

Meeting called to order at 7:30 pm as advertised and held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. Members present, Sheppard, Miletta, Bowman.

Meeting closed for executive session to discuss matters of personnel/contract negotiations motioned Miletta, seconded Bowman, unanimous vote.

Executive session closed and the regular meeting reopened at 8:35 pm.

Brief discussion held regarding Historical Society Building project. Mr. Miletta advised that the pole barn style could be constructed with a treated fireproof wood and drywall. Mayor Sheppard advised that the Architect will make minor changes needed for wood vs. steel construction. Mr. Miletta will follow up with BlueScope Construction, as discussed at the July 29th meeting as suggested by Mr. Bowman. Mayor Sheppard will get numbers for the building to be purchased and constructed in house. Further consideration will be given as to which direction will be pursued.

Clerk advised that she received a call from the County regarding Community Service program. Committee agreed that the extra help would be welcome, motioned Miletta, seconded Bowman that the Township participate in the program. Mayor Sheppard stated that workers could assist in removing bamboo from township property on Maple Ave.

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

Clerk presented information Mayor Sheppard planned to be included in newsletter and asked committee to consider condensing it to two pages. Draft will be completed for final review.

Committeeman Bowman brought attention to the need for a generator at Municipal Building. Loss of electricity from recent storm caused power outage. Mayor Sheppard stated it should service EMS also. Deputy Mayor Miletta agreed and stated that there are medications in the ambulances that need to be kept cool. Mr. Miletta will talk to Gerard Reilly, Systems Electric and have him spec out the proper size unit for further consideration.

With no further business to discuss, meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm, motioned Miletta, seconded Bowman.

Ruth Dawson

August 10, 2020
Regular Monthly Meeting

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

Following the pledge of allegiance, Minutes of the July 9th, 13th and 29th meetings were approved, motioned Bowman, seconded Miletta, unanimous vote. Reports for the month of July accepted motioned Miletta, seconded Bowman, unanimous vote.

Land sale held as advertised with the following results:

Block 185 lots 10, 13, 15, and 16 sold for 3,000 each and block 185 lot 20, 2,000 to Kurt and Tina Lorton. Bids accepted motioned Miletta, seconded Bowman, unanimous vote.

Resolution 2020-47, Amending Resolution 2020-15 adopted January 13, 2020 Authorizing Submission of a Strategic Plan for Municipal Alliance Grant for year 2021 approved, motioned Bowman, seconded Miletta, unanimous vote. The amendment revises allocation and shortens the grant period to three fiscal quarters.

Resolution 2020-48 Authorize refund of Various Tax overpayments approved, motioned Miletta, seconded Bowman, unanimous vote.

Resolution 2020-49, Authorization for Cedarville Volunteer Fire Department to participate in the States Firefighter Certificate Program and Designating Assistant Chief Kevin Scarlato to execute any necessary documents to implement the program approved, motioned Bowman, seconded Miletta, unanimous vote.

Mayor Sheppard opened the floor for public comment prior to closing for executive session.

Resident Clint Miller stood and spoke on behalf of Ron Sutton, ACO, regarding June 8th incident which occurred near his home. He saw the dog several times and the dog was mean. It was his opinion that Ron handled the call properly. He stated that the 10 minute video (social media) did not reflect the full situation. Mr. Miller thanked the committee for their time and also for the job they do. Mr. Miletta thanked him for attending and speaking. Resident Gail Ward stood and responded to Mr. Miller's statement that in NJ, the Law states that an animal cannot be euthanized by a gun shot. The animal must be trapped, scanned for chip and taken to a veterinarian and none of this was done. Mr. Miletta questioned how the situation should have been handled while the dog was causing havoc in the roadway creating a public hazard. Ms. Ward stated that she spoke to the sergeant at the police barracks and was told that the dog would not be shot. The Sergeant then called her back and reported that the dog had been humanely put down. She stated that there was nothing humane about the shooting- Ron has no compassion and never has and the dog should not have been killed. Mr. Miletta question if the dog was dead, as Ms. Ward previously made statements that the dog had been spotted in Laurel lake. Ms. Ward said that there were rumors posted on social media, but the dog had never been located. Mr. Miletta questioned Ms. Ward regarding her posts on social media that the Lawrence Township Committee had failed the tax payers. She stated that yes, when Ron Sutton was awarded the contract instead of Shore Animal Control, Ron does not do his job. Joe stated that with 15 towns already there was concern that Shore would be able to provide service. Ms. Ward replied that Shore would respond if called.

Resident Robin Bundy stood and read a letter from the NJ Certified Animal Control Officers Assoc., ACO Sutton is not a member or affiliated with the Assoc., who expressed their disappointment in the manner that he handled the situation. The Assoc. is confident that the NJ Dept. of Health will investigate the incident and take appropriate action regarding Mr. Suttons certification. Ms. Bundy stated that on the video, Ron told the trooper to kill the dog. She then referenced an incident that followed whereas Ron was called to a residence near her home, for a racoon. Troopers were called and again an animal was shot- Ron does not follow the Law. She stated that she is looking into rumors going around that another dog had been shot. Clerk advised that if it had happened, it would be on monthly report. Ms. Bundy stated that Ron once had almost all the towns in the county, there is a reason why he now has only 2.

Resident John Wilson appeared and confirmed with the Committee that they had received a copy of his written complaint. He reiterated that Ron responds to calls when he wants to. He suggested that the Committee hold him to a 2 hour response time or cancel contract for services. As far as calls pertaining to wild life, Mr. Wilson stated that Fish and Game should be called, not the State Troopers.

