

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
January 23, 2024
6:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER

SALUTE TO COLORS

Mayor Wronko invited all those present to stand in a salute to the colors.

MAYOR'S STATEMENT AS TO COMPLIANCE WITH P.L. 1975

Adequate Notice of this Meeting has been provided according to the Open Public Meetings Act, Assembly Bill 1030. Notice of this Meeting was included in the Annual Meeting Notice sent to the New Jersey Herald and the Daily Record on January 10, 2024 and was placed on the Official Bulletin Board in the Municipal Building.

Furthermore, notice of the meeting time change was sent to the New Jersey Herald and the Daily Record on January 11, 2024 and was placed on the official bulletin board in the Municipal Building.

In the event the Mayor and Council have not addressed all items on this Agenda by 10:00 PM and they are of the opinion that they cannot complete the Agenda in a reasonable time period, the Mayor and Council may exercise their option to continue this meeting at an agreed to date, time and place. Please turn off all cell phones for the duration of this Meeting.

ELECTION OF TEMPORARY COUNCIL MEMBER

Mayor Wronko stated the first order of business this evening is to elect a council person to fill the vacant seat and Councilwoman Kuncken was asked to explain the procedure.

Councilwoman Kuncken outlined the process required to fill the vacant seat on the council. Councilwoman Kuncken stated before Gene Wronko became the Mayor, he had one more year to serve on the council. The position now needs to be filled and any interested applicants were asked to send a letter to Ms. Kuncken, who is the Chairperson for the Republican Committee. Councilman Wronko resigned as of December 31, 2023 and because he is a republican, the seat must be filled by a republican. The letters of interest needed to be submitted within 15 days from that time. Three letters were received within the 15-day timeframe from Najib Iftikhar, Bill Eaves and Tyler Simpson and they were reviewed by the governing body. Councilwoman Kuncken stated the governing body has made replacements in the past but this one happens to be well in advance of the primary election and therefore the newly elected person will need to run in the upcoming primary election. If that person does not run or does not win in the primary, then the appointment will end in November with the general election.

On motion by Councilman Wachterhauser and seconded by Councilman Riccardi, Tyler Simpson was nominated for the temporary council member position. On motion by Councilman Romano and seconded by Councilwoman Kuncken, nominations were closed. As a result of the following unanimous roll call vote, Tyler Simpson was elected as the temporary council member.

Council Members:

Councilwoman Kuncken – yes
Councilman Riccardi – yes
Councilman Romano – yes

Councilman Thornton – yes
Councilman Wachterhauser – yes

OATH OF OFFICE

Tyler Simpson was sworn in by Attorney Ursula Leo as the temporary council member. Everyone congratulated Councilman Simpson and he was invited to take his seat on the dais.

ROLL CALL

Council Members:

Councilwoman Kuncken – present
Councilman Riccardi – present
Councilman Romano – present

Councilman Thornton – present
Councilman Wachterhauser – present
Councilman Simpson – present

Mayor Wronko – present

PRESENTATION

Ray Sarinelli, Borough Auditor – Mr. Sarinelli stated they are working on closing out the financial statements and the budget will be signed off on in the next few months. The biggest factor plaguing all the municipalities is the inflation in the economy. In 2023, the average interest rate was 4.1% but traditionally for the past 100 years it has been at 2%. The Borough has done some good long-term planning which has enabled the Borough to be in a good strong financial position now. Increasing the debt service payments over the past few years, while putting a small strain on the budgets, has made you stronger now. This good financial position will temper the inflation. Mr. Sarinelli stated he does not want the 2024 budget to hurt the Borough in the future. People are still spending. Collections are down slightly but people are still paying their taxes. The economy is still growing. We are not in a recession as yet. But there are indicators that a recession is coming. The governing body needs to continue to plan well long term. The administration is reviewing the water and sewer utility fund which has been affected by inflation and Mr. Sarinelli stated he has been assisting with this. Rate increases will be needed for the budget appropriations. The sewer rate has been reduced several times over the past and inflation has caught up now. The rates are going to have to be increased in the near future. The operating and utility funds will be okay due to the good planning in the past. Councilwoman Kuncken stated in the past we have increased the amount to pay down the debt service and she asked if that amount should stay the same or should it be increased again this year. Mr. Sarinelli recommended not increasing the amount. The tax is the same every year for the debt and the debt payment has stabilized. Mr. Sarinelli stated the governing body should not look to change this. The pension and health benefits are putting pressure on all the budgets across New Jersey. Mayor Wronko stated the trash collection and recycling increases are also affecting the budget and he asked if Mr. Sarinelli has seen this problem in other towns. Mr. Sarinelli confirmed this and stated for some towns who are renewing their five-year contracts, they are seeing a 98% increase. The Local Finance Board took an unprecedented step in allowing that expense to be pulled from the CAPS due to the fact you can only increase appropriations by 3 ½ % per year. Mayor Wronko asked if other towns are changing their sewer and water rates. Mr. Sarinelli stated some municipalities already have higher rates. The rates depend on which sewerage authority your municipality is in. The Musconetcong Sewerage Authority is increasing their rates. These are uncontrollable costs that the town has no control over. Administrator McNeilly stated the MSA has two problems. The State is changing rules and the costs are going up. The MSA plant is 33-35 years old and the machinery is at the end of its life. The dedicated fund plan was put into place approximately 15 years ago in anticipation of this. However, the machines of today are not the same as those in the past and the costs are more than could have been anticipated. The fund has accumulated to \$1 million which has softened the blow for some of the equipment but everything is so expensive now. The buildings also need to have the roofs, heating and air conditioning replaced. The State just keeps adding new requirements. The governing body thanked Mr. Sarinelli for attending this evening's meeting.

2024 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Angelica Sabatini, CFO, came forward to begin the discussion for the 2024 municipal budget.

Salaries – Councilwoman Kuncken stated union contracts will be affected by the salaries and negotiations will be taking place this year. Councilwoman Kuncken suggested the salary discussion wait until further along during the budget discussions.

3A General Administration – The General Administration budget had a 0% increase. No changes were made.

3B Mayor & Council – The Mayor and Council budget had a 0% increase. No changes were made.

