

December 5, 2019
Workshop Meeting

Monthly workshop meeting of the Lawrence Township Committee called to order as advertised and held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. Members present Bowman, Miletta, Sheppard.

Proposal received for installation of electric at Public Works addition reviewed: Systems Electric LLC \$15,216.00, GM White Mechanical and Steven R. Walsh Electrical Contractor, no proposal received. Award made to Systems Electric LLC motioned Miletta, seconded Sheppard, unanimous yes vote.

Discussion held regarding mold remediation at Bank Property, 339 Main Street. Servpro has completed removal of plywood underlayment and insulation that was exposed. A beam remains to be removed and replaced along with installation of a vapor barrier. Proposals will be requested for this work in the 2020 budget year.

Clerk relayed to committee that assessor advised that any abatement/exemption enabling ordinance must be up to date and done every 10 years. Any such ordinance would expire after 10 years and become void. This will be considered with upcoming master plan reexamination.

Clerk also advised that the Christmas employee luncheon will be held on Friday December 13th at noon, at the Senior Center.

Annual Reorganization will take place at the regular workshop meeting on January 9, 2020 motioned Sheppard, seconded Miletta, unanimous vote. Professional Service appoints reviewed for further consideration at reorganization.

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

Employment ad for Construction Code Official reviewed. Ad will be placed, interviews to be held in January for appointment effective February 1, 2020.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm, motioned Miletta, seconded Sheppard.

Ruth Dawson, Clerk

Monday December 9, 2019
Regular Monthly Meeting

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

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, minutes for the month of November were approved motioned Sheppard, seconded Miletta, unanimous vote. Reports for the month of November accepted, motioned Miletta, seconded Sheppard, unanimous vote.

Resolution 2019-60, Authorizing refund of tax overpayment in the amount of \$1,247.49 block 189 lot 2, due to exempt veteran status granted motioned Sheppard, seconded Miletta, unanimous vote.

Necessary 2019 budget transfers, Resolution 2019-61 approved motioned Miletta seconded Sheppard, unanimous vote.

Resolution 2019-62, Chapter 159 to approve insertion of \$4,000.00 in the adopted 2019 Budget under the caption of Live Healthy Cumberland County approved, motioned Sheppard, seconded Miletta, unanimous vote.

Continued

Township will participate in the Cumberland County Cooperative Purchasing award to Garden State Highway Products for various traffic signal and sign materials, motioned Miletta, seconded Sheppard, unanimous vote.

Mayor Bowman announced that proposals for Animal Control Services would not be opened due to a delay in submittal by County Wide Animal Care & Control. Upon receipt proposals will be reviewed for action to be taken at the Dec. 30th end of year meeting.

Payment of additional approved vouchers granted motioned Sheppard, seconded Miletta, unanimous vote.

Quotes for purchase of a 250,000 BTU Natural Gas, Ceiling mount heater for Public Works addition reviewed. Bridgeton Plumbing and Heating \$1,601.00, and Grainger \$1,794.25. Award made to Bridgeton Plumbing, motioned Sheppard, seconded Miletta, unanimous vote. Mr. Sheppard instructed Clerk to get a quote for installation from Sieri Mechanical.

Mayor Bowman announced that the tree lighting ceremony was very well attended. Additional tables had to be set up for festivities that followed at fire house.