Mr. Rudy Badger stood and stated that the dog should have been trapped and checked for a chip. Mr. Lester Woody stated that he had called Ron several times over the years and he always responded. Mr. Miletta stated that we never had complaints until the past 8 months. Mr. Miller asked how many years Ron has been with the Township to which Mr. Miletta replied 18 years. Mr. Miller stated that was a pretty good record. Mr. Woody stated that he hoped Ron would be around for another 18 years. Dawn Adams appeared and stated that her family had a very bad experience with Ron. About 15 years ago her mother's neighbor had company who brought a pit bull. The pit bull came into her mother's yard and viciously attacked her family pet. They took their dog to the vet and it had to be put down. Her vet told her to contact her town and file a court complaint. Ms. Adams stated that Ron refused to issue a summons and stated that it was just a dog.

With no further public comments the floor was closed and the meeting closed for executive session at 8:30 pm to discuss contract negotiations/matters of personnel.

Executive session closed and the regular meeting reopened at 8:35 pm.

Mayor Sheppard announced that the Township would be pursuing a shared services agreement for animal control services for the remainder of the year and once initiated Ron Sutton would be given 30 day notice of contract termination.

Floor opened for public comment.

Ms. Ward stated that was good because she believes Ron's license will be revoked. Members of the public thanked the committee for listening to them.

Robin Bundy stated that there is an issue with motorcycles and 4 wheelers riding wheelies down the middle of Main Street, every evening between 7:30 – 8:30. The motorcycles congregate at 435 Main Street. She said she spoke to one of the kids and requested that he wear a helmet and find a safer place to ride. His mother came out of the house and cursed at her. Mr. Miletta instructed Clerk to contact Sheriff's Department and State Police and request patrols. Mr. Bowman said they come down his road (Maple Ave) at the same time everyday and should be easy to catch.

Mr. Miller questioned if Ron has a contract how could the committee let him go. Mayor Sheppard advised that there is a clause in the contract that allows either party to terminate for any reason upon 30 days written notice. He also questioned if Ron and Trooper supplied township with reports regarding June 8 incident and was told yes. Mr. Miller stated that's it's a terrible world that we live in today, people get crazy with their keyboards. It's a shame to get rid of him for something that happed 15 years ago. Mayor Sheppard stated some of the complaints came from long time residents. Mr. Bowman stated that Ron used to have 9 towns, now only 2. Mr. Miller replied that it may have been Ron's choice.

With no further comments, floor closed and meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm, motioned Miletta, seconded Bowman.

Ruth Dawson, Clerk

A special meeting of the Lawrence Township Committee was called to order at 12:00 pm as advertised and held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. Purpose of the meeting was to award contract for Temporary Animal Control Services and review a farmland preservation application. Members present: Sheppard, Miletta, Bowman.

Committeeman Bowman advised that he spoke to City of Bridgeton, Deerfield Township and Hopewell Township representatives regarding interlocal services agreement for Animal Control Services. Although Bridgeton was receptive, Mr. Bowman advised that after hour calls are handled by the Bridgeton Police Dept, who would not respond to Lawrence complaints. Deerfield expressed concerns that sharing their ACO would pull him away from his other duties. Hopewell's ACO is a contracted service. Mr. Bowman has requested that the CDC (Cumberland Development Corp) get involved to assist in establishing a county wide interlocal Animal Control Service for all participating townships, as many towns have expressed an interest. Due to complaints received by residents in previous meetings, current ACO Ronald Sutton will be given 30 day written notice of termination of contract (effective Sept. 30) motioned Bowman, seconded Miletta Unanimous vote. Committeeman Miletta stated for the record that Ronald Sutton and Trooper Jeffries who responded to June 8th incident on Cedarville Road did not violate operating procedures, rules or regulations as determined by the Attorney General Division of the State Police. Mayor Sheppard reiterated that termination of the contract was never considered because of that incident, but because of complaints received by long- time residents.

Proposals submitted reviewed:

Countywide Animal Care and Control - \$1,000.00 per month, \$50.00 per cat delivered to shelter and \$100.00 per call after hours. Normal Business Hours 8am-3:30pm

Shore Animal Control Services LLC - \$1,250.00 per month, after hours (5PM) or weekends call out fee \$75.00

Animal Control of South Jersey- \$1050.00 per month, services 24\7 including holidays. No additional charge for evenings, weekends or holidays.

Motioned Bowman, seconded Miletta, unanimous vote that award be made to Animal Control of South Jersey for the period beginning October 1 through December 31, 2020.

Committee reviewed application for Farmland Preservation Block 188 Lots 1 and 2, assessed to Estate of Dorothy Kenney, made by Paul Gilson, Executor. Committee agreed that it's a good move to retain all current remaining farmland, and supports the application, motioned Miletta, seconded Bowman, unanimous vote.

Discussion held regarding Clerks request to use accrued sick time, possibly one day per week, as family leave during the current pandemic. Request approved, motioned Bowman, seconded Miletta, unanimous vote.

Brief discussion held regarding Historical Society/Agriculture Museum project. Motioned Bowman, seconded Miletta, unanimous vote that project move forward as a wood/pole structure as opposed to steel due to cost. Mayor Sheppard will reach out to architect to revise plans for same. Clerk will contact Millicent Davis, QPA, KMD Consultants to obtain a proposal for QPA services. Project will be done in-house, with the Township serving as contractor.

With no further business to discuss, meeting adjourned at 1:05 pm, motioned Bowman, seconded Miletta.

Ruth Dawson, Clerk

