

DOWNE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 13, 2023 at 7:00 P.M.

The Downe Township Committee met in the Meeting Room of the Municipal Office on Monday, November 13, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. Mayor Michael L. Rothman, presided. Deputy Mayor Larry Jordan, Committeemen Robert Campbell, and Steve Byrne were in attendance. Committeeman Bart was absent. Municipal Solicitor Rebecca Bertram was 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 – Campbell, Jordan, Byrne, and Rothman

Absent - Bart

Mayor Rothman stated last month we told you we would invite our fire chief to the meeting. Chief George Robertson was introduced. He stated he has been in fire service for 27 years. Has been Fire Chief in Downe Township for 14 years. He is Fire Captain for the City of Bridgeton full-time. He thanked the committee for inviting him to the meeting. He stated he heard there were some concerns raised about Gandy's Beach and the fire department's access to areas. He represents Fire District #1 which covers Newport, Fortescue, Gandy's Beach, and Money Island and we work exclusively with Dividing Creek – District 2. We are doing a lot of training together and things are going very well. Our fire company has been in business since 1941 when Fortescue was founded and right after that in the 1950's Newport was founded and in 2007 the two departments realized they had an issue with manpower and decided to merge the departments together. We average about 270 to 300 calls a year. We also cover water rescues. We do water rescue for three counties, Cumberland, Salem, and Cape May County. That includes dive rescue, ice rescue, swift water rescue, and surf rescues as well as provide fire protection for our district. Another thing we do is provide EMS services. We don't run an ambulance service. We run two small vehicle first responder services. One comes out of Newport and one out of Fortescue. During COVID we teamed up with Dividing Creek because the State only wanted EMT's to go on calls. We have only 8 EMT's in our department and Dividing Creek only has 1 EMT. So, we decided we are going to start sharing services for EMS calls. We thought it was important to do this because we use a third-part ambulance service from Inspira, and we thought our residents deserved a familiar face first.

John Gilligan of Gandy's Beach stated the water comes through the bulkhead and there is wet sand 2ft deep. How can the first responders get through that? Chief Robertson stated in instances where we have a situation like that, we have a 5-ton emergency vehicle that is all wheel drive and has a lift gate. This is a high-water response vehicle. We will run that into the area, package the patients up and bring the patient out of that area to where the ambulance is station. This vehicle was used during Hurricane Sandy to help evacuate people. We have also used the vehicle during a storm to bring the rescue personnel and equipment to a scene. The township in the past has always had personnel on staff during emergency situations, which is a great help to the fire department. We have not run into any situations where we were not able to get to an emergency. Chief Robertson stated when we make first responder calls there are 7 other guys besides himself that are EMT's, and we do everything they can do on an ambulance. Generally, what we do because we are so far away from the hospital is a rapid turnaround. Sometimes before the ambulance even arrives, the first responders have gotten to the scene and the patient is ready to be transported to the hospital. There are even instances where we will meet the ambulance on the side of the road to speed up the transport of the patient to the hospital. The early arrival of the first responders helps to get a patient to the hospital in the "golden hour" which is key to saving lives.

Mayor Rothman and the Committee thanked Chief Robertson for his presentation and for his years of service to Downe Township. We are very fortunate to have him here in this township.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Mayor Rothman read the Tax Collector Report. The Township Committee acknowledged the receipt of the following report:

