

A special meeting of the East Amwell Township Committee came to order at 7:30 PM. Present were Mayor Dart Sageser, Deputy Mayor David Wang-Iverson, and Committee members Tim Mathews, Charles Van Horn, and Peter Miller. Township Administrator Timothy Matheny was also in attendance.

In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, a copy of notice of this meeting was filed in the Clerk's Office, posted on the bulletin board, sent to the Hunterdon County Democrat, Times of Trenton, and Star Ledger on April 14, 2014, and published in the April 17, 2014 issue of the Hunterdon County Democrat. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the 2014 budget; to approve a resolution to enter executive session to discuss personnel; to consider an appointment for the finance department; and to approve a salary and wage adjustment resolution.

The public is invited to attend and comment during the open session. Action may or may not be taken.

The meeting opened with The Pledge of Allegiance.

The meeting was open to the public for comment; there were no members of the public present at this time.

A decision was made to hold the discussion on the budget until after the CFO item was discussed.

RESOLUTION TO ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS PERSONNEL

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RESOLUTION #63-14

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act, P.L. 1975, Chapter 231 permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, East Amwell Township Committee is of the opinion that circumstances presently exist; and

WHEREAS, the governing body of the Township of East Amwell wishes to discuss personnel; and

WHEREAS, minutes will be kept and once the matter involving the confidentiality of the above no longer requires that confidentiality, then minutes can be made public;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the public be excluded from this meeting.

By Order of the Township Committee,

Dart Sageser, Mayor

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Motion by Deputy Mayor Wang-Iverson, seconded by Mr. Miller, and carried unanimously to approve the resolution.

Executive session began at 7:33 p.m.

The special meeting resumed at 8:53 p.m.

APPOINTMENT FOR FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Mr. Van Horn made a motion to offer the CMFO position to Chris Hart at a salary of \$35,000 per year, amending the salary and wage resolution accordingly, for up to 20 hours per week.

Mayor Sageser explained that the goal is to have 12 hours in the office. Mr. Mathews suggested that the candidate "meet deliverables" and report to the Administrator hours expended. Mr. Matheny said that there would be more hours in the beginning, and Mr. Hart will speak with him

when his hours will change. Mr. Matheny explained that he had put together a list of bullet points as a “memorandum of understanding” to provided to Mr. Hart, highlighting items, such as the following: he is entitled to benefits based on number of hours as stated in the policy manual; there are no medical or pension benefits; he will work 15-20 hours per week, with 8 off-site hours; there is an Assistant Treasurer helping 17.5 hours per week with flexible hours; the position will be a four year term towards tenure; the CFO will also be Certifying Officer for pensions and tabulate payroll; he will be in charge of the finance office.

Some comments were exchanged about the term of the CFO, with some varying opinions given by the Department of Community Affairs and the former CFO; the Township Committee agreed that this appointment would be a four year appointment. Mr. Van Horn expected Mr. Hart to report to the Township Committee in person at the regular Township Committee meetings – this would be scheduled as an item at the beginning of each meeting. Mayor Sageser commented on being provided with a monthly schedule, similar to what is provided by the Township Administrator, showing a two week accurate schedule and two weeks flexible scheduling. It was agreed that Mr. Hart will be required to attend all budget meetings, and the salary would be prorated at \$35,000 for the year.

The motion was amended as follows:

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RESOLUTION #64-14

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of East Amwell that they hereby offer Christopher Hart a position as the East Amwell Township Certified Municipal Finance Officer (CMFO), pursuant to the acceptance of a letter of understanding, as outlined by the Township Administrator; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 2013 Salary and Wager Resolution be amended to include Christopher Hart, removing the former CFO’s name, at an annual salary of \$35,000, prorated, with a start date of April 28, 2014, if possible.

By Order of the Township Committee,

Dart Sageser, Mayor

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Motion by Mr. Van Horn, seconded by Deputy Mayor Wang-Iverson, and carried unanimously by roll call vote: Mr. Van Horn, yes; Mr. Wang-Iverson, Mr. Mathews, yes; Mr. Miller, yes; Mr. Sageser, yes.

