

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 TUESDAY, APRIL 19, 2011, AT 7:30 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)	X	_____
Hon. Hassan Abdul-Rasheed	(West Ward)	X	_____
Council President			

The Acting Municipal Clerk announced there was a quorum.

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) Acting Municipal Clerk announced 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

None

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.

Council Member Corbitt commented on Ordinance 15-2011; he stated the continuity of numbers was accurate from pages 15-16 which made it difficult to follow without the proper documentation. He pointed out other pages with the same problem; he also mentioned that the last page was confusing.

Council President Abdul-Rasheed asked Valerie Jackson, Director of Planning to come forward and explain the problem.

Ms. Jackson said she had not followed all of the comments as she did not have the copy that the council members had. Council President asked that she take one of their copies and review it.

Council Member Corbitt then requested information on Resolution 97-2011 concerning the lease purchase agreement with Verizon for an amount not to exceed \$13,536.00. He said that seemed like a lot of money; he wanted to know if other companies had been contacted and if this lease agreement included cell phones.

Mr. Mason said that there were two staff members here that were taking the lead on this project to speak on the matter; TaQuisha Knight and Saheed Baksh – IT. He said they would explain the cost savings associated with this solution and why Verizon was chosen.

Saheed Baksh and TaQuisha Knight introduced themselves. Ms. Knight explained that this was for a lease purchase agreement for equipment that would set the foundation for phone and computer advancements. She said on average, the city currently pays \$10,973.00 per month for phone bills and this does not include cellular charges and they were not completely satisfied with the current phone company. In addition, the city was paying \$1900.00 per month for a microwave wireless system and Mr. Baksh, could explain how this solution would remove the need and the cost for the microwave system. She stated that they had met with several phone companies to try and reduce the costs in technology and communications for the city. She said that while the equipment was being leased, maintenance would be included and at the end of the agreement, the equipment would belong to the city and would then be maintained by the IT department. She said this equipment would lay the foundation for our phone system as well as technology infrastructure. In the future, the city could go back to 4-digit dialing and if something were to happen to the phone system at the police/municipal court building or city hall, they would be able to upgrade the system at by expanding the fire department's VOIP phone system without having to buy a new phone system; they would have to purchase phones.

Mr. Baksh said that the way the buildings were currently configured was cumbersome. He said the current microwave system was \$1900/month and if the company had to come out to repair the system, there were additional charges. He said this equipment under the lease purchase would help eliminate that cost.

Council Member Corbitt said he was still concerned with the cost but was glad to hear that this would save the city money.

Ms. Knight added that we now pay over \$10,000/month for phone bills but with this configuration, the monthly cost would be \$5,496 not including taxes. The city would get 8,000 free minutes per month and each minute over 8,000 would be at a rate of around \$.02. In addition to these savings, the \$1,900/month for the microwave system would be eliminated. She mentioned that the microwave system got knocked off regularly especially in the event of heavy winds, snow or rain. The fees for this system would be spread over a two year period and the city would not see costs like this for a long time. In addition, this would set a solid foundation for the city to expand on as far as technology goes.

Council Member Corbitt asked for clarification on the maintenance of the equipment.

Ms. Knight stated that the city was required to have Verizon maintain the equipment while they were leasing the equipment but after the lease agreement, Mr. Baksh would maintain the equipment.

Council Member Williams asked if this was a result of the contract that previously came before the council to analyze the city's cost.

Ms. Knight replied no; she said Council Member Williams was referring to Tariff Billing and the city has contracted with them in the past. What Tariff Billing does is go through the city's phone bills and make recommendations for changes. For example, there may be lines that are only used to monitor systems in the city such as the boiler system at the police/municipal court building and that line does not have much activity. Tariff Billing would see that and ask if this was still a needed line; they also may find things that the phone company should not be billing for and make sure the charges stop. Tariff only gets paid when they save the city money.

Council Member Williams asked if the city put out bids for this service.

Ms. Knight stated that this service was under state contract and it was also a service that did not require the city to go out for bid. They did however, meet with several phone companies and Verizon's bid was a little less than the others, however, this did not include taxes or FCC charges. Presently, if there was a problem with a line, they would call their current phone company who would then have to contact Verizon. Since the pricing was comparable, they would rather cut out the middle man and just deal with Verizon.

