

Meeting Minutes
Hightstown Borough Council
Special Workshop Meeting
February 15, 2013
6:30 pm

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Kirson at 6:31 pm and he read the Open Public Meetings Act statement which stated, "Adequate notice of this meeting has been given in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, pursuant to Public Law 1975, Chapter 231. Said notice was sent to the *Trenton Times* and the *Windsor-Hights Herald*, and is posted in the Borough Clerk's office."

Resolution 2013-45 Naming an Acting Deputy Clerk

Council President Quattrone moved resolution 2013-45, Councilmember Bluth seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Council members Bibens, Bluth, Doran, Quattrone, Thibault, and Woods voted yes.

Resolution adopted, 6-0

Resolution 2013-45
BOROUGH OF HIGHTSTOWN
COUNTY OF MERCER
STATE OF NEW JERSEY

**NAMING AN ACTING DEPUTY CLERK FOR THE SPECIAL MEETING OF
FEBRUARY 15, 2013**

WHEREAS, The Borough Clerk is not available for the February 15, 2013 meeting of the Borough Council; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of Borough Council to deputize Michael Theokas, Borough Administrator, to perform the duties of the Borough Clerk for the special meeting of February 15, 2013; and

WHEREAS, Michael Theokas, Borough Administrator, shall perform all the duties of the Borough Clerk for said meeting.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Hightstown that Michael Theokas, Borough Administrator, is hereby named as Acting Deputy Clerk for the special meeting of the Borough Council on February 15, 2013 and shall perform the duties of the Borough Clerk for said special meeting.

The flag salute followed Roll Call.

	PRESENT	ABSENT
<i>Councilmember Bibens</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Bluth</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Doran</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Quattrone</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Thibault</i>	✓	
<i>Councilmember Woods</i>	✓	
<i>Mayor Kirson</i>	✓	

Also in attendance: Michael Theokas, Borough Administrator/Acting Deputy Clerk; James LeTellier, Police Director; Carmela Roberts, Borough Engineer; and Dawson Bloom, Project Manager.

Resolution 2013-46 Authorizing a Meeting Which Excludes the Public

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Councilmember Woods moved resolution 2013-46, Councilmember Doran seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Council members Bibens, Bluth, Doran, Quattrone, Thibault, and Woods voted yes.

Resolution adopted, 6-0

Resolution 2013-46

*BOROUGH OF HIGHTSTOWN
COUNTY OF MERCER
STATE OF NEW JERSEY*

AUTHORIZING A MEETING WHICH EXCLUDES THE PUBLIC

BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Hightstown that this body will hold a meeting on February 15, 2013 at 6:30 p.m. in the Historical Society Building located at 164 N. Main Street, Hightstown that will be limited only to consideration of an item or items with respect to which the public may be excluded pursuant to section 7b of the Open Public Meetings Act.

The general nature of the subject or subjects to be discussed:

Contract Negotiations – Lease of Greystone Property

Stated as precisely as presently possible the following is the time when and the circumstances under which the discussion conducted at said meeting can be disclosed to the public: May 15, 2013 or when the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

The public is excluded from said meeting, and further notice is dispensed with, all in accordance with sections 8 and 4a of the Open Public Meetings Act.

The public meeting was called to order by Mayor Kirson at 7:00pm and he again read the Open Public Meetings Act statement.

The Flag Salute followed Roll Call which had remained the same.

Council President Quattrone moved the agenda for approval, Councilmember Thibault seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Council members Bibens, Bluth, Doran, Quattrone, Thibault and Woods voted yes.

Agenda approved.

Mayor Kirson opened Public Comment Period I and the following individuals spoke:

Jeff Bond, 210 South Main Street - commented that he is a concerned taxpayer and is concerned at the direction of Council regarding the site of Borough Hall. He appreciates the position of those who want to keep Borough Hall downtown for nostalgic reasons, but that this was a financial decision. He spoke about the cost of rebuilding the Borough Hall in a flood zone, and the total cost of temporary trailers, and the cost of building from the ground up. He said that the Lucas building was a better alternative, and the advantages of an easier move-in and general cost efficiencies make it a better option. He asked Council to look at the hard numbers and do a complete cost analysis; he didn't have all the real numbers, but used general information to form his opinion. He asked that Council not base the decision on location only.

