

MAYOR AND COUNCIL
BOROUGH OF CLOSTER

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES - WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2015 - 7:30 P.M.

The Mayor and Council of the Borough of Closter held a Special Meeting on Wednesday, April 29, 2015. Mayor Glidden called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Glidden invited all to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT STATEMENT

Notice of this Special Meeting was sent to The Record and Star Ledger on April 23, 2015 for publication on April 26, 2015, was posted on the Municipal Clerk's bulletin board and has remained posted as the required notices under the Statute. In addition, a copy of the notice is and has been available to the public and is on file in the office of the Municipal Clerk.

3. ROLL CALL

The following persons were present:

Mayor John C. Glidden, Jr.
Councilpersons David Barad, Alissa Latner (7:35 p.m.), Thomas Hennessey,
Arthur Dolson and Victoria Amitai (7:35 p.m.)
Borough Administrator, Jonathan DeJoseph
Borough Attorney, Edward T. Rogan
Borough Clerk, Loretta Castano
Tax Collector/Temporary Chief Financial Officer, Maria Passafaro

The following persons were not present:

Councilman Robert Di Dio

4. INTRODUCTION OF THE FOLLOWING ORDINANCE - PUBLIC HEARING - 5/27/15 @8:00 P.M. OR AS SOON THEREAFTER AS THE MATTER MAY BE HEARD
(Received from Auditor 4/24/15)

ORDINANCE NO. ~~2014-2015~~:1184, "BOROUGH OF CLOSTER CALENDAR YEAR 2015 ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK (N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.14)"

Mayor Glidden read the ordinance by title and asked if any Council member had any questions. Hearing none, Mayor Glidden asked for a motion of approval.

Motion approving introduction of Ordinance No. 2015:1184 was made by Councilman Barad, seconded by Councilman Dolson and declared carried by Mayor Glidden upon the affirmative vote of Councilpersons Barad, Hennessey and Dolson.

At this time, in response to Councilman Barad's question, the Borough Attorney advised that three Council members plus the Mayor constitutes a quorum.

At this time, Councilpersons Latner and Amitai entered the meeting.

5. INTRODUCTION OF THE 2015 MUNICIPAL BUDGET AND RELATED RESOLUTIONS PUBLIC HEARING - 5/27/15 @8:00 P.M. OR AS SOON THEREAFTER AS THE MATTER MAY BE HEARD (Received from Auditor 4/24/15)

Mayor Glidden explained as follows: 2015 was a very difficult year; and in the beginning when we started the process, the requests from all Departments totaled approximately an \$800,000 increase in the amount to be raised by taxation. Through the work of the staff and Finance Committee, the Budget was reduced by more than \$600,000. To place that in

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perspective, had we introduced the Budget with the \$800,000 increase, that would have been roughly an 8% tax increase and that's just not acceptable for the residents of Closter; so, it was reduced by \$600,000. We are now looking at a municipal tax increase – just the municipal portion of 1.97% which is \$64.00 per averaged assessed household assessed at \$666,000 and the amount of the increase is \$201,000. There are approximately \$400,000 of expenses in the Budget over which the Borough has no control. Some of the largest increases include debt service, pension, health insurance, reserve for tax appeals, reserve for uncollected taxes, DPW overtime due to the winter, sewage utility costs and the Library. There is a zero percent (0%) increase and freezing longevity for non-contractual employees.

Mayor Glidden informed he had a listing of the largest increases, in addition to the ones he listed earlier, and invited anyone wanting to take a look at it to do so. He voiced his opinion that it is a responsible Budget and he wishes we could do more. He thinks this is where we should be as a Borough; and any further increase would require a decrease in services. Mayor Glidden said it is his recommendation to introduce the Budget; and prior to calling for a motion, he invited questions or comments at this time.

Councilman Hennessey thanked Councilman Dolson and Councilman Di Dio for their help in the Finance Committee along with Jonathan DeJoseph, Maria Passafaro, all the Department Heads and Boards and Commissions who all put a major effort together to get this going. Mayor Glidden echoed Councilman Hennessey's sentiments and said it was amazing how many times the Finance Committee had to meet and thanked all who assisted.

Councilman Dolson wished to comment regarding one of the uncontrolled expenses: the Bergen County Utilities Authority. He said he wonders what kind of pay raises they handed out this year at the expense of the Borough's employees. Mayor Glidden said that has been troubling him for a long time because municipalities have seen a 2% CAP placed on their budgets and the ability to raise taxes. The BCUA budget has gone up over the past 10 years roughly 5% each year and – 4.96% for Closter this year. Councilman Dolson said we may have a different portion of the charge compared to the rest of the County; and the Mayor said it is based on inflow used. For the BCUA to go up 5% a year consistently over 10 years in this particular environment is very troubling. Mayor Glidden said he has questioned Executive Director Bob (Robert) Laux about that; and he was advised the majority is not salaries and wages for the BCUA but for requirements under NJDEP to do certain things to that plant and they are huge capital costs. He expressed his concern that although he has not looked through the BCUA budget, he feels it is time for Closter and other municipalities to question it. The Mayor noted they also have public hearings on their budgets and he thinks municipalities should go to them and start asking questions. Councilman Dolson voiced his opinion that they could have rebuilt the plant for all of the money they have spent on improvements and Mayor Glidden agreed. He said the increase amounts to \$27,000 from \$861,000 to \$889,000 this year for Closter and noted every municipality is seeing similar increases. Mayor Glidden voiced his hopes for one day having a zero percent (0%) tax increase or even a tax reduction.

