

**VOORHEES TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF JULY 9, 2012**

FLAG SALUTE

ROLL CALL Mayor Mignogna, Mr. DiNatale, Mr. Friedman, Mr. Lovallo,
Mr. Spellman, Township Administrator; Mr. Long, Township Solicitor;
Mr. Bibbs, Township Engineer; Mr. Hoffman, Township Auditor

ABSENT Mr. Platt

SUNSHINE STATEMENT

The Solicitor stated for the record that this meeting is held in compliance with the requirements of the “Open Public Meetings Act” and has been duly noticed and published as required by law.

PUBLIC PORTION FOR RESOLUTIONS ONLY – No one spoke

MOTION TO CLOSE

THE PUBLIC PORTION: MR. LOVALLO
SECONDED: MR. FRIEDMAN
AYES: 4
NAYS: 0
ABSENT: 1 MR. PLATT

RESOLUTION NO. 147-12 AMENDING THE 2012 BUDGET

MOTION TO APPROVE:	MR. LOVALLO	ROLL CALL:	MAYOR MIGNOGNA Y
SECONDED:	MR. FRIEDMAN		MR. DiNATALE Y MR. LOVALLO Y
AYES:	4		MR. FRIEDMAN Y
NAYS:	0		ABSENT: MR. PLATT
ABSENT:	1 MR. PLATT		

Continuation of Public Hearing on the 2012 Budget

MOTION TO CLOSE

THE PUBLIC PORTION: MR. LOVALLO
SECONDED: MR. FRIEDMAN
AYES: 4
NAYS: 0
ABSENT: 1 MR. PLATT

RESOLUTION NO. 148-12 ADOPTION OF 2012 TOWNSHIP BUDGET

MOTION TO APPROVE: MR. LOVALLO
SECONDED: MR. DiNATALE

Mr. Friedman stated that he would be voting “no” on the budget because it appropriates money for health benefits for part-time committeemen.

Mr. DiNatale asked Mr. Friedman to clarify if this is the only reason he is voting “no” – that if that were not in the budget, he would vote in favor of it.

Mr. Friedman stated “no” – that it is only one of the reasons. At the reorganization meeting, he (Mr. Friedman) objected to the hiring of professionals who submitted proposals that were greater in cost than others.

Mr. DiNatale asked Mr. Friedman if he was certain that those professionals carried all the same qualifications, experience, work ethic etc. as those the Township had hired?

Mr. Friedman stated that he had done an analysis and had written an article in the Voorhees Sun regarding the issue. He directed Mr. DiNatale to that article.

Discussion ensued between Mr. DiNatale and Mr. Friedman regarding Mr. Friedman’s reasons for voting ‘no’ on the budget.

Mr. DiNatale pointed out that Mr. Friedman had voted no on the budget last year, even though there was a zero tax increase.

Mr. Friedman stated that he voted “no” because the budget last year, as it does this year, contained appropriations for health benefits for elected officials and because people were appointed to positions based upon political contributions rather than credentials.

Mr. DiNatale stated that Mr. Friedman could vote in favor of the budget, but state his areas of concern. Mr. DiNatale noted that this budget is 26 million dollars, yet Mr. Friedman is expressing concern about \$42,000 for health benefits for two committeemen and the difference between \$25,000 and \$16,000 for some professionals. This amounts only to about a \$60,000 - \$70,000 dollar difference in a \$26 million dollar budget, however, Mr. DiNatale stated, Mr. Friedman is not voting against greater amounts such as \$750,000 for a police storage building.

Mr. Friedman noted that the above math calculations were done quickly on the spot by Mr. DiNatale and he was not sure they are correct. He believes the amount for the health benefits and the professionals is more than what was stated by Mr. DiNatale. Mr. Friedman stated he has issues with part-time committeemen taking benefits at taxpayer expense and also with the township hiring professionals who charge more than others who may do a better job for less money.

Mr. Friedman advised Mr. DiNatale that if he was comfortable taking the health benefits at taxpayer expense, then he should go for it, but that he (Mr. Friedman) has issues with it, just as he has issues with hiring professionals who charge more than other equally qualified ones who don't.

Mr. Friedman cited the example of the appointed bond counsel, in which a firm from Philadelphia that is very qualified offered a proposal that was thousands of dollars less than the one accepted, yet it was not even considered.

Mr. DiNatale stated that he believed Mr. Friedman was attempting to make this political because he was only objecting to the appointment of professionals and the taking of health benefits by two committeemen, but that he was not objecting to other more costly items in the budget.

Mr. Friedman stated that Mr. DiNatale was attempting to deflect from the issues by raising the subject of other items, such as the police building, because he (Mr. Friedman) had never said he was in favor of purchasing a building for \$750,000.

Mr. DiNatale stated that when he raised objections to the purchase of the building for the police department and when he wanted to lay off employees, Mr. Friedman did not support those ideas, yet Mr. Friedman seems to be worried about the health benefits paid to two committeemen and the costs of six professionals that is minimal compared to other items in the budget.

