

The Minutes of the **Conference Meeting** of the Township Committee of the Township of Cranford, County of Union, State of New Jersey on **March 7, 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, 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. LaBrutto of 104 Arlington Road – inquired why the North Avenue Redevelopment Area had been discussed in the previous evening's Closed Session Meeting. Mr. Cooper responded and stated that both the Township's Consulting Redevelopment counsel and he had provided legal advice on the matter. Ms. LaBrutto requested that Agendas contain more descriptive language.

Mr Thilly of 22 Bloomingdale Road – requested that residents be treated with respect. Mr. Thilly inquired about the proposed agreement and partnership with the Westfield YMCA.

Sally Kleeman of 130 North Lehigh Avenue – stated that some Cranford Indoor Pool & Fitness Center members did not think it was necessary to close the Indoor Pool during the upcoming renovation period. She inquired about expected loss of revenue.

Discussion ensued regarding the anticipated closed date (April 1st) of the Cranford Pool & Fitness Center. Ms. Kleeman inquired whether the construction would begin immediately. Ms. Kleeman inquired how the membership would be informed about the anticipated close date. She inquired about the reasoning for the close date. Commissioner Curran spoke about costs associated with operating the Indoor Pool. CFO Patterson provided payroll and revenue figures for the Indoor Pool. Discussion then ensued regarding the end of the winter season (May 23rd) and the rollover start at the YMCA. Ms. Kleeman inquired if the Indoor Pool would be open this summer. Commissioner Curran responded that the Indoor Pool would not be open during the summer months. CFO Patterson spoke about the expected open of the Indoor Pool (i.e., September or October).

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

State of New Jersey – mandated Flood Ordinance

Township Attorney Ryan Cooper spoke about the State of New Jersey-mandated Flood Ordinance and correspondence received that day from Township Consulting Engineer Jacques Dirmann regarding this matter. Discussion ensued on next steps as well as the ordinance's proposed fees and estimated costs. Mr. Cooper stated that the Township would work with the Township Consulting Engineer on the ordinance. A brief discussion ensued regarding the "Critical Building" section of the ordinance. Mr. Cooper spoke about checking with the State of New Jersey regarding the ordinance as there was still time for discussion before we were out of compliance. A brief discussion ensued regarding flood insurance for Cranford residents as well as sending the ordinance to the State of New Jersey for review.

Westfield YMCA and Cranford Pool & Fitness Center

Commissioner Curran stated that a meeting had been held that day with representative from the Westfield YMCA (YMCA). He stated that meeting discussion included post May 21st plans, i.e., current members could buy a Cranford Pool & Fitness Center membership and use the YMCA until the Cranford Pool & Fitness Center reopened. Discussion ensued regarding whether the Indoor Pool and gym were expected to open at the same time (Deputy Mayor Gareis), per diem classes use (Commissioner Curran noted that this would not be possible) and bringing family and friends (Commissioner Curran noted this would be possible). Discussion ensued regarding the proposed April 1st closing of the Pool & Fitness Center for members as well as the use of the Pool from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. for the High School swim team and the Gators. Discussion ensued including discussion that the YMCA offered scholarships for people who could not afford the cost of a membership. Commissioner Black inquired when the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) document would be distributed. Interim Administrator Greco stated that it would be distributed on the following morning.

Union County Municipal Aid Grant Program

Interim Administrator Ryan Greco provided an update on the Union County Municipal Aid Grant Program. He stated that Township Consulting Engineer Jacqueline Dirmann would be the lead person on the grant task. Interim Administrator Greco stated that possible grant projects were a GIS mapping project and a mill and road pave project.

On motion of Commissioner Black, seconded by Commissioner Miller Prunty and passed, the Township Committee moved to conduct the Official Meeting at 7:35 p.m.

On motion of Commissioner Black, seconded by Commissioner Curran and passed, the Township Committee returned to the Workshop Meeting at approximately 10:05 p.m.

Late Starter – Administrator Update

Interim Administrator Ryan Greco stated that County of Union would be conducting a practice drill in an abandoned home. He stated that such drill would occur after school drop-off and before school pick-up times.

Budget Workshop Meeting Follow-up

CFO Patterson stated that the introduction of the Budget was scheduled to occur at the Township Committee Meeting on March 21st. Mayor Andrews stated that he would follow-up with the Library.

Discussion then ensued regarding use of the Township's Surplus and the proposed municipal tax rate. Commissioner Curran spoke about the importance of raising fees. A brief discussion regarding fees ensued. Further discussion ensued regarding the Township's Surplus. Ms. Patterson stated that 2024 would be a very difficult budget year and there would be less money to add to the surplus. Further discussion ensued regarding the municipal tax rate.

On motion of Deputy Mayor Gareis, seconded by Commissioner Curran and passed, the Township Committee adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Donahue
Township Clerk

Dated: March 7, 2023