

TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG
Special Meeting Minutes
6:30 pm

March 18, 2020

The Special Meeting of the Lopatcong Township Council was called to order by Mayor Mengucci. The meeting was held in the Municipal Building located at 232 S. Third St., Phillipsburg, New Jersey.

A Prayer was offered followed by the Oath of Allegiance.

Mayor Mengucci 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.”

Present – Councilman Belcaro, Councilman Palitto, Councilman Wright, Council President Pryor, Mayor Mengucci. Also present were Attorney Campbell and Engineer Sterbenz.

Motion to resume regular session by Councilman Belcaro, seconded by Councilman Palitto. All in favor.

Public Comment: No Public Comment

Business:

2020 Municipal Budget - CFO Browne stated this is the introduction of the budget. She stated this year the emphasis was placed on paying down the debt, specifically, the solar panels with a healthy surplus this could be accomplished. The 2020 budget is an accurate representation of service and public safety needs of the community. Additional monies have been allocated to repair sink holes and sewer lines. The total appropriation for the 2020 budget is \$9,702,205.41. Revenues are anticipated in the amount of \$4,161,921.38 which leaves the amount to be raised by taxes in the amount of \$5,540,284.03 and this equates to a two-cent increase on a home assessed at \$231,000.00. The impact will be \$49.00 for the year for the local share. Council President Pryor noted that the Mayor and he formed the Finance Committee this year and worked with both the Administrator and Kim and thanked them for their assistance. Council President Pryor had three broad goals; limiting the increase to two-cents, paying off old debt and maintain a 12 percent surplus going into the year in accordance with the policy. CFO Browne confirmed this. There was some discussion over the Fire Dept. budget line items which included the vehicle and the outfitting costs which will come in below \$60,000.00. The difference can be applied to other equipment not funded. Motion to introduce the budget by Council President Pryor, seconded by Mayor Mengucci. Roll call vote:

AYES: Councilman Belcaro, Councilman Palitto, Councilman Wright, Council President Pryor, Mayor Mengucci.

NAYS: None

Court Recording Equipment – This equipment is outdated leaving no storage, software has changed, in need of bigger hard drive and various other problems that have led to the replacement which Gramco has provided a quote in the amount of \$5,766.00. Motion by Council President Pryor, seconded by Councilman Wright. Roll call vote:

AYES: Councilman Belcaro, Councilman Palitto, Councilman Wright, Council President Pryor, Mayor Mengucci.

NAYS: None

Wastewater Operation and Maintenance – Award to Chapman Environmental Services.

R 20-56

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG, COUNTY OF WARREN AND
STATE OF NEW JERSEY AWARDING A PROFESSIONAL SERVICE CONTRACT FOR
THE OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP’S WASTEWATER

COLLECTION SYSTEM FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE CONTRACT TERM TO EXPIRE
JULY 31, 2020

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey find that the terms and conditions of the current Contract with O & M Solutions, LLC are not being satisfied and it has been determined that the Township Council shall terminate this contract; and

WHEREAS, under Article VII. Entitled Termination, provides for reasons this contract can be germinated; and

WHEREAS, this contract shall terminate under No. 6 – If contractor persistently fails to perform the work in accordance with the Agreement; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Lopatcong has received a quotation on March 5, 2020 from Chapman Environmental Services of One Industrial Way West, Bldg. A, Suite N in Eatontown, NJ 07724 to perform services to the Township's Wastewater Collection System; and

WHEREAS, these appointments are made without competitive bidding as professional services under the provisions of the Local Public Contracts Law, as provided in N.J.S.A. 40A:11-5; and

WHEREAS, the Chief Financial Officer has certified funds are available.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey that O & M Solutions, LLC, be terminated as the Township's Wastewater Operator immediately and a contract for the remainder of the contract term be awarded to Chapman Environmental Services of Eatontown, New Jersey.

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, March 18, 2020.

Margaret B. Dilts,

CMC

Motion to adopt this Resolution by Council President Pryor, seconded by Councilman Palitto.

Roll call vote:

AYES: Councilman Belcaro, Councilman Palitto, Councilman Wright, Council President Pryor, Mayor Mengucci.

