

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Oceanport, New Jersey
January 15, 2004

- REGULAR MEETING:** The Regular Meeting of the Oceanport Mayor and Council was called to order on January 15, 2004 at 8:00 P.M. with Mayor Gatta stating the meeting had been properly advertised in accordance with law.
- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Councilpersons Kahle, Mahon, Apruzzi, Johnson, Briscione and Mayor Gatta.
- MEMBERS ABSENT:** Councilwoman Chaump.
- OFFICIALS PRESENT:** Borough Clerk, Patricia L. Varca and A/Borough Attorney, Martin A. McGann.
- PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Mayor Gatta led the audience and members of the Council in the flag salute.

Mayor Gatta stated that an amendment is necessary regarding the appointments made on New Year's Day and offered the name of Robert A. Hulsart & Co. as the Borough's auditor rather than the former firm name of Armour S. Hulsart & Co. Councilman Apruzzi moved to approve this amendment for the Borough Auditor. It was seconded by Councilman Mahon and approved by Council.

As copies of the minutes from the regular meeting held on December 18, 2003 and the Reorganization Minutes held on January 1, 2004 had been made available to the members of the Governing Body, Councilman Mahon moved to waive the reading of same and approve the minutes as presented by the Borough Clerk. It was seconded by Councilman Apruzzi and approved by Council with the exception of Councilwoman Johnson who abstained from voting since she was not a member of the Council.

Mayor Gatta stated tonight we will be hiring a new police officer and she asked Councilman Apruzzi to report on this matter.

Councilman Apruzzi stated that after receiving the news that Sgt. Ross would be retiring in March of 2004, the Chief began an extensive search for qualified applicants and after reviewing the applications that were submitted, the Police Sergeants interviewed the candidates with both Chief Bebout and Captain Sutton in attendance and have selected Lisa Tisseker as the final candidate and he commented that he did not think we could find a more qualified person to fill this position.

Councilman Apruzzi then moved to hire Lisa Tisseker as a Probationary Police Officer effective February 1, 2004 at the entry-level salary of \$25,000. It was seconded by Councilman Mahon and approved by Council.

The Clerk then administered the Oath of Office to Officer Tisseker after which Mayor Gatta presented Officer Tisseker with her badge and the Council offered their congratulations and best wishes to Officer Tisseker.

CLERK'S REPORTS:

1. Police report for the month of December, 2003 and a copy will be posted on the Bulletin Board.
2. Raffle license application made by the Oceanport PTO to be held on March 5, 2004 and the prizes are to be assorted merchandise.

The Clerk reported that the paperwork was found to be in order and the required fees had been paid, after which Councilwoman Johnson moved to approve the application. It was seconded by Councilwoman Kahle and approved by Council.

COMMITTEES:

COUNCILWOMAN KAHLE: Councilwoman Kahle reported the Environmental Commission held its reorganization meeting this month and Robert Broege was re-elected Chairman and John Vivona as Vice-Chairman. She continued that the Commission has completed reviewing the plans from the NJ Sports & Exposition Authority for the development behind the bank and have forwarded their concerns to the Planning Board.

Councilwoman Kahle advised that the Bulletin is currently at the printers and should be in the mailboxes by February 1 and any other submissions will be included in the April/May issue.

Councilwoman Kahle also wished to give the First Aid Squad report for Councilwoman Chaump who is unable to be here this evening and advised that during 2003 our first aiders for 2003 had 787 calls and she thanked them on behalf of all of us for the time and dedication they all put into our Borough.

Councilwoman Kahle reported that the Fire Committee also met this month and enacted a No Alcohol policy, which states any volunteer firefighter may not respond if they have consumed any alcohol within 4 hours of a fire call and it was approved by both companies. She also stated they are getting both fire companies ready for a gear inspection on February 16th. Councilwoman Kahle commented that it has been brought to her attention that we currently have 15 members from the Port-au-Peck Fire Company certified to be a RIT which stands for Rapid Intervention Team and they are the members who will be able to go in and rescue a firefighter in the event of an emergency. She explained that these men have had to undergo a rigorous, advanced training regiment and we are all very proud to have a team like this in Oceanport.

