

**TOWNSHIP OF MONTVILLE
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS - DISTRICT NO. 2**

MINUTES OF THE BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING HELD AT FIRE HEADQUARTERS, AT 6:30 PM

August 18, 2010

IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT, ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THIS MEETING WAS GIVEN BY HAVING SAME INCLUDED IN THE ANNUAL SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS WHICH WAS POSTED AT THE MONTVILLE TOWNSHIP OFFICES, MAILED TO THE OFFICIAL DISTRICT NEWSPAPER, THE DAILY RECORD, SUBMITTED TO ANY PERSON REQUESTING SAME, AND PLACED ON FILE IN THE DISTRICT CLERK'S OFFICE. THE NOTICE PROVIDED THE DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF THE MEETING AND AGENDA TO THE EXTENT KNOWN.

QUORUM: A quorum was declared present based on the presence of President Kenneth E. Breeman, Vice President Richard D. Conklin, Treasurer Edward D. Adams, and Commissioner William E. Mac Study.

Absent: Clerk Russell P. Lipari

Also present: District Administrator Harry Schaub.

CALL TO ORDER: President Breeman called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Commissioner Adams asked what is on everyone's mind.

Commissioner Conklin said he doesn't want to sound like a broken record and he will speak for himself, I am only one Commissioner and I think that I have mentioned in past meetings and we all read the paper every day and things are tight. I know the Montville Twp Committee, they totally knocked out all of their benefits as far as hospitalization and things go, they cut back. Everybody seems to be cutting back. So just like this Board, there's five of us here, there's gotta be some way that we can cut corners.

Adams: Do you have any ideas about where you think we could cut back?

Conklin: I have a list of certain things and I don't care if I get any hard feelings on it or anything like that I have some suggestions. Some of it may seem trivial but again they are only suggestions from one, but again I'm hoping that if I say a couple of things maybe some commissioners will say, ok maybe that's not a good idea, but how about this? In fact whatever I mention is open for debate, so we can go on from there. These are only starting points but if I were Dictator tomorrow and I could pass it myself these are things that I would do. Harry I know that you got nailed with like a 2% you have to start paying on your hospitalization?

Administrator Schaub: 1.5%

Conklin: Okay. If Harry has to start paying that, I thought even though we get paid stipends they're nothing to begin with, I'd like to see as a good faith gesture that we all give back 1.5 or 2% of our **Commissioners' fees**. I'm not talking about the working side, he got his work to do and you've got yours, I'm talking about Commissioner fees only that we would give back some of that. As far as I'm concerned I'd donate the whole damn thing either to the town or to the fire department. I think it would be a good start. If it doesn't show anything else I think it would show a good faith effort to the community and to the fire department of what we're doing.

Discretionary costs, and again I've been here for a year and I still don't know what I would call discretionary costs because some things come through and I look at them and I have questions on them but I'm not that familiar with the process to know what they are. So please don't think that these are kinda trivial or goofy but I'm saying these are discretionary or incidental costs.

Bottled water, it might be \$2.00 a month or it might be \$10.00 a year it's perception, we have MUA water and its Montville Twp water out of our aquifers whatever the cost may be. Why?

Car washes, I know there's car washes and the cars need to be cleaned in the fact that deterioration from salt could be there but if we can limit them. My suggestion would be, and again I'm just pulling this out of my hat and shootin from the hip, that we gave each one of the vehicles 12 washes a year, you get one a month.

Adams: That's about what we're doing.

Commissioner Mac Study: Well now as a construction guy who gets a company vehicle, you don't get car washes. You get a vehicle and you wash it yourself.

Adams: You get to use it all the time right?

Mac Study: So do they.

Adams: No they don't, only business. Neither one of these guys use their vehicles for personal use.

Mac Study: They're not carte blanche?

Adams: No, no, no, no. Only used for business, both of them.

Conklin: The district owns those vehicles and to let those vehicles get deteriorated from salt and from something else, that wouldn't make sense either. But my point is I don't know if they're one time a week or one time a month or whatever, I'm just throwing it out there.

