

**MINUTES CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF ORANGE TOWNSHIP
ORANGE, NEW JERSEY**

A CONFERENCE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ORANGE TOWNSHIP HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL, 29 NORTH DAY STREET, ORANGE, NEW JERSEY, ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8, 2011, AT 7:15 PM.

1) ROLL CALL	PRESENT	ABSENT
Hon. Elroy A. Corbitt (At-Large)	___X___	_____
Hon. Tency A. Eason (North Ward)	___X___	_____
Hon. Linda Jones-Bell (East Ward)	___X___	_____
Hon. Edward B. Marable, Jr. (South Ward)	_____	___X___
Hon. Rayfield Morton (At-Large)	___X___	_____
Hon. Donna K. Williams (At-Large)	_____	<u>Arrive at 7:18PM</u>
Hon. Hassan Abdul-Rasheed (West Ward)	___X___	_____
Council President		

ALSO PRESENT

Claude Wallace, Acting, Municipal Clerk	___X___	_____
Hon. Eldridge Hawkins, Jr., Mayor	_____	___X___
Marvin T. Braker, City Attorney	___X___	_____
Dwayne D. Warren, Legislative Research Officer	___X___	_____
John F. Mason, Business Administrator	___X___	_____
Shinell Smith, Clerk's Office	___X___	_____

PLEASE STAND FOR A MOMENT OF SILENCE

SPECIAL NOTICE: Please be apprised anyone wishing to discuss Agenda or General Items shall sign one (1) book. There will be two (2) columns in the book, one (1) for Agenda Items and one (1) for General Issues. Each person signing the book will check Agenda Items or General Issues. If they check only Agenda Items or General Issues, they will be allowed to speak for five (5) minutes. If they check General Issues and Agenda Items, they will be allowed to speak for ten (10) minutes.

2) Municipal Clerk announces that the requirement of N.J. S.A. 10:4-9 et. Seq., "Sunshine Law" has been met. A notice of this meeting was sent to the *Star Ledger* and published in *The Orange Transcript* on July 8, 2010, posted on the Bulletin Board in City Hall and filed in the Office of the Municipal Clerk.

3) **MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION**

- **Presentation by Dieter Lerch, Budget Consultant, on behalf of Council President Abdul-Rasheed- Fiscal to Calendar Year Transition Overview**

Mr. Lerch gave a brief overview as to the City's conversion from Fiscal Year to Calendar Year. The current Fiscal Year is from June 30th to July 1st and the Calendar Year will run from January 1st to December 1st. With this transition there will be no need to send

estimated tax bills. The last estimated tax bill will be approved by Council in August. Therefore, September and forward the tax bill should be accurate.

Mr. Lerch stated that the application was filed on behalf of the City three weeks prior and it was approved by Trenton. Mr. Lerch stated that sixty-eight percent of the budget is gained by taxation and the other seventeen percent is State Aid. He stated that the bulk of the budget covers salaries, group health insurance and pension. Mr. Lerch stated that the budget was submitted through the Division of Local Government. However, it's in the Council's hands to vote it up or down. The assumption is that the City will have its due State Aid going forward, which will create stabilization.

Mr. Lerch stated that the six month budget will run from July 1st to December 31st; in which time we should receive State Aid in the amount of eight million dollars. Mr. Lerch stated that four million of the aid can be used toward flat tax and the other four million can be banked for such a time that it's needed to stabilize taxes in 2012 and 2013. Mr. Lerch stated, with the transition budget the residents should see a decrease in their quarterly taxes compared to previous years. [Please see the attached for a breakdown of the 2011 Transition Budget.](#)

Mr. Lerch stated in response to Councilwoman Eason that he would provide extra copies of the handout at no additional cost. He stated that the handouts would be available in the Clerk's Office.

Mr. Lerch stated in response to Councilwoman Williams that a transitional budget would not be impacted by tax appeals. He stated that they will have to be taken into consideration and budgeted for when that time comes. Hopefully, the issue as to reassess or reevaluate properties so that budget isn't impacted will be resolved.

Mr. Lerch then stated in response to Councilwoman Williams that the government requires that State Aid is placed in a financial institution in which they approve so it's secure; it can be invested in the US Treasury and other statutorily governed institutions.

Council President Abdul-Rasheed recognized John Mason, BA

Mr. Mason thanked Mr. Lerch for an informative presentation.

Council President Abdul-Rasheed thanked Mr. Lerch for a concise and informative presentation.

- **Overview of Financial Accounting for the Finance Department by Business Administrator, John F. Mason and Deputy Finance Director, John Ditinyak.**

Council President Abdul-Rasheed recognized John Mason, BA

Mr. Mason stated that he had sent correspondence to the Council Prior to this meeting regarding the upgrade of the finance department's accounting software.

Mr. Mason stated for many years the finance department hadn't updated the accounting system and realized that they can't move forward with the requirements of the finance

department until they do so. He stated that it was the auditor's recommendation that they consider upgrading as to minimize error. Therefore, the time has come for the City to provide the finance department the tools it needs to run the finance efficiently. The program that will be implemented is through Edmonds Associates because they have a software which is in line with statutory requirements. Mr. Mason stated that Edmonds has its program in place in over five hundred municipalities.

