

**TOWNSHIP OF MANSFIELD
BURLINGTON COUNTY**

**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
February 1, 2018, 1:30 PM**

The Regular Meeting of the Mansfield Township Committee was held on the above shown date with the following in attendance: **Mayor Robert Higgins, Committeeman Sean Gable, Committeeman Michael Magee, and Committeeman Frederick Cain.** Also in attendance was **Municipal Clerk Linda Semus.** **Deputy Mayor Janice DiGiuseppe** was not in attendance.

Mayor Higgins called the meeting to order, followed by the following opening statement read by **Municipal Clerk Semus:**

“Adequate Notice” has been provided for this Special Meeting and has been posted on the Official Bulletin Board of the Township of Mansfield, noticed to the Burlington County Times on January 30, 2018 and filed with the Municipal Clerk of the Township of Mansfield, notice of which contained the date, time, place, and purpose of this meeting, as so noted in N.J.S.A. 10:4.-8(d), Amended 1981, by including Section 10:4-18 which addresses Regular Meeting of a Public Body, which is addressed under “Annual Notice”.

The above statement was followed by the flag salute and a moment of silence.

ORDINANCES

ORDINANCE NO. 2018-3

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MANSFIELD, IN THE COUNTY OF BURLINGTON, NEW JERSEY, PROVIDING FOR ACQUISITION OF EMT VEHICLES (AMBULANCE) IN AND FOR THE TOWNSHIP, APPROPRIATING \$250,000 THEREFOR, AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$237,500 IN GENERAL IMPROVEMENT BONDS OR NOTES OF THE TOWNSHIP TO FINANCE THE SAME.

BE IT ORDAINED by the Township Committee of the Township of Mansfield, in the County of Burlington, New Jersey (not less than two-thirds of all members thereof affirmatively concurring) as follows:

Section 1. The improvement or purpose described in Section 3 of this bond ordinance is hereby authorized to be undertaken by the Township of Mansfield, in the County of Burlington, New Jersey (the “Township”) as a general improvement. For the improvement or purpose described in Section 3 hereof, there is hereby appropriated the sum of \$250,000, including the sum of \$12,500 as the down payment for the improvement and purpose required by the Local Bond Law. The down payment has been made available by virtue of provision for down payment or for capital improvement purposes in one or more previously adopted budgets.

Section 2. In order to finance the cost of the improvement or purpose not covered by application of the down payment, negotiable bonds or notes are hereby authorized to be issued in the principal amount of \$237,500, pursuant to the Local Bond Law. In anticipation of the issuance of the bonds, negotiable bond anticipation notes are hereby authorized to be issued pursuant to and within the limitations prescribed by the Local Bond Law.

Section 3. (a) The improvement hereby authorized and the purpose for which the bonds or notes are to be issued is the acquisition of an ambulance for the Township’s EMT services, and including customization, painting, decals and related equipment to allow the vehicle to be used for its intended use.

(b) The estimated maximum amount of bonds or notes to be issued for the improvements or purposes is as stated in Section 2 hereof.

(c) The estimated cost of the improvements or purposes authorized herein is equal to the amount of the appropriation herein made therefor.

Section 4. All bond anticipation notes issued hereunder shall mature at such times as may be determined by the chief financial officer; provided that no note shall mature later than one year from its date. The notes shall bear interest at such rate or rates and be in such form as may be determined by the chief financial officer. The chief financial officer shall determine all matters in connection with notes issued pursuant to this bond ordinance, and the chief financial officer's signature upon the notes shall be conclusive evidence as to all such determinations. All notes issued hereunder may be renewed from time to time subject to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 40A:2-8(a). The chief financial officer is hereby authorized to sell part or all of the notes from time to time, at not less than par and accrued interest, at public or private sale and to deliver them to the purchasers thereof upon receipt of payment of the purchase price plus accrued interest from their dates to the date of delivery thereof. The chief financial officer is directed to report in writing to the governing body at the meeting next succeeding the date when any sale or delivery of the notes pursuant to this bond ordinance is made. Such report must include the amount, the description, the interest rate and the maturity schedule of the notes sold, the price obtained and the name of the purchaser.

Section 5. The capital budget or temporary capital budget (as applicable) of the Township is hereby amended to conform with the provisions of this bond ordinance to the extent of any inconsistency herewith. In the event of any such inconsistency and amendment, the resolution in the form promulgated by the Local Finance Board

showing full detail of the amended capital budget or amended temporary capital budget (as applicable) and capital program as approved by the Director of the Division of Local Government Services is on file with the Clerk and is available there for public inspection.