Schaub: Just so you know last month's car wash bill was \$8.95 for the whole month and we didn't have any bill for this month.

Mac Study: I've seen previous months that the bill was \$26.00, \$26.00. That was only one month but if Dan washed the vehicle during the day while he's here doing things we could save \$26.00, \$26.00, \$26.00

Conklin: **Seminars and Training**. I understand that firematic-wise guys have to go to training sessions and I know the chief is always having a hard straight because he's not always getting certain training. I'd like to take a hard look at'em. Harry, I'm not talking about you or Dan but I'm just suggesting that they're all free seminars.

Schaub: So are ours.

Conklin: Then that's fine but I'm just throwing it out there. Please let's just concentrate on any free seminars that are out there rather than any training seminars that we have to pay for other than firematic training or anything like that. I would suggest that.

Adams: Before we go too far off of that I think we should discuss that. The Training budget that's in here is for the firemen themselves. It's not for the Administration side of the operation; it's for the volunteers and to the point that they all go to the same place we pay \$125 to \$200 some are a little more but that's set by the county of Morris and I don't know anybody that's doing that stuff for free. So maybe we could just take that off the table, unless you have some other ideas about it.

Conklin: Again, you're a little bit more informed than I am. These are things that I'm throwing down here and I'm looking for feedback and if my questions are answered and I feel comfortable with it, then end of story. We talked very briefly during the last meeting about **energy conservation**. I think there are some audits out there. Jersey Central used to do a free audit.

Adams: Not for commercial. We can ask and find out.

Conklin: At this point in time I bet if we checked with Adam Brewer or someone else, there maybe something out there that he can point us in the direction to. The town is going green and they got their green council, maybe they could throw us a couple of ideas to go our way. **Hot water heater**; I don't know what it's set at. I know there's a minimum for dishwashers and things like that, might be 140 degrees or whatever.

Adams: No, we have it way down.

Schaub: When this place was built, it was built with independent heaters except for the third floor. We're down to three hot water heaters, two for the first floor and one for the second floor; we've cut them in half really. One thing is they burned out too fast and they're really expensive compared to a regular hot water heater.

Adams: We went with point-of-service hot water heaters so that they wouldn't come on unless there was demand on it. This is all stuff that we put together when this building was being built about going as green as we could at the time to keep energy costs down.

Schaub: This building is only twelve years old and it was built with energy conservation in mind with insulation, stone, these lights for instance are 99 watts, the normal is 120 watts.

Adams: Also the parking lot lights. What are they set at Harry?

Schaub: Half of them go on around 8:00 PM the other half go on later and the middle two that are the most wattage go off at 1:00AM because there is really nobody here, but all the perimeter lights stay on so there is still enough lighting for security and if there is a call at night.

Conklin: So they are on timers?

Schaub: They are on timers and also they have electric eye so that if there is a hazy day they don't light up.

Adams: The air handlers on the third floor have timers on them. The lights don't, and when you get a couple of the kids on the third floor playing pool and they walk out and don't shut off the lights, I can't tell you the number of times I have stopped here and go up in the elevator shut the lights off and leave. Because we're conscious about the money we spend.

Mac Study: What about putting the sensors upstairs?

Schaub: For the lights? They probably wouldn't let you do that. I know Lincoln Park has got it in their bays. You could put them in the bays but if you had an affair going on and the lights were not controllable, then they would give you a hard time, half of them at least.

Conklin: I was a little disappointed because I think when we voted on our last budget, holding even for the year, I think you went up \$9,000 or something like that.

Schaub: We held the bottom line.

Conklin: But when I got my tax bill we went up a penny per hundred. Why would...

Schaub: No, no, no, not a penny. It was 7.4 now it is 7.5 it's a hundredth of a penny.

Adams: It's one one-hundredth of a penny.

Schaub: And that's not our fault. The town is required to give a certification. They have to give us a copy and send a copy to Trenton. They had 88 tax appeals going on and they were afraid that they would be short at the end of the year.

Conklin: So bottom line is their ratables were different than we thought that they were going to be.

Schaub: Yes and the town adjusted it accordingly.

