

Florence, New Jersey
July 15, 2015

The Florence Township Council held a regular meeting on the above date in the Municipal Complex, 711 Broad Street, Florence, New Jersey.

The meeting was called to order by Council President Sandusky at 8:00 PM. President Sandusky led the Salute to the Flag.

A moment of silence was held in honor of Council Member Ted Lovenduski's mother, *Marguerite C. Lovenduski*, who passed away on Sunday.

The Opening Statement was read by the Township Clerk: Notice was posted on the municipal bulletin board; placed on the web-site on January 8, 2015; and advertised in the Burlington Co. Times on January 11, 2015. It was also provided to the now defunct Register News for information and sent to the Trenton Times on May 21, 2015.

Present: Frank Baldorossi, Paul Ostrander, David Woolston, Jerry Sandusky
(Ted Lovenduski absent due to a death in the family)

Also present: Mayor Craig H. Wilkie; Richard A. Brook, Township Administrator; Thomas A. Sahol, Assistant Administrator; Kelly Grant, Esq., Township Attorney; Joy M. Weiler, Township Clerk

MINUTES None at this time.

FINANCIAL CORRESPONDENCE

It was the MOTION of Ostrander; seconded by Woolston to receive and file the Tax Collector's Tax and Water & Sewer Reports for June. Roll call vote – All ayes. Motion Carried.

It was on the MOTION of Ostrander; seconded by Woolston to approve the **Treasurer's Bill List**.

Upon roll call Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Baldorossi, Ostrander, Woolston, Sandusky

NOES: None

ABSENT: Lovenduski

Motion carried.

REGULAR CORRESPONDENCE: None at this time.

APPLICATIONS:

- A. Social Affair Permit (1): American Legion Post 194, West Sixth & Broad Streets
Bocce Ball Tournament, August 1, 2015, 9:00am – 9:00pm
to benefit the Florence Township Football Association

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Social Affair Permit (2): Same as above, inside, to benefit the American Legion
10:00am – 1:00am

B. Off-Premise 50/50: Roebling Museum, 100 Second Avenue, Roebling
September 26, 2015, 1:00pm – 7:00pm

C. On-Premise 50/50: Roebling Museum, 100 Second Avenue, Roebling
September 26, 2015, 1:00pm – 7:00pm

D. Transient Merchant: Kona Shaved Ice, Richard Peak

It was the MOTION of Baldorossi; seconded by Ostrander to approve Applications A through D.
Roll call vote – all ayes. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Seeing no one wishing to be heard, it was the MOTION of Ostrander; seconded by Woolston to close the public comment. All ayes.

Township Auditor – Review of 2014 Audit

Township Auditor John J. Maley, Jr. referred to the Audit Reports he provided previously. He called attention to the Balance Sheet of the Current Fund. This the general operating fund. The balance sheet shows the financial position on December 31, 2014. The total assets were \$6,980,578.72. Most was in cash in the amount of \$6,041,620.18. There are liabilities payable from those assets. The total liabilities is \$3,418,454.06. Subtracted from the assets and offset by reserves and receivables, the township is left with a fund balance of \$2,623,166.12. That is down from the year before which was \$3,253,389.73. It is down about \$630,000 because there is less revenue being generated. Of the \$2,623,166.12, the township used \$1.6 million of it to balance the 2015 Budget. The prior year the township used \$1.7 million. It seems that the amount is around \$1.5 million that the township needs each year to get the budgets balanced.

He now referred to the Statement of Operations. This is what would be considered a profit and loss statement. The revenues for the year 2014 were \$36,267,106.51. That is up from \$35,747,765.97 the year before. That is an increase of \$520,000. It is not really that the revenue has increased. Included is the fund balance utilized, and that is the township's own funds. If that is removed, the revenues are actually down about \$300,000. The total expenditures are \$35,176,330.12. That is up from \$33,497,085.68 the year before. It is an increase of about \$1,679,000. One item that stands out is the large increase in Capital Improvements. The excess in revenue this year was \$1,090,776.39, compared to \$2,250,680.29 the prior year. The fund balance at the end of the year on December 31, 2014 was \$2,623,166.12 compared to the prior year of \$3,253,389.73 is down about \$630,000. That is because the revenues were down and the expenses were up.

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He directed Mayor and Council's attention to the Detail of Budgetary Revenues. It compares what was budgeted to what was actually realized in revenues. The last column is the excess or deficits. There were some small deficits, most were excesses. There were two large numbers. In the Uniform Construction Code Fees, there is an excess of what was anticipated of \$267,956.00. PILOT Programs had an increase of \$164,992.54. It is a combined total of \$432,948.54. It could be a one shot deal because he does not know where the township is going in the future with the PILOT Programs and Construction Code fees but it is something to keep in mind.