- Tax Collector October 2023

PUBLIC HEARING - 2024 SMALL CITIES HOME REHAB GRANT PROGRAM

Mr. Mark Blauer of Blauer Associates conducted the Public Hearing to introduce the 2024 DCA Small Cities Grant Program. Mr. Blauer stated he has been the grant administrator for Downe Township since 1998. In September we held a performance hearing to talk about what has been done with the money received. We are here tonight to tell you that we have an opportunity to apply for more money. The opportunity was opened on October 20th by the State Department of Community Affairs. They have \$6.7M and each year we can go after a piece of that. The last few years we have applied for \$200,000 of that money for home rehabilitation assistance for low to moderate income homeowners in Downe Township. The last three years we won \$200,000 at a time and we are quietly running a program that is helping any number of people in any given year. We have assisted 8-10 households per year with this program. This year the State added more money. They announced in October they have \$5M of extra money. The money is specifically for dealing with lead paint in homes. The State has made it a point of emphasizing dealing with lead paint. If you have a home built before 1978, there is a chance your home will have lead paint. Lead was used in paint. It is no longer used and can't be used because it is dangerous to children that might ingest it. There are consequences to ingesting lead paint. We are being encouraged to apply for this money in addition to what we regularly apply for. The State is so keen on getting this money on the street they have loosened the rules. With the regular program we are required to place a lien on the property, so the money comes back to us without interest when a person sells their home. This lead money has no such strings attached, think of it as a grant with no match required. Our intention is to go for \$200,000 of traditional grant money and \$200,000 of lead money. This application will be due by December 7, 2023. During our application process if we determine you are eligible for the grant, we send a lead inspector to the property. If the home was built before 1978, we conduct a lead inspection. If we find lead paint and the rehab project will disturb that lead paint, we will employ HUD work lead safe work practices. We would have to have a final clearance test at the end of the project to make sure there is no lead dust left in the house. If we find lead paint in the house and we can tag some of the rehab work as lead work such as replacing woodwork, doors, tiles, or windows we will not need to put a lien on the property for that money. We are normally allowed to spend approximately \$25,000 per home of traditional money, we can spend up to \$13,000 per home to deal with lead. We are being encouraged by the State to take a somewhat liberal view as to what will count as lead work. This is a particularly useful opportunity for us. We have a very well-established program. We can ask for \$200,000 of regular money and \$200,000 of lead money. There are various resolutions on the agenda tonight that relates to the application. If anyone has any questions or comments, this is your opportunity to speak.

A motion was made by Jordan and seconded by Campbell to open the public hearing for comments.

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

Vote: All in favor

Ken Fester of Gandy Beach asked if home raising is allowed. Mr. Blauer stated he asked the State and they are not allowing that type of project.

There being no further comments a motion was made by Jordan and seconded by Campbell to close the public hearing for comments.

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

Vote: All in favor

SOLICITOR’S REPORT

Solicitor Bertram did not submit a report prior to the meeting. She apologized for not providing the report. She informed the Township Committee the report will be sent to the Clerk’s Office in the morning.

ORDINANCE INTRODUCTION

Ordinance 2023-6 - *An Ordinance Regarding Pet Waste in the Township of Downe*

Ordinance 2023-7 - *An Ordinance Regarding Wildlife Feeding in the Township of Downe*

Ordinance 2023-8 - *An Ordinance Prohibiting Illicit Connection to Municipal Stormwater System Operated by the Township of Downe*

Ordinance 2023-9 - *An Ordinance to Establish Requirement to Control Littering in the Township of Downe*

Ordinance 2023-10 - *An Ordinance to Prohibit Disposal of Waste in the Township of Downe Municipal Storm Sewer System*

Ordinance 2023-11 - *An Ordinance Requiring the Retrofitting of Private Storm Drain Inlets in the Township of Downe*

Ordinance 2023-12 - *An Ordinance to Establish a Yard Waste Collection and Disposal Program for the Township of Downe*

Ordinance 2023-13 - *An Ordinance Establishing Requirements for the Storage of Salt and Other De-icing Materials in the Township of Downe*

Mayor Rothman stated we are grouping Ordinance 2023-6 through Ordinance 2023-13. These ordinances are all related to the Stormwater Tier change from Tier B to Tier A which is regulated by the State.

Motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to introduce Ordinance 2023-6 – Ordinance 2023-13.

