

Minutes of the Regular meeting of the Township Committee of the Township of Commercial held on November 17, 2022, at 6:00 P.M., at the Township Hall at 1768 Main St. Port Norris, NJ

Those Present:

Mike Vizzard	Mayor
Fletcher Jamison	Deputy Mayor
Joseph Klaudi	Committeeman
Thomas Seeley	Solicitor
Heather Sparks	Township Clerk
Clint Miller	Public Works Supervisor
Nick DiCosmo	Engineer

Mayor Vizzard presided and called the meeting to order with the announcement that the meeting had been advertised, it was being electronically recorded and being held in full compliance of the Open Public Meeting Act.

Mayor Vizzard asked that attendees join him in the flag salute and the Lord's Prayer.

Mayor called on the State Police for their report.

Sgt. Black said there wasn't much to report other than, troopers were recently active on Olive Road. We made some arrests out there for trespassing on some condemned properties.

Mayor asked for clarification, these are the squatters.

Sgt. Black said yes. The condemned status of buildings gives them a little more ammunition so to speak and will continue to put out fires as they can. Sgt. Black attended a meeting with the Prosecutor's office, the Chiefs of Police in the County. There was a lot of talk about the ALPR program expanding into Cumberland County which is pole cameras. Pole cameras, tree cameras in high crime areas. These cameras are prevalent in the cities and up north where they have a large concentration of car thefts but the program has expanded throughout the state and they are going to work with the state police unit that will be heading this up to get cameras in our area. Of course, we aren't going to divulge where they are. It will help us in curbing violent crimes and property crimes.

The mayor asked if anyone had questions for the Sgt., with none, Mayor thanked Sgt. Black.

The mayor said we have a guest, Bonnie Clendaniel, representing the family of Alice Todd concerning a Bayshore Housing Grant. Mayor said you can tell us what it is you're actually looking for but we did read the letter from you and that did provide a lot of clarity.

Ms. Clendaniel said that her mother was Alice Todd, and she received the Bayshore Housing grant, and it was such a blessing. It provided her with a new septic system and a new

well which was amazing because we couldn't help with that. She cashed in an insurance policy to put on a new roof. She had a will made up in 2013 and we had the lawyer write a letter and I believe he addressed it for Mom to take to Maurice River Township because that is where she applied. He asked a question about this lien and how we could go forward with it and she had informed us that in five years the loan would be forgiven. We even had a party when it was five years because we thought it was all done so we were under the impression it was done. What triggered me calling Heather, I started getting these weird bogus scams in the mail from Maurice River, it looked really official, I called Denise and asked her what is this? She said it sounded like a scam. I am still getting these letters, warning letters about this lien. Denise said she thought it was a scam and that they wouldn't even handle it because it is a Commercial Township property and to call Heather. So this is what triggered it. Otherwise, we would have never known she still had this lien against home, that it was collecting interest so that's when Heather and I started communicating. We don't have the money. We could pay it in payments, that was my first idea. Could we somehow pay on the interest. We are keeping her property tax up to date. We would like to keep the house a little longer. We would love the family to keep it. We had a niece that was looking into purchasing it but that fell through, but we still meet there. We are having 20 people there for Thanksgiving and celebrating Mom. So, we are still using the home, maybe down the road sell it but we feel that having a lien against the property when we do go to sell, will cause a problem.

Solicitor Seeley said just to clarify, the lien will come up in the title search of any purchaser. That will need to be paid off prior to the sale.

Ms. Clendaniel said we feel that if anyone is looking for a house, and they see a lien against the house, it will discourage them from buying.

Solicitor Seeley said not necessarily unless the lien is more than the house is worth.

Ms. Clendaniel said Heather had told her that the committee was sympathetic to my letter but that you had some questions. So, I will answer whatever questions you have.

The mayor said, well one of the questions was, what exactly is it you are asking for? We really didn't understand what you were asking about at last month's meeting. You have clarified that. There is no secret that I'm not a big fan of this grant that was given out back then.

Ms. Clendaniel said that it was a beautiful thing. Her Mother was so relieved.

Mayor said I realize that I just think it miss lead a lot of people. But I'm not going to speak for the rest of the committee, but I feel as though we can forgive the original amount of the grant if you would take care of the interest that occurred on the grant. If these guys are in agreement with that, I think that would be a fair way to go. I believe the balance of the grant was something like \$10,000. The interest is something like 7 or 8 thousand.

Ms. Clendaniel asked if the interest had to be paid in one chunk or could it be in payments?

Mayor said he didn't have any problem with payments.

Solicitor Seeley said we will have to set up a contract.

Mayor said the reason we want you to pay the interest is because we want to be able to offer this funding to other residents in need.

Mayor asked the committee if they were ok with it. They agreed.

Solicitor Seeley said you will need to set up what the payment schedule will be.

After further discussion about terms of payment plan, it was determined the principle would be forgiven and interest is to stop accumulating as of November 30th and that it would be a two-year plan to pay total of the accumulated interest. Mr. Seeley will draw up a contract with an amortization schedule.

Ms. Clendaniel asked if she had more, could she pay more on the loan then the scheduled amount.

Solicitor Seeley said yes, you can always pay off early.

Mayor Vizzard asked for a motion to approve waiving the principle and establish a payment plan for the interest.

Committeeman Jamison made the motion and was seconded by Committeeman Klaudi. Roll call, all were in favor.

Ms. Clendaniel thanked the committee.

Mayor said next, we have James D'Ambrosio representing the Laurel Lake Fire Department. What we are asking of the Laurel Lake Fire Department is at our meeting Monday night, we were asked to approve \$3,600 in payments to your officers for the Laurel Lake Fire Department.

