks Paul. That's all I have.

Council President Ciesla – Let me start with the LAA. At our first home game we honored two of our retired LAA Directors Corrine Steinmetz and John Donnelley. He moved out of the area so he wasn't present. He, I think, was one of our longest directors. Um, Corrine was right behind him. They put in about six to eight years each and did an amazing job. They did it well after they had children in the program. They coached teams when they didn't have children on them and they really brought the programs to where they are now so they were presented with proclamations and we just have to mail John's to him. Also I wanted to recognize that the LAA did an ALS challenge themselves and they raised over \$500 for that and I just wanted to say thank you for doing that. It is a very good cause and, you know they even made a really nice video; it's out there if you want to look at it.

Soccer Fest is this weekend, October 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> at the soccer fields here. It is a big event and a nice fundraiser event for soccer too. They are having a good season. Football is having a very good season. Also the LAA, in conjunction with the Recreation Program, is planning a community service project. Primarily we want the LAA athletes to give back to the community but it is open to adults, it is open to high schoolers. I've been working with the principal to try to get some high school involvement in town too so this is one of the things they could do. We are going to, I believe it's the weekend of the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> we are going to put out a flyer and see if we can do some leaf raking and yard work for our seniors, disabled, veterans (inaudible), anyone

who might need the help and this will go along with our uh, go along with our leaf cleanup. So this is something that the kids used to do a lot of years ago and we just want to give back because we know that the community shares the burden of our recreation fields and we just want to give back to everybody.

For recreation, I would like to invite the engineer to one of our meetings up coming soon because we're looking for, now that we have community day behind us, which thank you for everybody who attended and helped, it was a big success, we want to discuss a safer access to the park for bikers and walkers and we found a little road that the Township owns and we might be able to get them to cross at a better place on Belvidere. Also we want to just discuss the possibility if we could put in a dog park somewhere in town. Apparently, it seems that 80 percent of the residents own a dog and everybody wants to go out and socialize with their dog so I'll reach out to you Paul to see when you can come.

We're also working on a calendar. Thank you Gary for giving me your template. I have almost all the pictures from the photo contest and we're, I should have that all together and available for purchase in November. Uh, one of our winner's is here, Mr. Taggart with his beautiful pictures. Thank you.

Uh, technology. Uh, we've been very busy. Right now we're proceed, we're going through, I'm going through with the tax collector, we're going through actual demos from the on-line payment vendors. We're looking, we're not only looking just at costs to the Township, costs to the residents, but we need to make sure that it is not going to increase their work burden, that it's actually going to decrease her work burden so, you know, she'll actually have less work and maybe she won't have to be here at all hours of the night trying to catch up. We have one scheduled, we did one and we have another one so by our next meeting I should have a recommendation to Council on all the pros and cons of the three. We've talked to all of them and as long as we decide by December, we can have it in place for first quarter 2015. I think this will be a big help, especially for sewer bills cause I know a lot of mortgages pay your taxes like I do but, you know, that's one thing, but your sewer bill, you get the little card. You pay that and there's no way to do that except bring it here or mail it.

Um, we had several problems with the LAA website; one being that it didn't work all together. I had about four help desk tickets open. I'm down to one but we're right in the midst of basketball and wrestling signups so it was a high priority to get that up and running. I still have gotten through this several times with our vendor and its working. We just have a few little things left to fix so, uh, everything is a little behind because I spent a lot of time on that so catching up with the other projects that I have going on.

Another hot topic in town is our sewer fees. A lot of people don't quite understand how your sewer bill is derived so I'm working on a Council Corner piece with Betty and Rachel to explain how your sewer charges are generated and we're also going to offer you tips to save money.

One thing I've also been looking into, one of the things people wanted was in email and text notifications, for things besides emergencies, is we have free use of Rapid Notify for emergencies because of Merrill Creek. Because we're in that area, where if something should happen to the reservoir and they need to get us out of here, so we are allowed to use that free of charge for emergencies. For non-emergencies we're now looking into Nixel. Betty has the figures on that but that would be so if you wanted updates on when you know Community Day is or when, you know, any other kind of events we have in town, or it could be even traffic incidents, stuff like that depending on how much we want to use it.

Um, for the newsletter, I know we really didn't assign anyone to it but I did receive a package which I can, if anyone wants to look at if after, they put together these really nice newsletters,

very professional. What happens is they get sponsorships; the company gets sponsorships to pay for it so it is no cost to the Township at all so I'm just, I'm trying to get a bunch of different ideas together. If this is no cost it also goes kind of hand-n-hand with EDAC trying to promote our business because they can advertise in here and we would only be responsible for mailing them but we don't even have to incur that cost because they send us a pdf. We can email it and then we can just, the printed copies that they give us, we can leave them in strategic places in town.

Loss control, one of the things I've been talking to our risk manager about to come in and provide some loss control training. This is something that is provided through our insurance and it usually helps you eliminate risks. So they can come in and go over DPW equipment, its safety, workplace harassment, sexual harassment and how to deal with things like when it is an employee or a customer, little things like that, it helps us with our insurance rating and I think it just a good benefit for the Township and the employees.

And then just looking ahead for next year, we have a schedule of replacement for our police vehicles so we kind of know where we're going with that. We now have some information from the fire department and I also asked the DPW to project out the next five years of their replacements and the EMS is going to do that too. Just so we can kind of, because we, the tax appeal bond that's going to be with us for five years. We need to be strategic going forward. And that's all I have.

Mayor Steinhardt – Thank you. We are going to be meeting on October 14<sup>th</sup>. It is a Tuesday most likely in the afternoon based on everyone's availability to deal with some things because Betty is not here today. More specifically, the Best Practices Worksheet and that's the worksheet that the DCA puts out every year that we are required. The questionnaire that the DCA puts out every year that the Council is required to respond to in order to qualify for what little state aid they give us. Although it is a small number it's about \$200,000. A million dollars

Clerk Dilts – It's a million dollar.

