

MINUTES CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF ORANGE TOWNSHIP
NEW JERSEY

CITY OF ORANGE TOWNSHIP NEW JERSEY
CONFERENCE MEETING MINUTES
January 28, 2014

This was a conference meeting of the City Council of Orange Township, located at 29 North Day Street, Orange, NJ. The meeting was held on Tuesday, January 28, 2014 at 7:06pm.

Roll Call

Present:

West ward Hon. Hassan Abdul-Rasheed (arrived at 7:45pm)
At-Large Hon. Elroy A. Corbitt
North Ward Hon. Tency A. Eason
At-Large Hon. April Gaunt-Butler
At-Large Council Hon. Donna K. Williams

Also Present:

Deputy Municipal Clerk Madeline Smith
Michael Hackett, Represents City Attorney's Office
Kevin D. Harris, Legislative Research Officer
Margaret Homere, Clerk's Office
Mr. Mayes, Administration Representative

Absent:

East Ward Hon. Linda Jones-Bell
South Ward Hon. Edward B. Marable, Jr.

The chair asked for a moment of silence

Sunshine Law

The Deputy 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 Record-Transcript on July 25, 2013, posted on the Bulletin Board in City Hall and filed in the Office of the Municipal Clerk.

Matters for Discussion

Topic - Public Safety, Presentations: Director Sims, Director of Police; and Director Dowd, Fire Department Director

Councilman Corbitt who serves as liaison to the Police Department, introduced the Director of Police. The goal of these presentations is to make sure citizens are aware of safety. Director Sims will present status reports on a quarterly basis to the City Council.

Police Director Sims stated that since the previous quarter, he's noticed a county wide, as well as, a slight increase locally in crimes (many are violent).

- The response is to increase presence in the areas where crimes have occurred. Crimes of opportunity make it difficult to pinpoint times to be in specific areas. They are keeping an eye on high-end vehicles; if seen in the city. Other areas of concern:

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Matters of Discussion Con't .

- Robberies – the police can only be available if there is a request for police acceptance; or if the police is in the areas. Lately there has been an increase in cell phone thefts. Last spring the prosecutor's office handled a lot of cell phone robberies; but it is surfacing again. Smart Phones are being targeted. If one is talking or texting, be aware of one's surroundings and use common sense
- Councilwoman Eason asked if stores are buying stolen cell phones and reselling them. Director Sims stated that the city of Orange does not have a pawn ordinance. Last year kids were stealing cell phones at school and some local stores were re-selling phones. Last year the police put a stop to that. There may be a store that keeps receipts; but this can be addressed
 - Councilwoman Eason asked if there was legislation that could assist with preventing the stolen cell phones from being re-sold.
- Director Sims stated that it would help if there was more legislation. Councilwoman Eason asked City Attorney Smith to research to determine if legislation can be created
- Director Sims stated that police can only be in areas – at a certain time. (75% dropped because of changing robberies)
- There is a push for more Crime Watch Group. The interest has increased.
- Council President Williams inquired if the community is aware of the monthly Police Community Council (PCC) Meetings. She inquired as to how does one find out about the meetings? Director Sims responded that they send meeting dates to the mayor's office; which should be posted on the city's web-site
- Council President Williams asked about Gang Activity. If someone wanted to get out of a gang; she inquired what could be done; and if there were any resources
- Director Sims commented that Deputy Director Warren has taken that initiative and has resources and groups that address gang related activities. Deputy Director Warren has parents come in and he meets with them. He could get a list of places and he can explain the processes
- Council President Williams commented that a website can be created that addresses Gang issues an email would be good so individuals would be able to reach out directly to Director Sims or another. She would like to see FAQ's be created. If the web could be created so if citizens have questions, those questions would go directly to Director Sims or another
- Council President Williams asked if there are police officers in the school system. Director Sims responded that there is a school resource officer. The police presence is not as much, for they are assigned to other areas
- Council President Williams asked, "What about Federal Manpower Grant?" Director Sims responded that it was applied for this summer and then it was sequestered at the Federal level. Most of the grants were put on hold.
- Councilman Corbitt introduced Director Dowd. He asked if Director Dowd would consider providing an update once a month before city council – regarding fire protection matters. Council woman Guant-Butler and Councilman Marable are liaisons to the Fire Department.

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- Captain Dowd stated an annual review had been requested by Council President Williams. He is providing this review: He thanked the council for the opportunity to come before the Council. There was the first female fire fighter in 2013. Responded to 3000 calls; 1500 inspections of residential and commercial properties were completed.

He highlighted 3 major accomplishments for 2013: Insurance Services Offices, (ISO) Emergency Management Services (EMS) and Grants.

