

The Minutes of the **Conference Meeting** of the Township Committee of the Township of Cranford, County of Union, State of New Jersey on **March 5, 2024** at 7:05 p.m.in Room 108.

THIS MEETING IS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE “OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT” AS ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THIS MEETING HAS BEEN PROVIDED BY E-MAILING THE ANNUAL SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS TO THE WESTFIELD LEADER, THE UNION COUNTY LOCAL SOURCE, THE STAR LEDGER, AND TAP INTO CRANFORD, BY POSTING SUCH ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULE ON A BULLETIN BOARD IN THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING RESERVED FOR SUCH ANNOUNCEMENTS AND THE FILING OF SAID NOTICE WITH THE TOWNSHIP CLERK OF CRANFORD. FORMAL ACTION MAY BE TAKEN AT THIS MEETING.

Present: Mayor Brian Andrews  
Deputy Mayor Terrence Curran  
Commissioner Paul A. Gallo  
Commissioner Kathleen Miller Prunty  
Commissioner Gina Black

Absent: None

Township Attorney Ryan Cooper, Business Administrator/CFO Lavona Patterson and Township Clerk Patricia Donahue were present.

### **Public Comments**

Mayor Andrews opened the public comments portion of the meeting and asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing no comments, Mayor Andrews closed the public comments portion of the meeting.

### **Review Official Meeting Agenda**

Township Clerk Patricia Donahue reviewed the motion procedures associated with amended Ordinance No. 2024 -05. Ms. Donahue then stated that per Commissioner Gallo’s outreach, 1) proposed Ordinance No. 2024-08 wording in the second “Whereas clause” would be updated from “Emergency Management Services (EMS)” to “Emergency Medical Services (EMS)” and 2) she would note such change in the Official Meeting.

### **Budget and Capital Budget Planning**

Business Administrator/CFO Lavona Patterson spoke about the Auditor review of the proposed Municipal Budget (Budget) and their directive to reduce the Budget as it was (slightly) above the Spending “Cap” amount. Ms. Patterson stated that certain salaries and wages and miscellaneous areas were reduced or removed to lower the Budget. Discussion then ensued regarding the terms of Terminal Pay and the Township’s Terminal Pay obligations this year and in the years ahead.

The Commissioners then discussed the proposed 2024 Local Municipal Tax Increase and proposed use of the Township’s Surplus Analysis (sheet). Members of the Township Committee discussed whether the Township should move forward with Option Four (4) (use of \$4,800,000 in surplus with a change in tax rate (per one hundred dollars (\$100)) of 3.46 per cent) or Option Five (5) (use of \$4,900,000 in surplus with a change in tax rate (per one hundred dollars (\$100)) of 3.08 per cent). The Mayor asked for a straw vote. Consensus was reached to move forward with Option Five (5) (Deputy Mayor Curran and Commissioner Gallo favored Option Four (4) and Mayor Andrews, Commissioner Black and Commissioner Miller Prunty favored Option Five (5)).

### **Closed Session**

On motion of Commissioner Miller Prunty, seconded by Commissioner Gallo and passed, the following resolution was adopted by roll call vote:

### **Resolution No. 2024-95.6**

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Township Committee will go into closed session to discuss the following, the minutes of which will be released at some time in the future at the discretion of the Township Committee:

**Personnel**

- Building Department

**Recorded Vote:**

Aye: Mayor Andrews, Deputy Mayor Curran, Commissioners Gallo, Miller Prunty and Black  
Nay: None  
Abstained: None  
Absent: None

On motion of Commissioner Miller Prunty, seconded by Commissioner Black and passed, the Township Committee returned to open session at 7:32 p.m.

**Late Starter – Personnel – Building Department**

Discussion ensued regarding the authorization of a Township Construction Code Official offer of employment letter for Mr. Gary Junkroft. Committee consensus was reached to move forward with such appointment letter (Mayor Andrews, Deputy Mayor Curran, Commissioners Black, Gallo and Miller Prunty voted in favor of such appointment letter.) Further discussion ensued regarding the removal of the placeholder resolution from the Official Meeting Agenda (Resolution No. 2024-152) pertaining to the appointment of a Construction Code Official/Building Subcode Official.

On motion of Deputy Mayor Curran, seconded by Commissioner Gallo and passed, the Township Committee adjourned the Conference Meeting to begin the Official Meeting at 7:33 p.m.

On motion of Commissioner Miller Prunty, seconded by Commissioner Black and passed, the Township Committee adjourned the Official Meeting and then returned to the Conference session at 9:07 p.m.

**Budget and Capital Budget Planning (continued)**

Mayor Andrews spoke about his efforts to obtain funding for the Fire Apparatus, specifically from the Union County Improvement Authority. Discussion ensued regarding 1) the process and terms associated with this possible funding source; 2) the length of time to receive a Fire Apparatus order (four (4) years); 3) the additional cost of waiting another year to place the order and 4) removing the Fire Apparatus request from the 2024 Capital Budget requests list.

The Township Committee then discussed the updated 2024 Capital Budget request list. Ms. Patterson spoke about the amount of requested funding for road appropriations (\$3,248,270.60). Deputy Mayor Current requested that the Fire Department provide an apparatus fleet management plan. Consensus was reached to move forward with the updated 2024 Capital Budget request list minus the “Replacement of Fire Apparatus” line item.

**Closed Session**

On motion of Commissioner Miller Prunty, seconded by Commissioner Black and passed, the following resolution was adopted by roll call vote:

**Resolution No. 2024-95.6**

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Township Committee will go into closed session to discuss the following, the minutes of which will be released at some time in the future at the discretion of the Township Committee:

**Personnel**

- Building Department

**Recorded Vote:**

Aye: Mayor Andrews, Deputy Mayor Curran, Commissioners Gallo, Miller Prunty and Black  
Nay: None  
Abstained: None  
Absent: None

On motion of Deputy Mayor Curran, seconded by Commissioner Black and passed, the Township Committee returned to open session at 9:32 p.m.

On motion of Deputy Mayor Curran, seconded by Commissioner Black and passed, the Township Committee adjourned the Conference Meeting at 9:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Donahue  
Township Clerk

Dated: March 5, 2024