3C Municipal Clerk – The Municipal Clerk budget had a 2% reduction. No changes were made.

4A Financial Administration – The Financial Administration budget had a 46% decrease due to the fact that Ms. Sabatini arranged for the bank to cover up to \$6,000 per year for payroll services. Councilman Riccardi asked why the 2023 charged amount for Office Supplies was so high. Ms. Sabatini stated some of the items most likely should have been placed in a different account like tax collection but got charged to finance. No changes were made.

4B Audit & Computer Services – The Audit & Computer Services budget has an increase of 38% due to the change over from MSI to Edmunds in the Finance Department and Quikteks moving the computer file storage from the server to the cloud. Mayor Wronko stated some of these costs are a one-time expense that will not reoccur next year. Mayor Wronko asked why the 2023 charges for the website were lower than expected. Ms. Sabatini stated it may just be a matter of timing on the billing. There are still charges for 2023 which may not have been accounted for to date. Councilman Wachterhauser stated the budgeted amount for Nixle messages is not enough. Administrator McNeilly stated the amount has been increased to \$1,800 which will provide for a better plan. The costs for Nixle are spread out over three budgets. One third goes to general, one third to water and one third to sewer. Councilman Wachterhauser asked if other quotes can be obtained. Everbridge wants the Borough to switch to their system but it does not transfer well with telephone numbers. Administrator McNeilly stated the Borough has stayed with the legacy program and the costs have been the same since 2012. Councilwoman Kuncken stated the governing body wants to have the ability to send more Nixle messages. Administrator McNeilly stated the amount this year will be double what it has been. There were 74 Nixle messages sent out last year to date. There are approximately 12 or 13 messages still available for use until the reset of the new year. Councilman Thornton stated, during talks with NJ Natural Gas, they mentioned that they may be able to partner with the Borough for the cost of the Nixle service. This subject should be revisited with NJ Natural Gas. Administrator McNeilly stated several of those representatives have since retired. The Borough may have to start over again with those talks. Councilman Romano asked how many residents are signed up to receive Nixle messages. Administrator McNeilly stated there are approximately 1,800 text message credits and 1,100 emails which are not counted. The number of customers totals 3,000 for red alert messages. Councilwoman Kuncken stated a communications campaign should be done to try and get more residents signed up for Nixle. There are a lot of homes which have changed ownership. Administrator McNeilly stated the information is on the main page of the website. This is a topic which can be discussed further during a work session meeting. Councilman Wachterhauser is of the opinion the costs should be reviewed to determine if the Borough should move to a new system. Administrator McNeilly stated in municipalities with a large Police Department, they would be handling the operation of sending out the messages. That is not an option in Stanhope. If the number of messages is going to increase significantly, passwords would have to be issued to Emergency Management and the Police Department. Councilwoman Kuncken stated caution needs to be used to ensure that too many messages are not sent out. Councilman Romano agreed and stated Netcong sends out a lot of messages. Administrator McNeilly stated Netcong is now using Code Red, it required starting the sign ups all over again. In the future, if the Borough changes systems, it will only be done if the Borough owns the file so that it is portable.

4C Tax Collector – Ms. Sabatini stated the Tax Collector budget has an increase due to the fact that the current assistant will be attending training classes. Administrator McNeilly stated the training for the assistant is helpful. Councilman Riccardi asked when the training will take place. Ms. Sabatini stated there is a course available in the Spring/Summer and another in the Fall. The overall course has a total of three required courses. Two classes are budgeted for this year and the third class will be budgeted for next year. The certification would take place next year. No changes were made.

4D Tax Assessment – The Tax Assessment budget had a 0% increase. Administrator McNeilly stated in the future when the reassessment is required, the budget will increase. That will take place in 2025 or 2026. Councilman Thornton stated the Borough needs to plan for this. Administrator McNeilly stated the reassessment will have to go out to bid and unfortunately it is not an item that can be budgeted for with a “rainy day fund”. The funding will have to be bonded. There is nothing that can be done at this time.

5A Legal & Engineering Services – Councilman Wachterhauser asked where the legal bills for something like 45 Main Street are budgeted. Ms. Sabatini stated those costs are paid for through an escrow account and they are not put into the budget. No changes were made.

5B Land Use Board – Mayor Wronko asked why there is a decrease in the budget for the Engineer and the Professional Planner for 2024. Ms. Sabatini will ask the Land Use Board why this change has been made. Administrator McNeilly stated these costs are for issues which arise without applicants.

5C Regional Planning Board & Affordable Housing – The Regional Planning Board and Affordable Housing budgets had a 0% increase. No changes were made.

6A Construction Official – Councilman Riccardi and Councilman Wachterhauser asked why the office supply line item has increased. Ms. Sabatini stated the increase is most likely due to the need for more forms and construction folders. The governing body asked for backup documentation explaining the increased budget for office supplies.

6B Zoning Officer – Councilman Riccardi and Councilman Wachterhauser stated the line item for office supplies is also increased in this budget and they asked for backup to show why there is a need to increase the budget for office supplies.

6C Insurance – On paper there is a decrease in the Insurance budget but that is not the reality. Ms. Sabatini stated there were changes in the plans for the employees and there are not as many waivers being taken. The costs of the plans have also increased. Councilman Riccardi stated there are changes to the workers compensation also. Administrator McNeilly stated the Governor of NJ made changes regarding who is eligible to be covered when hurt on the job. If an injury required early retirement, those situations used to be put through the retirement system but now this is being pushed back to the municipality's workmen's compensation. This is the most expensive workmen's compensation in the nation. The trial lawyers are getting everything they ask for. Mayor Wronko stated this is happening everywhere. Administrator McNeilly stated the people here in Stanhope are doing their job with regard to expenditures and are keeping in line. The unfunded mandates are hurting the towns. No changes were made.

7A Police Department – Mayor Wronko questioned the 431% increase to line 10524035 Contracts/Permits/Licenses. Ms. Sabatini stated the increased costs are due to shipping, E-ticket calibrations, web/email/cloud server and the Ring system. Councilman Romano asked if some of the charges are one time only or if this will be part of the budget every year. Ms. Sabatini stated she will check with the Police Chief. Councilwoman Kuncken stated the governing body did previously approve the E-ticket system. Councilman Thornton asked why the overtime budget is so high. Ms. Sabatini stated she entered that amount based on the increase in salaries but it can be brought back down. Ms. Sabatini stated the Police Department was supposed to receive two new vehicles last year but only one was available. The lease costs have increased. Councilwoman Kuncken stated leasing the vehicles has been beneficial. Ms. Sabatini stated two vehicles have been placed in the budget.

