

The Minutes of the **Workshop Meeting** of the Township Committee of the Township of Cranford, County of Union, State of New Jersey on **September 12, 2022** at **7:01 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 Kathleen Prunty  
Deputy Mayor Jason Gareis  
Commissioner Brian Andrews  
Commissioner Gina Black  
Commissioner Mary O'Connor

Absent: None

Township Attorney Ryan Cooper, Administrator Jamie Cryan, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Lavona Patterson, Police Chief Ryan Greco, Police Lieutenant Matt Nazzaro, and Township Clerk Patricia Donahue were present.

### **Public Comments**

Mayor Miller Prunty opened the public comments portion of the meeting and asked if there were any questions or comments. Mr. Thilly of 22 Bloomingdale Avenue inquired and/or commented about these matters: the number of Affordable Housing units the Township still needed, constructing a building for only Affordable Housing units, whether the agreement pertaining to the Birchwood development was negotiated in open or closed session, whether there was a vote in public pertaining to Birchwood, areas in need of redevelopment versus areas in need of rehabilitations, an overlay agreement referenced in Fair Share Housing information, the zoning associated with the core area of the Downtown and zoning approval for The Albergo building. Mayor Miller Prunty closed the public comments portion of the meeting.

### **Safety Improvements to Belmont Avenue Walking Paths**

Police Lieutenant Matt Nazzaro introduced Eagle Scout candidate Daniel Kennedy to the Township Committee. Mr. Kennedy spoke about his bike safety project initiative and how it related to Orange Avenue School as well as how it would help the community learn about bike safety. Lieutenant Nazzaro stated that the proposed signage had been approved by both the Police and the Township Consulting Engineers as well as Troop 80 and the Patriots Path Council. Mr. Kennedy stated that the signage would be installed during the months of October and November. Commissioner Black inquired about the number of volunteers needed to assist with the project. Mr. Kennedy replied that fifteen (15) volunteers were needed. Commissioner

Andrews stated that this project was great. He inquired if there was anything that could be done to augment the project, i.e., paint the crosswalks. Chief Greco and Lieutenant Nazzaro noted that the area had just been paved. Lieutenant Nazzaro responded that they would check for overgrowth. Lieutenant Nazzaro spoke about the QR codes which would be part of the signage. Mayor Miller Prunty stated that this project was comprehensive and much needed. Members of the Township Committee voted to move forward with the Safety Improvements project.

### **Emergency Preparedness Update**

Police Chief Ryan and Office of Emergency Management Coordinator Matt Lubin provided an emergency preparedness update. Battalion Chief Lubin stated that a meeting had been held with members of the Department of Public Works and Administrator Jamie Cryan in mid-August to review the Township's flood preparedness issue, and such meeting included discussion about portable pump usage on Balmiere Parkway, cross training for Township employees and utilizing off-duty employees in emergency situations. Battalion Chief Lubin spoke about the effectiveness of hiring an outside vendor for debris removal during the period after a storm. He spoke about the importance of having pre-selected vendors "on the bench". Battalion Chief Lubin stated that work would be done with the Finance Department to go out to bid for two (2)-year agreements. Mr. Lubin stated that residents often inquired about the flood gates in the Township. He discussed river flooding and flash flooding. Battalion Chief Lubin spoke further about the portable pumps on Balmiere Parkway. He suggested that the Office of Emergency Management could request pumps during the next Capital Budget cycle if it was not feasible for the Department of Public Works to request such pumps.

Discussion then ensued regarding outreach to residents. Administrator Jamie Cryan suggested that information could be centralized on an Office of Emergency Management website. Chief Greco noted that the main source of communication was Nixel communications and stated that approximately 9,500 people receive Nixel text messages. Commissioner O'Connor inquired about use of the National Weather Service information. Discussion ensued regarding the limitations of the County flood warnings. Commissioner Andrews inquired about use of sirens to warn residents. Chief Greco spoke about the slogan of "life over property" and sheltering in place when managing flood scenarios. Mr. Cryan spoke about CRS (Community Rating System).

Commissioner Andrews inquired if a "pre-canned" video pertaining to flood preparation could be prepared for TV 35. Chief Greco noted that the Nixel messages at the beginning of a storm are "canned" but as the storm progresses, the Nixel messages are "in real time". Battalion Chief Lubin stated that the FEMA claim (pertaining to Hurricane Ida) was quite time-consuming and briefly elaborated about the claim as well as the proposed use of a payroll product which would assist in getting information to FEMA. Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Patterson noted that any monies received are circled back to the Township's trust accounts or the budget code associated with where the items had been charged. Mr. Cryan spoke about the large amount of claim work and how fortunate the Township was to have CFO Patterson, the Office of Emergency Management team and department heads to work on these matters.