Mayor Steinhardt - What's that issue I guess, it's a couple hundred thousand dollars with some of the questions we need to address. One of which is impacted by the Police Department's collective bargaining agreement. So in order to have some questions answered that came up during executive session, as they may relate to our ability to answer certain questions on the Best Practices Worksheet we need Betty and/or Dave to be here. So in order to do that, the first available date in order to get notice out to the public is October 14<sup>th</sup>. So there will be a meeting on October 14<sup>th</sup> most likely sometime in the mid to late afternoon based on everyone's availability. Next on the Best Practices Worksheet, there's an opportunity to gain points by creating a finance committee consisting of members of the Council and the chief financial officer to discuss and review financial issues impacting the Township. It is an advisory committee so its opinions and recommendations are non-binding. They are created in an advisory capacity and therefore there are no other requirements in-so-far its meeting. However, it is important we appoint one in order to gain the points available to us on the DCA's worksheet. Ms. Schneider and Ms. Ciesla have volunteered to participate on that committee with Ms. Dobes so I'll make those appointments now. Next, we have a request from Ms. Dobes to hire Phoenix Advisor in response to an SEC mandate that has come out and in order for us to be in compliance with it, I'll defer to Ms. Campbell in way of a further explanation, but it is my understanding that they have a flat rate proposal for review of documents in order for us to be in compliance with the SEC reqs. correct?

Attorney Campbell – Yes, the SEC and financial markets are clamping down on local government issuers of outstanding debt. Um, so actually we got a Local Finance Notice from the DCA and the first sentence says, "this notice is intended to give you fair warning," and so

basically they are calling it the Municipal Continuance Cooperation Initiative and a very, very brief overview of it is that we need to be monitoring the people who are giving us our bonds and there are certain things that the town doesn't necessarily have the capacity to go out, or even our bond counsel, so many towns have been seeing letters from their bonds counsels recommending that they get an advisor who can do this and basically this cooperative initiative is giving you an opportunity to self-identify past non-compliance and fix it and if you don't, then you are going to be, you know, and get it right going forward. But basically it is not something the town did or didn't do, it is the people who issue the bonds and it's paperwork that needs to be done and so this company, they have issued two proposals. They are on the Morris County Cooperative so this is a competitive contract. It is a flat fee of \$950.00 to review and research all of our past, any open bond and also we need to do this in order to do any bond anticipates notes or issue any bonds in the future and then there is a \$650 fine to actually file all the paperwork and that includes up to three or four issues. If you go beyond that, it is like \$100 for each additional issue but they'll bring those to you as they come up. But so you are looking at about \$1600 for this and this has been recommended both by your bond counsel and by your auditor and read the agreement and the proposal. I am okay with you signing it.

Mayor Steinhardt – Great motion. Motion by Council President Ciesla, seconded by Councilwoman McCabe. Discussion?

Councilwoman Schneider – Just a quick, we did have two proposals that we looked at, um, so we didn't just get one and go with it we did have two.

Roll call vote:

AYES: Councilwoman Schneider, Councilman Belcaro, Councilwoman McCabe, Council President Ciesla and Mayor Steinhardt.

NAYS: None

Mayor Steinhardt – Next we have to appoint a conflict assessor for Sycamore Landing. The assessor has a conflict so far as her ability to address the roll back tax issue the Township will be receiving. I believe, Kathy, \$304,423.00 in roll back taxes associated with that property but in order to have it administrated it is necessary to hire a conflict assessor. You have a recommendation Ms. Campbell I believe. Somebody out of the county.

Attorney Campbell – Yes, um, James, I'm going to butcher his last name, Anzevino, thank you. He is the assessor in Paramus, also a whole host of others, I researched him; Oradell, Cresskill, Englewood. Beth do you have the list I sent you? But I think there were five or six of them but I think Paramus is his main place, but he is in Bergen County. He is not a Warren County assessor. We thought it was best to leave the county and he has reviewed all of the comps and he has signed the roll back paperwork. The official amount is \$304,423.00. I'm sorry and, um, we are just authorizing the payment of \$100.00.

Council President Ciesla – One hundred dollars to him?

Attorney Campbell – Yes.

Mayor Steinhardt – Motion. Motion by Council President Ciesla, seconded by Councilwoman McCabe. Discussion?

Councilwoman Schneider – I have a question. How did this whole roll back thing come about? Is it just, how'd that happen?

Attorney Campbell – Yes. Um, the property, Sycamore Landing property. I don't know if you know where it is, it is being farmed. As of this year, I believe there may even still be some

farming going on but they didn't file their FA1 Form which is a farmland assessment paperwork. It is due as of August 1<sup>st</sup>. I assume the reason they are doing that is they hope to break ground soon and start building. Had they started building or not filed their paperwork either one prompts that so they didn't do that for August of this year so 2014 is the year that there is a change in use and then they go back two years so the taxes that \$304 is the roll back taxes for 2012, 2013 and 2014 so each year so there's a new assessment for each one; that is the total for all three years, but I'd be happy to show you the figures for all of them.

Councilwoman Schneider – Yeah. That's okay. Does the assessor, does she monitor the properties that are being farmed? Is that how that works?

Attorney Campbell - Oh yeah, yes.

Councilwoman Schneider - Is that how you find out? Okay.

Attorney Campbell - Yes, every year it's a very strict deadline. Every year August 1<sup>st</sup> you have to be on your death bed to not submit that thing by August 1st and even then they give you a month if you are on your death bed. It's literally that ridiculous. So she gets them and then she can go out and inspect the various farms and make sure that they're doing what they say there doing or they have to give a Woodland Management Plan if it a wooded property that has a plan and she reviews all of those and so if she thinks anything is suspicious she'll, and then like, she'll for example, if you bought a house that bought a piece of property that use to be a farm, sometimes this happens, people buy a piece of property and it used to be farmed and they're like I'm going to build my house here and they get a roll back for two years and the property owner who sold it to him didn't mention that they use to farm the land (inaudible) but um, so that's what it is. That's what triggered it and so, and then from here on out it will be assessed and once they start building as they finish buildings, they will get, they'll get assessed for their improvements and at that point most likely we'll be coming back to you to approve more work for this particular conflict assessor but at this point we are just asking for the roll back because we're not sure how those buildings are going to come in. If they're going to be one at a time or a whole project at once so we'll figure we'll wait to see if (inaudible) and then come back.

Councilwoman Schneider – Okay thanks. Thank you.

Mayor Steinhardt - So motion, do we have a motion? We had a second, discussion, roll call please.

AYES: Councilwoman Schneider, Councilman Belcaro, Councilwoman McCabe, Council President Ciesla and Mayor Steinhardt.

