

**VOORHEES TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE  
MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF APRIL 25, 2016  
REGULAR MEETING 8:00 PM**

**FLAG SALUTE**

**ROLL CALL STATEMENT** Mr. Friedman, Mr. Platt, Mr. Ravitz, Ms. Nocito, Mayor Mignogna, Mrs. Sara Irick, Remington & Vernick Engineers, Mr. Doug Johnson, Remington & Vernick, Mr. Long, Township Solicitor; Mr. Spellman, Township Administrator; Louis Bordi, Police Chief, Dean Ciminera CFO

**SUNSHINE STATEMENT** Mr. Long stated that this meeting is being held in compliance with the "Open Public Meetings Act" and has been duly noticed and published as required in the Courier Post and Inquirer Newspaper.

**RESOLUTION NO. 94-16 AUTHORIZATION TO READ THE 2016 BUDGET BY TITLE ONLY**

MOTION TO APPROVE: MR. RAVITZ AYES: ALL  
SECONDED: MR. FRIEDMAN NAYS: NONE

**2016 VOORHEES TOWNSHIP BUDGET - PUBLIC HEARING**

Mr. Spellman announced that the 2016 Voorhees Township Municipal Budget is \$28,568,000.00. It is comprised of total expenses in the amount of \$26,108,600.00 and \$2,459,400.00 in the budget as a reserve for uncollected taxes. The total amount to be raised by taxation is \$19,132,000.00. This budget is \$383,000.00 under the 2% state levy cap and \$932,000.00 under the state budget cap. The Open Space Tax is unchanged at 2 cents and the local tax rate will be .61.1 cents, an increase of 02.4 cents. The average taxpayer will pay \$1,565.00 in 2016 or \$130.00 per month for municipal services.

MOTION TO CLOSE: MR. PLATT AYES: ALL  
SECONDED: MR. FRIEDMAN NAYS: NONE

**RESOLUTION NO. 95-16 AMENDMENT TO THE 2016 BUDGET**

MOTION TO APPROVE: MR. RAVITZ ROLL CALL:  
SECONDED: MR. FRIEDMAN MR. FRIEDMAN Y MR. PLATT Y  
AYES: ALL MR. RAVITZ Y MS. NOCITO Y  
NAYS: NONE MAYOR MIGNOGNA Y

**RESOLUTION NO. 96-16 ADOPTION OF 2016 TOWNSHIP BUDGET**

MOTION TO APPROVE: MR. RAVITZ ROLL CALL:  
SECONDED: MS. NOCITO MR. FRIEDMAN N MR. PLATT Y  
AYES: ALL MR. RAVITZ Y MS. NOCITO Y  
NAYS: NONE MAYOR MIGNOGNA Y

Deputy Mayor Ravitz stated that this is his first budget and he commended Township Committee passing the budget. He added that Voorhees Township is now able to, with some increased dollars to the police department, have additional police coverage in all of our schools for all of our school children. We also now have funds available to turf either a field or fields in the township to be used for the various sports leagues. This will keep Voorhees Township competitive in the landscape of local sports. He thanked his fellow Committeemen and Committeewoman for passing the budget.

**PUBLIC PORTION FOR RESOLUTIONS ONLY**

**MOTION TO CLOSE**

PUBLIC PORTION: MR. PLATT  
SECONDED: MR. FRIEDMAN  
AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE

**RESOLUTION NO. 97-16**

AUTHORIZING A FEDERAL AID  
AGREEMENT BETWEEN VOORHEES  
TOWNSHIP AND NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT  
OF TRANSPORTATION FOR THE KRESSON  
ROAD SIDEWALK PROJECT

MOTION TO APPROVE: MR. RAVITZ  
SECONDED: MR. FRIEDMAN  
AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE

**RESOLUTION NO. 98-16**

AUTHORIZATION FOR THE VOORHEES  
TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT TO  
ENROLL IN THE LAW ENFORCEMENT  
SUPPORT OFFICE PROGRAM

MOTION TO APPROVE: MR. RAVITZ  
SECONDED: MR. FRIEDMAN  
AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE

**RESOLUTION NO. 99-16**

AUTHORIZATION TO APPOINT JOHN  
MILLIGAN TO THE POSITION OF CLASS II  
OFFICER IN THE VOORHEES TOWNSHIP  
POLICE DEPARTMENT

MOTION TO APPROVE: MR. RAVITZ  
SECONDED: MS. NOCITO  
AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE

**RESOLUTION NO. 100-16**

APPOINTING MARIO DiNATALE AS AIDE TO  
THE MAYOR, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
DIRECTOR AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
DIRECTOR

MOTION TO APPROVE: MR. RAVITZ  
SECONDED: MS. NOCITO

Committeeman Friedman voted No on this resolution due to the request for resumes being open for only two weeks and the places where the opening was advertised were minimal. He added that the advertisement was in Monster.com, which is largely an obsolete job search engine. He would have preferred that the opening was advertised on a site called Indeed, which is a search engine used for finding management level positions. He added that it was not advertised on the township Facebook page or website. He stated that he has an issue with the process, it does appear to be a political patronage hire, which he added is something that concerns him. He added that if the process was longer and more involved, open process that the perception could have been avoided. The salary larger than the predecessor in the position who had significant experience in the position. This individual is a new individual to the position who is making more than his predecessor, which I think is problematic. Other executive level hires in our township recently have come in under their predecessor.