Councilwoman Kahle stated under the Oceanport Hook & Ladder Fire Company they have accepted a new member, Michelle Centanni, the first woman firefighter in Oceanport and this is truly the year of the woman in our Borough, with the first woman Mayor, the first woman firefighter and tonight the first woman police officer and she welcomed Officer Lisa Tisseker into the Oceanport community in what seems to be an extraordinary year in Oceanport history.

COUNCILMAN MAHON: Councilman Mahon asked the Clerk to read resolution **R-04-8** awarding a contract to repair the pipe on Port-au-Peck Avenue to the low bidder, Mark Woszczak Mechanical Contractors, Inc. in the amount of \$4,500, after which he moved to approve same. It was seconded by Councilwoman Kahle and approved by Council.

Councilman Mahon asked the Clerk to read resolution **R-04-9** regarding the tonnage grant application, after which he moved to approve same. It was seconded by Councilman Apruzzi and approved by Council.

Councilman Mahon asked the Clerk to read resolution **R-04-10** appointing an Acting Public Defender for 2004 under the Local Public Contracts Law, after which he moved to approve same. It was seconded by Councilwoman Johnson and approved by Council.

Councilman Mahon asked the Clerk to read resolution **R-04-11** appointing an Acting Borough Attorney for 2004 under the Local Public Contracts Law, after which he moved to approve same. It was seconded by Councilman Apruzzi and approved by Council.

Councilman Mahon asked the Clerk to read resolution **R-04-12** appointing a Borough Auditor for 2004 under the Local Public Contracts Law, after which he moved to approve same. It was seconded by Councilman Apruzzi and approved by Council.

Councilman Mahon asked the Clerk to read resolution **R-04-13** appointing an Acting Borough Engineer for 2004 under the Local Public Contracts Law, after which he moved to approve same. It was seconded by Councilwoman Johnson and approved by Council.

Councilman Mahon commented that the last four items, three of them have been made for acting appointments which has been the decision after discussion among the Mayor and Council to make acting appointments and pursue competitive choices for these positions and we will be undertaking that process and a parallel course is being undertaken to introduce a pay for play ordinance and they are connected in other towns, but he is not stating that they are connected here. He continued that in any case what we are doing is giving the Mayor and Council an opportunity to get the best price and to evaluate the professional services on an annual basis for our community and this is the first step in that process. Councilman Mahon stated that this is no indication that these positions will be changed, but simply an indication of our commitment to evaluate them further on behalf of the Borough.

Councilman Mahon asked the Clerk to read resolution **R-04-14** appointing representatives to the Monmouth County Community Development Program for 2004 after which he moved to approve same. It was seconded by Councilman Briscione and approved by Council.

Councilman Mahon asked the Clerk to read resolution **R-04-15** transferring funds after which he moved to approve same. It was seconded by Councilman Apruzzi and approved by Council.

Councilman Mahon reported under Public Works as everyone is aware, we had some snow and the Department has been out since about 7:00 p.m. last night and they started by salting the streets and actually the preparation began yesterday morning with getting the plows ready and they have been doing a great job. He continued one of the things we are emphasizing is special attention to the areas around the schools and getting them in shape for tomorrow when they will re-open and we did have a minor incident with one of the plows which is out of service, but that repair is underway.

Councilman Mahon reported under Administration and Finance that one of the things we are looking to do as a Council is as you look at the bill list which is available to members of the public in the back of the room, one of the things we are looking to do is to establish a cut off date which will be done in the next several weeks so that the Council has more time to review the bills submitted for payment. He continued that this is going to require a little more effort and some adjustment on the

part of our employees and our vendors in terms of the timing of their submitting bills and their expectation of payment, but we think it is the right thing to do and will give us all more time to evaluate our bills and invoices.