Conklin: Let me ask you this because you're more informed than I would be. How did we fare compared to Pine Brook and Montville?

Scjhaub: Pine Brook stayed at 6 and I think Montville is at 6.

Conklin: Well did they go up or down or did they stay even also?

Schaub: Pine Brook stayed the same; they did the same thing we did.

Adams: But to use our bottom line in this district against the other two is apples and oranges because we have bond payments on this building and they don't.

Conklin: No, I understand that. Just perception to the public, did they go up or did they go down and we went up? Because I didn't see what Pine Brook or Montville's was.

Adams: So, we actually shaved off eight million dollars of our ratables off the top of our head, and it turned out that it was more than that that we lost.

Conklin: The only other question I got is like when I look at invoices and things both Verizon and Cablevision they are fairly high, what are they for?

Adams: Verizon is for the FDDA lines...

Schaub: You remember we moved onto Optimum and we saved \$675 a month off of Verizon's bill.

Conklin: These are phone services, computers?

Schaub: Phone. And we shaved Station 2 down to local service only and went down \$28 a month. Next month you will see the \$600 reduction in the Verizon bill; those were the FDDA lines that we discontinued that we shared with the other two districts. We only paid a third of that.

Conklin: Now what do the FDDA lines do? Are they for the siren?

Schaub: Those lines were for the radios.

Conklin: What about Cablevision?

Schaub: Cablevision is now our telephone outside of that its \$46 a month.

Conklin: What do we have in the line of phone service? How many lines do we have coming in here?

Schaub: Well, it doesn't matter because it went down to \$200 from \$675 and if you didn't have that many lines you would pay more so the amount of lines now it doesn't really matter.

Conklin: So it's based on business service what we have now?

Schaub: Yes.

Conklin: Just one or two other issues. When I first came on board, right after that, YOU and I made a meeting with Pine Brook for a joint fire commissioners meeting for shared services. One meeting in eighteen months and it hasn't gone anywhere.

Schaub: Because the other two districts like a little autonomy.

Conklin: Well, maybe they need somebody to call a meeting together again.

Schaub: Well you can try. Tony Speciale tried that and....

Conklin: I tell you three or four years down the road, whoever's here, all this Sh__ s going to come to a head, they're gonna say enough of this crap. If they want to keep their autonomy that much they're going to shoot themselves in the foot because it's all going to come to an end.

Adams: We do do some things for instance we go to Boonton for air as a cost savings. We are saving at least \$13.50 per small bottle that we used to have filled by Cain & Sons.

Schaub: Some of the legal ads the districts' share the cost of, we share the radio ty lines. We also shared the cost of pagers with Pine Brook.

Adams: If the suggestion is to buy turnout gear together, these companies are not interested.

Mac Study: We don't have the same gear.

Adams: Right, everybody's got something different....

Conklin: I'm going beyond that. We're talking about buying a new truck in the next couple years, we're going to need something, it's a lot of money. If you're talking the square miles we have here, 5, 10, 15 what do we have 16 trucks here in Montville Township? And we get maybe two or three structure fires a year and we got all this apparatus.

Adams: Let me say for arguments sake that it's a good idea for you and for me if this firehouse stays, it's a bad idea if they close up this firehouse and the firehouse is now over at River Road.

Conklin: I could see if maybe they want to get rid of one over there at Station 2. But how do you cover Camp Aheka or something like that.

Mac Study: Correct me if I'm wrong but by insurance purposes, you have to have a firehouse within 'so many' square miles...

Schaub: We did an evaluation on our Station 2 because there were rumors about our Station 2 and Pine Brook's Station 2 and I think it cost us on an average of \$14,000 a year to keep that building running. On the other hand all the people within the area even the people in Montville's fire district get a reduction in their fire insurance because that building is sitting there, it doesn't even matter if no one goes there, they're all getting protection.

Mac Study: For insurance purpose you have to be, and that's the same with equipment.