Mayor Wilkie explained that 2013 was the last of the five year abatement from the Whitesell projects. In January of 2014 those funds became tax money. What was being received directly by the town decreased. The Debt Service for 2014 and 2015 remained high. In 2012 when this was being reviewed, his comment was the township was going to lower the Pilot payments, so it would be roughly the same to be able to bank the money in 2013, so in 2014 and 2015 taxes would not have to be raised to pay for the Debt Service. It was done to keep the taxes stable.

Mr. Maley referenced the Statement of Expenditures. This is the summary of the budget for the year. It shows line by line expenses and how they compare to what was budgeted. The reserve column means that whatever was in the budget that was not spent or encumbered is what was left. The total was \$421,091.39. That is a good number. Most of it will eventually find its way back to surplus by the end of this year.

He noted the Trust Fund Exhibits were included but he was not going to review them individually. These reflect cash that is held in trust for other people. Some examples are developer's deposits and payroll accounts. It is cash set by liabilities.

He moved on to the General Capital Fund Balance Sheet. This is used to account for the Capital Projects that are expected to be bonded along with the township's outstanding debt. The first three items in the Liability section are outstanding debt. They total about \$7,029,000.00. That is down from \$8,200,000.00 the year before because the township was budgeting principal payments as required. The number is relatively small if compared to what the township is permitted to hold in debt, which would be 3.5% of the equalized valuations. This is about 1% of the equalized valuations. The township is not overburdened with debt.

Mr. Maley said the Water & Sewer Utility Total Operating Fund amounts to \$2,768,095.68. That is up from the prior year of \$2,568,674.72. The liabilities payable against those assets are about \$425,929, that is down from \$482,394 the year before. The Fund Balance was \$2,085,846.77. That is up from \$1,763,773.77. Of that \$2,085,846.77, the township used \$342,000 to balance the 2015 Budget. That is not a very high number to have to use. In prior years it was somewhere around \$420,000.

The debt for the Water & Sewer Utility is accounted for separately. The bonds are around \$6,629,000.00; that is down from \$8,209,000 the year before.

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That is a decrease of almost \$1,600,000.00. This was a function of paying off debt as budgeted from year to year.

The next exhibit showed what would be considered a Profit/Loss Statement for the Water & Sewer Utility. The total revenues were \$6,198,228.29, down from \$6,566,294.61 the year before. The total expenditures were \$5,456,166.29, relatively equal to the year before that was \$5,412,998.61. There was an excess of \$742,062.00, compared to \$1,153,296.00 the year before. The utility is in decent financial condition.

Mr. Maley said the funds he reviewed are the ones that Mayor and Council should be somewhat familiar with. He noted the surplus for the Current Fund and for the Water & Sewer Utility, and Florence Township finished the year very well.

He said Mayor and Council are, at a minimum, required to certify that they are familiar with the Findings and Recommendations from the Audit Report. He said he looks for compliance in the areas of expenditures, budgeting and over expenditures. This year there were no findings at all. The finding from last year was corrected. The township had a good year and the Municipal Offices are running smoothly. He looks closely at compliance issues and if there are any to be mentioned they will be mentioned. He found nothing this year so that is a good thing.

Mayor Wilkie said the audit confirms what he and Council already knew, the operations are efficient and effective.

RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 2015-172

Approve Annual Audit

RESOLUTION NO. 2015-173

**Burlington County Mutual Aid and Assistance
Agreement Between Participating Units**

RESOLUTION NO. 2015-174

**Authorizing Approval of 2015-2016 Renewal of
Plenary Retail Distribution License
*Liquor Barn***

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RESOLUTION NO. 2015-175

**Authorize Refund
Housing Inspection Fee**

RESOLUTION NO. 2015-176

**Authorizing the Township Engineer and Assistant
Township Administrator to Prepare Plans,
Specifications and Solicit Bids for the
Community Development Block Grant Application**

RESOLUTION NO. 2015-177

**Approve Current Estimate No. 3 for
Library Roof Replacement and Related Work
Laurant Construction Co., Inc.
3 Meadows Court, Pennington, NJ 08518**

It was the MOTION of Baldorossi; seconded by Ostrander to approve Resolution Nos. 2015-172 through 2015-177.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Baldorossi, Ostrander, Woolston, Sandusky
NOES: None
ABSENT: Lovenduski Motion carried.