James D'Ambrosio III – What you were handed was a resolution to be passed by the board of fire commissioners for district 3. It has no bearing on what Laurel Lake fire company does. That is for the officers of the fire commission. It has nothing to do with Laurel Lake Fire Company.

Mayor said I feel like we need an education. Are there commissioners for district 1 and district 2. There is. We have another resolution here for district 2 for \$600 for the treasurer and secretary. We have a resolution for district 3 for five positions. A Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary and a Commissioner. All of which is \$3,400. My question is how can district 2 have two positions at \$600 and you have five positions at \$3,400.00?

Mr. D'Ambrosio said I don't work for district 1 or district 2. I am an elected official for district 3. I do know that we have the majority of the residents in Laurel Lake. Our budget is a lot

bigger; we have a lot more load. We handle the EMS for the whole township. We had approximately 80 fire calls in 2021.

Mayor Vizzard said, I'm not even sure why this was put on us now.

Mr. D'Ambrosio said you signed it last year. It hasn't increased for five years. We do all ours in-house. The other districts contract out for accountants. We do everything in-house. We do not pay \$10,000 to an accounting firm.

Mayor said that doesn't really have anything to do with this resolution.

Mr. D'Ambrosio said yes it does.

Mayor said I realize what you're saying but we have to justify approving this resolution.

Mr. D'Ambrosio said you are authorizing the elected officials to get paid for doing their job.

Mayor said I guess if that's a good enough answer for you guys its good enough for me, but I still don't understand why.

Mr. D'Ambrosio asked the mayor if he receives compensation.

Mayor stated he does.

Mr. D'Ambrosio said ok so it's in the budget.

Mayor said but why such the drastic difference.

Mr. D'Ambrosio said \$3,400 for 12 months.

Mayor said yes compared to \$600.

Mr. D'Ambrosio said but you are comparing us to other districts.

Committeeman Klaudi said that he understands that district 2 just started going outside.

Mr. D'Ambrosio said I'm not going to compare us to them. I'm here to answer your questions.

Mayor said but the average person is going to ask that question. Why are you going to pay them \$3.400 and Mauricetown \$600.

Mr. D'Ambrosio said you aren't paying anyone.

Mayor said but we are signing off on this resolution, so why would we sign off on this resolution. What am I going to tell someone that ask me that question.

Mr. D'Ambrosio said You're asking me?

Mayor said yes, that's why you're here.

Mr. D'Ambrosio said that is the compensation we pay our commissioners for the job they do.

Mayor said we did sign off on this last year, but I don't think we had them all at the same time and we didn't realize the drastic difference.

Mr. D'Ambrosio said do you understand the drastic difference from district 3 to 1 and 2?

Mayor said No.

Mr. D'Ambrosio said we have 3800 residents, that 2/3 of the population in Commercial Township. There is 2.5 square miles. There are 44 square miles in Commercial township. In 2.5 miles we have 2/3 of the population. We ran 1250 EMS runs for the whole township which we provide that service for the whole township.

Mayor said which I am 110% looking to get funded.

Mayor said I am not trying to make a hard time for anybody. I just don't know why it is thrown on this committee to approve this.

Mr. D'Ambrosio said you would have to ask the state on that one.

Mayor said I just want to understand why we are doing it.

Mr. D'Ambrosio said all I can tell you is, that is the compensation that the commissioners came up with. I think that rate was set 4-5 years ago.

Shawn Ronan, Laurel Lake Fire Company, I am currently the fire chief. I think what we are trying to get to here is over the years, going back to the early days, the commissioners were getting paid 2 and 3 hundred dollars. As the workload got to be more and more over the years, a lot more responsibilities. Over time, it has gotten harder to get people to do the job, so we have raised the compensation over the years. Apparently Mauricetown hasn't done that. Port Norris hasn't done that. Our guys spend countless hours going over our budgets and audits and everything we do for inspecting trucks and this is where it has gotten because the workload has become so much. It hasn't been raised in 5 or 6 years. If they don't do it, who is going to do it.

James D'Ambrosio- Just touching on that, You can contact the state yourself who is in compliance in Commercial Township. District 3 is the only one in compliance.

Mayor asked in what way.

James D'Ambrosio- Everything we are required to do by the state. The website, you can go on and see our budget, you can see all the minutes, resolutions, everything required by law, by the state of New Jersey. I can't find anything for Port Norris or Mauricetown. We aren't here to bash anyone, but we are in compliance, and this is why we are paid to do our job. They are looking outside to have people do their job. I spoke with Colavita & Volpa today, I got a quote, to do just accounting services, it was \$10,000.

Mayor Vizzard said all I can tell you is we are, not, not going to sign this. It's gonna go, I just wanted an explanation.

Shawn Ronan – The workload has increased, like when we got the EMT's. We got a donation to start the paid EMS. When we started, we paid EMS \$10 an hour. The covid thing ruined everything, everything is going up. Now we have to pay EMT's \$22, \$23 dollars an hour which we struggle to do.

Mayor said I just want you to know we are good with these resolutions, I just needed to get some answers.

James D'Ambrosio, I don't fault district 1 and district 2 for not being in compliance, it's a lot of work. Before we even pay ourselves, it is approved and voted on by the voters.

Shawn Ronan – Are you guys satisfied with our answer?

Mayor said Am I fully understanding, No but I am satisfied with your explanation. I appreciate you coming out and answering our questions.

Mayor moved on to approval of meeting minutes for previous meetings of the agenda meeting of October 17th 2022 and the regular meeting of October 20th, 2022. Mayor asked for a motion and second for approval.

Motion made by Committeeman Klaudi and seconded by Committeeman Jamison. Roll call, all were in favor.