Section 6. The following additional matters are hereby determined, declared, recited and stated:

(a) The improvement or purpose described in Section 3 of this bond ordinance is not current expenses. It is an improvement or purpose the Township may lawfully undertake as a general improvement, and no part of the cost thereof has been or shall be specially assessed on property specially benefited thereby.

(b) The average period of usefulness of the improvements or purposes, within the limitations of the Local Bond Law, computed on the basis of respective amounts or obligations for the several purposes and the respective reasonable life thereof within the limitations of the Local Bond Law, is 5 years.

(c) The Supplemental Debt Statement required by the Local Bond Law has been duly prepared and filed in the office of the Clerk, and a complete executed duplicate thereof has been filed in the office of the Director of the Division of Local Government Services in the Department of Community Affairs of the State of New Jersey. Such statement shows that the gross debt of the Township as defined in the Local Bond Law is increased by the authorization of the bonds and notes provided in this bond ordinance by \$237,500, and the obligations authorized herein will be within all debt limitations prescribed by that Law.

(d) An aggregate amount not exceeding \$5,000 for items of expense listed in and permitted under N.J.S.A. 40A:2-20 is included in the estimated cost indicated herein for the improvements or purposes.

(e) The Township reasonably expects to commence the acquisition of the improvement or purpose described in Section 3 hereof, and to advance all or a portion of the costs in respect thereof, prior to the issuance of bonds or notes hereunder. To the extent such costs are advanced, the Township further reasonably expects to reimburse such expenditures from the proceeds of the bonds or notes authorized by this bond ordinance, in an aggregate amount not to exceed the amount of bonds or notes authorized in Section 1 hereof.

Section 7. Any grant moneys received for the purposes described in Section 3 hereof shall be applied either to direct payment of the cost of the improvements or to payment of the obligations issued pursuant to this bond ordinance. The amount of obligations authorized hereunder shall be reduced to the extent that such funds are so used.

Section 8. The full faith and credit of the Township is hereby pledged to the punctual payment of the principal of and the interest on the obligations authorized by this bond ordinance. The obligations shall be direct, unlimited obligations of the Township, and the Township shall be obligated to levy ad valorem taxes upon all the taxable real property within the Township for the payment of the obligations and the interest thereon without limitation as to rate or amount.

Section 9. The Township Committee hereby covenants on behalf of the Township to take any action necessary or refrain from taking such action in order to preserve the tax-exempt status of the bonds and notes authorized hereunder as is or may be required under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, and the regulations promulgated thereunder (the "Code"), including compliance with the Code with regard to the use, expenditure, investment, timely reporting and rebate of investment earnings as may be required thereunder.

Section 10. This bond ordinance shall take effect twenty (20) days after the first publication thereof after final adoption, as provided by the Local Bond Law.

A motion was offered by **Committeeman Gable** and seconded by **Committeeman Magee** to introduce Ordinance 2018-3. Motion carried on a Roll Call Vote, as follows:

AYE: GABLE, MAGEE, CAIN, HIGGINS

NAY:

ABSENT: DIGIUSEPPE

ABSTAIN:

Mayor Higgins addressed the audience before opening the Public Comment:

This Ordinance is basically for bonding for a new ambulance. There was some discussion whether or not to amend another Bond Ordinance that was there, to cover this, however, there are certain improvements that we are going to use in this town that we want to use that Ordinance to cover. We want to finish this building, it comes down to it, that simple. We need signs, we need outside areas that we need to address. That is the Ordinance that we have held for the last two years, to do this. Somehow, transition or communication was not understood and there were some calls to use that for the EMS ambulance. However, we are not going to be able to do the soccer fields, so that Ordinance will be converted to, in his opinion, and all those he spoke with on the Committee, we will be using that Ordinance and convert it to finishing the building here. That Ordinance was initially put together when we were going to build a sewer treatment plant and then build the fields above the sewer treatment plant. We are not building the plant, so yes, we held that in reserve to do the improvements on the final improvements in the town. We are not holding anything over anyone's head. It was discussed months ago or even years ago to utilize that bond when the time came.

