

**WORK SESSION
MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

**January 25, 2022
DELRAN, NJ**

Sunshine Statement: Be advised that proper notice has been given by the Township Council in accordance with the sunshine law in the following manner. Notice advertised in the Burlington County Times and Camden Courier Post on January 12, 2022 and posted on the bulletin board on the same date.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Smith, Mr. Jeney, Ms. Parejo, Mr. Lyon and Mr. Burrell were present.

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Catrambone, Mayor, Mr. Siciliano, Solicitor, Mr. Winckowski, Engineer and Ms. Eggers, Township Clerk.

DELRAN WELCOME COMMITTEE

Mr. Burrell reported that this was part of the recommendations from the Communications Committee and the Mayor has been working on this issue. A memo was provided in the agenda packet. Mr. Burrell asked Mayor Catrambone if there was anything he would like to add.

Mayor Catrambone reported that the committee would compile Township phone number, information for trash, recycling, parks and recreation, construction and school information. This information packet could also be provided to realtors to provide the information. The committee would include individuals from various organizations and anyone Council would like to include.

Mr. Burrell stated that he feels this is a great idea. There may be some students that can help to prepare the welcome packet. One of the biggest issues we will face is identifying new residents.

Mr. Jeney stated that there are resources available to find homes that have recently sold.

Mr. Catrambone stated that we would like to include a realtor on the welcome committee.

Mr. Smith asked if we could provide the welcome packet information to the leasing office for the apartments.

Mr. Catrambone stated that there will also be a new residents page on the website.

Ms. Parejo asked that the welcome packet be available in multiple languages.

Mr. Burrell asked if the Mayor has individuals prepared to serve on the committee.

Mr. Catrambone stated that he will provide the information for the next meeting and if there are any suggestions from Council, please let him know.

REPORTS

Ms. Eggers – No report.

Mr. Catrambone – Mr. Catrambone congratulated Joe Bellina on his appointment of Interim Business Administrator and thanked Government Strategy Group for the services they will provide in the search for a permanent Business Administrator.

Mr. Catrambone reported that last week he became aware of a new blog that seemed to be focusing on one individual. While he fundamentally disagrees with the narrative on the first blog as the manipulation of facts during Council meeting over the last few months has been something we are all dealing with, Mr. Catrambone stated that he does not condone this new blog's nonsense in any way. He does not know the motivation behind the person doing this but we will not be dragged into a blog war. This behavior only further distracts from the work we have to do. This blog, if created by a Delran resident, is not helping.

Mr. Catrambone stated that he wanted to update the residents that he recently submitted a letter to the Local Finance Board and is also waiting on a response from the Comptroller's Office on the audit he requested.

Mr. Siciliano – No report.

Ms. Parejo – Ms. Parejo congratulated and welcomed Joe Bellina.

Ms. Parejo stated that she is also getting a lot of questions as to when the work on Chester Avenue will be completed. From what PSE&G has indicated, they should be completed in approximately three weeks weather permitting. The final road restoration will be completed in the summer. Ms. Parejo thanked Mr. Winckowski for his quick response to the issue.

Mr. Burrell asked that the Mayor have the Communications Director add the information to the website and Facebook.

Mr. Smith – Mr. Smith welcomed Joe Bellina and stated that he is looking forward to working with him.

Mr. Smith stated that for resident interested in at home covid testing they can visit the website or call the 1-800 number. Also, N95 masks will be available for free at retailers including CVS and Walgreens.

Mr. Jeney – Mr. Jeney welcomed Mr. Bellina to Delran. We look forward to working with him.

Mr. Lyon – Mr. Lyon welcomed Joe Bellina. We are happy to have him on board.

Mr. Burrell – Mr. Burrell echoed the comments from the Mayor related to the recent blog and stated that we need to start acting like adults.

Mr. Burrell welcomed Joe Bellina.

Mr. Burrell stated that we are mourning the loss of Nick Stone and Avery Young, both two students that he went to High School with. Thoughts and prayers are with the community and their families.

PUBLIC PORTION

Mr. Jeney made a motion to open the meeting to the public. The motion was seconded by Mr. Smith. All were in favor, motion approved.

Mr. Burrell read the rules of decorum.

Matt Gabor, stated that during the discussion on the Welcome Committee it was mentioned the committee would present the information the day of closing or the day after which sounds like it will be in person. Mr. Gabor asked if that is accurate.

Mr. Catrambone stated that if it is possible, yes it will be in person.

Mr. Gabor asked if they will be volunteers.

Mr. Catrambone stated yes.

Mr. Gabor asked if Government Strategy has been retained to find a Solicitor.

Mr. Burrell stated no, Government Strategy Group had been retained to provide Interim Business Administrator Services and also recruitment services for a permanent replacement.

Mr. Gabor stated that he meant Administrator not Solicitor. Mr. Gabor stated that Government Strategy has been engaged to find a permanent replacement going forward instead of the Township having the ability or talent to find one on our own. Mr. Gabor asked why there was a need for the added expense.

