

MINUTES WEST MIDDLESEX BOROUGH

WORK SESSION

JANUARY 13, 2021

6:00 p.m.

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Council Present: President Cyndi Gilkey, Vice-president Eric Lucich, Robert Lark, Ron Preston, Maleia James and Mayor Debra Larouche.

Others Present: Secretary/Treasurer Sandra Ricci

Ms. Gilkey addressed the request from Cheryl Babcock, Tax Collector, requesting voting at the next Council Meeting to "Correspond Per Capita Taxes with the School's Billing Date" with a possible Resolution if needed. Ms. Gilkey stated this could save on mailing costs. Council discussed and concluded this would be favorable at the next regular council meeting.

Mr. Preston said he and Mr. Lark met with Bruce Mattson to discuss the Municipal Building kitchen area. Drywalling, replacing countertop, updating kitchen cabinets and replacing the serving area. Mr. Preston said the work can be done in segments and broken down into projects. Council discussed rentals in the Municipal Hall. Ms. Gilkey suggested free advertising once the Co-Vid pandemic ceases. Mr. Lark said the estimates from Bruce Mattson should be in February. Mayor Larouche questioned if they had reached out to other bidders for said projects. Mr. Lark said he was in agreement with her statement and he said they can and will reach out to others. Mr. Preston stated winter time would be better to do the work. Ms. Gilkey suggested putting this subject on hold until they have more information. Mr. Preston said there was no rush. Mr. Lark read monetary amounts to utilize said projects: \$2,000.00 plus money from the insurance money; \$2,000.00 from the Street Department Truck sale; \$8,000.00 from the CD; and \$17,000.00 from the Co-Vid Block Grant. Mr. Lark stated \$29,000.00 is above and beyond our taxes and the money we have in the Budget. Mr. Lark said there was some other things that they might look at as well. Mayor Larouche stated that is was good that they could then afford the firemen the concrete that they want for their little monument. Mr. Lark stated they already spent \$8,000.00 to buy the firemen that new device they needed and he said they shouldn't lose sight of that. Mr. Lucich stated that is the fire department's money, that they have taxes for the fire department to buy the fire department equipment. Mr. Lucich stated that is two different sets of money. Mr. Lark said they didn't have to spend it on that, they could have spent it on the cement or anything. Mr. Lucich said that cement doesn't save lives, that tool they bought does. Mayor Larouche stated she still thinks they deserve the cement and she said she is going to fight for it. Mr. Preston and Mayor discussed further.

Ms. Gilkey addressed the Hitching Posts and the last thing she remembered was that in December they were going to get some more information about it. Mr. Lark said the Mayor was to get information. Mayor Larouche said Maleia James was getting the information on that. Ms. James confirmed. Ms. James stated she didn't know where it originally came from, that it was on Main Street. Mr. Lark described where it was on Main Street, Ms. James confirmed. Ms. James said since she does not speak to the Williams' she doesn't know if they purchased it or it was given to them by the people who had that property, but it was definitely moved from Main Street to their personal driveway on the alley. Mr.

Lark stated it was not for them to give or for them to sell. Mr. Lark stated between the curb and the sidewalk are street signs, there is also fire hydrants, there is also the cement steps across the street. Mr. Lark stated then if you wanted to sell those items you could give those away, absolutely positively no. Ms. James agreed. Mr. Lark said it should come back immediately if not sooner. Council discussed further. Council also discussed time frames for temporary signs in the Borough. Mr. Lark said he would research Hermitage's stipulation on sizes of signs and the management of signs. Ms. Gilkey said she would talk to Attorney Tesone regarding examples of wording for an Ordinance.

Ms. Gilkey said the monthly Zoom subscription is \$14.99 for January. She also stated there are many other uses for the Zoom meetings such as other's health conditions which help those who cannot attend public meetings and also costs savings for Engineer's fees instead of phone conferences.

Mayor Larouche questioned if the \$17,000.00 Grant money could be utilized to help small businesses, such as giving each business a \$500.00 check or anything. Mr. Lark said the small business owners need to contact the County Commissioner's Office to apply. Mr. Preston said he did not think legally they can give money to select few businesses and which ones would they give to if they could? Mr. Preston referred the businesses to the County Commissioner's Office also. Council and Mayor discussed further.

Mr. Lark asked if there was any response in the Braho case. Mr. Preston said there was a letter from Attorney Tesone dated December 23, 2020 and there is now a Municipal Lien on the property. Mr. Preston said the next thing they need to do is go after the house. Mr. Preston said Attorney Tesone needs to research how many deeds are on said property and that he will speak to Attorney Tesone about this matter.

Mr. Lark requested consideration to have a regular meeting in February. Ms. Gilkey said there is speculation in the future regarding Biden and to do whatever is safest for-jus and the community. Mr. Preston suggested going on a month to month basis. Ms. Gilkey stated Council can meet in public and everyone else can be on Zoom. Mr. Lark said Council and the Mayor can be in the room and the rest of the people can be on Zoom for social distancing matters. Mayor Larouche agreed since she'll be in Florida for two months and likes the regular meeting for the Council and the rest of the people via Zoom. Council and Mayor discussed Co-Vid vaccinations.

Mayor Larouche addressed Debbie Barris' problems her car in the handicap parking space regarding the act of nature of birds in the trees and this is Council's decision. Mr. Preston said it was ridiculous. Ms. Gilkey said they cannot cut down trees due to birds. Mr. Lucich asked if those trees reduced visibility and Mr. Preston said no. Ms. Gilkey said it is not Her handicap spot, but Is a handicap spot. Council agreed.

Mr. Preston stated they will need to act on Chief Jason Newton's request to give CIRT authority in the Borough and this is a matter of protocol and to be addressed at Tuesday's Council Meeting.

Adjournment: 6:51 p.m.