Mayor Higgins opened the floor to public comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Colleen Herbert, 2 Millennium Drive, stated that she sent an e-mail to every Township Committee member trying to get answers to her questions, the only person she heard from was the Deputy Mayor who was unable to answer the questions at that time as she was away.

Discussion ensued as follows:

Is the ambulance corps a private entity? **Committeeman Michael Magee** explains that they are a 501c. What support do they get from Mansfield Township financially? She knows they raise money, get insurance payments, so why is it we are paying for this ambulance and how does this work? **Mayor Higgins** stated that, basically, there are certain services that you want to provide to the township - obviously the first is the police, then normal one is fire protection, which by law you have to provide for, and the third, in our case, we have several adult communities. They do not have children going to the schools. So we have strived to provide the best services to them because they do not have children in the schools. He states that he too is getting up there in age, and these are things that are important to the senior citizens who contribute so much to school and county taxes, and of course municipal taxes. **Mayor Higgins** felt, and he says he may be wrong, and they may not want it, but he felt that this is something that we should give back to the elder members of the township. Trying to give the best service we can to that community. Things have shifted. When you first move to town, it is more for emergency services, however, when someone moves into an adult community, they might move in at 55 years of age, but there needs change over time, and there are many other needs to help them with. People fall down and just need to be picked up, not necessarily transported to the hospital. Those calls are not charged. The ambulance corps only charges if they transport to a hospital. That being said, we may need to get some feedback from the community, do we want to start charging them for every call like that?

Mrs. Herbert replies: I'm getting older, and I want to be transported to the hospital if I need to, but she can remember when she moved in to the new community and all these big houses came and we didn't even have a fire truck that really could adequately fight fires for all the new developments that were coming in. Her concern is why are we funding the whole thing, how much money do they make? She felt that it should be an expense that is shared by both entities. **Mayor Higgins** responded stating that they have worked diligently between the EMS and the Fire Department to spread the fund/help between them both over periods of time. The last time the EMS wanted an ambulance, we didn't do an ambulance, we did a retro built, which means to keep the body and put it on a new frame. This particular vehicle is too old to do something like that. It was pushed back as long as conceivably possible. He further stated that what Mansfield provides to the adult communities by any other town in the State, we have an A+ rating. Do we want to lower those standards to a B, if that is what the community wants, then we will listen to them, but he feels right now what he hears is they do not have children in the schools and they contribute to the school taxes and they would like to get some benefits for their more than fair share for other aspects.

Committeeman Gable states that we are buying the ambulance 100% for a few reasons: one, the way they operate and the money they collect the employees that work out there are employees of Mansfield Township EMS, not employees of the township. So they cover 100% of all the costs of the employees. Health insurance, their salaries, benefits, holidays. The township pays them \$200,000.00 to cover their expenses, plus we provide the equipment. We cannot buy half an ambulance or bond a half of an ambulance and give it to another organization, so we have to buy it/bond it, it belongs to us, the residents of our community and that is where it serves our residents. We have mutual aid agreements, but it serves the residents of Mansfield. Chesterfield uses their own ambulances, Mansfield EMS provide the employees, there is an ambulance that they rotate in Wrightstown, but Wrightstown pays Mansfield EMS to have that ambulance housed over there, plus that ambulance answers a lot of second rate and third rate calls in Mansfield. If the primary vehicle is transporting a patient, then that ambulance is staged in Georgetown Park and stays there to cover Mansfield, which happens quite frequently. The other issue with their expenses is their call volume. They do not have enough call volume to cover their expenses 100%. Night time they are out there sometimes for a 12 hour shift and answer maybe only one call that they could charge \$600.00. So to be able to maintain the level of service and the response times they do, we have to have the personnel on staff. We do not have any volunteers any longer. That is where the biggest portion of their expenses are and their monies they collect go to. Because of the money we give them and the equipment we provide for them, the residents insurance do not cover, they do not collect from our residents, they do collect from people that are outside of our community, but for our residents they are not collecting the difference and that's because of the funding that we give them and the equipment that we purchase, so that is a savings to our residents.

Ms. Herbert: This was what I needed to hear. I'm fact finding. To me that makes sense now. That is fabulous to hear. That is why I need to ask these questions, I want to make sure she understands

it fully and hear where the Committee is coming from. She is not saying do not buy the ambulance, I needed to know why we are buying it. The explanations that you are giving today makes her appreciate now that they do not bill Mansfield Residents. She appreciates their response times. **Committeeman Gable** stated it is a little confusing and he understands why, if you do not see and hear all the details/information, you would wonder why the township needs and wants to contribute. There are reasons and circumstances. Other circumstances like when they bill an insurance company the \$600.00 they are allowed to bill for, and that insurance company will only allow say maybe \$50.00 or \$500.00 and there is no recourse to collect the difference.

