

February 21, 2024  
6:37 PM

A caucus meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of West Long Branch was held on the above date and time in the Council Chambers, Borough Hall, 965 Broadway, West Long Branch, N.J.

Mayor Janet W. Tucci presided.

Mayor Tucci reported that in accordance with N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 adequate notice of this meeting of the Mayor and Council has been provided.

PRESENT: BRAY, CIOFFI, GOMEZ, NEYHART, PENTA  
ABSENT: SNIFFEN

Michelle Wood of General Code gave a presentation on MapLink, an online zoning map feature offered by the company, and addressed any questions.

#### **MAYOR TUCCI**

The Mayor listed the items on for discussion in Executive Session, which included the following:

- i. Recreation Position
- ii. Personnel Healthcare Matter
- iii. DPW Personnel
- iv. Public Works Contract
- v. Police CBA Contract
- vi. Jungle Lasers Contract
- vii. Update on Property Violations
- viii. Public Defender
- ix. Police Personnel
- x. Borough Engineer Contract

It was determined that the Mayor and Borough Council would go into executive session following the Council meeting.

#### **JULIE NASTASI**

Julie Nastasi of T&M Associates discussed proposed changes to the Borough's Stormwater Ordinance so that it follows State guidelines; Julie recommended opting for a version with simplified language that is in step with State verbiage, to avoid having to change the ordinance again in the future.

#### **MAYOR TUCCI**

Mayor Tucci referenced a letter she received from the County Clerk's Office seeking the Borough's participation with a project based on commemorating America's upcoming Semi-quincentennial in 2026. Mayor Tucci expressed her interest and encouraged participation in this project.

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### **COUNCILMAN BRAY**

Councilman Bray offered the Finance Committee's assessment on the major areas in the budget and reviewed the significant changes for each department.

### **COUNCILMAN CIOFFI**

Councilman Cioffi delivered the following report on behalf of the Office of Emergency Management:

*"Thanks to a joint effort, and I thank our Borough Administrator and Borough staff for this, our Borough's Emergency Management web site on our Borough web page, has been updated. It now gives crucial information in many different areas that residents can click and read on. We are also sharing the Monmouth County Sheriff's department site as well along with links to the major utility companies, JCP&L & NJ Natural Gas.*

*Also, thanks to Chief Botti of our boroughs Police Department, Councilman Sniffen of our Buildings and Grounds Committee & DPW, the existing shed behind police headquarters that was in very poor condition and not in use, is now currently being refurbished for use of OEM. I will be able to store needed equipment in it and make great use of it. The cost of having it refurbished vs buying a new one is much better and I thank those who assisted.*

*Lastly, without taking Councilman Pentas thunder, as OEM Coordinator, I want to send special thanks to out to our entire Road Department Crew for the last few rain & snow events that we have experienced. These storms are not easy to predict and what comes out of them, our crews have gone above and beyond in making our streets safe. I also want to thank our police department for their continued efforts as well with parking enforcement during storms. A ticket is not always the answer and our officers have even knocked at doors to have vehicles removed vs 'Just write the ticket'. Parking on snow covered roadways does hamper our crews from clearing the roadways properly."*

Councilman Cioffi reported that he discussed budget adjustments with the Recreation Department and stated that the council has been sent information on the proposed Recreation Director Position, which will be discussed in further detail during Executive Session.

### **COUNCILMAN GOMEZ**

In reference to the Mayor's report on America's Semi-quincentennial, Councilman Gomez suggested that the Council form a committee specific to this event.

### **COUNCILMAN NEYHART**

Councilman Neyhart proposed increasing the fine for parking on the roads when snow covered from \$25 to \$100. Councilman Neyhart added that he felt the fine was not significant enough and people do not take the matter seriously, which causes significant problems for the road crews. The Council was in favor of the fine increase.

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**COUNCILMAN PENTA**

Councilman Penta stated that there is an ongoing issue with utility companies opening roads without permits under “emergency circumstances” and without following proper procedure for doing so. Councilman Penta proposed introducing an ordinance to increase the fine for opening the road without a permit; the Council was in favor of this.

Councilman Penta addressed a letter of hardship that was submitted for consideration, following the denial of a road opening permit on Delaware Ave due to the moratorium; the Council agreed that the permit should remain denied.

**BOROUGH ATTORNEY BAXTER**

The Borough Attorney discussed the suggestion of allowing credit card payments to be made online for certain fees; currently the Borough only accepts credit card transactions for online tax payments. Councilman Bray reported that the subject was discussed during the Finance and Administration meeting and the committee agreed that that, while they are interested, it will need some further research.

The Borough Attorney re-addressed the issue of the State DOT requesting a resolution from the Borough in support of the Troutman Bridge Repair; the Council agreed that they would not be adopting an endorsement resolution, as they do not agree with the detour plan.

**OPPORTUNITY FOR ANY PERSON TO BE HEARD:**

There being no one wishing to speak, Councilman Neyhart moved Council adjourn Caucus Session at 8:00 PM. Seconded by Councilman Bray and carried unanimously.

  
BOROUGH CLERK