

**VOORHEES TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF OCTOBER 24, 2016
REGULAR MEETING 8:00 PM**

FLAG SALUTE

ROLL CALL

Mr. Friedman, Mr. Platt, Mr. Ravitz, Ms. Nocito, Mayor Mignogna, Mr. Long, Township Solicitor, Mr. Spellman, Township Administrator

SUNSHINE STATEMENT

Mr. Long states 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

FIRST READING ON ORDINANCE

AN ORDINANCE TO MANDATE DIRECT DEPOSIT FOR MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES BY THE TOWNSHIP OF VOORHEES PURSUANT TO C.52:14-15F ET. SEQ.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR RESOLUTIONS ONLY

The following is a verbatim recording of the public comment between Mr. Tom Hanney, Board of Fire Commissioners, Richard Tavani, Fire District Solicitor, Deputy Mayor Jason Ravitz, Mayor Michael Mignogna, Mr. Howard Long, Township Solicitor

Tom Hanney
2 Farmhouse Lane, Chairman of the Fire Commissioners

As some of you may have been aware, last Thursday night at the regular meeting of the Voorhees Fire Board, Committeeman Jason Ravitz spoke of his deep offense at the scheduling of the fire awareness night in conflict with Yom Kippur. His sincerity seemed genuine, so I suspended the five minute rule for all speakers to fully hear Mr. Ravitz's thoughts and concerns on this issue. He stated that he heard rumors that the schedule had been changed deliberately to tweak him and others –

Mr. Long
Mr. Hanney, I am very sorry to interrupt you, can I ask your council, did you advertise this meeting on behalf of the fire district?

Mr. Hanney
We are not taking any action at this meeting.

Mr. Long
We don't have to take action, it is just a matter of conducting business and were certainly doing that, only because I think I saw a third fire commissioner come in and you have a quorum

Mr. Hanney
I am unaware of having a quorum tonight, the only fire commissioner I am aware of being here tonight is the Chairman.

Mr. Long
I think if you turn around you might see what I'm talking about. I think you have two others in the audience. I just don't want there to be a violation.

Mr. Tavani
I don't believe there would be a violation of the Open Public Meetings Act.

Mr. Long
There is no question, it would absolutely be a violation if we're here to discuss a topic of business that involves the fire district, you don't have to formally take action to have to be in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act. There's absolutely no doubt in my mind we have caucus meetings all the time where we are reviewing various things that are all advertised public meetings and I mean you can break the quorum and continue and I hate to interrupt you, but I don't want to put you in a position where you are breaking the law.

Mr. Hanney

Well one of the two will have to be asked to leave.

Mr. Tavani

I believe Commissioner Silary is leaving the meeting room. I respectfully disagree with your opinion Mr. Long, but we are here to respond to the statements made at our public meeting on October 19th. To set the record straight, to establish for the record that there is no intolerance in this fire department and that allegation is false. That the resolution that you proposed tonight–

Mr. Long

Well you can say that all you want, but I am just advising you that if you tell your client that they are welcome to stay, that's up to you. I'm just making the observation that I wouldn't do that. They need to listen to you, not me.

Mr. Tavani

Understood. I'd like the record to reflect that Commissioner Silary has left the meeting room.

Mr. Long

Mr. Hanney, I apologize for interrupting you.

Mr. Hanney

No problem. Committeeman Ravitz had stated that he had heard rumors that the scheduling had been changed to deliberately tweak him and others and he did not state where or when he had heard these rumors. Mr. Ravitz spoke of how he had attended Fire Night in the past with his children and said that they stopped by this event for just a few minutes. He emphasized how he felt offended by the conflict of dates that had occurred and kept questioning if there was a deliberate intent behind the confusion between the actual date scheduled and the date that appeared on the township calendar. One of the things that Mr. Long that you received back from Deputy Chief Wharton that addressed the fact that for the last forty years, the Voorhees Fire Department has had Fire Awareness Night or Fire Prevention Night, on the Wednesday of whatever week that the 9th of October fell onto. The 9th of October regulates that, because that is when the great Chicago fire happened. So Fire Awareness night is always scheduled around the Great Chicago Fire. It can fall in the first week of October or the second week of October. Yom Kippur has a much wider list of dates.

Mr. Long

Have you made arrangements to modify that? Because I agree with you.

Mr. Hanney

Yeah, right, so I am going to get to that. One of the things that we said was no deliberate attempt was made, it has always been very rock steady on that Wednesday night for forty years, however that fell. So from that stand point no deliberate adjustment or change had been made in the schedule for that date. I know that there was some confusion with the township calendar. We don't know how that happened; we don't know how that was communicated incorrectly, whether it was here or there. Nobody seems to know. But it would have been this date no matter what, because of that rule of thumb for Fire Awareness Night. It was explained that rather than being the tweak it was suggested, that the fact that this event had been held on Wednesday night on Fire week for the last forty years might be something that is taken into consideration. I assured Mr. Ravitz that the oversight was unintentional and not deliberate in anyway and I also assured him that I was personally sympathetic to his concerns, because I have experienced this as an eastern orthodox Christian myself. Our calendar is different-

Mr. Ravitz

Mr. Hanney, I'm sorry for interrupting you but will you please for the record after you assured me that this was not on purpose, what I did say?

Mr. Hanney

What was the question?

Mr. Ravitz

Mr. Hanney is up there accusing me of repeatedly alluding; I guess Mr. Slack called it a conspiracy after I left. We were speaking for forty five minutes. What did I say to you on the record about my thoughts about it being done on purpose?

Mr. Hanney

I think I actually have it down here that you were sympathetic to the fact that my calendar is different.

Mr. Ravitz

No, not about that what did I say about my thoughts whether it was a tweak or not a tweak after you and I had the discussion.

Mr. Hanney

You said you had no evidence of that, but that you had heard rumors.

Mr. Ravitz

Right and didn't I say on the records to you and to Deputy Chief Wharton that I did not believe that after listening to the two of you that it was done on purpose. I did.

Mr. Hanney

You know, rumors are never good to throw out anyway, because they're unsubstantiated, they're rarely confirmed with anybody and they lead to thoughts that are probably not accurate.

Mr. Ravitz

We can OPRA request the transcript and hopefully we get it within the seven day period we're due and we can talk about that.

Mr. Hanney

Nancy is doing her best. She has to listen with head phones and type everything in, she had payroll today so she had double duty. She got part of it done-

Mr. Ravitz

You can just send a CD over, we can ask for it to be transcribed. There's no transcription necessary, you just have to record it from one instrument to another.

Mr. Haney

Mike thinks he has a way to do that, but we don't ever do that. So it's one of those things that we didn't have a method for. I mean it's recorded on little micro tapes. So Nancy just puts the headphones on, listens to it-

Mr. Ravitz

I'm sure Mr. Spellman will be glad to come over to your office with a device in order to record it so that everyone can hear.

Mr. Hanney

Well let's see how Mike makes out. I assured Mr. Ravitz that the oversight was unintentional and not deliberate in anyway. I also assured him that I was personally sympathetic to his concerns because as an Eastern Orthodox Christian, our calendar is different than Western Christianity. Our Christmas is on January 7th and it's always a work day or a school day or whatever and no consideration is given to our holiday at all. Our Easter is required to follow the Jewish tradition of Passover. So, four out of five years, it is different than Western Christian Easter, and therefore, is not given any consideration at all from that. I also, he mentioned that he had brought his children to Fire Prevention Week activities. I can't tell you how many times on our Easter either for a Saturday night service or a Sunday service I was grabbing the kids off the fields after they finished whatever competition they had, whether it was drum line or sports and racing them back to church. Not only my kids, but other kids that were going to St. Thomas over in Cherry Hill who were also Eastern Orthodox. So, we had the car packed with kids coming off the field and they were changing in the car as we we're going back so that they could get to Church. So, being sympathetic to this is something that I really am. I understand it, I understand that there are conflicts and this is something that we need to be very sympathetic towards. Mr. Ravitz acknowledged this; however he did continue to treat this unintentional issue as if it had much greater significance than it was actually entitled to. I assured him that this would not happen again and that we would be putting together-

Mr. Ravitz

Can you explain that please?

