

NOVEMBER 25, 2013

A special meeting of the Hope Township Committee convened at 4:30 P.M. at the Hope Township Municipal Building with the following members present: Mayor Timothy McDonough, Deputy Mayor George Beatty, and Committeeman John Koonz. Also present was the Municipal Clerk, Mary Pat Quinn; Municipal Court Judge, Craig Dana; and Municipal Court Administrator, Christine Rabtzow.

Under the provisions of the "Open Public Meetings Act", adequate notice of the meeting had been provided by publishing notice in The Express Times and by posting notices in the Hope Post Office and on the Township bulletin boards all on November 20, 2013.

#### DISCUSS MEMBERSHIP, PROPOSED BUDGET & STAFF REQUIREMENTS FOR MUNICIPAL COURT

Present from White Township were: Jeff Herb, Mayor; Sam Race, Committeeman; Brian Tipton, Esq., Township Attorney; and Kathleen Reinalda, White Township Clerk and CFO (also Hope Township CFO). James Perry, the Mayor of Hardwick Township was also present.

Koonz advised all present that he was made aware of a rumor that Hope Township does not want White Township to join the Municipal Court of North Warren at Hope. He emphasized that that information is false and that all of the member municipalities in the court would welcome White as a new member. McDonough added that the inclusion of White Township would be a good fit for the court. He also noted that Hardwick Township is interested in coming back to the court and will likely give notice to their present court.

Judge Dana began the discussion by mentioning that there is a decrease in tickets being written by the New Jersey State Police statewide. There are not many new troopers either. Collections are also a problem for all municipal courts; as the economy worsens, the ability to collect becomes worse.

The analysis prepared by the Municipal Auditor, Anthony Ardito, was reviewed. Dana disagreed with portions of the analysis, specifically the staff requirements and salaries. Based on statistics published by the Administrative Office of the Courts, the Municipal Court of North Warren had 20,778 cases in the past year; Hardwick had 2,500; White had 8,000. He suggested that the income vs. weighed case average be considered as well.

To accommodate the activity of the five municipalities, the three court sessions per month should be increased to four per month. He recommended increasing the following salaries accordingly: Municipal Court Prosecutor \$21,000.00; Deputy Court Administrator \$30,000.00; Court Administrator \$64,000.00; Judge \$37,000.00; security \$6,000.00; temporary \$16,600.00; Treasurer \$5,500.00.

A brief recess was called to allow Quinn to make copies of the present interlocal agreement for the court for everyone on a motion made by Beatty, seconded by Koonz. Committee polled: Beatty-yes; Koonz-yes; McDonough-yes.

The recess concluded on a motion made by Beatty, seconded by Koonz. Committee polled: Beatty-yes; Koonz-yes; McDonough-yes.

Dana recommended that each municipality make a minimum three-year commitment to the interlocal agreement.

Reinalda asked that the revised projections be forwarded to Ardito so that he can adjust his analysis. Quinn was directed to do so and ask for a one week turnaround from Ardito. McDonough stated that after that, one person from the Hope Township Committee should sit down with the judge to fine tune the staff and salary requirements. All present agreed that another joint meeting should follow.

Koonz, along with the support of McDonough and Beatty, asked Quinn to reorder the ballistic window for the violations office. The governing body was not in favor of buying the used ballistic door/window unit from Union Township. The lead time on the delivery of the glass is three to four weeks. Rabtzow, who expressed skepticism on the lead time, asked that the mayors of each member municipality contact the Administrative Office of the Courts to advise that the window is ordered. Quinn should follow up with a letter. By doing so, Rabtzow thought that the merger with Hardwick and White could be expedited.

Beatty obtained information from "Pioneer", a court collection agency, while he attended the N.J. State League of Municipalities Convention this month. He gave the information to the judge for his review and recommendation. Dana preferred that the Township look in to credit card capability.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 P.M. on a motion made by Beatty, seconded by Koonz. The motion was carried.

Respectfully submitted:

Mary Pat Quinn  
Municipal Clerk