

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Township Committee of the Township of Commercial, held on November 21, 2024, at 6:00 P.M., at the Township Hall at 1768 Main Street, Port Norris, NJ.

Those Present:

Ron Sutton Sr.	Mayor
Joseph Klaudi	Deputy Mayor
Mike Vizzard	Committeeman
Heather Miller	Township Clerk
Nick DiCosmo	Engineer
Thomas Seeley	Solicitor

Mayor Sutton 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 the compliance of the Open Public Meeting Act.

Mayor Sutton asked the attendees to join him in the flag salute and the Lord's Prayer.

Mayor Sutton moved on to our Guest, Richard Wells, Esq, representing CCIA regarding Basin Easement request.

Richard Wells-

- I'm here on behalf of CCIA to give a brief update on the is associated with the Basin Easement for the State Police Barracks on Godfrey Lane.
- What we came upon putting the project into fruition was that Godfrey Lane was misaligned. It's a 33 foot right away on the tax maps but the actual surveys for our property on Godfrey Lane don't line up evenly with that 33-foot right of way.
- We had a couple ways to address it and one was to realign the right of way to Godfrey lane.
- We are requesting an easement, basically to confirm this section of the storm water basin that goes over the construction will be fully maintained by CCIA.
- All the property is owned by Commercial Township but there is potential later on that it can be sold or transferred to the State Police so looking ahead and making sure it functions we thought the easement was the most prudent course of action.
- This is constructed, maintained and operated by the CCIA.
- If we can accomplish the Godfrey Lane realignment, then there is no need for the easement.
- We did receive some questions about if it could be redesigned to really just move or reconstruct the basin. We did look at that.
- Because the properties basically encumber wetlands and CAF permitting, literally every square foot impervious surface and pavement surface and how the basin is designed significantly impacts that CAF permitting. There wasn't a way to redesign and restructure this basin to make this project more viable, that way we decided the combination of the easement and eventually the realignment to match up with the tax maps was the best course of action.

Richard passed out what the draft of the easement would look like to the Committee.

Nick DiCosmo- I didn't do a site plan because it wasn't a requirement but what I did do was a minor subdivision. When I did that review what came out was the Godfrey Lane right away and it was 33ft and I do believe the Township Land Develop Ordinance requires all right ways to be 50 feet. That was my only comment that maybe we want to look at expanding the right of way to the proper right away. I don't know how that really takes place as far as the easements are concerned, but I don't really have any comments on the easement per se.

Mayor Sutton- Clint has pictures. We have about this much on Godfrey Lane. We are really concerned about that. Ice and snow will slide off there. I feel if we give you an easement, and we gave you the property, and that was generous, the states got money. We are a poor community. I think they could at least black top that Godfrey Lane, or overlay. They just want us to say, "okay give you the easement, goodbye." That's not right.

Richard Wells – I understand that is how it comes off, I know that as part of the improvements there is a saw cut and repaving of Godfrey Lane that is associated with frontage and that includes the re-curbng, The danger of someone slipping off or sliding into the basin would be addressed.

The Committeeman talk about the basin and the guardrails/buffers that would come with the basin to make it safer.

Nick DiCosmo- This is why it came up with the 50 foot right away, that could go in either direction. If you look, there is not a lot of room there to fit the road, had Godfrey Lane been say a 50 wide right away there would be more separation, and this wouldn't be a issue. That was a preexisting issue, that was nothing CCIA did, we don't know why it was a small right away to begin with. That was a problem leading into this. The road is narrow and a few things going on there. There are some things I could look at, but as far as easements goes its nothing that an engineering recommendation I couldn't make for that easement. If the committee wants me to look at the proximity of the road or those issues, I'd be happy to do that.

Richard Wells- I understand that guardrails are little tough with the various warrants but if fencing is something. Yeah, there is already a curbing proposed and there is room for a 4 foot split rail or something of that nature to create a little more separation. I don't see any objection.

Clint Miller- They are putting curbing around there, instead of saw cut in the middle of the road in either entrance on both sides and repave that section from the northeast of Godfrey to the entrance of the barracks. Maybe that's a fair trade off? If we can get them to pave that road vs. that various.

Mayor Sutton- If we can get them to overlay that road, I think it's a fair trade.

Richard Wells- I can certainly present that to them. I will just have to check with them.

Mayor Sutton- I do have one more issue, in the plans that show a sidewalk on the other side of Godfrey Lane, if we take the curbing out and run the sidewalk to the old barracks. I'm questioning why because no one has talked to us about them taking the barracks over or giving

us a lease. We are up to 10 years now without a lease on this one. They are talking about putting sidewalk up there? I don't want them to touch it unless they talk about signing a lease.

Richard Wells- I see the sidewalk area, and you don't want that touched until that's....

Mayor Sutton- Not unless they come before us to do a lease for the building.

Clint Miller- There were talks about the state utilizing our old barracks as training building, which I think would be welcomed by our committee. If we could get someone to address the township if that is going to happen, because that would be a way to go.

Richard Wells- Absolutely, I can get an answer on that no problem. I'll make a note of that also in the terms of the improvements you don't want the sidewalk touched unless they talk to you.

Committeeman Vizzard- When they say realign Godfrey Lane, what would they be able to do to realign Godfrey Lane?

Richard Wells- Mostly the lot line associated with the new barracks is shifting. It's not parallel and doesn't match up there. It would still be 33ft. The lot lines don't add up. It's much wider towards 649 and then it's thinner up 676. This basically fixes that and makes it even with the existing curb cuts as proposed

Committeeman Vizzard- I don't know if that's a good idea either.