Mayor asked for consideration to approve the bill list for the month of November as prepared by the Chief Financial officer.

Motion was made by Committeeman Jamison and was seconded by Committeeman Klaudi. Roll call, all were in favor.

Mayor Vizzard asked Nick DiCosmo to present the Engineers report.

1. Miller Avenue bridge – Met with DEP. Met with the technical engineer and his supervisor and the meeting was to find out what exactly we needed to do to get the permit approved for the bridge placement. It was a good meeting, and we did

get direction. We just have to draw a simple model that shows the effect of widening the bridge because we are widening four feet to accommodate two lanes of traffic. We will do that and it should be the last hurdle.

Mayor said did you say they are looking for the reason we are widening the bridge.

Nick DiCosmo said they understand the reason, but their concern is what will happen down stream from the bridge by widening it.

2. Reconstruction of Brown Street – They are finishing up final grading this week. Final paving is supposed to start next week and be completed before Thanksgiving. Any punch line work will be the following week.
3. Yock Wock – Still in design
4. The mill and over lay of Main Street – Spoke to Doug, the county engineer, we have good news, what he is trying to do with the interlocal agreement is utilize some DOT funding. He had talks with the DOT, they un-officially approved that it just has to go through the appropriate channels. He had no concern about it not going through. Over the next few weeks, he should be able to pin that down and get the agreement final. Also spoke to Doug about any traffic calming measure that the county would support for Main Street. He said they are generally opposed to something like a speed bump because it becomes a maintenance issue. He is in support of maybe reducing the lane width, stripping, stripping for crosswalks. We could do bump outs at the intersections. We just need to play with some of these ideas while we are in the design process.
5. Gas Company Restorations in Laurel Lake– Nick reached out to the contractor. South Jersey gas did get final approval for all the additional restorations that we agreed upon with the contractor. The GC is just waiting on waiting on a schedule from his paving sub. This should be coming up in the next couple of weeks. We are repaving Doris Drive and several other side streets; I think it will be about 3,000 tons of asphalt. This is being funded by the gas company.
6. Strawberry Ave – We picked up the counter we had out for the 2023 Local Freight. Not the best news, the counts came in low, we were shooting for 10% to qualify which we have always hit all the other times. This came in low at 5.3 %. It was unfortunate because as it turns out the sand plant that typically uses this route wasn't running trucks. However, the silver lining is that with this application, they do consider applications with over 5% if there are not enough applications over 10%. With our past track record, and it seems they typically fund almost all applications, and we can make a strong case for Strawberry Avenue, it connects to Main Street, we should still submit it. I personally still feel confident that we will still get it.

7. Local Recreation Grant – We still haven't heard about our 2023 state aid applications, but I think we could apply to add onto the walking path.

Mayor Vizzard said I was brainstorming and thought with this grant about trying to get lights at the ballfield. The reason I was thinking that is I was told that if we got lights there we could probably get these leagues down and have leagues at the ballfield again. Whether the electric company is going to support the lights down there, that I don't know.

A brief discussion ensued about the electrical load at the Sheppard Building and possibilities for upgrade.

Nick DiCosmo said he could certainly work up a cost estimate.

Mayor asked Clint Miller if he had anything to add with the Brown Street project.

Mr. Miller said not really, other than they gave us quite a bit of millings. They are doing a really good job so far. They did the oil injections last week.

Mayor moved on to correspondence -

1. Correspondence from Natalya requesting to purchase municipal tax lien for property at 100 Sandalwood. Block 53, lot 7210. Right now, the lien is valued at just over \$2,000. Natalya was referred to us by Mr. Eduard Gibert Renart.

Committeeman Klaudi said I though she would have been here.

The Clerk stated she is from North Jersey, about 3 hours away.

The mayor said she wanted to buy 6 properties, but we would only allow one and this is the one she has chosen, 100 Sandalwood.

Committeeman Klaudi made a motion to approve and was seconded by Committeeman Jamison. Roll Call, all were in favor.

2. Memo from Pam Humphries, CFO. Committee is to review the 2022 Best Practices Inventory Questionnaire.
3. Letter from Julie Gandy resigning from the Environmental Commission effective 12/31/22
4. Letter from John Nardone resigning from the Environmental Commission and the Land Use Board effective 12/31/22
5. Letter from Katie Dayton requesting to be a member of the Environmental Commission.

Mayor Vizzard said we have a discussion item.

The City of Millville is pursuing an extension of water utility services to the Millville side of Laurel Lake. They plan to provide a connection for Commercial Township to tie into at a future date. Millville is applying for forgivable loans from the DEP for this project. If Commercial Township is interested in participating in this project, a letter of intent has been requested.

The mayor asked, do we want to provide this letter of intent.

Committeeman Klaudi made a motion that the committee approve a letter of intent and was seconded by Committeeman Jamison.

Committeeman Klaudi wanted to elaborate, Committeeman Jamison and Committeeman Klaudi met with the City of Millville, Joe Sooy from the water department. They were shown the map. They are going to run a 16" main down Silver Run Road to Buckshutem Road up to the bridge. They will branch off to the local streets supplying them with water and over 100 fire hydrants. They will be putting in a water tower and a large well somewhere over there to help supply the water. They are proposing that we pick it up on the Commercial side. We would have to put in a water tower and a well. They say they are going to get this done with forgivable loans through the DEP.

Mayor Vizzard said that's for the installation. What about the connection for the residents? Would that be part of the forgivable loan?

Committeeman Klaudi said he wasn't sure about that. They will be presenting it to the City Commission on the 22nd. I plan to be there, and I will ask that question. They are claiming since we are an overburdened community that we are a shoo-in for this.