Floor opened for public comment. Gail Ward, Township resident appeared before the committee and requested clarification on Animal Control Contact award. Mayor Bowman stated that once third proposal is received, the proposals will be reviewed. Ms. Ward questioned if the public's preference would be considered. Mayor Bowman stated that award will be made based on cost, proper credentials, vehicles, etc. References will be collected. Ms. Ward stated that residents are not getting the services they are paying for. She has collected a number of complaints on a Facebook page that deals with lost and found pets. Residents want 24/7, weekends and holidays coverage for ACO services. Because of her involvement with lost pets, she is familiar with all ACO's in the County. Shore Animal Control serves Fairfield and Upper Deerfield Townships and provides 24/7 service. Mr. Miletta disagreed with her. He has a dog that was found after hours in Fairfield Twp and on that particular day neither the State Police or Shore responded. Solicitor Seeley questioned where Shore Animal Control home base located. Ms. Ward replied Upper Township, but one of their ACO's lives in Lawrence, and they have vehicles all over. Ms. Ward stated that she wants a ACO that is compassionate with animals. She stated that the State investigated Ron's Shelter 10 years ago for keeping an injured pet and not providing veterinary care. Mr. Sutton was present and stated that he was not charged. Ms. Ward also suggested that award to Mr. Sutton would be a conflict due to personal friendship with committee members. Mayor Bowman replied that committee is certainly familiar with Ron as he has provided service for 19 years, but there is no personal friendship, no conflict. Mr. Sutton stood and stated that he has served the Township for 19 years and has had no dealings with Ms. Ward and is appalled that she would make such comments about him. She stated that she previously adopted dogs from him when he had the shelter. Mr. Sheppard stated that we are not talking about the past, solicitor Seeley agreed and stated that discussion would be regarding future contract. Ms. Ward stated that she just wants better for our animals.

Resident Jessica Hitchner stood to speak about her experience with Mr. Sutton. She had a pit bull jumping and snapping at her back door on a Sunday morning a month prior and was surprised to learn that there was no ACO service on a Sunday unless it was an emergency. She called the State police who provided Ron's cell phone number. She called Ron who determined it was non emergent and said he would be there the following morning. The dog was not in her yard the following morning, Ron searched the neighborhood with no luck. He returned the following morning and found the dog in her dog pen. He could not get to his truck to get necessary equipment without the dog getting away, so he called Ms. Hitchner who came home and brought her dog outside to lure the other dog out of the pen. Ms. Hitchner's only complaint was that the contract should be restructured to provide service 24/7. Mr. Miletta questioned if Mr. Sutton responded to calls on weekends. Mr. Sutton replied emergencies only. Mr. Sheppard questioned what constituted an emergency. Mr. Sutton replied, dog bite, dog hit by car and injured or loose aggressive dog. Mr. Sutton stated that he called Ms. Hitchner later that Sunday

Continued

morning and the dog was gone. Ron stated that Shore Animal Control does not always respond after hours and he knows this because the State Police have called him in and he has had to decline assistance if it's not his contracted town.

Lifelong resident Robin Bundy addressed the committee to express concerns regarding makeshift kennels she has spotted in certain areas of the township dealing with illegal kennels, breeding and fighting of dogs. Mayor Bowman stated that these cases should be reported to animal cruelty. Shore Animal Control officer Holly Gavrilow was present and advised that first point of contact for a cruelty case is the Animal Control Officer who reports to the State Police then to the Humane Law Enforcement Officer /Prosecutors Office. Ms. Bundy complained that the Township website gives the Township's number for Animal Control Services, and the number to State Police for after hour emergencies, and the website needs to be updated, to include Animal Shelter information. She stated that the State Police do not want to be bothered with animal complaints, ACO should be available 24/7. Ms. Bundy also suggested that the township consider a Trap/Neuter/ Spay Ordinance as cats are getting to be a big problem, need to think about the future. Ms. Bundy expressed her disappointment that she took the time to come out for the meeting and award of ACO contract was tabled. Mr. Sheppard stated that she did have the opportunity to voice her concerns and award would be made at December 30th year end meeting to be held at 5 pm. Mayor Bowman stated that all complaints and concerns would be taken under advisement.

With no additional public comments received, meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM, motioned Miletta, seconded Sheppard.

Ruth Dawson, Clerk

December 30, 2019
Special/Year End meeting

A special meeting of the Lawrence Township Committee was called to order at 5:00 PM as advertised, and held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. Purpose of the meeting was to close out business for the year 2019. Members present: Bowman, Sheppard, Miletta.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Minutes of the December 5th and 9th meetings were approved, motioned Miletta, seconded Sheppard, unanimous vote.

