

DOWNE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
MAY 8, 2023 at 7:00 P.M.

The Downe Township Committee met in the Meeting Room of the Municipal Office on Monday, May 8, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. Mayor Michael L. Rothman, presided. Deputy Mayor Larry Jordan, Committeemen Robert Campbell, Steve Byrne, and Edward Bart were in attendance. Municipal Solicitor Rebecca Bertram was present. Township Auditor, Nancy Sbrolla of Ford Scott was also present.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / STATEMENT REGARDING COMPLIANCE WITH OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

Mayor Rothman called the meeting to order; led the Pledge of Allegiance and read the Open Public Meetings Act Statement.

ROLL CALL

Present – Jordan, Bart, Byrne, Campbell, and Rothman

Absent - 0

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Mayor Rothman read the Tax Collector, Chief Finance Officer, and the Zoning Office Reports. The Township Committee acknowledged the receipt of the following report:

- Chief Finance Officer            April 2023
- Tax Collector                      April 2023
- Zoning Office                        April 2023

MUNICIPAL SOLICITOR’S REPORT

Solicitor Bertram presented her report which consisted of information and updates on matters that should be discussed in the Executive Session.

PUBLIC HEARING - 2023 ANNUAL BUDGET

Motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Bart to open Public Hearing for 2023 Annual Budget.

Roll Call:        Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman  
                      Nay – 0  
                      Vote: All in favor

Kary Wilson of Newport asked what is the anticipated local purpose tax? Mrs. Sbrolla stated last year we needed to raise \$534,232 to balance the budget. This year we are raising \$600,000. The overall budget went up but that does not mean our tax increase will be for the same amount. Mrs. Wilson asked for the amount of taxes to generate this year. Mrs. Sbrolla answered about \$65,000. We can only go up by 2% a year. Mrs. Wilson questioned if the township would receive the same or an increase in state funding. Mrs. Sbrolla answered some stayed the same and some experienced a small increase.

There being no further comments on a motion by Campbell and seconded by Jordan the Public Hearing was closed.

Roll Call:        Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman  
                      Nay – 0  
                      Vote: All in favor

RESOLUTIONS

R-53-2023 *A Resolution to Amend the 2023 Annual Budget*

Motion was made by Byrne and seconded by Campbell to adopt Resolution R-53-2023.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman

Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

FINAL ADOPTION - 2023 ANNUAL BUDGET

Motion was made by Byrne and seconded by Campbell to adopt the 2023 Annual Budget.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman

Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

RESOLUTIONS

R-54-2023 *Authorizing the Payment of Bills*

R-55-2023 *Resolution of the Township of Downe Granting the Mayor and Municipal Clerk the Authority to Execute a Collective Bargaining Agreement Between the Township of Downe and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), NJ Council 63 for the Period of January 1, 2023 thru December 31, 2025*

R-56-2023 *Authorizing the Sale of Tax Sale Certificate 23-00018*

R-57-2023 *Resolution Authorizing Shared Service Agreement Between the Township of Downe and County of Cumberland*

R-58-2023 *Resolution Approving the TWA-1 Form for the State of NJ, Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Water Quality Relative to 230 Cove Road, Gandy Beach, Downe Township Known as Block 1 Lot 6*

R-59-2023 *Resolution Authorizing Approval to Submit a Grant Application to National Park Service Underrepresented Community Grant*

R-60-2023 *Authorizing Executive Session*

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-54-2023 *Authorizing the Payment of Bills* in the total amount of \$651,571.91.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman

Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Bart to adopt Resolution No. R-55-2023.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman

Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Byrne and seconded by Jordan to adopt Resolution No. R-56-2023.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman

Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-57-2023.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman

Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-58-2023.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman  
Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Byrne and seconded by Campbell to adopt Resolution No. R-59-2023.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman  
Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Byrne and seconded by Jordan to adopt Resolution No. R-60-2023.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman  
Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

Mayor Rothman gave the following update: the Horseshoe Crab Festival will be held this Saturday May 13<sup>th</sup> in Fortescue. There have been some complaints about traffic going into Fortescue with excessive speed. The Sheriff's department has been in the area and they have issued about 30 tickets. There is an ordinance for the dunes in the township. In 2015 the township passed Ordinance 2015-3 which covers the dunes. Last week we held a bid opening for the Fortescue Sewer project.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

On a motion by Campbell and seconded by Byrne, the meeting was opened to the public for comment.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman  
Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

Bill McPhillips of Fortescue wanted to know who enforces the dune ordinance. The ordinance and signage are useless if it is not enforced. Mayor Rothman explained that without an ordinance we have no means to enforce any issues in the township. If someone is discovered damaging the dunes, with the ordinance, we can contact Fish and Game to enforce the ordinance. Mayor Rothman explained the enforcement process with Fish and Game. If you see something contact Fish and Game. Call them to report any incidents and always take pictures when you see something.