Deputy Mayor Gareis stated that the Stormwater Committee had met that day. Discussion ensued including discussion about maintenance, looking at the trouble areas and cross-training

among Township employees. Further discussion ensued regarding areas such as Droeschers Mill, the area behind the Munciiipal Building and Casino Brook (Mayor Miller Prunty). Commissioner Black spoke about a specific tree which had been reported to the Township and the County and no action had occurred. Chief Greco stated that such matter could be escalated to their County contacts. Deputy Mayor Gareis inquired about the use of a drone.

### **Bulk Waste Collection Alternatives**

Administrator Jamie Cryan spoke about the dissolution of the Plainfield Municipal Authority's Bulk Waste service. He spoke about the options to residents to dispose of Bulk Waste such as partnering with Westfield, having residents arrange for Bulk Waste pickup with a garbage vendor, use of the County of Union's various recycling programs and working with not-for-profits.

Commissioner Gareis inquired whether the Bulk Waste information could be posted on the Township's Facebook page. Mayor Miller Prunty requested that Mr. Cryan speak to Michelle Stavrou about moving the newsletter information to the Township Facebook page.

Commissioner Andrews requested that outreach to the garbage haulers regarding this matter occur. Mr. Cryan responded that had already been accomplished. Commissioner Black suggested that the garbage hauler numbers be provided. Commissioner Andrews inquired about the Bulk Waste drop-off at Westfield. Mr. Cryan responded that one (1) carload was allowed for a fee of sixty dollars (\$60). Commissioner Black requested that the hours of operation and the address of the Westfield location be posted on the website.

### **2023 Professional Services Proposed Timeline**

Township Clerk Patricia Donahue spoke about the proposed timeline for the 2023 Professional Services Request for Proposals (RFP). She stated that the 2023 Professional Services Committee had already met once and would be meeting again during the upcoming week. Ms. Donahue stated that the RFP legal ad would be placed in the Westfield Leader on October 20<sup>th</sup> and the Requests for Proposals would be received by the Township on November 10<sup>th</sup>.

### **Township Social Media Policy**

Administrator Jamie Cryan spoke about an Union County government social media incident of bigotry. Commissioner Black inquired about who in the Township would police the Township's social media. Mayor Miller Prunty suggested that this matter be discussed in Closed Session. Commissioner O'Connor inquired if the social media Policy was meant for all of the Township or just the DMC. Mr. Cooper responded that the policy was meant for the entire Township. Mr. Cryan stated that the DMC was seeking to police the egregious comments.

### **Proposed Salary Ordinance**

Commissioner O'Connor provided a brief overview of the proposed Salary Ordinance. Administrator Jamie Cryan spoke about how the Ordinance changed from the August

Township Committee Meeting, specifically that Township Attorney Ryan Cooper's edits had been incorporated into the proposed ordinance. He noted that the Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) would be tied to the Collective Bargaining Agreements' COLA and not the Federal Government's COLA figure, i.e., the COLA that was tied to the Social Security indicator. Discussion ensued regarding the COLA figure.

CFO Patterson specified that an employee who out of of their salary range would get a COLA increase and an employee who was still in their salary range would be eligible for a merit increase and a COLA increase. Discussion ensued regarding fixing Section 5.5, page four (4) of the proposed ordinance. Commissioner O'Connor spoke about separating the maximum-earning employees from the non-maximum earning employees. Mayor Miller Prunty requested that further updates to the Salary Ordinance be received well in advance of the Township Committee Meetings. She stated that the Township has been waiting for this for too long. Ms. Patterson stated that the Salary Ordinance work had been in progress since March 2022. Commissioner O'Connor requested that page four (4), Section 5 be corrected.

### **Cranford Recreation Facility at 375 Centennial Avenue Renovation and Programming Update**

Referring to a distributed handout, Administrator Jamie Cryan stated that the priority use for the Cranford Recreation Facility (Facility) would be for use by leagues. He stated that the marketing piece would allow the Township to begin charging for use this year. CFO Lavona Patterson stated that to project revenue for 2023, an Ordinance should be considered pertaining to Facility fees. Commissioner Black stated that details were coming into place at the Facility such as sports equipment, signs, cleaning supplies, Information Technology (IT) matters and Comcast installation. She suggested that an opening date be planned and elaborated about the importance of an opening date. Discussion ensued regarding a possible October 15<sup>th</sup> opening date as well as accountability regarding work with Triform Construction, Inc. and DMR Architects. Township Attorney Ryan Cooper stated that he would have to review the Facility proposal and bid specifications regarding the accountability matter. Commissioner Andrews inquired about the netting for the Facility. Committee consensus was reached for an October 15<sup>th</sup> opening date for the Facility. Township Clerk Patricia Donahue inquired about the timing of the Facility fees ordinance. A brief discussion ensued with Mr. Cryan, Ms. Patterson and Commissioner Black and consensus was reached to include such matter on the second Township Committee Official Meeting in October. Deputy Mayor Jason Gareis provided an update on a Water Garden at the Facility.

