

April 22, 2020
6:36 PM

A caucus meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of West Long Branch was held on the above date and time virtually via Zoom due to the Coronavirus and the need for social distancing.

Mayor Janet W. Tucci presided.

The Borough Clerk 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 in the newspaper and through a public notice posted on the Borough's website providing members of the public with the link to join the Zoom meeting.

PRESENT: BRAY, CIOFFI, MANGO, NEYHART, PENTA, SNIFFEN

ABSENT: NONE

Mayor Tucci thanked the residents for their diligence in following the social distancing guidelines. Further, she recognized the Emergency Management Coordinator, Councilman Cioffi, for his guidance and direction during the COVID-19 pandemic.

COUNCILMAN SNIFFEN:

1. Repairs were made to one of the bathrooms in the Police building.
2. Progress has been made on the removal of some trees at 965 Broadway.

COUNCILMAN PENTA:

1. The Public Works Department has been experiencing a problem with illegal dumping at the recycling center. Therefore, the Public Works Director was instructed to place a free-standing sign in front of the recycling center advising residents that it is illegal to dump items in front of the gate. It was determined that if the problem continued, other options would have to be explored.

COUNCILMAN NEYHART:

1. This year's Fishing Derby has been scheduled for June 6th. It was mentioned that the event would be moved to a date further in the summer or October 17th, the other Free Fishing Day in New Jersey,

COUNCILMAN NEYHART: (Contd.)

if it was necessary to postpone this event due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. The Police Department has been making daily and periodic inspections and found compliance with the COVID-19 restrictions/guidelines.

COUNCILWOMAN MANGO:

1. The Recreation Commission has advised that the local and regional Boards of Education haven't responded to their requests to use their facilities for this year's Summer Recreation Program. Therefore, as a back-up plan, the Commission Chair has reached out to St. Jerome School.
2. It was noted that it was unclear what would happen with this year's fireworks display if the social distancing guidelines were still in place on July 4th.
3. It was announced that the Beautification Committee would be moving forward with planting the flowers in the Parks. It was also mentioned that the Committee was seeking volunteers.
4. The Environmental Commission decided to postpone the semi-annual recycling event to June. A date has not yet been confirmed.
5. The Fall Festival has been scheduled for Sunday, October 11th.

COUNCILMAN CIOFFI:

1. The Borough has obtained a permit to open the Franklin Lake dam in accordance with certain guidelines if necessary.

BOROUGH ADMINISTRATOR DOLLINGER:

Nothing.

BOROUGH CLERK COLE:

Nothing.

BOROUGH ATTORNEY BAXTER:

1. A resident whose property abuts the Old Free Cemetery on Monmouth Road wrote to the Borough to report that a tree fell from the cemetery property on to her property and wanted to know who would be responsible for the damage if it happened in the future. The Borough Attorney consulted with the Borough Clerk, who found no records indicating the cemetery property was owned by the Borough, and the Tax Assessor, who advised that the cemetery was exempt, but was not Borough-owned property. Therefore, the Borough Attorney sent a letter to the Borough Administrator to forward to the resident advising that any damage was not the Borough's responsibility.
2. It has been determined that virtual meetings of the land use boards would not be feasible for several reasons. The Borough Attorney stated that the main issue would be notice to the applicants and the fact that the application must be available at Borough Hall for review by the public, which would not be possible now that Borough Hall was closed to the public. It was noted that the Board Attorney was working on a notice to be sent to applicants advising them there would be no meetings until at least the end of May and requesting the applicant to authorize an extension of time.
3. The Borough Attorney indicated that he was preparing an ordinance amendment which would clarify roles between the Borough Administrator and Borough Clerk.
4. It was reported that two of the Franklin Lake aerators were not working. Councilman Penta replied that the Borough was experiencing trouble with the breakers, and he was working on the problem with the Public Works Director.

BOROUGH ENGINEER MULLAN: *(Represented by Julie Nastasi)*

Nothing.

Councilman Bray presented the following information, with associated slides, relative to the improvements to the West Long Branch Community Center:

We are happy to provide the update on the Community Center project tonight and also introduce the Capital Bond Ordinance that will allow the numerous improvements to occur at the Community Center. I would like to thank my committee members, the CFO, the leadership at the Community Center, and our professionals from Parallel Architects and T&M Engineering for their continued efforts on this project.

We have had numerous meetings over the past 6 months on this project and now have switched to virtual meetings to get to this stage. Parallel and T&M worked with our committee on putting together the overall budget on the project, which is then used for the Bond Ordinance.