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

Vote: All in favor

RESOLUTIONS

R-106-2023 *Authorizing the Payment of Bills*

R-107-2023 *Resolution Authorizing the Cancellation of Property Maintenance for Property Acquired by Downe Township*

R-108-2023 *Resolution Authorizing Transfers Between Budget Appropriations*

R-109-2023 *Resolution Authorizing Professional Service Agreement with Mott MacDonald for Bidding Services for Gandy’s Beach Bulkhead Damage*

- R-110-2023 *Resolution Authorizing the Adoption of the State Model Citizen Participation Plan for DCA Small Cities Program*
- R-111-2023 *Resolution Identifying Small Cities Fair Housing Officer*
- R-112-2023 *Resolution Approving Housing Rehabilitation Grant Management Plan*
- R-113-2023 *Resolution Adopting Housing Rehabilitation Policies and Procedures Manual*
- R-114-2023 *Resolution Authorizing the Submission of a Small Cities Community Development Block Grant for Home Rehabilitation Program FY 2024*
- R-115-2023 *Resolution Appointing Conflict Counsel*
- R-116-2023 *Resolution Authorizing Executive Session*

A motion was made by Jordan and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-106-2023 *Authorizing the Payment of Bills* in the total amount of \$238,390.78.

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

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Byrne and seconded by Jordan to adopt Resolution No. R-107-2023.

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

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Byrne and seconded by Campbell to adopt Resolution No. R-108-2023.

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

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-109-2023.

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

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-110-2023.

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

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-111-2023.

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

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-112-2023.

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

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-113-2023.

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

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Byrne to adopt Resolution No. R-114-2023.

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

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Byrne and seconded by Campbell to adopt Resolution No. R-115-2023.

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

Vote: All in favor

A motion was made by Campbell and seconded by Jordan to adopt Resolution No. R-116-2023.

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

Vote: All in favor

Mayor Rothman gave the following updates:

There was a Fortescue main break last week. This was created by South Jersey Gas who hit a waterline. Our PW department and South Jersey Gas took care of the issue. We have been working on the storm drains in some problem areas in the south part of Fortescue when it rains the water collects in that area and floods it. We are working on identifying better drainage of stormwater in that area which should help to eliminate the flooding.

We are working on a bulkhead ordinance. With this ordinance the problems we are facing is how do we enforce something that is going to be fair not just to township but also to the property owners. There is a property in Fortescue. We made contact with the owner last week. He has material onsite to fill the project. He has engineering plans prepared. He has not moved on the repairs. Since that time, a for sale sign has been posted on the property. We are aware there is concern that the property will be sold and not fixed. He has offered to attend a meeting to answer everyone's questions.

We are getting close to introducing a new ordinance for short-term rentals. Some of the issues we are discussing is accessing a fee for inspections and when we will do inspections. We would like to do our inspections in the beginning of the rental season and in the middle of the rental season. We have spoken with Chief Robertson to discuss what the City of Bridgeton does in reference to short-term rentals. We need to make sure the township is aware of these short-term rentals as well as our local fire department.

We adopted a resolution for Mott MacDonald that will allow the Gandy Beach Bulkhead Repair project to be put out to bid. Mott MacDonald will be handling the entire bid process for the project.

There was a complaint recently on Hall Street regarding animals. The State Police got involved and the resident has 30 days to conform with our animal ordinance.

We met with some residents in Gandy Beach regarding some of their concerns. The residents requested contact information for US Army Corp, and we are working on getting good contact information. One of the items that was discussed is on the south side of Cove Road the original project was to include bin blocks. This project has been changed and instead of bin blocks we will be installing a steel bulkhead. The beach restoration project is still in the works. Preliminary engineering has been completed. The money has been pulled off the table because of the federal budget process.

The Elsinboro project was a \$3M project with a 10% match requirement for the township. They are a smaller community than we are, and they don't have the funds. Nothing has been awarded or finished because of the 10% match that needs to be funded.

