

BOROUGH COUNCIL
MINUTES –MAY 2, 2011

A Regular Meeting of the Borough Council was held in the Council Chambers of Borough Hall on Monday May 2, 2011. The Meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Mayor Vahalla. The invocation given by Councilwoman Rasmussen and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Mayor advised that adequate notice of this meeting was provided by an annual notice sent to the Home News Tribune and the Star Ledger and filing a copy with the Borough Clerk within seven days following the annual organization meeting of the body.

Present were Councilmembers Lease, Muldoon, Rubin, Rasmussen and Wallace and Council President Cammarano.

Also present were Mayor Vahalla, Borough Administrator Boerth, Borough Attorney Murphy and Borough Clerk Harris.

BUDGET DISCUSSION-LIBRARY

Ms. Melody Kokola and Ms. Marian O’Connell addressed the Council regarding the budget for the Library. Ms. Kokola explained that the funding for the Library is calculated by the “third of a mill” formula which is based on the assessed values of properties in the Borough. The numbers for the formula are \$2,288,810,943 times the multiplier of .0033 which equals approximately \$760,269. The Library’s operating budget request for 2011 is \$760,269. Ms. Kokola went on to discuss that the assessed values of homes in the Borough have decreased from 2010 which was 778,148. The decrease in the operating budget request equals approximately 2.3 percent. The decrease in the budget requires all of the Library’s lines items to be adjusted accordingly.

Mayor Vahalla asked how many people patron the library.

Ms. Kokola stated that approximately 11,000 people per month utilize the Library.

Mayor Vahalla asked if the Library offered free wireless internet for its patrons.

Ms. Kokola stated that they do but that the amount of traffic utilizing that free service is not tracked.

Mayor Vahalla asked if there were any plans to improve the Library.

Ms. Kokola stated that the Library is looking to improve the children’s section.

Councilwoman Rubin asked if the improvements to the children’s section will be completed before this summer.

Ms. Kokola stated that they would be.

Councilwoman Rubin asked how many employees the Library has.

Ms. Kokola stated that the Library has 5 full time employees. Four of the 5 full time employees are librarians with masters degrees. The Library also employees 7 adult part timers and 3 young adults. Ms. Kokola continued to state that the employees that work on Sundays from Memorial Day to Labor Day get overtime pay. The overtime pay is approximately \$400 a weekend.

Councilman Muldoon asked the Library to rethink paying overtime for Sunday hours worked.

Councilman Muldoon also mentioned the idea of a children’s book fair.

Ms. Kokola stated that she thought that was a good idea and would investigate that suggestion further.

Councilwoman Rubin asked if the process for the funding of the Library could be explained. Borough Administrator Boerth explained that the “third of a mill” formula is based on the assessed value of property within the Borough. Borough Administrator Boerth stated that the Library is governed by a Board of Trustees which determine how the Borough funding and any funds for the Library are spent. The Borough has no direct say in how those dollars are spent.

AGENDA SESSION

On a motion by Council President Cammarano, second by Councilwoman Rubin, with all in favor the agenda session was opened.

Councilwoman Rubin stated that the Congregation of Neve Shalom has requested permission to place directional signs directing the public to their synagogue. The request has been reviewed and approved by the Chief of Police.

Council President Cammarano stated that this item will be placed as item number eight on the consent agenda.

Council President Cammarano questioned what the \$381 charge for hotel accommodation was on the current bill list.

Borough Administrator Boerth stated that it was for a 3night hotel accommodations stay for the Court Clerk to attend a conference to obtain her Continuing Education Credits for her certification.

On a motion by Council President Cammarano, second by Councilwoman Rasmussen, with all in favor the agenda session was closed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Vahalla opened the meeting to public comment on any item on the agenda.