Mr. Burrell stated that we did advertise for the position when Mr. Hatcher was still here. Three candidates were interviewed and they were either asking too much money or were not qualified. The goal was not to expend money for recruitment but we are in the situation were the position needs to be filled and we are going to rely on their expertise.

Mr. Gabor stated both the Mayor and Council President reference a blog but did not provide a name. Mr. Gabor stated that he has an issue with Government trying to silence someone on the web and asked if they could provide the name of the blog.

Mr. Burrell stated that he doesn't have the name of the blog but it is something to the effect of sunshinedisinfacts. The blog makes allegations that a certain person fake cancer and he feels that is inappropriate. Everyone has free speech but it doesn't mean we have to agree.

Mr. Gabor asked what the point of mentioning the blog was, if they weren't going to give the name.

Mr. Catrambone stated that this blog was against an individual not at the Township but he felt it was not helping the dialogue or interaction we are trying to have. He is not going to promote the blog because he doesn't agree with what it says.

Mr. Gabor thanked Council for their time.

Barb Littleton, resident, stated that the Mayor and the Communications Director have put out that they are for transparency and to her that is the most important thing. Ms. Littleton gave the definition of transparency which is the government's obligation to share information with citizens that is needed to make informed decisions and hold officials accountable for the conduct of the people's business. With the information we are getting, through OPRA and at meetings, she doesn't feel they are getting that. Ms. Littleton asked if an investigation was completed by Council after they made the settlement with Dunphy's. As far as they can tell, the \$300,000 came from taxpayer's money and she has a problem with that knowing four landscaping businesses operating in A-1 zones were allowed to operate without permits or use variances. Everyone should be treated the same. Ms. Littleton stated that if the case went to court, the insurance company would have paid and the taxpayers would have only paid \$75,000. Ms. Littleton stated that this all comes back to transparency, which she isn't seeing from Council.

Mr. Burrell stated that with respect to Dunphy's, the question has been asked and answered. A lengthy statement was read at the meeting when the settlement was approved. It was brought to our attention that a lawsuit may be filed and we sat in negotiations with their attorney and reviewed the claims. Mr. Siciliano prepared a memo about the potential exposure financially. Certain claims are covered and some are not. That is why a settlement was made, it was purely a business decision. The insurance company did provide \$75,000 towards the settlement.

Patrick Duff, stated that the blog the Mayor and Council mentioned is a blog that is talking about him and stating he faked his cancer and other defamatory things against him. He can assure everyone that he is not faking his cancer.

Mr. Duff asked if the Mayor needs to have a surety bond.

Mr. Catrambone stated that he doesn't believe so but asked the Attorney to answer.

Mr. Siciliano stated that the answer is no.

Mr. Duff asked if the Solicitor is bonded.

Mr. Siciliano stated no, he has professional liability insurance.

Mr. Duff asked if officials, such as Ted Reimel, are required to have a bond.

Mr. Siciliano stated that they are not individually bonded. He believes the only individually bonded employees are the Assessor, Tax Collector, CFO but he can further research the issue if they would like.

Mr. Duff asked if the BURLCO JIF is considered a bond.

Mr. Burrell stated that they provide insurance.

Mr. Duff asked if there is any stipulation in the insurance that caused the Township not to go through the insurance company with regards to Dunphy's because the deductible was only \$75,000. Mr. Duff stated that Dunphy's never filed a tort claim or a demand letter with the Township yet the Township settled for \$300,000. The big issue with that is the Township is settling on illegal advice that the Solicitor gave the Mayor and they all signed off on the settlement. Mr. Duff asked if the Council voted on the payout.

Mr. Burrell stated that there was a Resolution and vote.

Mr. Duff asked if Council thinks it's a problem that the individuals that committed the illegal and unethical acts were the ones to negotiate the settlement. He is asking that the Council ask the Attorney General for an investigation.

Mr. Burrell stated that there was a demand letter issued to the Township. The goal was to keep this out of litigation. Allegations are not facts until proven.

Mr. Lyon made a motion to close the public portion of the meeting, seconded by Mr. Jeney. All were in favor, motion approved.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At this time, Mr. Burrell asked for a motion to adopt Resolution 2022-31 authorizing the executive session.

TOWNSHIP OF DELRAN RESOLUTION 2022-31

AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING: CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS – DELRAN EMERGENCY SQUAD

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 10-4.6 et seq. (Open Public Meeting Act) provides for the exclusion of the public from public meeting for certain reasons; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to close the work session meeting of January 25, 2022 for the following reason:

1. Contract Negotiations – Delran Emergency Squad

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the meeting is closed for the reasons above in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act.

Mr. Lyon made a motion, seconded by Mr. Smith to adopt Resolution 2022-31.

There being no questions, the roll was called.

Mr. Smith, Mr. Jeney, Ms. Parejo, Mr. Lyon and Mr. Burrell voted aye

Ayes: 5

Nays: None

Motion Approved

Ms. Parejo made a motion to end the closed session and reopen the meeting to the public. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lyon. All were in favor, motion approved.

There was no action taken after executive session.

Mr. Lyon made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Jeney. All were in favor; the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jamey Eggers, Township Clerk

