RESOLUTION NO. 217-16

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING A PROPOSAL AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TOWNSHIP OF VOORHEES AND STAMPEDE CONSULTING, LLC FOR THE PURPOSE OF CIRCULATING A PETITION TO CONSIDER THE DISSOLUTION OF THE VOORHEES FIRE DISTRICT PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 40A:14-91

WHEREAS, there is established in the Township of Voorhees, County of Camden, State of New Jersey the Voorhees Fire District No. 3 ("VFD") which provides fire and emergency medical services to the residents of Voorhees Township ("Township"); and

WHEREAS, it has come to the attention of the Mayor and Township Committee that there is substantial and serious financial mismanagement of the VFD by the Board of Fire Commissioners which has resulted in serious public safety issues; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Township Committee have authorized various evaluations of the VFD; and

WHEREAS, Harry R. Carter, Ph.D., an expert in fire administration and public fire safety matters has rendered a report dated October 14, 2016 attached hereto and made a part hereof as Exhibit "A" wherein he has rendered the opinion that there is serious financial mismanagement by the Board of Fire Commissioners in the operations and administration of the VFD which has had a negative impact on the level and quality of fire services in the Township and it has created serious public safety issues; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Carter has opined that in his entire career, the Voorhees Township Board of Fire Commissioners is perhaps the most poorly managed fire district with which he has ever interacted and he recommends that the VFD be dissolved; and

WHEREAS, the Township is in receipt of the Standard and Poor's May 4, 2016 credit profile regarding the Voorhees Township Fire Commissioners entitled "Voorhees Township Commissioners Fire District No. 3, New Jersey; General Obligation" wherein it states, "S&P Global Ratings lowered its rating on Voorhees Township Commissioners Fire District No. 3 N.J.'s General Obligation ("GO") debt one notch to AA from AA+. The outlook is negative. The rating action reflects our opinion of the district's significant financial deterioration. Officials are projecting the combined general and capital fund balance totaling $303,000 at fiscal year–end 2015, down from the roughly $2 million of general fund balance in the past. The negative outlook reflects our opinion that there is, at least, a one-in-three chance the district will not return reserves to their former strong levels over the next couple of years;" and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Township Committee have received a Resolution of a Vote of "NO CONFIDENCE" in the Board of Fire Commissioners, Voorhees Fire District No. 3 and Deputy Fire Chief Michael J. Wharton, attached hereto as Exhibit "B" from the International Association of Fire Fighters, Local 3249 which represents the full-time professional firefighters, fire officers and emergency medical technicians which outlines multiple financial and safety failures of the part of the Board of Fire Commissioners of the VFD and Deputy Fire Chief Michael J. Wharton; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Township Committee have also received a letter from the International Association of Fire Fighters, Local 3249 dated October 11, 2016 attached hereto as Exhibit "C" which states in pertinent part, "Voorhees Township's current fire, rescue and emergency medical services delivery system is broken" and "public safety and service would be best served by disbanding Voorhees Fire District #3 and transferring the current emergency and other related service functions to the control of Voorhees Township as a municipal fire department;" and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:14-91, upon written application of at least five percent (5%) of the registered voters of the Township, the Mayor and Township Committee shall consider the dissolution of the VFD and upon receipt of such an application the Mayor and Township Committee shall fix a time and place for a hearing thereon. After the hearing the Mayor and Township Committee shall determine the question of the proposed dissolution; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Township Committee of the Township of Voorhees has received a professional services proposal from Stampede Consulting, LLC to perform the services of gathering and verifying signatures of registered voters by way of petition to be submitted to the Governing Body pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:14-91 attached hereto as Exhibit "D"; and

WHEREAS, as set forth above the Township has a need to use the professional services of Stampede Consulting, LLC as a non-fair and open contract pursuant to provisions of N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.4 or 20.5 as appropriate; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Township Committee of the Township of Voorhees has determined that the value of the proposal shall not exceed $17,500; and

WHEREAS, the Township CMFO has certified the availability of funds pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:30-5.4; and

WHEREAS, based upon the foregoing the Mayor and Township Committee of the Township of Voorhees believes it is in the best interests of the public safety of Voorhees and its residents to contract with Stampede Consulting, LLC for the purpose of circulating a petition to gather and verify the signatures of necessary voters to consider the dissolution of the VFD.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Township Committee of the Township of Voorhees, County of Camden and State of New Jersey that the Professional Services Agreement between Stampede Consulting, LLC and the Township is hereby authorized and approved.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Stampede Consulting, LLC is hereby authorized to circulate a Petition in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:14-91 with the following language:

"**PETITION TO DISSOLVE THE VOORHEES FIRE DISTRICT PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 40A:14-91**

WHEREAS, the undersigned are residents and legal voters in the Township of Voorhees, Camden County, State of New Jersey;

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:14-91 provides that upon a written application therefor, of at least 5% of the registered voters or 20 legal voters whichever is the greater the governing body of the municipality, where the fire district is located, shall consider the dissolution of the fire district and upon receipt of such an application, the governing body of said municipality shall fix a time and place for a hearing thereon, after the hearing the governing body of said municipality shall determine the question of the proposed dissolution;

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of the undersigned and the public would be served by the dissolution of the Voorhees Fire District as aforesaid.

NOW THEREFORE, we, the undersigned, do hereby petition the Voorhees Township Committee to hold a hearing and adopt a resolution in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:14-91 to dissolve the Voorhees Fire District and consolidate it as a Fire Department within the Township of Voorhees.

Printed Name	Signature	Address
1.		
2.		
3.		

"

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Mayor of the Township of Voorhees is hereby authorized to execute the Professional Services Agreement with Stampede Consulting, LLC and any other documents necessary to implement this Resolution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Township Clerk is hereby authorized to publish notice of this Resolution as required by law.

DATED: OCTOBER 17, 2016

MOVED: MR. RAVITZ

AYES: ALL

SECONDED: MS. NOCITO

NAYS: NONE

APPROVED BY: Michael R. Mignogna
Michael Mignogna, Mayor

I, Dee Ober, Clerk of the Township of Voorhees, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the Mayor and Township Committee, at their meeting of October 17, 2016 held in the Municipal Building, 2400 Voorhees Town Center, Voorhees, NJ.

Dee Ober

Dee Ober, RMC
Township Clerk