Conklin: Where I was going with it, lets say a ladder truck. We'll use a round figure, let's say a million dollars. If all three districts bought a ladder truck rather than one district buying a ladder truck, if you have a structure fire, I don't know firematics anymore I'm so far out of this thing – tell'em dispatch automatically mutual aid; structure fire – everybody goes. Car fire, brush fire its Towaco's its Pine Brook's. Structure fire; everybody goes.

Mac Study: It doesn't work now. We don't work well....no, Montville calls Boonton before they call us, and we're second to Boonton. Pine Brook calls district 5 and us it depends what side of town it's on.

Conklin: You don't see an issue with that?

Mac Study: No. I have – we have 6 districts in Parsippany and we all work differently.

Commissioner Breeman: We call Lincoln Park because they're closer.

Schaub: Rich you gotta understand something, there is always a thought and most people think police department when they think emergencies, and we don't roam the streets looking for crime. Timing is really what you have to count. Montville Township is 21 square miles Towaco is 6 square miles. If you see a ladder truck somewhere you're probably

going to see two ladder trucks because seldom do they work all by themselves, unless it's a helper thing. I want to go to Pine Brook and help them out, I have an 18 minute run.

Adams: So the argument is for making that not a good choice to do, would be look what happens in New York when they talk about closing a firehouse, the people go nuts over that. To go back to your remarks about a ladder truck, that's one of the reasons this district never had a ladder. We never felt that we needed it here. Lincoln Park has one, Pine Brook and Boonton and we always felt that in the event that we needed a ladder, and it's happened, we can get a fairly accurate response to get it here rather than us having to spend \$800,000 or a million dollars plus the up-keep of it.

Mac Study: Well the thing is if it's not used it rots in the garage.

Conklin: Here's my point, lets say a ladder truck, you would know or the chief would know that we're not going to need a ladder truck on your average residential call. So in circumstances when we would need a ladder truck tell the dispatcher call Lincoln Park we need the ladder truck. Maybe give Lincoln Park a stipend every year.

Adams: Here's the "great wall of china" now, to be fair to you, you still have a lot of ways about how the district ran 35 years ago, this fire district has no say about that judgment call that's made, that belongs to the line officers out there. We can't go and tell the fire department how to run their operation. We provide them with the apparatus and training to do it but we don't have the ability to go.....

Conklin: But if they're in the conversation, they need to explore.

Mac Study: They've been doing that for years. How many years you've been calling Lincoln Park?

Schaub: 40

Mac Study: So it's something that.....When you deal with ladder trucks and ladder operations it's a whole different thing. The ladder needs to be in front of the building the pumper needs to be behind the ladder, you need a support ladder.

Conklin: Just a quick one here because I'm signing checks. Verizon Wireless. Who has cell phones?

Schaub: Myself, Dan, the Chief and it's also for the computer modem.

Conklin: \$280 a month??

Schaub: You will hear more about this in the regular meeting, we have been working for a couple of years on the occupancy pre-plans and that's going to be wireless.

Conklin: \$280 a month is a lot of money for wireless.

Schaub: 5 units.

Adams: You're doing data packs, that's what costs the money.

Conklin: Why do we need cell phones?

Schaub: The fire department wanted them in the beginning.

Conklin: You got radios in your cars.

Schaub: In all fairness in today's world you call the county, the emergency alarm guy....

Conklin: You can't do business from here?

Breeman: If you're on a fire scene and you have to call for hazmat or the county, you call on a cell phone; you don't talk over the radio.

Conklin: So how many is out there 3?

Schaub: Three cell phones and two links.

Adams: Mobile data ports. Harry is the fire official and also the emergency management coordinator.

Conklin: So you have a laptop in the car.

Mac Study: So why are we paying for his link for OEM?

Adams: We don't really. We have the ability to do that, but it is used for our use here for the fire official.

Conklin: Who else has one, the chief?

Schaub: No the chief is going to get one when the information is available to him that he can use. The history of each building is in the terminal server, it is updated every time there is an inspection. Outdated information is worse than no information. This system keeps everything up-to-date.

Conklin: One or two quick items. **Fuel** – trucks, building, do we use gasoline anywhere. Where, how?