COUNCILMAN APRUZZI: Councilman Apruzzi asked the Clerk to read resolution **R-04-16** appointing the Acting Borough Prosecutor for 2004 under the Local Public Contracts Law after which he moved to approve same. It was seconded by Councilman Mahon and approved by Council.

Councilman Apruzzi stated that this is Mr. Butler's second year serving as the Borough's Prosecutor and he has received very good accolades from the Court as well as the Police Officers and Chief Bebout and everyone thinks he does a great job and we are very fortunate to have his talents in the Borough.

Councilman Apruzzi then asked the Clerk to read resolution **R-04-17** appointing a Public Agency Compliance Officer regarding affirmative action requirements, after which he moved to approve same. It was seconded by Councilman Mahon and approved by Council.

Councilman Apruzzi advised that the Police Report for the month of December states that there were 815 calls and our Officers responded to 447 calls.

Councilman Apruzzi stated that the Recreation Committee had held its reorganization meeting last night but due to a lack of a quorum, they were unable to elect the 2004 officers and it will be done at the February 11th meeting.

Councilman Apruzzi offered his congratulations to our new Police Officer, Lisa Tisseker and felt that she would be a great asset to the Borough and looked forward to working with her over the next few years.

COUNCILWOMAN CHAUMP: ABSENT.

COUNCILWOMAN JOHNSON: Councilwoman Johnson reported she attended her first meeting with the Board of Health and Connie Savarese was re-elected as President and Carole Connor as Vice-President and the rabies clinic was discussed which will be held on Saturday, January 24th from 9 – 11 a.m. at the Port-au-Peck Fire House and a sign will be placed on our Community Sign board in front of Borough Hall advising everyone of the rabies clinic.

Councilwoman Johnson also reminded all dog and cat owners to have their licenses renewed during the month of January.

Councilwoman Johnson advised that we will again be conducting our annual health screening some time in April at the First Aid Squad Building and more details will be forthcoming.

Councilwoman Johnson stated that at the Board of Health meeting, our Health Officer from the County advised that the Department has added personnel due to the level of terrorism and under Federal Law effective January 1, 2004, all blood that is being taken must be tested before being sent on and they are taking every precaution possible.

Councilwoman Johnson also advised that anyone in the Fire Department or First Aid Squad needing Hepatitis B shots should be contacting John or Carol Connor and they will make the necessary arrangements.

Councilwoman Johnson also reported that the Monmouth County Health Department would be conducting flu clinics on January 20 and 21 for ages 9 and older with chronic illnesses only and you must bring a Doctor's note and they will be held at the County Health Department Offices in Freehold.

COUNCILMAN BRISCIONE: Councilman Briscione offered his congratulations to Officer Tisseker on her appointment and welcomed her to Oceanport.

Councilman Briscione reported that the Planning Board reorganized last evening and Chris Widdis is the Chairman, Robert Broege is Vice-Chairman, Kim Jungfer is Planning Board Secretary and Pasquale Menna was appointed as the Attorney. He continued that additionally due to the anticipated length and complexity of the NJ Sports & Exposition Authority's applications on the Village Center and the Jockey Club Estates, the second meeting of the Board each month will be dedicated to these applications and the first meeting will be devoted to all other business.

Councilman Briscione advised that in a matter of public interest he spoke with Chief Demaree in West Long Branch relative to the problems at the intersection of Route 36 and Oceanport Avenue and he was going to ask if it would help him if the Oceanport Council wrote a letter of support, however, he informed him that the DOT has put this intersection on their expedited list of projects for 2004.

MAYOR GATTA: Mayor Gatta offered the appointment of Co-Chairpersons to the Coastal Monmouth Alliance for the Prevention of Substance Abuse being Madelyn Badalaty and Hope Santi. Councilwoman Johnson moved to approve these appointments. It was seconded by Councilman Apruzzi and approved by Council.