Councilwoman Woods asked Mr. Bond why he quoted a particular number regarding the lease of the parking lot behind the Ely House. Mr. Bond replied that he was using an estimate from what he thought it was. Councilwoman Woods questioned how he could be so accurate in his estimate. Mr. Bond then tried to dispel the rumor that there was a conspiracy among some to move to Lucas. He said that he had not had any conversations with anyone in this room about any numbers he cited.

J.P. Gibbons, 602 North Main Street - commented that Council has spent many hours and has a resolution on the books, passed with a 5-1 vote, to keep Borough Hall downtown; this decision was based on numbers. He said it is documented that the insurance would pay anything over the \$500,000 deductible, and that FEMA would reimburse the Borough 75% of the deductible making the Borough responsible for \$125,000. He referenced the Perez report, which said that making a complete Borough Hall in that building would cost \$2,000,000 versus \$125,000 to rebuild at the current site. He noted that three years ago, there was a

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police report that said the Borough would save \$800,000 a year if they outsource the police to East Windsor, and that the Voices of Hightstown dispelled that with research and different conclusions. He said that this meeting was supposed to be about trailers and rebuilding the new building, not Lucas. There was not a change in the information about the meeting, and that it was not fair that this was being discussed without proper notification. He is tired of hearing that Lucas will not cost anything regarding tax implications, and that it would be a higher number than was being discussed. He said facts are facts and are not disputable and asked why the current Borough Hall is such a valuable property if it is in the flood zone.

There being no further comments, Mayor Kirson closed the public comment period.

Dawson Bloom, Project Manager, opened the temporary facilities and Borough Hall discussion. He began by posing three questions and strategies: 1) What is the end point for Council regarding Borough Hall 2) What are the needs and plan for intermediate facilities now and 3) establish an overall strategy to get from this point to the conclusion. He brought up issues regarding the partial or complete demolition of Borough Hall, and asked for affirmation of previous Council resolutions.

Councilwoman Bluth questioned the validity of Council resolutions and stated that her opinion had changed from when Council voted on the location. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding architectural reports, working conditionals for Borough employees, and the functionality of the current Police Department.

Police Director Le Tellier said that the current police facilities were not up to code, and that modifications can be made. Borough Engineer Carmela Roberts noted that the modular facilities are smaller, but would put the Borough in compliance. Councilmember Thibault asked about prevailing wage for work on the modular facilities. He noted that there was an absence of hard numbers for the move to Lucas, and that Council had pushed for information and had made a decision based on the information they had received. Councilwoman Woods discussed the flood maps and flood insurance that would be available when the new maps are adopted. Mayor Kirson affirmed his opinion that staying downtown at the old Borough Hall would be a mistake and that Lucas fits our needs, but that he would not fight Council's decision. Council President Quattrone said that he hasn't changed his mind, and thinks for a number of reasons that Lucas is the best option.

The discussion continued, with topics including the Fire House, insurance coverage, and the time necessary to make any alterations.

Borough Administrator Theokas discussed the bond process, and advised Council that whatever direction is chosen, a bond ordinance would have to be passed in order to begin the process. There was discussion regarding insurance, FEMA, DEP requirements, the cost of demolishing Borough Hall and inspecting 415 Mercer Street to determine what it would take to occupy.

Borough Engineer Roberts recapped by verifying that Council wanted to know the cost involved in an inspection of 415 Mercer Street and to demolish Borough Hall. It was determined that a resolution would be prepared for the next council meeting that authorized the Borough to determine the financial feasibility of purchasing 415 Mercer Street and moving Borough operations.

Councilman Thibault made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:08pm, Councilwoman Woods seconded. All Ayes.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Theokas
Administrator
Acting Deputy Clerk