7B Public Safety – Other – Councilwoman Kuncken stated this is the first year with dispatch and it is savings. No changes were made.

7C Fire Department – Councilman Riccardi asked why line 10526531 Pump Testing is budgeted for \$1,200 for 2024 but the 2023 amount charged was \$5,000.25. Councilwoman Kuncken stated she will contact the Fire Department. Administrator McNeilly stated no figures for 2023 have been added to lines 10526530 Hose Testing or 10526532 Ladder Testing and suggested perhaps the costs were all placed on the one-line item. Councilman Wachterhauser asked if the lease cost should be reviewed and asked if they are experiencing increased costs. Ms. Sabatini stated the amount listed is what the Fire Department requested. Mayor Wronko stated the Fire Department does fundraising as well. Administrator McNeilly stated the lease price is fair based on the size and it has been the same for the past 10 years.

8A Road Maintenance – Ms. Sabatini stated this budget has several contracted amounts but the highest amounts for the wage schedule have been listed which can be adjusted. Councilman Thornton asked if the cost for the rental equipment includes the leaf machine. Ms. Sabatini confirmed this. Councilman Wachterhauser asked if the cost for the new leaf machine is included. Ms. Sabatini stated the new leaf machine cost was included in the capital budget last year. No changes were made.

8B Solid Waste Collection – Administrator McNeilly stated, fortunately, the Borough's contract is from June to June which helped in the planning process. Councilman Romano stated the recycling costs are a problem. Councilman Wachterhauser stated the recycling and garbage could be pulled

out of the budget and billed as a utility. Administrator McNeilly stated Netcong Borough almost had to do that because the bids they received were so high. Netcong was able to make a deal with Mt. Olive and the garbage is being collected by a truck with the automatic arm. If the garbage and recycling was billed as a utility there are other problems which arise such as administration and issues with collecting the funds due to the fact a lien cannot be placed on a property for this service. There are only 6 towns in Sussex County that include garbage and recycling for their residents. In the other towns, the residents must contract on their own with the garbage companies. All the garbage trucks have to unload at SCMUA before 2:00pm every day. The high costs are due to manpower, vehicles and fuel costs. Recycling costs are now just as expensive as the garbage costs. The Supreme Court or appellate court ruling on flow control requires the trucks to only unload in the county land fill where it is collected. SCMUA closes at 2:00pm because the material that is unloaded has to be covered before the end of the day. No changes were made.

8C Building & Grounds – Councilman Wachterhauser asked if enough funds are budgeted for park maintenance. Administrator McNeilly confirmed the budget is sufficient. No changes were made.

9A Shade Tree – No changes were made.

9B Vehicle Maintenance – No changes were made.

9C Board of Health & Animal Control – No changes were made.

10A Recreation & Public Events – Councilman Wachterhauser asked Bill Eaves, present in the audience, if the costs for the Little League Program have increased. Bill Eaves confirmed the costs have increased. They are in negotiations with Byram in an effort to create a joint Little League. Mr. Eaves stated their prices are already significantly higher than ours so they are trying to bridge that gap over this year and next year. Councilman Wachterhauser asked Mr. Eaves if they contacted Netcong to ask for additional funding? Mr. Eaves stated that Netcong refused. Mr. Eaves stated he will be attending a future Mayor and Council meeting to make a presentation regarding the Little League Program. Administrator McNeilly asked that a document be presented regarding the Little League's request for funding. No changes were made to this budget.

10B Environmental Commission – Councilman Riccardi stated the annual ANJEC dues increased this year. No changes were made.

At this time, the governing body ended the budget discussion which will be continued at a future meeting and they thanked Ms. Sabatini for attending tonight's meeting.

CITIZEN'S TO BE HEARD

Mayor Wronko opened the meeting to the public after advising attendees that there is a five (5) minute time limit for each speaker.

Seeing no one from the public wishing to speak, Mayor Wronko closed the public portion of the meeting.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

Mayor Wronko read aloud the list of minutes being presented for approval:

December 12, 2023 Business Meeting & Closed Session

On motion by Councilman Romano, seconded by Councilwoman Kuncken and carried by a majority voice vote, the minutes for December were approved. Councilman Riccardi abstained from the Closed Session Minutes of December 12, 2023.

CORRESPONDENCE *(List Attached)*

On motion by Councilman Thornton, seconded by Councilman Romano and unanimously carried by voice vote, the list of correspondence was accepted and ordered placed on file.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Public Safety – Councilwoman Kuncken/Councilman Riccardi

(Police, Fire, Ambulance, Court & Violations Bureau, Emergency Management)

Councilwoman Kuncken stated the Police Department, for the month of December, had 72 motor vehicle stops and 231 total calls for the month.

Councilwoman Kuncken stated the Sussex County Fire Marshal, for the month of December, reported 24 total inspections. There were some failures at 10 Furnace Street and 20 Main Street and the abatement dates have all been met.

Councilwoman Kuncken stated a Fire Department report was not received this month.

Councilwoman Kuncken stated the Ambulance Squad submitted several reports. Reports have been received for October, November, December and for the year end. In October, there were 22 calls in Stanhope, 23 in Netcong, and 2 standbys. There were 3 out of town calls to Hopatcong and 1 to Roxbury. The total number of calls for the month was 51. They made 25 trips to the hospital, travelled 790 miles and totaled 215 hours and 27 minutes of volunteer hours. In November, there were 27 calls in Stanhope, 30 in Netcong and 1 standby for a total of 58 calls. There were 11 out of town calls; 1 in Byram, 5 in Hopatcong, 4 in Roxbury and 1 in Mt. Olive. The grand total of calls for the month was 69. They made 35 trips to the hospital, travelled 854 miles and totaled 355 hours and 17 minutes of volunteer hours. In the month of December, there were 28 calls in Stanhope, 34 in Netcong and 2 standbys for a total of 64 calls. There were 3 out of town calls to Roxbury. The overall total of calls for the month was 67. They made 33 trips to the hospital, travelled 969 miles and had 295 hours and 9 minutes of hours volunteered.

