

**BOROUGH OF LAKEHURST
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 21, 2022
MINUTES**

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

ALL STOOD FOR PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE.

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 TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF APRIL, 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: ABSENT	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.

NO PUBLIC COMMENT

Time closed: 7:33 p.m.

Council President Oglesby stated a resident approached him regarding a streetlight that is out on Church Street questioning the protocol for reporting streetlight outages.

Municipal Clerk Capasso responded she will report the outage to Police Chief Kline.

Councilman Davis added there is also a streetlight out at the corner of Route 70 and Manapaqua Street, near the old Burger King.

Mr. Oglesby stated awhile back, the borough had replaced a few streetlights with LED asking if JCP&L still has the program so that the borough can replace the remaining lights.

Mayor Robbins answered he will reach out to the JCP&L representative.

Mr. Oglesby stated his concerns about the high New Jersey Natural Gas bills at the ESC adding he would like to contact New Jersey Natural Gas, having them check the meters to be sure that they are operating correctly. Mr. Oglesby further added he would also like to have an energy audit of the building to see if heat is leaking out somewhere. Mr. Oglesby stated the bill for the Borough Hall was much less than the ESC adding Borough Hall is occupied five days a week and has an upstairs and downstairs and is an old building that more than likely is not energy efficient.

ADJOURNMENT OF WORK SESSION:

Motion by: James Davis
To adjourn work session. Roll call vote held. All votes affirmative.

Seconded by: Bernadette Dugan

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion by: Bernadette Dugan
To approve minutes of April 7, 2022 Regular Meeting. Roll call vote held. All votes affirmative with the exception of Councilman Davis who abstained due to his absence at the April 7th regular meeting.

Seconded by: Steven Oglesby

CONSENT AGENDA:

All matters to be considered to be routine in nature and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items. If any discussion is desired by Council, that particular item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and will be considered separately.

A. RESOLUTIONS:

1. Resolution #22-088 re: Payment of Bills
2. Resolution #22-089 re: Membership in Lakehurst First Aid Squad for Rachel Cogley

B. ORDINANCES APPROVED ON FIRST READING:

“AN ORDINANCE BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF LAKEHURST AMENDING THE BOROUGH OF LAKEHURST CODE OF ORDINANCES TO REPEAL CHAPTER XXIII; TO ADOPT A NEW CHAPTER XXIII; TO ADOPT FLOOD HAZARD MAPS; TO DESIGNATE A FLOODPLAIN ADMINISTRATOR; AND PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE” (#2022-05)

Motion by: Patricia Hodges

Seconded by: Bernadette Dugan

To approve consent agenda. Roll call vote held. All votes affirmative with the exception of Council President Oglesby who abstained to Resolution #22-089 for he is a member of the First Aid Squad.

ORDINANCES NOT ON CONSENT AGENDA:

Motion by: James Davis

Seconded by: Steven Oglesby

To approve on second reading and open the public hearing of Ordinance #2022-03 entitled: "AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF LAKEHURST, COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK." Roll call vote held. All votes affirmative.

Time opened: 7:37 p.m.

David Burton, 501 Lilac Street, asked if the borough was establishing a cap bank due to the increase of taxes.

Wayne Sibilias, Borough Chief Financial Officer, responded every year the state statutorily allows municipalities to establish a bank so whatever the municipality does not utilize between what was raised by taxes and what the statutory maximum taxes were, the municipality can reserve for up to three years to utilize in future years in order to help provide for additional revenue. Mr. Sibilias stated an example would be the state allows the municipality to raise taxes 2% a year but if the municipality only use 1% that year, they are allowed to use the other 1% the following year if needed. Mr. Sibilias went on to say establishing a cap bank is an accounting procedure the municipality must do every year to keep that bank open.

Time closed: 7:39 p.m.

Motion by: Bernadette Dugan

Seconded by: James Davis

To adopt Ordinance #2022-03. Roll call vote held. All votes affirmative.

Motion by: Steven Oglesby
Seconded by: Patricia Hodges
To approve on second reading and open the public hearing of Ordinance #2022-04 entitled: "AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF LAKEHURST FIXING AND DETERMINING THE AMOUNT OF SALARIES AND WAGES FOR CERTAIN EMPLOYEES OF THE BOROUGH OF LAKEHURST, COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY." Roll call vote held. All votes affirmative with the exception of Councilman McCarthy who voted no.

Time opened: 7:40 p.m.

Miranda Salas, 208 Church Street, asked which employee, or employees, will be affected by said ordinance.