Mayor Gatta advised that this Tuesday at 1 p.m. she will be attending the first Stakeholders Group advisory meeting at Monmouth Park and she wanted to bring everyone up to date and stated there was an article in today's paper where Mr. Zoffinger said he was looking for input from the community and also support from us as well, so this will be our first meeting and she will keep everyone informed.

Mayor Gatta commented that the Mayor's hours will be on Thursday mornings from 9-11:30 a.m. and also on Tuesday from 7-8 p.m. and she asked anyone interested to please make an appointment through the Clerk's Office.

Mayor Gatta reminded everyone about our first Town Meeting which will be held on Thursday, March 11th at 7:30 p.m. and we need to develop an agenda and advised that as you enter Borough Hall there are flyers asking for our residents input as to what topics they would like to have included at that meeting.

Mayor Gatta stated the 2nd week in February Councilpersons Mahon and Kahle will be holding their first meeting addressing the space limitations at Borough Hall and obviously that will be progressing and as far as our Public Safety Committee is concerned, she would ask each of the members of the Council, who recently received an outline at the workshop meeting and she would like to have any comments or suggestions in this regard not later than Monday in order to give it to our Attorney for review and begin the process of drafting an ordinance.

Mayor Gatta reported last Saturday she and Councilpersons Chaump, Johnson and Briscione attended a seminar at Brookdale for Government Officials held by Freeholder Ted Narazanick and it

went from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and it is an excellent seminar and we came away with a lot of good information.

Mayor Gatta also again welcomed our new Police Officer, Lisa Tisseker and also welcomed Michelle Centanni and it is not so much that she is our first woman firefighter, but she was a classmate of her daughter's and our second and third generations are moving up in Oceanport.

Mayor Gatta stated that recently the paper reported that the Monmouth County Board of Freeholders agreed to allocate \$2 million in the County's open space fund to pay for improvements at six of our County parks and they have earmarked \$750,000 for the Oceanport Park which will go toward building roads, drainage basins and other infrastructure necessities that must be installed before additional ball fields can be constructed at the Wolfhill Recreation area. She continued that in 1997 the NJ Sports & Exposition Authority sold the 95 acres Wolfhill Farm track to the County Parks System and with this design phase beginning this year, the first phase of construction should begin next year and the entire project completed in 2008 depending on the availability of continued funding.

Mayor Gatta then opened the meeting to the public for any comments or questions they might wish to make.

Ed Ryan, 24 Willow Court stated that about a year ago the Fire Department went to the County for all 9-1-1 calls and he wants to know if there is any paperwork showing if using this system is costing the Borough money and how has it affected the time involved with getting to a call.

Councilwoman Kahle could not answer what the cost is to the Borough but did state that the calls coming from using 9-1-1 are up 15-30% more calls with the County system and it was discussed at the recent fire meeting and overall they felt there was no delay as long as people called 9-1-1 first because what was happening was people in town were calling the Police Department and then they had to go through 9-1-1 which caused a delay. She continued that there will be something in the Bulletin this month advising people to use 9-1-1 for all fire calls.

Mr. Ryan did not understand why the Fire Department had to go to the County 9-1-1 system to which Councilwoman Kahle stated she felt some of it had to do with the ISO insurance rating and explained that in 1992 we were audited for an ISO rating which rates the Fire Department and their response time, which in turn effects our insurance rates for all the buildings in Oceanport and we received a very low rating and one of the reasons listed was because the Dispatcher was dispatching police calls, the first aid calls and fire calls and the ISO regulators felt that one person cannot handle all those calls with only two phone lines coming into the Department. She continued that in 2005 we will be getting another ISO audit and we are hoping to get better marks and therefore, insurance rates will come down for the entire Borough.