Mr. Friedman stated that those things were the minimum reasons for voting against the budget.

Mr. DiNatale stated that Mr. Friedman needs to articulate exactly what his objections are.

Mr. Friedman stated that he has made his position very clear through his statements at reorganization; through his article in the Voorhees Sun and that he stated again tonight that there are several professionals whom he believes were appointed based upon their political contributions. He would like to see tax dollars saved by choosing professionals, based upon price, who are as good as those who were chosen for other reasons.

Mr. DiNatale stated that for clarification he would like to confirm that Mr. Friedman voted for the budget at introduction, which is the same budget here tonight.

Mayor Mignogna clarified that tonight's budget is actually less than the one introduced in April.

Mr. Friedman stated that he voted to “introduce” the budget in name only, which is very different from voting “for” the budget.

Mr. DiNatale stated that it appears to him that at one point Mr. Friedman was willing to go for the budget and now after several months of meetings and caucuses, at the last minute the issue of health benefits and professionals is raised. Mr. DiNatale stated that for someone who claims to be transparent, he would have liked Mr. Friedman to be professional enough to speak of these issues at caucus meetings rather than airing it in this venue.

Mr. Friedman stated that these issues have been raised by him time and again. There are no surprises; there is no mystery. "I have discussed them the last year and half that I have been on committee. It is transparent and fiscally responsible, which is why I have stood by my position."

End of discussion

ROLL CALL: MAYOR MIGNOGNA Y
 MR. DiNATALE Y

Yes, I vote in favor of the budget. We are showing an additional savings of \$132,000, bringing us below the 2% levy cap. We worked diligently to get to that point. While there are other areas that need improvement, I am in favor of this budget.

 MR. LOVALLO Y
 MR. FRIEDMAN N
ABSENT: MR. PLATT

RESOLUTION NO. 149-12 RELEASING A PERFORMANCE GUARANTY AND
 ACCEPTING A MAINTENANCE GUARANTY FOR
 PROMENADE CAR WASH, BLOCK 220; LOT 7

MOTION TO APPROVE: MR. LOVALLO
SECOND: MR. FRIEDMAN
AYES: 4
NAYS: 0
ABSENT: 1 MR. PLATT

RESOLUTION NO. 150-12 TAX COLLECTOR

MOTION TO APPROVE: MR. LOVALLO
SECOND: MR. DiNATALE
AYES: 4
NAYS: 0
ABSENT: 1 MR. PLATT

RESOLUTION NO. 151-12 TAX COLLECTOR

MOTION TO APPROVE: MR. LOVALLO
SECOND: MR. DiNATALE
AYES: 4
NAYS: 0
ABSENT: 1 MR. PLATT

RESOLUTION NO. 152-12 ACCEPTING A REPLACEMENT LETTER OF CREDIT
 FOR SHEPPARD PARK, LLC

MOTION TO APPROVE: MR. LOVALLO
SECOND: MR. FRIEDMAN
AYES: 4
NAYS: 0
ABSENT: 1 MR. PLATT

RESOLUTION NO. 153-12 AWARDING A CONTRACT TO MID ATLANTIC
WASTE SYSTEMS, INC. FOR TRASH TRUCK
MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS

MOTION TO APPROVE: MR. LOVALLO
SECOND: MR. FRIEDMAN
AYES: 4
NAYS: 0
ABSENT: 1 MR. PLATT

RESOLUTION NO. 154-12 ADD AND REMOVE BUS STOPS IN THE TOWNSHIP

MOTION TO APPROVE: MR. LOVALLO
SECOND: MR. FRIEDMAN
AYES: 4
NAYS: 0
ABSENT: 1 MR. PLATT

RESOLUTION NO. 155-12 ESTABLISH TWO NEW BUS STOP LOCATIONS IN
THE TOWNSHIP

MOTION TO APPROVE: MR. LOVALLO
SECOND: MR. FRIEDMAN
AYES: 4
NAYS: 0
ABSENT: 1 MR. PLATT

RESOLUTION NO. 156-12 APPROVING AN AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST
FUND SPENDING PLAN AND REQUESTING
APPROVAL FOR THE PLAN

MOTION TO APPROVE: MR. FRIEDMAN
SECOND: MR. DiNATALE

Mr. Lovallo stated that he would be voting “no” on Resolutions 156-12 and 157-12 as both of these resolutions have to do with the affordable housing program and COAH regulations. His experience over the last few years is that the state has changed the rules as they go along. He believes the Township has spent a lot of money over the years administering these state changes and it has come to a point that after all these expenditures there have not been any results in affordable housing.

Another reason to vote “no” is that up until now all these costs have come from our COAH fund and that fund is established from developers who put money into the fund. A percentage can be used for administrative purposes, but with these two new resolutions, we will be over the amount in our fund for administrative costs and we will have to pay for some of these additional costs through an increase in taxes. For these reasons, he will vote “no”. He believes COAH needs to stop somewhere with all the administrative costs.