Hearing or seeing no one wishing to comment Mayor Vahalla closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

PROCLAMATIONS-SENIOR CITIZENS MONTH

Mayor Vahalla presented the Senior Citizens Committee with a proclamation recognizing May as Senior Citizens month.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate to recognize the past contributions of Metuchen's Senior Citizens to our community; and

WHEREAS, the Borough wishes to commend Metuchen's Seniors for their present involvement, enthusiasm and volunteerism in establishing and furnishing the Senior Citizen Center; and

WHEREAS, the Borough recognizes that the Senior Citizens of today laid the foundation for a strong Metuchen;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, THOMAS VAHALLA, MAYOR OF THE BOROUGH OF METUCHEN, COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, DO HEREBY PROCLAIM the month of **May 2011** as Senior Citizen Month in the Borough of Metuchen.

Dated: May 2, 2011

COMMUNICATIONS CONSENT AGENDA

On a motion by Council President Cammarano, seconded by Councilwoman Rubin, with all in favor the communications consent agenda items numbers 6-8 were approved.

6. Receipt and Approval of Annual Picnic on June 18 for Metuchen Little League - Rain date of Sunday June 19.
7. Receipt and Approval for Block party on Milton Street on Saturday June 4.
8. Approval of Directional Signs For Neve Shalom.

COUNCIL REPORTS

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Council President Cammarano stated that the OEM office along with the Borough just finalized a claim for the December 2010 storm for \$20,430 to FEMA. The Parking Authority and Board of Education also submitted separate claims.

POLICE

Council President Cammarano stated that the Police Department wants all residents to be more aware of pedestrians and children at play. Council President Cammarano also stated that the new crosswalk at Main Street and Pennsylvania Avenue will be finalized shortly but that all motor vehicles are still required to yield to pedestrians at that intersection.

Councilman Wallace had no reports.

RECOGNITION OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER

Mayor Vahalla suspended the Council reports in order to recognize Emily Kulesza as an "Outstanding Volunteer".

Councilwoman Rubin and Ms. Cathy Ostermueller, Senior Center Director, presented Miss Kulesza with a certificate in recognition of her dedication to the Metuchen Senior Center. Miss Kulesza donates baked goods to the Senior Center for the various events that occur there.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Councilwoman Rubin stated that Cruise Nights will be beginning on May 4th and will continue every first Wednesday of the month through September. Councilwoman Rubin also stated that the Memorial Day Parade is scheduled to occur on May 30th and the annual golf outing will occur on June 6th at the Metuchen Golf Club. The June Bug will begin Friday, June 3rd and continues every Friday through the month of June and the Farmers Market will begin on Friday, June 18th.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Councilwoman Rasmussen stated the Earth Day will be on May 7. The Earth Day festivities will include a free continental breakfast at the Senior Center then a walk to Trail Head Park to view the progress on the Greenway extension then to the Sportsplex to view their solar system and end with a trip to Dismal Swamp to view the land the Greenway extension will make available.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Councilman Muldoon stated that the Historical Scavenger Hunt in recognition of Historic Preservation Month has begun. The last day for submissions will be May 23rd.

Councilman Muldoon suggested that a survey be placed on the Borough website to ascertain what types of shows the public wants to view on METV.

Mayor Vahalla stated that he would like the Cable TV Commission to create that survey.

Councilman Lease had no reports. Councilman Lease stated that on May 21st the American Legion will be holding a Veterans Wellness Day.

REPORT OF BOROUGH ATTORNEY

Borough Attorney Murphy had no report.

REPORT OF BOROUGH ADMINISTRATOR

The Borough Administrator Boerth had no report.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Vahalla stated that Middlesex Water is working on moving the water main at Charles Field.

Mayor Vahalla stated that the next meeting of the Unity in the Community Organization is May 12th at 4pm. The organization is sponsoring a unity march which will begin at Borough Hall, go through the downtown area then to Martin Luther King Park and the YMCA continuing through Freedom Square onto Main and New Street and ending at the Senior Citizens Building. The event will be held on June 16 at 6pm.