Adams: We get it from the town. It took 20 years to finally get our municipal government to realize that it is a no-brainer.

Schaub: And they buy it off the county contract which is cheaper.

Mac Study: I have a question, Uniform fire Safety Act it says salary. Is that Dan?

Schaub: It's actually Alice, Dan and myself. It's broken down based on percentages.

Mac Study: And this Administration salary, is that you?

Schaub: Administration is you (commissioners), me, Alice.

Conklin: The last thing on my list is to talk about personnel.

Breeman: Not now.

Conklin: I got two items down here that I would like to have debate on and one is the **mechanic**; what they do, what the salary is, is it cost effective, I'd like to hear from the chief what he thinks about it, what the fire department thinks about it and the **full-time fire inspector position**. You and I have had a little discussion about it and I've had a discussion with Russ and it's been a year and a half and I thought about it and thought about it and I need to hear dialog from the other four commissioners and your side of it. At first I kept an open mind and I studied it for a year and I've come up with my judgment based on what I do every day, based on my job and the personnel that work under me and I compare it to here and I think that we're over-staffed.

Adams: We cannot talk about people because it is inappropriate. Dan Kiefte is here as a second guy for a daytime fireman, so we can get rid of the fire inspector position sometime down the road if you want to go that way, and you'll lose the second fireman. From my perspective I certainly wouldn't roll a truck out of here by myself. We have no daytime firemen here Monday through Friday and that's one of the big reasons why we hired the

full-time fire inspector. That is not the only job he does, that position in this district is the janitor, the snow-plower, fire inspector, daytime firemen.

Mac Study: So you're telling me that without Harry and without Dan the fire trucks don't leave this firehouse?

Adams: They do Not this firehouse. Not during the day they don't.

Mac Study: So Bobby Peer don't come, Mark Peer don't come?

Schaub: You may get the three from station two.

Conklin: Look I did a little background. A while back you said why don't I go to a fire department meeting. I didn't want to go to a meeting but I did talk with the chief. We discussed how many firefighters turn out for a call and he showed me the slips, you got 5 and 6 guys to the average of all calls.

Schaub: I'm definitely not sitting here to explain to you how the fire department operates, I'm asking you to have an open mind, and their method of bookkeeping is a little different than ours. Most of the time they have two slips; I made the fire – I made the fire can mean anything. Two guys that made the fire and then at night during recall, they show up again, they get a double credit – average attendance 23. Now we do the fire reports, Dan is the one who does the fire reports and sends them to Trenton. We know who came to the firehouse, who got on the trucks, and who came to recall. Very often you get the same guy who went to the fire also made recall. If you look at the chief's report here tonight there are 23 people. Some of them are the same people – doubled.

Mac study: Then that should be addressed from you, that a person that comes to the daytime call cannot get credit from the recall.

Schaub: That's not up to me to do.

Conklin: Can I finish what I was saying?

Mac Study: If we're paying them a stipend per credit per call and they're getting two calls.....

Conklin: Let me finish my thought. We got 30 some odd firemen on the roster. The role here is the volunteer. We're talking about one guy who is a value to the company and we're paying him to do that, in My mind he works and 8 hour day and gets vacation and all that Monday through Friday. The other 16 hours a day plus the weekends and everything else are strictly the volunteers. They don't get anything. As far as Dan goes, snow plowing, janitorial and the other work that he does, the fringe benefits alone, not salary, would far more than cover those services.

Schaub: This district actually spends less to operate....

Conklin: I don't care if we spend \$10 a year, it's irrelevant.

Schaub: It's VERY relevant. We spend less to operate than Pine Brook...

Conklin: And you could spend even less money.

Schaub: No, you won't that's the deal. We have a part-time secretary, two full-time guys, part-time mechanic, and five commissioners. Now Pine Brook doesn't have that but they spend more money. The reason we started doing this is that we found that we could save more money doing this ourselves than all the outside contracting that we were doing before.

Conklin: I'd like to hear from them. If you do \$100 a week in janitorial services, that's \$5200 a year, snow plowing, I don't know how many times a year, or if you bid it and it's \$20,000 fringe benefits for that position has got to be \$15,000 - \$20,000 a year. My point is, I can't see the need for that position.