Proposal for Animal Control Services reviewed:

Shore Animal Control Services LLC, \$1,000.00 per month plus \$50.00 call out charge for after hours
Ron's Animal Control \$1,250.00 per month (no call out charge after hours)
Countywide Animal Care and Control, \$1,750.00 per month plus \$100.00 call out charge after hours

Sarah Atlas, a resident of Fairfield Township for the past 3 years approached the committee to provide her recommendation and support for Shore Animal Control based on her personal experience with them. Prior to Shore contracting with Fairfield Township she experienced many issues with animal control, dogs running loose in her neighborhood, and severe cruelty, dogs being chained out with no protection from the weather, sometimes no food and water. Ms. Atlas claimed that it took a year and a half to get the cruelty cases resolved working with the State Police. She stated that the prior ACO provided no assistance. Mr. Sutton was present and stated that he was not contracted with Fairfield at that time. Ms. Atlas stated that since ACO services have been provided by Shore there are no issues with dogs running loose in her neighborhood, nor does she see dogs being chained with no protection. She stated that Shore Officers are available 24/7, take no vacations and respond within minutes of

Continued

receiving complaint. Solicitor Seeley question if Ms. Atlas had a complaint regarding Ron's Animal Control. She replied no, she has had no dealings with him, only wanted to give her support for Shore. Mayor Bowman confirmed that Fairfield provided a good reference for Shore Animal Control. He also advised that over the past years he had only one resident complain to him about Ron Sutton, and that was because the resident had a bad phone number. Mayor Bowman asked for committee members input. Mr. Miletta stated that he had a personal experience with Shore and they did not respond after hours. He had no complaints about Ron's Animal Control and was happy with service provided. Mr. Sutton made 33 after hour calls in 2019 at no charge which closes the gap in contract amount. Mr. Miletta's recommendation was to award to Ron's Animal Control. Mr. Sheppard stated that he had concerns that Shore could provide service as they are currently under contract in 14 towns and have only two transport vehicles. Mayor Bowman stated that he liked the idea that Ron's contract could be terminated with a 30 day notice if Committee was not happy with service provided. Mr. Sheppard stated that Ron's cell number should be available for people to call him direct and not have to go through the State Police after hours. Mr. Sutton agreed. Motioned Sheppard, seconded Miletta unanimous vote that contract be awarded to Ron's Animal Control.

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

Resolution 2019-63 Authorizing necessary 2019 budget transfers approved, motioned Sheppard, seconded Miletta, unanimous vote.

Fralinger Engineering authorized to proceed with Topographic Survey and Site Plan for Addition to Senior Center to house Historical Society for a cost of \$6,500.00 motioned Miletta, seconded Sheppard, unanimous vote. Architecture Services for the project will be performed by Barreiro Architecture at a cost of \$9,500.00 motioned Miletta, seconded Sheppard, unanimous vote.

Survey and subdivision plan will be prepared by Fralinger Engineering, block 157 lots 68 and 69 to create a new street right-of-way connecting Thompson and Monroe at a cost of \$7,500.00 motioned Sheppard, seconded Miletta, unanimous vote.

Mayor Bowman opened the floor to the public. John and Josh Kline, representing Kline Bros. Landscaping appeared to provide committee information regarding a proposed business on property located at 28 Maple Ave. The building is a warehouse that has been vacant for some time. The Kline's are interested in purchasing the building to be used to manufacture and store fiberglass swimming pools which will be moved by rail. They currently employ approximately 250 people for their landscaping business and would anticipate hiring about 60 for this venture/location. Committee advised that Planning/Zoning Board approval would be required in addition to any permits required by DEP and EPA. The Township Committee was receptive and would welcome a business that is environmentally friendly and would create new jobs. The Kline's will keep the committee informed as they move forward in this endeavor.

With no further business before them, meeting adjourned at 6:25 pm, motioned Sheppard, seconded Miletta.

Ruth Dawson, Clerk

