

COMMISSIONERS MEETING
RIDGEFIELD PARK
May 12, 2009
7:30 PM

Mayor Fosdick announced that this meeting is being held in accordance with the "Open Public Meeting Act, N.J.S.A. 10 4-6 et seq." notice of which was sent to the Record and the Star Ledger on December 31, 2008 and was posted on the Municipal Bulletin Board.

ROLL CALL*****

Those present were Commissioners Anlian, Boyd, MacNeill, Poli and Mayor Fosdick in the Chair. The Mayor requested a moment of silence in honor of Fred Hartman who recently passed away. Mr. Hartman was a member of the Fire Department, the Shade Tree Commissioner and the Fourth of July Committee.

FLAG SALUTE*****

The flag salute was led by Mayor Fosdick.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES*****

Motion by Commissioner Boyd seconded by Commissioner MacNeill to approve the minutes of the Commissioners Meeting of April 28, 2009. On roll call Commissioners Anlian, Boyd, MacNeill, Poli and Mayor Fosdick voted "YEA".

PAYMENT OF BILLS*****

Motion by Commissioner Boyd seconded by Commissioner Poli to approve the payment of bills in the amount of \$4,331,921.62. On roll call Commissioners Anlian, Boyd, MacNeill, Poli and Mayor Fosdick voted "YEA".

SPECIAL REPORTS*****

Mayor Fosdick read three Proclamations for Scleroderma, Click It or Ticket, and Myasthenia Gravis.

Mayor Fosdick said prior to this meeting we had watched a slide show presented by the Police Department. Three of our police officers, Lieutenant DiNiro, Detective Locarno, and Detective Rella, attended a program on terrorist bombings in New Mexico. He said he would like to have it presented to the everyone at a public meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE*****

Acting Village Clerk read a letter from Hose Company No. 1 regarding the resignation of Ronald Wagner.

Motion by Mayor Fosdick seconded by Commissioner MacNeill that the resignation of Ronald Wagner from Hose Company No. 1 be accepted with regrets. On roll call, Commissioners Anlian, Boyd, MacNeill, Poli and Mayor Fosdick voted "YEA".

HEARING OF CITIZENS*****

Stella Cummings – 98 Laurel Street:

Mrs. Cummings read an article in the Record regarding a former employee being suspended and looking for her position back in Ridgefield Park. She asked if the Village had to pay her back salary.

Commissioner Anlian responded - the employee was suspended by the Bergen County Superior Court, not Ridgefield Park. Since the County suspended her, we believe the County should pay her. The case involving the suspension, we thought would be over in a year, but it took over three years. We had no say in the process.

Sonia LaValle – 129 Arthur Street:

Ms. LaValle said she had a difficult time understanding why her property tax increases were going to pay for salary increases for town employees. She explained that she has seen an increase in her medical costs, plus a reduction in her salary.

Mayor Fosdick explained the school budget had been presented to the voters and was overwhelmingly approved. He went on to explain the portion of our taxes which goes to pay the Board of Education and the County. He said the police had been working without a contract for 3 ½ years. Negotiations went to arbitration, and it cost the Village over \$100,00 in arbitration. However, new employees will contribute to health benefits. Mayor Fosdick said we do not have any ratables in Ridgefield Park and this year's budget is the lowest increase we have seen in years. We have reduced the hours of school crossing guards. We will not get State Aid this year because we did not do pension deferral. Had we accepted the deferral, our budget would be lower this year, however, in the years to come it would cost us 8 ½ % interest, going up to 10% interest on the pension cost. He explained the number of tax appeals received on commercial properties. He said Commissioner Boyd will be going to Trenton tomorrow for funding of a bond for tax appeals. Mayor Fosdick said there is no answer to Ms. LaValle's question, but New Jersey has a very bad tax system. We rely on property taxes, and property taxation goes back to Colonial Times.

Commissioner Anlian explained the police contract covers five years. He too said arbitration is a problem. Most municipalities do not prevail in arbitration. If you want a change, you must contact your New Jersey Legislators.

Cheryl Perrotta - 15 Union Place

Ms. Perrotta said just hearing that three of our police officers went to New Mexico for training in dealing with bombs makes you know that today's police are a different kind.

Mrs. LaValle said she was not diminishing the work of the police officer, but "how much is too much"?. I will have to leave Ridgefield Park because I cannot afford to live here.

Mayor Fosdick said we are trying to keep control on expenditures, and trying to keep this a community everyone wants to live in.

Ray Ziembra – 101 Overpeck Avenue

Mr. Ziembra said the biggest issue is property taxes. They keep going up. Binding arbitration is very costly. He said the State is going bankrupt because of wasteful spending. We need ratables.

Commissioner Anlian explained State policy on Affordable Housing. For every housing unit built, you must provide affordable housing.

Mr. Ziembra said one of the ways talked about to reduce spending is to eliminate the county government, and eliminate the sheriff in Bergen County. He said other towns have cut spending, have employees contributing to health care and even a salary freeze. Mr. Ziembra said salaries here are too high, health cost and pension too costly. Mr. Ziembra said there is talk of making the mayor's position a full time job.

Mayor Fosdick said when Mrs. Warlikowski was retiring, there was serious thought of hiring a Business Administrator, but decided we could not afford one. We determined we were satisfied with our department heads, and felt they are doing a good job.

Commissioner Poli said more and more training is required for emergency service volunteers. However, the governor wants to take away the Emergency Service Fund which pays for training, and then the town would have to pick up the cost.

Mrs. Cummings asked if the August Tax Bill would be at today's assessment.

Commissioner Anlian answered "yes".

UNFINISHED BUSINESS*****

Mayor Fosdick announced that the Public Hearing on the 2009 Budget has been postponed.

NEW BUSINESS*****

Mayor Fosdick announced that all business is considered to be routine in nature and will be enacted in one motion. Any item may be removed for separate consideration.

Resolution No. 1. Authorizing Redemption of Tax Sale Certificate 07-03.

Resolution No. 2. Authorizing LOSAP Contribution For Four Additional Members. .

Resolution No. 3. Opposing Governor Corzine's Plan Regarding EMT Training Fund

Resolution No. 4 Increasing the 2009 Temporary Budget

Motion by Commissioner Poli, seconded by Commissioner Boyd that the Consent Agenda be approved. On roll call Commissioners Anlian, Boyd, MacNeill, Poli and Mayor Fosdick voted "YEA".

Mayor Fosdick announced Memorial Day Services will be Monday, May 25 Fire Department Monument at 9:30 AM, and the American Legion Post #40 and VFW #277 at 11:00 AM at the Monument on Euclid Avenue and Mount Vernon Street.

RECESS*****

Motion by Commissioner Anlian seconded by Commissioner Boyd to recess the Commissioners Meeting to go into Closed Session to discuss legal matters. On roll call Commissioner Anlian, Boyd, MacNeill, Poli and Mayor Fosdick voted "YEA".

/s/John A. Anlian
Commissioner

/s/Margaret R. Boyd
Commissioner

/s/Adam A. MacNeill
Commissioner

/s/Hugo R. Poli
Commissioner

/s/George D. Fosdick
Mayor

/s/Barbara Pettit
Acting Village Clerk