

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOWER ALLOWAYS CREEK HELD MARCH 9, 2023

A Regular Meeting of the Lower Alloways Creek Township Committee was held on March 9, 2023 with Mayor Paul M Collier calling the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

STATEMENT OF NOTICE GIVEN

The Township Clerk read the following statement.

This is a Regular Meeting of the Township Committee of the Township of Lower Alloways Creek being held in compliance with the "Open Public Meetings Act" N.J.S.A. 10:4-6. To insure the right of citizens to have adequate advance notice of and the right to attend meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting them is discussed or acted upon. Advance written notice of this meeting was given by way of the Annual Notice which was filed with the Lower Alloways Creek Township Clerk, forwarded to the South Jersey Times and posted on the Bulletin Board in the lobby of the Lower Alloways Creek Township Municipal Building in compliance with said Act.

FLAG SALUTE

Mayor Collier led in the Flag Salute.

ROLL CALL OF COMMITTEE

Present: Mr. Bradway, Ms. Crane, Mr. Palombo, Mr. Venable and Mayor Collier

Absent: none

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Also in attendance were 36-(thirty-six) members of the public including Members of the LAC School Administration, Township CFO, Kevin Clour and Clerk, Ronald L Campbell Sr.

OLD BUSINESS Nothing

NEW BUSINESS

2023 Budget Session

Mayor Collier asked if there were any changes or comments on the regular 2023 Budget as given by Mr. Clour.

Ms. Crane asked that the Log Cabin budget be moved up to \$ 4,000.00 so as to include the inventory grant and internet.

Mayor Collier stated hearing no more input on the regular 2023 Budget, we will move to the Capital Items for 2023.

Fire Department

\$ 10,000.00 for Fire Hose.

Police Department

\$23, 000.00 for new firearms and updates to the security cameras

Public Works

\$ 78,500.00 for Leisure Arms Roofs, new windows in the PW Garage, ADA Door at the Senior Lunch Building and new salt spreader

LAC School

Mayor Collier began with this prepared statement.

It's a shame the school funding discussion turned out to be so contentious. Hopefully next year it continues with the current more cooperative effort.

You as the CSA and I as the mayor along with the BOE and committee are keepers of the public's trust. And as such, we must be very conscientious with everything we say and do. During your Feb 14th meeting a comment was made which gave many residents the impression the state could close the school and send the students to a nearby district due to lack of funding. While that was never a possibility, I began receiving texts during that meeting followed by emails and phone calls over the next two weeks. Again on Tuesday a slide was presented showing various tax scenarios without a township contribution. I personally found that inflammatory. I can't stress this enough, communication from all of us must always be clear, concise and reliable.

I understand there has been a lack of long term, consistent management at the school and this was several years in the making. But without a stable, long term, well thought out plan, no amount of money will fix these issues.

Given the unique funding situation in this township, the committee must now weight the interest of entire township against how much additional funding to provide to the school..... and note I did say additional funding. Before I turn this over to the education subcommittee for their recommendation, I have two questions I'm hoping someone can answer.....

The School Administrator Mrs. Colleen Cancila stated that she has only been here for one year and cannot answer for the past, she only knows that there are no longer anything to cut and an increase is now needed for the school to continue and remediate the deficiencies that exist.

For the last five years, LAC has led the county in per pupil spending. Last year the anticipated spending jumped by nearly \$5K per pupil. Given that equates to an approximately \$800K increase, where did the money come from and what was it spent on?

You mentioned \$960K in excess surplus which has been growing at the rate of \$200K per year. Do you anticipate a surplus this year? Or do you intend to spend down any or all of the surplus this year? And if all, does that leave a \$960K gap in revenue next year?

The School Administrator Mrs. Colleen Cancila stated that there has been one on one tutoring and extra help for students during Covid, as far as how the money has been spent specifically under her term, she would have to look it up.

The Township Committees Educational Sub-Committee recommends giving the School a two percent (2%) increase in their budget and \$ 60,000.00 in capital funding

PUBLIC COMMENT A resident asked if the Committee oversaw the school and the Mayor responded that no, we only have two people from the Township Committee on a subcommittee that attends their meetings to keep up on what is going on and hopefully to work together for the good of the school.

No one else indicated that they wished to make any further comments.

Mr. Venable thanked everyone for coming out.

Ms. Crane stated that the Historic Log Cabin was having an open house this coming Sunday 1-4 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion (Venable, Crane) to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 p.m.

The motion to adjourn the meeting passed unanimously.

Minutes of the March 9, 2023 Meeting were approved at a Township Committee Meeting held March 21, 2023.

ATTEST:

LOWER ALLOWAYS CREEK TOWNSHIP

Ronald L Campbell Sr. Clerk

Mayor, Paul M. Collier