Municipal Clerk Capasso responded a resolution naming the position, employee, and salary will be adopted at the next council meeting.

Time closed: 7:41 p.m.

Motion by: Steven Oglesby
Seconded by: Patricia Hodges
To adopt Ordinance #2022-04. Roll call vote held. All votes affirmative with the exception of Councilman McCarthy who voted no.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

PUBLIC HEARING ON 2022 MUNICIPAL BUDGET:

Motion by: Patricia Hodges
Seconded by: Steve Oglesby
To open public hearing on 2022 Municipal Budget. Roll call vote held. All votes affirmative.

Time opened: 7:41 p.m.

Wayne Sibilia, Borough Chief Financial Officer, stated the budget this year was challenging due to cost that are outside the borough's control. Mr. Sibilia reported the municipal tax rate increased \$51,000 this year, that is under the 2% statutory maximum adding that equates to a 2.7 penny increase, where a penny in Lakehurst equals \$13,951. Mr. Sibilia stated a 2% municipal tax increase in a year where the federal government expects a 5.5% average inflation through the end of the year, is a challenge. Mr. Sibilia stated the department heads worked hard this year to try to foresee what is needed and come up with creative solutions to manage costs. Mr. Sibilia went on to say that taxes are going up adding the average municipal tax for the average residential assessment is \$50 a year based off \$160,000 assessment.

Carina Robinson, 519 Willow Street, asked if the houses in the borough are going to be reassessed.

Mr. Sibilina responded yes adding that is due to the county ordering a reassessment.

Mrs. Robinson asked when will the reassessment take place.

Mr. Sibilina answered it will take place gradually over the course of this year.

Municipal Clerk Capasso added Borough Tax Assessor Martin Lynch will be sending a letter to all residents that explains the reassessment process and added the letter will also state that he will be holding an informational meeting for all questions that residents may have.

Joann Edgar, 500 Union Avenue, questioned paying more taxes due to the reassessment.

Mr. Sibilina responded not necessarily adding if everyone is under assessed the same percentage then the taxes will remain the same. Mr. Sibilina stated due to residents selling their homes, this “triggered” the reassessment.

Ms. Edgar stated resident’s taxes are being raised \$50, then the reassessment happens asking if there is a possibility of having their taxes being raised again.

Mayor Robbins answered in the affirmative.

Alan Hurley, 219 Cedar Street, asked if the reassessment will affect this year’s taxes or next years.

Mr. Sibilina responded next year.

David Burton, 501 Lilac Street, asked when was the last assessment completed.

Mayor Robbins responded ten years ago.

Mr. Burton asked how often must a municipality complete a reassessment.

Council President Oglesby answered it is ten years adding there is a state mandate that says if there is a wide disparity between assessed value and real estate market value then the municipality must reassess. Mr. Oglesby stated the idea of a reassessment is to do one more frequently so that no one is “hit” with a large increase.

Mr. Burton asked if the real estate market goes down, does the borough reassess.

Mr. Oglesby responded if the market goes down, the homeowner can request a revaluation.

Mr. Burton stated the market has gone up and the borough is doing a reassessment asking why the borough will not do a reassessment if the market goes down.

Mayor Robbins responded the borough is conducting a reassessment because the county order it adding the borough would rather not spend the money on the reassessment.

Mr. Burton, a school board representative, stated the board of education has completed the school budget adding taxes will not be raised.

Maranda Salas, 208 Church Street, questioned the borough paying for the reassessment yet the county order it.

Mayor Robbins responded that is correct.

Mr. Hurley asked what the cost for the reassessment is.

Mr. Sibilis answered the cost is estimated to be \$57,000.

Mr. Oglesby stated the last reassessment cost the borough \$105,000 due to not being able to do it in-house. Mr. Oglesby asked that all residents to please cooperate with the assessors, to let them in so that they are not guessing what has been in the home as far as home improvements. Mr. Oglesby further stated that if the home is reassessed for more than what is worth and you appeal the assessment, the judge will ask if you allowed the assessor in the home.

Lystra Andrews, 102 Brown Avenue, stated that she does not mind paying higher taxes adding she enjoys the benefits that it offers. Mrs. Andrews asked why the roads are not being repaired, mainly Brown Avenue and Union Avenue.

Mayor Robbins responded the Union Avenue, Brown Avenue, and Center Avenue will be repaved by the county this May.

Ms. Edgar asked if anything is happening with the Burger King.

