

BOROUGH OF WESTVILLE

Special Council Meeting

165 Broadway

July 15, 2019

Meeting Minutes

Council President Michael Ledrich called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Deputy Clerk read the public notice and roll call was taken, with the following persons in attendance:

Council President Michael O. Ledrich, Council Members: Paul C. Mailley, Donna Moan, Charles D. Murtaugh, Bruce Nordaby and Fritz H. Sims, Jr., Deputy Clerk Kathleen Carroll, Police Lt. Michael Packer, Solicitor Timothy Scaffidi, Fire Chief Eric Farley, Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator Steve Cope and Emergency Management Coordinator Jeff Paul

Administrator/Clerk Ryan J. Giles and Public Works Manager Donna Domico arrived at 7:10 p.m. and Police Chief Whinna arrived at 7:55 p.m.

Absent: Mayor Russell W. Welsh, Jr.,

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY No Comments Received

Steve Cope, Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator for the Borough of Westville advised the purpose of the meeting is to create an "After Action Report" so he made an Agenda to keep the meeting "on point". Deputy EMC Cope advised when responding to an emergency event, there are three priorities to be considered, they are: (1) Life Safety, (2) Incident Stabilization and (3) Property and Environmental Conservation. The streets affected by the flooding were: East Olive Street, High Street, New Street, Broadway, William Road and Woodbine Avenue

Fire Chief Eric Farley provided a detailed explanation on how the events of June 19, 2019 through the early morning hours of June 20, 2019 unfolded with the Borough of Westville receiving five inches of rain in less than two (2) hours and how he put the call out for assistance through the County 911 system. Chief Farley did advise there were some challenges rescuing people and pets because of the quickly rising waters and that the Fire Department did not immediately have access to a high water rescue vehicle and that personnel had not be trained to rescue people in rapidly moving flood waters. Chief Farley also commented that they initially did not know the extent of the residents affected by the flooding.

Deputy EMC Steve Cope commented that moving forward, the Borough needs improvement on the establishment of an Emergency Operations Center.

Public Works Manager Domico and Administrator Giles arrived at 7:10 p.m. and Deputy EMC Cope gave them a copy of the agenda and a summary on what had been discussed so far.

Council President Ledrich asked for a timeline of details starting at 11 p.m. when events began to develop. Chief Farley stated within one hour, his staffing went from three to five individuals but that he had difficulty reaching other Fire Department members and had even requested that County dispatch put out the tone for a dwelling fire. Chief Farley addressed the communication impediments with Police and Fire dispatch at the County level.

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Councilman Nordaby started a conversation that addressed Police and Fire personnel being able to communicate with one another during an emergency situation.

Deputy EMC Cope talked about the documentation of events and the importance of establishing a Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) and the State requirements for having a LEPC and that the committee should meet at least four (4) times a year. Deputy EMC Cope highlighted the responsibilities of the LEPC.

Councilman Sims requested, before moving on to the next part of the meeting that both the Police and Public Works Departments report on the challenges they faced during the weather event. Lt. Packer stated he agreed with Chief Farley that one of the biggest issues was getting through to personnel to come to work and overall communications. Lt. Packer also confirmed that Sgt. Grady was having phone problems and discussed phone software that could send out a tone during an emergency. Discussion took place regarding setting up a phone/contact list in emergency situations to get essential personnel into the office. Lt. Packer advised he was going to talk with an officer in Deptford Township to get on the list for free high water rescue vehicles. Public Works Manager Domico discussed certain areas of the Borough that could be checked to be sure there are no blockages that may affect water flow. Chief Farley mentioned that they considered shutting down the town because of the flooding but that they did not have cones/equipment. Public Works Manager Domico stated she would set up a trailer with cones and other items that would be needed for Borough emergencies that could be accessed by both the Police and Fire Departments.

Discussion took place regarding having both the Fire and Police Departments on the same radio channel during emergencies.

Housing Official Dennis Morina asked if there was a possibility to have Borough radios in Borough cars and he reiterated that Communications was the most difficult part of the event.

Chief Farley stated that it was his intent to keep the residents who were being housed at the Community Center, due to the flooding, informed regarding the status of the flooding.

General discussion took place regarding the timeline when events took place and how things could be changed.