NAYS: None

Mayor Steinhardt – I'm going to digress for a couple of minutes. I apologize but obligated, personally compelled to address something that came up last month. Mr. Imhoff was here and made a little statement that in not uncharacteristic fashion mixed apples and oranges and read some (inaudible) and got his facts entirely twisted and contorted. I invited him to come back and told him that I would certainly go through his math between last meeting and this meeting and I want to make sure I keep my promise so I've transcribed Mr. Imhoff's statement from last meeting. I'll hit the highlights and that I brought with me, it is a little small, it's as big as we could blow it up, but a little chart here that shows the numbers and so forth and I'll leave it out here on the table if anybody wants to ready them. Joe came last month and made a statement in response to a statement that Ms. Ciesla made regarding the little pie chart that reflects the amount of everybody's tax bill and what she indicated was that the amount of the municipal taxes on our tax bill represent 17% of the total taxes. Then Mr. Imhoff came up and made a little spectacle speech in which he indicated that by his math the amount of his taxes went up far more than that in fact, 143% - 61% was increased in his taxes over eight years was just the

municipal portion of the tax bill then he went year from year indicating how much it went up each particular year and he made some statement about his social security benefits not going up that much and then indicated over the past nine years that Mayor Steinhardt has been the one constant, because he was talking 2006 to 2014 and I know Mr. Mengucci was in the back of the room, that night too listening to Mr. Imhoff's presentation but the interesting comment that he made was that costs must therefore, be out of control. Um, in fact he said "Um, costs must be out of control". So the problem is three fold. He's talking about three different things and mixing them all together. First let's talk about the pie chart. The pie chart reflects, and that pie chart is that little chart that you see that shows the open space tax is a certain percentage of your tax bill, the county tax is a certain percentage of your tax bill, the municipal tax is a certain percentage of your tax bill and from 2008 until, 2006 rather to 2014 that amount has gone from 9 percent to 17 percent and that reflects the amount that is collected or raised by taxes and he suggested that that number is somehow a poor reflection on the dwindling state aid that comes to every municipality and I'll point to a couple of examples. Starting in, the number began, so we know, the amount to be raised by taxes was roughly two millions dollars when he started and ended up, in this year, 4.1 million; \$4,151,046.88. Back in 2008 it was \$2,002,069.40. Now, what's happened is that over that course of time that is the amount of money that we have to raise by taxes not the amount of money that it costs to operate the town; that's the town's budget, that's the part that we introduce every March, debate back and forth and then vote on. I'll get to that in a minute. Um, but the amount to be raised by taxes is what goes out to all of you and then you guys have to dip into your pockets to pay back. We have very little control over the amount to be raised by taxes other than what we deal with with the particular budget and for example, in 2009 and 10, the year after Mr. Imhoff started his presentation to the town Lopatcong and Blairstown in fact, were the only two towns to get completely wiped out of the consolidated municipal tax relief, we went from getting a double digit percentage to getting none. We also got wiped out of our Energy Receipt taxes. After Governor Christie got elected and got rid of the Energy Tax Relief that came back to the various towns, thereby causing the town, the amount to be raised by taxes to go up from 2008 to 2009 by \$200,000. It went up again the following year when the DCA Checklist came out and they started to regulate how much money each town gets based on the answers to various checklists from 2.2 to 2.4. The following year it went from 2.4 to 2.5. Then between 2011 and 2012 is when we had the reassessment and if you recall, that is when the town's value dropped from a billion dollars to \$800 million dollars we lost 200 million dollars in assessed value and the amount to be raised by taxes jumped from 2.5 to 3.1 to offset the monies that were coming in from the towns value, the dip in the towns value. The following year it went from again from 12 to 13 based on the same issue the town's value dropped from 3.1 to 3.7 and the following year to 4.1 and that's where it stands today. The amount to be raised by taxes and that's the pie chart that Ms. Ciesla is referring to. As it increased from year to year based on the town's reduction in state aid coming to us from the State of New Jersey. Now, let's talk about the municipal budget. So again, when she said that the amount to be raised, excuse me, the amount that the Township deals with is 17% of your tax bill that was entirely accurate based on the fact that we are dealing with the amount to be raised by taxes. Now, let's talk about the piece that was thrown specifically at me dealing with the Township's budget, me and by association I guess, Mr. Mengucci who is sitting in the back of the room and Mr. Curry was kind enough to wander in and had been here on Council back then. In 2006 the Township's operating budget was \$5.8 million dollars and I had Betty go back and pull each budget from 2006 to 2014, I'll go through each of the numbers with you, but in 2006 the Township's operating budget was \$5.8 million dollars. In 2007 it dropped to \$5.7 million dollars without rounding it, was a reduction of \$64,536.00 or a reduction of 1.11 percent from the 2006 to the 2007 operating budget. 2008 the budget went up to \$6.1 million dollars, again, rounding an increase of \$341,000.00 or 5.89 percent. In 2007 the town's budget went from \$6.1 to \$6.2 million dollars. An increase of \$133,226.00 or 2.17%. In 2010 it increased from 6.2 to 6.4 or \$193,353.00 and increases of 3.9%. In 2011 we had a drop of 6.4 to \$6,407,316.00 in that year's budget; a drop of 6.73 percent. Then we had the assessment change when the town's value dropped at 200 million dollars and we had to pick up the short fall as a result of the town's drop in value. Cause what

happens is the towns value is multiplied by the tax rate and we figure out, therefore, how much money we need to make our operating budget. What happened is the budget of that year jumped from 6 million to 7 million and we struggled to figure out a way to offset that million dollar increase that we had to take on that particular year. The budget jumped \$974,815.00 for us to tackle the 200 million dollar decrease in the town's value. So that following year after an exceptional amount of work we reduced the budget by \$521,000.00 to \$6.5 million dollars; a reduction of 8.03%. This past year between 2013 and 2014 we added \$515,491.00 to the budget to get us back to \$7, 016,837.00 and that's budget we currently have on the table today. It reflects roughly \$500,000 as every council member up here will tell in capital improvements, purchases of equipment, improvements to road work that we are doing and so, we took advantage of the opportunity that we could get some work done and we added \$500,000.00 to the budget this year. Um, so during that same period of time we added roughly \$500,000.00 for the work done on Lopatcong Park which increased our budget significantly almost by half of that 1.2 million dollar difference between 2006 and 2012 an asset that I think everybody in this room uses and would be proud of. But in response to Mr. Imhoff, who didn't show up today, in 2006 the amount that Mr. Mengucci, Mr. Curry, Mr. Baker and Mr. Camporine and I administered from this dais is \$5.8 million dollars. In 2014 that number is \$7 million dollars and I will submit to you that it is a result of the \$500,000 that we are just doing this year, the loss of the 200 million dollars in value that we had between 2011 and 2012 and the fact that we did Lopatcong Park and several other road improvements throughout that period of time. That \$1.2 million change, swing between 2006 and 2014 represents a 19.89% change in the town's overall operating budget during that eight year time period. Now, that is a far cry from the 143% that Mr. Imhoff was swinging around the room last month based on honestly combining three different things into one math problem. I will also, without picking on the school board since they're here, point out to you that in 2006 the school board's budget was \$14,126,662.00. In 2014 it's \$18,256,928.00 which is an increase of 29.23%. So I would suggest that our 19% sort of pales in comparisons to the school boards 29% and again, you guys do a wonder job congratulations. You treat our children great for the money available to you. I would suggest to you that this Council has done an exceptional job during not only my tenure but the tenure of the other four council members sitting up here to manage the funds available to us and one other little tid bit with which I will leave you, uh, if you go back and take away the \$200 million dollars or add back the \$200 million dollars that we lost, in 2012 for the reval, and use the same value of \$1,051,382,339.00 as the Township's value, our tax rate instead of going from \$2.049 to \$2.761 would have only have jumped from 2.049 to 2.271 and that 19.89% would actually only be 10.09%. So I would suggest to you that this Council has done an exceptional job. I take exception to Mr. Imhoff's funny math and wish he would be here today to have this discussion in person but maybe he'll show up next month and we can talk about it again then. So that said, that's the story on the budget. Feel free to look at the worksheet when we're done and uh, that's it for Council Reports so tax collector is not here, CFO is not here, Mr. Sterbenz.