Nick DiCosmo- It's an odd layout.

Committeeman Vizzard- Let's do pro and cons because I don't know what to think of it.

Richard Wells- We did consider alternatives.

Mayor Sutton- You have to figure out the clientele were coming off the main drag there, and now they will be coming to a little side street. You have police coming in and out, and people coming in a driveway.

Richard Wells- Understood, I don't think the question to the CCIA would be either or, I'm going to ask if they can do both the fence and paving since they are both great suggestions.

The Committeeman discuss the plans. Mayor Sutton thinks they should blacktop Godfrey Lane for the easement.

Nick DiCosmo- One thing that should be noted that is if the right of way should be realigned, they put part of the road into the new lot 4202 in the corner. I don't know the implications to that in this upper corner right here. That would have to be addressed. I guess on the other side as well. I know they are all Township owned. Fortunately, the township could sell that potentially.

Richard Wells- I think if I recall back to the subdivision there were some restrictions to that lot I'll have to double check. All the things like the site triangles and easements, would have to be updated if it was realigned. It would be part of the process.

Committeeman Vizzard- So what are we saying, are we going to grant the easement if we get the road asphalted?

Tom Seeley- Yes contingent to your request.

Mayor Sutton moved on to the State Police report.

No State Police present.

Mayor Sutton moved on to the OEM Report.

Robert Welch was not present.

Mayor Sutton moved onto Minutes of Previous Meetings.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

- Special BRIC Meeting, October 10, 2024
- Special Meeting, October 15, 2024
- Executive Session, October 17, 2024
- Regular Meeting, October 17, 2024
- Special Meeting, October 22, 2024

Mayor Sutton asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes. A motion was made by Deputy Mayor Klaudi and seconded by Committeeman Vizzard. Roll call vote, all approved.

Mayor Sutton moved onto the Bill list for consideration of bills received for the month of November as prepared by the Chief Financial Officer.

Mayor Sutton asked for a motion to approve the bill list. A motion was made by Committeeman Vizzard and seconded by Deputy Mayor Klaudi. Roll call vote, all approved.

Mayor Sutton moved onto the Engineers Report.

Nick DiCosmo-

- Port Norris Riverfront tide gate phase III project is now complete, and the contractor has moved onto Miller Ave Bridge replacement. We had to relocate a gas main and that has been complete. The existing bridge has been demolished.
- For Yock Wock and High Street reconstruction project, we did have the contractor come back and address one of the issues that developed over there. The contractor did come back and construct an overlay of the road so the issue wont pop up anywhere else. The overlay should extend the road another ten years, and there was no cost.
- Main Street is still a punch list. Still working on a couple issues until we close that project out.

- Roadway and drainage to Whitter Drive all that work as been completed. Just working on punch list now and grass restoration.
- Mill and overlay of Main Street Phase 2, finished the design and completed our final reviews. We will submit out to the county for their review and the DOT for their review and approval prior to going out to bid. Bidding probably in the new year, and construction in the Spring.
- FY2025 NJ State Aid the Township did receive \$280,000.00 in grant funds from the state for the reconstruction of Magnolia drive, a portion of it. We will start that work probably in the new year.
- FY2025 LFIF has opened for applications. The due date is January 2025, and the committee just needs to decide what we are going to apply for so we can install our traffic counters to get the proper percentage of truck traffic for our applications because it does require a minimum of 10% truck traffic for whatever we apply for to be eligible.
- Our Proposal for the FY 2025 Local Recreation Grant has been submitted and placed on the agenda. I believe it was discussed we will be applying for additional funds for the Battle Lane Park.

Mayor Sutton moved on to Correspondence.

1. Memo from Pam Humphries, CFO. The committee is to review the 2024 Best Practices Inventory Questionnaire.
2. Correspondence from Jud Moore. Requesting that the County Engineers Office and the Committee review the possibility of an all the way stop at the intersection of County roads 649 and 676 (Highland and Bypass.)
Committeeman Denied.
3. Correspondence from NJDOT- Applications now being accepted for the FY 2025 Local Freight Impact Fund. The deadline for applications is January 8, 2025.
Discussion of the next project. – Berry Bridge and Sluice.

Committeeman Vizzard- We were kind of talking about the repairs to the sluicgate and to the Miller Avenue Bridge. There is a sluice gate next to the bridge we are working on now.

Nick DiCosmo- Yes, it's the bridge closest to High Street.

Committeeman Vizzard- We are talking about redoing that sluicgate and the bridge again.

Nick DiCosmo- That's just another wooden structure like the Miller Avenue one that we are doing now. I think the thought was if we could improve that with a wider and precast concrete structure it would increase.

Committeeman Vizzard- Yeah, because trucks go over it every day. Do you think that's two projects we could get for this Local Freight Impact?

Nick DiCosmo- Yeah, I mean that's two projects we could definitely apply for as long as the truck traffic is how it is on Miller then I don't see a problem with getting the counts.

The Committeeman talk about the truck traffic from the sand plants and the truck impact on the roads. The Committeeman would also like to see the County to participate in the grant too. They all agree that the sluicgate repair is important.