Committeewoman Nocito thanks Committeeman Friedman for his candid opinion, and added that it is important. She stated that she had hoped that he would have been so candid with his thoughts on the budget. She felt that we had so many good meetings about it. She appreciates the passion on the issue but is surprised that he voted no.

Committeeman Friedman stated that it is more than Aide to the Mayor position that he is opposed to. It's the Economic Development Director and Community Development, which to me, those responsibilities mimic the same responsibilities that were there previously. He added that the people of New Jersey are getting tired of the political patronage and we're seeing people

fleeing the state in droves and this is just one of the examples why. He added that it is a problem for residents and he doesn't feel that he is alone in voicing that opinion. He stated that he does feel that Mr. DiNatale did meet with him to talk further about the position.

Committeewoman Nocito asked if there was something about budget that we weren't able to work out together. Committeeman Friedman answered that his main issue is that it is still a lot of money for this position, which is money considerably above and beyond what should be the salary and what his predecessor was earning. I'm not going to respectfully vote yes on a budget that allots money for something that I don't believe in.

AYES: 4  
NAYES: 1 - MR. FRIEDMAN - NO COMMENT

**RESOLUTION NO. 101-16** APPROVING BOND REDUCTION #1 FOR  
VOOHREES MEDICAL, BLOCK 229, LOTS 4 &  
4.01

MOTION TO APPROVE: MR.FRIEDMAN  
SECONDED: MR. RAVITZ  
AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE

**RESOLUTION NO. 102-16** APPROVING BOND REDUCTION #1 FOR  
VOORHEES MEDICAL WATER MAIN  
INSTALLATION, BLOCK 229, LOTS 4 & 4.01

MOTION TO APPROVE: MR.FRIEDMAN  
SECONDED: MR. RAVITZ  
AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE

REGISTRAR'S REPORT FOR MARCH  
BILLS POSTED FOR APRIL 25, 2016

MOTION TO APPROVE: MR. RAVITZ  
SECONDED: MR. PLATT  
AYES: ALL  
NAYS: NONE

#### COMMENTS FROM COMMITTEE

Deputy Mayor Ravitz added to his comments regarding the budget that in addition to hiring Class 2 officers, we are also able to add four police officers to Chief Bordi's staff which for a township of almost 30,000 residents was understaffed. From a quality of life and a safety perspective, Voorhees is where it needs to be for the residents.

Committeewoman Nocito added that she is very grateful to the Police Chief and the schools for working together to make this happen.

#### COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Brittney Benzenhafer  
34 Peregrine Drive

Anne Marie Zaum  
32 Peregrine Drive

Suzanne Connors  
33 Peregrine Drive

These residents spoke to committee regarding a large pothole on Peregrine Drive in front of their homes that when large trucks run over it, stones are being thrown into the air and could cause

damage to the residents' vehicles parked on the street. Ms. Brittney stated that they were told it was going to be fixed by September and we do think it needs to be fixed before that.

Mr. Spellman stated that this road is included on the 2016 road program to be re-paved but the pothole will be taken care of before the summer.

The residents also stated that there are two speed humps located at the beginning of Peregrine Drive, but not another one until about a quarter of a mile. They spoke about concerns of speeding and the safety of the children playing outside. They requested another speed bump be installed along this road to slow down the drivers on this street.

Mayor Mignogna suggested that they speak to the chief after the meeting, who was present at the meeting.

Mr. Spellman will speak to public works about filling the pothole on Peregrine Drive.

Mrs. Connors addressed committee regarding township owned property adjacent to her property that she has maintained for the last 22 years. Mayor Mignogna thanked her. She added that there is a creek through the property and she cannot access areas that need to be cleaned and the overgrowth is obstructing the water flow. She has concerns about mosquitos and requested that the township come out to inspect and determine if there is anything that can be done to clean up the creek.

Committman Platt stated that we looked at the creek about a month earlier when a tree came down. A company was retained to remove the tree and clear the creek of any other debris in the area. He continued that the area that was addressed was closer to the Goshawk Court entrance and stated that we can expand the work to include the creek closer down to Fulmar Drive.