Insurance Services Office (ISO) – Major Accomplishment 1

- **ISO - Insurance Service Offices** – is a service organization for insurance companies and their job is to evaluate risk regarding fire life safety. After ISO completes an inspection/evaluation, a report is generated and sent to insurance companies. Every city's Fire Department is required to undergo this evaluation at a minimum of 10 years; maximum 15 years. ISO classifies and categorizing fire rankings/protection. Each city has a rating between 1 and 10 with 10 being the lowest.
- ISO reviews are conducted every 10-15 years. The city Fire Department was notified in 2012 and completed the inspection/evaluation in 2013
- ISO initially lowered the city's class rating to from a 2 to a 3. He immediately took action and worked towards increasing the class 3 to a class 2 rating again. Through the efforts of his team, and working with the ISO, getting the rating back, is considered a major accomplishment. This rating relates to insurance rates for both residential and commercial. This ranking of 2 is not common throughout America.

Director Dowd thanked Councilwoman Eason and all members of the city council in assisting in obtaining money in 2013.

Emergency Management Service (EMS) – Major Accomplishment 2

- In 2013, the city's EMS provider could no longer provide a "0" cost ambulance. It would cost \$225, 000.00 a year
- This time frame was the middle of December; and the contract ended January 1, 2014. The administration stated to continue to find an EMS service that would be provided at "0" cost
- They approached/negotiated with East Orange's EMS provider, Lifestar. Lifestar agreed and is providing a "0" cost ambulance service; which will save the city over \$500,000.00. Additionally, Lifestar will be providing 3 ambulances during the day and 2 at night; an increase in services
- The first responder program has also expanded.

Grants – Major Accomplishment 3

The Fire Department had won a grant for \$1,200,000 in 2010; but had not collected the funds. They were successful to obtain the grant in 2013 and receiving the \$1,200,000.

Tips to Stay Safe during Cold Weather

- In older homes (for example 100 years), the electrical systems, have not been upgraded. Nor were they designed to handle all of the many appliances. Use 1 appliance plug per outlet.
- Be cognizant of electrical heaters; again, don't overload the plugs
- Do not use propane to heat one's home
- Be careful of Carbon Monoxide fumes
- New smoke/carbon alarms now have 5 year batteries which are 5 years (When one changes locks, check the smoke detector batteries).
- Do not use one's stove (ovens) to heat the house
- Avoid plugging extension cords into heaters...issue is multiple appliances are being and can be an issue. Do not overload one's electrical outlets

Evacuation Strategies

- The Fire Department inspects quarterly the senior buildings, but the senior building plan is reviewed once a year. Life Safety Hazard concerns is what the buildings are inspected
- Diagrams should be available that illustrate where the handicap individuals live; especially if there is an emergency. Councilwoman Eason specifically has asked for Salem Towers to have an updated diagram
- Councilwoman Eason asked if all senior buildings have a fire evacuation plan and if the Police
- Department have access cards to the senior buildings? She asked Director Dowd to make sure that the police department has access
 - Councilwoman Eason has asked for the escape ladder to be tested by and an evacuation plan for City Hall

New Cars Fire Department

Council President Williams asked if the new cars that were approved last year, have been secured. Director Dowd responded that he hopes he will have them by March 1, 2014. They are being readied for use.

St. Mathews Request

A request (for collaboration) has been made by St. Mathews for an Eagle Scout Certification Program.

- Director Dowd has spoken with the Cert. Trainer.
- Director Dowd stated he has to speak with the law department to make sure that minors can be deployed; after they are trained.
- The Fire Department does not have an academy; but they do have an explorer program.
- Councilwoman Eason believes that the church is looking for collaboration; the gentleman who wants to get the program off the ground is a retired police officer; and she believes that they are looking for volunteers too.

Office of Emergency Management (OEM)

- The City of Orange Township has a part time Deputy Coordinator for OEM. He was unable to be present.
- The report covers incidences the Office of Emergency Management for 2013. Oversight is done reviewed and approved by NJ OEM and Essex County OEM. Key incidents they responded to:
 - 12 fire scenes
 - 2 coordinated efforts with the red-cross arranged for temporary shelter of 15 families
 - Joined an initiative with Older Adults Services - presentations to senior citizens for OEM
 - Assist in major snow storms (if there is a power failure, relocate families, etc.)
- Council President Williams asked under what conditions would there be a need to open for warming station. So far in 2014, there has been a need to open 1 warming station. The conditions that would be required to open a warming station: severe weather and extreme cold. The first location is Colgate Field by Central and Lincoln; the second location for a warming station is Freeway Day - Scholar's Academy - Board of Ed.

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Police Department Obtained 3 New Vehicles

- Council President Williams asked if the Police Department received 2 cars and 1 truck.
- Director Sims responded, yes; 2 cars and 1 truck. He would be even more appreciative if he was able to obtain additional police officers.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Motion by Councilwoman Eason, seconded by Councilman Corbitt to adjourn meeting

Roll Call:

Yeas: Abdul-Rasheed, Corbitt, Eason, Gaunt-Butler, Williams

Nays: None

Absences: Jones-Bell, Marable

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58PM



Madeline F. Smith, RMC
Deputy Municipal Clerk



Donna K. Williams
Council President