

**City of Lambertville,  
Borough of Stockton & West Amwell Township  
SPECIAL JOINT SESSION OF MAYOR AND COUNCIL  
FRIDAY, 6 P.M., MAY 20, 2011  
UNION FIRE HOUSE, 230 NORTH MAIN STREET, LAMBERTVILLE  
MINUTES**

The meeting was Called to order at 6 pm by Mayor DelVecchio with a statement of compliance with the Open Public Meeting Act, notice was sent to the Beacon, the Times and the Democrat on Wednesday, May 20, 2011, posted on the City's bulletin board and website, and sent to assorted individuals through the list serve of the website.

**ROLL CALL.**

City of Lambertville Members Present: Councilwoman Asaro, Councilman Sanders, Councilwoman Warner, Council President Stegman, and Mayor DelVecchio.

Borough of Stockton Members Present: Councilman Esposito, Councilman Messina, Councilman Dougherty, Mayor Giocondo.

West Amwell Township – not present.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.**

Mayor DelVecchio led the public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**MOMENT OF SILENCE**

Mrs. Ege led the public in a Moment of Silence in recognition of the Lambertville citizens and all others serving with the United States Armed Services.

**BILLS LIST.**

Mayor DelVecchio asked for a motion to approve the voucher from P.A. Contractors in the amount of \$33,664.96 for the reconstruction project on Perry Street.

Council President Stegman made a motion to approve the bill from PA Contractors in the amount of \$33,664.96. Councilman Sanders seconded the motion. An affirmative roll call vote was taken in favor of the motion by all members present. MOTION CARRIED.

**RESOLUTIONS.**

RESOLUTION 94-2011: *Authorizing the COPS CHP Grant Application*

City of Lambertville  
Resolution 94-2011  
*A Resolution Authorizing the Submission of the COPS CHP Grant*

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by Mayor and Council of the City of Lambertville, in the County of Hunterdon, in the State of New Jersey, that the grant application for COPS CHP is hereby approved for submission requesting funding for 1 full time police officer.

ADOPTED: May 20, 2011

MOTION:

Councilman Sanders made a motion to approve resolution 94-2011 authorizing the submission of the COPS CHP grant application. Councilwoman Asaro seconded the motion. An affirmative roll call vote in favor of the motion was taken by all members present.  
MOTION CARRIED.

*RESOLUTION 93-2011: A resolution certifying the General Fund Tax Levy for the South Hunterdon Regional High School for the School Year 2011/2012, by the Governing Body of the City of Lambertville, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey.*

Mayor DeVecchio stated that it was his understanding that South Hunterdon Regional High School passed a resolution Thursday evening supporting the \$117,190 in cuts from the budget and is asking the City of Lambertville and the Borough of Stockton to support the cuts at \$117,190. Marie Collins, a resident of Lambertville and board member of South Hunterdon confirmed this was true. He stated that the Municipalities were responsible for cutting almost \$800,000 from the budget of South Hunterdon over the past four years. They required a special-needs audit, the South Hunterdon Work Group, and the creation of a five-year plan. He felt South Hunterdon is heavy in secretarial positions and maintenance positions.

**City of Lambertville**  
**RESOLUTION 93-2011**  
*An resolution Certifying the General Fund Tax Levy for the South Hunterdon Regional High School for the School Year 2011-2012, By the Governing Body of the City of Lambertville, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey*

WHEREAS, the voters of the City of Lambertville in a duly held election, did fail to approve the General Fund Tax Levy Budget of the Board of Education of South Hunterdon Regional High School for the school year 2011-2012; and

WHEREAS, the Education, Budget and Appropriation Law, N.J.S.A. 28a 22-37, requires the Governing Body of the City of Lambertville, after consultation with the South Hunterdon Regional Board of Education, to determine the amount which is necessary to be appropriated in such budget and to certify to the County Board of Taxation the total amount so determined; and

WHEREAS, the Governing Body of the City of Lambertville consulted with representatives of the South Hunterdon Regional Board of Education on Tuesday, May 10, 2011, and has thereafter determined the amount necessary to be appropriated;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Governing Body of the City of Lambertville, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey, that the following determination is hereby made:

- |  |              |
|--|--------------|
| 1. The original tax levy on the ballot for the base budget           | \$7,929,856  |
| 2. The amount of reduction to the tax levy for the base budget       | \$ (117,190) |
| 3. The second question to fund the feasibility study to regionalize: | \$ 50,000    |
| 4. The amount of tax levy being certified for the base budget:       | \$7,862,666  |
| 5. Specific line items reductions:                                   |              |

<b>Account Number</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
a.	Salaries	25,000
b.	Bank Fees	13,000
c.	Asbestos Abatement	30,000
d.	Custodial Services	12,000
e.	Administrative	37,190

6. Supporting reasons for reduction: Based on a review of all data provided by the Board of Education, meetings with representatives of the Board of Education, numerous public hearings and consideration of the public need, it has been determined that the reductions set forth herein can be effectuated without a reduction in programs or negatively impacting upon the education of the students.
  - a. A review of the overall budget of \$10,096,116 reflects the recommended reduction of \$117,190 is just over a 1% reduction (1.47%) cut in the levy.
  - b. All three municipalities strongly support the reduction in administrative line items causing the reduction in staffing in the secretarial positions, facility manager position and/or any other area in the Administrative offices.
  - c. All three municipalities did not support a cut in programming, specifically the Agricultural program for the following reasons:
    - i. It would negatively impact the education offered to the students currently attending South Hunterdon Regional High School,
    - ii. It would negatively impact the School Choice program South Hunterdon Regional High School enrolled in and would not attract the students needed to support the ten million dollar budget which would lower the cost per pupil,
    - iii. For cultural reasons, it would negatively impact the three sending districts as farming is part of their heritage and considered to be a legacy for the students,
    - iv. There are other ways for the school board to reduce the budget by \$37,190 by reducing the staff of the Administrative line item which would not negatively impact the education of the students attending South Hunterdon Regional High School.
  
7. The revised budget is sufficient to provide a thorough and efficient education with all of the supporting reasons listed in paragraph five (5), items i through iv.
  - a. A reduction in support staff or administrative staffing will not impact the level of education offered to the students attending South Hunterdon Regional High School.
  - b. Since 2008, the City of Lambertville has reduced staffing to meet the budgetary needs of the community without impacting the level of services offered to the community in the following ways:
    - i. Reduction of 1 full time staff member in Public Works,

- ii. Reduction of 1 part time staff member in the Clerk's Office,
  - iii. Reduction of 1 part time staff member in the Police Department Administrative Staffing,
  - iv. Reduction of 1 part time staff member in the Court,
  - v. Reduction of 1 full time Police Officer.
8. There was an additional general fund tax levy considered by the voters to fund a formal feasibility study to examine whether there are educational benefits to the students and/or financial savings to the taxpayers by creating a South Hunterdon pre-k through 12<sup>th</sup> grade all purpose school district. This question was approved by the voters with 429 yes votes and 340 no votes and will not result in a permanent increase in the district's tax levy.
9. The implementation and continuation of the following is vital to the community:
- a. South Hunterdon Regional High School Work Group – a group of elected officials and community members organized to help guide the high school in the preparation of their budget and programs and review the procurement practices.
  - b. Completion of the Feasibility Study ratified by the voters on April 27, 2011.
  - c. Review and implementation of the Special Needs Audit/Assessment completed in December of 2010.
  - d. Holding regularly scheduled meetings in the home town of the sending districts in order to offer accessibility to the voters of each community.
  - e. Hold the annual school board election during the hours of 7 AM and 9 PM.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this resolution be forwarded to the South Hunterdon Regional Board of Education, Superintendent of Hunterdon County Department of Education, and the administrator of the Hunterdon County Board of Taxation.

ADOPTED: May 20, 2011

Both Mayors asked for a motion on the resolution to certify the General Tax Levy for South Hunterdon Regional High School. Councilman Asaro made a motion to approve Resolution 93-2011 certifying the General Tax Levy for South Hunterdon Regional High School. Councilman Sanders seconded the motion. An affirmative roll call vote in favor of the motion was taken by all members present. MOTION CARRIED.