Councilman Barad questioned if these kinds of increases were present in other counties and asked where that money goes. Mayor Glidden reminded he has not had the opportunity to review the BCUA budget yet but that he planned to and did not know the answer to that question. He noted that when he was Chairman of the BCUA, these types of increases did not exist – we only had 2-3% increases each year. The BCUA is claiming the increases are due to DEP regulations and he would like to see that. Councilman Barad suggested talking with other towns and possibly passing Resolutions to get our State representatives to put some pressure on them. He said he feels that Mayor Glidden is uniquely positioned having served there and now serving here in Closter.

At this time, Mayor Glidden invited a motion for introduction.

Motion to introduce the 2015 Municipal Budget was made by Councilman Hennessey, seconded by Councilman Dolson and declared carried by Mayor Glidden upon the affirmative vote of Councilpersons Barad, Latner, Hennessey, Dolson and Amitai.

6. OPEN MEETING TO PUBLIC FOR ANY MATTER, PER N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 (a)
(Subject to 5-minute limit per By-Laws General Rule No. 11)

Mayor Glidden opened the meeting to the public. Mayor Glidden acknowledged Patrolman Michael Feshal in the audience who said he was observing. No one wishing to be heard, Mayor Glidden closed the meeting to the public.

7. ANY OTHER MATTER WHICH MAY COME BEFORE THE GOVERNING BODY

Councilman Barad noted, as there was no audience present this evening, that there is a maximum occupancy of 90 persons; and said we have 96 chairs in this room. He suggested that a number of chairs be removed.

Councilman Dolson observed the variety of machinery and scaffolding around the building and said he was informed by Councilman Hennessey that the contractor is aiming for a June 1, 2015 completion. He wondered if there was a way to accelerate that process to have it completed by Memorial Day so as the parade passes Borough Hall, nobody will have to see this debris. Mayor Glidden explained we are doing the parade slightly different this year in that the Mayor and Council walk at the front of the parade from St. Mary's parking lot and stop at a reviewing stand placed at Borough Hall before rejoining the parade at the end.

Borough Administrator wished to confirm that the Governing Body had received the copy of the letter he sent them regarding the reduction in speed limit on High Street from 35 to 30 mph (9 M.L. 4/30/15). He said that the County anticipates introducing the Ordinance on May 20 with a June 6 adoption; shortly thereafter, the County will change the speed limit sign. Councilwoman Amitai asked if a stop sign could be installed on High Street halfway between Closter Dock Road and Piermont Road. Councilman Hennessey informed that the Chief of Police and the Borough Engineer advised that was not a good idea because it is not considered legal. Borough Administrator explained a mid-block stop or intersection generally speaking based on what Chief Kaine said is not allowed. The Traffic Study conducted by the County would have recommended that if it were a feasible option. Councilwoman Latner voiced her surprise at the expediency the request was addressed; and said she is glad it is going to get lowered. In answer to Councilwoman Amitai, Mr. DeJoseph said if the governing body chose he would ask the County about the stop sign; and Mrs. Amitai reiterated that even if the sign goes from 35 to 30, maybe a few people will go a little slower; but there will not be a constant police presence there. In answer to Mayor Glidden, Councilman Hennessey affirmed it would be a 4-way stop similar to the one by the reservoir off Livingston Street. He discussed it with the Borough Engineer and Chief of Police and they both agreed it was not a good idea. Councilman Dolson said he thought it was not eligible because it was not a cross street or a through street as they are both dead ends. The Borough Attorney agreed it is not an intersection; and said you will have a dead end yielding to a main street potentially. Councilwoman Amitai noted she cuts through Cresskill on her way to Hillside; and said there are stop signs at every corner. Councilman Hennessey explained those are all through streets; and recommended waiting until the County ordinance is changed and the new speed signs are installed before inquiring about the stop sign. In answer to Councilwoman Latner, Mr. DeJoseph said he emailed Ms. Bickici about the letter.

Mayor Glidden announced he had information regarding a grant request for a new trail called the Buzzoni Farm Conservation Easement on which former Mayor Heymann had been working; and he requested she continue to follow through with the grant after she left office. Mayor Glidden explained the trail would begin at the north end of Ruckman Park, go through a conservation easement in the back of Temple Emanu-El and through Buzzoni Park to pine alley to Blanch Avenue where it would meet with the rest of the Nature Trail. He said Mayor Heymann has worked a long time on this grant and it needs to be filed by Friday. Her opinion is that the preparations for the grant would cost too much; and it wouldn't be worth it because it is just overly expensive, although it would be nice to have that trail. The trail would be 1,800 feet which isn't very long; and the engineering costs to file the grant would be prohibitively expensive regardless of the length of the trail. Mayor Heymann's recommendation was to discard the grant application as it likely would not get approved anyway; and he wished to have a consensus that we do not want to file this grant by Friday. Councilman Barad suggested the project be put on the back burner for a possible future grant and Mayor Glidden agreed. No objections were voiced regarding the non-filing of the grant application.

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8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the Special Meeting at 7:51 p.m. was made by Councilman Barad, seconded by Councilwoman Latner and declared unanimously carried by Mayor Glidden.

Provided to the Mayor and Council
on May 7, 2015 for approval at the
Regular Meeting to be held
May 13, 2015

Loretta Castano, RMC
Borough Clerk

Prepared by Arlene M. Corvelli, RMC
utilizing recording and Borough Clerk's
notes

Approved at the Regular Meeting held May 13, 2015
Consent Agenda Item No. 18c