Councilwoman Kuncken stated the year end activity report for 2023 lists 226 calls in Stanhope, 331 in Netcong, 17 standbys for a total of 574 calls for the year. The out of town calls consisted of 1 call to West Milford, 7 to Byram, 40 to Hopatcong, 18 to Roxbury, 1 to Mt. Olive, and 1 to Morristown, for an overall total of 68 out of town calls for the year. The overall total number of calls came to 642 for the year. They travelled 9,158 miles and totaled 3,414 hours and 12 minutes of volunteer hours. There were 2 fire department assists, both of which were from Stanhope.

Finance & Administration – Councilman Romano/Councilman Thornton

Councilman Romano stated, for the month of December, the Borough collected \$125,257.00 in taxes. The year to date total is \$13,299,674.78 as compared to the total year to date in 2022 which was \$12,766,294.43. The taxes are being paid, just as the Auditor stated earlier. The percentage of collections for the fourth quarter is 96% as compared to last years figure of 97%. The overall percentage for the year is 97.8% as compared to last years figure of 98.0%.

Councilman Romano stated, for the month of December, the water collections totaled \$110,695.25 and the year to date collection totals \$725,446.03. The sewer collections for December totaled \$132,521.01 and the year to date collection is \$878,072.99. The water and sewer bills are also being paid.

Community Development – Councilman Wachterhauser/Vacant

Councilman Wachterhauser stated he had no report.

Municipal Infrastructure – Councilman Thornton/Councilman Romano

(Water Distribution, Sewer Collection System, Road Construction & Maintenance, Buildings & Grounds)

Councilman Thornton stated the leaf machine is still out for repair. Administrator McNeilly stated the rental machine is here but that is waiting for a new hydraulic hose. Leaf collection will not stop until they are all picked up. Pick up will continue with the backhoe once the snow is gone. Zone 3 has the most challenges along with Brooklyn Road and Sparta Road. Mayor Wronko stated it is unfortunate that the rental machine does not have the same capacity as the one owned by the Borough. Councilman Wachterhauser asked if the current leaf machine, once it is returned, will remain operational once the new leaf machine is received. Administrator McNeilly confirmed this and stated leaf collection, going forward, is going to be treated as an essential service so there will always be a primary leaf machine and a backup.

Administrator McNeilly stated Christmas Tree pickup has been continuing and will end at the end of the week. The decorations will also be taken down later this week.

Information Technology – Councilman Riccardi/Vacant

Councilman Riccardi stated a Technology Committing Meeting will be scheduled for the near future in order to discuss Nixle.

Boards/Commissions – Vacant/Councilwoman Kuncken

Councilwoman Kuncken stated Councilman Simpson will be the Chairman for the Boards and Commissions and she will remain as the second seat.

ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT

Road Opening Permit – Administrator McNeilly stated a request was received from the Stanhope School asking the Borough to waive the \$100 road opening permit fee for the installation of a gas main at the Valley Road School. Mayor Wronko called for a straw poll asking for approval to waive the \$100 gas line road opening permit fee for the Valley Road School. The results are as follows: Councilman Romano – yes; Councilman Simpson – yes; Councilman Riccardi – yes; Councilman Thornton – yes; Councilman Wachterhauser – yes; Councilwoman Kuncken – yes Approval was granted to waive the permit fee.

Mr. Bender’s Inquiry – Administrator McNeilly stated Mr. Bender sent correspondence requesting to have the zoning changed for property the family owns on Smith Street. Administrator McNeilly asked the governing body how they would like to proceed to follow-up with the request. The governing body agreed that the standard operating procedure which includes an escrow fee of \$2,500 should be established by Mr. Bender in order to have the application reviewed by a review committee, Land Use Board, etc. and to have a report created. Administrator McNeilly stated he will contact Mr. Bender and inform him what the procedure is to obtain a technical review.

Shred Day – Administrator McNeilly stated the Borough will be offering a Paper Shred Day on April 20th. If the electronics recycling vendor in Randolph is available, the Borough will also offer E-Waste Recycling.

Cannabis Presentation – Administrator McNeilly stated the cannabis business owner was not ready to make a presentation for their proposal for a location in Stanhope this evening. They will be requesting to reschedule.

DCA LRIG Grant 2024 – Administrator McNeilly stated last year the Borough received a grant for \$71,000 for playground equipment. This side of town does not have a playground now that the Linden Avenue School has been sold. Administrator McNeilly recommended a pocket park be installed at the basketball courts, located off of Main Street, using the same layout as the Dell Road Park. This plan could be submitted for the DCA LRIG Grant for 2024. The furthest basketball court from the parking lot could be removed to provide space for a playground. Councilman Simpson stated the basketball court furthest away from the parking lot is the most popular court due to the fact the rims are at different heights. Administrator McNeilly stated it would not matter which court was changed over to a playground. Last year the Borough was notified in May that we would be receiving the grant. The company, Burke’s, did well with designing the Dell Road Park. The governing body agreed to move forward in applying for the grant.

T-Mobile Hometown Grant FY24 – Administrator McNeilly stated T-Mobile has a Hometown Grant program to encourage public gatherings. Administrator McNeilly recommended an application be submitted to request funding for additional anti-vandal picnic tables and park benches for Lakeside Park, Musconetcong Park, Dell Road Park and Salmon Park. There is one picnic table at Lakeside Park and it does get a great deal of use. There is one picnic table at Musconetcong Park by the playground. The lake side of Musconetcong Park and the Dell Road Park do not have any picnic tables. The picnic tables cost approximately \$1,400 each because they are anti-vandal. The tables would encourage public gathering. Administrator McNeilly stated last year there were no recipients in our area who were awarded this grant. The governing body gave the Administrator approval to move forward with the grant application.

Borough Engineer – Administrator McNeilly stated Eric Keller, Borough Engineer, will be at the February 13th meeting to provide an engineering update.