Ms. Herbert then asked if they look at an accounting of how they manage their monies. She was advised that an audit is provided each year. **Committeeman Gable** stated that he and **Mayor Higgins** are out there, as the Liaisons, at least quarterly to have them give us an overview. They answer any questions we have all throughout the year as well. We do not have an authority over their employees, we cannot hire or fire etc., but if we have any concerns, which we have not, we would pass that onto Ryan or their Executive Board, and I'm sure our concerns would be addressed. Ms. Herbert again asks that the Committee has in fact looked at their books, if they are fiscally responsible etc. and are comfortable in purchasing an ambulance for them correct? She was reassured.

Ms. Herbert stated that we need all the emergency services, fire, police and ambulance. The ratings are important, not every person comes here and only checks out school systems, there are those who check out emergency services as well. It is important to them as well, I guess it could be looked at as getting something for your tax dollars. **Committeeman Gable** stated the good thing with this purchase is, that even if a decision was made to not keep the level of service that we have right now, this ambulance would still be needed, it would still remain in our community as we own it. We would/could take the oldest one and liquidate it bringing back revenue back into the service.

Ms. Herbert now directs a question to **Committeeman Cain** since he did not vote for this at the last meeting and asks him why he changed his mind. **Committeeman Cain** responded by stating that his whole question was not about the need for an ambulance, it was how it was being financed and if we already had money in a bond not being utilized why are we not using that instead of opening up another bond? That was his whole issue. He learned that it will take another month and a half to re-write this bond that then will cost more tax dollars to do and not to mention that we would lose the discount we were getting on the purchase and the offer was only good for so long and may also lose that particular ambulance to another township. So with a better understanding of this all, he feels they should move forward so that we do not lose the money and equipment. **Mayor Higgins** then interjects, stating that if we did not buy this ambulance, the EMS would have to buy the ambulance themselves. In order to do that, they would have to request more money to build a surplus so they could buy it, if we allow them to do that, how do we know that all the extra monies being given them to buy the ambulance is in fact being spent on the ambulance. We are now ensuring that they are using it on equipment (for capital) not on their operations. Also, if the EMS ever has to close down, could no longer perform, and the ambulances are owned by them, we would have to bring in another entity to run the squad and purchase ambulances for them. Our owning of the ambulances, we would only have to find people to do the services and not the huge expense of purchasing ambulances. We are looking out for the whole township, and want the assets in the township. Also on another side, if they owned the vehicles, they would have to pay much more for insurance than the township has to. If we do not get this done rather soon, it will cost us another \$11,000.00 for the ambulance, so this is the reason for this special emergency meeting today.

Ms. Herbert thanks the committee for all the information provided, although she was not happy leaving her job to attend a 1:00 PM meeting, but she needed the answers and she stated that in her opinion, this is the process working, and thanks them all. She further thanks **Committeeman Cain** for not voting yes at the last meeting until he better understood. **Mayor Higgins** then stated that since the last meeting, he and Mr. Cain had spoken several times and it does take time to catch new members up to speed, but the Mayor has been here for 10 years and Mr. Cain only 1 month. **Committeeman Gable** interjects stating there is no down payment on the ambulance right now, the manufacturer has agreed to hold on to it for just a short time before releasing it so we do not want to lose the ambulance.