NAYS: None

Tax Assessor - Advertise for the position. Motion by Council President Pryor to authorize, seconded by Councilman Belcaro. Roll call vote:

AYES: Councilman Belcaro, Councilman Palitto, Councilman Wright, Council President Pryor, Mayor Mengucci.

NAYS: None

Consent Agenda:

Motion to approve Consent Agenda by Councilman Belcaro, seconded by Council President Pryor. Roll call vote:

AYES: Councilman Belcaro, Councilman Palitto, Councilman Wright, Council President Pryor, Mayor Mengucci.

NAYS: None

Resolution No 20-57 – Correct Tax Account for Block 87, Lot 1.31.

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG, COUNTY OF WARREN AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY TO CORRECT THE TAX ACCOUNT FOR BLOCK 87, LOT 1.31

WHEREAS, the Township of Lopatcong, County of Warren and State of New Jersey has been provided with an affidavit and supporting evidence from the owner of Block 87, Lot 1.31 that he made his 4th quarter 2015 tax payment in cash but it was not properly posted in his account; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Council of the Township of Lopatcong hereby authorizes the Township Tax Office, upon receipt of a signed affidavit from the taxpayer, to apply a correction to Block 87, Lot 1.31 bringing the account current through 1st quarter 2018.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Lopatcong Township Tax Office shall cancel any and all interest resulting from the failure to timely post these payments.

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, March 18, 2020.

Margaret B. Dilts,

CMC

Resolution No. 20-58 – Correct Tax Account for Block 77, Lot 5.

R 20-58

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCONG, COUNTY OF WARREN AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY TO CORRECT THE TAX ACCOUNT FOR BLOCK 77, LOT 5

WHEREAS, the Township of Lopatcong has been provided with copies of receipts for cash payments made by the taxpayer in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 that were not properly applied to the taxpayer's account; and

WHEREAS, a review of the taxpayer's account shows fraudulent credits to the taxpayers account by the former Tax Collector in an effort to cover up the failure to post the taxpayer's cash payments; and

WHEREAS, the taxpayer is eligible for a Senior Freeze and therefore, an incorrect delinquency on his account could interfere with his eligibility; and

WHEREAS, the Township Council wishes to correct the taxpayer's account to show a zero balance as of 1st quarter 2020.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Township of Council of the Township of Lopatcong hereby authorizes the Township Tax Office to apply a credit to Block 77, Lot 5 to bring the account current through 1st quarter of 2020.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Lopatcong Township Tax Office shall cancel any and all interest resulting from the failure to timely post these payments.

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, March 18, 2020.

Margaret B. Dilts,

CMC

Resolution No. 20-59 – Correct Tax Account for Block 85, Lot 12.

R 20-59

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOPATCNG, COUNTY OF WARREN AND
STATE OF NEW JERSEY TO CORRECT THE TAX ACCOUNT FOR BLOCK 85, LOT 12

WHEREAS, the Township of Lopatcong has been provided with copies of receipts for cash payments made by the taxpayer in 2017 and 2018 that were not properly applied to the taxpayer's account; and

WHEREAS, a review of the taxpayer's account shows fraudulent credits to the taxpayers account by the former Tax Collector in 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 in an effort to cover up the failure to post the taxpayer's cash payments; and

WHEREAS, the taxpayer is eligible for a Senior Freeze and therefore, an incorrect delinquency on his account could interfere with his eligibility; and

WHEREAS, the Township Council wishes to correct the taxpayer's account to show a zero balance as of 1st quarter 2020.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Council of the Township of Lopatcong hereby authorizes the Township Tax Office to apply a credit to Block 85, Lot 12 to bring the account current through 1st quarter 2020.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Lopatcong Township Tax Office shall cancel any and all interest resulting from the failure to timely post these payments.

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, March 18, 2020.

Margaret B. Dilts,

CMC

Porta Potties – Award quote to Warren Septic for the 2020 season.

Announcement - Public hearing and final reading of the Municipal Building is scheduled for Wednesday, April 15, 2020 – 6:30 pm Executive Session, Regular Session 7:00 pm.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Councilman Belcaro, seconded by Council President Pryor. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret B. Dilts, CMC
Clerk/Administrator

James E. Mengucci
Mayor