

The Minutes of the **Workshop Meeting** of the Township Committee of the Township of Cranford, County of Union, State of New Jersey on **March 6, 2023** at 7:03 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 Jason Gareis  
Commissioner Terrence Curran  
Commissioner Kathleen Miller Prunty  
Commissioner Gina Black

Absent: None

Township Attorney Ryan Cooper, Interim Administrator Ryan Greco, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Lavona Patterson, Downtown Management Corporation (DMC) Director Caren Demyen, Township Consulting Attorney Sherri Orenberg-Ruggieri 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.

Ms. Brenda Hynes, 127 Columbia Avenue – inquired about the Township’s February 27<sup>th</sup> meeting with the Westfield YMCA.

Ms. Karen Bennett, 38 Herning Avenue - inquired about the expected distribution of the second Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ’s) document and briefly elaborated.

William Thilly, 22 Bloomingdale Avenue – stated that he had two (2) types of questions pertaining to the Pools and 201 Walnut Avenue. Mr. Thilly inquired if the Township had gone out to bid for the Pool, when the Agreement could be seen and whether thought had been given to making the Pools free for residents. Mr. Thilly inquired whether contract language would be added which would address what would happen if flood mitigation efforts were not successful at 201 Walnut Avenue. He further elaborated.

Commissioner Curran stated that a second Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ’s) document would be distributed on the following day. Mayor Andrews provided an update on the recent meeting with the YMCA. He then asked Township Attorney Ryan Cooper about escrow and the 201 Walnut Avenue developer in the event of infrastructure issues. Commissioner Curran stated that there had not been a bidding process associated with the YMCA and Cranford Pool & Fitness Center collaboration and elaborated. A brief discussion ensued regarding the infrastructure upgrades which were currently occurring at 201 Walnut Avenue.

Hearing no further comments, Mayor Andrews closed the public comments portion of the meeting.

### **Stormwater Infrastructure Planning Working Group Update**

Mayor Andrews stated that the Stormwater Infrastructure Planning Group Update had been cancelled and would not occur during the evening’s Workshop Meeting.

### **Proposed Library 2023 Capital Budget Presentation**

Library Board of Trustees President Patricia Pavlak introduced Library Board members Kate Rappa and Elizabeth Rees and Interim Library Director Judith Klimowicz.

Ms. Pavlak discussed the Library's Capital Budget requests specifically 1) new front steps and hand rails, 2) a new front door, 3) painting, 4) flooring and 5) a new roof. Ms. Pavlak stated that the Cranford Library did not have the financial means to pay for the Capital Budget requests and requested the Township to assist the Library. Commissioner Miller Prunty inquired if the Library had prioritized these requests. Discussion ensued.

### **Townwide Walk/Bike Study**

Mr. Anthony Durante, Chair of the Cranford Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Committee, provided a brief overview of the Cranford Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Committee work during the past year. Mr. Durante asked for the support of the Township Committee to submit an application for assistance to the New Jersey Department of Transportation. He spoke about the interest of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Committee to evaluate transportation safety in Cranford. Discussion ensued. Consensus was reached by the members of the Township Committee to support the Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Committee's request for assistance from the New Jersey Department of Transportation.

### **State of New Jersey – mandated Flood Ordinance**

Township Consulting Engineer Jacqueline Dirmann was present virtually.

Township Consulting Engineer Jacqueline Dirmann spoke about the proposed flood ordinance which was mandated by the State of New Jersey. Ms. Dirmann stated that the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) had to approve Cranford's flood ordinance before it could be considered by the Township Committee. Ms. Dirmann then reviewed the proposed ordinance. Discussion ensued including discussion regarding "Section E, Ordinary Building and Maintenance," the tracking of money spent on structures, what would not be allowed in the basement (i.e., utilities), violations, the Flood Plain Administrator role and duties, flood plain permit intake, the role the ordinance could play with flood insurance rates, repetitive loss, substantial improvements, fees, new construction and waivers and exceptions. Ms. Dirmann reiterated that the draft ordinance had to be reviewed by the State of New Jersey. Mr. Cooper requested that Ms. Dirmann prepare a memo and the matter be further discussed at the following evening's Conference Meeting.