Committee members agreed to read the letter of understanding, preliminarily drafted by Mr. Matheny, and provide changes to him in Word as soon as possible.

DISCUSSION ON 2014 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Deputy Mayor Wang-Iverson explained that he took the budget worksheets prepared by a previous CFO and updated them using the end of year reports from Edmunds, including 2012 data as a comparison. Spreadsheets were adjusted by moving 2012 numbers and adding the 2013 numbers of what was budgeted and paid as of the end of 2013. He said that if it was valuable, he would continue with the remainder of the budget pages.

As an example, Deputy Mayor Wang-Iverson turned to page 24, Tax Appeals, wherein he would add the \$10,000 requested by the Assessor for The Ridge at Back Brook to the existing \$4,000 still in the budget for appeals. There was an exchange of comments between governing body members about the request for the funds for an appraisal, including the following: Mayor Sageser commented on a recent article in the Star Ledger about a drop in value for golf courses; the trend of corporate membership money drying up was mentioned; The Ridge is one of the biggest taxpayers in the municipality; The Ridge’s value did not change during the reassessment;

the Assessor did provide information on the taxes paid by The Ridge, which was around \$240,000; the Assessor did not know what devaluation The Ridge was looking for; if there was a 10% decrease in value, it would mean a \$24,000 reduction in taxes to the Township, while school and county taxes still must be paid; Deputy Mayor Wang-Iverson felt that an appraisal would be important for defense; Mr. Van Horn reminded the Township Committee that strategy should be discussed in executive session.

Deputy Mayor Wang-Iverson also noted that the Board of Health and Road budgets may be underfunded. Mr. Mathews felt that the Township should just use the 2013 budget as the basis for the 2014 budget "and tweak it."

Deputy Mayor Wang-Iverson agreed to continue his work on the budget sheets, with Committee members commenting that this may also be helpful for the new CFO. The Deputy Mayor also commented on having itemization on the budget sheets, noting concern last year on budgets provided without itemization, i.e., departments did not know lines that funds came out of, although budgets may not have been exceeded. He said that this would be fine tuned this year. Mr. Mathews said that as Deputy Mayor Wang-Iverson continues, he should focus on 2014 requests, noting that the 2013 numbers should tie into the Annual Financial Statement; the new CFO will be asked about this practice.

Deputy Mayor Wang-Iverson said that he did not include any new requests from the departments in these budget sheets; additionally, there is an expense for the Edmunds program, i.e., the original cost for the program was taken out of the 2012 budget. He also noted that he only got up to the Workers Comp page of the budget, which he will leave for the new CFO since it is based on specific calculations that the CFO would know.

AMENDMENT TO THE 2013 SALARY AND WAGE RESOLUTION

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RESOLUTION #65-14

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of East Amwell that they hereby amend the 2013 Salary and Wage Resolution as follows: retroactive to January 1, 2014:

Delete

Township Committee Member Cregar \$753.75/quarterly

Add:

Township Committee Member Van Horn \$753.75/quarterly

Township Committee Member Miller \$753.75/quarterly

By Order of the Township Committee,

Dart Sageser, Mayor

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Motion by Mr. Van Horn, seconded by Mr. Miller, and carried unanimously.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present at this time, and the meeting was closed to the public.

OTHER

Mr. Mathews wanted to report on a fire, citing the recently adopted Community Wildfire Protection Plan. He explained that there was a fire on the Read property on Linvale Road, where there was a downed wire belonging to JCP&L located in the crook of a tree, filled with nuts and leaves. There was a 20' x 50' patch burned in a brake area, with the Forest Ranger indicating that there may have been more damage had the incident happened "two hundred yards up the road." Mr. Mathews felt that it was important to understand wildfire protection and make sure that the fire companies are well equipped to handle them. He recommended that the LEPC have a meeting to talk about the plan and implement it.

A recommendation was also made to call JCP&L and schedule a meeting with Mr. Anderson, who had previously agreed to quarterly meetings with the ad hoc committee assigned by the Township.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, motion by Deputy Mayor Wang-Iverson, seconded by Mr. Van Horn, and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 p.m.

Teresa R. Stahl, RMC/CMC
Municipal Clerk

DRAFT - NOT YET APPROVED