

Lopatcong/Pohatcong Townships
Joint Committee Meeting
232 S. Third Street
7:00 PM

April 14, 2015

The meeting of the joint Councils of the Township of Lopatcong and the Township of Pohatcong was called to order approximately 7:00 pm by Mayor McKay. The meeting was held in the Municipal Building located at 232 S. Third St., Phillipsburg, New Jersey 08865.

A moment of silence was offered followed by the Oath of Allegiance.

Mayor McKay 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 Buildings."

Clerk Kutzman for Pohatcong called the roll – Becker, Kern, Slack, Van Lieu, Vangeli.

Clerk Dilts for Lopatcong called the roll – Councilman Belcaro, Councilwoman McCabe, Councilwoman Schneider, Council President Ciesla, Mayor McKay.

Mayor McKay – Stated that this meeting was to gain further insight into the mechanics of the shared services rules which were promulgated by State of New Jersey and afforded to certain counties within the State of New Jersey and Warren County is one of those. There is no decisions being made tonight; we haven't Rice Noticed any employees, in fact there is no arrangement between the townships and some other townships may be interested in doing this as we go down the road. Tonight is to learn what the rules are and clearly the legislature recognizes what challenges small towns have with high paid employees and tax bases that just can't bear the burden of much more expense.

Mayor Kern - Expressed that he echoed Mayor McKay's sentiment that this law is unique and affects us here in Warren County to participate in the pilot program to explore sharing some of these different positions that are in our municipality. It is important that it is looked at for a cost-savings perspective but also that the level of service that the residents expect. It is a start by at least talking.

Councilwoman Ciesla – Asked to make a motion to establish a Joint Committee and a Joint Meeting according to the DCA guidelines that would be comprised of all ten members of both Lopatcong and Pohatcong Councils

Attorney Benbrook – Explained that there are certain procedures. Meetings have to be advertised and Sunshine Act procedures have to be applied. His suggestion was to have subcommittees with less than the majority of the two councils.

Councilwoman McCabe – Thought both councils should meet on a regular basis because of the importance of these decisions and seconded Councilwoman Ciesla's motion.

Attorney Benbrook indicated the statutory formality.

Council President Ciesla – Restated her motion that effected Lopatcong only, seconded by Councilwoman McCabe.

Roll call –

AYES: Councilman Belcaro, Councilwoman McCabe, Council President Ciesla

NAYS: Councilwoman Schneider, Mayor McKay

Mayor Kern – Motion to join to establish a joint committee with Lopatcong to discuss shared services, seconded by Becker.

Roll call –

AYES: Becker, Slack, Vangeli, Kern

NAYS: Van Lieu

Both Pohatcong and Lopatcong will take turns as to where the meeting will take place which will allow the Mayor and Council to each regulate the procedures in their respective towns.

Lopatcong – All in favor.

Pohatcong – All in favor.

Attorney Benbrook asked Pohatcong Council to form a subcommittee – Mayor Kern acknowledged himself along with Councilman Becker. Moved by Councilwoman Van Lieu, seconded by Councilman Slack. Shared Service Subcommittee.

AYES: Becker, Slack, Van Lieu, Vangeli, Kern.

NAYS: None

Attorney Benbrook – Stated the four legislative positions to be considered for Shared Services - Tax Collector, Tax Assessor, CFO and Clerk.

CFO Rossetti asked the two Councils if she would like a cost analysis for each position. All agreed and decided the analysis should be submitted to everyone.

Council asked that resumes, lists of duties and any other information necessary to be submitted by the employees being considered for shared services.

Council President Ciesla – Made a motion for the township attorney to look into all the details of a shared service, seconded by Councilwoman McCabe. Roll call vote:

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

NAYS: None

Council agreed that May 19th is the next meeting for both Councils to meet at 6:00 pm. Pohatcong Clerk Wanda Kutzman will advertise for this meeting.

Public Comments:

Kelly Smith – 3026 Hutchinson River Road in Harmony - Mrs. Smith, Warren County Clerk's Association President provided an overview of the Clerk's Office responsibilities to the councils and public.

Dave Lorimer – 809 Rugby Road in Lopatcong– Glad that everyone is taking a look at these issues. Are any of the current positions vacant?

Judith Forbes – 66 Creek Road in Pohatcong – Did anyone determine if the positions these people are working in have any extra time? Also thought the CFO could be shared also.

Lee Rozycki – 56 Puddingstone Way in Lopatcong – Suggested evaluation of both Clerks' positions creating a new job description and reporting structure, done on a trial basis, etc.

Marla Endick – 10 Byron Drive in Lopatcong – Is there a statute that states the position must go to a person already in the job. Is there criteria in place? Is it based on performance? Is the salary negotiated?

Linda Zimmer – 4th Street in Lopatcong – What is going to happen to the bldgs.? How are you going to save money if half the time they are here and half the time they are there?

Rob Larsen – 26 Browning Court – I think the idea for shared services is great but there is a lot to tend to just by the round of questions that came up. Everyone line item of every person and every

responsibility has to be evaluated, the cost needs to be associated based on town size. I mean there is so much involved in this; I think that it is a premature move for the town. If the stage isn't set properly, it could be a recipe for disaster.

Olschewski – Highlands Way – Agreed with Mr. Larsen. Clerk in Pohatcong has a lawsuit going on. Does she run a pool operation because our clerk runs the pool. He did not feel if there was a savings of \$15,000, it would not be worth it. Sharing will be purely economic – should it be the clerk that is making less money be considered?

Carrie Emery – Tax Collector in Pohatcong – Understands the philosophy of saving money for the tax payer. Look into the quality of the person and professionalism in the job.

Judith Forbes – Asked why this meeting was called in the first place.

Linda Zimmer – 4th Street – If the tax collector is not here all the time are you going to have a tax collector available five days a week to cover both areas and pay the same salary. Say if she is only here two days a week and yours is there three days – the tax collector is going to have to work in both areas – she is not going to work for the same salary so you can't expect to take money away if she is going to work more days. Same way with the clerk's.

Eric Johnson – 361 Stonehenge Drive – Came to watch and gather and referenced a job description. Does this make sense – we should know what everybody is doing. Let's look at the whole big picture.

Olschewski – Commented on Mayor Kern and stated we do have a shared service committee. Is it your goal in Pohatcong to share service on every position?

Mayor McKay made for a motion to close public comment, seconded by Councilwoman Schneider. All in favor.

Motion to adjourn by Councilwoman Van Lieu, seconded by Councilman Slack. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret B. Dilts, CMC
Clerk/Administrator