Mr. Sterbenz – Thank you Mayor I just want to report to the public and Council that there was a pre-construction meeting for the South Third Street Improvement Project on September 23<sup>rd</sup>. It appears that the contractor will be starting on Monday, October 13<sup>th</sup> and I'm going to confirm that tomorrow and I will let all the Council members know after I have that meeting with the contractor tomorrow. Given the schedule that we've laid out and the specifications, the contractor would have to be completed by November 20<sup>th</sup> before Thanksgiving. Thank you.

Mayor Steinhardt – Motion to approve Department Reports. Motion by Council President Ciesla, seconded by Councilwoman McCabe. Discussion? Roll call:

AYES: Councilwoman Schneider, Councilman Belcaro, Councilwoman McCabe, Council President Ciesla and Mayor Steinhardt.

NAYS: None

Mayor Steinhardt – Pay bills. Motion by Council President Ciesla, seconded by Councilwoman McCabe. Roll call:

AYES: Councilwoman Schneider, Councilman Belcaro, Councilwoman McCabe, Council President Ciesla and Mayor Steinhardt.

NAYS: None

Mayor Steinhardt – Folks questions, comments?

Martin Swim – Marty Swim 4 Byron Drive. I just have a couple easy questions for Lori and all that.

Council President Ciesla – That’s a directive coming from Mayor Steinhardt.

Martin Swim – Lori, Lori listed a flyer and said they put it together. I totally missed who they were.

Council President Ciesla – Which flyer.

Martin Swim – The one with all the ads in.

Councilwoman McCabe – (Inaudible) newsletter.

Martin Swim – Newsletter.

Council President Ciesla - Oh this?

Martin Swim – Yeah when you said they I didn’t know who it was.

Council President Ciesla – It’s a yeah we are looking at some vendors.

Mayor Steinhardt – Even though we are dealing with public comment, we’ll go ahead and take some questions Mr. Swim. So what do you got (inaudible)?

Martin Swim – Okay that was the first question. I can ask another one.

Mayor Steinhardt – What’s that, who’s they?

Council President Ciesla – It’s just a – they’re not, I haven’t committed to anything.

Lee Rozycki – My, it’s a question. The sale of public property why would that be in Executive Session?

Attorney Campbell - It’s contractual.

Lee Rozycki – So it’s a con, you’re talking

Attorney Campbell – The Township owns property and they’re considering selling it. So when we discussed the terms, whether we want to sell it, how we we’re going to sell it.

Mayor Steinhardt – How we value it.

Lee Rozycki – Okay.

Attorney Campbell- I gave them a memo about the process to do it and also, (inaudible) values.

Mayor Steinhardt – We're going to do it again at that meeting in October where we can deal with it, you know, in more specifically in the public session it's just that Katrina gave us a memo today and none of us had a chance to read it and we wanted an opportunity to take a look at it.

Diane Hall – Mine is two-fold. Number one thank you very much for having the cleanup at the solar farm. It looks better and I just want to make that public notice. The second thing is a question that I had addressed previously um, about the stop signs at Baltimore. I think this is great for the four-way but if you remember, I had asked about if we could have the larger stop sign. Is that going through on this one?

Engineer Sterbenz – Um, the ordinance just allows for stops signs to be placed there. A decision as to how large the signs would be would be made after the ordinance is adopted. But if it is a standard stop sign it is 30" X 30". But in certain instances, if warranted, you could make the stop sign larger; it could be 36 X 36. So that's an engineering decision. That is something I would work with the Police Department on.

Diane Hall – I'm a little confused. Do I bring that up again when this goes through the ordinance or is that for you?

Engineer Sterbenz – Um, you have made your opinion that it should be a bigger stop sign. I don't know if I agree with that but once we get the ordinance adopted and approved by the DOT, I will see if it's warranted to have a larger stop sign there.

Diane Hall – Okay.

Engineer Sterbenz – Something bigger than 30" X 30".

Diane Hall – Also because the daycare is right on the corner too.

Engineer Sterbenz – Right.

Diane Hall – Okay thank you.

Engineer Sterbenz – Thank you.

Mayor Steinhardt – Mr. Horun.

Andy Horun – 13 Windsor Lane. Um, having been involved with the LAA as a coach and now director. Um, for about a decade, um, you know, with coaching there's something that we call a compliment sandwich that we learned about that you have a problem with one of your players you start off something positive, then maybe something negative and end up with something positive so um, because of what was said to Council President Ciesla, I did want to thank her for her assistance with the website. Um, because I had asked her for assistance with the website because we were having difficulty with it and when you have signups and it is not working properly, it becomes a disaster so I want to thank Council President Ciesla for all her time and effort with the website.

Council President Ciesla – You are welcome.

Harvey Walters- My name is Harvey Walters. I live on South Third Street. They're going to start construction. Can I have permission to park my, one of my vehicles in the municipal lot here why they are working on the curb and the manhole out in front of my house?

Council President Ciesla – They can't drive over it for three days.

Mayor Steinhardt – I don't see why not.

Harvey Walters – Thank you.

Mayor Steinhardt – Anybody else tonight questions, comments. Motion to adjourn.