Mr. Hanney

I will. I assured him that this would not happen again and that we will be putting together a policy to put into place to send our proposed yearly calendar to all twenty-three religious organizations in Voorhees for pre-approval for the year to make sure that there are no conflicts in the future.

Mr. Ravitz

You didn't say that at the public meeting. Mr. Hanney. Mr. Howard.

Mr. Hanney

It is the only and best way that I can answer how to correct the problem.

Mayor Mignogna
We're going to talk one at a time, first of all

Mr. Hanney
And I was speaking-

Mr. Ravitz
I have a question for you.

Mr. Hanney
I said that we are going to go and address this with all the religious organizations here in Voorhees; I've identified twenty three religious organizations in Voorhees. It will be the policy, not a suggestion; it will be the policy of the Fire Board going forward to always send the calendar at the beginning of the year to all of these organizations for any fire event to make sure that they are not excluded from participating from these events in any way shape or form.

Mayor Mignogna
Deputy Mayor, you had a question?

Mr. Ravitz
Are you saying that you stated that at the Fire Commissioners Meeting?

Mr. Hanney
No.

Mr. Ravitz
You just stated that you did

Mr. Hanney
No

Mr. Ravitz
You just stated that you did, we can pull this really fast. But you just stated that you did. That you promised for twenty-three religious groups, you just stated it.

Mr. Hanney
No, what I said-

Mr. Ravitz
It didn't come out like that

Mr. Hanney
I assured you that this would not happen again. Then I said we would be putting together a policy, okay. Two different things. I assured you it would not happen again. Now we are putting together a policy that we will check with all twenty-three religious organizations in Voorhees going forward. This did not seem to reach Mr. Ravitz, as he was starting to make references to the Holocaust, by repeatedly stating that the Jews have a saying 'Never again and never forget'. I stated to Mr. Ravitz, that he was assigning a level of absolute evil to this complaint that was in no way justified and was completely offensive to even propose. He mentioned that he had never mentioned the word 'evil' to us. But I ask you, is there anything more the definition of evil than the Holocaust? I don't know of anything else that is more the definition of evil. So even though you didn't say the word evil, by bringing up and repeating several times 'Never again, Never forget', you were literally assigning an evil intent and an evil purpose to what we were doing. I mean it just; one trades hands with the other.

Mr. Ravitz
I believe I said at that meeting, and again I would really appreciate it if-

Mr. Hanney
You will have the minutes

Mr. Ravitz
I'd like, I think we asked for the audio of it. The, what I explained to you and Mr. Tavani heard me loud and clear and has Jewish business partners, that would understand these comments. When Jews, actually I think I said it last Monday, at this public hearing, and I don't see anyone here that was there, my eyes are kind of bad, but there were people in the audience. When Jews, when I explained to you, the Holocaust was obviously more than an evil event. From that, the Jewish people have developed a saying 'Never forget, Never Again' and I was explaining to you, if I recall, why Jews are mobilized to show up and

protest what some other ethnic groups or religious groups wouldn't necessarily come and do maybe, I don't know. But that is how- what?

Mr. Long

I'm answering Mr. Platt's question

Mr. Ravitz

That is what and I explained that's how we're brought up, that's how I feel. So please don't put words into my mouth about the Holocaust and its evil in reference to the Fire District because honestly you guys aren't worth it.

Mr. Hanney

No, honestly we are worth it and you're making an assumption there.

Mr. Ravitz

You're not worth it in comparison to the Holocaust, Mr. Hanney

Mayor Mignogna

I've stated multiple times, we will speak one at a time. We will keep this diplomatic-

Mr. Ravitz

It's my turn. We are not, I would not, when I say you're not worth it, I would not level an analogy about the Holocaust against a group of people, like a Fire Commission Board and demean those that went through the Holocaust. So before you start putting words in my mouth about those types of things, I suggest you check with the source, and I'm not hard to find. Go ahead. I'm the Deputy Mayor so you address me as Deputy Mayor, especially since when I go to your meetings I can't wear a hat and I can't wear civilian clothes, my daughter can't eat her dinner and I can't have a drink while I'm talking. Now it's your floor.

Mr. Hanney

We didn't say those words. You did. And by saying them and by repeating them more than once, in our meetings you made the inference. And that's all there is to it. I mean if you made the inference, you made the inference. We didn't say it that's for sure. And by bringing it up and by mentioning all of the other Jewish groups and the fact that you're going to go to those Jewish groups and tell them that we were anti-Semitic. This is what you told us. Okay and that you were going to turn them against us and have them totally be against the Fire Board. This was a small, inadvertent and correctable mistake.

Mr. Ravitz

It wasn't small.

Mr. Hanney

You know-

Mr. Ravitz

It was not small.

Mr. Hanney

It has happened to me a lot of times in my life and I've looked at it and I think hey if somebody willing to correct an error when they see it, correct it and let's move on. But no, you didn't come and you made all kinds of intolerable and awful accusations against our board and against me and against Deputy Chief Wharton, who has done I just can't even begin to tell you how great a job this individual has done and how hard he has worked. And to come in and make so much more of this than you really need to make of this, it just was abusive. I'm sure that some of you that are claiming your sole interest and concerns on some of the actions that this committee has taken, which I will talk about later in the regular public session, I find that this ties in to those other actions. And we can talk about that a little later on. But my point here for this resolution that you are going to talk about in a few minutes, is that it is way over blown. The idea that we would do anything even remotely anti-Semitic or with forethought and that's really the key here. That there was no fore-thought to this whatsoever in terms of offending anybody or excluding anybody. And there won't be in the future. Because with a policy established, not just for the Jewish folks, but for everybody else in the town, all twenty-three organizations that I have identified, we will have a policy in place and we will make sure that they are aware of our calendar and that they all have the ability to comment back to us, we will have a contact with each one of those organizations and you know it might actually expand what the Fire Department can do for those organizations in terms or services or anything. I know for that a lot of these different groups we provide EMS services for different services that they have and holidays that they and it might be a good way to you know what the Fire Department does for them. So that's our intention, there was nothing evil here

whatsoever and you know, my apologies for anything that may have been interpreted that way. Thank you.

Mr. Friedman

Mr. Hanney, is it my understanding that you're working on some kind of statement with Mr. David Snyder from the JCRC.

Mr. Hanney

Yes, I spoke to David on Friday, and we are going to speak again on Wednesday, and you know he was the nicest gentleman to talk to and he called me and I called him and he called me back and it was one of these touch base things. But we got each other at about 4:30 and then said let's talk again on Wednesday and we spoke for about five minutes and I think we'll come up with something good and I don't see any problem with working with David at all.

Mr. Friedman

So I mean, is it your understanding that there will be some sort of statement through them?

Mr. Hanney

Yeah, probably. Probably. And there should be, but it's not an apology. It's something that would be, something that would say, you know, we're going to do something special to reach out for the Jewish Community, because they may have missed out on this and it was a great event. And it was a great event, it was a great night. It was the most well attended Fire Awareness Night ever. And we want to build on that and we don't want anybody to be excluded from this. We really do not, I mean this is a really great event and it's for everybody. My kids went to it when they were little, although back then they got to ride on the top of the Fire Trucks which was great, you know? But, you know, this is again one of these things that was inadvertent, unintentional and correctable. Thank you.

Mr. Ravitz

Mr. Hanney, how did the JCRC get to you, David Snyder?

Mr. Hanney

I called him.

