

STILLWATER TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
July 26, 2011
Special Meeting

A SPECIAL MEETING of the Stillwater Township Committee was called to order by Mayor Scott at 7:03 p.m. noting the meeting date, time and place were duly published in the New Jersey Herald and posted at the Town Hall and advised those present that this meeting was being held in compliance with provisions of P.L. 1975, Chapter 231, Sections 4 & 13.

Roll Call was taken and the flag was saluted.

PRESENT: Mayor Scott, Deputy Mayor Fisher, Committeeman Gross, Committeeman Morrison, Committeewoman Straway, Municipal Clerk Judy Fisher and Attorney Howard Vex.

Municipal Clerk Separation Agreement: The Committee reviewed the separation agreement. Mr. Vex noted the Municipal Clerk's term would conclude on August 4, 2011. Following review, Mr. Morrison made a **motion** to accept the agreement, seconded by Mayor Scott.

Mr. Morrison asked if Mrs. Fisher could be placed on administrative leave until the end of her term, August 4, 2011. Mr. Vex stated the Committee could do so.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Fisher, abstain, Mr. Gross, yes, Mrs. Morrison, yes, Mrs. Straway, yes, Mayor Scott, yes

Mr. Morrison made a **motion** to place Mrs. Fisher on administrative leave beginning at midnight July 26, 2011 until the end of her term, August 4, 2011, seconded by Mayor Scott.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Fisher, abstain, Mr. Gross, no, Mrs. Morrison, yes, Mrs. Straway, yes, Mayor Scott, yes

Mr. Morrison made a **motion** to authorize the advertisement for a full-time Municipal Clerk to replace the part-time position, seconded by Mr. Fisher.

Mr. Gross noted that the municipality would require a Certified Municipal Registrar as the population is less than 5,000. Mr. Vex would review the requirement.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Fisher, yes, Mr. Gross, yes, Mrs. Morrison, yes, Mrs. Straway, yes, Mayor Scott, yes

At this point, this portion of the meeting was opened to the public.

Bill Steckowich, 907 Hardwick Road asked if the current Municipal Clerk was fulfilling her workload and if so, why change it to a full-time position. Mayor Scott stated the change is being done to address office coverage issues. Mr. Steckowich questioned the agenda wording with reference to "non-renewal." Mr. Vex explained the Municipal Clerk term was for three years concluding on August 4, 2011 and it will not be renewed or reappointed. Mr. Steckowich asked who would cover the responsibilities of the Clerk until someone is hired. Mayor Scott stated the Committee is in the process of bringing in an Interim Clerk until a permanent selection is made. The Committee explained that Mrs. Fisher performed all requirements of the job and was offered the full-time position and declined it.

Kathleen Draghi, 1016 Route 619 asked why Mrs. Fisher was placed on administrative leave at this point, and felt it was insulting. Mr. Morrison referred to the non-disparagement clause in the agreement, stating he could not discuss it. She inquired as to the coursework Mrs. Wunder has completed toward her license for Municipal Clerk. Mr. Gross stated she has completed all required courses but has not taken the State exam at this time. Mrs. Draghi was concerned that she would obtain her license and with no advancement possibility she would leave. Mrs. Draghi also expressed concern with budget constraints and the creation of a full-time position for the purpose of office coverage. Mr. Morrison stated the savings will come from changing the Tax Collector and CFO positions from full-time to part-time. Discussion was held on employees having to help with responsibilities outside of their own due to the small office and part-time employment. Mrs. Draghi did not understand the reasoning of the Committee to establish the full-time position as there are many part-time positions within the Municipal Building with limited availability, and she felt an office clerk could be hired to provide office coverage at a much lower cost.

Lisa Chamings, 928 Mt. Holly Road asked why this matter was so public compared to when former employees have left their employment, and why a Special Meeting was required. Mayor Scott stated action had to be taken and it could not be done in Executive Session, so a Special Meeting was scheduled during a normal workshop date. Ms. Chamings asked if past settlement agreements would be made available to the public. Mr. Vex stated a determination would be made as to whether or not they are required to be made public; and if all matters in Executive Session are resolved, the information would be disclosable. She asked when the resolution for a full-time Clerk would be available, and when her OPRA request would be filled. She asked how an advertisement was placed when no action was taken at the July 19th meeting. Mr. Vex stated since they were not replacing the current Clerk advertising was appropriate. She referred to prior discussion regarding the Committee having to cover the building since the Building Department secretary does not start until 8:30 a.m. She stated that during a March budget session the Committee discussed bringing in the secretary earlier to provide office coverage. She felt the half hour gap could have been addressed at that point eliminating the Committee members from having to cover the office. She also stated the Clerk Typist could have been offered 40 hours as opposed to 35 hours. Mayor Scott stated several different options have been reviewed and are being considered. Ms. Chamings was concerned with her OPRA requests not being filled. The Committee stated Mrs. Wunder could address the OPRA's with the advisement of the attorney if necessary. Ms. Chamings thanked and commended Mrs. Fisher for her years in Stillwater.

There being no further business, Mr. Morrison made a **motion** to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m., seconded by Mayor Scott. In a voice vote, all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Wunder