Ms. Roncoroni – Raine Roncoroni, 11 Greystone Avenue. I just wanted to tell you as part of our community outreach with the school district and as part of our strategic plan, our five year plan, we are hosting a senior breakfast on October 24<sup>th</sup> which we are inviting the senior citizens in our community and additionally this year, we are extending it to community partnerships. So you have all received an invitation and additional invitations will be at the municipal building. It's 9:00 at the middle school October 24<sup>th</sup>.

Mayor Steinhardt – I did miss one I do apologize I did miss Chief LaFord and Mr. Stires, gentlemen there is an issue with our engine, our fire engine as opposed to our ladder or our pumper and um, sort of rolled away out of the garage the other day. Mr. Stires, being flee to foot, ran, jumped in and stopped it um, so they would like to discuss with Council their recommendations as it relates to that fire truck. So why don't you guys start and fire away and then we will, if Council has questions, they can ask so.

Chief LaFord – 1997 engine which transports water from the hydrant to the fire (inaudible) from the truck apron down at Delaware Park. The driver set the parking brake, he got out, the truck started rolling away towards the house across the street. Assistant Chief Stires was able to jump in and stop it, how he did, but he did it and he save us from having a truck go into a house. So, it's been an ongoing issue with the brake system um for the last four years the brake system, we've replaced the brakes on it and this time it completely failed so it was an issue that we knew about. Not, not that it was going to fail but we knew there was an issue with the brake and we needed to get it fixed. The truck's due to be replaced in probably seventeen and there is an opportunity to get a demo vehicle right now at a considerable savings so we approached Council to replace the truck now (inaudible).

Mayor Steinhardt – What is the cost of the demo chief?

Chief LaFord – The cost of the demo is \$418,000.00.

Mayor Steinhardt – And what does demo mean to us lay people in the context of a fire?

Chief LaFord – Um, it's just like a vehicle in a show room. It gets displayed. It gets taken to other fire departments to be shown and that is it. There is no other wear and tear put on it. The pumps never been used.

Mayor Steinhardt – It comes.

Chief LaFord – (Inaudible) it's a brand new truck.

Mayor Steinhardt – Assuming the town would purchase it, it would come with all its full warranties exedra.

Chief LaFord – Correct.

Mayor Steinhardt – Okay. Um, if I'm not mistaken, the ladder truck that we purchased was "a demo". I think it was in a TV show. Um, the price again, I'm sorry was four something.

Council President Ciesla - \$414.

Councilwoman McCabe - \$414.

Mayor Steinhardt – The price of the same vehicle new is what?

Mr. Stires - \$587.

Council President Ciesla - \$587

Mayor Steinhardt – Last meeting you presented us with a series of options from lease payments to outright purchase. Um, we asked at the time that Ms. Dobes go back and explore another option that was between a zero down payment and \$100,000 down payment. I think the effect of a \$50,000 is probably (inaudible) she came back with that and if I'm not mistaken a recommendation as well to deal with it as a bond with a bond interest rates were below. They were ½ percent a year correct versus 3. whatever percent a year over the same time period for lease. Five to ten years versus ten years on the bond. Okay. Um, I believe there were also some requests of you guys of other information as it relates. Well actually what's the current status of, you have a number

Chief LaFord- Uh 74-16.

Mayor Steinhardt – All right so the current status of 74-16 is

Chief LaFord – Out of service.

Mayor Steinhardt – And may I ask how long it is anticipated it will be out of service.

Chief LaFord – I was waiting for an answer as to what we were going to do.

Mayor Steinhardt – Okay. Um, has it been out of service other dates during the course of this year.

Chief LaFord – Okay how about the preceding year?

Chief LaFord – Uh, several times in the preceding years for (inaudible)

Mayor Steinhardt – How about for non-regular maintenance related issues.

Mrs. Stires – (Inaudible) batteries exploded in the (inaudible) in 2009 (inaudible). The truck now does have, does leak oil. (inaudible)

Mayor Steinhardt – This is one of three cars in that fleet correct? Three trucks?

Chief LaFord – Yes (inaudible).

Council President Ciesla – (Inaudible) What exactly does it do? I know it gets the water from the hydrant to the fire.

Chief LaFord – Yeah engine's main responsibility is to get water from the hydrant to the fire to it carry's all our ladders. It also carries extrication equipment so (inaudible) extrication services within the Township. So it is a multipurpose vehicle.

Mayor Steinhardt – At will, out of curiosity, what are we doing in the department without the engine at the moment?

Chief LaFord - I have equipment spread out throughout the park.

Mayor Steinhardt – Meaning what?

Chief LaFord – Some equipment on a utility truck, some equipment on a ladder truck, some equipment not on any truck that where without it right now.

Mayor Steinhardt – Okay more, more significant I guess than that to me is what are you doing without that vehicle in your fleet of vehicles?

Chief LaFord – We're depending on mutual aid if there is a structure fire. There is a (inaudible) Phillipsburg Emergency Squad – they come in with the rest of the truck.

Mayor Steinhardt – The truck is 17 years old?

Chief LaFord – Correct.

Mayor Steinhardt – What's the normal life of that vehicle and the departments other regs. in-so-far as the normal life of the vehicle?

Chief LaFord – (Inaudible) engine truck and ladder truck is 20 years.

Mayor Steinhardt – So three years closing in on the 20 years for a three year shot.

Chief LaFord – Correct.

Mayor Steinhardt – Repair costs this year is my understanding up until the break failure, it was approximately \$7,000 through August. Does that sound about right?

Chief LaFord – Yeah.

Mayor Steinhardt – And in the years past, do you have a gauge of what it has been costing us for the relevant repairs.

Chief LaFord – Roughly \$5 to \$8000.

Mayor Steinhardt – And is that repairs and maintenance or is that simply repair costs above and beyond the maintenance costs?

Chief LaFord – That's above and beyond the maintenance.

Mayor Steinhardt – Okay um, so we don't have the figure any idea for what it is going to cost to make this most recent repair correct?

Chief LaFord – Correct.

Mayor Steinhardt- Does that alleviate or resolve the other issues that Assistant Chief Stires referenced that we can (inaudible) you get a laundry list of other problems related to the engine.

Council President Ciesla – The battery.

Assistant Chief Stires – No (inaudible).

Mayor Steinhardt – (Inaudible) Now when you presented this to Council back on September, strike that, back in the yeah the September meeting you had three options dealing with this demo truck where the payments varied \$50,000 a year, \$38,000 a year or \$64,000 a year if we bought the new vehicle at \$587,234.00. That's the 2014 as opposed to the two demos correct?

Chief LaFord – Correct.