Mr. Ravitz

Do you have any idea of how he got to you? Do you think that David Snyder and the JCRC are malicious, bad from your-

Mr. Hanney

I don't really know them, but David-

Mr. Ravitz

That he was a very nice man?

Mr. Hanney

Yeah, very nice guy. I don't know him really-

Mr. Ravitz

You're looking forward to working with him?

Mr. Hanney

He was so nice on the phone, I can't imagine that we couldn't work together to resolve whatever it is we need to resolve.

Mr. Ravitz

Okay because you made a statement just a couple of minutes ago that I **(couldn't understand 22:44)**. Just for everyone in the audience, the JCRC is the Jewish Community Relation Council and that's who I went to the next day with another individual to contact Mr. Haney and try to handle this situation. So, just so everybody knows since I 'threatened' according to Mr. Hanney, with the JCRC. Mr. Hanney finds David Snyder to be a lovely man.

Mr. Hanney

I do.

Mr. Ravitz

And Mr. Mayor, if I could say a few things, for everyone in the crowd, Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the Jewish calendar. It's a fasting period that is about twenty-four hours and it occurred Tuesday night of that week the 11th, at sundown and ends at sundown on the 12th. Typically, you're in synagogue all day if you're religious, not religious it's the one day of the year, the holiest day of the year that you show

respect for your religion. You don't work etc. Typically you 'break' the fast, for those of you who have read or heard and we do that at sundown. Some of us break the rules because we get really hungry and some of us don't. Sundown that night on the Jewish calendar, Harry can probably answer that, it's 7:23ish. But the problem is that it being a Holiest day of the year, you're in synagogue all day, you haven't eaten all day, and you're not going anywhere. You stuff your face, you're with your kids they're driving you crazy. It's a family night. And it would be the same thing as scheduling something on Christmas night. The Indian community I believe celebrates Diwali, which I believe is a New Year celebration that I have been lucky enough to be involved with because of our Indian community. They have a community center in Marlton off of 73. These are nights that you wouldn't even think to have things and as a Jew I think I can make the proper inference or assumption that Mr. Hanney used those words concerning the Holocaust or whatever. Since we already talked about that, but about, if this was some kind of small inconvenience, this is the Holiest Day of the year. Those synagogues had people in them, some of them until after 8 o'clock at night and people who haven't eaten all day. As for some of the defamatory accusations being lobbed at me by Mr. Hanney I encourage everyone to get a, I hope it's a cd so you can listen to it, about all the threatening verbal remarks I made to Mr. Hanney, I think Mr. Vandergriff is in the audience and was right by me when I was speaking, and I doubt I would take on a very threatening tone in front of my eleven year old daughter and that's why I got so excited here right now. I actually felt like I was acting like Mr. Hanney chairing the meeting, interrupting him and I'm actually shocked councilor that you're sitting there and let him say those things on the records, because I actually thought that in spite of me not being able to accept Mr. Hanney's apology and Mr. Wharton's apology and I said at that moment that I couldn't and you shook your head like you're shaking it right now and Deputy Chief Wharton shook his head as he did and Mr. Hanney, Chairman Hanney you offered up your apology and I said very calmly that I couldn't accept it right now because of my blood pressure and you said fine as well. And it's really weird how these facts are getting reworked because I reported to every member of committee I believe. I know Mr. Friedman and Mr. Platt that I thought Mr. Hanney was very genuine in his apology, and Deputy Chief Wharton was and Mr. Tavani's body language exuded that. And he knew it was a bad, bad mistake. He would know being that he is probably more exposed to the Jewish religion, having business partners like that practice our religion. So I'm kind of shocked sitting up here with what I just heard. I think the Holocaust inference as Mr. Hanney said, is God awful. This is not a small thing and I thought we were passed that. If I went on Facebook and talked about what went down, this court room would be filled with Jewish residents. We believe over 20% of our community is Jewish. They would have been here. I tried to handle it like a 'Mensch' is what it's called. A mensch means a good person in Yiddish. Obviously that didn't work. I did not threaten the ADL or the JCRC I said what would happen if I went to the ADL and Mr. Hanney exploded and interrupted me about the anti-defamation league, if you listen to the tape. And the JCRC which I did go to and you got the phone call from David Snyder, who is a lovely human being. From me threatening an organization who is that's going to try to help you through this, you should be thanking me. The end. You've got to sit for a second.

Mayor Mignogna

He can stand, but we'll let you finish.

Mr. Ravitz

Thank you Mayor. I'm not on the five minute rule?

Mayor Mignogna

No

Mr. Ravitz

You should let, just like we don't even bring it up, you shouldn't even bring it up. It was ten people at the meeting; you notice we didn't even bring it up with you. You can sit here and speak all you want, just like the hat rule, if you wanted to come in here and wear a hat it's a free country. Anyone want to wear a hat in here? Wear a hat. Two of our great police officers. And if your voice gets hoarse you're allowed to drink. So, I got to tell you, I'm very disappointed in your characterization of the night's events because anyone who was there knows them differently. Absolutely floored that you would come out here and say this and Mr. Tavani would allow you to lob these accusations at me when I'm sure he reviewed your remarks in advance. Let me get on the records, that after thirty five minutes of speaking, the other night Deputy Chief Wharton admitted that three to four weeks before Yom Kippur and the Fire Prevention Night, that he knew it was Yom Kippur. He knew. The Deputy Chief admitted on the record, he knew. And how did he know? He knew because he referred to it as a church, Congregation Beth-el, which is a Synagogue, called Deputy Chief Warton for EMT coverage for Wednesday. So, the Fire District knew, it's leadership knew, Deputy Chief Wharton, knew it was a big Jewish holiday, if we're asking for, if Beth-el which Harry belongs too, I believe he's on the board or his wife is, if they're calling for EMT service for that day. When Deputy Chief Wharton stated that anyone who is in the audience knows that I was on the dais and I kind of slumped. And it was almost like, let me help you, cause that was, I found that to be disappointed, pathetic, I don't know. At that point I was way past accusing any intent. I was satisfied with the Chairman's treatment with me, I thought we had a good back and forth, it was actually very calm. Except for the beginning when Mr. Tavani told us to take a moment and chill out. But I got to

tell ya again, I'm not happy with what you just said and how you characterized it. But, when I was on the Dais Commissioner Slack and Commissioner Aducat went like this, on their phone texting, playing on apps, I don't know. I turned to Mr. Tavani I guess or Mr. Hanney I don't remember which one, I said this is respect? Someone is up here pouring their heart out about their religion. About the holiest day of the year and this is what we get? We get Mr. Slack continuing on his phone, I hear you I'm listening to you. And I didn't go crazy, I didn't say anything, he was harassing me about having a Chick Fil A diet Dr. Pepper under the Dais because my mouth was getting all, whatever, cotton mouth. Made a comment about my daughter eating Chick Fil A, her dinner after soccer practice which ended at 7:30. In the crowd my eleven year old daughter. And I didn't lose my temper. Nobody on this dais is playing on their phones. Nobody on this dais was ignoring you. You did nothing about it. About this small problem. I was not there as the Deputy Mayor, I was there as a Jewish Activist. I was there as a Zionist, which means being pro-Israel. I was there because my daughter was in the crowd and I brought her there intentionally because she needed to see what sticking up for yourself, you're religion and other people's religions are all about. So you can spout your mouth off about all these things and accusations about me, but you're wrong. And the tape will reveal that. And then I understand that after I left, the commissioner Slack and Aducat said that this was a small problem and I think Commissioner Silary agree with them and then there was a to do about how Vaughn knew it was Yom Kippur and nobody else did. It's on every single calendar that you get right now; it's on the Township's Calendar. Fire Prevention Night was also on the Township's calendar for October 5th, not October 12th. You're free to speak.