Mayor Vahalla also stated that the meeting with local landlords was productive in gathering information as to why local commercial buildings are vacant. The Borough will attempt to streamline the application process.

Mayor Vahalla stated that the Fire Department responded to a fire at Metuchen Mower this past Thursday. Mayor Vahalla stated the Fire Department did a good job in maintaining the fire and not having it spread to other parts of the business or other neighboring buildings.

Mayor Vahalla stated that the Borough Administrator will be speaking with the Chief of Police to begin the hiring process for one or two new police officers.

Mayor Vahalla stated that there will be a ribbon cutting for Dante's Tuxedo at 6:30pm on May 4th.

BILL LIST

On a motion by Council President Cammarano, second by Councilwoman Rubin, with all in favor the bill resolution in the amount of \$4,317,101.58 was approved.

ORDINANCE-INTRODUCTION

On a motion by Council President Cammarano, second by Councilwoman Rubin, with all in favor Ordinance 2011-7 was taken up on first reading.

The Borough Clerk read the Ordinance by title only.

On a motion by Council President Cammarano, second by Councilwoman Rubin, Ordinance 2011-7 was passed on first reading published according to law and a public hearing date set for May 16, 2011.

ROLL CALL

AYES: Councilpersons Lease, Muldoon, Rasmussen, Rubin, Wallace and Council President Cammarano

NAYS:

ABSTENTIONS:

**BOROUGH OF METUCHEN
BOND ORDINANCE #2011-7**

BOND ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$1,970,100 AND AUTHORIZING \$944,760 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE BOROUGH FOR VARIOUS IMPROVEMENTS AND PURPOSES AUTHORIZED TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE BOROUGH OF METUCHEN, IN THE COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX, NEW JERSEY

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOROUGH OF METUCHEN, IN THE COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX, NEW JERSEY (not less than two-thirds of all the members thereof affirmatively concurring), AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The improvements described in Section 3 of this bond ordinance are hereby respectively authorized as general improvements to be made or acquired by the Borough of Metuchen, New Jersey (the "Borough"). For the said improvements or purposes stated in said Section 3, there is hereby appropriated the sum of \$1,970,100, said sum being inclusive of all appropriations heretofore made therefor and including (i) the sum of \$47,240 as the down payment for said improvements or purposes required by law and more particularly described in said Section 3 and now available therefor by virtue of provision in a previously adopted budget or budgets of the Borough for down payment or for capital improvement purposes, (ii) a grant from the New Jersey Department of Transportation totaling the amount of \$200,000, (iii) a Community Development Block Grant from Middlesex County in the amount of \$28,100 and (iv) a grant from the New Jersey Department of Transportation in the amount of \$750,000 (items (ii), (iii) and (iv) are collectively referred to as the "Grant").

Section 2. For the financing of said improvements or purposes and to meet the part of said \$1,970,100 appropriation not provided for by application hereunder of said down payment and the Grant, negotiable bonds of the Borough are hereby authorized to be issued in the principal amount of \$944,760 pursuant to the Local Bond Law of New Jersey, constituting Chapter 2 of Title 40A of the New Jersey Statutes (the "Local Bond Law"). In anticipation of the issuance of said bonds and to temporarily finance said improvements or purposes, negotiable notes of the Borough in a principal amount not exceeding \$944,760 are hereby authorized to be issued pursuant to and within the limitations prescribed by the Local Bond Law.

Section 3. (a) The improvements hereby authorized and the purposes for the financing of which said obligations are to be issued are: (i) the acquisition of a public works garbage truck, dump truck, pickup with plow; (ii) the acquisition of equipment for the Fire Department, including, but not limited to, rescue tools and radio communication equipment; (iii) the acquisition and replacement of various audio/video equipment; (iv) the acquisition of a police SUV and equipment;

(v) improvements to sewers; and (vi) overlay, drainage improvement and reconstruction of the following streets: Linden Avenue, Factory Street, Adam Street and Sharon Court and curb/sidewalk repair, including all materials necessary for or incidental to each of the foregoing purposes and improvements.

