

The Special Meeting of the Township Committee of the Township of Washington was called to order by Mayor Short at 7:38 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Comm. Popper, Harmon, Tobin, Walsh, Mayor Short, Attorney Jansen, Assistant Administrator Burd

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

Notice of this meeting was sent to the Observer Tribune and the Morristown Daily Record on August 19, 2009 and was posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building on the same date. This meeting is being held at the Washington Township Municipal Building, 43 Schooley's Mountain Road, Long Valley, New Jersey. Notices of this meeting were sent, as there were requests.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE – The pledge of allegiance was recited.

AUTHORIZE SPECIAL ABC PERMIT - THE LONG VALLEY INN, INC.

An application has been received from the Long Valley Inn, Inc. petitioning to extend the licensed premises for a public event to be held on September 13, 2009 from Noon to 8:00 P.M. on their premises at 1 Fairmount Road, Long Valley, New Jersey. Noted that the Chief of Police has signed the petition.

Motion was made by Comm. Walsh, seconded by Comm. Tobin that the foregoing special permit for a social affair be approved and the Clerk be authorized to sign the permit application and forward it to the Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control.

AYES: Comm. Popper, Harmon, Tobin, Walsh, Mayor Short

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: None

The Township Committee went into Executive Session at 7:40 P.M. The Committee indicated that it would be coming out of Executive Session to continue the public meeting and take formal action.

RESOLUTION #R-153-09 - EXECUTIVE SESSION – CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS: DISPATCH

Motion was made by Comm. Walsh, seconded by Comm. Tobin that the foregoing resolution be adopted. Motion was carried by the following roll call vote:

AYES: Comm. Popper, Harmon, Tobin, Walsh, Mayor Short

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: None

The Township Committee came out of Executive Session at 7:49 P.M.

DISCUSSION

DISPATCHING SERVICES- Mayor Short explained that dispatching services have been partnered with the Chesters (Township and Boro) for the past 35 years. Due to cost issues, other possibilities have been explored. For the past 7 years Washington Township has attempted to join the County dispatch system. Many discussions have been held with the County to this end. The County does not seem to have as good a system as the one currently in place in Washington Township; in addition there are various costs associated with making the transition. Police Chief Bailey came up with a solution that does not require Washington Township to join the County system. This evening the Committee will consider engaging CenCom, a regional 911 Emergency Medical Services telecommunication center, in a 5 year contract. There can then be a reduction in the number of dispatchers needed. Chief Bailey further explained CenCom's system, which includes significant cost savings (estimated at \$346,126) and enhanced public safety services.

PUBLIC PORTION

Mayor Short opened the meeting to the public.

Don Barcan, 79 Werhli Road, inquired what CenCom can do for the Township that we cannot do ourselves. It was explained that CenCom is part of Atlantic Health systems (Atlantic Ambulance Corp.). They will provide pre-arrival medical emergency instructions so that the Township's dispatcher on duty can address other incoming calls. CenCom will also dispatch a Mobile Intensive Care Unit when needed. Mr. Barcan expressed concern that the system will not be as effective as it has been in the past. He was assured that the system should be more effective.

Kevin Nedd, 65 Kim Lane, asked to confirm that the majority of savings in switching to the CenCom system is in the reduction of dispatchers. He was told that the statement is correct. Mr. Nedd estimated a net cost of the dispatchers and projected costs for next year based on a percentage increase and confirmed these numbers with CFO Lifer. He commended the Township for making the transition to CenCom as it will save the taxpayers money.

Walt Cullen, 9 Laurel Drive, inquired whether the contract offered us by the County was similar in cost to the contracts offered to other towns. **Mayor Short** stated that when the County system was first offered a few years ago, they did not charge the towns. They decided to charge towns and their cost was approximately \$19 per capita. Washington Township's cost per capita would have been approximately \$27 because of the added load to the County system. Mr. Cullen stated that out of 39 municipalities, only 9 have joined the County system and something must be wrong there. He feels that their system is overloaded and not as effective, even though 16% of our taxes are directed to the County. Mayor Short responded that the County was not trying to treat us unfairly, but there are inequities. **Comm. Tobin** stated that the County was losing money with the onset of their system and they are still losing money, therefore they were not motivated to bring us on. He opined that he thought the County should not charge based on population but on the number of calls. Mr. Cullen does not think that the County can compare to the quality of our system.

Rich Mitskowski, 2 Green Hills Road, is a small business owner. He inquired what the incentive was to charge \$1 per year. **Mayor Short** responded that CenCom is using our communication tower and some Township equipment.

Rob Cline, 340 Fairmount Road, inquired about how many dispatchers will be working at a time. **Chief Bailey** responded that the majority of time there will be one. He still has to look at call volume to fill in spots with part timers.

Hagan Sniffen, LVFAS Chief, sought a clarification on what CenCom will do. He was advised that CenCom provides pre-arrival instructions and dispatches advanced life support units. He was advised that every call made will come to our center.

Kurt Wanner, 10 Cindy Lane, expressed concern about how one dispatcher will handle a fire call. He was advised by **Chief Bailey** that nothing is going to change as far as dispatching for the Fire Companies. **Mayor Short** said that over 80% of phone calls are administrative. Mr. Wanner is concerned that the Fire Department was not properly considered as it was not mentioned. **Chief Bailey** stated that the Fire Department was not mentioned because the CenCom arrangement only involves medical calls.

Mary Robinson, Chester FAS, inquired how many dispatchers will be cut and using what process. **Mayor Short** stated that personnel cuts will be discussed at a future meeting.

Harlin Parker, 525 Naughtright Road, thanked the Committee for making a decision. He felt there was a great deal of anxiety due to the secretive nature of negotiations. He felt that the process could have been discussed more publicly. Mr. Parker appreciates the system that we have and is thankful the Township is not going with the County. **Mayor Short** and **Attorney Jansen** explained that contract negotiations are held in executive session, as the interests of different entities are not always the same, and a whole myriad of issues needed to be discussed privately. The Township was negotiating in good faith and trying to get the best deal for its taxpayers.

A Long Valley Resident inquired about why the emergency response groups were not part of certain elements of the discussion regarding dispatchers. **Attorney Jansen** replied that they were very much a part of the discussions and that their input was extremely important. Many discussions were open to the public. Only negotiation strategy was discussed in executive session. The resident stated that there was a great deal of anxiety caused by the closed session discussions. **Mayor Short** apologized to the employees affected for any anxiety caused, but until a consensus was reached, negotiations needed to be closed, as allowed by law.

Another Long Valley Resident stated that he shares some concern with a few people who have already spoken. The resident's concern lies in a "Black Monday" situation where all resources are required by various municipalities, how will one dispatcher handle it? **Mayor Short** stated the Committee considered this possibility. Our dispatchers are extremely well trained. The auto-attendant and CenCom systems should lighten the load. Police and/or part-time dispatchers will be available to help out.

Mary Robinson asked when Washington Township would be contacting the Chesters regarding the contracts. **Mayor Short** responded that the Township met with the Chesters last Thursday, as well as Califon.