Mr. Ryan felt the 9-1-1 situation should be investigated thoroughly by all the emergency services rather than just a few people and again questioned what it cost the Borough last year for the use of that system, to which Councilman Mahon stated that the actual cost out of the operating budget was \$2,600 to convert the radio equipment which the Borough already owned and there was an additional cost for radio equipment for the purchase of additional pagers which would be distributed to firemen who were also members of the First Aid Squad to cover the gap in our radio coverage there and this has been done over the course of the year. He continued that the cost that Oceanport pays to Monmouth County for them to provide radio dispatch services for fire is zero and there is a dollar figure associated with 9-1-1 calls, but that is a blanket number that is a distribution based on per call, that goes out to the entire County based on our number of calls and has nothing to do with the types of calls received, but it's the total number of calls. Councilman Mahon stated that

as long as the fire department have less than 500 total calls during a given year, the cost to Oceanport remains zero to provide that service and what we gain, when there is a fire call, is the services of another dispatcher and an additional two radio frequencies which helps our firefighters and keeps the firefighter radio traffic off the local channel because first aiders are also responding to those calls and don't have the cross communications problems any longer.

Councilman Mahon stated it is not a perfect picture and there is some discontent and the Council reviewed it during the course of the year when there were some problems and back in June we met with the County along with the Police Chief and Fire Chief and Councilman Apruzzi and went over the major issues that we could target and trace to a particular call and developed a response that would correct that problem in the future and since those corrections were made we are not aware of any reoccurrence of those same issues. He further stated at the time for renewal of this service for another year, the Borough Council had a thirty day window to either renew or back out of the agreement and the Fire Committee was asked to find out if everyone was satisfied and at the same time frame received a petition signed by 20 members of the Oceanport Hook & Ladder Fire Company and after all the information was reviewed, the Council agreed to continue the system until our next renewal date and reconsider it again at that time.

Mr. Ryan also reported that the siren at the Oceanport Hook & Ladder Fire House is not working again and has not worked for a month and felt that it should have been repaired correctly and not patched and if anything happens the Council is going to be responsible for not having a new siren installed when the problems first occurred.

Mr. Ryan also felt we had a shortage of Police especially in light of Sgt. Ross retiring and felt quite strongly that another officer should be hired to which Councilman Apruzzi stated that he would be willing to sit down with Mr. Ryan and explain the situation in more detail. Mr. Ryan stated that the Borough is in need of another officer since we have more people and homes in the Borough and at times it has happened that the officers on duty at night have to take a prisoner out to Freehold and if an emergency happens you have officers from another town responding to the calls and he did not feel that was right and felt that something should be done.

Mayor Gatta felt it would be a very good idea for Mr. Ryan to sit down with Councilman Apruzzi and have him explain the numbers involved with the hiring of an additional police officer.

Councilman Mahon wanted to comment for the record that as we go through our budget process this year one of the first things that happened was the Mayor invited all the Department Heads to come in and present their needs in the 2004 budget and stated that we have agreed so far that it is our intention as a Governing Body to seek the grant application at the federal level which is due June 8th this year and will fund the additional officer. He continued that in the meantime what we are funding is the replacement for Sgt. Ross.

Mr. Ryan did not agree about waiting to hire an additional officer and again stated that he felt very strongly about the need for another police officer.

As no one else from the public wished to be heard, Mayor Gatta closed the public portion of the meeting.

Councilman Mahon moved to approve the vouchers on the Bill List dated January 15, 2004. It was seconded by Councilman Apruzzi and approved by Council. TOTAL CAPITAL TRUST \$149.88. TOTAL 2003 VOUCHERS PAID \$33,347.81. 2004 VOUCHERS PAID \$424,043.79. 2004 VOUCHERS PAID THIS MEETING \$892,017.17. TOTAL 2004 VOUCHERS \$1,316,060.96. (SEE BILL LIST)

At 8:55 p.m. Councilman Apruzzi moved to adjourn this meeting until the next regular meeting scheduled to be held on February 5, 2004 at 8:00 P.M. It was seconded by Councilman Briscione and approved by Council.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Patricia L. Varca".

PATRICIA L. VARCA
BOROUGH CLERK