20 Main Street – Councilman Wachterhauser asked if there is an update for 20 Main Street. Administrator McNeilly stated the owner of 20 Main Street has received the life hazard certification from the County Fire Marshal. This clearly stated that this was not approving the use which has to be approved by the Zoning Officer and the State. Administrator McNeilly stated there is an active investigation being conducted by the State of NJ. Councilman Riccardi stated there are permanent structures which have been installed on the property. Administrator McNeilly stated the structures have not encroached onto the neighboring property. Councilman Wachterhauser stated there is an octagon shaped structure which has been built on the property. Administrator McNeilly stated this is all being handled by the court.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Environmental Commission Report – Councilman Riccardi stated the Environmental Commission is a member of ANJEC. ANJEC is a group located in Trenton and many municipalities and boards and commissions are members. The goal is to protect the environment within the municipalities and the state. The state budget wants to cut \$60 million from land preservation and hazardous waste polluted sites. There are items that can be cut from the budget but this is not the right choice. The preservation and clean up needs to continue. The ANJEC group is asking for a resolution of support to bolster their position. The budget cuts will give a 2.5% reduction to corporate business tax. If this cut is made, more land will be put up for sale. This will not directly affect Stanhope but this will not be a benefit. It will be a detriment. Stanhope is surrounded by open land. Preservation of open space needs to remain at \$48 million and \$12 million for clean-up. Mayor Wronko asked if there were any objections. Councilman Romano stated historic preservation is also affected by these cuts. Places like the Growing Stage, which recently received funding, will be affected. Councilman Thornton asked if the tax cut is only valid for larger corporations or if small businesses would also benefit from the 2.5% tax cut. Councilman Riccardi stated he did not have that information. Councilman Thornton stated small businesses are often eliminated from these benefits due to the number of employees or size of the business. Attorney Leo stated she will look into the tax cut issue and she will provide a letter with the resolution.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTIONS

Mayor Wronko offered the following resolutions which were read by title:

Resolution 037-24

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AWARD OF CONTRACT TO MILLENNIUM STRATEGIES

WHEREAS, the Borough of Stanhope is in need of the services of a grant consulting firm with knowledge of all aspects of the availability of applications for state and federal grants that may be available to the Borough of Stanhope on a competitive basis to assist the Borough in identifying and applying for such grants; and

WHEREAS, the services of a grant consultant constitute extraordinary unspecifiable services pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 40A:11-5(1)(a)(ii); and

WHEREAS, Millennium Strategies, LLC has the necessary experience and qualified staff to provide grant consulting services to the Borough on an ongoing basis; and

WHEREAS, Millennium Strategies, LLC has made a written proposal to the Borough of Stanhope to provide grant consultation services; and

WHEREAS, the proposed agreement between the Borough and Millennium Strategies, LLC provides for a retainer of \$1,550 per month, which amount is not in excess of the Borough's bid threshold; and

WHEREAS, said agreement with Millennium Strategies, LLC is terminable at will by the Borough.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope that the Borough does hereby award a contract for extraordinary unspecifiable services to Millennium Strategies, LLC, a copy of which agreement is attached hereto;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Clerk are hereby authorized to execute said agreement on behalf of the Borough.

On motion by Councilman Romano, seconded by Councilwoman Kuncken and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Kuncken – yes	Councilman Simpson – yes
Councilman Riccardi – yes	Councilman Thornton– yes
Councilman Romano – yes	Councilman Wachterhauser - yes

Resolution 038-24

AUTHORIZING AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE STANHOPE BOROUGH POLICE DEPARTMENT AND ATLANTIC HEALTH SYSTEM, NEWTON MEDICAL CENTER TO ESTABLISH JOINT PARTICIPATION IN THE ARRIVE TOGETHER PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the Stanhope Borough Police Chief has recommended that the Mayor and Council approve the execution of a Memorandum of Understanding to establish joint participation in the Arrive Together Program to enhance and support response to certain behavioral health crisis calls, along with members of participating Police Departments; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council have determined to approve the execution of the Memorandum of Understanding, attached hereto.

NOW THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope, that the Police Chief is hereby authorized to execute on behalf of the Borough of Stanhope the Memorandum of Understanding with Atlantic Health System, Newton Medical Center, in a form approved by the Borough Attorney.

On motion by Councilman Riccardi, seconded by Councilman Thornton and carried by a majority of the following roll call vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted. Councilman Wachterhauser abstained.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Kuncken – yes	Councilman Simpson – yes
Councilman Riccardi – yes	Councilman Thornton– yes
Councilman Romano – yes	Councilman Wachterhauser - abstain

Resolution 039-24

A RESOLUTION BY THE BOROUGH OF STANHOPE AUTHORIZING THE CONDITIONAL OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE STANHOPE BOROUGH POLICE DEPARTMENT FOR MIGUEL PARDO

WHEREAS, upon recommendation of the Borough Police Chief, the Borough is seeking to issue a conditional offer of employment for a new Police Officer; and

WHEREAS, one candidate, Miguel Pardo, will be presented with a Conditional Offer of Employment; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Pardo has been found to meet the minimum initial requirements for the position of Police Officer, but must meet other additional requirements before the offer becomes final; and

WHEREAS, medical and psychological evaluations, interviews, continued background cooperation and drug tests are a few of the additional requirements that needs to be completed for Mr. Pardo; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Pardo must adhere to all of the conditions of the Conditional Offer of Employment, including obtaining certificates in the time frame designated and satisfactorily completing the one year probation period.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey as follows:

Miguel Pardo is hereby conditionally offered a position of Police Officer effective January 24, 2024

On motion by Councilwoman Kuncken, seconded by Councilman Romano and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Kuncken – yes
Councilman Riccardi – yes
Councilman Romano – yes

Councilman Simpson – yes
Councilman Thornton– yes
Councilman Wachterhauser - yes

CONSENT AGENDA (All items listed on the Consent Agenda are considered routine by the Borough Council and were enacted by one motion of the Borough Council with no separate discussion.)