Mr. Hanney

As far as Deputy Chief Wharton is concerned, again, hardest working individual in this town. I absolutely think the man is great. However, he did admit after you had been, heard him say that he said three weeks before he knew. Then he went on to explain, that he is totally non-religious, he didn't know the significance of it at all. He just doesn't go to Church; he doesn't know anything about it. He knew it was Yom Kippur, it didn't mean a thing to him because he just didn't know. I will apologize for his not knowing and he did state on the record right then, that he would become more aware and more sensitive to the different religious holidays in the Township, because it was pointed out to him that he was wrong at that point. I don't know what any other Commissioner said. I never said anything about this being a small issue. I said it was a correctable issue; it was an oversight and was something that was unintentional. And this is ya know-

Mr. Ravitz

Tom, you just said it was small

Mr. Hanney

We can read each other wrong-

Mr. Ravitz

You just said in front of us that it was a small issue.

Mr. Hanney

No.

Mr. Ravitz

You did.

Mr. Hanney

No.

Mr. Ravitz

Everybody is shaking their heads out there; you said it was a small issue. Look behind you, everybody is going like this.

Mr. Hanney

I said it was unintentional, I said it was correctable and this is something that we can address. You know if you and I feel differently about how you said what you said, it's where I was sitting vs. where you were sitting, and you we're very passionate about what you were there for. So, maybe I misinterpreted your passion, for an attack. You came in pretty passionate. Again gentlemen, this is something we can address. I know that we've been talking to David Snyder on Wednesday and we will come up with a plan and we will do something, you know. Because it was, I feel bad that a lot of Jewish children missed out on Fire Prevention Night, because it was a great night. So, if we can find a way to make up for that, and there have been some ideas that we can do, we will. You have my word on that. Thank you.

Mr. Tavani

Mr. Mayor, may I address the committee?

Mayor Mignogna

Sure

Mr. Tavani

The proposed resolution that I was provided with tonight is Resolution No. 220-16. And I am specifically asking Committee or anyone who can provide an answer, what was the basis for the fifth whereas; where it says 'The Fire District traditionally holds its annual Fire Prevention night on Yom Kippur'.

Mayor Mignogna

Actually Mr. Tivani, it's interesting that you bring that up because in our caucus we discussed that particular paragraph there have been some changes to that paragraph that Mr. Long is going to read when we get to that.

Mr. Tavani

And I appreciate that.

Mayor Mignogna

No Problem.

Mr. Tavani

Because I don't see the adequate facts for the basis for that whereas; the second concern that I have for the resolution, is its use of the word 'intolerant' and 'offensive'. Intolerant means unwillingness to accept the views or beliefs or behaviors of other people, other than your own. Now as I understand it-

Mayor Mignogna

I can tell you that we changed that too

Mr. Tavani

And I appreciate that as well. My understanding, Yom Kippur ends at sunset, is that correct?

Mr. Ravitz

Sundown

Mr. Tavani

Sundown. So, If sundown-

Mr. Ravitz

We've been through this argument, don't demean, we've been through this argument before and I said it for everybody else, if this is where you're going.

Mr. Tavani

Well where I'm going is, if we had the, from NAA, National aeronautic administration that charts the weather-

Mr. Ravitz

It doesn't go by that; I explained that at your meeting. It's the Jewish calendar.

Mr. Platt

It's irrelevant. That time is a festive meal that we sit down together. It's the same thing as, and I said this at your last meeting, if we we're to hold a special township event from 3 o'clock in the afternoon to 5:30 on Christmas Eve. It's not, it's a question of, this is a day of celebration and your family goes through the entire day of this at sundown, there is a giant festive meal at someone's house and everyone comes to it. It's not this sundown everything stops and it goes back to normal. It goes through the rest of the night, as far as the celebration.

Mr. Tavani

And it was expressed tonight and at the meeting on the 19th, I'm sorry the 20th, in reference to the fact, that having it on the day that Yom Kippur is on was precluding members of our community from attending and as indicated by the Chairman, that's something that will be rectified. I just wanted to clarify because on the resolution it states on Yom Kippur, but technically would it be on Yon Kippur, if the event starts at 7 o'clock?

Mr. Ravitz

Sundown is probably 7:23 so yeah. If you want to go by semantics then yeah.

Mr. Tavani

Was that also amended in the resolution?

Mr. Ravitz
No.

Mr. Tavani
Okay.

Mr. Ravitz.
And we do not go by the NAA calendar. I don't know how many more times I have to explain this to you Mr. Tavani.

Mr. Tavani
And I appreciate that you-

Mr. Ravitz
I explained it to you last Thursday night

Mr. Tavani
You did-

Mr. Ravitz
It is the Jewish calendar.

Mr. Tavani
Understood. But I want the resolution to-

Mr. Ravitz
When you see Mr. Bricklen tomorrow just ask him.

Mr. Tavani
I'll be glad to, and actually that's Wednesday night. But I will be glad to, I appreciate the information you've provided to me. But I just want to make sure the resolution that you are proposing is as accurate factually as possible. And I appreciate the efforts of this Committee to make sure that it is. And to express my wish that we can put all of this unpleasantness behind us regarding this important issue, obviously. And again, thank you for your time, Committee. Have a great evening.

Stuart Platt
8 Hazelhurst Drive

I was sitting there and I was saying to myself, maybe possibly they get it. But they don't. Are you thinking of taking the word 'intolerant' out of the resolution? Don't. I heard two things tonight; Mr. Hanney says it was no small matter. He used those words, or excuse me I meant, it was a small matter. He used those words, you were right Mr. Ravitz. He used those words that it was a small matter. That you blew it up out of proportion. Mr. Tavani who is a gentleman, who is an attorney, claims he has Jewish partners, it doesn't matter. He's not using the nautical clock from King Neptune from the early 1400's to now parse when Yom Kippur begins and when it ends. So this is a group that goes from we don't know what Yom Kippur is, then all of a sudden, now they show up here as Jewish scholars on the holiday of Yom Kippur. It's offensive. It is intolerant. They have added injury.

Mr. Ravitz
They insulted you.

Mr. Stuart Platt
Would you let me speak now? They have added injury to anybody of goodwill who is offended by this. And in addition, they've also added insult to injury. Instead of coming here, saying we understand. You're offended. A good majority of the population may be offended. They don't say that. They say it was a small matter. He also said on the record that he isn't apologizing. He's said we're going to send out some circular to all twenty-three religious institutions in the town and we'll get it back and we'll figure it out. That's not an apology. This isn't a small matter. You have Mr. Bed Carson with Tom, I mean he's not, when it's Christmas Eve in my office, my employees, I don't let them stay until sundown on Christmas Eve. Nobody parcels that, nobody has that questions. But with this holiday it's an issue. It's a problem. It is intolerant. And Mr. Ravitz if you used the concept of the Holocaust and I was the Commissioner on the State Holocaust for three years, what I think you meant and you explained yourself so I wasn't there, but we always talk to the Holocaust Commission about the lasting of the Holocaust. Tolerance, diversity, acceptance. What you've heard tonight is none of that. They're still arguing with you, they want to say technically it's this, technically it's that. The reality is that a large percentage of the population in this town did not come out for the holiday. Did not have the opportunity to see Fire Prevention Night, because they were celebrating the Holiday. Nobody schedules things on Christmas Eve; they know people are going to have Christmas Eve dinner. Or any holiday, like Diwali or any

significant holidays in the calendar. I just don't understand where they are coming from. So I want to implore the members of this governing body, to doing something for the public, not just for the Voorhees Jewish community, but for all people of good will, who would not parse times, who don't use the nautical clock from King Neptune, and Ahab and Moby Dick, to figure out when the holiday begins and when it ends. And one last thing about factual bases, I think you can draw some influences here that maybe it was intentional because Mr. Tavani's talking about we scheduled it at a time, and by the way it was scheduled at 7 o'clock they had a man power it up. I'm sure people were there before 7 o'clock, to man power it up. He's parsing all of this and he's talking about we knew exactly when the holiday begins and the holiday ends. So you can draw inference from lawyers here some of us. You can draw an inference that it might have been intentional, but you don't have to go that far. You can stand up to the law of negligence and this reckless disregard for what is a well-known holiday, the most sacred holiday on the Jewish calendar. You don't have to be intentional about it. You can be neglectful, you can be reckless. You can be without tolerance. And that's what you heard tonight. They did add insult to injury. And I want to applaud you again, I don't want to focus on you, you should all be commended because this committee, year in and year out, since I've lived in town. And the current makeup of this committee with Mayor Mignogna's administration, continues to celebrate diversity in this community, regardless of the religious group and this is another fine example of you standing up for everybody, especially for those who can't stand up for themselves and I want to thank you again and applaud what you did tonight.

