

**BOROUGH OF LAKEHURST
WORK SESSION/REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 3, 2022
MINUTES**

MEETING OPENED AT 7:30 P.M. BY MAYOR HARRY ROBBINS.

ALL STOOD FOR THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE. MAYOR ROBBINS ASKED EVERYONE TO KEEP THE PEOPLE OF THE UKRAINE IN THEIR THOUGHTS.

PUBLIC MEETINGS STATEMENT READ INTO RECORD BY MUNICIPAL CLERK CAPASSO:

“IN COMPLIANCE WITH N.J.S.A. 10:4, OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT, NOTICE WAS GIVEN TO TWO NEWSPAPERS, AND POSTED, THAT A WORK SESSION AND REGULAR MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL IS SCHEDULED FOR THE THIRD DAY OF MARCH, 2022, WITH THE WORK SESSION TO BEGIN AT THE HOUR OF 7:30 P.M. AND THE REGULAR MEETING TO BEGIN IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING AT THE LAKEHURST COMMUNITY CENTER, 207 CENTER STREET, LAKEHURST, NEW JERSEY, AT WHICH TIME, THE BUSINESS OF THE BOROUGH WILL BE CONDUCTED.”

ROLL CALL:

COUNCILMAN DAVIS: PRESENT COUNCILWOMAN HODGES: PRESENT
COUNCILMAN DiMEO: PRESENT COUNCILMAN McCARTHY: PRESENT
COUNCILWOMAN DUGAN: PRESENT COUNCILMAN OGLESBY: PRESENT
MAYOR HARRY ROBBINS: PRESENT

WORK SESSION:

REVIEW OF REGULAR MEETING AGENDA:

Municipal Clerk Capasso reviewed the regular meeting agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Time opened: 7:33 p.m.

Bruce Margenson, 5 Geneva Road, questioned Resolution #22-070, the reassessment of the borough and the possibility of higher taxes.

Mayor Robbins responded the county has ordered the reassessment adding the borough has to comply. Mayor Robbins stated that for some, residents' taxes will increase, some will decrease, and some will remain the same.

Mr. Margenson questioned Resolution #22-071, the Public Agency Compliance Officer.

Municipal Clerk Capasso answered a Public Agency Compliance Officer is responsible for administrating contracting procedures pertaining to equal employment opportunity regarding both the borough and vendors with public contracts with the borough.

Time closed: 7:35 p.m.

Councilwoman Hodges reported that she had spoke with the Tax Assessor, Martin Lynch, who suggested having a public meeting for questions and answers regarding the reassessment.

Mayor Robbins welcomed the idea and suggested inviting Mr. Lynch to a council meeting.

Mrs. Hodges stated the borough has functioned well in the absence of a business administrator but would like the governing body to consider a business manager or coordinator. Mrs. Hodges also stated that position would not be a supervisor but would be that one-point person for everything happening in the borough. Mrs. Hodges further stated that this does not have to be done this year but perhaps some time “down the road”.

Mayor Robbins asked where the job title of Borough Supervisor falls under in regard to Civil Service.

Councilwoman Dugan responded the job title is non-competitive.

Mrs. Hodges stated she would like the governing body to “step out of the box” and to start formulating parameters for this position adding it does not have to be the same terms as it has been in the past.

Mayor Robbins stated the position would be part-time.

Council President Oglesby stated municipalities are mandated by law to reassess every ten years or when the assess value is different than the appraise value by a significant proportion. Mr. Oglesby also stated the idea is when the assessments of the homes go up, the tax rate goes down adding the borough needs a certain amount of money to run, that will not change, the reassessment just reapportions the shares. Mr. Oglesby further stated the taxes might go up slightly if an addition was added to the home or if major improvements were done. Mr. Oglesby went on to say if the borough assesses enough, taxes stay the same adding ideally one-third of the homes will go up, one-third will go down, and one-third will remain the same.

Councilman Davis reported the Car Show Committee had their first reorganization meeting last night adding it was asked if there will be a rain date for the July 2nd Car Show.

Motion by: Patricia Hodges

Seconded by: James Davis

To approve consent agenda. Roll call vote held. All votes affirmative.

COMMITTEE/COUNCIL REPORTS:

Councilwoman Hodges reported the Ordinance Committee has finished reviewing the Land Use Ordinances and have submitted it for codification and added the committee is waiting on the General Ordinance to come back so that the governing body can adopt. Mrs. Hodges commended Mayor Robbins, Council President Oglesby, and Municipal Clerk Capasso for all their effort and hard work and added the outcome will definitely pay off.