Mrs. Connors stated that she was just made aware of the Aide to the Mayor position being filled and wanted to understand why the position was needed and why at such a high salary?

Mayor Mignogna clarified that the position has 3 titles, Aide to the Mayor, Director of Economic Development and Director of Community Development. The aide is just one part. Mrs. Connors asked if a job description is available and the Mayor said yes.

Deputy Mayor Ravitz added that there previously was an Economic Development Coordinator in the township and we added Community Development and Aide to the Mayor. If you look at towns our size, although it is a part time job, the Mayor is at every ribbon cutting, every day, every night and it's more than a part time job to him.

Judy Hanney  
2 Farmhouse Lane

Ms. Hanney stated that she does agree with the Deputy Mayor that the mayor is at a lot of events and that the Township Committee members are part time. She stated that if the mayor is too busy to attend all of the events, the Deputy Mayor should step in. She added that we shouldn't be hiring someone at over \$100,000.00 per year. She feels that the taxes are already high and our residents are struggling and many homes are in foreclosure. She doesn't feel we need a part time position and feels that an Aide to the Mayor is not needed, that the work could be delegated between the five Township Committee members.

Mayor Mignogna stated that no one is suggesting that the Mayor's job is too much, and the job that we are discussing is not a part time job, it is a full time.

Deputy Mayor Ravitz added that the job has always been full time, one position and we have added two new jobs.

Mrs. Hanney asked what the salary was and Howard Long stated it was over \$100,000.00. Deputy Mayor Ravitz added that it was only one position at the time. Mrs. Hanney suggested that the salary and responsibilities be looked at, that maybe it doesn't have to be a full time position if committee delegated amongst themselves. She stated that a lot of her neighbors and friends have commented that they just can't afford to live here anymore because of the taxes. She thinks that the budget needs to be tightened.

Mr. Long asked Mr. Spellman how many positions we have not filled and Mr. Spellman stated that we have 28 fewer positions now than we did 6 years ago. Mr. Long added that he does have the job descriptions of the position being discussed and gave it to Mrs. Hanney. The previous employee who held the job worked full time as the Economic Development Coordinator and also did some Aide to the Mayor work. He explained that we haven't had a Community Development Director in more than 10 years and that the problem we are having is some of the large projects that come in, we are able to follow through from start to finish with a more streamlined process. We are looking to attract and increase retables. We didn't have anyone to fill that position and he doesn't want the impression to be that this is a part time position. Mrs. Hanney asked if any other things would be eliminated and Mr. Long explained again that over the last 6 years, 28 positions have not been filled after retirements or employees leaving. Several goals of the Economic Development Committee are to attract and increase retables, improve the membership of the Shop Voorhees Program, etc.

Committeeman Friedman added that his opinion it is a fallacy to say that we are now combining three part time positions into one full time position. He stated that he has been on Township Committee for six years and in his opinion, it is the same position. The prior individual maybe didn't have the same titles; all of those tasks were expected and required of that individual. The prior individual was the EDC Director and also as a Community Development Director he was the individual who put together the Summer Concert series, the Halloween in the Park with the VBA and in his opinion feels these are community development events. Being Aide to the Mayor, from his understanding, the previous employee did assist the Mayor in going to ribbon cuttings and other events taking pictures.

Mr. Long added that the Community Development Director oversees the Planning and Zoning offices completely and has nothing to do with events. It's a position that meets with developers and walks them through the process and follows up with businesses afterward and oversees the cumbersome complex laws that we have to deal with in the State of New Jersey. He clarified that the Community Development Director doesn't have anything to do with community projects, but more overseeing Planning and Zoning and added that we are down several employees in these departments.

Deputy Mayor Ravitz stated that we have a vacant shopping center on White Horse Road; Rt. 561 has a lot of vacant properties. He added that surrounding towns have positions within the town government that walk developers through the processes and helps find ways to increase business for the business owners of the town. The businesses in Voorhees could suffer if we don't have someone in the position to assist the business owners and developers. The budget also includes one million dollars in road improvements and if you look at a two year period of taxes, the increase is only 1.2%.

Mrs. Hanney said the residents will see it when they receive their tax bills in August. Mr. Long asked Mrs. Hanney if she realizes that we are only 15% of that tax bill and she stated that she is well aware of that.

Committeeman Friedman clarified that he does not disagree having the position and that he is a pro-business person, his issue was with how the position was provided. He agrees with Deputy Mayor Ravitz that it is a valuable position and one that is needed and we want to attract new businesses and make sure that the ones that are here are happy. His understanding was those responsibilities were the same under the previous Director of EDC, perhaps under a different title, but the expectation was that that person had the same responsibilities.

MOTION TO CLOSE:	MR. FRIEDMAN
SECONDED:	MS. NOCITO
AYES:	ALL
NAYS:	NONE

ADJOURNMENT

