

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Oceanport, New Jersey
December 18, 2003

- REGULAR MEETING:** The Regular Meeting of the Oceanport Mayor and Council was called to order on December 18, 2003 at 8:00 P.M. with Mayor Gemma stating the meeting had been properly advertised in accordance with law.
- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Councilpersons Kahle, Mahon, Apruzzi, Gatta, Cooper and Mayor Gemma.
- MEMBERS ABSENT:** Councilman McGann.
- OFFICIALS PRESENT:** Deputy Borough Clerk, Kimberly A. Jungfer and Borough Attorney, Francis A. Margalotti.
- INVOCATION:** Borough Chaplain Berry gave the invocation.
- PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Mayor Gemma led the audience and members of the Council in the flag salute.

As copies of the minutes from the regular meeting held on December 4, 2003 had been made available to the members of the Governing Body, Councilwoman Kahle moved to waive the reading of same and approve the minutes as presented by the Borough Clerk. It was seconded by Councilwoman Gatta and approved by Council.

CLERK'S REPORTS:

1. Police report for the month of NOVEMBER, 2003 and a copy will be posted on the bulletin board.
2. Deputy Clerk read **R-03-71**, approving the renewal of the liquor license of Arthur & Alvina, Inc. after receiving a special ruling from the Division of Alcoholic beverage Control. Councilman Apruzzi moved the resolution be approved. Councilwoman Gatta seconded the motion which was approved by Council.

COMMITTEES:

COUNCILWOMAN KAHLE: Councilwoman Kahle moved to award a contract for cleaning services for Borough Buildings to Rodini Cleaning Services for 2004 in the amount of \$17,355. Councilman Mahon seconded the motion which was approved by Council.

Councilwoman Kahle reported for Buildings and Grounds, Pete Mistretta along with Lee Wersinger will be scheduling the Old Wharf building starting January 1, 2004. Their names will be published in the Bulletin and all calls to Borough Hall will be directed to them.

Councilwoman Kahle stated that the Water Watch Committee has reorganized and the new officers for 2004 are: Chairman, Dr. Kaloss; Vice Chairman, Steve Collings; Recording Secretary, Richard Gruskos; Corresponding Secretary, Bob Hosfeld.

Councilwoman Kahle reported that the Environmental Commission is reviewing the plans for the senior development and will report their findings to the Planning Board.

Councilwoman Kahle wished everyone a happy and healthy holiday and new year and wished for a safe and speedy return of all our service men and women.

COUNCILMAN MAHON: Councilman Mahon reported that work is on going on the Borough website and there have been some inquiries for Borough businesses, churches and so on that would like to have links listed on the website. After discussion by Council at the workshop meeting Borough businesses and organizations will be permitted to have a link to their websites from the Borough's website. He continued that a weather net feature is being investigated. As soon as the cost factor is received it will be decided if it can be included. There will also be some enhancements at an additional cost of \$50.00 per month that will allow the website to be somewhat interactive in terms of customer feedback or customer complaints that are seen in some of the better websites.

Councilman Mahon announced that the Fire Committee was meeting to work on their budget for 2004. Also the Oceanport Hook and Ladder has nominated for 1st Assistant Chief, John Schneider, who meets the qualifications.

Councilman Mahon reported that the Fire Prevention Bureau, under the direction of Fire Marshal Phil Payne, an employee of the Eatontown Fire Prevention Bureau, reported that as part of the shared services which was instituted last January, the total collected for fees and fines was \$6,944.00 and he will be submitting a report to the Borough Clerk shortly. The total budget to cover the cost of the service agreement was \$7,000.00 per year as part of a three-year agreement. The cost to taxpayers this year to support the agreement will be \$56.00. He thanked Eatontown and stated that so far the agreement is working out well and hopes it continues for the next two years.

COUNCILMAN APRUZZI: Councilman Apruzzi commented on the November Police Report stating that in the month of November the dispatchers received 827, of which 482 were responded to by patrolmen.

Councilman Apruzzi wished to acknowledge a certificate of achievement received by Chief Clifford Bebout for a Police and Chief Service seminar which he complete on November 21st. He continued that the Police Department is staying on top with all seminars to make sure they are update to date in everything they have to do.

Councilman Apruzzi received a letter from Chief Bebout dated 12/11/03 concerning the applicants for the opening for a patrolman which will be open once Sergeant Ross retires. There are 10 applicants and the process of reviewing and hiring has begun with the new officer in place by February 15, 2004. He added that the final three applicants will be interviewed by the Mayor and Council and they will in turn select the new officer.