4. Correspondence from NJDCA-DLGS is now accepting applications for the Local Efficiency Achievement Program (LEAP) for 2025. LEAP grants provide financial assistance to local governments to identify, study and implement shared services initiatives. DCA contact, Ryan Dullea has offered to set up a TEAMS meeting to discuss the project and provide feedback on how they can help with research or implementation of a new shared service.
5. The Cumberland CDC has brought to the Committee that The Cumberland County "Love where you Live- Beacons of Pride" grant has been opened to all County municipalities for community beautification and improvement projects. Grant maximum is \$20,000.00 with a 50% match required.

Mayor Sutton- This used to be just opened to Bridgeton, and Vineland took advantage of it. I think we could use it for our Veterans Park and get a gazebo. I know Clint, you talked about beautifying the Post Office. Maybe we can do both?

Clint Miller- It would be nice to get something for Veterans Park.

Committeeman Vizzard- What ever we do, just make sure Pam knows so she has the money.

Mayor Sutton- The Veterans have money.

6. Proposal from Remington & Vernick for the FY 2025 Local Recreation Improvement Grants Program. A resolution is on for approval.

Committeeman Vizzard- One thing I want to bring up regarding correspondence, is the memo from Pam to review the Best Practices from 2024, I don't know if you read that or not, but we scored very well and we will have no money withheld from us. Kudos to Heather and Pam!

Mayor Sutton- Number 6, Local Recreation Improvement, can you explain that a little bit?

Nick DiCosmo- Yeah, the FY 2025 grant application, it's the same one that we have \$50,000.00 for now through the NJDCA. It was discussed on Monday that the committee wanted to apply for that, so I submitted the proposal for review. If that is something that you want to do, and then we'll apply for it, then I submitted the application.

Mayor Sutton- Do we want to apply for that?

Committeeman Vizzard- Well we can either do like we talked about already. We can do the dog park at the ballfield, or the park on Battle Lane. We already have \$50,000.00 that we have gotten that we keep turning over.

Mayor Sutton- We are not losing that?

Nick DiCosmo- No we got the extended to December 2025.

Committeeman Vizzard- It was extended, now the fear is if we change the job, we are going to lose it.

Nick DiCosmo- Right now the job was not changed, you can change it, but they will go to review it and see if they want to grant that change or not. The change was never put through and we wanted to make sure we submitted the extension, which was a lot easier. The deadline has been extended for several years. It's funded 2021 grant.

The Committeeman discuss about the different grant ideas that are due the end of January 2025.

Mayor Sutton moved on to Resolutions.

RESOLUTION 2024-114
Authorizing Clerk's Office to Advertise for Bids For
Animal Control Services for 2025

WHEREAS, the current Animal Control contract will expire December 31, 2024; and

WHEREAS, Specifications have been prepared and an advertisement has been prepared to be sent to the South Jersey Times for bids to be received Tuesday, December 17, 2024, prior to 10:00 a.m.; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Commercial that the clerk's office is hereby authorized to solicit bids for Animal Control Services for the Township for the period January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025, with option of two (2), one-year extensions.

RESOLUTION 2024-115
AUTHORIZING TAX COLLECTOR TO ISSUE
DUPLICATE TAX SALE CERTIFICATE
FOR BLOCK 48, LOT 6082

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Commercial Township Committee, County of Cumberland, and State of New Jersey, which Block 48, Lot 6082, known as 205 Iris Rd, assessed to Syntax Services, LLC is reflecting a tax lien from January 23, 2024, Tax Sale for unpaid 2023 taxes.

WHEREAS, during the January 23, 2024, tax sale, 205 Iris Road received a lien held by Kareda, LLC through Certificate #24-00034.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Tax Sale Certificate #24-00034 was lost, misplaced, or inadvertently destroyed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Township Committee authorized the Tax Collector to issue a duplicate Tax Sale Certificate for the above tax lien for proper cancellation at the Cumberland County Clerk's Office to remove said lien from the title and release the collected redemption to the lien holder.

RESOLUTION 2024-116
Approving Bingo and Raffle License Applications of The Laurel Lake
Volunteer Fire & Rescue Inc., For Year 2025

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Commercial that the application of the Laurel Lake Volunteer Fire and Rescue, Inc. organization to conduct Bingo Games and Raffles during the year 2025 is approved to allow its members to purchase additional fire and rescue equipment from the proceeds while providing the local residents with entertainment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all applications shall be forwarded to the State of New Jersey Legalized Games of Chance Control Commission for final approval prior to license being issued.

RESOLUTION 2024-117
Accepting Proposal of Remington & Vernick Engineers
For Remaining Professional Engineering Phase Services for Roadway & Drainage to
Milbourne Drive and Dennis Lane in Port Norris, New Jersey

WHEREAS, the Township of Commercial has received a NJDOT Grant funding in the amount of \$475,000.00 for the NJDOT FY 2024 Local Aid Infrastructure Fund (FAIF), and

WHEREAS, Remington and Vernick Engineers submitted a proposal to the committee and was previously approved on May 16, 2024, in the amount of \$23,750.00 for providing preliminary engineering for the Roadway and Drainage Improvements to Milbourne Drive and Dennis Lane in Port Norris.

WHEREAS, the remaining cost of Bid Document and Coordination, Contract Administration, and Construction Observation cost remains to be authorized in the amount of \$38,000.

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Commercial that the committee has accepted the proposal in the amount of \$38,000 and the funds are to come from the following as provided by the chief financial officer in the certification of funds.