The BRIC grant funding was just recently announced so this also ties into the conversation with Gandy Beach residents. With the BRIC grant funding we can propose resiliency projects to both Gandy's Beach and south end of Fortescue shoreline. We will be looking into this grant opportunity. Please know these things do not happen overnight. Please do not come to the next meeting and say what are you doing. Give us time to do what we are doing.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

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

Vote: All in favor

Kary Wilson of Newport stated it was mentioned that the township went from a Tier B to a Tier A community. Can you explain what that means. Mayor Rothman answered we talked about this a few months ago. The easiest way to explain it is the stormwater runoff program has different tiers. One of the things involved in this tier change is the addition of street sweeping. These are statewide stormwater changes. The change affects our budget because of the additional services required to conform to the new regulations. Mrs. Wilson asked for an explanation of R-107-2024. Miss Lockley stated this was a piece of property the township acquired which had been assessed fees for violating our grass maintenance ordinance. We are eliminating the fee because we now own the property. Mrs. Wilson asked for an explanation of R-115-2024. Mayor Rothman stated this is counsel for a personnel matter. Mrs. Wilson asked for the agenda topics for Executive Session. Mrs. Bertram stated personnel and possible litigation. Mrs. Wilson asked has there been word from the State on their plans to demo the houses they purchased through Blue Acres in Money Island. Mayor Rothman stated he spoke with Fish and Game a few times about the activity in the area. Blue Acres has marked the properties for demolition, and we have not received a schedule yet.

Dennis New of Fortescue stated the property next to his where a house was demolished and the bulkhead remaining needs work. The repairs are not holding and has caused a 4-foot-deep sink hole that is getting bigger with every tide. This sinkhole is encroaching on his property. This bulkhead is not repairable and with one or two more storms it will be gone. We installed snow fence to help temporarily. Pictures were sent to the owner, and we never received a response. Mayor Rothman asked to speak with Mr. New after the meeting to get more information so the township can contact the homeowner about the issue.

LeeAnn Ripp of Fortescue stated this past Saturday there was a surveyor on the lot next to her, did someone buy that lot? Mayor Rothman answered no one bought the property. The township has been looking at a drainage pipe in that area and we did have a surveyor in that area. Mrs. Ripp stated when she approached the surveyor, he was a bit rude and gave her very little information about what he was doing.

Liz Cowley of Fortescue commented on the bulkhead at the campground. We have been talking about this property for 11 months. We keep hearing I have talked to the owner, and he is going to take care of the issues. He has done nothing but bring in dirt to make people think he is going to do something. This man is not going to do anything unless we have some kind of an ordinance or some kind of a rule that is going to force him to do something. He is going to sell that property and we have nothing in place for the new owner that says as the new owner this is what you need to do. We need to get something in place. Even if it is the wrong wording, get something in place, please.

Ms. Cowley stated the trailer park that is in Fortescue, last winter had people there who did not have water because the park owners turned it off. Now I believe there are certain individuals in that park that are getting water from Middlesex on their own. The question is some people are choosing to use Middlesex however I believe we will still have residents in that park who will not have running water. Mayor Rothman stated he met with Kyle & Sam Corona, the owners and at least two residents of the park. The residents stated what the park management is trying to do, and they felt it was unfair to the residents. We have no control of what a private business can charge for occupancy. The residents were referred to the Cumberland County Department of Consumer Affairs. They have investigated. We were told by the owners they will foot the bill to bring water to the trailer park. There should be no Middlesex Water service yet. Ms. Cowley asked what the Health Department said about people living without running water. Mayor Rothman stated when he questioned the Health Department about the totes in front of each camper onsite, the Health Department did an investigation and said the residents are not using the water as potable water. The water in the totes is not being consumed by the residents, it is being used to wash dishes and such. Because it is not used for drinking purposes it is okay to use. Ms. Cowley stated that is odd, because the Health Department is known was coming down hard on everyone.

Ms. Cowley stated we had a great day at Downe Home Day. Because of the wind, the only events we could not hold were the inflatables. The school made \$6500 for the 8th grade graduation. The is \$200 more than last year. Thanks to all who participated and helped with the event. We are doing a used toy drive next. We are looking for gently used plastic toys. We want to keep the plastic out of the landfill. We will collect the toys, clean them up and recycle them for a free giveaway to children in Downe Township before Christmas. If anyone has toys sitting in your garage that are not being used, collection days are this Wednesday and Saturday the 18th at the OEM building for the same hours as the Convenience Center. On January 6th we will be holding our Polar Plunge, and the Mayor will have a better costume this year. Mayor Rothman stated all of the events that the Green Team does is not put together overnight. Liz has taken over the Green Team and the Heart and Soul group and we would like to thank her and her team for all they do in this Township.