Mr. DiNatale stated that while he understands Mr. Lovallo’s point, the Township will be spending a few dollars to save about two hundred thousand dollars in the fund. These funds may or may not be necessary in the future, depending on whether the COAH laws are abolished or approved. This amount is diminimus when you are looking at the possibility of the governor raiding the fund and pointing this money to the general fund to pay down his debt.

Mr. DiNatale stated that this expenditure is money well spent to protect the fund.

Mr. Lovallo stated that the fund holds \$191,000. His goal has always been to protect the residents' interests and so he has always tried to protect this fund. However, after thinking about it and going forward, he wonders what he is really protecting when the rules constantly change and we don't know if we will have to build housing units or not, so at this point he feels he must vote "no".

Mr. Lovallo continued that what he would like to see the governor do, and would like the Township to propose, would be to have any balance in the funds be allowed to go directly to property tax relief. He would like to see this money transferred into the municipal budget as a revenue and with a caveat that whatever that amount is, the Township would have to reduce the amount raised by taxes in an equal amount.

Mr. DiNatale stated that if Mr. Lovallo votes "no" and the money goes away, that opportunity will never happen, because the money won't be there.

Mr. Lovallo said it is not certain that the money will go away. The court is in the process of deciding now whether it can be taken from the town and for that reason, he will not vote in favor of this.

AYES: 3
NAYS: 1 MR. LOVALLO
ABSENT: 1 MR. PLATT

RESOLUTION NO. 157-12 AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING THE CREATION
OF A MARKET TO AFFORDABLE PROGRAM TO BE
ADMINISTERED BY TRIAD ASSOCIATES

MOTION TO APPROVE: MR. FRIEDMAN
SECOND: MR. DiNATALE
AYES: 4
NAYS: 1 MR. LOVALLO
ABSENT: 1 MR. PLATT

RESOLUTION NO. 158-12 APPROVAL OF THE LIQUOR LICENSE RENEWAL
FOR WINE WORLD OUTLET

MOTION TO APPROVE: MR. LOVALLO
SECOND: MR. FRIEDMAN
AYES: 4
NAYS: 0
ABSENT: 1 MR. PLATT

RESOLUTION NO. 159-12 ACCEPTANCE OF AN INTERIM DEVELOPER'S
AGREEMENT FOR BLOCK 206; LOT 12

MOTION TO TABLE: MR. LOVALLO
SECOND: MR. DiNATALE
AYES: 4
NAYS: 0
ABSENT: 1 MR. PLATT

RESOLUTION NO. 160-12 DESIGNATING A CUSTODIAN FOR THE VOORHEES
TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT RECORDS

MOTION TO APPROVE: MR. LOVALLO
SECOND: MR. DiNATALE
AYES: 4
NAYS: 0
ABSENT: 1 MR. PLATT

MINUTES FROM JUNE 25, 2012
BILLS POSTED FOR JULY 9, 2012

MOTION TO APPROVE
THE ABOVE: MR. LOVALLO
SECOND: MR. FRIEDMAN
AYES: 4
NAYS: 0
ABSENT: 1 MR. PLATT

COMMENTS FROM COMMITTEE

Mayor Mignogna reminded everyone about the Summer Series Concert this week – Hotel California.

Also noted the Farmers Market every Saturday at the mall.

Mr. DiNatale stated that he wanted to add some additional comments regarding the budget so people would understand how much work went into it. Even though there is a tax increase, if you take out the costs that the Township has no control over, such as health benefits and pension -- our pension contribution increased significantly because the State has decided not to fund their share of the pension -- the pension that employees have worked 20/30 years for and paid into.

The state decided they are not going to fund the pension and dumped that burden on the municipality so they could lower the state taxes, which was very nice of them. Voorhees had to eat those increased costs.

Our insurance payments have also increased significantly. We have no control over that. This township is providing the same services as we have always provided with 30 less employees who are doing more with less. We have gone from 54 police officers down to 45 and are still providing the same services. We recognize and pride ourselves on the fact that our employees are very dedicated and hard working.

If you take the fact that our state aid was decreased and the energy tax credit was cut,(money paid to the state, that is our money and should be returned to us, but that the state has decided to decrease by a million dollars and that the governor has eliminated from all municipalities), and then take the money that is supposed to be paid by the state into the pension, which has been burdened on us also, that boils down to the fact that we are providing the same services in all departments for about \$400,000 less than what we paid last year. If we could get back what is ours from the State, our tax rate would be zero. So I want people to realize that when we pass a budget like this that is under the 2% cap, there is a lot of work that went into it and there are a lot of things we have no control over.

Mayor Mignogna stated that he agrees with all the points made by Mr. DiNatale and that he is very proud of our shared services program, which Voorhees started doing years ago before it became fashionable.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC – No one spoke.

MOTION TO CLOSE:	MR. LOVALLO
SECOND:	MR. FRIEDMAN
AYES:	4
NAYS:	0
ABSENT:	1 MR. PLATT

ADJOURNMENT