Mayor Mignogna

Thank you, Mr. Platt. Do we have anyone else from the public who has any comment on any of our resolutions this evening?

Anastasia Hanney
2 Farmhouse Lane

This Committee is really trying to change the focus here. You've tried how many different ways now to defame the members of the Fire Board. You've hired an auditor to try and find problems in the books and never sent him over because you found out that not only that everything was accounted for, but that the Fire Board was in the black, unlike yourselves. And unlike yourselves, they're actually saving the tax payers money by being in the black and not costing us anything else. I heard also that you are all out of money, that you have hit your borrowing limit and that is why you want to take over the fire department, you get to spend their money and increase your debt, just like you did about ten years ago. I know Mayor Mignogna and Harry Platt were both on the board at the time, so I'm sure you remember that.

Mr. Platt

I'm sorry; I have to cut you off. I know Dean Ciminera is making the same face as I'm making at him, it debunks everything you're saying with our head. Because absolutely that is 1,000 percent incorrect.

Ms. Hanney

Okay, I'd like to see the information on that. Do you remember the fire budget being taken from-

Mr. Harry Platt

You weren't in the room and what happened was, the commission was told to reduce some of the debt, to use some of their surplus. That's it. We didn't take a dime. Not one dime.

Ms. Hanney

Okay, I'd like to see more of the stuff on that.

Mr. Harry Platt

There's nothing to see because we didn't take anything.

Ms. Hanney

Okay.

Mr. Harry Platt

If you have some kind of proof that we took something, I'd want to see that, because the state, the Chief Financial Officer, the Mayor and Township Committee, don't have that.

Ms. Hanney

Okay, well-being as the Fire Board is in the black as of right now and the Township Committee is not, perhaps it might be advisable for you guys to get them to help you balance your budget.

Mr. Harry Platt

I'm sorry, I'm going to have to, he's shaking his head no and I'm going to have to, he'll speak and he will debunk everything. Go ahead.

Ms. Hanney

That's absolutely fine. So, I also find it a little bit ridiculous that you're claiming something that happened on the same week for forty years was somehow intentional. Obviously it was an oversight and something that shouldn't have happened but it was an oversight and it does happen, quite frequently, unfortunately. So, perhaps you Mr. Ravitz should have made the Committee more aware and asked them to change the 39 year standard which was already in place. It did become apparent that the only member of the Fire Board who actually knew about the conflict was Commissioner Vandegrift that did not say anything about the conflict. It sounds to me that this is a political ploy to get the unions to get away with whatever they want at the expense of the taxpayer and with the blessing of this committee. It really disgusts me that you would stoop so low as to compare this to the Holocaust which is just a horrifying event and to suggest that the Fire Board would do that intentionally is just absolutely disgusting. That is completely offensive to pretty much anyone, it was just a horrible event and to compare anything to that is just an extremely serious accusation. For the record, my high holy day is missing from your township calendar. This was our Easter on May 1st. That's not on there; our Good Friday is not on there. None of the Orthodox religious events are on your calendar. And having grown up through the Voorhees school system, many of the Eastern high school functions fell on our high holy days. And I cannot tell you how many times I suffered as to not being able to attend events or attempted to be punished by coaches rather than trying to not be thrown off of a team or not be allowed to compete in our championship events because I couldn't make it to the practice because I needed to be in church for our high holy day and this Township Committee did not see any problems with that, and we did go to the School Board with that complaint and nothing happened, other than me not getting thrown off the team. No apologies were made; it happened again the following year we had to go through the whole thing again. So while I am sympathetic, absolutely because I've been there several times, I do not think that it is fair that it is any more important than what happened to me through all of my experiences. And I hope that something that we can do going forward is not only make us a better Jewish community, but to make sure all of our communities, like they were saying, all twenty-three, are recognized so that this doesn't happen to anybody else again. Be it your community, my community because we are all one community here in Voorhees and that should just not, we should all be able to have events and attend the events that this township offers for all of us. And if you are saying that you are unaware of things like that, it would be no different than the Fire Board who also says that they were unaware. I do call for the resignation for any of the Committee members, or solicitors who would incite religious hate speech and division in our community because I just do not think that that is the right thing to do. I do not appreciate that that is what is happening here tonight and it's just absolutely appalling to me that I would hear that from Township Committee members and I have been to many of these meetings throughout my life and this is one of the nastiest that I've been partial to. And it doesn't seem very bipartisan at all. I would like to see all of us come together and be able to, whatever religion you are, be it from the School Board, the Fire Board, or the Township Committee, that we can all rectify calendars so that no one is excluded from any of our events or anything of that means. Thank you.

Mayor Mignogna

Any other comments on any of our resolutions this evening?

Edward Ferruggia

4 Harwood Drive

I didn't know anything about this issue prior to tonight, I just heard there were some issues regarding the Fire Board, and so I just want to say clearly, that things should not be scheduled on Yom Kippur, that's obvious. That is clearly a serious mistake. I know with our own organization in neighborhood, obviously you have these discussions you start pushing dates for things, people want to do things on different dates and somebody says that's Yom Kippur and that's, there's all different kinds of conflicting things and usually that comes out. So that's a mistake, it should not happen. To say there is no excuse for it, I'd say there is no excuse for it, it should not happen. Now, so I only listened to what occurred at the meeting and I just really have some questions logistically and I guess because you're considering a resolution apparently to admonish the fire board I guess, what I don't understand is, I did hear an explanation that they do always hold it on a Wednesday that falls on a certain way on the calendar and that that Wednesday fell on Yom Kippur, they've been doing so for forty years or something. So I heard that explanation. Then I also heard this reference that it appeared on the Township Calendar a week before that and I don't understand any of that. Now, I'm just going to say the following because what they did was a mistake and it was wrong by scheduling it on that date and not figuring it out and when they learned it was that date, then maybe, whether he didn't have that sensitivity to realize the conflict. So that's a mistake and a problem. What I have to say in all sincerity, if it was on the wrong date on the Township Calendar, how could the whole Township Committee or even the whole township, not be aware that it didn't occur that day. It was still going to occur the next week on the bad date and therefore, I would think frankly the Township or whatever mechanisms exist for the Township calendar or their calendar, it seems to me they all owe an apology and should be expressing their regrets and I don't really understand that Mr. Ravitz is, I don't know if he was the only one to show up and complain. I don't understand why nobody brought this up a week before, or a day before, something and say "hey don't

hold it on that day". Or, "hey do you know you're doing this on Yom Kippur?" And then if somebody said, oh well so what, too bad, then I would say that person should be admonished, because the Jewish religion is one of, I mean all religions are important, I mean the Christian religion, the Jewish religion, and I know we have a large Indian representation in the town, there are a lot of religions, but the Christian and Jewish religions are certainly two of the major religions. And obviously I wouldn't want to see anything get scheduled on Christmas. But, sincerely I have to say to you and I know there are other things going on with the Fire Board, it just seems to me, wouldn't it should be looked into in the sense, doesn't the whole Township at some level owe an apology, because I don't understand why this complaint occurred and you had to come out on your holidays, it was noble of you that you did, but you're the person who came out and did it and I don't understand why nobody else picked up on it in advance and said hey you're about to hold something on Yom Kippur. I think you should all apologize, and frankly if I had known about it I'd stand here and apologize, but to be honest I've never focused on Fire Prevention night, which I apologize for that, but that's all I can say. But logistically it sounds like a screw up, it's offensive then but I think maybe more apologies are owed than just than the Fire Board because apparently more went on here like on advertising the event properly, that's all I can say, thank you.