Account # G-02-41-885-100 NJDOT Grant Milbourne & Dennis Match:	Balance	\$15,000.00
Amount Certified:	\$15,000.00	
Remaining Balance:		-0-
Account # G-02-41-885-000 NJDOT Grant Milbourne & Dennis	Balance:	\$451,250.00
Amount Certified	\$22,000.00	
Remaining Balance:		\$429,250.00
Account # 4-01-20-165-028 Engineering Services	Balance:	\$20,245.00
Amount Certified:	\$1,000.00	
Remaining Balance:		\$19,245.00

Total Certified: \$38,000.00

RESOLUTION 2025-118
Approving Proposal of Remington & Vernick Engineers
For Preparation of Application for Fiscal Year 2025 Local Recreation Improvement Grant (LRIG) Program

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Commercial that Proposal of Remington & Vernick Engineers for the preparation of application for Fiscal Year 2025 Local Recreation Improvements Grant (LRIG) Program in the amount of \$2,200 is approved by the chief financial officer with funding coming from the following accounts:

Line Item:		
4-01-20-165-028 Engineering Fees Balance	\$20,245.00	
Amount Certified	\$ 2,200.00	
Remaining Balance	\$18,045.00	

RESOLUTION 2024-119
Accepting Proposal of Remington & Vernick Engineers
To Prepare and Submit Grant Application for the FY 2025 NJDOT Local Freight Impact Fund Program

WHEREAS, NJDOT is accepting applications for the FY 2025 Local Freight Impact Fund Program.

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Commercial that the committee has accepted the proposal in the amount of \$6,500 and the funds are to come from the following as provided by the chief financial officer in the certification of funds.

4-01-20-165-028 Engineering Fees		
Available Balance	\$ 18,045.00	

Total Amount Certified for RVE
Remaining Balance

\$11,545.00
\$6,500

Moved By: Klaudi
Seconded By: Vizzard

	In Favor	Against	Abstain	Absent
Sutton, R	X			
Klaudi, J	X			
Vizzard, M	X			

CERTIFICATION

I, Heather Miller, Clerk of the Township of Commercial hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate copy of resolutions adopted by the committee at their regular meeting held on November 21, 2024, at 6:00 P.M. at the Township Hall, 1768 Main Street, Port Norris, NJ

Heather Miller, Township Clerk

Mayor Sutton asked for a motion to adopt Resolutions 2024-114 through 2024-119
Deputy Mayor Klaudi made a motion, and Committeeman Vizzard seconded. Roll call vote, all approved.

Solicitor Seeley- Another thing that I want to touch on one of the issues that the Township has is Tax Foreclosures. It appeared that they were going to change the law and give new court rules to where we can proceed. I spoke to the head attorney yesterday that actually wrote the law and they didn't accept it. It was written by Senators who were not local attorneys. He got one foreclosure for Maurice River Township. I asked him what we should do going forward right now, and he said wait. He did an estimate on Trenton and to do 4 foreclosures, we usually do groups of 30, he had a 200,000 dollar estimate on how much it would serve everybody with the current rules. We are not out of the woods. I know it is very hard for Committeeman to except that we can't foreclose on people that owe taxes. The government has not finished the rules, so right now if we go forward it's going to cost us 10 tens that he believes. I spoke to him yesterday; he said don't go for them. He got one through, and nobody is getting them through. All I can say is don't shoot the messenger. You can't afford it. You don't have the money in your budget to do the foreclosure the way they want us to do them now. Once the attorneys get involved and write the rules then we will be okay.

Committeeman Vizzard- Do you have any idea about how long that will be?

Solicitor Seeley- I asked him and he said 1 year, and that's coming from the top foreclosure attorney in the state.

Committeeman Vizzard- Sounds like a bogus answer to me.

Solicitor Seeley- From me?

Committeeman Vizzard- No, from him. If he is the one with all the answers, he should have that answer.

Solicitor Seeley- I don't believe he is holding back from me and getting my hopes up since I have to go and explain to these committees when we are going open for foreclosures again. Maybe he's just being pessimistic because he doesn't want to give me hope, but he said it could be 1 day to one year. I have no control over the state legislature.

Mayor Sutton moved on to the Land Sale. Solicitor Seeley conducted.

Adjoining owners have been notified by certified mail. This sale was advertised two times, 11/8/24 & 11/15/24. The minimum bids were accepted at the September 19, 2024, meeting. A deed will be prepared when the balance is paid in full.

- 20% down the night of the sale, balance due in 30 days.
- \$400 fee for legal services.

1. Bid received by Kevin Nocon in the amount of \$5,000.00 for the following lots to be sold as one, 140x100 buildable lot.
 - a. Block 139, lot 7902 known as Beaver Drive. Lot is undersized at 40x100.
 - b. Block 139, lot 7904 known as 342 Beaver Drive. Lot is undersized at 60x100.
 - c. Block 139, lot 7907 known as 352 Beaver Drive. Lot is undersized at 40x100.

Sale Amount- \$7,500.00

2. Bid received by Brian O'Neill in the amount of \$800.00 for the following undersized lot.
 - a. Block 116, lot 9933 known as 428 Opal Road. Lot is undersized at 40x100.

Sale Amount- \$800.00 to Mr. O'Neill.

Mayor Sutton asked for a motion to accept the land sales.

A Motion was made by Deputy Mayor Klaudi and seconded by Committeeman Vizzard. Roll call vote, all approved.