Councilman DiMeo reported the Youth and Recreation Committee will resume their meetings this coming Monday at 7:00 p.m. at the Community Center.

Councilman Davis reported the Public Works Committee met with Dave Winton, Public Works Department Head, and added Mr. Winton reported the pavilion at the lake will be repaired in-house. Mr. Davis also reported trees will be planted along Union Avenue this April. Mr. Davis stated the planting of ten trees will also be completed in-house saving the borough \$6000.00. Mr. Davis also stated the electrical boxes that are functioning will stay and the ones that are in disrepair will be cut off and be replaced with junction boxes so if needed “down the road” they can be replaced adding the electrical boxes came in handy for many functions such as decorating the trees during the holiday season. Mr. Davis further stated the Chief Financial Officer, Wayne Sibia, had told Mr. Winton that money will be available to order the trees.

Councilwoman Dugan added that ten trees will show “good faith” effort to the residents adding the borough can add more trees once there is money available in the budget.

Mayor Robbins asked the Finance Committee to reach out to Mr. Sibia in regard to money that is available to replace the trees.

Ms. Dugan stated the trees need to be ordered by April 1st due to the arborer not selling after that date.

Mayor Robbins asked about removing the sidewalk.

Mr. Davis responded that the sidewalks are no longer needed to be removed adding once the stump is removed, the tree can go in the exact place. Mr. Davis stated the Public Works can install a watering system; this allows deep watering to the tree’s roots.

Ms. Dugan added the watering system, also know as Tree IV, can be made by Public Works adding the cost would be \$25.

Council President Oglesby stated the company he met with last year suggested removing the sidewalk so to enlarge the area for the trees and fill in with cobblestone so that the water can filter through.

Mr. Davis stated Mr. Winton felt the area that is in place now will work for the trees.

Councilman McCarthy reported the Police Department's grant radios that were received through the Homeland Security 2021 grant have been commissioned. Mr. McCarthy also reported Chief Kline has applied and submitted for the 2022 grant for two more radios and added that police will be static for a five-year period.

Mr. McCarthy stated he received the current roster and an officer list from the Fire Department.

Mr. McCarthy also stated the Board of Education meeting had first reading of the Policies and Regulations as well as Professional Development approvals.

MAYOR COMMENTS:

Mayor Robbins announced the county will start paving Union Avenue on May 12th lasting through June 17th and Center Street on April 18th through May 15th.

COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC:

Time opened: 7:53 p.m.

Bruce Margenson, 5 Geneva Road, thanked Councilwoman Hodges for completing the review of all the ordinances.

Mr. Margenson asked if the county will be paving Union Avenue in the evening or during the day.

Mayor Robbins responded it will be during the day adding traffic will be directed accordingly.

Mr. Margenson questioned the cannabis businesses.

Mayor Robbins answered the state is granting cultivation licenses now and retail licenses application are being accepted by the state on March 15th.

Mr. Margenson asked if the borough granted a consumption area for cannabis.

Mayor Robbins replied the borough did not grant consumption of cannabis on public property.

Council President Oglesby stated that he and a few other members of the council attended a webinar in regard to the legalization of cannabis that had useful information. Mr. Oglesby stated the webinar was a reinforcement of everything the borough has done in preparation for the cannabis businesses is correct.

Joel Merkin, 17 Lake Shore Drive, commented with the state of the economy, prospects of this getting worse, and the cost of living going up a lot, is there any possibility of putting off the reassessment of homes.

Mayor Robbins responded it is not the borough's choice adding it was mandated by the county.

Councilman DiMeo echoed Council President Oglesby and added the last time the borough was reassessed was ten years ago. Mr. DiMeo stated the value of homes have increased yet the assess value has not, the assessment will bring homes assess value into what is current. Mr. DiMeo also stated that when the new reassess value comes back, the county will give the borough an overall borough value, the actual tax rate will most likely go down to align with the tax amount needed to run the borough. Mr. DiMeo further stated that some homes will see a tax increase, some will see a tax decrease, and some will see no change.

Time closed: 7:59 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION:

Municipal Clerk Capasso reads resolution to go into closed session:

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P. L. 1975, permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances, **and**

WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Lakehurst, County of Ocean, State of New Jersey, as follows:

The public shall be excluded from discussion of and action upon the hereinafter specified subject matter.

The general nature of the subject matters to be discussed is as follows:

PERSONNEL MATTERS