Mayor Steinhardt – Uh, we went back and asked that she take a look at doing this that Betty recommended doing it as a bond to reduce the interest rate and the payment even further. In your professional opinion as the Chief um, what's the impact on the department, its multiple questions so, write them down if you want? What's the impact on the department of not having that vehicle in our fleet, what potential hazards does it [pose to the Township if we don't have it and thirdly, in-so-far as an option available to us, um, what is your recommendations as far as the two trucks is concerned and the timeliness of this acquisition.

Chief LaFord – The impact to the town if we do not replace the truck and go without an engine, it could impact our ISO rating, Insurance Service Organization rating, so our rating would go down and increase the homeowners insurance premiums. As of right now we get rated for each engine that we have and each ladder truck (inaudible) our ratings would definitely go down. Um,

Council President Ciesla – So based on population? How many you need.

Chief LaFord – No it's based off square mileage.

Council President Ciesla – Okay.

Chief LaFord – And your water sources in the Township. Lopatcong Township has mostly hydrants, very few sections of town that don't have hydrants that (inaudible). Um, that was your second question.

Mayor Steinhardt – Yeah well my final question though Chief is that I'm looking for your recommendation as again, in your professional capacity as Chief of the Fire Department. What are you advising us of our need to provide for the Township's safety, you know, with that truck not presently in our fleet and its longevity given the issues you've represented it has.

Chief LaFord – To replace the truck with the demo truck. You will have the demo truck within 30 days. If you're buying a new truck you are looking at least six months um lead time it would be made for us.

Councilwoman McCabe – Cost would be \$200,000 more.

Chief LaFord – Correct.

Council President Ciesla – Right now.

Councilwoman McCabe - \$200 to (inaudible).

Council President Ciesla – To replace it in three years definitely because 20 years it has to come off correct?

Mayor Steinhardt – And what other Council members, I've done my share. Who has questions of either Chief LaFord or Assistant Chief Stires?

Councilman Belcaro – The manufacturer of the fire truck has been out of business correct?

Chief LaFord – Yeah, the current manufacturer is Central States. They are out of Lyons, South Dakota. They went out of business and (inaudible) issue that we are having with parts and the brakes.

Mayor Steinhardt – We are talking about the manufacturer of the existing engine Chief?

Council President Ciesla – Yeah he is.

Chief LaFord – They don't make them, the parts aren't made anymore so we're going out and finding a part for um, different manufacturer, you know, put them on the truck, see if they work. We're piece mealing the truck together with parts that aren't working obviously.

Councilman Belcaro – So every time this truck goes out, when it does work, um, it's like a flipping a coin, anything can go wrong.

Chief LaFord – Correct.

Councilwoman Schneider – Um, we do have the other two trucks we do. The one that you're um, wanting to replace is the pumper and we do have another pumper.

Chief LaFord – Correct.

Councilwoman Schneider – Does that pumper also have the extraction and everything else that this pump has?

Chief LaFord – No.

Councilwoman Schneider – What is it missing that this pumper has?

Chief LaFord – The extrication equipment we only have the one set down at Delaware Park and I don't have a complete set at number 2 so that's one thing right there. Other than that, they do the same thing as far as firefighting supplying the water to fight the fire so.

Councilwoman Schneider – Okay the ISO rating, if it were to not be replaced and we have two instead of three, um, what monetary impact are we talking about.

Chief LaFord – That would be up to each individuals insurance, I don't know what that is.

Councilwoman Schneider- Is there a way to find out?

Councilwoman McCabe – But it would go up is what you said.

Chief LaFord – Yeah it would go up.

Councilwoman McCabe – (Inaudible).

Councilwoman Schneider – But are we talking a couple hundred dollars are we talking \$10,000. Um, I guess that's a

Chief LaFord – Yeah I don't, I don't know.

Council President Ciesla – Just based on each individual insurance company how they rate their policy so you have to call.

Councilwoman Schneider – Okay so you have to call their and find out okay.

Chief LaFord – I would call my (inaudible) policy and see where it would go.

Councilwoman Schneider – Okay and also if how many volunteers do we have right now in the fire department?

Chief LaFord – Roughly 30 to 35.

Councilwoman Schneider – Okay and how many actually respond to the calls. What is the ratio, you know, fire fighters that respond to the fire calls.

Chief LaFord – During the day time five or six guys. At nighttime when everybody is home from their jobs, closer to 15 to 20.

Councilwoman Schneider – Okay so if there was a fire during the day, um, you wouldn't have enough guys to take all three trucks out.

Chief LaFord – There is a possibility.

Councilwoman Schneider – Okay and at night 15

Chief LaFord – I think that's (inaudible).

Councilwoman Schneider – Well it's not because if we had two trucks, or if we had five trucks and we only have five guys, then those other three trucks are deemed really not necessary. Um, I, you know, I'm not with barring not being a safety issue to the town but if we don't have enough fire fighters to man the trucks then, you know, they're just kind of sitting there because we don't have any fire fighters to man the trucks so

Chief LaFord – Maybe we should go with a paid department then.

Councilwoman Schneider – But that, you know, it's still the if we don't have someone to manage the truck, then you know, why have a

Chief LaFord – If it's a car accident, 61 is going to go to the car accident. We don't have it right now, we're going to rely on Phillipsburg to come in and do our work.

Councilwoman Schneider – For a car accident?

Chief LaFord – Correct.

Councilwoman Schneider – Okay and if you had 15 to 20 on call and all 15 showed up, um, how many times has that happened that all 15 has shown up?

Assistant Chief Stires – I don't have numbers (inaudible).

Councilwoman McCabe – I mean is that relevant to the

Councilwoman Schneider – Barring any safety issues, my, my I'm not saying that I don't want to go ahead with this purchase but I don't have enough information right now to give you a yes on that I, I, you know, if we don't have 15 to 20 fire fighters who man these trucks, then this, the expense right now is not, you know, did we recruit more or are we definitely going to get more fire fighters, I just, I'd like to know and how many times the truck has gone out um, you know, there's so many of these issues I'd just like to know the answers to before I give a yes or a no.

Councilman Belcaro – I'd like to say that this fire truck has become liability to the Township not just a liability to the Township but also a liability to the volunteers who do respond on the truck that who knows what could happen if the breaks were to fail in the travels to a call. So this is detrimental not just to volunteers on the truck but the public and the liability of lawsuits to the Township. So this is important, it's critical and it is not a game to play with. To find out how many volunteers actually answer the calls, it's a blessing to the town that you even have volunteers. If we go to a paid volunteer, excuse me, a paid fire department, you know what your taxes would be like. So be grateful that you have volunteers that are risking their lives. I can count the guys who are here right now that volunteer.