ORDINANCES

ORDINANCE NO. 2015-16

**AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE TOWNSHIP OF FLORENCE
IN THE COUNTY OF BURLINGTON, NEW JERSEY
TO ENTER INTO A FINANCIAL AGREEMENT
BETWEEN THE TOWNSHIP AND LIBERTY FLORENCE I
URBAN RENEWAL, L.L.C. FOR CERTAIN
PROPERTY WITHIN THE ROUTE 130 REDEVELOPMENT AREA
(1st Reading) (Public Hearing & Adoption 8/5/15)**

It was the MOTION of Baldorossi; seconded by Woolston to approve Ordinance No. 2015-16 and set the public hearing and adoption for August 5, 2015.

Upon roll call Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Baldorossi, Ostrander, Woolston, Sandusky
NOES: None
ABSENT: Lovenduski Motion carried.

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REPORTS

Committees, Boards and Officers: Nothing at this time.

Administration

Mayor

Mayor Wilkie thanked everyone for their participation in the **Patriotic Day** festivities the previous Saturday. He has heard a lot of positive comments. It was a very nice day and the weather was very cooperative.

There was a lot going on behind the scenes that day. The fire and the police were very busy, especially the EMS. During the concert there was a vehicle that was overturned at the corner of Delaware and Hornberger Avenues. At least eight people were taken to the hospital. The first responders returned to the festivities to be on hand during the fireworks. Then at around 2:30am he learned there was a fire in the Community Center. Fortunately, there was only damage to the sitting room, but the entire building is covered in soot and is unavailable for use at this time. What was a nice shiny wood floor is black; there was even soot in the closed ice machine. It is literally everywhere. The Police and Fire Departments showed a great response to both incidents.

Regarding the Patriotic Celebration, he heard some comments about adding activities earlier in the day. It is a busy enough day, and it would be very taxing on people to start earlier. It should be a good day but not an exhausting day. He thanked everyone for all that they did for the event.

Saturday, **July 25th, 2015**, is the **Roebling Museum Car Show**. That weekend is also the **100th Birthday of Frances Almassy**. She was in the parade and is a World War II Veteran. Council President Sandusky will be in attendance. Also, there is an **Eagle Scout Presentation** that day that Council President Sandusky will attend. Mayor Wilkie will not be town that week.

Mayor Wilkie said he had two appointments this evening. The **Shade Tree Commission** has had a vacancy that expires in **December of 2017**. He appointed **David Cartier**. Mr. Cartier is a recent graduate of Florence High School. He is in the landscaping business and will be pursuing that with further education. There is also a **2nd Alternate** position on the **Historic Preservation Commission**. He appointed **Jack Ulmer**, who is in attendance. Mr. Ulmer has been very involved with the Florence Historical Society and he takes great interest in the community.

It was the MOTION of Ostrander; seconded by Woolston to confirm the appointments.

Upon roll call Council voted as follows:

AYES: Baldorossi, Ostrander, Woolston, Sandusky

NOES: None

ABSENT: Lovenduski

Motion carried.

Council President Sandusky said regarding comments about having a run the morning of the Patriotic Celebration, it was done in the past but there was a run on the day of the Police Bike Rodeo and it seemed to work well. All agreed.

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Administrator

Administrator Brook said when the township bought the Bucs Property on Hornberger Avenue the arrangement was that the township would pay the owner a certain amount of money. The balance would be put in an escrow account to make sure the property was remediated. The remediation has occurred over the past couple of years. Mr. Bucs recently reached out to Administrator Brook and there will be a meeting with the Chief Financial Officer to inspect the bills that came against the escrow account. Then a payment will be finalized and it will be placed on the next bill list. Everyone remembers what Bucs looked like versus what it looks like today. Assistant Administrator Sahol is working with Mayor Wilke for something to do with the building. It is much improved for the residents of the village.

Hopefully the township will hear something this month regarding the tax bills. A resolution will be put on the agenda and something will be posted on the township website. Florence Township adopted its budget early, the state adopts its budget on time, the county adopts its budget on time, but nobody has a tax rate. There is nothing that can be done. That is the reason for the Tax Anticipation Notes.

There is a property on Railroad Avenue, **837 Railroad Avenue**. The owner got approval to put offices there many years ago. The property is in horrific condition. Over the winter the Construction Code Official cited the owner, sent a copy to the management company and declared it an unsafe structure. The property is a total mess and a hazard to the public. He spoke to the Township Solicitor and he is going to be meeting over the next week or two and following through under the statutes in accordance with the process of demolishing this home and leveling the property. The authority is there under the Construction Code Official. Now it is going to be taken to the next level where the work will be done. It could be done by the property owner or one of the lien holders, but it is going to be done. Nobody should have to live next to a property that is in this kind of condition. The proper notice will be made and there will be a hearing before the Public Officer. If no one comes forward there will be a resolution prepared to give the township the ability to do an emergency appropriation and do the work. He said the township should be aggressive and diligent. He thinks the township will need to take action. He just wanted Mayor Wilkie and Council to know in case there were questions. If no one comes to the public hearing, there will be a resolution that would need to be authorized to get quotes and have the property cleaned up.

