



**DELAWARE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE**  
**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

**June 29, 2021 – 6:00 PM**

**At Town Hall**

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Mayor James Waltman called the special meeting of the Delaware Township Committee to order on June 29, 2021 at 6:00 PM. Mayor Waltman announced that this meeting is called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Notice of this meeting was faxed to the Hunterdon County Democrat, Trenton Times, Courier News and the Star Ledger, was posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building and filed with the Township Clerk on June 24, 2021.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor James Waltman led those in attendance in the pledge to the nation's flag.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Mayor James Waltman, Deputy Mayor Joseph Vocke, Committee Members Charles Herman and Susan Lockwood along with Deputy Township Clerk Tiffany Crivelli, CFO Diane McDaniel, and Township Attorney Joseph Tauriello.

**NEW BUSINESS/OTHER**

Mayor Waltman advised that the Township Committee put together an Open Space Referendum Sub-Committee comprised of a representative(s) from the Open Space Committee, Township Committee, Finance Committee, Township Attorney, Hunterdon County Open Space, and the Recreation Commission.

Mayor Waltman then read the municipal question to be voted on and the interpretive statement aloud that the sub-committee constructed.

**MUNICIPAL PUBLIC QUESTION TO BE VOTED UPON**

Without increasing the amount of the Delaware Township Open Space Tax, shall the uses permitted for the Delaware Township Open Space Trust Fund be expanded to include: Acquisition, development, improvement and maintenance of municipal lands for recreation and conservation purposes; preservation of open space, farmland, natural areas and historic sites; preservation of historic structures, properties, facilities, and sites; and for the payment of debt service or indebtedness issued or incurred by the Municipality for any of the purposes described above, with projects to be awarded through a fair and open process and to be acquired from willing sellers only and to be funded by the existing Open Space Tax rate not to exceed the amount of .06 cents per hundred dollars of assessed property?

**INTERPRETIVE STATEMENT**

If approved, the referendum does not increase the Delaware Township Open Space Tax rate. Presently, Delaware Township's Open Space Trust Fund is used to (a) acquire land, easements, development rights or other interests in real estate for recreation, conservation, and farmland preservation purposes and (b) to pay debt service on indebtedness issued or incurred by the

Township for these acquisitions. Voting “YES” on the question would permit, but not require, the Township to also utilize the Delaware Township Open Space Trust Fund for the development and/or maintenance of all lands or interests therein acquired, to include acquisition and maintenance of historic sites, and to include a fair and open process to determine how funds are allocated each year, and an annual independent audit of how funds have been spent during the preceding year. As used herein, the word “development” means “any improvement to land acquired for recreation and conservation purposes designed solely to expand or enhance utilization for those purposes.”

Mayor Waltman stated that the Township is not against anti-acquisition of lands and that the Open Space Referendum would provide flexibility for the Township to use some of the funding to pay for maintenance of land acquired and gifted. Currently the Dilts Park maintenance is paid by general tax funds. If Dilts Park requires additional maintenance such as updating the bathrooms, that puts additional stress and burden on the general tax funds and how the funds are allocated. If more money needs to be allotted to Dilts Park, it could take away from what is allotted for road repairs.

Committeewoman Lockwood noted that she volunteered to be on the sub-committee to make sure that all questions were clear and wanted an amount to be set, but noticed there was not one. Committeewoman Lockwood stated she does support Dilts Park and believes that the Township has the resources, they just need to be allocated appropriately.

Committeewoman Lockwood advised that people voted to pay a tax to acquire Open Space and for Preservation because it would keep the area from being developed and keep taxes down as well as maintain quality of life.

Mayor Waltman stated that he is aware of a concern that there may not be resources to acquire future land that may be on the list if money is allocated elsewhere. CFO McDaniel noted that there is no reason that the Township could not issue another bond to be able to purchase and finance future acquired land yearly.

Mayor Waltman stated there is a better way to allocate the money that is currently in the Open Space Fund rather than just sitting there. As a tax payer himself, Mayor Waltman stated he would expect the funds to be used within a certain time period. Mayor Waltman noted there is currently \$1 million in the fund now, and after paying down the debt service and collecting from tax revenue, if no land is acquired in five more years, there will then be another million dollars in the fund that should be expected to be put to use.

Committeeman Herman agreed and believed it should be framed and modeled after the county and other municipalities referendums. Committeeman Herman stated that he understood the concerns of not having a set amount. Committeeman Herman suggested working with the Open Space Sub-Committee to see what properties needed maintenance and repair versus what property they want to acquire on an annual basis. Committeeman Herman noted that having the funds sitting there unused is not servicing anyone or providing a benefit, meanwhile there is a struggle on what to do with historical structures and how utilizing this fund may shorten the time it takes to maintain and repair properties. Committeeman Herman also noted this funding could be used towards improvement of the roadways in a timelier manner.

Deputy Mayor Vocke stated that we are on a great path and we have communication with how money will be spent and noted that just because the funds would be used, does not mean that funds would not be there for other purchases. Deputy Mayor Vocke noted that Committeewoman Lockwood stated the referendum had been voted out in the past, but now there are a lot of different residents with different outlooks and opinions and the old decision may change.

Mayor Waltman stated that the Open Space Improvement Plan noted that 32% of the Township was currently preserved with 10% of that for recreation purposes since the last 2006 ballot. Mayor Waltman also noted that it stated the purpose is to purchase and improve the area to residents for use and anticipate a large percentage of that for recreation purposes, and due to being used for recreation purposes, that presents a burden on the municipal budget to continue to maintain Open Space properties. Mayor Waltman felt the Township should not have to stress or raise taxes just to maintain the properties acquired by Open Space.

Committeewoman Lockwood stated that the Township should use the money given by the county to Open Space and allocate that to the park instead of using the referendum.