Resolution 040-24

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CHANGE IN CLAIMANT SIGNATURE REQUIREMENT

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:5-16 requires that the Governing Body of any local unit shall no pay out its monies unless

- a) The person claiming or receiving payment first presents a detailed bill of items or demand, specifying particularly how the bill or demand is made up (the invoice), with the certification of the party claiming payment that the bill or demand is correct (the Claimant Certification).
- b) The payment carries a written or electronic certification of some officer or duly designated employee of the local unit having knowledge of the facts that the goods have been received by, or the services rendered to, the local unit (certification of the user department).

WHEREAS, N.J.A.C. 5:30-9A.6(c), N.J.A.C. 5:31-4.1, and Local Finance Notice 2018-13 gives local units discretion to not require claimant certification by enacting a standard policy by resolution for vendors or claimants who do not provide such certification as part of its normal course of business; and

WHEREAS, the Chief Financial Officer has in place internal accounting controls and has determined same to be sufficient to avoid errors and fraud in the processing of claims for payment.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Borough Council of the Borough of Stanhope, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey hereby establishes a policy requiring the claimant signature under the following circumstances only:

1. Advances or reimbursement of employee expenses, and
2. Services provided exclusively and entirely by an individual (e.g. sole proprietors).
3. The local unit shall have the discretion to require claimant certification as it deems necessary and appropriate.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, this policy will be applied in a non-arbitrary fashion and will be affirmatively communicated to vendors.

Resolution 041-24

RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE A SHARED SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH THE BOROUGH OF NETCONG FOR AN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR

WHEREAS, the Borough of Stanhope is required to have a Municipal Emergency Management Coordinator pursuant to the provisions of New Jersey Law App. A:9-40.1; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Netcong currently employs an Emergency Management Coordinator pursuant to law; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Netcong has offered a Shared Services Agreement to the Borough of Stanhope to share the services of Netcong's Emergency Management Coordinator; and

WHEREAS, shared services are both authorized and encouraged by the provisions of N.J.S.A. 40A:65-1, the Uniform Shared Services and Consolidation Act; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the Borough of Stanhope to enter into the Shared Services Agreement.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope that the Shared Services Agreement for Emergency Management Coordinator between the Borough of Netcong and the Borough of Stanhope be and the same as hereby approved; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Mayor and Clerk are hereby authorized to execute said Agreement on behalf of the Borough of Stanhope.

Resolution 042-24

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE AWARD OF NON-FAIR AND OPEN CONTRACTS FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FOR THE BOROUGH OF STANHOPE FOR THE YEAR 2024

WHEREAS, the Borough of Stanhope has a need for professional services for the year 2024 of Borough Attorney, Borough Labor Attorney, Bond Attorney, Borough Engineer, Borough Planner, Borough Auditor and Conflict Counsel; and

WHEREAS, the Chief Financial Officer has determined and certified in writing that the value of the position of each of the agreements will exceed \$17,500.00; and

WHEREAS, the anticipated term of each contract is one year; and

WHEREAS, Laddey, Clark & Ryan, LLP has submitted a proposal to provide legal services as Borough Attorney and as Labor Attorney for the year 2024; and

WHEREAS, Robert Beinfield, Esq. of the firm Hawkins, Delafield and Wood has submitted a proposal to provide legal services as Borough Bond Attorney for the year 2024; and

WHEREAS, Bowman Consulting Group, Ltd. has submitted a proposal indicating that it will provide engineering services as Municipal Engineer and Municipal Planner for the Borough of Stanhope for the year 2024; and

WHEREAS, Nisivoccia & Company, LLP has submitted a proposal indicating that it will provide auditing services as Municipal Auditor for the Borough of Stanhope for the year 2024; and

WHEREAS, Robert Morgenstern, Esq. has submitted a proposal indicating that he will provide legal services to the Borough as Conflict Counsel for the year 2024; and

WHEREAS, each of the aforesaid professionals has completed and submitted a Business Entity Disclosure Certification certifying that they have not made any reportable contributions to a political or candidate committee in the Borough of Stanhope in the previous one year and that the contract will prohibit said professional from making any reportable contribution through the term of the contract; and

WHEREAS, each of the aforesaid professionals has completed and submitted a Political Contribution Disclosure Form; and

WHEREAS, the Chief Financial Officer of the Borough of Stanhope has certified the availability of funds for these contracts pursuant to NJAC 5:30-5.4;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope that the Mayor and Clerk be and the same are hereby authorized to execute individual agreements with each Borough Professional named herein above; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Business Disclosure Entity Certification and the Determination of Value be placed on file with this resolution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that notice of the above contract shall be published by the Borough in accordance with the provisions of the Local Public Contracts Law.

Resolution 043-24

Governor’s Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Fiscal Grant Cycle FY2025

WHEREAS, the Governor’s Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse established the Municipal Alliances for the Prevention of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse in 1989 to educate and engage residents, local government and law enforcement officials, schools, nonprofit organizations, the faith community, parents, youth and other allies in efforts to prevent alcoholism and drug abuse in communities throughout New Jersey.

WHEREAS, The Borough Council of the Borough of Stanhope, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey recognizes that the abuse of alcohol and drugs is a serious problem in our society amongst persons of all ages; and therefore has an established Municipal Alliance Committee; and,

WHEREAS, the Borough Council further recognizes that it is incumbent upon not only public officials but upon the entire community to take action to prevent such abuses in our community; and,

WHEREAS, the Borough Council has applied for funding to the Governor’s Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse through the County of Sussex;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough of Stanhope, County of Sussex does hereby recognize the following:

1. The Borough Council does hereby authorize submission of a strategic plan for the Lenape Valley Municipal Alliance grant for fiscal year 2025 in the amount of:

GCADA GRANT FUND	\$ 3,918.00
Cash Match	\$ 979.50
In-Kind	\$ 2,938.50

2. The Borough Council acknowledges the terms and conditions for administering the Municipal Alliance grant, including the administrative compliance and audit requirements.

