

Meeting called to order as advertised and held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. Members present: Sheppard, Miletta, Bowman. Meeting held telephonically as advertised, posted on website and on front doors of municipal building.

Zac Meyer, Soltage LLC participated in the meeting hoping to gain Committee's support for proposed development of (2) community solar projects: Block 239 lots 30 and 42, named Lawrence Main Solar 1 and Lawrence Solar 1 block 238 lot 9. Mr. Myer explained some of the benefits of the project if successful would be savings on electric bills, residents and local businesses would have the opportunity to secure energy at discounted rates. Soltage is willing to commit \$10,000.00 provide an electric vehicle charging station upon the completion and operation date of either project. Mr. Bowman questioned location of the charging station, Mr. Meyer replied the location would be determined by the Township. Mr. Sheppard questioned if they would be making payment in lieu of taxes. Mr. Myer replied that the lease agreement they have with the land owner provides that Soltage is responsible to pay any increase in real estate taxes due to the project. Mr. Sheppard stated that the Planning/Zoning Board is currently working on a Master Plan update and solar facilities will not be permitted in an agriculture zone, but he would not be opposed in supporting these two projects due to location, minimal amount of farm land to be used, and the benefit to the community. Mayor Sheppard also advised that final determination or approval would have to come from the Planning/Zoning Board. Township Committee support granted, motioned Bowman, seconded Miletta, unanimous vote.

Lengthy discussion held with Meghan Wren, Area Planner and Donna Rendeiro, Executive Director of the NJ State Planning Commission regarding the Township's Center designation which was set to expire June 20, 2020, but has been extended. Lawrence committee previously declined to pursue Plan Endorsement due to lack of benefit at that time and inactivity of the State Planning Commission, but may reconsider. Mayor Sheppard questioned what would be the process and benefit of Plan Endorsement? Ms. Rendeiro replied that the Township's previous plan was consistent with State goals, regarding economic growth, need for infrastructure, protecting the environment, etc. Her office can assist in communications with other state departments, DEP, DOT, DCA, etc. and provide technical assistance to obtain goals. She questioned what the committee was looking for, what would they want? Mayor Sheppard stated that his biggest concern is the need for assistance with septic issues in the town center, and questioned what programs might be available for assistance in repairing or replacing of septic systems. We currently have many old homes on very small lots in the center of town, many which are vacant, and remain vacant due to the cost associated with the septic issue. Mayor Sheppard is concerned that with current DEP regulations, and proposed Café One legislation how will we be able to keep and maintain existing homes along Main Street and in the Center Designation. Both Mr. Miletta and Mr. Bowman agreed. Mr. Bowman also stated the needs for sidewalks for safety reasons. Mr. Bowman stated that the Bridgeton Utilities Authority had a plan to run sewer lines to Newport and Fortescue. Ms. Wren advised that a study prepared for the Bay Shore areas indicated that the Bridgeton Utilities Authority was at only 50% capacity and would welcome the extension. Ms. Rendeiro questioned how many homes were affected with septic issues, Mayor stated 100 or so. Ms. Rendeiro will research to determine what grants, if any are available and also look into low interest loan programs prior to the committee making a commitment regarding Plan Endorsement. The committee agreed that their goal would be to keep the small homey town atmosphere, to be able to maintain what we have. Ms. Rendeiro suggest that she do a ride through the town to get ideas for improvements. Meeting scheduled for 10 AM February 18<sup>th</sup> at which time the committee will provide Ms. Rendeiro and Ms. Wren a tour then they will meet for further discussion.

Various land sale offers reviewed, minimum bids set. A commercial for sale sign will be posted in front of old Public Works Building. Committee will correspond with Planning/Zoning Board to request zoning on that parcel be changed from "P" Public to "VR" Village Residential which is inline with the surrounding properties. Further action will be taken on sale which is proposed for April 12, 2021.

Resumes received for the CFO Position reviewed. references will be checked by committee and a date will be set for interviews.

Committeeman Bowman advised that the Mayors in the County will be meeting with Freeholder Director Derella on Feb. 24<sup>th</sup> to discuss Animal Shelter issues, mainly the lack of transparency with current shelter, SJ Regional Animal Shelter. Information is being gathered to determine the feasibility of construction of a new shelter to be financed and operated by a county-wide interlocal services agreement. Mayor Sheppard stated that currently municipalities are being billed based on population, not use. Mr. Bowman will provide updates following the meeting.

Brief discussion held regarding Historical Society/ Ag Museum project. Mayor Sheppard advised that construction was delayed due to doors and windows being backordered. Carpenters have been rehired and will begin construction around February 15<sup>th</sup>. Clerk instructed to contact Systems Electric to determine if quote for additional concrete/Phase 2, would be honored as its over 60 days old.

Authorization to pay approved vouchers granted, motioned Bowman, seconded Miletta, unanimous vote.

Floor opened for public comment. Receiving none, meeting adjourned at 10:00pm, motioned Miletta, seconded Bowman.

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Ruth Dawson, Clerk

February 8, 2021  
Regular Meeting

Regular monthly meeting of the Lawrence Township Committee called to order at 7:30 pm as advertised and held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. Public invited to participate telephonically. Members present: Sheppard, Miletta, Bowman.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, minutes of the January 7<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> meetings were approved motioned Bowman, seconded Miletta, unanimous vote. Reports for the month of January accepted motioned Miletta seconded Bowman, unanimous vote.