Laurie Williams of Fortescue stated she can assure the township there will be calls to the Cumberland County Board of Health because she would like them to explain how they know that the water totes are only being used for gray water. Did they inspect all of trailers with totes? The newest trailer in there which replaced one that was removed has new totes in the back of it. This is the road that the sewer plant will be built on. Why is it falling on the residents of Fortescue to contact the Health Department regarding this issue? Mayor Rothman explained the importance of the residents reaching out with your complaints to the County offices. Ms. Williams continued about the unsafe and unhealthy situation with the water and she will be calling the Health Department to get some answers or documentation.

Ms. Williams asked how far along is the bulkhead ordinance? Will the ordinance allow the sale of the property in question without it being repaired. Mayor Rothman stated we have ordinances that we have been reviewing and the biggest problem that we are having is how to enforce this. Mr. Jordan stated some years ago there was a court case, and it was determined that we could not mandate a bulkhead due to the financial aspect of the mandate. Mrs. Bertram stated you cannot stop a sale based on an ordinance. You cannot stop the sale even on a Certificate of Occupancy. If someone is going to buy something "As Is" you can not tell them they cannot do it. You can stop someone from living somewhere without a CO, but you cannot stop a

sale because the property is not up to code. Ms. Williams asked when the bulkhead ordinance will be available for review. Mayor Rothman answered when it is in a form that is presentable. Ms. Williams stated that if that bulkhead is breached it becomes a risk to the beachfront owners, something has to be done. Don't tell me he can sell the property and we wait to see if the next person will repair the bulkhead.

Pete Wagner of Gandy Beach stated he doesn't think you can force someone to put a bulkhead on their property. The only thing you can do on your property is bring your bulkhead down the sides of your property. Mayor Rothman stated this is another issue we are dealing with in writing this ordinance. Ms. Williams stated then we need to reach out and find a way to do this ordinance. He can not be allowed to screw us again. Walk away with a couple million dollars and laugh all the way out of town. Mayor Rothman stated we will continue to work on this issue and we will invite Mr. Carpino to our next township meeting to answer your questions.

Mr. Campbell stated we have been visiting the bulkhead problem since Hurricane Sandy. It is not just the campground property. There are a dozen other properties along the bayfront that don't have bulkheads that are going to cause a problem in the future. Gandy Beach has the same problem. There are properties over there that have no bulkheads. That is the reason the sand covers the roads every time you have a moon tide or high tide or a storm event. In Gandy Beach the DEP won't allow anyone that doesn't have a bulkhead to build one. In Fortescue the problem has always been who pays for the bulkhead. If the people that own the property don't have the money or don't want to spend the money, then who will spend the money to put in a \$50,000-\$100,000 bulkhead. After Hurricane Sandy we tried to figure out a way to mandate that bulkheads be repaired and if they didn't the township would put them in. We realized we couldn't afford to do that. Mrs. Bertram stated if the township has the money, and someone gave consent you could do the bulkhead and put a lien on the property. Mayor Rothman stated we can not make someone do something to their property if they don't want to. We are trying to figure this out. Mayor Rothman stated he realizes this is very frustrating. Just think how frustrating it is to make all of these calls when there is an issue and not get the results you expect afterwards. Ms. Williams stated her point is, we need an ordinance to assure that a bulkhead in disrepair is a danger to surrounding properties and needs to be fixed. Mrs. Bertram stated the neighbors can sue the property owner. Mayor Rothman stated let us get through this month and we can work on getting you something on bulkheads. Ms. Cowley stated she has had conversations with Mr. Carpino, and he is telling everyone the same thing, he is going to do a temporary fix. He brought in 12 loads of dirt and hasn't moved it at all. He showed me the engineering plans but has not done anything to fix the bulkhead. Come January when we are having winter storms, his bulkhead is going to come loose and be the cause of damage to another bulkhead.