Mr. Baksh added that in his dealings with the current phone company, they had not been very responsive and he had been witness to a lot of finger pointing. He agreed that he felt it was best to deal with Verizon since any other company would have to go through them anyway and this way they would only have one company to deal with.

Council Member Williams asked about the current monthly cost and the amount after the equipment was installed.

Ms. Knight said the current costs per month were on average \$10,973.00 and baseline cost for the new system would be \$5,946.68.

Council Member Williams asked if they would be able to connect the buildings again.

Ms. Knight said they would but it would not happen right away with the phones, but the buildings would be connected on the IT end.

Mr. Baksh agreed and added that this was something that they could build on.

Council Member Marable asked about the equipment that was given to the council when the phones were installed in their homes. He wanted to know if that was the current company Broadview. He wanted to know if there would be a lapse in service and if there would be a cost savings on that end.

Ms. Knight said there was only one council member with a home phone in addition to the mayor. All other council members opted for a cell phone or reimbursement towards their own line. The phone numbers would remain the same and there would not be a lapse in service because the lines were still Verizon lines however, there may be minor hiccups when the changeover occurred.

Mr. Baksh agreed that there may be some hiccups, but they would make sure to keep the council informed of what was going on.

Council Member Eason asked if the cell service would be affected.

Ms. Knight responded that this did not concern the cellular service and that would not be affected unless a council member wanted to go back to having a home phone. However, the police department would receive an added benefit with the in car computers and the city may see cost savings with that service.

Council Member Williams asked why they decided to go with the 3-year versus 5-year plan.

Ms. Knight stated because it was less money and Saheed would be maintaining the system after the lease was over and it just made more sense to go with the 3-year plan.

Council Member Williams asked if there were any benefits to having a bundle package by combining the cell service with the phone service.

Ms. Knight said the city currently receives discounts on cell service because they do have Verizon lines. The city still has Verizon lines because Broadview did not port over all the lines as they were contracted to do. She added that all city employees were eligible for a cellular discount if they had Verizon Wireless or Sprint/Nextel.

Ms. Jackson came back to the podium to respond to Council Member Corbitt's first question. She said the problem was that the original document that was submitted was a 2-sided document and only one side was copied for the council. She suggested that the directors get copies of what the council receives to make sure that correct information was received. However, she said that she did send a memo out to

all council members explaining the changes proposed by the city's planner for tonight's ordinances. She asked how the council will like to proceed with the central orange redevelopment ordinance.

Council Member Corbitt stated that even though he received the memorandum mentioned, he would like to wait until he saw the entire package put together.

Council President Abdul-Rasheed said he too received the memo and he was prepared to move on this matter tonight, however, in the future he hoped that matters such as this were resolved.

Council Member Corbitt then questioned resolution 100-2011 to renew the contract to design decorators to replace Christmas decorations. He wanted to know what this resolution entailed since it was for a third one-year contract.

Ms. Jackson stated that funding was received from UEZ for Design Decorators for 3 one-year contracts that purchased the decorations and there would be additional decorations purchased. She restated that this project was UEZ funded; she would prefer to spend the funds on municipal salaries but she could not. This was an existing project that they were closing out and the project was for 3 years.

Council Member Corbitt asked if the council did not approve this resolution, would she be able to take the funds and use them to increase the funding under UEZ police project for additional officers.

Ms. Jackson said she was not allowed to spend these funds on municipal related services at this juncture.

Council Member Williams asked for clarity on if they had paid Design Decorators for the third year. She also wanted to know what the \$15,000.00 was for.

Ms. Jackson replied they had not but they had for the first two phases. She did not have the breakdown but part of it was for the installation and the other part was for the decorations in Military Park and city hall. She said they have had problems with PSE&G concerning the transformer box and whether it was powerful enough to handle lights. She said the city been going back and forth with PSE&G for years about the decorations on the poles on Main Street because some are lit and others are not. She said that they have dealt with the city's electrical contractor, Sal's Electric and they have come to the conclusion that it is a PSE&G problem. PSE&G is supposed to replace the box in Military Park.