Certificate and Determination of Award, Bond Anticipation Note 2021-1 presented in accordance with the Local Bond Law., prepared by Mary Jane Lake, CFO. The Bond Anticipation Note was awarded and sold to Piper Sandler & Co. at the price of 798,410.55 at 1% per annum, accepted motioned Bowman, seconded Miletta, unanimous vote.

Resolution 2021-18, 2020 Budget transfers approved, motioned Miletta, seconded Bowman, unanimous vote.

Certified LOSAP List presented, a total of 37 volunteers qualified for benefits for the year 2020 at a total cost of \$20,000. List accepted motioned Bowman, seconded Sheppard unanimous vote, Resolution No 2021-19.

Resolution 2021-20, Establishing Dog License fee for the year 2021 and extending the grace period to April 30<sup>th</sup> approved, motioned Miletta, seconded Sheppard, unanimous vote. Clerk advised that the Townships free rabies clinic will be held Saturday April 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Resolution 2021-21, authorizing award of Non-Fair and Open Contract to Systems Electric in the amount of \$15,910.00 for concrete work, Phase 2, Historical Society Building motioned Miletta, seconded Bowman unanimous vote. A second proposal was received by QPA Millicent Davis for this project from Lindsey & Sons Construction, Philadelphia, in the amount of \$30,000.00

Ordinance No. 2021-422, An Ordinance Providing for the Salaries and Wages for the Employees and Officers of the Township of Lawrence was approved as introduced, motioned Bowman, seconded Miletta, Unanimous vote. Further consideration for final adoption will take place following a public hearing at the regular meeting of March 8<sup>th</sup>.

Quotes received for service/maintenance and inspection of (2) Generators reviewed:  
Gen-Serve- no quote submitted Penn Power Systems - 850.00 Reliable Power Plus- 1,100.00  
Committeeman Miletta stated that although Penn Power was less for routine maintenance, any charges for repair could be quite costly due to that travel time from their home base in Philadelphia. Mayor Sheppard stated that Reliable Power Plus is around the corner, a Lawrence Township based business which he would like to support, in addition to being satisfied with their service in the past. All concurred. Reliable Power Plus proposal accepted, motioned Bowman, seconded Miletta, unanimous vote.

Payment of additional approved vouchers authorized motioned Bowman, seconded Miletta, unanimous vote.

A brief discussion held regarding need for updated telephone system. Quotes will be gathered for consideration at budget meeting.

Committee Comments:

Mayor Sheppard instructed clerk to prepare a letter for Planning/Zoning Board requesting a change in zoning for old public works building from a "P" Public Zone, to a "VR" Village residential zone which is inline with the surrounding properties. Same will be presented to the board for their consideration at their Feb. 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Committeeman Bowman stated that the Public Works employees did a good job during the recent snowstorm. Mr. Sheppard stated that bucket on JCB Backhoe needs to be replaced, estimated cost of \$6,000, Supervisor will get quotes. Mr. Miletta stated that there is only one JCB dealer in the state. He also advised that the bucket is beat up but can still be used for "beat up work" as it connects and disconnects easily. Purchase of new bucket authorized motioned Mr. Miletta, seconded Mr. Bowman unanimous vote.

A brief discussion held regarding reopening of municipal building to the public. Mayor Sheppard stated that it would be considered once employees received covid vaccinations.

Floor opened to the public. Receiving no public comment, floor closed and meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM motioned Bowman, seconded Miletta.

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Ruth Dawson, Clerk

February 23, 2021  
Budget Workshop Meeting

A budget workshop meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm as advertised and held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. Members present: Sheppard, Miletta, Bowman. Purpose of the meeting was to prepare the 2021 Municipal Budget.

Committee along with Auditor Fred Caltabiano reviewed budget line by line. End result, budget up only \$38,388 over 2020 appropriations, proposed tax rate increase of 1.9 cent per \$100 dollars valuation amounting to \$33.00 per year to the average assessed home of \$170,000. Further consideration for final adoption will be given upon receipt of confirmation of State Aid.

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Ruth Dawson, Clerk

A special meeting of the Township Committee was called to order at 10:00 AM as advertised and held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. Members present Sheppard, Miletta, Bowman. Also in attendance was Donna Rendeiro, Executive Director and Meghan Wren, Area Planner of the NJ State Planning Commission and Don Schlachter, Engineer. Purpose of the meeting was to discuss the benefit of renewal of the Township's Center Designation/Plan Endorsement. As previously discussed via teleconference at the February 4<sup>th</sup> workshop meeting, active Plan Endorsement may assist in obtaining grant funds for improvements. Discussion mainly revolved around the need for a municipal sewage system in the town center and the various types of sewage systems available. Also discussed was various funding sources that might be available for such project. Ms. Wren provided a packet of information regarding a Search Grant (USDA/Rural Utility Service) which could provide up to \$30,000 for a feasibility study. The Township Committee will consider all options and further consideration will be given as to what direction they may go. Meeting adjourned at 11:15 AM.

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Ruth Dawson, Clerk