Council President Sandusky asked what the time frame would be? Administrator Brook said the hearing would be held in August and shortly after the hearing the resolution would be brought to Council.

There will be a separate bond ordinance in the near future to clean up the **Marconi Lodge** property. The property on Railroad has been a blight to that portion of the community and it's unfair that it should be allowed to sit and keep deteriorating for so long.

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Council President Sandusky said while on the topic of properties of that nature, what is the status of the Nirdip Motel? Administrator Brook said the new owners came to the township shortly after the property was transferred and asked for the approval for the utility disconnect. They were told that they now own the property and they didn't have to come to the township for approval. The owner and the township are working together to try and expedite the request but he believes it will probably come down in August.

Assistant Municipal Administrator

Assistant Administrator Sahol said he just submitted for reimbursement for last year's Park Project. He recommends the township apply to Burlington County for the funds to finish the last three parks with the fall surface material. The cost will be about \$35,000 for all three. That is a State Contract material. He also recommends a rather sizeable amount of funds be included to add some trees to some of the parks. There are some areas where the township experienced some loss of some of the tree cover. He wants to work with the Shade Tree Commission to see where the need is.

One of the third or fourth priorities in prior years was to pave the section of **Riverside Avenue Park** that is currently gravel. It is at Second Avenue and Riverside Avenue. He can include the number if Council would like him to.

It was the **MOTION** of Ostrander, seconded by Baldorossi to approve the request of the Assistant Administrator. All ayes.

Assistant Administrator Sahol referred to a memo he provided regarding the annual contributions from Waste Management. The funds are held in a trust. They are to be used for something environmental in nature. He recommends that \$500.00 be donated to each of the two garden clubs in the municipality. They do a lot for the community. He also requested some of the funds be used for the tree installation project on Front Street.

It was the **MOTION** of Baldorossi; seconded by Woolston to approve the request and direct the Assistant Administrator to move forward with the donations and tree project. All ayes.

There was a request from a resident to look at the feasibility of putting a bike lane on Hornberger Avenue. Township Engineer Biegen did look and with the requirements it would require widening the road. That would mean changes to the storm drains, utility pole changes and interfere with many people's water and sewer lines. It was a really good idea; unfortunately that road just cannot support it.

Mayor Wilkie said there are a number of people living at Roebing Arms on Hornberger Avenue that use motorized chairs. He recommends improvements to the sidewalks. He sees a number of the residents riding in the road. His concern is the accessibility to the sidewalks for those in motorized chairs. He would like everyone to be able to support local businesses and have access to them. He suggested at least from Tenth Avenue to Parrish Lane looking at what can be done.

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Assistant Administrator Sahol said the sidewalks would be addressed when the road was resurfaced. Mayor Wilkie asked about widening the sidewalks on one side. People riding bikes don't like riding on sidewalks and there is a statute that says they are supposed to ride bicycles in the road. He would like all of the options to be explored.

Division of Law Nothing at this time.

Division of Engineering Nothing at this time.

Unfinished Business Nothing at this time.

New Business Nothing at this time.

Public Comments: Open to the Public

Joseph Csik, 45 East Fifth Street, thanked the Police Department, especially **Officer Nicole Bonilla**, for helping him regarding an abandoned house on Fifth and Chestnut Streets. The doors and windows were open again. She responded very quickly.

He noted that Administrator Brook mentioned a building that was an eyesore and was falling down. He would like someone to tear down the one near him. It is probably bank owned; it is falling down and he doesn't think anyone is going to buy it. It is a hazard and kids are going in and out of it.

Administrator Brook said for that particular property, the initial legal notice as required under the Uniform Construction Code has been given. There was no response. The only true option is to follow through with the statutes and give them a hearing. If no one comes forward to demolish the property, there are only two options, leave it the way it is or demolish it and put a lien on the property. Ultimately the municipality will regain its costs to take down the structure.

Mayor Wilkie said the township will follow up regarding the property. Council President Sandusky asked that the Chief of Police be notified of the compliment for Corporal Nicole Bonilla. Administrator Brook said it would be done and he said Clerk Weiler would probably do it before he would get a chance to.

It was the **MOTION** of Ostrander; seconded by Woolston to close the public portion of the meeting. Roll call vote – all ayes. Unanimous approval.

ADJOURNMENT

8:42 PM **MOTION** of Woolston; seconded by Ostrander to adjourn. Roll call vote – all ayes. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Joy M. Weiler, RMC/MMC
Township Clerk
/aek