Mr. Mason stated that Edmonds Associates proposal have been reviewed, and agreed upon by our IT head, Saheed Baksh. He stated that Mr. Baksh recommended a different server for the security of our financial data. However, the hardware that we have in place is suitable. Mr. Mason stated that he, Carl Smith and John Ditinyak agreed that this software is perfect for finance. He also found it to be useful and helpful at his previous job. Mr. Mason stated that the Tax Collector was happy with his current provider and the conversion to this provider will cost more so they have to discuss it further.

Mr. Mason stated that they were willing to review the conversion with the IT committee once that has been formulated, along with Council Members and the Citizen Budget Advisory Committee.

John Ditinyak, Deputy Director of Finance stated that the purchase requisition system will allow those who are responsible for approvals to receive real-time alerts. He stated that this system will give an update as to how much money is available in real-time, unlike the current system in which you don't find out until the end of the day. Mr. Ditinyak stated that the program that Edmonds provide can archive needed data on-line up to ten years, which allows us to keep track of our assets.

Mr. Ditinyak stated that the most powerful use of this software is that it can generate specific reports which can be transferred to excel, pdf and etc. Mr. Ditinyak stated that Edmonds software would replace the antiquated software currently used, and bring us up to date with modern technology.

Mr. Mason thanked the Council for allowing the presentation. He stated that he's not looking for the Council to move on anything at this time. However, he is looking to set aside money in the upcoming budget to acquire the proper software. Therefore, going forward we can manage our finances in a more efficient and effective manner.

Please see the attached for details.

Council President Abdul-Rasheed stated that he is in favor of this software as it is critical to processing our budget.

Councilwoman Eason asked Mr. Mason if he had a timeline in which he would like to implement this program.

Mr. Mason stated that he would like to implement it as early as July 1st, which is the beginning of the new fiscal year. Mr. Mason stated that we should be in a better position with the transition year as per Mr. Lerch. But there will need to be money appropriated to assure the efficiency and effectiveness as to how our City's finances are managed.

Mr. Mason stated in response to Councilwoman Eason that Edmonds gave us a proposal of approximately thirty-one thousand dollars. He stated that they're open to other providers and welcome the suggestions of the CBAC, Council Members and Citizens.

Mr. Mason stated in response to Councilwoman Eason that this software will help us keep track of transactions in real-time, and there will be less room for error with respect to the audit, but it's not essentially a tool used for cashiering.

Councilman Corbitt stated that there is no doubt that this new system will be a plus and bring us into the new millennium but how will it affect the tax payers.

Mr. Mason stated that he would try to incorporate it in the over all budget and not have a tax hike due to this expenditure. He stated that the approximate quote at this time is thirty-one thousand dollars.

4) RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES

The resolutions and ordinances to be presented at tonight's meeting are listed on the attached Regular Meeting Agenda. If any Council Member wishes to discuss any resolution or ordinance, it may be discussed at this time.

There was extensive conversation with respect to ordinance 25-2011 (An ordinance amending Chapter 14, (Municipal Court) and establishing the position of Municipal Court Director for the City of Orange Township). Mr. Mason stated that this is a position appointed by the Mayor with the Council's consent. The Court Administrator position is a civil service position and it will be eliminated. He stated that the plan is to eliminate such position and have a Municipal Court Director, which is not civil service. Mr. Braker stated for all intent and purposes it wise to have this position as the next in command after the Chief Judge. The Municipal Court Director will manage as per the directive of the Judge. Mr. Braker stated that it is our goal to add the position of Municipal Court Director to the code book with a list of duties thereof, along with those given by the judge. The Chief Judge is placed over the court but essentially needs a Director to see that the administration duties are fulfilled.

Mr. Braker stated that the position of Municipal Court Director is in fact legal under the state guidelines with respect to the Administrative responsibilities of the court. Yes, the Court Administrator may have to obtain certain credentials as per civil service. However, the Municipal Court Director's position is not civil service and does not have those requirements. It is the concern of certain Council Members that the Court Administrator position will be eliminated when it is still needed. Although, some feel that both positions are not needed, as one had been sufficiently filled by the late Sherry Montalvo, Court Administrator, who supersede her job expectations. It was mentioned by Council that more responsibilities could be added to the position of Court Administrator as to preserve the title and position. The civil service dictates the duties of the Court Administrator. Mr. Braker stated that the ALC provides regulations and guidelines for the Court to follow.

Mr. Mason and Mr. Braker agree that the Municipal Court Director would manage and account for the money that comes in to the court for various reasons. Mr. Mason stated that no one had been chosen to fill the position but when that time comes they will begin to look in-house first.

The majority of the Council was in agreement as not to take action with respect to this ordinance until they had clarity. They didn't feel the position of Court Administrator should be eliminated. This position had already been established and it works so there were reservations amongst some of the Council. Meanwhile, other Council Members felt the Municipal Court Director with a financial background that can create a better work flow and give account to monies being collected.

5) MOTION TO ADJOURN

Council President Abdul-Rasheed entertained a Motion to adopt previous meeting minutes.

Motion to adopt: Corbitt

Second: Williams

Council President Abdul-Rasheed announced the roll call as follows:

Yeas: Corbitt, Eason, Jones-Bell, Morton, Williams and Council President Abdul-Rasheed

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

Absences: Marable

Council President Abdul-Rasheed ruled the motion was carried by Six Yeas, No Nays, No Abstentions and One Absence.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:30 PM