Mayor Steinhardt – Well listen, let me just say this. Um, well I've never, that's not true, there are occasions when I've gone out with our firemen uh, Sandy, uh, other floods um, that's just to go out and be helpful to these guys. I don't get up at two o'clock in the morning and go out and have to put a suit on uh, he's not here, is he still here?

Council President Ciesla – Who?

Mayor Steinhardt – Jessamine. Um, the former chief of a New York city fire department with us who's volunteered his time as a member of Lopatcong Township Fire Department and was kind enough to take me on multiple occasions, in fact, if any of you guys who ever watched the documentary on September 11<sup>th</sup>, it was his fire department that was covered in the documentary on the day of 9/11. In any event, I have never had to put that suit on and walk into a burning building at two o'clock in the morning and I've never had to uh, put my life on the line and go out and do what these guys get up and they don't get paid to do, they just do it because they care about the Township and the people who live here and uh, Mr. Stires is the second generation of doing that, his father was a former fire chief recently passed away, his mother's a member of the auxiliary um, he's been involved for almost as long as I've been in the Township. Lou, Lou's father is involved in the fire company, his mother, his wife on the Emergency Squad besides being a member of the police department. He's Chief of our fire company. He is on our EMS Squad and again these guys put their lives on the line for all us to be safe. Um, not only have I not had to do that, I've never gone to the trainings that are required of these guys. I think part of the reason why, you don't find that many volunteers, one; people just aren't willing to give the time up that it takes to do it and two; a lot of people don't have the time that it takes to go do it. Uh, the hours that is required of these men and women to go to fire academy's, to go to emergency squad trainings to stay certified is far more than I think any member of the public sitting in this room comprehends and obviously is willing to put out themselves otherwise we'd have more than just 25 volunteers in the department. So when the chief of the department comes in and makes a recommendation to me as one of the five members here, that it's in our best interests to replace a piece of 17 year old equipment that not only is needed for the town's safety but for the safety of the people using it and it comes down to me as simply a matter of dollars and cents. Same analysis that I go through when Chief Marinelli comes and makes requests for the Police Department. I have no reason to doubt that or second guess it. I've never known our guys to be guys that just like to run around and jump on a fire truck for the running around on a fire truck on Saturday mornings because they have nothing better to do, um, so I have no reason to doubt either Mr. Stires or Mr. LaFord's credibility. Uh, they are recommending to us that it's an essential part of our department in order to maintain the town's safety. Um, so consequently I'm going make the motion that we go ahead and move forward and do it on the basis of the

bond that Ms. Dobes recommended because it reduces the interest rate to us from roughly 3.5% a year to ½% a year, um, and we can certainly have more discussion if the motion gets a second but I see no reason to uh, to uh, debate that portion of it and the justification for the recommendation any further. Someone has a financial problem with it, that's up to them. Make whatever arguments you want but in-so-far as the health, safety and welfare of our residents are concerned and the fact that we have more than enough money within that line item to cover the relatively nominal payment that would go along with leasing a demo fire truck as opposed to paying for repairs for a couple of years while we sit around and decide whether or not it is worth someone in the Township's lives or one of our volunteers lives while we debate it further, it is not worth it to me so my motion is there a second?

Councilwoman McCabe – Second

Mayor Steinhardt – Discussion?

Council President Ciesla – I asked for the projected needs from DPW and EMS and all that so we can strategically plan because we can't, you know, these machines or if you didn't get that like it would have crashed into their house so then we would have had that cost and then if there was somebody in there, that's a big truck, you're not going survive being hit by that thing. Um, so that's why I asked cause we need to, over the next five years plan, we have to replace our equipment so it's not a danger to the residents or to our employees as well.

Councilwoman Schneider – I'd just like to say um, safety absolutely is the number one issue for our residents here. Safety is definitely the top priority over money. Um, what I would like is just some answers, it wouldn't be, um, I wouldn't be doing my job as a council person if I didn't ask some of these questions, um, you know, this is a big purchase and this is your money that I am spending so, you know, to get some answers to these questions and even just put this off for a couple of days um, you know, to make me feel comfortable saying yes to it would be great but that's, you know, I'm not saying no, I'm not saying yes. I'd just like some answers to the questions first.

Mayor Steinhardt – Well you're going to get a chance to yes or no in about two seconds. Roll call.

AYES: Councilman Belcaro, Councilwoman McCabe, Council President Ciesla and Mayor Steinhardt.

NAYS: Councilwoman Schneider

Mr. Mengucci – (Inaudible) It was on his recommendation that we bought the last demo truck and if I'm not mistaken back when you and I (inaudible). Kudos to you guys and thanks for your efforts and God Bless you.

Councilwoman McCabe – here, here.

Orchefski – Highlands Way. First the comment I would have appreciated it if a purchase of a ½ million dollars would be on the agenda. I think that is appropriate. Question for Lou, the old truck can we sell it?

Chief LaFord – (Inaudible) \$8,000.

Orchefski - \$8,000 wow, thanks Lou appreciate it.

Mayor Steinhardt – Thanks Mr. Orchefski, Mr. Hall.

Bruce Hall – Just want clarification the insurance rating, it's not just what the town pays?

Council President Ciesla – No.

Bruce Hall – It affects homeowners.

Council President Ciesla – Homeowner.

Bruce Hall – Either way we are going to pay if the ratings go up.

Council President Ciesla – You'll personally pay yeah. Yeah, I have the memo from the ISO ratings.

Lee Rozycki 56 Puddingstone Way – What is the possibility of shared services with Phillipsburg and the surrounding. Why has that been looked in?

Mayor Steinhardt – This is public comment not a question/answer thing.

Lee Rozycki – Can it be, do other towns share truck services and what not?

Assistant Chief Stires – Pretty much the whole south end of Warren County shares – Alpha, P'burg, Harmony. Our ladder truck is (inaudible).

Lee Rozycki – So is that considered for this new truck?

Mayor Steinhardt – We have a mutual aid agreement Ms. Rozycki with all the surrounding towns; police, fire and emergency squad.

Council President Ciesla – I was under the impression that in order to make our rating, we have to keep.

Mayor Steinhardt – I didn't understand that that is what she was asking.

Lee Rozycki – Well I meant.

Chief LaFord – The other organizations, what they have does not count towards our rating.

Lee Rozycki – Oh so really your criteria, is to stay within the town to maintain that rating.

Mayor Steinhardt – Anybody else?