Solicitor Seeley said that would be good because it can solve a problem with the septic being too close to the well.

Committeeman Klaudi said with us getting involved and being down stream from Millville, that will help push them through.

Nick DiCosmo asked if they indicated they would need something from us as far as deliverables, design or mapping for Laurel Lake?

Committeeman Klaudi said they didn't say anything at this point. They just said to send a letter of intent.

Michael Bojociuk, 317 Olive Rd. - If Commercial Township picks up this water main, who is going to maintain it afterwards?

Mayor Vizzard said I imagine it will be the responsibility of Commercial Township. We would have to work all that out. This is all preliminary.

Committeeman Klaudi said he believes they said it would be a 22-million-dollar project.

James D'Ambrosio said we need sewer. We have a lot of problems down here with sewers in Laurel Lake. That's where there's contamination.

Discussion continued as to the positives and negatives of having water or sewers in Laurel Lake.

Mayor Vizzard said I think it would be smart of the township if we did go with water to put sewage pipes in. Weather we get a sewage plant in the next 5 years, that, I don't know. I just want to let everyone know this is a starting point and we are getting started.

Mayor asked for a motion and a second to approve sending a letter of intent. Committeeman Jamison made the motion and was seconded by Committeeman Klaudi. Roll call, all were in favor.

Resolutions –

**Resolution 2022-100
Authorizing Assignment**

WHEREAS NJSA 54:5-113 authorizes assignment by a municipality of tax sale certificates for the full amount of the certificate, including all subsequent municipal taxes and other municipal charges; and,

WHEREAS, Ed's Mobile Home Services, LLC has presented an offer to purchase, by assignment, Certificate # 22-00035, which was issued to the Township of Commercial at a tax sale held on January 12, 2022 on Block 58, Lot 509, known as 1301 Lakeshore Drive, Millville, NJ and assignment to Gerald Passarella Jr. in the amount of \$3,677.95, being the full amount of the certificate, including all subsequent municipal taxes and other municipal charges.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Township of Commercial hereby authorizes the Mayor and Municipal Clerk to execute the necessary assignment documents to effect assignment of the above-referenced Certificate of Sale.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Tax Collector.

RESOLUTION 2022-101

A RESOLUTION IN OPPOSITION TO THE REASSIGNMENT BY THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OF ALL MUNICIPALITIES CURRENTLY DESIGNATED TIER B UNDER THE MUNICIPAL SEPARATE STORM SEWER SYSTEM PERMIT PROGRAM TO TIER A DESIGNATED AND EXPANSION OF TIER A PERMIT CONDITIONS

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) has undertaken efforts to reassign to 'Tier A' designation under the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit program (M54 Permit Program) all New Jersey municipalities currently designated 'Tier B; and

WHEREAS, Compliance with the MS4 Permit Program for a municipality designated Tier A is far costlier and more onerous than compliance for a municipality designated Tier B; and

WHEREAS, under the existing designation system, the Tier B designation was specifically created for municipalities that are located in more rural areas and non-coastal regions, while Tier A designation was created for municipalities that are located within the more densely populated regions of the state or along or near the coast; and

WHEREAS, many municipalities designated Tier B under the existing designation system simply do not have the resources to comply with Tier A designation; and

WHEREAS, the NJDEP, while attempting to reassign all municipalities to Tier A, is simultaneously proposing to renew the Tier A MS4 General permit to include additional conditions on municipal permit holders; and

WHEREAS, the NJDEP is asking current Tier B municipalities to come into compliance with both existing Tier A requirements and a set of still-unfinalized Tier A renewal requirements on practically the same schedule as existing Tier A municipalities; and

WHEREAS, the State, however well-intended in its actions, continues to saddle municipalities with additional responsibilities through unfunded and underfunded mandates, putting additional burdens on property taxpayer; and

WHEREAS, the reassignment by the NJDEP to Tier A designated for all New Jersey municipalities currently designated Tier B will result in a redistribution of these municipalities' limited resources, away from their crucial government functions; and

WHEREAS, Township of Commercial, County of Cumberland, State of New Jersey, supports taking action to better protect and improve the quality of its own waterways, as well as waterways throughout the State but efforts to do so must be balanced against other critical needs with consideration for the limit resources of municipal government.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the (Township of Commercial, County of Cumberland, State of NJ), and the State of New Jersey as follows:

1. The (Township of Commercial, County of Cumberland, State of NJ) hereby urges the members of the New Jersey Assembly and Senate to support, co- sponsor, and adopt legislation that would prevent the NJDEP from expanding conditions of the Tier A permit until a full analysis of the fiscal impact these changes will have on these municipalities can be completed, and state funding is made available.
2. The (Township of Commercial, County of Cumberland, State of NJ) hereby urges the governor of State of New Jersey to sign any legislation adopted by the State Assembly and Senate which would prevent the NJDEP from reassigning to Tier A designation under the M54 permit program New Jersey Municipalities that are currently designated Tier B, and also prevent the NJDEP from expanding conditions of the Tier A permit until full analytics of the funding is made available.
3. A certified copy of this resolution upon its adoption shall be furnished to Governor Phil Murphy, the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, and New Jersey State League of Municipalities.

RESOLUTION 2022-102
RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF
COMMERCIAL REVIEWING AND APPROVING THE TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT
NO. 3 COMMISSIONER SALARY FOR 2023

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:14-88 requires the municipal governing body to review and approve such compensation before the fire district can submit its annual budget to the voters, or in the case of fire districts whose Board of Fire Commissioners elections coincide with the November General election, before the district can adopt its annual budget.