Resolution 044-24

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING REFUND OF REDEMPTION MONIES TO OUTSIDE LIEN HOLDER

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector has received payment for the redemption of Tax Title Lien No. 2023-027 representing 2022 property taxes and/or utility charges on Block 11603, Lot 17 known as 37 Young Dr, assessed to Anthony, Diana L, and;

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector certifies that reimbursement is now required to be made to the following lien holder for the required redemption amounts as shown below:

To Lienholder:	Pro Cap 8 FBO Firstrust Bank PO Box 774 Fort Washington, PA 19034
Redemption Amount:	Tax Title Lien #2023-027 and Interest to Date of Meeting \$ 1,987.06 Premium Paid by Lienholder <u>300.00</u>
Total From Current Fund:	\$ 1,987.06
Total From Tax Premium Account	300.00

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Borough Council of the Borough of Stanhope, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, that the Borough Treasurer be authorized to prepare the necessary check as stated above and to forward same to the lien holder.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Borough Chief Financial Officer/Tax Collector.

Resolution 045-24

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING REFUND OF REDEMPTION MONIES TO OUTSIDE LIEN HOLDER

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector has received payment for the redemption of Tax Title Lien No. 2023-018 representing 2022 property taxes and/or utility charges on Block 11501, Lot 2 Qual C0152 known as 8152 Ashland Ct, assessed to Cilenti, Silvia, and;

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector certifies that reimbursement is now required to be made to the following lien holder for the required redemption amounts as shown below:

To Lienholder:	Pro Cap 8 FBO Firstrust Bank PO Box 774 Fort Washington, PA 19034
Redemption Amount:	Tax Title Lien #2023-018 and Interest to Date of Meeting \$ 1,780.78 Premium Paid by Lienholder <u>300.00</u>
Total From Current Fund:	\$ 1,780.78
Total From Tax Premium Account	300.00

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Borough Council of the Borough of Stanhope, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, that the Borough Treasurer be authorized to prepare the necessary check as stated above and to forward same to the lien holder.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Borough Chief Financial Officer/Tax Collector.

Resolution 046-24

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING REFUND OF REDEMPTION MONIES TO OUTSIDE LIEN HOLDER

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector has received payment for the redemption of Tax Title Lien No. 2023-017 representing 2022 property taxes and/or utility charges on Block 11501, Lot 2 Qual C0144 known as 8144 Ashland Ct, assessed to Garcia-Tejada, Johnny, and;

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector certifies that reimbursement is now required to be made to the following lien holder for the required redemption amounts as shown below:

To Lienholder:	Pro Cap 8 FBO Firstrust Bank PO Box 774 Fort Washington, PA 19034
Redemption Amount:	Tax Title Lien #2023-018 and Interest to Date of Meeting \$ 993.85 Premium Paid by Lienholder <u>400.00</u>
Total From Current Fund:	\$ 993.85
Total From Tax Premium Account	400.00

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Borough Council of the Borough of Stanhope, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, that the Borough Treasurer be authorized to prepare the necessary check as stated above and to forward same to the lien holder.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Borough Chief Financial Officer/Tax Collector.

Resolution 047-24

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING REFUND OF
REDEMPTION MONIES TO OUTSIDE LIEN HOLDER**

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector has received payment for the redemption of Tax Title Lien No. 2023-025 representing 2022 property taxes and/or utility charges on Block 11501, Lot 2 Qual C0356 known as 19356 Dell Pl, assessed to Sprague, Joel, and;

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector certifies that reimbursement is now required to be made to the following lien holder for the required redemption amounts as shown below:

To Lienholder:	Pro Cap 8 FBO Firstrust Bank PO Box 774 Fort Washington, PA 19034
Redemption Amount:	Tax Title Lien #2023-025 and Interest to Date of Meeting \$ 1,028.39 Premium Paid by Lienholder <u>300.00</u>
Total From Current Fund:	\$ 1,028.39
Total From Tax Premium Account	300.00

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Borough Council of the Borough of Stanhope, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, that the Borough Treasurer be authorized to prepare the necessary check as stated above and to forward same to the lien holder.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Borough Chief Financial Officer/Tax Collector.

Resolution 048-24

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING REFUND OF
REDEMPTION MONIES TO OUTSIDE LIEN HOLDER**

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector has received payment for the redemption of Tax Title Lien No. 2023-006 representing 2022 property taxes and/or utility charges on Block 10903, Lot 12 known as 6 Hickory Dr, assessed to 6 Hickory LLC, and;

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector certifies that reimbursement is now required to be made to the following lien holder for the required redemption amounts as shown below:

To Lienholder:	NJSL 301, LLC 650 E Palisade Ave Ste 2 #258 Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632
Redemption Amount:	Tax Title Lien #2023-006 and Interest to Date of Meeting \$ 1,183.97 Premium Paid by Lienholder <u>300.00</u>
Total From Current Fund:	\$ 1,183.97
Total From Tax Premium Account	300.00

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Borough Council of the Borough of Stanhope, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, that the Borough Treasurer be authorized to prepare the necessary check as stated above and to forward same to the lien holder.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Borough Chief Financial Officer/Tax Collector.

Resolution 049-24

**RESOLUTION AMENDING STANHOPE BOROUGH'S
EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

WHEREAS, the Borough of Stanhope maintains an Employee Handbook, last revised September 2021; and

WHEREAS, the Borough Council has requested that the Borough Attorney review certain provisions within the Handbook and make amendments in compliance with the Municipal Excess Liability Joint Insurance Fund 2024-2026 Employment Practices Risk Control Program.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Borough Council of the Borough of Stanhope, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, that the Employee Handbook is revised to incorporate the changes recommended by the Borough's Attorney to be in compliance with the Municipal Excess Liability Joint Insurance Fund 2024-2026 Employment Practices Risk Control Program.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Employee Handbook is amended effective as of this date to include these changes.

If any section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase in this resolution is for any reason held to be unconstitutional or invalid, such decision shall not affect the remaining portions of this resolution.