Mr. Aiello- Mr. Mayor former Councilman here in Lopatcong. Lou, on the fire department just wanted to pass along what Wilson Borough does. Wilson Borough is a ten block area over in Pennsylvania. They have four full-time firemen. What they do when a fire comes in is they respond and then the volunteers go directly to the scene. Now what I'm up here to talk about is about two summers ago I meant with a former Lopatcong resident by the name of Jeff Verone. Jeff and I got into a discussion about the Police Departments weapons that were not being worked – jamming, we talked it over and he was gracious enough to purchase the weapons for the Lopatcong Police Department. To this day I don't think the gentlemen has ever got a thank you. No proclamation.

Clerk Dilts – He did receive a letter.

Mr. Aiello – He got a letter. Okay, I wasn't sure about that. I did talk to him and he didn't say that but I think it should be even more of a something more than just a letter and I will tell you

this that he did say that anything the Township would need in the future, he'd be gracious enough to purchase for the Police Department.

Marla Endick – 10 Byron Drive just a quick question about the swearing in Michael Patricia, Sergeant. Um, we have a police liaison, is it a committee or is it just one liaison person, how does that work?

Mayor Steinhardt – It's just a liaison person.

Marla Endick – Who, who is the person?

Mayor Steinhardt – For the Police Department.

Marla Endick – Yes.

Mayor Steinhardt – It's me.

Marla Endick – You are the police liaison?

Mayor Steinhardt – Yes.

Marla Endick – Donna what is your role with the police?

Councilwoman Schneider – Liaison for bargaining.

Marla Endick – For bargaining okay. So, uh, I was surprised when Ms. Schneider said tonight she wasn't even aware that Michael Patricia was being sworn in tonight. I'm curious if the other Council members were aware of this as well.

Mayor Steinhardt - I put it on the agenda today, I believe. Chief made the recommendation.

Marla Endick – So Lori you're saying yes, you said you were aware of this?

Council President Ciesla – Yes, I was aware of this.

Marla Endick – So you just found out, everyone found out tonight and he was sworn in today.

Mayor Steinhardt – I met with the chief yesterday, he made the recommendation. Ms. Dilts was away. She got back last night so the agenda was only finalized this morning. So that's when it was placed on the agenda.

Marla Endick – Okay and it

Mayor Steinhardt – This morning, I put that on there, the gun thing.

Marla Endick – Yeah and, and (inaudible) this is done and people aren't made aware of it till the day of it. It would have an impact, that couldn't wait another week or so.

Mayor Steinhardt – We replaced a retired sergeant – it's not like we added somebody new.

Marla Endick – Yeah, I got it but I think my points being made. No okay thank you so much.

Councilwoman Schneider – Um, you know, uh based on Mr. Imhoff's comments I just wanted to say I went home and I did some of my own assessment based on my own tax rate. Um, I have

two things, when you talk about the assessed value causing an increase on your taxes, if we have a decrease I would like to say in 2006 we had a ½ billion dollar assessment value increase about 100% and our local taxes increased by 2%. Then we had from 2007 to 2011 flat, there was no change in the assessed values and we had tax increases of 6%, 15%, 10%, 11% and 4%. We're talking just local municipal tax. Um,

Mayor Steinhardt – Can you give me your figure again. We had an increase of what? The property valuation in 2006 was \$1,010,869,025 and in 2007 \$1,018,383,086.

Councilwoman Schneider – I'm sorry I didn't write your numbers down – say that again.

Mayor Steinhardt – The property valuation in 2006 was \$1,010,869,025 and in 2007 was \$1,018,383,086.

Councilwoman Schneider – Mmhmm.

Mayor Steinhardt – And between 2006 and 2007, the budget went down from \$5,852,585.00 to \$5,788,049.00. It was actually reduced by \$64,536.00 – 1.1%.

Councilwoman Schneider – I'm talking about the assessed values and your correlation that because they assessed values decreased that the taxes have to go up.

Mayor Steinhardt – I never said that, I never said that at all.

Councilwoman Schneider – You were, you were talking about the assessed value um, the drop in the value

Mayor Steinhardt – On no, no, no.

Councilwoman Schneider – The drop in the value which caused the taxes to go up.

Mayor Steinhardt – What I said in that particular year when the towns value dropped by two billion dollars we had an established tax rate and in order to raise the amount of monies that we needed we had to do two things, first the amount to be collected by taxes increase expeditiously because we didn't have it available as an income stream anymore and secondly, we had to recoup a lot of the costs that we lost by virtue of that fact in the following budget year. That is why the budget increased by a million dollars – that is what I said.

Councilwoman Schneider – But right but so it doesn't matter than if the assessed value decreases, increases or stays flat, the local tax increase has taken place every year um, and I say based on my own taxes and I could give you a copy, um, in 2003 my taxes were \$872.00 local municipal tax. In 2013 my taxes are \$2,422.00.

Mayor Steinhardt – The amount to be collected by taxes.

Councilwoman Schneider – That's the dollar amount that I'm paying different

Mayor Steinhardt – That's the amount to be collected by taxes. That's

Councilwoman Schneider – No that's local municipal tax. That's the tax that you that this town charges me.

Mayor Steinhardt – That's correct the amount to be collected by taxes that's different.

Councilwoman Schneider – Right and it increased 178%.

Mayor Steinhardt – Right you are absolutely correct. I'm not going to dispute

Council President Ciesla – Did you do any improvements to your home?

Councilwoman Schneider – Well yeah but that doesn't matter because if you took your tax dollars and the percentages they've gone up over these past years, yours would be the same thing.

Council President Ciesla – Numbers semantics.

Mayor Steinhardt – That's not it at all. She's correct that the amount to be raised by taxes has gone up for the reasons that I said. We don't get anywhere near the state aid we used to. The budget number though, the amount of money that this Council has spent has changed 19% in the window that he gave us. What you're doing is no different from really what Joe did, you're pointing to the amount of monies to be raised by taxes not the amount of money that the Township has spent and that is the result of a bunch of other factors outside beyond the scope that this Council can control; which is how much state aid we have, what kind of grants we get, what other reimbursements we might get from other outside agencies. You are talking about totally different things.

Councilwoman Schneider – Not really because you know, your taxes increase, excuse me. Well, your taxes go up because of expenditures, you know, uh, it's not because of assessed values that you were alluding to so. That's what I have to say.

Motion to adjourn by Councilman Belcaro, seconded by Councilwoman McCabe. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret B. Dilts  
Clerk/Administrator

Douglas J. Steinhardt  
Mayor