Ms. Williams stated at the north end beach by the jetty they used black geotubes. Those geotubes or geobags are what that is saving the beach in Fortescue. Mr. Campbell stated they were geobags piled on the beach and after 6 months or a year the DEP was supposed to come back and do something with the geobags. The geobags were cut around the bottom and the tops were removed. So, if you see geobag fabric there it is just the bottom of the fabric and not a bag. This was a temporary emergency repair. Mayor Rothman stated one thing that can be done with geobags is they pump a mixture in the bags that turns it into concrete. But in DEP's world we are not allowed to use them. When we dredge the creek, DEP wants the material to go where they want it. We have asked them several times to put the material in certain areas that need it, but they won't. Ms. Williams stated she has a difficult time believing the bags are not bags because we walk on them, and it is solid as a rock. Mr. Campbell stated the fabric you are walking on is just the bottom of the bag. I believe the vegetation has been very responsible for keeping the dunes that are left there. Ms. Williams stated we are losing a tremendous amount of sand at the north end. The cement rubble is still there thankfully because the sand is gone and we are now to the bayberry and that is just going to keep eating away until it gets to the bin block. Mr. Campbell stated that area from the first crossover all the way up to the jetty is in a FEMA project currently from Storm Isaias and that is a million-dollar project to repair that. It will include taking all of the rubble out, putting the dune system back and to put sand back on that beach. It is all

being worked on. This is one of our current FEMA projects. Ms. Williams stated ordinance wise we need to do everything we can do to protect ourselves.

LeeAnn Ripp of Fortescue asked what are the plans for the green house. Mayor Rothman stated we have had discussions about the green house. We would like to take the green house down and put up a pavilion to have a place to just sit and relax.

Pete Wagner stated when he first got to Gandy Beach thirty some years ago, the water never came up near the houses. There was a beach, trees and vegetation in front of Gandy Beach. Since then we have lost so much sand no one ever thought we would need sand for the beach. The houses there had no need for a bulkhead because they had dunes in front of the houses and vegetation all around. The only way to fix it now is with replenishment and jetties. Mr. Campbell stated that is why we are working on the BRIC grant.

Todd Bowen Chief from the City of Bridgeton Fire Department came for two quick things. One is, we do the shared service for fire inspection for the township. We currently do 200 square miles of fire prevention and about 70 square miles of EMS coverage. Shared services has been a model for the State. It gives the township a local person they can call on. He is here to tell the committee that he appreciates all of the years of service and hopes it continues. He has decided to retire on January 1st and move on. The second thing is, here with him is Deputy Chief Jack Justice who he has the privilege of knowing and who his replacement will be. It makes for a better transition which has been going on for the past few weeks. He will be the new contact for the fire inspection service. Mr. Justice stated he was born and raised in Elmer and still lives there so he knows small towns. Has been a fireman for 25 years and has served 19 with the City of Bridgeton. Looks forward to working with the township and it is very nice to meet you all. Mayor Rothman thanked Chief Bowen for everything he has done. He has had the privilege of getting to know and work with Chief Bowen and learn from him. To Chief Justice he looks forward to getting yelled at by him at some point.

