

**TOWNSHIP OF HARDWICK  
TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 5, 2022**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Jacksic at 7:00 pm. Those present were Committeeman Duffy, Deputy Mayor Lovell, and Mayor Jacksic. Also present were Clerk Shipps and DPW Supervisor Campbell.

**FLAG SALUTE**

**SUNSHINE STATEMENT**

“Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act, P.L. 1975, Ch. 231 setting forth the time, date, place, and purpose of this Public Meeting through a legal notice published in New Jersey Herald and The Express times following the Township’s Annual Reorganization Meeting at which the 2022 meeting schedule was adopted.

**PRESENTATION**

**John Donahue in support of the Delaware Water Gap Recreation Area being designated a national park.**

Mr. Donahue passed out documentation referencing questions and answers on why the township should support the designations. Questions on the document referenced fishing and hunting which was explained would not change. Another question was will the local economy be impacted. The answer was due to the increase in visitors which would have great impact on tourists.

The committee thanked Mr. Donahue for attending the meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

NO public Comment

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

DPW Supervisor Tom Campbell reported that the fuel shed will be arriving the week of the 24<sup>th</sup>. Butler Rd Cul-de sac has been completed.

Primrose, Meadow Lake and Tara Ct are also completed.

Bob Wolfe-Fire tower – reported that there is currently a low fire warring and that he plans on having a table at Hardwick Day.

Joe Dunn- Emergency Management reported that the emergency operation plan is completed.

**MEETING MINUTES**

August 17, 2022, Executive Session Meeting Minutes

August 17, 2022, Township Committee Meeting Minutes

**Motion made by Lovell, second by Duffy and carried to approve the above minutes.**

**CONSENT AGENDA**

1. 2022-64- Certification of Taxes Due to Tax Exemption

**WHEREAS**, the property owner at Block 401, Lot 5.01, 32 Birch Ridge Road, applied for non-profit/charitable organization tax exemption in 2020 with the Tax Assessor.

**WHEREAS**, the Assessor intended to grant tax exemption via county tax appeal, the appeal was not filed, therefore taxes were billed for 2021, 2022, and preliminary 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> quarters of 2023.

**WHEREAS**, the property is currently listed on the 2021 Tax Sale List for delinquent taxes.

2021 Property Taxes \$5,423.40

2022 Property Taxes \$5,555.83

2023 Preliminary Taxes \$2,777.92

Total Cancellation \$13,757.15

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Mayor and Committee of Hardwick Township that the Tax Collector is hereby authorized to cancel property taxes in the amount of \$13,757.15.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** by the Mayor and Committee of Hardwick Township that the Tax Collector is hereby authorized to remove the property from the 2021 Tax Sale List.

2. 2022-65 Resolution Authorizing Award of a Contract for Professional Services with Toohey Real Estate & Appraisals for Appraisal of Block 1103, Lot 9 (48 Paulinskill Road)

**WHEREAS**, the Township of Hardwick has a need to acquire professional services relative to appraisal services required for a portion of property known as 48 Paulinskill Road, Block 1103, Lot 9, Hardwick, New Jersey (the “Project”); and

**WHEREAS**, Toohey Real Estate & Appraisals submitted a proposal dated September 5, 2022, to provide appraisal services relative to the Project; and

**WHEREAS**, the value of these services will not exceed the sum of \$1,800 to perform appraisal and prepare report; and

**WHEREAS**, N.J.S.A. 40A:11-5(1)(a)(i) provides for the award of professional service contracts without competitive bidding.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, hereby authorized the Mayor to enter into a Contract with Toohey Real Estate & Appraisals as described therein.

3. 2022-66 Resolution Opposing the Proposed Increased to the State Health Benefits.

**WHEREAS**, the State Health Benefits Program (SHBP), governed by N.J.S.A. 52:14-17.25 et seq., offers medical, prescription drug, and dental coverage to qualified State and participating local government public employees, retirees, and eligible dependents; and

**WHEREAS**, all SHBP plans are self-funded meaning that the money paid out for benefits comes directly from a SHBP fund supplied by the State, participating local employers, and member premiums; and

**WHEREAS** the Division of Pensions and Benefits is responsible for the daily administrative activities of the SHPB, the State Health Benefits Commission is the executive organization responsible for overseeing the SHBP; and