Mayor Mignogna

Thank you. Any other public comment regarding any of our resolutions this evening?

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

RESOLUTION NO. 218-16	AUTHORIZING PARTICIPATION IN A PRICING AGREEMENT BETWEEN VOORHEES TOWNSHIP AND CRANFORD TOWNSHIP
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MOTION TO APPROVE:	MR. FRIEDMAN
SECONDED:	MR. PLATT
AYES:	ALL
NAYS	NONE

RESOLUTION NO. 219-16	AUTHORIZING PARTICIPATION IN FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PILOT PROGRAM UNDER STATE HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM
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MOTION TO APPROVE:	MR. FRIEDMAN
SECONDED:	MR. PLATT
AYES:	ALL
NAYS	NONE

RESOLUTION NO. 220-16	ADMONISHING THE VOORHEES FIRE DISTRICT FOR FAILING TO RESPECT AND HONOR THE YOM KIPPUR HOLIDAY
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Mayor Mignogna

I know there were some proposed changes to the proposed resolution, so if you could be so kind as to-

Mr. Platt

Mayor, with all due respect I am confused with regard to item three, based upon our understanding in our caucus meeting and with what has been stated here tonight, I was prepared to state based upon the changes that were agreed upon by committee in our workshop, that the Governing body hereby understands that the Voorhees Fire District intends to issue an apology. Apparently that is not the case. So, is- can I hear from the Committee as to how I deal with that? Do I read the original language as a result of what we heard this evening?

Mr. Ravitz

Yeah, if they're not going to issue an apology with JCRC then yeah.

Mr. Stuart Platt

Any issues from anyone?

Mr. Friedman

We're keeping the other changes right, Mr. Long? The other whereas changes we made.

Mr. Long

Yeah I'm keeping those Mr. Friedman, but it doesn't appear- I heard there was not going to be an apology and that would change the context of item three.

Mr. Stuart Platt

I spoke to Mr. Snyder from JCRC and he was very grateful that Mr. Hanney did reach out to him and speak with him and talked about speaking to him on Wednesday about the things that had happened. He had mentioned that were said, the district was going to continue to try to make sure that no one gets offended in the future. It was my impression that he did believe an apology of some sort was coming as well. So, I'll make you aware of that. Because number three is an item I had issues with the wording and if that's not going to be the case, I'm okay with going back to the original wording.

Mr. Hanney

Gentleman, I will give you an apology for this occurring. I was unaware of it myself, by any reference whatsoever but I will issue an apology that it got by us. There's no doubt about it. Once again, it was totally unintentional and when I talked to David Snyder on Wednesday, we've got some ideas on how to make up for this. He and I had a really brief discussion, but we are going to speak again on Wednesday and hopefully we are going to come up with something.

Mr. Long

Mr. Hanney based upon your representation I will go back to the language that we discussed, that modified language. Based upon the fact that you've indicated that there will be an apology issued.

Mr. Ravitz

Can I just say one thing real quick, being as I'm the one who had Mr. Snyder contact Mr. Hanney? If one of the things is going to be to have fire department access to those that were deprived it on Fire Prevention Night, it should not be just for Jewish kids. I'm trying to help you here. That David sends out to every Voorhees Jewish family that belongs to the JCRC or that is on his list. Because all that is, is stigmatic.

Mr. Hanney

You're saying that that was what we we're thinking, but we already said that it would be all those children who missed-

Mr. Ravitz

Okay.

Mr. Friedman

Mr. Long, what is going to be the body then of paragraph three, so we understand.

Mr. Long

Actually discussed when we we're in workshop. Not the original here, but the modified language as I understand there is going to be an apology issued.

Mr. Friedman

And that is including the threat?

Mr. Long

Pardon me?

Mr. Friedman

Including the demand part, which calls for the resignation at the bottom of the paragraph?

Mr. Long

Yes, except for the beginning is changed, the first part is being changed. It doesn't say 'Calls for them to publish a written' it says 'understands that they intend to'.

Mr. Friedman

Got it.

Mayor Mignogna

In all fairness, we did allow Mr. Hanney to come and speak further, so do you have a comment?

Mr. Stuart Platt

I appreciate the indulgence Mayor and Committee, but I heard him say is that he is going to issue an apology and that he and the JCRC and Mr. Snyder will work it out, but I don't think that's appropriate in terms of what the resolution really intended because what I think this Board is trying to do by

communicating with Mr. Snyder is to make sure the entire Board of Fire Commissioners adopts a resolution and takes action formally as the governing body of the Fire District that they made a mistake, it was wrong.

Mr. Long

It is written in those terms Mr. Platt. We understand that the Board, that the Voorhees Fire District intends to issue an apology.

Mr. Stuart Platt

I didn't hear him say that, I only heard that he intended to do it. So, I think there is a difference between one person that may have some contrition, it's another thing if the body, the public body.

Mr. Long

I understand it's couched in terms of the body; it certainly wouldn't reference an individual.

Mayor Mignogna

I would like to give Mr. Hanney a chance to respond, Mr. Hanney if you please, they said that the apology that you made reference to would be on behalf of the Board.

Mr. Hanney

Yes, the apology will be a resolution before the Fire Board.

Mayor Mignogna

Thank you, I wanted to clear that up.

Mr. Long

Madam Clerk do we have a motion and a second?

Mr. Ravitz

I thought we had discussed reading the resolution?

Mr. Long

Yes, after the motion and a second.

Mayor Mignogna

We have a motion and a second.

Mr. Long

(Reads Resolution 220-16 to include the amendments)

Mayor Mignogna

We have a motion and a second is there any discussion?

Mr. Harry Platt

I just wanted to say what I said in the caucus, I also adopt the last part in part three about asking for resignations. I think that between Mr. Hanney and Dave Snyder that this will be done in the proper way, I hope it will be done in the proper way. I'm going to vote for the resolution, I think it's important, but I just had some issue with that wording and I think it will be fine.

Mr. Long

Mr. Platt if I may address that, I just want to indicate to you or anyone else and you did raise those concerns earlier it's an express condition that only comes into effect if the first portion of no formal apology is lacking.

Mr. Friedman

I agree with Harry, I'll support the resolution given the fact that, you know it's all about providing knowledge and awareness and education and I believe that Mr. Hanney and the Fire District has been contrite and understand that it is a serious issue. As a Jew, growing up where I did, I didn't have a ton of Jewish friends so I did see anti-Semitism I played football in central Pennsylvania, in Amish country and it wasn't the best of Judaism that it is here in Camden County, so I've been through real anti-Semitism and I've seen quite a bit of it. I mean obviously my family is very happy here. I share Deputy Mayor Ravitz's passion for our faith and for Israel and for standing up for our faith immensely. That being said, what I believe happened was unfortunate. I think there was a level of unawareness and ignorance in some respect for some of the individuals; however, I deal with evidence. I don't see any evidence that there was an intent to hurt people of the Jewish religion I think that there is speculation are unfounded and I just don't see it. In that I do agree that we did get away from the intent issue, but that bothers me that there is some kind of accusation on intent, but I think that's kind of gone away. I agree it was reckless, I agree it was extremely negligent all the different standards we use in law. I think that the Fire Commissioners

have learned their lesson, that's why I am supporting this resolution. But I don't agree with calling for resignations. I do believe that Commissioner Hanney and the Fire Board are going to take this seriously. Mr. Snyder is a good man he's done a lot of good work with a lot of organizations and I look forward to seeing the acknowledgement of the issue that occurred here, it was unfortunate. I don't think it will happen again. I appreciate you working with us Mr. Hanney and rectifying the issue that has affected several people.