### **Westfield YMCA and Cranford Pool & Fitness Center**

Commissioner Curran stated that the Township Committee would consider a resolution at the following evening's Official Meeting pertaining to the authorization of a Facilities Operation Agreement with the Westfield YMCA. Commissioner Curran noted that the proposed Agreement had been uploaded to the Township website. Discussion ensued regarding membership use of the Westfield YMCA. CFO Patterson spoke about annual expenses and revenues associated with the Indoor Pool. Discussion ensued about the closing date of the Indoor Pool. Consensus was reached that the Indoor Pool would close on March 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **Union County Municipal Aid Grant Program**

Interim Administrator Ryan Greco spoke about the Union County Municipal Aid Grant Program. A brief discussion ensued regarding appropriate grant "asks." Mayor Andrews requested that Interim Administrator Ryan Greco follow-up on the Grant Program ideas.

### **Public Comments**

Mayor Andrews opened the public comments portion of the meeting and asked if there were any questions or comments.

William Thilly, 22 Bloomingdale Avenue – inquired about accessing the Westfield YMCA agreement. Township Clerk Patricia Donahue responded that it was in the Agenda package on the website. Mr. Thilly inquired about the flood mitigation work at 201 Walnut Avenue. Discussion ensued. Mr. Thilly inquired about Pool revenues. Discussion ensued.

Christine Bradley, 107 Herning Avenue – inquired about the swim practices for the High School teams and the club teams and elaborated regarding this matter.

Hearing no further comments, Mayor Andrews closed the public comments portion of the meeting.

**Closed Session**

On motion of Commissioner Black, seconded by Deputy Mayor Gareis and passed, the following resolution was adopted by roll call vote:

**Resolution No. 2023-94.6**

**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:

**Legal**

- Legal Update
- Township Budget Update
- North Avenue Redevelopment Area

**Personnel**

- Township Administrator
- Department of Public Works – Collective Bargaining Negotiations Update

**Contractual**

- Westfield YMCA and Cranford Pool and Fitness Center
- Library

**Minute Review**

- Closed Session Meeting Minutes – October 11, 2022

**Recorded Vote:**

Aye: Mayor Andrews, Deputy Mayor Gareis, Commissioners Curran, Miller Prunty & Black

Nay: None

Abstained: None

Absent: None

On motion of Commissioner Black, seconded by Commissioner Miller Prunty and passed, the Township Committee returned to open session at 10:47 p.m.

**Review Official Meeting Agenda**

Commissioner Black inquired about Resolution No. 2023-130 pertaining to the Riverside Dike repair. A brief discussion ensued.

**Capital Budget Workshop Meeting Follow-up**

CFO Patterson provided an update on the Department of Public Works Capital Budget request as it pertained to their sweeper request. Mayor Andrews and Commissioner Miller Prunty spoke about a reduction in the Township Consulting Engineering budget including reducing the mill and pave figures. Discussion ensued.

**Budget Workshop Meeting Follow-up**

Chief Financial Officer Patterson spoke about the Township’s use of Surplus funds to support the operating Budget. She spoke about Budget issues such as Legal Budget increases, Professional Services allocated spending (to Topology), determining the Library component of the Budget, grant monies, employee health insurance costs, the proposed tax increase to residents with utilization of different Surplus amounts, expected revenue for 2023 and 2024 (as Court revenues and Parking revenues were “down”), expected Surplus allocation for 2023 and payment to the Board of Education. Ms. Patterson spoke about expected Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) revenues in 2025. Mr. Cooper stated that the tax base was expected to increase in 2025. Discussion ensued regarding the use of the Township’s Surplus. Ms. Patterson spoke about upcoming Budget expenditures such as salary increases for the three (3) unions as well as expected police terminal leave packages. Mayor Andrews requested a straw poll vote regarding the use of the Township surplus, i.e., whether to utilize \$ 4.9 million in Surplus funds or \$ 5.1 million in Surplus funds. Discussion ensued including discussion regarding expected School

Board increases. Commissioner Curran recommended utilization of a Surplus amount of \$4.7 million, Mayor Andrews recommended utilization of a Surplus amount of \$5.1 million, Commissioners Miller Prunty and Black recommended utilization of a Surplus amount of \$4.9 million and Deputy Mayor Gareis recommended a utilization of a Surplus amount of \$5.0 million. Mayor Andrews requested that the Township Budget matter be placed on the following evening's Conference Meeting Agenda.

**Closed Session Minutes of October 11, 2022**

Commissioner Black made a motion to adopt the October 11, 2022 Closed Session Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Prunty seconded the motion. Mayor Andrews, Deputy Mayor Gareis, Commissioner Prunty and Commissioners Black voted to approve the Closed Session minutes of October 11, 2022. Commissioner Curran abstained from the vote.

On motion of Commissioner Black, seconded by Commissioner Miller Prunty and passed, the Township Committee adjourned at 11:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Donahue  
Township Clerk

Dated: March 6, 2023