**WHEREAS**, the State Health Benefits Commission, comprised of state officials and union representatives, annually consider the calendar year premium levels for the Local Government Employer Group of the SHBP based on recommendations found in the Rate Setting Recommendation Analysis of the Local Government Employee Group; and **WHEREAS** the preliminary rate increase for the 2023 Local Government Employer Group is 22.8%, which includes a 21.6% increase for Active, a 13% increase in Early Retiree, and a 0.7% increase for Medicare Retiree; and **WHEREAS** subsequent news accounts has Department of Treasury noting “rates for active members and early retirees would likely be increase between 12-20% across the various plans for the upcoming year”; and **WHEREAS** such proposed exorbitant rate increases will fall upon the local property taxpayer along with the local public employees at a time where there is record inflation, and **WHEREAS** the proposed premium increase for most active employees will take thousands more out of their paychecks annually and lead to huge costs for local governments that will translate into higher property tax bills for struggling families; and **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the governing body of the Township of Hardwick in the county of Warren call up the State Health Benefit Commission to reconsider the rate increase and strike a rate increase that is appropriate in the current economic conditions; and **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the governing body of the Township of Hardwick in the county of Warren urge the legislature to adopt legislation expanding the composition of the State Health Benefits Commission to include representatives from both municipal and county government management; and **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Governor Murphy, State Treasurer Muoio, Senate President Scutari, Assembly Speaker Coughlin, Senator Steven V. Oroho, Assemblyman Parker Space, Assemblyman Harold J. Wirths, and New Jersey State League of Municipalities.

4. 2022-67 Payment of Vouchers

**WHEREAS** all claims as reviewed and listed on the attached bill list are approved as reasonable and proper claims against the Township of Hardwick to be paid from its current fund; and **WHEREAS**, the CFO has certified that funds are available to pay such claims. **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, State of New jersey that the bills on the attached bill listed are authorized to be paid

**Motion made by Duffy, seconded by Lovell and approved by roll call vote: Duffy—yes, Lovell—yes, Jacksic—yes for consent agenda items 1-3.**

**Motion made by Duffy, second by Jacksic and approved by roll call vote: Duffy—yes, Lovell—abstain, Jacksic for consent agenda item 4.**

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Voice Over IP Service** -no update

**OEM Plan-Draft** -discussed during department report

**Storm Emergency Overtime Rate**

Wording was prepared for the personnel manual and will be forward to the attorney for review.

**American Rescue Plan Funds**- no update

**Spring Valley Rd.**-no update

**Mallard Pond Rd.**-no update

**Hardwick Days**

Hardwick day will be held on October 23, 2022 from 12 pm – 5 pm at the Vass Farmstead.

**Town Hall Meeting Room Ventilation**-no update

**Drainage Easement Maintenance on Sunset Lake Rd.**

Motion made by Duffy, second by Jacksic and carried to approve to have Deputy Mayor Lovell prepare a letter to Mrs. Van Beek stating that it is not the township's responsibility to maintain the drainage near her home on Sunset Lake Rd.

**DEP Stormwater Tier Change**

No update at this time.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Flood Damage and Prevention Ordinance**

Committee was provided with a sample ordinance for the flood damage and prevention ordinance. The ordinance will be reviewed by the township attorney and township engineer and will be introduced and adopted in the new year.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

### **TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY**

#### **TOWNSHIP CLERK**

Clerk Shipp reminded residents that the township shredding event will be held on October 29, 2022, from 1:00 pm – 4 pm.

#### **TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Deputy Mayor Lovell complimented the DPW for their diligent work at the Vass Farmstead in preparation for the upcoming Hardwick Days.

Deputy Mayor Lovell reported that he will be discussing the State Aid Primrose voucher with the township engineer.

Mayor Jacksic reported on the call outs from the fire department.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Resident Judy Rosnell asked if the township was still in a co-op with JCP&L.

Mayor Jacksic stated that at this time the township is not due to the fact that JCP&L rates are lower then any of the competitors.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Motion made by Lovell, seconded by Duffy, and carried to go into Executive Session at 8:06 pm. It was reported that action may be taken after the executive session.**

2022-68- Authorizing Executive Session

**WHEREAS**, Section 8 of the Open Public Meeting Act, Chapter 231, P. L. 1975 permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting under certain circumstances; and

**WHEREAS** this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, in the County of Warren and State of New Jersey as follows:

1. The public shall be excluded from that portion of this meeting.
2. The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows:
  - A. Contract Negotiations
  - B. Personnel
  - C. Attorney Advice

As nearly as can be ascertained, the matter or matters to be discussed at this time will be disclosed to the public when such matters are resolved.

**Motion made by Duffy, seconded by Lovell and carried to close Executive Session at 9:15 pm.**

**Resolution 2022-69- Resolution of the Municipality of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, Authorizing the Appointment of Rich Motyka as Tax Assessor.**

**Motion made by Lovell.**

**Second by Duffy**

**Roll Call: Duffy—yes, Lovell—yes, Jacksic ---yes.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion made by Duffy, second by Lovell and carried to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by

Kristin Shipps