

Fairness In Taxes

Meeting Minutes 05-03-17

Board Attendance: Leo Burke, Bill & Sheila Hartranft, Marie & Dave Hayes, Don Kerns, Michael Hinchman, Vic Staniec & Jim Tweed

Meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:00 P.M. with welcome by Jim Tweed.

May minutes approved with no changes.

Treasurer – Bill Hartranft

- \$6,090.00 in dues have been collected so far for 2017.
- Savings account balance is approximately \$16,000.00 and CD's are at approximately \$13,000.00.
- Have been continuously updating our mailing list and have requested the mailing list for OC Flooding from Suzanne Hornick to incorporate into FIT's.

Education – Vic Staniec

- There were no budget changes this year.
- Jack Fitzpatrick has been the acting Athletic Director. They have hired a new Athletic Director, Vincent Leavy effective 7-1-17. Vincent is from Coatesville and has a master's degree in athletics. His starting salary will be \$100,000+.
- SAT scores for Ocean City High School are the highest in Cape May County, Mainland Regional is the highest in Atlantic County followed by Middlesex in Bergen County.
- Comparable average salaries per year are North Valley at \$105,650.00, Margate at \$89,000+, Ocean City \$89,036.00, E. Newark at \$4,911.00 and Atlantic City \$88,316.00. Ocean City has the lowest starting salary.
- There was an increase in taxes for the school system of \$5.00 per household on a home valued at \$555,000.00.
- Highest academic ratings are for the vocational schools. With today's technology they are able to attract the "cream of the crop" students.
- Jim Tweed commented that about 1/3 of the School Board meeting was devoted to awards and another 1/3 dealing with the recent tragedies among students, the drug issues and many parents sharing their personal experiences.
- Leo Burke asked about the salary of the new Athletic Director and his qualifications. The salary not known at this time, but the person did meet all criteria for the position.
- There is \$2m in the reserve. There is a 2% cap per year in tax increases but this is cumulative. Ex.: If they do not have an increase over a 3-year period they could potentially have a 8% increase for the fourth year.
- Democrats are looking for school reform which could mean a loss of funding due to loss of students.
- School Choice students are now frozen at 192 in the high school. There are no students in the elementary or middle school.

Questions submitted to City Council – Jim Tweed

- There are 4 members of this committee working at trying to get answers on specific issues. The categories are as follows:
 - Employment Practices
 - Resources
 - Capital Expenses – Public Safety Building
 - Flooding
- Phil Brunone is gathering information on how things are handled in other towns. An effort is being made and FIT will continue to monitor this.

City Revenue & Expenditures – Michael Hinchman

- A new police station with an addition was planned in 2016. The question is should they build a new station or rehab the existing station. We need to educate ourselves on the needs of a police station in today's world as to which would be the better route; i.e, court, social services, police, 911 lines, etc. Should the construction be pre-fab?
- The city has received a \$5m grant for a new pump station. The quote from the engineering firm is at \$27m. Recommend we develop ads to address this issue.
- On utilities, notably the water dept. putting in new meters and the resulting condition of our streets; recommend that FIT should write a letter directly to the water dept. asking for their installation plan and timeline to better address this issue.

Guest Speakers Committee – Marie Hayes

- Dr. Clare Abernathy of Stockton University gave a very good, well received presentation, and very well covered by the press. Also, good response from local businesses, WaWa, ShopRite, etc. allowing us to place ads in their stores.
- Continuing to work on speakers for upcoming meetings.

Web Communication Committee – Dave Hayes

- Is there a possibility of having our meetings taped and shared. Michael Hinchman did comment that one drawback could be those times when the discussion goes "off record".

Ocean City Life Saving Station

- So far the cost is \$1.7m for the station, and there is to be no charge for admission. Marie Hayes commented that she has never been able to get an accounting of the income and expenditures. It was also commented that the city would like to fundraise for the project. Michael Hinchman recommended submitting an OPRA request for itemized expenses. Al Keleher volunteered to submit OPRA requests on income and expenses for the Life Saving Station.

Adjourned 8:55 P.M.

The next meeting (s) is scheduled for Wednesday, June 7, 2017 at 7:00 P.M. Meetings will continue on Wednesdays through the rest of the year.

Respectfully submitted by:
Sheila Hartranft, Secretary