Mr. Ravitz

Two things. If I didn't attend the Fire Commissioners meeting on Thursday night and I just sat back just did nothing and took my daughter to dinner, we wouldn't be here, none of this would be going on and that would make me wrong too. In a diverse community like we have everybody deserves respect, everybody who lives here deserves respect, everybody's religion deserves respect, everybody race and creed deserves the utmost respect and that's what this is about. Ignorance-you could all be the victim of ignorance and I don't think you know until you're the focus of it how you would react unless you've been there. I thought we were way passed. It's 2016. And the, everybody likes to use the word hateful antics, it's the Donald Trump nonsense which I said clearly at your meeting that Donald Trump and Hilary Clinton you know, none of the above, whatever, any kind of hateful rhetoric, any kind of ignorance, bullying, is not acceptable. And I will go to the wall for my religion; I will go to the wall for anyone's religion. And the Jewish Community Relations Council just so we're all clear does the same. The anti-defamation league does the same. When there are riots in cities the anti-defamation league is there, it's not just there for Jews, the JCRC is there. They're not just there for the Jews. So, I think it's a shame and I think at the end I said that I was ashamed for the first time, the one time in my life to have my daughter there and be a resident, because I know how to explain this all to her. So, that being said I would like to ask for a roll call vote on this resolution and I'd ask Mr. Hanney when you take, when your resolution is brought forward, that I understand that you've agreed to tonight for the Fire District, I ask you to take a roll call vote as well.

Mayor Mignogna

Any other discussion? We have a motion and a second; may we have a roll call vote please?

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

RESOLUTION NO. 221-16

OPPOSSING THE USE OF PARCC TESTING IN
NEW JERSEY SCHOOLS

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

RESOLUTION NO. 222-16

AUTHORIZING PARTICIPATION IN A PRICING
AGREEMENT WITH CAMDEN COUNTY FOR THE
PURCHASE OF SODIUM CHLORIDE AND PRE-
TREATED LIQUID ENHANCED SODIUM
CHLORIDE

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

RESOLUTION NO.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 12, 2016
REGISTRAR'S REPORT FOR SEPTEMBER 2016
BILLS POSTED FOR OCTOBER 24, 2016

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

COMMENTS FROM COMMITTEE

Mayor Mignogna

I would just like to remind everybody that our Annual Halloween Festival is this Sunday, October 30th, 1PM to 4 PM here at the Voorhees Town Center.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mr. Hanney

Since, I'm here I'm just going to talk a little bit about this. I wanted to talk about some of the actions that Committee has taken recently, one being the Committee hired an auditor to come and visit us. We have not heard from that-

Mr. Ravitz

Commissioner Silary is back in the room

Mr. Long

No, I was not actually pointing at you, I was pointing at my son, since we are talking about, whose sitting in front of you. If- no he does not have to leave, I am going to ask him to get Mr. Platt for me if he wouldn't mind. Well, that's not my advice to give you, I do agree with Mr. Tavani on that part, that's his advice to give you. He and I differ on opinions, so you need to listen to him not me.

Mayor Mignogna

Mr. Hanney.

Mr. Hanney

I will be brief; I will try to be brief. We have not heard from your auditor yet but we are welcoming that person when they come. Our books are completely reconciled up to date all bills are paid and we are well in the black. We are for the first time in my memory with the department in perfect condition to be audited. So that's absolutely welcome. Also, I know you have had some folks come and testify, specifically the union and some other retired union members. I can only tell you from a public safety standpoint, we have never been in better shape. Our manning is better than it has been. The schedule that Deputy Chief Wharton has worked out has actually saved enormous money for the district and covered the hours much better than it has before. On the upside to that, which is an upside by itself, it also has allowed the district to end, and we did this with the contract we were offered, it ended a long tradition of pretty much abusive over time practices that were built in contractually to the old contract, so that nobody has a right of first refusal and we were able to use part timers for different activities and we were able to cover those different shifts better without incurring the huge overtime that we've had in the past, which is really a major contributor now in terms of where we are of a balanced budget. We started the year in a terrible hole and now we are going to come out of this year well ahead. The savings that we have managed, there is a vote coming up on the November 8th ballot that will approve one of our ladder trucks that is going to save this township over the next four and a half years more than a million dollars. Actually the right figure is about 1.4 million dollars by buying this ladder truck for \$235,000.00 instead of paying 1.5 for a brand new one. And the thing only has 14,000 miles on it. So it's really in great shape and it's just a great deal. We've had other examples and I could go down a long list of them, but probably another \$250,000.00 to \$300,000.00 in different activities initiated by Deputy Chief Wharton including a maintenance program that has saved more than \$50,000.00 this year. Just changing our own oil and belts and tires and breaks and different things that we were able to do ourselves within house that we didn't pay Campbell's Supply to do has saved this much money. So small things, a lot of small things, a long list, probably at least twenty or more small things but adding up to big money this year have put this Township, this Fire Department in great financial shape. And when it comes to the public safety issue, which is always the primary issue, and I'm sure this is an issue that has been raised by those who have come and spoken negatively, this, all of our career and our volunteers have been mutually trained for the first time ever this year. And for the first time, in memory, they've actually been training with all of the surrounding towns. Including Cherry Hill, and these mutual training exercises that are scheduled on a regular basis, are really so beneficial because it's not just an internal type of thing it is an external learning experience that really really helps everybody, especially when we are working with the Cherry Hill group because they have a lot great training over there that we're taking advantage of and we're working cooperatively with them on, you know, different sharing of equipment and sharing of time where we position vehicles for coverage and everything. So when we're looking at it at as a whole, it really is a much much better situation and I know that you've hired a group to collect signatures of the possible takeover of the District, but I would ask you to take a very hard look at the other side of this. And we can get into more detail, I'm bringing this up right now because I'm here tonight, but we can actually schedule another time for me to be back and I said I would be back, but I got back now because we finally do have it all together. And it would be a shame to break up what we finally got fixed after, and it took eighteen months to get this fixed, from the previous administration. So I know you're collecting the signatures, fine, but I would suggest that we schedule another

meeting and we go down the list and take another hard look at what these new schedules have created, where we are with all of the vehicles that we've just signed to, we're having three new vehicles being delivered next year and our plan for the first time ever by taking those vehicles it's a lease purchase type of situation in five years we can have these vehicles, which an enormous amount of work has gone into making sure that these vehicles are the exact right vehicles for this Township. I mean for the size of the motors in them to what they hold all of the compartments and how they're positioned, the truck committee and a lot of the Firefighters did an enormous amount of work on this. The goal that within five years, what will happen is, we will be able to pay a six year equivalent lease and own those vehicles and have them in use for the following six years, with no cost, no additional leasing cost, no additional purchase cost and we would have a really good period there to make other investments that would benefit the town enormously, without having those major major costs. So, a lot of forethought has gone into this, and again I can't say it often enough, I give just enormous credit to Deputy Chief Wharton for all the work he has done. I mean I can't- you talk to any fire fighter here, chances are you're going to the office at two o'clock in the morning and you find him there working. I mean he's just working that hard and doing that well and he's a very bright individual. So I want to give all praise to him for what he's doing, we're fully supporting him and I'd like to see all the good things that he has created stay in place. If we can schedule another meeting in a month or two, you know, whenever you want, I'd love to go through all those details with you at that time.