Councilman Apruzzi has asked the Chief to enforce State Statute 39, which relates to people driving through a parking lot to avoid a light. He continued that people are cutting through the parking lot in front of Borough Hall at high rates of speed creating a very dangerous situation.

Councilman Apruzzi commented about overnight parking in Borough parks and discussed it with Council at their workshop meeting and it was decided that it would be banned with an amendment to the ordinance with exceptions regarding flooding.

Councilman Apruzzi has asked the Borough Engineer to begin planning for the Blackberry Bay Park work so that the project can go out to bid, with hopes of the work beginning in January or February because we are looking for a growing season starting September 15th. It looks like when this does happen the fields will be closed for one year and the Recreation Committee is already working with all the associations who use those fields as far as making arrangements in other areas to play their games.

Councilman Apruzzi reported that the Borough has received the insurance check for the damage to Charles Park in the amount of \$2,100. with the total cost to replace the damaged equipment at \$3,100. including installation and work on that should be started shortly.

COUNCILWOMAN GATTA: Councilwoman Gatta commented as reported in the paper today the State has announced that they will not be selling the racetrack and they will be keeping Monmouth Park a track for racing. The New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority is going to explore leasing the Meadowlands and/or Monmouth Park Racetrack to private operators. They want to explore the market place and Councilwoman Gatta said she was asked to serve on an advisory committee for such exploration which she readily accepted because gives us a chance to articulate our concerns here in Oceanport. She added that on this committee will be former Assemblyman Michael Arnone, Senator-elect Ellen Karcher and Mayor Ed McKenna among others in this bi-partisan effort and she will keep everyone apprised of the progress.

Councilwoman Gatta stated that the Senior Citizens had a luncheon a few weeks ago and their meeting last night. Most of the officers are returning but she wanted to report that some have decided to step down. On behalf of the Borough she thanked those stepping down for all their efforts. She continued that Al DeSantis will be president for a second year and at their meeting she thanked them for participating in all the activities that allow us to provide to our residents such as the flu and pneumonia clinic, health screening and networking. Councilwoman Gatta stated that a large number of seniors participate and they do many wonderful things for the community and should be recognized for their efforts.

Councilwoman Gatta reported that at last night's First Aid meeting, it was reported that for the month of November there were 57 calls, which brings the total to 721 calls thus far this year. With the 57 calls there were 870 man-hours expended by the First Aid in November. They also had their election for their line officers and next years Captain will be Jane Ciani and Laura Hornung will be the 1st Lieutenant, Lynn Arnold the 2nd Lieutenant and Alan Johnson Sergeant. Ray Ciani was re-elected President.

Councilwoman Gatta added that the First Aid just completed a very successful Holiday Bazaar and Kathy Maida, who chaired the event, along with all the other members worked very very hard to make this. She also mentioned that the First Aid is still selling trees, wreaths and grave blankets and asked anyone who still has not bought their tree or whatever for the holidays to please remember the First Aid. Councilwoman Gatta reflected that the other night when she was listening to the scanner go off, it was raining, they were selling trees and then they get a call, they simply do not miss a beat when responding to calls and she wanted to on behalf of the Council thank them for all their fine work.

Councilwoman Gatta wished everyone a Happy Chanukah, Merry Christmas and hoped to see everyone New Years Day at the Reorganization Meeting at 12 noon.

COUNCILMAN McGANN: Absent.

Since Councilman McGann had not arrived the agenda matters listed under his name were referred to Councilman Mahon.

Councilman Mahon asked the Deputy Clerk to read **R-03-72** authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement with the Federal Highway Administration for a grant for the improvements to Cayuga Avenue and Gooseneck Point Road in the amount of \$297,392 after which he moved to approved same. Councilman Apruzzi seconded the motion which was approved by Council.

Councilman Mahon added that the grant came from Congressman Holt and was awarded to Oceanport in January, 2002 and the monies are to elevate both roadways to reduce the occurrence of flooding, not eliminate flooding, but reduce the frequency of flooding.

Councilman Mahon moved to authorize the Borough Engineer to receive informal bids for the pipe repair located on Port-Au-Peck Avenue. Councilwoman Gatta seconded the motion which was approved by Council.

Councilman Mahon stated that there were some estimates received from Birdsall Engineering associated with these road improvements and one is for pipe repair on Port-Au-Peck Avenue that is next to the pony express tracks that go into Monmouth Park Racetrack. There is a steel plate over the area now, with an estimate of repair of about \$14,000.00. There is also an additional estimate that was received to do some remedial work to eliminate flooding on Manitto Place, which was \$30,000. and the Council will be discussing this matter for possible inclusion in the 2004 Capital Budget in January.