Carl Schwartz, 40 Fitzgerald Lane, reiterated what Ms. Herbert spoke of. His understanding since speaking with Mr. Lewis from the EMS, was that if you do not take someone to the hospital, it is not that you can't bill them, it's the insurance will not cover. They have chosen to say, if they go out on the call, they will not bill the resident. They, the resident could get billed, but then that leaves it on the resident's shoulders since the insurance will not cover it. The second thing he heard today was that you wanted to listen to the residents, but he is not sure how that is done because the 2, 5, 3 people who come to these meeting, so who else are you hearing from or how did you hear from them. At the end of the meeting, Mr. Lewis rattled off a lot of facts and that was disappointed that you hear this after the fact as oppose to somehow communicating this before the vote. There are many residents in Four Seasons that have questions and how do we get that information out to them except through one on one conversations if they meet you in the neighborhood. **Mayor Higgins** agreed with getting information to the residents, however, it was you last meeting that asked why do we let some people speak at some items and not at others, that is why you have the public session before the final vote on the second reading. That is where the public should come in and ask these questions. **Mr. Schwartz** interrupts and said he meant for more like how the EMS ran the business and how it affects the township. He said if the residents of the township knew that they do not get paid for a lift assist, they, the residents may say, okay then, bill me \$50.00. That type of communication would be good. **Mayor Higgins** said that when he became the Mayor the first time, he made it a point to explain each Resolution and Ordinance came up. We started giving a little explanation. **Committeeman Gable** continued that procedure during his reign as Mayor. We want the residents to understand. Anything that the residents feel would help to understand things, please come to the Committee Members or to a meeting. He feels that the residents should hear that there is true thought process to everything that is done. The more the Committee can exhibit that to the public, he feels the public will feel more comfortable with decisions being made. Mr. Schwartz suggests that maybe a meeting with different communities take place, not a formal meeting a few of you going out to the areas and giving an update to these communities on what is going on within the township. **Mayor Higgins** feels the more the public knows, the more the Committee can get things done.

Mr. Schwartz then expressed his concern on all the repairs, expenses, and monies being spent on this building etc. **CFO Monzo** sent him a note way back on the particular repairs/improvements being done at that time. But now, again I hear more things are getting done again and more monies being spent. So, just like the ambulance situation, get the residents up to speed on this as well. What's the plan and the end game plan? This building is a very emotional topic for some residents and he feels it would be helpful if the Committee would think about communicating the end game and history on this situation as well. **Mayor Higgins** stated that history sometimes is painful. No one on this Committee right now are responsible for the history, but the end game is very simple - to get all the municipal services over here and to find a way to make what was downtown productive. It is fair to say that **Committeeman Gable** and he had a meeting last evening with the people who are buying the Municipal Complex, and we are excited in what will be done there. Surveys are being done to get the other properties sold. Public Works needs to be brought down here, but we do not have enough property to accommodate that, so yes, if you come to meetings you will be well versed in all that will be getting done. **Mayor Higgins** feels the more the residents are informed, the less rumors there are.

Paul Narwid, 13 Cobblestone Court, states that his background is EMS and he has been on both sides of the spectrum. Under the contract of the 501c3, are they supposed to provide in Mansfield? **Committeeman Gable** stated the funding we pay them for is for 24 hour coverage. They provide a service to Chesterfield, which is reimbursed by Chesterfield. Mr. Narwid feels by providing a crew for Mansfield, Chesterfield and Wrightstown, they are providing more crews then they are technically contracted to provide for here in Mansfield. He said he is worried that they are over extending themselves with all these crews all over the place and they are not able to reimburse or pay and putting us on the township to have to pay for all these ambulances. They are doing so much that they might be creating them to be at a loss in profit.

Committeeman Gable advised that he had recently reviewed the contract with Chesterfield and that contract actually puts money back into the organization to help cover Mansfield's expenses of operation. So they are able to show the expenses and income from them that is put back into our township and our residents. He is now in the process of reviewing the Wrightstown contract right now.

MAYOR AND COMMITTEE COMMENT

Committeeman Cain reiterates that this was good that you all came before us and asked questions and we were able to answer these questions. It's unfortunate that there is not a lot of people here today, because he agrees the more information you can get out to the residents it dispels the rumors.

Committeeman Magee thanked the residents and feels that it is true it should be more photographic. It is important.

Committeeman Gable stated that we put a lot of time on issues to get the proper information needed to make informed decisions. When Mr. Lewis presents things to the Committee it makes sense to the Committee because we know why he is asking for things, but it is hard for them to tell what the residents are thinking, i.e. why are they doing this etc., so he appreciates the questions at meetings because it does help get the information out to everyone on why they, as Committee Members, do what they are doing.

Mayor Higgins said he would like to move forward with monthly meetings to address the concerns of the residents and to inform the residents on things that the Committee is moving forward with. He asks if anyone is interested in taking part in these meetings he asked that they contact **Municipal Clerk Semus** so that she can reach out to you when these meetings will take place.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT

A motion was offered by **Committeeman Cain** and second by **Committeeman Magee** to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

PREPARED AND RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY:

Linda Semus, RMC, CMR
Municipal Clerk

Approved: February 21, 2018