Councilman Murtaugh confirmed with Solicitor Scaffidi that in the event of an emergency, the Borough could hold a meeting. Solicitor Scaffidi advised the meeting could be held and then advertise after the fact because of the emergency status.

Deputy EMC Cope stated once a State of Emergency is declared in the Borough, it gives the local Emergency Management Coordinator a lot of power in that he/she can request additional resources to help with managing the event. Deputy EMC Cope discussed the process to declare a State of Emergency and the training available for personnel to identify damages. Councilman Murtaugh talked about software available that would help personnel document losses in the Borough.

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Councilman Murtaugh suggested the Borough have the County Drone Team come out to assess damages in case some areas are missed by foot.

General discussion took place regarding a back up to the Community Center if more room is needed for evacuees and possibly contacting Deptford Township for use of one of their buildings.

Councilman Murtaugh advised the Fire Department submitted a grant request for two generators for the Fire House that could be used in the event of an emergency and that some of the information listed in the current Emergency Management manual may be outdated.

Lt. Packer advised that if an event occurred and Parkview School had to be evacuated, students and staff would go to the baseball field at Almonesson Road.

Discussion took place on expenses that can be reimbursed through FEMA that includes fees to GCUA.

Councilwoman Moan asked if there was a total amount of damages to which Councilman Murtaugh replied over two million and close to three million.

Public Works Manager Domico expressed her concern about the lack of electricity at the Lions Club because the pond fountain is hooked up to that building and with the extreme heat called for in the next couple of days, she was concerned about the fish in the pond.

Deputy EMC Cope advised he would provide a report to meeting attendees highlighting what was discussed and would include the Borough's strengths and weakness during the emergency event. Deputy EMC Cope did state that an area of improvement for the Borough is to have a full time Emergency Management Coordinator and to establish a Local Emergency Planning Committee that should meet quarterly to identify training and equipment needed and to select a command center and to have a contact list.

Chief Farley stated Public Works did a good job picking up the trash after the flood waters receded and that Fire Department personnel went door to door to remind people to put out their trash.

Code Enforcement Officer Dennis Morina advised that people who do not comply with cleaning up their property as a result of the flood, may be cited.

Administrator Giles confirmed that the Borough has not yet received any requests for Claims Tort Notices but that individuals had 90 days to submit a claim.

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PUBLIC PORTION:

- ❖ Daniel Klemczak of 262 West Olive Street, expressed his apprehensions for his neighborhood because of the Oxford House that is two houses away from him and was concerned that he was never notified of the residents. Housing Code Enforcement Officer Dennis Morina advised that under the laws of New Jersey, homeowners cannot be notified of the residents who live in the transition sober living facility and that it is considered a rental property. General discussion took place specific to the laws permitting to this type of housing in the Borough and nuisance calls and how the calls are managed by the Police Department.
- ❖ Councilwoman Moan commended First Responders with respect to the June 20-21, 2019 flooding event.
- ❖ Councilman Nordaby complimented the First Responders on the good job they did with the June 20-21, 2019 flooding.
- ❖ Councilman Mailley also acknowledged the good work of the First Responders.
- ❖ Council President Ledrich advised he had a difficult time getting to Borough Hall because of the flooding.
- ❖ Councilman Murtaugh asked Deputy Clerk Carroll to make “Emergency Management” discussion a part of the old business on all agendas. Additionally, Councilman Murtaugh asked that the Public Safety Committee meet with the current Office of Emergency Management staff and discuss the issues that were talked about tonight and consider appointment of a full time Emergency Management Coordinator that is a resident of the Borough of Westville.
- ❖ Councilman Sims echoed everyone’s sentiments about the good job done by the First Responders and the Red Cross. Councilman Sims also mentioned that the Red Cross complimented the Borough on their positive actions in support of their residents.
- ❖ Councilman Murtaugh thanked Administrator Giles, Housing Official Morina and Emergency Management Coordinator Paul on pushing the landlords to be sure their tenants had adequate housing during the emergency.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Councilman Nordaby and seconded by Councilwoman Moan. *Motion unanimously approved by voice vote.*

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectively Submitted,

Kathleen Carroll

Kathleen Carroll

Deputy Municipal Clerk

Next Council meeting scheduled for Monday, August 5, 2019