(b) The estimated maximum amount of bonds or notes to be issued for said purposes is \$944,760.

(c) The estimated cost of said purposes is \$1,970,100 which represents the initial appropriation made by the Borough and includes the Grant. The excess of the appropriation of \$1,970,100 over the estimated maximum amount of bonds or notes to be issued therefor and the Grant is the amount of the down payment for said purposes.

Section 4. The following matters are hereby determined, declared, recited and stated:

(a) The said purposes described in Section 3 of this bond ordinance are not current expenses and are a property or improvement which the Borough may lawfully acquire or make as a general improvement, and no part of the cost thereof has been or shall be specially assessed on property specially benefited thereby.

(b) The average period of usefulness of said purposes, within the limitations of the Local Bond Law and taking into consideration the respective amounts of said obligations authorized for the purposes, according to the reasonable life thereof computed from the date of the bonds authorized by this bond ordinance, is 12.74 years.

(c) The supplemental debt statement required by the Local Bond Law has been duly made and filed in the office of the Borough Clerk and a complete executed duplicate thereof has been filed in the office of the Director of the Division of Local Government Services in the Department of Community Affairs of the State of New Jersey, and such statement shows that the gross debt of the Borough as defined in the Local Bond Law is increased by the authorization of the bonds and notes provided for in this bond ordinance by \$944,760, and the said obligations authorized by this bond ordinance will be within all debt limitations prescribed by the Local Bond Law.

(d) Amounts not exceeding \$89,978 in the aggregate for interest on said obligations, costs of issuing said obligations, engineering costs and other items of expense listed in and permitted under Section 40A:2-20 of the Local Bond Law are included as part of the estimated costs of said improvements.

Section 5. Any funds from time to time received by the Borough as grants in aid of financing the improvements or purposes described in Section 3 of this bond ordinance, including the Grant, shall be used for financing said improvements or purposes by application thereof either to direct payment of the costs of said improvements or purposes, or to payment or reduction of the authorization of the obligations of the Borough authorized therefor by this bond ordinance. Any such funds so received may, and all such funds so received which are not required for direct payment of the costs of said improvements or purposes shall, be held and applied by the Borough as funds applicable only to the payment of obligations of the Borough authorized by this bond ordinance.

Section 6. The full faith and credit of the Borough are hereby pledged to the punctual payment of the principal of and interest on the obligations authorized by this bond ordinance. Said obligations shall be direct, unlimited obligations of the Borough, and the Borough shall be obligated to levy *ad valorem* taxes upon all the taxable property within the Borough for the payment of said obligations and interest thereon without limitation as to rate or amount.

Section 7. The capital budget of the Borough is hereby amended to conform with the provisions of this bond ordinance to the extent of any inconsistency herewith and the resolutions promulgated by the Local Finance Board showing all detail of the amended capital budget and capital program as approved by the Director of the Division of Local Government Services, are on file with the Borough Clerk and are available for public inspection.

Section 8. The Borough intends to issue bonds or notes to finance the cost of the improvements described in Section 3 of this bond ordinance. The Borough expects that the maximum principal amount of bonds or notes that will be issued to finance the cost of the improvements described in Section 3 of this bond ordinance is \$944,760. If the Borough incurs any such costs prior to the issuance of its bonds or notes, the Borough intends to reimburse itself for such expenditures with the proceeds of such bonds or notes.

Section 9. This bond ordinance shall take effect twenty (20) days after the first publication thereof after final adoption, as provided by the Local Bond Law.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Vahalla opened the meeting to public comment on any item.

Hearing no one wishing to speak Mayor Vahalla closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Council President Cammarano, second by Councilman Lease, with all in favor the meeting was adjourned at 7:37pm.