Mayor Robbins responded at the moment, no adding the owner did mention a dispensary but at this time the state is only allowing medical dispensary to sell recreational cannabis.

Robert Robinson, 519 Willow Street, stated that the CFO mentioned earlier Public Works and Police Department's needs asking what items do they need.

Mayor Robbins responded where the budget began, it was cut more than half adding a lot of work went into the budget.

Councilwoman Hodges stated when a department head formulates their budget, they consider salary, equipment, and any other expenses the department accrues. Mrs. Hodges commended all department heads and the CFO for the hard work that went into this budget adding they had to consider things that were not necessary such as replacing vehicles or hiring new employees.

Mr. Robinson commented that a resident makes improvements to their home to make the borough “look better” and now they are going to be “hit” with higher taxes.

Councilwoman Dugan responded the reassessment will raise the valuation of the properties in the borough.

Mr. Oglesby added if the assessment doubles, the taxes won't double.

Mr. Burton asked if foreclosure properties are assessed.

Mr. Sibilgia answered in the affirmative.

Mr. Burton question how the hardware store will be assessed now that it is empty.

Mayor Robbins answered the assessor assesses the square footage and number of rooms.

Time closed: 8:04 p.m.

Motion by: Bernadette Dugan

Seconded by: Steven Oglesby

To close public hearing on 2022 Municipal Budget. Roll call vote held. All votes affirmative.

ADOPTION OF 2022 MUNICIPAL BUDGET:

Motion by: Patricia Hodges

Seconded by: Bernadette Dugan

To approve Resolution #22-090 adopting 2022 Municipal Budget. Roll call vote held. All votes affirmative.

COMMITTEE/COUNCIL REPORTS:

Councilwoman Hodges reported the Ordinance Committee has reviewed the memo from General Code adding the committee has a few minor questions. Mrs. Hodges stated the committee hopes to have the General Ordinances ready for the next meeting.

Councilwoman Dugan reported the backhoe motor has been installed and is running well and further reported the pavilion repair will begin next week.

Councilman Davis reported the remaining street signs have been installed.

Councilman McCarthy reported the next Board of Education meeting will be April 26th adding they will be adopting the school budget. Mr. McCarthy also reported the proposed budget is \$11,022,000, that is up 1.184 million from last year adding the tax levy will remain the same. Mr. McCarthy further reported the debt service went down \$3600.

COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC:

Time opened: 8:07 p.m.

Corinna Robinson, 501 Willow Street, asked why the street signs were replaced.

Mayor Robbins responded the street sign were no longer readable and could not be restored.

Maranda Salas, 208 Church Street, asked now that the governor has lifted ban on no turning water services off due to nonpayment, is the borough collecting back payments.

Wayne Sibiliala, Chief Financial Officer, responded part of the governor's plan is that the borough has to provide a payment plan to those that have fallen behind and added they have 12 months in order to make up on past balances and stay current. Mr. Sibiliala stated the borough is anticipating to receive past money owed.

Bruce Margenson, 5 Geneva Road, stated the trees that have been planted look nice.

Mr. Margenson stated now that hurricane and tornado season is upon us, is there a plan in place for shelter; and if so, it needs to be publicized.

Mayor Robbins stated he believes the closes place for shelter is Jackson Liberty School adding he will investigate. Mayor Robbins further stated when a disaster is near, a reverse 911 will be put out to the residents.

David Burton, 501 Lilac Street, stated "things are getting out of control" in some resident's yards around his block adding his hope is that the Code Enforcement Officer is made aware of the situation.

Mayor Robbins responded the Code Enforcement Officer first gives the resident 14 days to correct the violation, he then goes back, if the situation is not taken care of, then a ticket is issued. Mayor Robbins stated some people just pay the ticket, do not correct the issue, and are ticketed again.

Councilman McCarthy stated in this month's Police Chief Kline's report, it states that there were two dozen code enforcement violations.

Mr. Burton reported the Lakehurst Board of Education has an agreement with the Manchester Board of Education to line both the baseball field and soccer field.

Mayor Robbins asked if Lakehurst could work on having the fields fertilized as well.

Mr. Burton responded he will ask them. Mr. Burton reported the bases have been set on the baseball field adding the school will be researching the possibility of starting a

baseball team and softball team. Mr. Burton thanked the mayor and council for all work that was done at the fields.

Time closed: 8:18 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by: Bernadette Dugan

Seconded by: Steven Oglesby

To adjourn meeting. Roll call vote held. All votes affirmative. Time: 8:18 p.m.

Maryanne Capasso, RMC
Municipal Clerk