WHEREAS, the fire district must seek annual approval of elected commissioner compensation from the municipal governing body regardless of whether the Board is modifying the amount of compensation.

WHEREAS, the Board of Fire Commissioners of the Commercial Township Fire District No. 3 have proposed annual compensation for various members of their Board of Fire Commissioners for 2023 as follows:

Chairman	\$3,400.00
Vice Chairman	\$3,400.00
Treasurer	\$3,400.00
Secretary	\$3,400.00
Commissioner	\$3,400.00

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Commercial, County of Cumberland and the State of New Jersey, hereby approve the 2023 annual compensation of the Board of Fire Commissioners of the Township of Commercial Fire District No. 3 to be paid from the Fire District No. 3, 2023 annual budget.

RESOLUTION 2022-103
RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF
COMMERCIAL REVIEWING AND APPROVING THE TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT
NO. 2 COMMISSIONER SALARY FOR 2023

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:14-88 requires the municipal governing body to review and approve such compensation before the fire district can submit its annual budget to the voters, or in the case of fire districts whose Board of Fire Commissioners elections coincide with the November General election, before the district can adopt its annual budget.

WHEREAS, the fire district must seek annual approval of elected commissioner compensation from the municipal governing body regardless of whether the Board is modifying the amount of compensation.

WHEREAS, the Board of Fire Commissioners of the Commercial Township Fire District No. 3 have proposed annual compensation for various members of their Board of Fire Commissioners for 2023 as follows:

Treasurer	\$600.00
Secretary	\$600.00

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Commercial, County of Cumberland and the State of New Jersey, hereby approve the 2023 annual compensation of the Board of Fire Commissioners of the Township of Commercial Fire District No. 2 to be paid from the Fire District No. 2, 2023 annual budget.

RESOLUTION 2022-104
AUTHORIZING THE CANCELLATION OR REFUND OF PROPERTY TAXES DUE TO APPROVAL OF 100% DISABLE VETERAN'S APPLICATION

WHEREAS, on July 26, 2022, a claim for Property Tax Exemption on Dwelling House of Disabled Veteran or Surviving Spouse, Civil Union Partner/Surviving Domestic Partner of Disabled Veteran or Serviceperson was filed, along with all supporting documentation on behalf of Robert Welch for Block 20, Lot 3704 located at 7009 Battle Lane and,

WHEREAS, after proper review of the application and all supporting documentation by the Tax Assessor it was determined that Mr. Welch met all requirements to receive 100% permanently disabled veteran benefit pursuant to N.J.S.A. 54:4-3.30 et seq. (Supporting exemption approval attached) and approved the same on August 16, 2022. Said exemption approval was retroactive to January 1, 2022, and,

THEREFORE, BE it RESOLVED, the Tax Collector is authorized to cancel and refund taxes for 2022 in the amount of \$1,429.84 and cancel the first half of 2023 in the amount of \$714.92.

COMMERCIAL TOWNSHIP
Cumberland County, New Jersey

RESOLUTION NO. 2022-105

**A RESOLUTION ACKNOWLEDGING SATISFACTION IN FULL
BY AMELIA SAVAGE OF THE BAYSHORE HOUSING PROGRAM
MORTGAGE HELD BY COMMERCIAL TOWNSHIP AND
AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A DISCHARGE OF MORTGAGE**

WHEREAS, Amelia Savage previously qualified for participation in the Small Cities Grant known as the Bayshore Housing Program for the rehabilitation of housing units and received the sum of Eleven Thousand nine hundred and forty dollars (\$11,940) on May 18, 2004, and a mortgage lien evidencing said indebtedness was recorded with the Clerk of Cumberland County in Mortgage Book 3387, Page 1 on July 16, 2004, and

WHEREAS, the said mortgage has been paid in full or otherwise satisfied and is to be discharged of record.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of Commercial, that the mortgage held by the Township of Commercial and given by Amelia Savage as set forth above shall be discharged.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Township Committee hereby authorizes the Mayor and Municipal Clerk to execute and deliver a Discharge of Mortgage.

RESOLUTION 2022-106
Appointing Katie Dayton to Commercial Township
Environmental Commission

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Commercial that Katie Dayton of Mauricetown, New Jersey be appointed to the Commercial Township Environmental Commission to fill the unexpired term of Julie Gandy to December 31, 2023.

RESOLUTION 2022-108
BUDGET LINE-ITEM TRANSFERS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Commercial that the following budgetary transfers be made to avoid over-expenditures in the 2022 Municipal Budget as requested by the Chief Financial Officer.

Admin O/E	500
Building & Grounds O/E	4,000
Sluice & Ditch	4,000
Parks & Recreation O/E	2,000

Total	10,300
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Line-Item	Amount
To:	
Land Use S/W	300
Engineering O/E	8,000
Senior Center S/W	2,000

Total	10,300
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I, Heather Sparks, Township Clerk, do hereby certify that the forgoing resolutions were adopted at a regular meeting held on November 17, 2022, in Morris, NJ.

I, Heather Sparks, Township Clerk, do hereby certify that the forgoing resolutions were adopted at a regular meeting held on November 17, 2022, in Morris, NJ.

Heather Sparks, Township Clerk

Mayor asked for a motion to approve resolutions 2022-100 through 2022-108. A motion was made by committeeman Klaudi and seconded by committeeman Jamison. Roll call, all were in favor.