Adams: Let me go back to the subject matter that we were talking about. You as a taxpayer and a commissioner would be completely satisfied relying on the volunteers to respond to fire calls during the day?

Conklin: Yes. If I take the state of New Jersey, they're volunteer fire departments all the way around. We are the only town that you're saying we need a paid.....

Adams: That's not true.

Mac Study: Morris Township has them, they also respond to....

Conklin: But they are paid fire departments and it's clear that we are a paid fire department. I'm talking about a volunteer organization. So to say that we NEED him I would like the chief or somebody else to tell me that our district would be in some kind of jeopardy if we didn't have a full-time paid guy here for those 8 hours a day.

Mac Study: You're saying that we need Dan here but by law by firematics you need to have three guys. You can't justify to me that he's here just as a paid firefighter.

Adams: He's not here just as a paid firefighter. A big part of why this district hired a full-time fire inspector was to help provide fire protection response to the people of the district during the work week.

Conklin: There is a risk to everything on life, to what point do you lose your liberties or - skydiving...take away the fringe benefits and everything, whatever Dan and the cleaning of the building and the janitorial services whatever else and the salary, is \$60,000 to the fire district worth the level of protection that they're getting? Is the payback right for the money that we're paying for that position? There is a lot of animosity amongst the fire department...

Adams: Stop. I will not be a part of your conversation about that stuff in a public meeting.

Conklin: It's very relevant.

Adams: We're not going to discuss that in a public meeting.

Conklin: Why not?

Adams: Because now you are interjecting personalities, you're talking about people not positions.

Conklin: Yes, I'm talking about the fire department services in this town and their morale, if it was the police force and there was no morale there or they weren't properly functioning because of something the administration or the chief would have to look at that and say I have to make a correction here and straighten it out. I think that's part of our duty to make sure that this thing runs cohesively and if there's a problem we have to look at that.

Schaub: You want to make the fire department happy and you're willing to jeopardize the people of the district and a billion dollars worth of property to make the firemen happy. Is that realistic, aren't we here to provide fire protection? Dan and I are here to help them and supplement them because we try to help in every way, doing their paperwork and we do the stuff that laws have made it very difficult for volunteers to do. We try to make their life as easy as possible. So we're going to let it all go to hell just to make them happy because they have a problem with personnel.

Conklin: I'm looking at that position, my question to all five of the fire commissioners is; is that position at \$60 - \$70 or \$80,000 a year cost effective, is the return on our investment there to have that position here? Let me go a

little bit further on this. I can only tell you what I do in life. I don't know what the budget is here. I'm working on an 85 million dollar high school in Phillipsburg. When I go to the construction site at any one given time there are probably be anywheres between 90 and 175 skilled workers on that job, minimum. The whole administrative outfit is going to work under one project manager, granted there will be a superintendent and a couple of other positions out there, one superintendent runs that whole operation. We're running here average 120 hours a week in labor and I don't see it, I don't see it. We have a very capable administrator that's fully licensed....

Schaub: You do realize that we're not "laying block"?

Mac Study: Can we discuss personnel now?

Adams: If this conversation continues about personnel, I'm walking out of this meeting. This is supposed to be a budget conversation, not supposed to be talking about personnel.

Mac Study: That why I asked, I asked if I can.

Adams: You're talking about individual personnel and their activities and I won't be party to a conversation talking about personnel during a budget workshop.

Conklin: Some things I agree might be off base, but talking about personnel under a budget issue I think is very, very apropos.

Breeman: If the position is necessary is one thing, not what they're doing in it.

Adams: If you want to discuss that we can discuss that later in a closed door session, but during a budget meeting is completely inappropriate.

Conklin: I can't say that I agree with that.

Mac Study: During the public meeting I will ask for a personnel meeting.

Commissioner Adams motioned to adjourn the budget workshop meeting at 7:31 PM. Seconded by Commissioner Mac Study. Vote being – unanimously carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Russell P. Lipari
District Clerk