Clint Miller- I wanted to bring something to your attention, Ron has been digging into this too with the county, but the flooding we had on Buckshutem Road. Last week we had massive tides, the road was flooded, and I think twice it was closed down. The county isn't going to help us because it's not a county sluice. So, Rons is concerned about it and so is Robbie. You can't see this sluice gate like the other ones, so I took some pictures of things. Ron spoke with someone at the County, and he met with the local supervisor down here. They told him pretty much that the County won't have any responsibility at all. Ron was thinking, and I told him we would have to talk to Nick about it, to repair something like this under an emergency. You think about this, we had a bad emergency on the corner of town, and if happened while that was closed down an ambulance has to go by the barracks to even get someone. So, I don't know how much further in depth with this. See what it means to call it an emergency to make improvements. I feel like it could be fixed fairly easily. We were going to do this probably 7-8 years ago when John Nuke was there. We came really close to doing it, but we gave up in the end. I don't know. It is a serious problem and it's never going to stop

Shawn Ronan, Laurel Lake- That was a discussion with Jamie, I work for the county. I did look at it with Jamie in the office with an areal view, where the Township sluice is by the Mauricetown Park. If you look at the area view of that north of that towards the bridge, there is a wider stream that's where most of your problems come in on that end more than the sluice.

Shawn and Clint talk about where the stream is.

Clint Miller- The sluice in question, not what Shawn is talking about, but the one where we think some of the water failure is there is no door on there. It's a wide-open pipe. The pipe is rotted out. It's still somewhat there.

Mayor Sutton- Clint said that if we can do it under an emergency repair, he could get it done within a day. I had the county out there where that new house they remodeled there, they dug up the pipe there and it's in the center of his yard. There were a couple of trees in the way and couldn't get any further, so I called that guy and got him out there and he didn't want the trees, so the County is going to pull those two trees out and connect the pipe to the ditch. As far as the sluice gate they don't want anything to do with it.

::In audible chatter::

Committeeman Vizzard- So is this something you're proposing your guys can fix?

Clint Miller- No I just want to dig into the aspects of what an emergency is and what we can do to apply for it.

Mayor Sutton- If we can get the emergency maybe Clint can do it.

The Committeemen talk about the sluice, the location, and ideas on how to fix it. Nick DiCosmo suggests raising the road 6-9 inches and that would possibly relieve 90% of the problem. Committeeman Vizzard asked Clint when he was asking about the emergency funding if he was talking about DEP. Clint Miller stated yes because the permitting involved in that is not going to be cheap and he doesn't know what it would cost in an emergency process. Nick DiCosmo said basically we would have OEM/State Police write a letter and send it to DEP saying that there was an emergency after a flooding event, and they would have two weeks to review and act on it. We would have to be ready to go for construction on that.

The Committeeman discuss the sluice and the water that comes up from high tides.

Committeeman Vizzard- Why can't we tie the bulkhead into this emergency appropriation?

Clint Miller- Because it's not a truck route.

Committeeman Vizard- It doesn't have to be. That road isn't a truck route either. The Mauricetown park, repairing that bulkhead. That's got to be done now, I mean how many things flood because of that bulkhead being destroyed?

Clint Miller- If something doesn't work out in that, then that is a possibility looking for bonding for all of that. Either way, we have to fix that park somehow.

Mayor Sutton asked for a motion to open to the public.

A motion was made by Deputy Mayor Klaudi and seconded by Committeeman Vizzard.

Rebeka Parish, Laurel Lake Rescue- I do want to reinstate how grateful we are for the appropriations you all set aside for us. However, with that being said, since October 15th, which was the date of our special meeting, we have received \$145,993.47 for billable revenue. For the same time period we had \$52906.89 in total expenses. That includes payroll of \$41,822.92. So, for that time period alone, from 10/15 to today we have had a net revenue of \$93,086.53 so I am quite confident that we would not need your appropriations.

Committeeman Vizzard- Congratulations, it looks like everything is working pretty good!

Mayor Sutton- I have questions. Is that back pay from Inspira?

Rebeka Parish- That is not included yet. We have not had any contact with Inspira since I set them the list.

Mayor Sutton- I understand that they sent you a check for a hundred and sixteen or something like that? That's what I heard.

Rebeka Parish- We did receive a fifty-eight-hundred-dollar check but that was prior to 10/15 so that is not included in this cost.

Mayor Sutton- And where did this money come from? From billing?

Rebeka Parish- Yes.

Committeeman Vizzard- I think its good news. Very good.

Shawn Ronan- This is for you Mr. Mayor respectfully; I know you spend a lot of time riding around the area pointing out things on county roads that need attention. I'm asking you; can you ride through Laurel Lake and give them attention on things that need to be done up there.

Mayor Sutton- I'm in Laurel Lake just about every day.

Shawn Ronan- Okay, well I'm just saying all these campers in people's back yards and squatting. It's getting out of control man. I got one right next to me, at like 2-3:00 in the morning just screaming and yelling and dogs. It's just ridiculous. It shouldn't even be there and not even aloud do be there. There is a lot of things in the Lake that need attention.

Mayor Sutton- I go around there about every day. I do interact with Dan, but I just think he doesn't like to listen to me.

Committeeman Vizzard- I don't think its that at all. One of the things I got a little niffed about with the foreclosures. Our hands are pretty much tied getting that stuff out.

Shawn Ronan- You can't be living in campers, this and that.

Committeeman Vizzard- Yeah, and Dan has issued tickets.