Ken Festa of Gandy Beach asked about the state health benefits payments on the bill list. Mayor Rothman stated that is for health benefits payments for two months. He continued it is no secret that we have changed CFO's and there may be more situations to help clean things up while we transition. Mr. Festa continued with comments regarding the FEMA Audit and asked if we have reached and met the federal procurement standards. Mayor Rothman stated we achieved everything that was stated or else we would not be able to continue to do work with FEMA. Mr. Festa asked if we were able to come up with the missing support on the \$445,000. Did we come up with that paperwork? Mr. Campbell stated he remembers the audit well. He remembers what initiated the audit and he went through the audit. Not sure what \$445,000 you are referring to at this time because it was a few years ago. Mayor Rothman stated the money never came here. FEMA rescinded the funds which was noted in the audit. Mr. Festa asked if we got the \$2.3M back. Mayor Rothman stated that those dollars never came to the township, those were amounts written on paper but never received. Mr. Festa stated it was designated for repairs from Sandy. We are suffering here. Mr. Campbell stated we have received almost \$20M here from Hurricane Sandy and with all of the other storms we had here. When FEMA obligates a project for \$2.5M it is obligated all based on estimates and what's called a property damage assessment. Then we as a township pay through bonding. We get the money, pay for the repairs all based on these estimates. Then when we are done we submit the actual cost invoices to FEMA and then we can get reimbursed by FEMA. It takes forever to get the money back. If we go over the obligated amount we don't get it, if we go under the obligated amount we only get what we actually paid no matter what was obligated. Mr. Festa stated we left a lot of money on the table with FEMA and we are suffering for it now. Mayor Rothman stated has there ever been a thank you for the \$20M that we did get. Has anybody ever stood up and said thank you. Mr. Festa asked how much of the \$20M was spent at Gandy Beach. Mayor Rothman stated we spent \$5. Mr. Festa commented you said you were going to fix the road and the road still isn't fixed. Mr. Campbell said, "do you want an answer Mr. Festa? Mr. Campbell stated after Sandy North and South Cove Road were under 4ft full of debris, there was no road from the beachfront all the way to the meadow. We put in 6" of asphalt and all the roads were rebuilt as temporary road after that

storm. We spent millions in Gandy Beach to put it back and we spent money after the April storm, then Hurricane Irene and then Isasia. We have spent a lot of money in Gandy Beach. Mr. Festa commented yes you pushed the sand back. Mr. Campbell continued on South Cove Road that bin block wall that was put in is 1500ft long and that was a temporary emergency protective measure and it is only still there because we are still working on the design to try to fix the road. We keep filling all the holes in. We have spent a lot of money. Mr. Festa asked when was the last time something was fixed in Gandy Beach other than pushing the sand off the roads so we can go to work. Mr. Campbell stated two week ago they went down and fixed the crack in the turnaround and there is more concrete coming. Mr. Festa said nothing has been done. Mr. Campbell said he was told it is going to be done so it will. The Army Corp is suppose to put in a jetty there at that turnaround. We have a lot of projects going on in Gandy Beach. The steel bulkhead costs \$1.3M. Mayor Rothman asked if anyone else has something for the public comment portion.

Sean Pignatelli of Fortescue stated we have an event called Taste of Italy schedule for December 1st. Tony and Tina Orillia will be hosting the event. They own an Italian restaurant in New York. They will be giving instructions on cooking. We are also doing a fund raiser in conjunction with the school. There is a brochure and there is a digital brochure available. The proceeds go to the school.

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

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

Vote: All in favor

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mayor Rothman stated we are in the final stages with the IBank and the Local Finance Board.

Mr. Jordan had nothing to report.

Mr. Byrne reported there will be music at Union Hall on November 18th at 7pm. It will be Linda Sands and Joe Marleno they are tremendous musicians. Come out and join us. Don't forget Sunday at 1pm – 4pm for another music gathering.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Downe Township Committee will be held on Monday, December 11, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the Meeting Room of the Municipal Complex.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion by Campbell and seconded by Jordan, the meeting was closed to the public and the Executive Session was opened with no action to be taken after Executive Session. Contract/personnel/potential litigation issues will be discussed.

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

Vote: All in favor

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

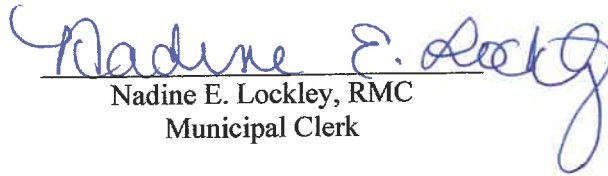
Roll Call: Aye – Byrne, Jordan, Campbell, and Rothman
Nay – 0
Absent - Bart

Vote: All in favor

ADJOURNMENT

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

Vote: All in favor


Nadine E. Lockley, RMC
Municipal Clerk