### **Clean Communities Committee 2022 Fall Cleanup Day**

Mayor Miller Prunty stated that the Clean Communities Committee would be conducting a Fall Cleanup Day on Saturday, September 24<sup>th</sup>.

### **Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority (RVSA) Request to Amend the 2021 Member Municipalities Agreement**

Mayor Miller Prunty requested that the Township Committee receive a one (1) page summary of the Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority (RVSA)'s request to amend the 2021 Member Municipalities Agreement. Administrator Jamie Cryan stated that Township Attorney Ryan Cooper and he would get clarification on this matter and would work to introduce the proposed ordinance at the next Township Committee Official Meeting.

### **Review Official Meeting Agenda**

Mayor Miller Prunty and Township Attorney Ryan Cooper spoke about a resolution needed for the following evening's Official Meeting pertaining to a competitive grant.

Commissioner O'Connor requested that the Pay to Play Ordinance be moved to the September 27<sup>th</sup> Township Committee Official Meeting. Committee consensus was reached to move the ordinance to the September 27<sup>th</sup> Official Meeting.

### **Minute Approval - Closed Session Minutes of March 29<sup>th</sup> and August 8, 2022**

Commissioner O'Connor made a motion to adopt the March 29<sup>th</sup> and August 8, 2022 Closed Session Minutes. Deputy Mayor Gareis seconded the motion. Mayor Miller Prunty, Deputy Mayor Gareis and Commissioners Andrews, Black and O'Connor voted to approve the Closed Session minutes of March 29<sup>th</sup> and August 8, 2022.

### **Professional Comments**

Administrator Jamie Cryan stated that the Joint Insurance Fund agreement, a three (3)-year agreement, was due at the end of the year. He stated that the Township usually sought quotes from two (2) other Joint Insurance Funds.

Deputy Mayor Gareis asked Mr. Cryan to brief the Township Committee on the elevation of homes. Mr. Cryan provided a home elevation update. Discussion ensued.

### **Public Comments**

Mayor Miller Prunty opened the public comments portion of the meeting and asked if there were any questions or comments. Mr. William Thilly of 22 Bloomingdale Avenue inquired if the Township Committee would consider renegotiating the Fair Share Housing Agreements. Discussion ensued including that the matter was a very complicated matter which involved a court order (Mayor Miller Prunty), the Fair Share Housing Agreements obligated the Township to a certain number of Affordable Housing units (Commissioner Black) and residents have the opportunity to provide input with both the Planning Board and Township Committee (Commissioner O'Connor). Mr. Thilly inquired if members of the Township Committee would consider dropping their political affiliations. Mayor Miller Prunty stated that the Township Committee was working on the Township's business and it was not appropriate to respond to this inquiry. Mr. Thilly stated that he sought clarification regarding twenty (20) credits in the Fair Share Housing Agreement pertaining Hartz Mountain

Industries. Discussion ensued between Mr. Thilly and Township Attorney Ryan Cooper regarding this matter.

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

**Closed Session**

On motion of Commissioner O'Connor, seconded by Commissioner Andrews and passed, the following resolution was adopted by roll call vote:

**Resolution No. 2022-98.17**

**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

**Personnel**

- Township Social Media Policy
- Salary Review
- Department of Public Works
- Police Department
- Collective Bargaining Negotiations

**Contractual**

- PILOT Discussion – 750 Walnut Avenue and 201 Chestnut Street
- Police Department
- Westfield YMCA and Cranford Pool & Fitness Center

**Minute Review**

- Closed Session Minutes of March 29<sup>th</sup> and August 8, 2022

**Recorded Vote:**

Aye: Mayor Miller Prunty, Deputy Mayor Gareis, Commissioners Andrews, Black & O'Connor

Nay: None

Abstained: None

Absent: None

On motion of Commissioner O'Connor, seconded by Commissioner Andrews and passed, the Township Committee returned to open session at 11:36 p.m.

On motion of Commissioner O'Connor, seconded by Commissioner Andrews and passed, the Township Committee adjourned at 11:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: September 12, 2022

Patricia Donahue  
Township Clerk