Shawn Ronan- I know you guys are working on it. ::inaudible:: I cross that road every day, it's very nice now. They did all the topsoil, but there is a ton more work that needs to be done. If we could focus on that more, it would be greatly appreciated.

Mayor Sutton- I didn't quite understand what you meant that I rode around looking for problems with the County.

Shawn Ronan- You called the County saying that there is this wrong with this road, and this wrong with that one.

Mayor Sutton- That's my job.

Shawn Ronan- Yeah, well your job is also on the Townships roads. You need to focus on and do that. As a taxpayer I'm asking if you could do that.

Mayor Sutton- I called the County last week and they fixed the problem.

Shawn Ronan- I know you did, because I'm the one that did it. It's just me sometimes, you seem like you are focused a lot on other projects but let's get some real things done that is going to benefit the residents. The little hole where the water runs off the road that has been there for 30 plus years, and it was a problem. They went out to fix it out that day. I'm just asking if we can focus things on Township stuff that needs to happen.

Mayor Sutton- That is Township stuff. I don't understand where you are coming form. We have to have the County for things to get done on the County roads.

Shawn Ronan- Yes, and it get it done. You just seem to point a lot out on County stuff. There is a ton of stuff in the Lake that needs attention, I'm just saying can we focus on that a little bit too. Please.

Clint Miller- Some of the stuff that Shawn brought up were abandoned houses. I don't know if you heard him or not. I had literally 3 people literally today while doing a tree count, 3 people today stopped and asked me about that. I know Dan has handed out a boat load of tickets and he gets people in court all the time. I don't know what to tell folks and I know there was a house on Raymond, Shawn has one next to him. Doris and Ridge, I can't remember off hand but it's a horrific house. Sandalwood is another one. I know Dan has had these folks in court. I don't know what is happening at the court level, but I have had 3 people stop and tell me there are people living in these campers. These campers are pushed up in these yards and this one yard is horrendous.

Mayor Sutton- Shawn just to let you know what I've been working on, just this year I've been working on evaluations that haven't been done for passed 6-7 years, over a million and half dollars that is going to be on this years tax.

Shawn Ronan- Evaluations for what?

Mayor Sutton- For taxes. Housing is not really my department. I've tried to talk to Dan.

Shawn Ronan- As Mayor if you could tell whoever. Dan is my neighbor and he's a nice guy.

Shawn Ronan- I know there have been two trucks on Battle Lane covered in dust, dirt, and mud sitting there dry rotting so long.

Shawn Ronan- I get tons of people asking me to come to meetings to say this or that, and I've already talked to Clint about there are a lot of people with issues with the streetlights on Battle Lane not working. There are a lot of things people are saying that aren't getting addressed. Again, respectively, can we put the focus on Laurel Lake.

Mayor Sutton- I know I've talked to Clint before about it. I would like to make one Saturday to get the whole Committee to ride around there. It's terrible. I've been on every road in Laurel Lake within the last month, I'm up there all the time.

Clint Miller- It's the same stuff that has been going for a long-time with the court system. It's not Dan, because I know he's out there doing things because I see the stacks of tickets. It's when he goes to court, he's not making any headway or people don't show up.

Shawn Ronan- The whole issue is if they don't go to court the first time it gets rescheduled but after the 3rd time they get a bench warrant. The thing is these people don't care. Until you get pulled over and they find out they have a warrant then they go to court.

Solicitor Seeley- If I can answer that, the problem is everything has been changed to virtual so when someone doesn't show up, all the have to do is come the next time and they will recall the warrant. They recall the warrant and then they pay the ticket but that doesn't solve the problem. They are not getting one for not paying it.

Clint Miller- Some of the problems though from what Shawn is talking about is we have a lot of abandoned properties and it's very difficult to figure out who owns these properties.

John Reeves, Laurel Lake- All these people are the ones stealing everything. They ain't got money anyway and tickets aint doing anytihng. I'm telling you right now, I've had enough. At the end of Sandalwood there are buckets of sh** in the state property. There is a burn barrel where they are stripping the wire. You mean to tell me you can't do anything about that? There isn't a law?

Clint Miller- The police have too, and their hands are tied.

John Reeves- You mean to tell me dumping sh** on state property aint a law?

Solicitor Seeley- Call the police!

Shawn Ronan- Like the house next door to mine, I'm not saying you need to foreclose on it but there was a camper there before and they removed it. Now they put another back in there living there, dogs barking and fighting. The cops are there all the time. At least get rid of that. Outside of that it was quite.

Solicitor Seeley- But that's your problem. Do you know how many other people's problems are just like yours?

::inaudible chatter::

Shawn Ronan- I'm saying as zoning issue, you can say look you cant have this camper in your back yard living it. You did it before.

::inaudible chatter::

John Reeves- What I'm talking about over on Sandalwood, they are stealing our sh** and going on the other side.

Solicitor Seeley- This poor girl has to type up all of this stuff so if you don't say your name and address, she doesn't know who are on type.

John Reeves- I don't care about that.

Solicitor Seeley- Well I care about it because I care about her. So, the next time someone speaks please say your name and address.

Mayor Sutton- Anyone else have anything to say?