CFO McDaniel noted the amount from Hunterdon County is \$26,000 annually. Mayor Waltman stated trail maintenance and capital improvement alone far exceed the \$26,000. Mayor Waltman stated that using the Open Space funds would provide flexibility on improving what Open Space owns now, which is currently dilapidated and the current budget cannot handle.

Committeeman Herman noted that many towns are phasing out Open Space and do not even have coordinators anymore. Committeeman Herman stated elected officials should put the Open Space Referendum to vote for the public opinion as a lot of research has already been done since 2006 of what the surrounding municipalities and the county have done. Committeewoman Lockwood stated that she is not concerned with what other communities have done as the Township has made its own decisions for years and that it would be ok to sample from them but just because they did something does not mean this Township should as well as the fact that details are very important and the Townships Open Space Referendum still does not tell how much.

Mayor Waltman noted that there is a misconception with how much money we acquire from grants that go by what is in the account and stated that the grant amount does not change and the Township can still go to bond for funding. Committeewoman Lockwood stated that the Township does not want to bond. Mayor Waltman noted that there is currently a bond on the budget. Committeewoman Lockwood noted that if there is no money to spend, then there is no money to get back and that she was elected to protect Open Space. Mayor Waltman stated that he is also for Open Space as well as maintaining and improving acquired land, which all would be predictable to be included on the annual budget. Committeewoman Lockwood stated that can be unpredictable as people go to Open Space about having their land acquired, while others pass away, etcetera.

#### **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Mayor Waltman opened the floor to public comment for any items listed on the agenda.

The following residents expressed some concerns and recommendations regarding the proposed Open Space Referendum:

Rosalind Westlake, 664 Rosemont-Ringoes Road

Roger Harris, 37 Covered Bridge Road  
Ed McLaughlin, 14 Cemetery Road  
Jes Stahl, 38 Dunkard Church Road  
Doug Borden, 245 Lambertville-Headquarters Road  
Pete McCrohan, 87 Worman Road  
Jan Weber, 37 Buchanin Road  
Donna Dimatteo, 241 Lambertville-Headquarters Road  
Kenneth Hyman, 36 Pine Hill Road  
Catherine Szega, 106 Yard Road  
Alix Bacon, 15 Redding Road  
Larry Coffey, 118 Lambertville-Headquarters Road  
Roger Byram, 7 Zentek Road  
Tim Soltis, 9 Rittenhouse Road  
Corrina Sayles, 160 Kingwood-Stockton Road  
Charles Taylor, 43 Lambert Road  
Deborah King, 945 Sergeantsville Road  
Judy Allen, 132 Sandy Ridge Road  
Diana McConkey, 149 Lambertville-Headquarters Road

Hearing no other members of the public speak up, Mayor Waltman closed the floor to public comment.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION: Approval of Resolution #2021-58: To Enter into Executive Session for the Purpose of Personnel Matters and Subjects Falling Under Attorney-Client Privilege – *The discussion is expected to take approximately 30 minutes. Action may be taken.***

A motion by Herman, seconded by Vocke to approve Resolution #2021-58 and enter into Executive Session was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

*Herman: Yes, Kwasnik: Absent, Lockwood: Yes, Vocke: Yes, Waltman: Yes*

**Resolution #2021-58**

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975, permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, this governing body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Committee of Delaware Township, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The public shall be excluded from discussion of and action upon the hereinafter specified subject matter.
2. The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows: Contracts, Personnel Matters, and subjects falling under Attorney-Client privilege. The discussion is anticipated to take approximately 30 minutes. Action may be taken.
3. It is intended at this time that the above stated subject matter will be made public when the matter has been resolved.

4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

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Tiffany Crivelli, Deputy Township Clerk

A motion by Herman, seconded by Lockwood to return to Open Session was unanimously approved by voice vote.

It was noted for the record that the Committee was in Executive Session from 7:58 PM – 8:07 PM.

**RESOLUTION**

**Delaware Township Resolution #2021-59  
Authorization of Hiring of a Police Officer**

WHEREAS, Sgt. Richard Gordon is retiring from the Delaware Township Police Department after 25 years of service; and

WHEREAS, there has now arisen a need for the hiring of a full time police officer within the Township of Delaware; and

WHEREAS, Timothy J. Althamer possesses all of the training needed to be certified and sworn in as a Police Officer; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Delaware is desirous of hiring Althamer to perform the duties of Police Officer for the Township.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Delaware, County of Hunterdon in the State of New Jersey that Timothy J. Althamer is hereby hired and appointed as a full-time Police Officer for the Township of Delaware, conditioned upon receipt of signed 2021-2022 Memorandum of Agreement, to be effective on May 10, 2021.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that, as of July 12, 2021, Althamer shall be entitled to compensation as set forth in the newly adopted Memorandum of Agreement by and between the Township of Delaware and the PBA Local No. 188 for January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2022. He shall remain at the second step (\$54,598) for one year from his date of hire.

ATTEST:

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Tiffany Crivelli, Deputy Township Clerk

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James Waltman, Mayor

**CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of the Resolution Approved by the Mayor and Township Committee of the Township of Delaware at their meeting of June 29, 2021.

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Tiffany Crivelli, Deputy Township Clerk

Approved: June 29, 2021

A motion by Herman, seconded by Lockwood to approve Resolution #2021-59 authorizing the hiring of a Police Officer was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

*Herman: Yes, Kwasnik: Absent, Lockwood: Yes, Vocke: Yes, Waltman: Yes*

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion by Herman, seconded by Lockwood to adjourn the meeting was unanimously approved by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:09 PM.

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Tiffany Crivelli, Deputy Clerk

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James Waltman, Mayor

Approved: