

LINWOOD COMMON COUNCIL
CAUCUS MINUTES
March 24, 2010

Council President Donna Taylor called the meeting to order at 6:05 P.M., noting that the meeting had been advertised in compliance with the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act.

1. Roll Call

Present: Mayor Rick DePamphilis; Councilman Elliot Beinfest; Councilwoman Stacy DeDomenicis; Councilman Matt Levinson; Councilman Alex Marino; Councilman Ralph Paolone; Councilman Tim Tighe; and Council President Donna Taylor.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Joseph L. Youngblood, City Solicitor; Steve Mazur, Dixon Associates; Chief Jim Baker, Police Department; Hank Kolakowski, Public Works Superintendent; and Leigh Ann Napoli, Municipal Clerk.

2. Approval of Minutes Without Formal Reading

Councilwoman DeDomenicis motioned, seconded by Councilman Levinson, to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2010 Caucus meeting, without formal reading. Five members of Council were in favor with abstentions by Councilmen Beinfest and Marino. Motion was approved.

3. Mayor's Report

A. The Mayor reported on a meeting with representatives from Northfield regarding the Interlocal Sewer Agreement. They are requesting that Linwood reconsider their contribution to a fifty-fifty split. Linwood's committee is currently waiting for documentation from Northfield's committee and he will report further details at a future meeting.

B. Teri Weeks, Linwood School Business Administrator; Dr. Tom Baruffi, School Superintendent; and Board of School Estimate members Dr. Matt Finkelson and Diana Rutala presented the Linwood School's proposed 2010-2011 budget. Mrs. Weeks advised that the City Board of School Estimates members are Mayor DePamphilis, Council President Taylor and Councilman Beinfest. Mrs. Weeks reviewed the budget process and the loss of \$655,000 in State Aid and the \$455,000 loss in Fund Balance. A lot of cuts were made to the budget to get to a 4.9 cent tax increase. There is a decrease of 1.5% in the budget over 2009-2010. There will be impacts to athletics and after school programs as well as the elimination of seven part time staff members and the reduction of one full time staff member to part time. Councilman Tighe questioned if the Board would renegotiate insurance costs with the unions. Dr. Baruffi advised that they are currently in negotiation with the union and that is being addressed. Councilman Beinfest indicated that he cannot remember the last time there was an actual decrease in the overall budget. Mrs. Weeks advised that it is not typical. Council President Taylor asked Mrs. Weeks to explain the money that was lost. Mrs. Weeks advised that the State discontinued \$629,000 worth of payments. This was targeted for tax payer relief in the 2011 budget. That money went to the State instead. Additional money lost was in the Maintenance Reserve Account. The School had two chillers planned for upcoming expenditures. The School was putting money away for that purpose. The money was withdrawn. The State also took 25% of the Capital Reserve money that was being put away for future renovations. Councilman Marino discussed the total State Aid that was cut from Mainland Regional High School and whether the 1.5% that employees are now required to contribute to their health insurance will be coming back to the municipalities or schools. Mrs. Rutala advised that the school budget maintains the programming for the students. It is the least impact to the students. Dr. Finkelson indicated that the State funded the schools 11% yet they took 100% of the reserve money. That money should have gone back to the City. Discussion ensued on the reductions in State Aid. A public hearing on the school budget is scheduled for March 30 at 7:00 p.m.

4. Councilman Beinfest
 - A. Neighborhood Services
 1. Councilman Beinfest advised of the Annual Easter Egg Hunt scheduled for this Saturday, March 27 at 10:00 a.m.
5. Councilwoman DeDomenicis
 - A. Public Works
 1. Councilwoman DeDomenicis discussed a Resolution on the agenda for lawn treatment services for City properties.
6. Councilman Levinson
 - A. Engineering
 1. Councilman Levinson advised that the Linwood Roadway project is ongoing. The contractor should start paving tomorrow.
 2. Councilman Levinson removed Resolution No. 59 from his agenda with regard to the NJ Department of Transportation's traffic control device on Route 9 and West Avenue.
 3. A Resolution is on the agenda to award a Contract to Craig Testing for concrete coring and testing with regard to the State Aid Improvements to Maple Avenue. This testing is required from the State. Two quotes were received, the lowest being Craig Testing.
 4. Councilman Levinson advised of a Resolution on the agenda authorizing the advertisement for bids for the Wabash Avenue ADA Curb Ramp Improvements, Phase 3.
7. Councilman Marino
 - A. Revenue & Finance
 1. Councilman Levinson explained that the Bond Ordinance for the NJEIT Financing Program is on the agenda for final reading. This project will address the drainage issues at Frances & Grammercy Avenues.
 2. Councilman Marino explained several absences from the Council meetings. He has been accepted into the Leadership NJ for Public Policy program and must attend sessions out of town on certain dates that Council meetings are scheduled. He will miss one meeting in April.
 3. The State Aid figures were released last week. The City's aid was cut significantly more than expected, which will delay the introduction of the 2010 municipal budget.
8. Councilman Paolone
 - A. Linwood Arboretum
 1. Councilman Paolone reported that the dedication and ribbon cutting for the Arboretum is scheduled for Saturday, April 24 at 11:00 a.m. He will reach out to Freeholder Curcio to say a few words at the ceremony and asked Council President to ask the same of the County Executive. The City has put in a request for School Facilities Application to use the restrooms at Belhaven and the Cafetorium in case it rains. Dr. Lacy will provide tours of the Arboretum up to 4:00 p.m.
9. Councilman Tighe
 - A. Planning & Development
 1. Councilman Tighe discussed a Resolution on the agenda to release Planning Board application fees, which were approved by the Planning Board.
 2. Councilman Tighe advised of an honorary Resolution on the agenda for the Girls Travel Basketball Team.

10. Council President Taylor

A. Administration

1. Council President Taylor advised of a Resolution on the agenda authorizing the City Auction for Saturday, May 1 at 9:00 a.m.
2. An honorary Resolution for the U-14 MUSA Soccer Team is on the agenda for tonight.
3. Council President Taylor advised that Council meeting minutes will be posted on the City web site.

At 6:32 P.M., Council President Donna Taylor called a recess.

Respectfully submitted,

Leigh Ann Napoli, RMC
Municipal Clerk