Kacy Catalano, Laurel Lake- I understand that part of it and there are only powers to give a fine and as it stands if they have a fine, they have no means of foreclosure. Their hands are kind of tied beyond the Township to be able to do from the State Police. Any who, I'm the secretary for fire district 3 and EMT for Laurel Lake fire and Rescue and I'm familiar with the problems intimately familiar with the problems that plagued the department as well as the fire district and wanted to give you some updates here. Three points that I know that are of concern for the township, one is the 2023 Budget, audit, sorry Audit and that audit is in correspondence with the auditors for 6-7-8 months and there was a verification they need for a bank account and they never got it and they never reached out to let her know they needed that to finish the audit. She has gotten that to them, and they were supposed to have the book audit for her last week, and they are undergoing peer review so the expectation they will have it ready next week and Beca will make sure the township gets that. The other thing is rumor out there that Inspira Health Network owes Laurel Lake Rescue a significant amount of money for the direct bills from the

transport provided. First and foremost, you mentioned a number of 116 thousand dollars, I don't know where that came from. Currently the administrator of Laurel Lake Ems division Ken Wilson has assigned this responsibility to his LT Chris Stratton and Chris has been in correspondence with people in Inspira, practically Larry Coffman. He has been in correspondence with them and emailed them last week, but they have not responded. So, the way that works for direct billing for Ems for transport that was done for Inspira via contract, a list will be sent over for the dispatcher and the top of that would include direct bills that will be cross referenced with Laurel Lake charting system, and that will be set back. That part of process was not explained to Ken Wilson by the previous administrator William Petit when he resigned. He never explained that needed to be done. It was never verified in the way it was sent back. There was no contractual obligation to how it was supposed to be handled. Kris has gone September's billing and there was approximately \$9,000.00 I don't know the exact number off the top of my head, but there were 2 over payments made at the end of 2023 by Inspira to LLFR some were in the sums of 20 thousand dollars. There were 3 months that weren't billed for direct bills, assuming they were approximately the same as we are looking at them owing us 27000 and us owing 20000, which makes a net of \$7,000.00 Inspira would owe us. A lot of assumptions are made there, but they are pretty good assumptions. It's a measly amount when you really consider what the payroll is all week, it doesn't even cover payroll. I have gone through and done the calculations based on the information that was presented to the Township previously to determine the cost 2023 primary EMS services. There were a few things that weren't clear, first and foremost, the hours were dropped which made doing the calculations very difficult, and shift differential directly effects doing transports. I can give this to Becka to send it over to Pam. I didn't have a lot of time and not good with Excel formatting so it's difficult to read. Ken has been in contact with the billing company and has gotten more in-depth reports, so he is able to break down the revenue that was received from Inspira for primary vs transports. That is the deficit that was ran in 2023 removing transport from the equation. I believe if you do the math, we netted about 20thousand dollars total between primary and doing transports. But that 2023 number, it was about 118thousand dollars, I did the quick math of what we brought into what we cost it us. It was not 120thousand dollars. That was how we were short. To cover payroll for the EMTs and that is the current format we are under which is 8 shifts for 16 hours a day, duty crews overnight which is a flat rate pay. Per hour from the 16 hours 6am-10pm, then from 10-6am it is a flat rate. Let's say its 120 thousand to round off, that's how much we were short considering the revenue we brought in from Primary Ems to the amount we paid in payroll from primary Ems. That number is a real number. Not our anticipated revenues or anticipated payrolls, that is was 2023 lost during primary Ems, it was made up doing transports. LLFR no longer does those transports, there was a merger with Tricare and Inspira and no longer needs extra ambulances in order to transports. They are still using Dorothy, but they have changed their contracts. Frankly, I haven't done the calculations of what it actually costs for Fire District 3 because we paid for those operations, but the margins were super small. The amount it was costing to do the transports was subsidized through tax money by Fire District 3. It wasn't really a great business, frankly, which you said before Mr. Klaudi and business wasn't great. That is was current administration was left with. We were all new, say maybe 2-3 people we are digging through and trying to make it right. That \$120,000.00 was the deficit was from 2023, and we won't have 2024 until its over. My anticipation is that the deficit is going run over 100 thousand dollars for 2025 as well. Ken Wilson has been through multiple meetings with billing companies and has gone through and determined what things have been preventing our billings from going through well

and how to improve that to bring in more revenue from the insurance money being paid out and has come up with a new charting system and is doing training on that currently to make sure the EMTs are doing them properly. All of this information shows you that we are striving to reduce the amount we are losing running primary Ems. We are anticipating being short 100-150 thousand dollars to cover it, it might be smaller. We are looking for the township to help us with that because we can't guarantee we can make up for that difference. When the money runs out of the account, we can't pay people to work. Myself, I've been running duty crews every single night, I've been volunteering my time because we don't have the money. Right now, we do, but January-February-March come around that's when co-pays are due. That's when insurance money does not come in. That is when we can expect to be hurting and I don't want to take whatever money we make on duty crews, it's only about \$75 a night. I have been volunteering at that time because we don't have that money in that account, and we don't pay enough to bring EMTs to Laurel Lake Fire and Rescue. I scheduled the duty crews, and when we dropped our rate from \$125 to \$75 a night, I lost four people. It wasn't worth their time. I know the importance of it, I do it because the community needs it, not everyone looks at it that way. I work a full-time job and support my household. Those people that do EMS as their primary job, they need to support their household. We are making efforts towards it, but realistically we cannot guarantee weather or not we can make up that difference next year. We cannot guarantee we can stay afloat and continue to provide the level of care we can without insurance we can make up that money somewhere.

Mayor Sutton- How many people do you have now?