Council Member Williams asked if this contract was only limited to Christmas decorations or could some of the funds be used in the community with the local non profits in the arts community to design decorations. Could the funds be used to do things with the stores or were they locked into this contract.

Ms. Jackson said they were locked into this contract with Design Decorators because they had to follow what was submitted. They would have to go through another approval process if they wanted to change the contract. She said they could possibly try to formulate a project with the arts community. In the past, they have tried to work with the merchants but they have not been as responsive as they would like them to be. She said they even had a holiday decoration competition for the merchants.

Council Member Williams asked why was the city continuing to pay Design Decorators if they were having problems the electricity.

Ms. Jackson said she believed they had reached an agreement with PSE&G; if they could not light up Military Park, then they would not pay for the installation of the decorations.

Council Member Williams suggested that since it was April, they had time to see if what PSE&G installs would work and they would have time to go back to UEZ to make changes to the contract if necessary.

Ms. Jackson stated that as of June 30th, the UEZ program as they knew it would no longer exist. Any unexpended funds would be returned in November and it would probably be too late to make any changes. Normally, the decorations were installed the Monday before Thanksgiving. She said it was the council's pleasure as to what should be done, however, as things stood now, they would have to follow the UEZ contract to the letter or go through a formal contract amendment procedure. They also had the option to wait until the unexpended funds were returned in November and the city would be responsible for managing those funds.

Council Member Eason wanted to know what would be done different with the decorations this year because last year they did not look too good. She was disappointed that the tree in front of city hall did not have lights and the lights in Military Park did not look good either. She stated that when you rode through other towns, the displays looked much better. She felt as though if nothing was changing, there was no need to renew this contract.

Ms. Jackson suggested that Council Members Eason and Williams meet with her on the type of Christmas decorations that should be displayed, she was agreeable to that.

Council Member Morton recalled a resolution two years ago for approximately \$48K for decorations and the lights did not work properly then. He felt as though this problem should have been resolved before any resolution was brought before the Council. He said this was a waste of money and he was under the impression that the decorations for the poles were included not just the decorations for city hall and Military Park.

Ms. Jackson replied that last year, the city brought the decorations from the company and the lighting of the poles was included. So installation is included plus the box to light the decorations. They have identified every pole to PSE&G that is missing the little box; they ordered the boxes last year, but they were not received. She restated that they have identified all poles that are not working and that PSE&G provides the boxes (she did not know the technical term) for each pole. She said it was a different issue with Military Park – there was debate between PSE&G and the city's electrical company about who was at fault and there was a blame game going on. In years past, the tree lighting ceremony has been held in front of city hall. She said they went to Military Park because it was on Main Street and they felt it was important to draw focus to Main Street during the holiday season. She said Military Park needed a lot of attention because it was not in the best condition.

Council Member Morton said he worked in the electrical field for years and he would be glad to give his assistance. He did not understand why PSE&G did not do what was necessary to make sure the park was lit. He said the city needed to look for ways to save money and did not need to put money in unnecessary areas. He stated that they should make sure that the right lighting was provided before they spent money on a project that would not be correct.

Council President Abdul-Rasheed suggested that the council pull this resolution and that Ms. Jackson give a time that the council needed to vote on this. He asked that Ms. Jackson meet with the 3 council members and that the business administrator removed this item.

Council Member Marable questioned resolution 95-2011; on the very last page he wanted to know who benefited from the emergency management training.

Mr. Mason said it was the for the deputy emergency management coordinator, Stacey Murphy.

5) MOTION TO ADJOURN

Council President Abdul-Rasheed entertained a Motion to Adjourn.

Motion: Corbitt

Second: Williams

The roll call by the Acting Municipal Clerk was as follows:

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

Nays: None

Abstentions: None

Absences: None

Council President Abdul-Rasheed ruled the Motion to Adjourn was carried by the vote of Seven Yeas, No Nays, No Abstentions and No Absences.

The meeting was Adjourned at 8:09pm.

Dwight Mitchell
Municipal Clerk

Hassan Abdul Rasheed
Council President

MINUTES APPROVAL

Passed on June 8, 2011

Conference & Regular Meeting on April 19, 2011

Motion to Adopt: Corbitt

Second: Eason

The roll call by Municipal Clerk was as followed:

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.