Michele Hooven, the Clerk of the Borough of Stockton was present and recorded the action taken to approve the Resolution from Stockton Borough certifying the General Tax Levy for South Hunterdon Regional High School. An affirmative roll call vote in favor of the motion was taken by all members present. MOTION CARRIED.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

MEMORIAL DAY PARADE will be held on Monday, May 30, 2011 starting at 9 AM at the corner of North Union and Cherry Streets.

**PARKING SPACES ARE AVAILABLE AT THE JUSTICE CENTER:** The Justice Center has 1 space (number 22) available for lease. The fee is \$45 per space per month. Please contact Shelley at City Hall for additional information. She can be reached at 609-397-0110.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT.**

Larry Simms, a resident and a past member of the South Hunterdon Work Group addressed Mayor and Council. He stated that the Work Group benefited from his experience as an educator and from Drew Gitomer. He said you can't run South Hunterdon a small school, the same as you do a big school like Hunterdon Central. Mr. Simms also commented that the budget being defeated isn't about the money but instead about the number of students and the cost per student. He referenced the information released today by the Department of Education and the "Taxpayers' Guide to Education Spending." Until the State looks at redistricting, it will continue to be a problem. He felt strongly that the voters are frustrated. He is not going to run for school board because he found the school board difficult to deal with and felt he could make more of an impact by asking questions and bringing items to the attention of the tax payers. He sat through two years of meetings on the Work Group and gave input and his suggestions, which he felt fell on deaf ears. He complimented Mayor DelVecchio for supporting the \$117,190 and felt this was a fair assessment. He expressed his disappointment in the adoption of the first resolution in the amount of \$100,000. Mr. Simms commented about the groups that meet in sub committee approving the cut of \$117,190 from the tax levy and stated he was disappointed that Councilman Sanders and Councilwoman Asaro didn't support the \$117,190. He questioned why Councilwoman Warner, who was a representative of the subcommittee didn't support the motion.

Mayor DelVecchio responded and said in fairness to Councilwoman Warner, she called him Monday morning and told him she could not support the resolution to cut \$117,190. He said he didn't run for Mayor to become the Superintendent at South Hunterdon. South Hunterdon always looks to the municipalities to bail them out. As a result of the continued failed budgets, Mayor and Council set up the work group and it did bring about change.

Council President Stegman stated that it is not always pleasant and it is not easy, but he encouraged the public to get their name on the ballot next April.

Councilman Sanders acknowledged the contributions of Mr. Simms and Mr. Gitomer to the Work Group, and said their input and work had impact on the budget. He also said he felt that the Work Group was a good collaborative effort among different towns and the school and that it should be continued. He noted that he appreciated the comments from the public on Monday on the improvements to the school. However, Councilman Sanders noted that his decision to support a cut in \$100,000 was based on the different recommendations coming from the Mayor and Councilwoman Warner. He felt \$100,000 was fair.

Councilwoman Asaro commented that Larry Simms had been a valuable member of the SHRHS Work Group and several of his ideas had provided the inspiration for changes that were made by South. She also felt that in order for South's board to make any major shifts in structure, and therefore substantially reduce the cost/pupil, that the board would need an

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infusion of new members and new and different points of view and expertise. She felt that the five-year plan, which came about as a requirement of the municipalities after the last failed budget, was well constructed. Finally, she trusted Councilwoman Warner's review and assessment of the budget based on her work with the LPs Finance Committee.

Councilwoman Warner stated she wanted to clarify her statements of May 20<sup>th</sup> and said she was not voting "no" because of the amount of money, but instead because there needs to be a change in the board and people need to run for seat on the South Hunterdon Board. She understands the reason people voted no, it's a tough time with the economical climate. She said when she ran for school board, she knew it wasn't going to be easy and she wasn't always going to get along with everyone. She feels this is the only way to invoke change and for the school to get the budget passed.

**ADJOURNMENT.**

Councilman Sanders made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:35 p.m. Councilwoman Warner seconded the motion. An affirmative roll call vote in favor of the motion was taken by all members present. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted:

*Cynthia L. Ege*

Cynthia L. Ege  
CMR, RMC, Acting City Clerk

*Approved at the regularly scheduled session held on June 20, 2011.*