Kacy Catalano- How many EMTs are currently? I think we have around 11, I'm not 100% positive of that number. Those 4 people that I was referring to were people who would run duty crews but stopped running crews, the flat rate, those 4 people dropped when we dropped the rate from 150 to 75, don't quote me on that but it was substantial cut. I'm not mentioning names, but we had many people, I think that there were duty crews around 10 people that dropped down to 6. I had difficulty covering shifts at all. Me and Chris run 4 days a week together on duty crews. I worked 6 last week and 5 prior to that. We are not paying enough to bring people in. We don't offer a union, full benefits, any who I wanted to present that to you.

Mayor Sutton- How do you know if you are going to make it through the year with enough people?

Kacy Catalano- How are we going to know if we are going to have enough EMTs? I mean I'm burning myself out, I know that, but the people that are there now are from the community and they really care. They are people that are willing to put in that extra effort. I didn't have a lot of that before. Unfortunately transporting is a double-edged sword, it brought in money and people, but it didn't bring in good people. You get people that are there for the paycheck and not the right reasons. Say one-person he's in Heislerville, everybody else is putting in as much effort as we can. So, any who, I wanted to present that information to you so you have a real number to look at in the hope that you can potentially budget something for Ems next year. If you can, if you can't. I know our situation isn't great in a poor community. Maybe put a new petition to it, ask the people if they are willing to raise the taxes. If the answer is yes, the answer is yes.

Committeeman Vizzard- We have already considered putting that on the ballot. Right now, all I can tell you is keep doing what you're doing. Rebeca is doing a great job, and we do have \$60,000.00 emergency appropriations set aside for you. She can cancel this, so we don't need to budget that because we didn't spend that. That doesn't mean we wouldn't be able to come up with some type of budget, but I don't know that until I sit with Pam. You're doing good and keep doing what you're doing!

Kacy Catalano- Question, so Fire District 3 is a joint insurance fund through MEL, I was working with a broker to get an exact figure for what the difference would be with or without EMS figuring out what that would cost of EMS operations are. I was reading through and haven't gotten a response from them and so I decided to see what the other fire districts were spending that don't provide EMS services. While I was reading the NJ MEL they give all the different joint insurance funds in NJ, and I noticed that Commercial is under Atlantic County and not Atlantic Cumberland Gloucester joint insurance fund and I was curious fund.

Committee Vizzard- Its Atlantic and Cumberland County Joint fund.

The Committeeman and Kacey talk about the different joint insurance funds. Clint states that we have been with this insurance since before he came on board with the Township. Kacey Catalano also tells the Committee he is the insurance fund commissioner, and he is thrilled with this insurance broker at the moment.

Maureen Sheppard, Port Norris- This is completely off topic of any of these discussions but back to your dog park, who is liable if something happens there? Who is liable if there is an incident with the people or dogs that the township is building?

Solicitor Seeley- I guess it depends on the situation. If you bring in a rottweiler that has been cited for biting 2 other people than the owner will be 100% liable.

Maureen Sheppard- I just wanted to know if the township is going to regret having a dog park.

Solicitor Seeley- Bridgeton has a dog park and it works out really well. If you look at the liability of any recreational facilities, a lot of them. You take a playground; a kid gets hurt.

Maureen Sheppard- Not everyone in town gets their dog licensed with their shots. How do you monitor that? I'm just thinking about the future because that's near my house.

Clint Miller- JIF has requirements just like the skate park across the street. We had a million people tell us we are going to get sued, and there's no two ways about it. Today, knock on wood, we haven't been sued once. JIF has insurance policies; a lot of towns have these dog parks. There are rules and regulations.

Solicitor Seeley- Its not like we are going to throw up a hodge podge dog park. It's going to have to be covered under what JIF provides coverage for. Really that should relieve us from the anxiety from being personally liable.

Maureen Sheppard- My other comment is, I sure wish there was a park in Laurel Lake. I wish it wasn't going to a dog park, but a park in the lake for children.

Resident- I know that the only problem is if you don't have lights, they are going to burn it to the ground.

Shawn Ronan- It's a shame because it's not the kids. It's the younger adults who just destroy sh**. We had a community camp, and they burned it down. Township spent money on the other things and how many times did they destroy things and repair them? Whatever you do they are going to destroy.

Mayor Sutton- We spent over million and half dollars on that laurel lake park and they destroyed it every time.

Shawn Ronan- I'm a resident there and I'm all for it. I think it's a waste of money if they are just going to destroy it. It's sad to say but it is.

Resident- Or the other problem is your kids are going to go down there and find someone overdosed.

Maureen Sheppard- You have to give the kids in the township something.

David Carangi, Laurel Lake- Just wanted to say thank you so much gentlemen and Happy Thanksgiving.

Mayor Sutton asked for a motion to close to the public.

Deputy Mayor Klaudi made a motion, and Committeeman Vizzard seconded.

Mayor Sutton moved on to additional considerations.

1. The Recreation Committee is hosting the Annual Tree Lighting ceremony with Sunday, December 1, 2024, 4:30 to 6pm. Crab baskets need to be turned in by this Saturday, November 23rd.
2. There will be a solar subscriber open house on Thursday, December 12, 2024, at 6:00pm at the Township Hall. A solar project is being constructed at the townships' closed landfill. No solar is required on your property to be eligible. Anyone who does not already have solar is welcome to attend for more information Refreshments will be served.

Mayor Sutton asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

A motion was made by Committeeman Vizzard and seconded by Deputy Mayor Klaudi.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Gabrielle Horseman, Deputy Clerk