ORDINANCE - Introduction of Ordinance

Ordinance 2022-613

An Ordinance of the Township of Commercial, County of Cumberland County, New Jersey, Providing for the use of 2022 Budgeted Matching Funds for the 2021 NJDOT Freight Impact Grant for Replacement of Miller Avenue Bridge Now Available in the 2022 Municipal Budget

BE IT ORDAINED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Commercial, County of Cumberland, New Jersey, as follows:

- Section 1: Supplemental Matching Funds for 2021 NJDOT Freight Impact Grant for the replacement of the Miller Avenue Bridge.
- Section 2: The total amount of \$15,000 is hereby appropriated from the 2022 Municipal Budget account number 2-21-41-865-418.
- Section 3: This Ordinance shall take effect upon publication of notice of final adoption as provided by law on or about January 5, 2023.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township

Mayor Vizzard asked for a motion to approve the ordinance for introduction. A motion was made by committeeman Klaudi and seconded by Committeeman Jamison. Roll call, all were in favor

Second reading and adoption is scheduled for December 15, 2022

Reports of officials –

Mayor Vizzard said he had a couple things to report.

Mayor said we had a very nice Veteran's Ceremony last Sunday. It went very well at our Veteran's Park. I think it gets better every year.

The mayor said he attended a meeting last week regarding animal sheltering. The problem we are having in the county, it looks like with the new rescheme we have at the animal shelter is being a little more forthright with their paperwork and numbers, they are trying to come up with a way to save the taxpayers in the county money as far as the animal shelter goes. We haven't let up on them. We told them how ridiculous they do it. They charge all the municipalities by population not the number of animals. It ends up being for a dog to go there one day, \$700. I believe we paid \$22,000 for animal sheltering last year. It's a lot of money for animal sheltering. No one knows exactly what direction this is going to go yet. I don't know if it's a good idea for the county to take over animal sheltering, but I also don't know if it's a bad idea either. We are still just trying to figure out how they are coming up with these sheltering costs. That's something we are working on.

Mayor said we also are working on the local recreation grant. I think that would be a good opportunity to get lights at the ballfield. I think that would help not only our own children in the township but also other children in the surrounding municipalities to have a ballfield they can come and play on rather than a field that is doing nothing. I was told if we had lights, we could be a part of a league.

Mayor asked for a motion to open the meeting to the public. Committeeman Jamison made the motion and was seconded by Committeeman Klaudi.

William Bitting, 529 fern Rd. – I came here in support of James D'Ambrosio. I am also a fire commissioner for fire district 3. Just to push the point again, there is a lot the state requires the board of fire commissioners to do. We handle everything we can in house, It's a lot of hours, I know the paper may say one hour per week, that is just a standard thing that every budget says. James spent 6 hours just today with the Mid-Atlantic guys, making sure all the fire packs were serviced correctly. Probably 6 days a week Jimmy spends 3 hours, at least, at the building to handle anything that needs to be handled. \$3,400 works out to less than \$10 a day. For him to be there multiple hours a day, several days a week, \$10 is nothing to pay and all our commissioners spend multiple hours throughout the week doing whatever they can. The fund commissioner stuff, getting training set up to make sure everyone is in compliance with EMS and Fire side. \$3,400 is a drop in the bucket into the amount of time spent at the firehouse not only to provide service to Laurel Lake but to the whole township.

Mayor Vizzard thanked Mr. Bitting for his comments. He said he definitely understands. Our intention was not to accuse anybody of anything. Our intent tonight was just to try to understand the differences in the numbers. This committee definitely appreciates everything Laurel Lake, Mauricetown

and Port Norris do for the community. We are not looking to harm anybody or cause conflict with anybody. I am just trying to get answers. I am just trying to understand.

Shawn Ronan-, 7118 Farm Ct. – Just want to put out there, thank you to the committee for showing interest in helping us with our EMS and to the future of the EMS. A lot of the public doesn't know how our EMS got started. We were 100% volunteer up until about 7 years ago. We obtained a donation from someone in the public to start our EMS. It's not costing the taxpayers anything to run the current EMS we have now. We received a large donation of \$125,000 to get it off the ground and it was how we paid the EMT's. We reached out to Port Norris and Mauricetown at the time, they were dealing with Millville. We didn't know if we would make it, but it all worked out and we cover the entire township now. I don't think a lot of the public knows; the taxpayers haven't paid for any EMS for the last 7 years. This same individual has donated additional money to us. There are 3 ambulances, a fire truck, the firehouse pick up, 1303 our fire engine that we picked up from Delmont. Every bit of this equipment was donated to the fire station. Every bit of fire equipment was donated to our fire station. We do discharges from the hospital, on a power truck to bring in extra money, to keep the EMS running in the entire township. Because future issues may be coming that we know of, we appreciate your effort.

The mayor said he thought it was important to educate the public.

Shawn Ronan – We are going to hold an open meeting at the firehouse and will reach out to Mauricetown and John Hoffman to educate the public on how the township EMS works because people are so quick to say “my tax dollars” but in reality, it didn't cost them anything. We have a \$35,000 self-loader. We don't have workman's Comp cases from throwing their back out. We paid \$2,000 a piece for the power stretchers and we did this all on our own through fundraisers, donations and grants. We just obtained a \$70,000 grant, which we have to pay 35 but we wrote the grant ourselves. We also just received a grant from South Jersey Gas for extra equipment also. I would like to set up a meeting with you guys and Port Norris to let people know where we are at.

Mayor said Good, I think that's important. I do have one quick question, we were talking about water and hydrants, what would having fire hydrants do for Laurel Lake Fire Company?

Shawn Ronan said it would provide us with an endless supply of water. As it stands right now for Commercial Township, if we have a structure fire anywhere in the township, we all get toned out at the same time. So, we are going out with our truck that will have 2,000 gallons of water followed with 3,000 following with the tender. Mauricetown comes with 5,000 and Port Norris with 4,500. There is a three-company response with any structure fire. Mr. Ronan continued with more detail as to the response to a structure fire and the water available in these situations.