COUNCILWOMAN COOPER: Councilwoman Cooper stated her first item would be a resolution transferring funds. The funds being transferred to Public Works in order to cover excess from last years storm which was December 5th and also this years storm on the same day a year later.

Councilwoman Cooper asked the Deputy Clerk to read **R-03-73** transferring funds after which she moved to approve same. Councilman Mahon seconded the motion which was approved by Council.

Councilwoman Cooper stated that her second item was a motion to approve the employee evaluations for all Borough employees explaining that this is a new system of evaluation that will be used to evaluate all employees and will be used for merit rate increases beginning this year. Councilwoman Cooper then moved the evaluations be approved. Councilwoman Kahle seconded the motion which was approved by Council.

Councilwoman Cooper spoke with Finance and Administration regarding a new policy whereby anyone who needs to contact these offices to please use the front counters, do not access the back areas at all for last week there was someone from the general public come in through a back door into the finance office. This is for security purposes and other administrative reasons. There are many things that go on at the desks such as transfers of money and we don't want people just in and out. There are also times that someone might be working on something of a confidential nature so she asked that everyone wait at the front counter and then if asked to come into an office that would be the followed procedure. The computer up front is being updated so both the tax collector and finance personnel will be able to access information right at the front counter and a filing station for purchase orders will be there also.

Councilwoman Cooper stated she was asked at the last meeting to review the attorney's bills which she did with Annette David, CFO and things were found to be in order. Ms. David has been

here about a year and she does see areas for change on how we are billing and what areas bills are being charged to. Ms. David also suggested changing the billing increments from 15-minute increments to 6-minute increments as some of the other towns do to make that process a bit easier, but there were problems that seemed to be viewed.

Councilwoman Cooper said that this was her last meeting and she wanted to thank everyone from Councilwoman Gatta, who appointed her in February to everyone she worked with and met. It has been a wonderful experience and great education and she would encourage everyone to get involved. Councilwoman Cooper hoped she would continue to be a part of the community in some type of capacity in the future and would encourage everyone to get involved for it is all about our community, not about being the best but rather doing your best and I think everyone needs to remember that "its about doing the best in the town in which we live".

Councilwoman Cooper wished Mayor-elect Gatta and Councilwomen –elect Chaump and Johnson all the best in the future and to Councilman McGann and Mayor Gemma, all the best in their future endeavors. Lastly Councilwoman Cooper wished everyone a happy and healthy holiday and a prosperous new year.

Councilwoman Gatta asked Councilwoman Cooper to be perfectly clear on the attorney's fees and that the November bill was in order and Councilwoman Cooper said that everything was in order and the implications mentioned at the last meeting were not found to be true.

MAYOR GEMMA: Mayor Gemma at this time changed the agenda a bit and recognized someone who was leaving who has served the Borough longer than anyone on the dais, the Borough Attorney, Andy Margalotti. He served not only as the attorney, but also as a Councilman and Mayor Gemma offered the floor to Mr. Margalotti to say goodbye to the Borough, which he served very effectively and ably for many, many years.

Mr. Margalotti said that the one point that occurred to him was where did all the time go. It seems like yesterday that he came on Council in 1969. He stated he succeeded Clem Sommers and sat in this very same chair for the nine years he served on Council. When he started his first term as Borough Attorney, up until that time the attorney always sat where Councilwoman Kahle now sits, and since the Mayor ran the meeting it was not particularly conducive to the attorney assisting the Mayor on questions of procedure when he was not sitting closer, he suggested that the attorney's seat be shifted next to the Mayor's and that is when that move occurred. As a matter of fact for 29 years he has been sitting in the very same seat and it gets a little uncomfortable suggesting a new seat. It seems incredible that that much time has gone by and he has had the pleasure of working with so many people in Borough government both elected officials and appointed officials. It has been a delightful experience and he treasures the opportunities he has had to work with the Borough having lived in the town for 38 years and he feels that Oceanport will always be his home even though he is retiring to Florida in about three weeks, Oceanport will always have a warm spot in his heart.

Mr. Margalotti continued that he had lived in Oceanport for more than half of his adult life and it has forged many pleasant relationships both on and off Council. It has been an experience he will never forget and it has been a great pleasure to have served the Borough. He stated he has seen a number of other towns at close range and you hear it often said by the people who live and work in Oceanport, that this is a great little town, a great place to live and there is a lot of truth to that statement. Oceanport has many special characteristics and we have all seen it happen particularly in our times of need, in times of distress we have seen our volunteers and other citizens stand up and participate when it counts. It is a great town and Mr. Margalotti said he has thoroughly enjoyed living

in this town and raising his family here. He stated that moving to Oceanport was the best decision he ever made and to have the good fortune to serve the town in various capacities has only been icing on the cake. For all of those opportunities, for all of the pleasant memories and experiences Mr. Margalotti said a big thank you to everyone.