Mr. Harry Platt

One other thing, have your financials person speak to the district and get some answers back and see what's been going on.

Mr. Stuart Platt

I'm sorry?

Mr. Platt

The financials.

Mr. Stuart Platt

Well, the financial report, by the way, the report that the Governing Body did is part of its decision on, had to do with finances as well from Dr. Harry Carter who is a Fire Manager, Fire District expert, so this wasn't done without any information. There is an implication that there was, we had obviously information that we had received a vote of no confidence from the career firefighters and the EMT's. We had these gentlemen for rating reduction because it- because statements made in that document showed- to answer your questions, I just want to - we've made it, there have been OPRA requests made over time of the Fire District and after a lot of fighting and waiting, unfortunately, some information was received, additional information was requested about a month ago. Only recently did we receive that information, we are still waiting for additional information but I anticipate the completion of the financial report will be coming within the next two weeks, about the next fourteen to thirty days. Two to four weeks, assuming we get the rest of the information on time.

Mr. Hanney

Just to readdress what Mr. Platt said, The SMP reduction didn't happen. It didn't happen because they saw that we got things on track. Okay so that did not end up costing the tax payers more money and that was a very, very important hurdle to overcome. Again, kudos to Deputy Chief Wharton for making that happen. So the SMP is not an issue. Harry Carter's information, believe it or not is old because of all the progress that we've made. At the time he was there, we had quite frankly, the previous administration had stuck five bills in a drawer that weren't paid that cost us \$600,000.00 deficit to be carried into this year, it was really bills from last year that were not budgeted by the previous administrator. Those were paid and went away and the other deficit which was about \$137,000.00 that was owed to New Jersey American Water that was paid back in June, so there are no deficits with anything right now and a lot of the information that Dr. Carter would have collected legitimately back in the Spring, are just simply not issues anymore. So, these are the type, this is the type of information and when it comes to the no confidence thing the union I have to say is acting in their own selfishness. We've really did, we only gave them a very minor increase this year we changed the schedule which they did not like, we eliminated all of that abusive overtime, which quite frankly they were making a lot of money from. There was a lot of people there who were making a lot of money on overtime and they're not making it now, so they're very unhappy. But, you know we offered them a contract, they came back once, sort of and they haven't been back since and we've been waiting for them to come back and actually negotiate. Funny thing now we actually have a little bit of room to negotiate with them and maybe actually give them something. But they haven't come back, they decided instead to take the route of no confidence and voting no confidence with Deputy Chief Wharton is just ridiculous because anyone that knows him anyone in that department realized what kind of job that he is doing. So, this is something that is on its face ridiculous. And they also did it to the past chief and the chief before that. It is a tactic that the Union does when they do this no confidence thing and if you take a hard look at where this department is right now it's not justified whatsoever and we've got our ducks in a row and I can only tell you that, but we can sit down and have another meeting and go through the details on this, I don't have that list on me right now, but we're ready we're there. I couldn't have said that even a month ago, but we're there now and it took eighteen months to get there but we've corrected the previous administration, which was ten years of

just sloppy, okay. I won't call it intentional, but it was sloppy administration and it was not good administration and that has been corrected and mostly by Deputy Chief Wharton. Thank you.

Bob Lancaster
12 Cambridge Way

We had a few people who were here and we want to make sure we are respectful of your time, so I just want to make sure that we get to the point. On the 16th, there was a, for lack of a better term, a large celebration that took place outside of our neighborhood where there is going to be a 30 million dollar Hindu Temple. I don't, I've been in Voorhees, I've went to Eastern, I mean I'm a lifer. I have never experienced the amount of noise on that Sunday, it was absolutely uncalled for. I've never been in front of you know, you all, I've spoken to some of you from time to time, but I will tell you it was an embarrassment. One of the neighbors actually lost the sale of a home because of that noise and I really hope you all are addressing whether it be the traffic, the noise, the trash. Something's got to be done. It's completely unacceptable.

Mayor Mignogna

We certainly became aware of the issue. I know there were a number of complaints in our Police, that we heard about and other members of this committee heard about. I can assure you that our planning board solicitor, Mr. Platt had a lengthy and direct conversation with the attorney representing the Temple and in no uncertain terms explained to him that this was not going to happen again and in fact if there were a further violations or issues, they would not be issued any type of CO to move forward with their project. Am I stating that correctly Mr. Platt?

Mr. Stuart Platt

Yes, Mayor. We spoke to the attorney as soon as we got the complaints and it was October 16th.

Mayor Mignogna

It was a Saturday correct?

Mr. Ravitz

No, Sunday

Mr. Stuart Platt

And it was my birthday but nobody had any kind of party for my birthday and that's okay. But it is a serious issue. The Mayor and other members of the community did reach out to me because this organization was granted a use variance to authorize them to have this place of worship, a temple in the Buddhist faith for, Buddhist religion I should say, for their congregation. As part of all of those approvals, they continually represented that this would not have a detrimental impact upon the neighborhood, i.e. traffic, noise and all of the things that you're talking about. After speaking with the Mayor I did reach out to their attorney who represented them and you saw some people being animated and upset here, see I'm a Voorhees resident, I'm not a lifer but I am half a lifer, and I made it clear and on no uncertain terms that on behalf of the Township Committee and the residents that this cannot happen again. The primary problem was the use of a loud speaker to play music and other things. I told them on no uncertain terms to pull the plug and they indicated that they will and that that will not happen again and they told me on no uncertain terms that if they continue on this pattern or at least my legal opinion, it would be a violation of their approval and the improvement can be revoked as well. So I think that, the Mayor and committee absolutely hear what you're saying and we got right on it and again I didn't have any birthday parties but I put down my little piece of birthday cake and dealt with the attorney, I happened to have his cell number and I spoke to him. He did apologize and he said it won't happen again, but we take a look at people's actions not just their words and we will see what happens. So we're on top of it.

Mr. Lancaster

I appreciate that, what's concerning me is that this seems like they've been, it gets more and more also add to that **(UNCLEAR?) 1:35:10ish**. This particular day it continued for five hours.

Jay LaRocca
11 Cambridge Way

It was five hours on a Sunday. From 11am to 4:30pm. Loud. I recorded in my back yard and I'm sure you'll be able to hear this. (plays audio)

Mr. Lancaster

This isn't the first Sunday that they've had it loud. I want to be a good neighbor also, but it just seems like every time they're stepping it up.

Mayor Mignogna

Well it was explained to them as Mr. Platt said, and we appreciate that you want to be a good neighbor well they need to be a good neighbor too and they're approvals are contingent upon them respecting the neighborhood and following the approvals that they were given, so we will monitor that closely. We can assure you that if there are ongoing issues or complaints that they will be addressed and as Mr. Platt said, this project could be brought to a halt if they do not abide by these approvals and conditions of the approval.

Ms. Nocito

Mr. Platt would you mind reaching out to them once again and reaffirming what you spoke about and remind them that we did have residents that came to express their concerns and to make sure that they clearly understand that this is an issue and to make sure it doesn't happen again.

Mr. Platt

Absolutely, I will follow it up with some correspondence as well.

Mayor Mignogna

And our Chief of Police is as always, here with us this evening, he is aware of the issue and we will make sure that it is closely monitored.

Mr. Ravitz

I feel that some there have been some complaints from some business owners on that corridor as well and, so this-

Mr. Lancaster

I believe there were some complaints from Berlin Township also.

Mr. Ravitz

And just so you know too there is, myself and the Mayor, one or the other sits on the planning board. Committeewoman Nocito sits on the planning board, so there's people here who are very active and have been for years on the planning board. So we have a meeting Wednesday night and we can also talk about this in caucus as well.

Mr. Lancaster

We appreciate it, thank you.

ADJOURNMENT