Michael Bojaciuk, 317 Olive- It was brought to your attention last month about the abandoned houses, the squatters and the nuisance going around Laurel Lake. I want to know what you guys' plan to do about it. There are a lot of homes that are dangerous, kids going in there, not boarded up and open to anybody. Renters move out and within 24 hours it's being broken into.

Mayor Vizzard – Yes we are aware and like the trooper was saying before in his report, he is trying to get those people out of there.

Michael Bojaciuk- Trooper Black has done a lot. What is the township going to do about it? Trooper Black is limited.

Mayor Vizzard – The township is even more limited. The trooper can't do anything until the township condemns the building which we did. And then he could do what he needed to do.

Michael Bojaciuk – You abandoned the building by putting a sticker on it. You're putting a sticker on it, you're not stopping anybody from going back into the house. You're not boarding it up.

Mayor Vizzard – We can't

Michael Bojaciuk – If it's a danger to the public, you can't do anything about it?

Solicitor Seeley – We have gone through this a few times. What it is called is an ejectment. If you have a house and someone moves into it, you can't get them out. You have to go through the court and have an ejectment hearing.

Michael Bojaciuk – If no one is in a property, and you guys don't board it up, people are going to end up in the property and that's what happens. You guys don't do anything.

Solicitor Seeley – Even if it's boarded up, they can still get in.

Michael Bojaciuk – That's trespassing

Solicitor Seeley – I know this is frustrating, the problem is you have to serve that person and they hide. So if you don't get personal service on the person in the house and believe me, I probably more frustrated than you because I'm the person who has to do it. Mr. Seeley continues by explaining a similar situation in the removal of a squatter.

Michael Bojaciuk – An incident happened a week ago where the state police came there and arrested them for trespassing. The township knew about this problem for over seven months and did nothing about it. Didn't put stickers on it, didn't do anything until recently. Just put a sticker on it. It's foreclosed on by the township. You still refuse to do anything.

Committeeman Klaudi – they aren't in our possession yet. We haven't foreclosed on it yet.

Solicitor Seeley- They are in the process of being foreclosed on. It takes a while for us to foreclose on the properties.

Michael Bojaciuk – What about all these properties that are abandoned, that no one is in and they are just left there? The township isn't going to do anything about those properties either.

Solicitor Seeley- We could do a demolition hearing the problem is you have to notify every possible owner, creditor, lien holder, everyone needs to be noticed if you are going to board it up or demolish it because then they could have a claim that you tore their house down.

Michael Bojaciuk – So there is no liability on the township to have a house open, unsafe for kids or anybody else to walk in there and get hurt. Millville boards their homes up.

Solicitor Seeley- We can board them up, it doesn't mean people won't go into the house and take the boards off. Once they go in there, you can't go in and take them out. State police would say you have to deal with this through a civil court. I'm on your side, I wish it could be done immediately and if someone was trespassing, you could just go in and have them arrested and taken out but that's not how the courts work. Squatter rights are a real thing. The question is, physically, how do you get someone out?

Michael Bojaciuk – So going forward, where are we at.

Sgt. Black- In talking with the Prosecutor's office you need to differentiate between condemned and not condemned. A condemned property is a safety hazard, then we can do something about

trespassing. What the gentleman is saying is if we have a condemned property, why aren't we taking the extra step to get it boarded up. Maybe there is a cost analysis benefit there.

Solicitor Seeley- When we condemn a property, we have to do a hearing. We have to take the housing officials testimony and we have to present it and notify anybody who is a lien holder on that house because if your going to enter that house and it's not ours we have to notify anybody that may have an interest in that property.

Committeeman Klaudi – You called last week, and I stopped and spoke to Sgt. Black He told me if we were able to condemn the property, they could get them out of there.

Solicitor Seeley – We still need to do condemnation hearings. We have to do certified mail and do a title search to find out who has liens on the property because if you just go in and knock it down, they could sue the township.

Michael Bojaciuk – When can you have a meeting with housing to figure out what houses you can board up to move forward with this. At this point, nothing is being done.

Shawn Ronan – If we brought you a list of properties that are problem areas with addresses, you could start a condemned list.

Solicitor Seeley- Yes with pictures. Mr. Seeley continued to explain the ejectment process.

Mayor Vizzard- If we are able to get a structure condemned because it is unsafe, do we have to go through all that?

Solicitor Seeley – You can do an emergency.

Mayor Vizzard – I think what they are asking is, let's get a list together of houses we can legitimately condemn and list them as unsafe structures.

Solicitor Seeley- But they have to be a true emergency.

Mayor Vizzard – I think that is a great idea. We would have to take it to the construction official and tell them these properties need to be condemned. Basically, you say you are willing to help us and I am all for that.

Michael Bojaciuk – I'm not here just to make complaints. I gave Sgt. Black a company that will take the homeless in if they are on drugs and they will help them. We want to fix the situation.

Mayor Vizzard – That's what we all want and if you are willing to help, we will jump on board.

Solicitor Seeley- So then what you will need is a quick testimony, and you don't have to notify everybody because you are saying this is an immediate safety hazard and then they can take immediate action. If it's just a house someone is squatting in that may be worth \$40,000, \$50,000, that's a different issue. That's sort of the fine line you have to draw.

Mayor Vizzard – Asked Sgt. Black if we are able to condemn some of these houses, is that something the state police can handle

Sgt. Black – Sure. We have already spoken to the Prosecutor's office and like I said, we took action last week. When you add the public safety aspect, we are protecting people.

Clint Miller- Asked Mr. Bojaciuk if he has reached out to code enforcement.

Mr. Bojaciuk said yes, I spoke to Steve, that's why I reached out to Bill White.