Mayor Gemma stated he did have some bad news, he received a notice from Telium indicating that the facility is closing and the remaining forty employees are being let go, with their last date of work being December 31st. Timing is everything and felt this was one of the hardest things he had to read as a Mayor especially at this time of year.

Mayor Gemma appointed Gary Wolfe as Alternate 2 on the Planning Board adding that Mr. Wolfe had served as the Council representative to the Planning Board and he has served this town for many years.

Mayor Gemma commented that tonight we had a transfer of money from one line item to another, but we have come closer this year to hitting our budget than to any other year he has been here. To all the members of Council who worked very hard in putting the budget together and keeping it together, he thanked them for a wonderful job done.

Mayor Gemma stated that this was his last meeting as Mayor and on December 31st his term is up and Mayor-elect Gatta with her newly elected team along with Councilpersons Apruzzi, Kahle and Mahon will run the Borough. Its often been said that we're afraid of what those who come after us may do. Mayor Gemma stated that the only fear that he had is that the people coming after him will do a better job then he did during his tenure.

Mayor Gemma thanked all the people for their friendship and support that he has counted on over the last 6 years that made this job meaningful and rewarding even during the most difficult of times, and even though we may not have always agreed on everything, when there was a need in the Borough we all came together.

Mayor Gemma quoted a prior Councilman saying "Oceanport at its worst, is its people at their best". Being the Mayor of a community like this is an amazing honor. He continued that there were certain aspects of the position that he would not miss, and he leaves with no regrets to spend time with his family, but there are many things about the office that he will look back on with longing, friends were made, ability to lead a parade, watching fireworks at the end of the summer and knowing in some small way you have helped throw a party for a few thousand of your closest friends, for those memories and the past years he thanked everyone from the bottom of his heart.

Mayor Gemma presented Councilwoman Cooper with a crystal bowl in appreciation for her time spent on Council for which she thanked the Mayor and those in attendance.

Mayor Gemma then presented Mr. Margalotti with a plaque for his many years of service. Mr. Margalotti thanked the Mayor and Council and members of the audience.

Councilwoman Gatta presented Mayor Gemma with a plaque from the Governing Body and thanked him for his years of service. Mayor Gemma thanked Councilwoman Gatta and the Governing Body for this honor.

Mayor Gemma then opened the meeting to the public for anyone who wished to be heard.

PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC:

Betty Berry, 25 Hiawatha Avenue, stated that in her many years of living she had never made a mistake before and apologized to Councilwoman Cooper and gave her blessings on her leaving Council.

Chaplain Berry also stated she did not realize Mr. Margalotti was leaving and commented that she has known him since he had hair. She wished Mr. Margalotti good wishes and said he would be missed.

Linda Johnson, 30 Belmar Avenue, said she was speaking as Captain of the Oceanport First Aid Squad and on behalf of the members of the Squad she thanked Councilwoman Maria Gatta for many years of dedicated support as Council liaison to First Aid. During these years Councilwoman Gatta never missed a meeting, attended most of the drills and supported all of the fundraisers. She never interfered in the meetings, showing respect for the process but was always there for First Aid when there was a question. Her assistance to the Squad worked to the betterment of all the citizens of Oceanport.

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

Councilwoman Cooper moved to approve the vouchers on the Bill List dated December 18, 2003. Councilman Mahon questioned the charge from Birdsall Engineering for the Port-Au-Peck Firehouse in the amount of \$5,092.00 and the Deputy Clerk explained that it was for the remediation for the fuel tank leak. The motion was then seconded by Councilwoman Gatta and approved by Council. TOTAL CAPITAL TRUST \$96,766.25. TOTAL ESCROW TRUST ACCOUNT \$3,389.75. 2002 VOUCHERS PAID \$97,212.05. 2002 VOUCHERS PAID THIS MEETING \$0.00. TOTAL 2002 VOUCHERS \$97,212.00. 2003 VOUCHERS PAID \$14,100,628.53. 2003 VOUCHERS PAID THIS MEETING \$68,964.11. TOTAL 2003 VOUCHERS \$14,169,592.64. (SEE BILL LIST)

At 8:42 p.m. Councilman Gatta moved to adjourn this meeting until the Reorganization Meeting scheduled to be held on January 1, 2004 at 12:00 P.M. It was seconded by Councilman Mahon and approved by Council.

Respectfully submitted,



KIMBERLY A. JUNGFER
DEPUTY BOROUGH CLERK