I want to now share a few slides that show the overall scope of the project:

- *Slide 1 – In January 2020, the Community Center was officially shut down for numerous fire code violations as well as other code violations. WLB hired Parallel Architects to identify the modifications necessary to address all code violations as well as enhancing the building for continued use.*
- *Slide 2 – Explains the task categories and the descriptions.*
 - **Sprinkler System** – To address the majority of the fire code violations, a new Fire Suppression system will be installed for the entire building including the library.
 - **Roof** – New roof for the entire building including library.
 - **Code Compliance and Building Upgrades** – Multiple upgrades to bring the building up to code and enhance HVAC and Lighting.
 - **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Upgrades** – Multiple ADA upgrades including new ramps and door access to the main ballroom and Norwood room. Upgrading bathrooms to be ADA accessible.
 - **Contingency** – Contingency budget for unforeseen conditions and miscellaneous repairs.
 - **Contractor O/H & Profit** – Contractor General Conditions, Overhead, and Profit.

- **Soft Costs** – Architectural and Engineering services for CDs, BA, CA, and Survey, Ordinance Prep and Funding.
- Slides 2, 3, and 4 – Shows pictures of the exterior, foyer entrance, and ballroom.

The bond that we are seeking will be a longer term 20 year bond with an interest rate of around 2%. We have already worked the initial capital down payment into the budget calculations for this year and with our projection this is not going to have a significant impact on our town budget. With other capital items retiring in the next two years, we anticipate a level amount of debt service in the future.

Now more than ever, we think this project will be great for the community. Last year the Community Center hosted over 140 events. This includes weekly meetings (AA and the Girl Scouts), monthly meetings (Sports Association, NARFE, Leisure Club, and Lion's Club). In addition, the Community Center serves as a key voting location, hosts senior citizen dinners, hosts the Shore Regional Sophomore Carnival, Holiday Events (Halloween, Easter, Christmas) and our Memorial Day ceremony. When this project is complete, the positive impact of the Community Center to our Borough will only increase.

This project was started primarily to address the fire code and safety violations in the building, but we will also be making this building (which includes the library) water tight with a new roof, upgrading our ADA compliance, and enhancing the overall look and functionality of our Community Center.

Our library and Community Center will truly be a centerpiece for the town that all ages and all denominations can enjoy.

Councilman Bray reported that he received an e-mail from Angelo Lombardi, a resident who indicated that he may not be able to attend this evening's meeting, with the following inquiries regarding the Community Center project:

I have several simple questions that I think the taxpayers of WLB should have answers to before this type of expense gets approved. Exactly what repairs/renovations are being done that cost \$1.6 million dollars? How

many bids/quotes were obtained to come to that price tag? How does the town anticipate recouping the money from an entity that has shown it cannot afford to operate without public donations? Will the residents of WLB have FREE access to the facility to host their events since public taxpayer funds are being used for its renovation?

Councilman Bray addressed Mr. Lombardi's concerns as follows:

- In the public bidding process, the funding must be lined up first. The architect/engineer developed the budget for the bidding process. Once bids are received, the Borough would select the lowest qualified bidder.
- As far as recouping the funding, he advised that this would be a capital enhancement to a public building.
- Finally, he confirmed that residents would have free access to the Library. However, for private events at the Community Center, there would be a fee.

Councilwoman Mango thanked Councilman Bray for his leadership on this project. The Mayor said that she discussed her concerns regarding this project with Councilman Bray and as a result has come to an understanding of the project. She also questioned whether the project could be done in phases; however, she was shown that approach would not be practical.

Mayor Tucci opened the meeting up to the public.


Mark Engel, Park Meadow Lane, complimented Councilman Bray on his presentation. He asked if it was possible to ask the County to help offset the cost of the project since part of it also covered the Library. The Mayor informed him that the Borough owns the building that houses the Library, not the County.

Vincent Lepore, 33 Ocean Terrace, Long Branch, expressed his appreciation of the work Councilman Bray has done on the Community Center project. He noted that a similar project was being done in Long Branch and they were going about the financing in a different way. He questioned why the Borough couldn't take a similar approach under the

Library Construction Bond Act. Councilman Bray replied that the Borough Administrator researched that approach and found that the process was extremely involved and, therefore, would be cost prohibitive for a town the size of West Long Branch.

The Borough Attorney explained that the Mayor and Borough Council would be going into executive session following the Council meeting.

There being no one else wishing to speak, Councilman Neyhart moved Council adjourn Caucus Session at 7:28 PM. Seconded by Councilman Bray and carried unanimously.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lori Cole", written over a horizontal line.

BOROUGH CLERK