Mayor Vizzard – We are going to get a list of properties together that we can present to Bill White and try to get these properties condemned. Once he condemns then, we will move forward. It doesn't mean the building is going to come down. If we don't own the property, we can't take the building down. If it is a foreclosed building that the township owns, and it is condemned and the building needs to be taken down, we will put it on the list. We only have so much money and can only take so many buildings a year. I'm excited for the help. If we can get a list from you guys, we will do it.

James Riggins, 212 Olive Rd. – You were talking about lien holders on these properties. If we get a list together, can you guys put pressure on these lien holders.

Solicitor Seeley- That's one of the problems, is notifying these lien holders. We need to notify them by certified mail.

Mayor Vizzard – To answer your question, we would notify everyone that needed to be notified.

James Riggins – They are responsible for keeping up on these properties, to have them be neglected this far is ridiculous.

Mayor Vizzard – To go one step further we are looking into ordinances that will make landlords more responsible. Right now, I don't feel like the landlords are responsible.

Solicitor Seeley suggested we could charge landlords like we do banks when they don't maintain their properties.

Mayor Vizzard – Like with the trash on the properties. The tenant is responsible because they are living there but ultimately, it's the landlord that is responsible.

James Riggins – I have another question about the streets and roads. How come you only have so many people working for our township. Is the budget that small.

Mayor Vizzard – It is.

James Riggins – What can we do to get more funding? I'll write letters every day if I have to.

Mayor Vizzard – That's commendable but the budget is very tight.

James Riggins – I'm concerned for like the storm drains. Every time it rains, my road gets flooded. Even down Battle Lane. When it rains, every road gets flooded.

Clint Miller – This is a difficult situation in Laurel Lake, we have a lot of clay down there. For the first time we finally have piping that actually goes out to the lake. We can follow up with DOT grants with pipe and drainage work but then we take away from road projects.

James Riggins – As far as right now, the end of Palm Rd. is full of trash and leaves and sand. There is nowhere for it to go. It's to the top of the grate.

Clint Miller- I have over 700 boxes alone just in Laurel Lake. This year I think we vacuumed out about 120.

James Riggins – My question is how do we get more funding for more people.

Mayor Vizzard – The other thing is a lot of people rent their home in Laurel Lake. They don't pay taxes. The landowners do.

Shawn Ronan – The renters don't care.

Mayor Vizzard – That's what I'm getting at.

James Riggins – We live at a private lake. We have the river and all this water around us. This place should be booming. Port Norris was one of the richest towns in the state. Why aren't we pushing for more money from the state. I'm not being angry; I just want to know why I can't start. We could get more people, but they come here and don't seem to get answers to their questions and that's what I hear a lot.

Shawn Ronan – Like the Mayor said, if they can lean on these landlords more, they need to be held responsible.

Solicitor Seeley – The problem is, in reality, we are the poorest area, in the poorest county of the whole state. We just can't give up but see it as a reality.

James Riggins – We have to start changing ordinances. We have these sand plants that are changing our eco system. Why aren't we taxing them harder.

Gerald Passarella Jr., 100 Shell Rd. – Received a tax notice. I was out of my house for three years. My ex-wife was living there and was responsible for the taxes. I moved back in November of 21 and I never got any late notices and then last week I got this letter that it wasn't paid.

The clerk stated that the lien on his property was just assigned to a new lien holder.

Solicitor Seeley explained the reasons someone would purchase a lien assignment. Mr. Seeley advised that he needs to pay the lien.

Mr. Passarella- My ex-wife was supposed to pay the taxes. I'm willing to pay but I can't pay it all at once.

Solicitor Seeley – You will need to discuss that with the lien holder. He advised Mr. Passarella to contact the tax collector to get the lien holders' information.

Mr. Passarella thanked the Committee.

Tracy Richardson – I know it must be frustrating to have squatters in their neighborhood and I hope you guys can do something about these places. Unfortunately, you board one house up, they will just find another house to squat in. I'm not sure how to address it but we need to get to the root of the problem, drug usage, homelessness, the mental conditions that cause people to be in that position.

Solicitor Seeley- They are attracted to this area because we have all these empty places.

Tracy Richardson – I know there isn't much you can do about it but maybe lien on the county and the state and tell them what the problem is and see if we can get more services in the area. We don't have the connector bus anymore. People can't even get to Millville.

Michael Bojaciuk- I gave Sgt Black the phone number for the Director of Real House, they are out on Rt. 40. They will take in people who are homeless, have a drug addiction, they will take them in and get them to rehab.

Mayor Vizzard – I just want to say, I see a lot of new faces out there tonight so thank you for coming. I also want to say to, I know it is frustrating but this committee has ripped down a lot of old houses in the last two years. It is not that we have done nothing. We are limited in our funds; we are waiting for the new year to come up. One more month and it will be a new year with new funds.

Shawn Ronan – With the new year, you will additional derelict housing funds?

Mayor Vizzard – Yes and the county has worked well with us. Through the derelict housing we are able to take all the debris up there for free. I know it is frustrating. A week or two ago, I took a ride around Laurel Lake for an hour, and I was very disgusted.

With no one else from the public, the mayor asked for a motion to close the meeting to the public. Motion was made by Committeeman Jamison and seconded by Committeeman Klaudi.

Mayor Vizzard – Additional considerations, the Commercial Township recreation committee is hosting its second annual tree lighting ceremony with Santa on Sunday, November 27th from 4-6pm at the Port Norris Fire Company.

Mayor Vizzard asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by committeeman Jamison and seconded by committeeman Klaudi.

Respectfully Submitted,


Heather Sparks, Township Clerk