John Gilligan of Gandy's Beach asked about the status of the repaving of Fortescue Road. Mayor Rothman stated we will give an update during the committee report portion of this meeting.

Kary Wilson of Newport asked if the Sheriff's department will be checking for speeding on Fortescue Road. Now that the weather is good, we have a lot of 4-wheelers and dirt bikes speeding down the road. Mayor Rothman stated the Sheriff's department does not like to tell you where they will be targeting. As far as 4-wheelers and untagged motorcycles, the State policy is that the police are not allowed to pursue them to avoid high speed chases. Mrs. Wilson asked if there were any amendments to the budget we should be aware of. Mrs. Sbrolla answered that every three years the State examines our budget to make sure we are doing everything properly. The State requested one adjustment to our budget. We have an account entitled "Reserve from Uncollected Taxes". We collect the taxes for the municipality, county, school and fire districts. They all get all of their money. So, if there is any shortfall it falls on the municipality. They made an adjustment to that figure during their review and the township needed to increase the number a little, but the tax rate did not change. Mrs. Wilson asked for details on resolution R-57-

2023, a shared service agreement between Downe Township and the County of Cumberland. Miss Lockley explained that the Cumberland County Health Department is offering a \$10,000 grant to each municipality for use with media and communication type services for our residents. My suggestion was to upgrade our current roadside bulletin board to an electronic message board. I am currently waiting for proposals to do the project. Mrs. Wilson asked when the contracts are awarded to the contractors for the sewer project, what percentage of the contract amount is paid up front to get the project started. Mayor Rothman answered there is no startup funding. The contractor is paid after invoicing the township for work performed.

Liz Cowley of Fortescue stated she is here to invite everyone to Fortescue on Saturday for the Horseshoe Crab Festival being put on by the Green Team. The start time is 11am and it goes to 4pm. There will be live music, beach tours, bird tours, lectures at the Chapel, food vendors and no bugs.

Laura Williams of Fortescue commented that if we find 4-wheelers and untagged vehicles flying down New Jersey Avenue we call the State Police. If they happen to go to the turnaround at the end and you can see them riding up the dunes with a 4-wheeler then we call Fish and Game. Discussion continued about the 4-wheelers and untagged vehicles all over the township.

There being no further comments, the public comment portion was closed on a motion by Campbell and seconded by Bart.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman  
Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mayor Rothman stated the Davis property is being cleaned up on Methodist Road. Mr. Loteck has been working on various issues in the township. We have a few residents being fined for code violations, a couple cases are in court and a few who have corrected their violations. We are working on the abandoned sailboat in Fortescue. The parked vehicles in Dividing Creek are being moved. The resident burning tires at night in the township has been fined by the DEP.

Mr. Jordan reported that we need to send out letters regarding the condition of Fortescue Road. Mr. Jordan suggests we address the letter to South Jersey Gas Company, the County Commissioners and Neil Reilly who is Director of the County Public Works Department. This letter should state there are approximately 24 places on Fortescue Road that need immediate attention. This roadway was damaged during the South Jersey Gas expansion project. We need to say that we appreciate the expansion project, but the aftermath is unacceptable. We cannot continue to drive over these potholes. This has become an extreme hazard. Mr. Jordan stated our public auction will take place on June 12<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. We are selling 3 properties.

Mr. Byrne stated music will be at Union Hall on May 20th at 7pm. The Squares from the Cape May area will be performing. Don't forget our one Sunday a month music session on May 21<sup>st</sup> from 1pm-4pm. Mr. Byrne thanked the Green Team for all of their efforts in the Township.

Mr. Campbell stated we are in between the two phases of the bid process with the Fortescue Sewer Project. The next bid opening will be May 18<sup>th</sup>. We are moving forward.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Downe Township Committee will be held on Monday, June 12, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the Meeting Room of the Municipal Complex.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion by Jordan and seconded by Byrne, the meeting was closed to the public and the Executive Session was opened with no action to be taken after Executive Session. A contract/personnel issue will be discussed.

Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman  
Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

On a motion by Campbell and seconded by Bart, the Executive Session portion was closed.

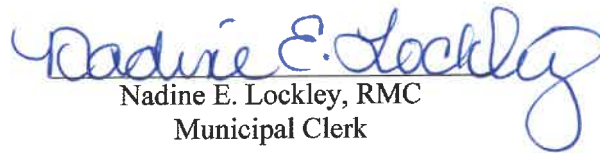
Roll Call: Aye – Bart, Byrne, Campbell, Jordan, and Rothman  
Nay – 0

Vote: All in favor

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Campbell and seconded by Bart.

Vote: All in favor

  
Nadine E. Lockley, RMC  
Municipal Clerk