

MEETING MINUTES OF MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF HIGH BRIDGE BOROUGH

MEETING DATE **May 14, 2015** **MEETING TIME** **6:00PM**
MEETING PLACE **High Bridge Firehouse** **7 Maryland Ave.**

Actual meeting may contain discussion of items not mentioned on the agenda and alternatively any items specifically listed may be omitted.

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor calls meeting to order and makes the following statement: “Pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, notice of 2015 Meeting Dates was published in the Hunterdon County Democrat on January 1, 2015, Noticed in the Express Times on January 15, 2015, and Sun Shine noticed on April 28, 2015 and posted on the bulletin board at Borough Hall. Action may now be taken.”

2. FLAG SALUTE: Led by Mayor Desire

3. ROLL CALL:

Roll Call Vote									P=Present A=Absent				
Hughes	Y	Scarcia	Y	Shipps	Y	Stemple	Y	Strange	Y	Zappa	Y	Mayor Desire	Y

5. VISITORS:

Three members of the public were present including press. Also present were Administrator John Gregory, Deputy Clerk Young and the members of the High Bridge School Board.
 Councilman Stemple arrived at 6:13 PM.
 At this time the High Bridge Board of Education formally opened their meeting.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS: Please keep Public Comments to the School Budget only

It is the policy of the Borough Council that all public comments on an issue shall be limited to five (5) minutes per person and no person may make more than one (1) comment per subject. Comments may be made on any subject pertaining to Borough issues. Comments pertaining to Public Hearings should be saved for that section of the agenda. No debating between residents. Comments should be addressed to Mayor and Council at the public microphone.

John Hansen asked a question regarding how much of the 22 percent increase in the school budget is due to health benefits. School Business Administrator, Michelle McCann responded to his question and explained different scenarios and how changes in Health Benefits can occur.

Councilwoman Scarcia asked a question regarding if any positions were cut this year? Ms. McCann responded to her questions with the specifics of any positions which were reduced or eliminated. A discussion with the Board regarding price per student and how the aides are utilized in this manner.

Brent Dugan has questions regarding the tax increase percentage in regards to the school budget and whether the State of NJ funded the school district this year. A detailed discussion ensued with Business Administrator McCann and Board President Robert Imhoff. Mr. Imhoff gave an explanation of how enrollment adjustments play a part in these increases. Mr. Dugan also asked a question regarding the PARCC testing and if the school district had enough of a participation percentage to keep the State funding. Mr. Imhoff affirmed that participation was adequate to keep funding. Mr. Dugan also asked whether the PARCC testing was a financial burden on the budget or it it saved money. Ms. McCann replied that the PARCC testing has saved money in the budget. Mr. Imhoff stated that technology cost associated with the PARCC testing is also integrated in the classroom, and not solely for tested purposes.

Councilman Zappa expressed concerns regarding the cutting of the Art program at the Middle School. Ms. McCann explained that various ideas were presented and the budget is finite and something has to be cut while still providing the students with the best education and what can be drawn back that will have the least impact.

Councilman Strange applauded the attempt at the online world language program. He expressed concerns about the elimination of the art program. He asked if there were any non-programmatic opportunities being considered to fill this void. Mr. Imhoff responded that this is being looked into and further explained the reasons to hire a fulltime World Language teacher.

Dr. Hobaugh, District Superintendent, explained that there are positions posted for afterschool art club programs. Councilman Strange also asked about the reading program that was being considered. Mr. Imhoff responded that Lisa Fallon is spearheading the selection of this new program, and that they are not rushing into this decision and have heavily involved the staff in the selection of this program.

Councilwoman Shipps asked if the students with IEPs will be helped by the new K-2 reading program. Dr. Hobaugh responded that a goal of the new program is to provide all students with a solid foundation in reading. Mr. Imhoff explained that we are trying to get to students earlier to eliminate issues.

Mr. Hansen had a follow up question regarding the growing student population of High Bridge. Ms. McCann responded that several families are moving into our borough and the number of students is changing accordingly. Mr. Hansen also expressed concerns regarding families being drawn to our district due to our special education program.

Councilman Zappa commended the special education program. He then asked a question regarding the morale at the schools. Dr. Hobaugh met with the Association President and the Building Association President regarding a climate survey and they are looking at addressing the survey results. He mentioned how the lack of a contract is also weighing on the morale.

Councilman Strange also commented on overall morale of New Jersey state teachers.

Mr. Dugan also stated concerns regarding taxes and cost savings and affordability for senior citizens.

At this time the High bridge Board of Education formally adjourned their meeting.

7. COUNCIL COMMITTEE AND SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT:

Reports on May 28, 2015

Councilman Zappa	<u>PLANNING & ENGINEERING</u>
Councilwoman Hughes	<u>PUBLIC HEALTH, ENVIRONMENTAL, SOLID WASTE & RECYCLING, OPEN SPACE, & CULTURAL & HERITAGE</u>
Councilwoman Scarcia	<u>INFORMATION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, EVENTS</u>
Councilman Strange	<u>EMERGENCY SERVICES, EDUCATION & MUNICIPAL COURT-</u>
Councilwoman Shipps	<u>DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS & RECREATION</u>
Councilman Stemple	<u>FINANCE & GOLF</u>
John Gregory	<u>ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:</u>
Mayor Mark Desire	<u>EXECUTIVE SERVICES</u>

8. BILL LIST:

Approval of Bills as signed and listed on the Bill Payment List.

Total Amount: \$336,993.39

Motion to Approve:	Hughes	Second:	Strange
Roll Call Vote	Y=Yes; N=No; A=Abstain; At=Absent		

Hughes	Y	Scarcia	Y	Shipps	Y/A	Stemple	Y	Strange	Y	Zappa	Y
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Councilwoman Shipps approves bill list with abstention from police related items.

9. ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Desire or presiding officer asks if there is any further business. If none,

Motion to Adjourn:		Hughes			Second:			Zappa			
Roll Call Vote							Y=Yes; N=No; A=Abstain; At=Absent				
Hughes	Y	Scarcia	Y	Shipps	Y	Stemple	Y	Strange	Y	Zappa	Y

Next Council Meeting May 28, 2015 REGULAR MEETING, 7:30PM, Fire House, 7 Maryland Ave., High Bridge, NJ.

Adjournment 6:57P.M.

Respectively submitted,

Adam Young, Deputy Clerk

EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS: (space for members of council and clerk to take notes on each item)