Resolution 050-24

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE BOROUGH OF STANHOPE TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE BOROUGH OF HOPATCONG, NEW JERSEY FOR ANIMAL CONTROL AND POUND/SHELTER SERVICES

WHEREAS, the Borough of Stanhope is in need of animal control and pound services; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Stanhope and the Borough of Hopatcong have determined it would be mutually beneficial to enter into an Agreement, whereby the Borough of Hopatcong's Animal Control Official would also service the Borough of Stanhope; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Stanhope and the Borough of Hopatcong desire to enter into an Agreement effective January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2028, which will allow the Borough of Stanhope to call upon the Borough of Hopatcong's Animal Control Official and utilize Hopatcong's Animal Pound, in accordance with the Animal Control and Pound/Shelter Services Agreement; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Stanhope shall pay the Borough of Hopatcong \$6,500.00 annually, pursuant to the Animal Control and Pound/Shelter Services Agreement between the Township of Byram, the Borough of Mt. Arlington, the Borough of Netcong, the Borough of Wharton, and the Borough of Stanhope; and

WHEREAS, State Statute permits municipalities to enter into a shared services agreement pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:65-1 et seq., and authorizes municipalities to enter into such agreement by adoption of a Resolution;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Borough Council of the Borough of Stanhope, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The Mayor and Clerk are hereby authorized to execute this Animal Control and Pound/Shelter Services Agreement between the Borough of Stanhope and the Borough of Hopatcong, New Jersey.
2. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution shall be forwarded to Hopatcong Borough Clerk's office.

Resolution 051-24

A RESOLUTION TO AFFIRM THE BOROUGH OF STANHOPE'S CIVIL RIGHTS POLICY WITH RESPECT TO ALL OFFICIALS, APPOINTEES, EMPLOYEES, PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTEERS, INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS, AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC THAT COME INTO CONTACT WITH MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES, OFFICIALS AND VOLUNTEERS

WHEREAS, it is the policy of the Borough of Stanhope to treat the public, employees, prospective employees, appointees, volunteers and contractors in a manner consistent with all applicable civil rights laws and regulations including, but not limited to the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 as subsequently amended, the New Jersey Law against Discrimination, the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Conscientious Employee Protection Act, and

WHEREAS, the governing body of the Borough of Stanhope has determined that certain procedures need to be and have been established to accomplish this policy

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ADOPTED by the Stanhope Borough Council that:

Section 1: No official, employee, appointee or volunteer of the Borough of Stanhope by whatever title known, or any entity that is in any way a part of the Borough of Stanhope shall engage, either directly or indirectly in any act including the failure to act that constitutes discrimination, harassment or a violation of any person's constitutional rights while such official, employee, appointee volunteer, or entity is engaged in or acting on behalf of the Borough of Stanhope's business or using the facilities or property of the Borough of Stanhope.

Section 2: The prohibitions and requirements of this resolution shall extend to any person or entity, including but not limited to any volunteer organization or inter-local organization, whether structured as a governmental entity or a private entity, that receives authorization or support in any way from the Borough of Stanhope to provide services that otherwise could be performed by the Borough.

Section 3: Discrimination, harassment and civil rights shall be defined for purposes of this resolution using the latest definitions contained in the applicable Federal and State laws concerning discrimination, harassment and civil rights.

Section 4: The Borough Administrator shall follow written procedures for any person to report alleged discrimination, harassment and violations of civil rights prohibited by this resolution, and as set forth in the Borough Employee Handbook. Borough procedures include alternate ways to report a complaint so that the person making the complaint need not communicate with the alleged violator in the event the alleged violator would be the normal contact for such complaints (per Employee Handbook #211).

Section 5: No person shall retaliate against any person who reports any alleged discrimination, harassment or violation of civil rights, provided however, that any person who reports alleged violations in bad faith shall be subject to appropriate discipline.

Section 6: The Borough Administrator shall follow the written procedures that require all officials, employees, appointees and volunteers of the Borough as well as all other entities subject to this resolution to periodically complete training concerning their duties, responsibilities and rights pursuant to this resolution and per Employee Handbook #211.

Section 7: The Borough Administrator shall establish a system to monitor compliance and shall report at least annually to the governing body the results of the monitoring.

Section 8: At least annually, the Borough Administrator shall cause a summary of this resolution and the procedures established pursuant to this resolution to be communicated within the Borough. This communication shall include a statement from the governing body expressing its unequivocal commitment to enforce this resolution. This summary shall also be posted on the Borough's web site.

Section 9: This resolution shall take effect immediately.

Section 10: A copy of this resolution shall be published in the official newspaper of the Borough of Stanhope in order for the public to be made aware of this policy and the Borough's commitment to the implementation and enforcement of this policy.

On motion by Councilman Thornton, seconded by Councilman Riccardi and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, the foregoing resolutions were duly adopted.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Kuncken – yes
Councilman Riccardi – yes
Councilman Romano – yes

Councilman Simpson – yes
Councilman Thornton – yes
Councilman Wachterhauser – yes

Mayor's Acceptance of Resignation

Resolution 052-24

**MAYOR'S ACCEPTANCE OF RESIGNATION OF
LAURA APONTE FROM HER EMPLOYMENT
WITH THE BOROUGH OF STANHOPE WITH
COUNCIL CONCURRENCE**

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Borough of Stanhope they do hereby concur with the Mayor's acceptance of Laura Aponte's resignation from the position of Finance/Tax Clerk, effective January 19, 2024.

On motion by Councilwoman Kuncken, seconded by Councilman Romano and unanimously carried by voice vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted.

Mayor's Appointment

Resolution 053-24

**RESOLUTION APPROVING THE MAYOR'S APPOINTMENT
OF THE BOROUGH'S REPRESENTATIVE TO THE
MUSCONETCONG SEWERAGE AUTHORITY WITH
COUNCIL CONCURRENCE**

Mayor's appointment of Brian McNeilly as the Borough representative to the Musconetcong Sewerage Authority with Council Concurrence.

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Borough of Stanhope that they do hereby concur with the Mayor's appointment of Brian McNeilly as the Borough's representative to the Musconetcong Sewerage Authority for a 5-year term effective February 1, 2024;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk be and is hereby directed to send a certified copy of this resolution to the New Jersey Secretary of State.

On motion by Councilman Romano, seconded by Councilman Riccardi and unanimously carried by voice vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Resolution 054-24

**RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE
BOROUGH OF STANHOPE AUTHORIZING PAYMENT
OF BILLS**

WHEREAS, the Chief Finance Officer has certified that funds are available in the proper account; and

WHEREAS, the Chief Finance Officer has approved payment upon certification from the Borough Department Heads that the goods and/or services have been rendered to the Borough;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope that the current bills list, dated January 23, 2024 and on file and available for public inspection in the Office of the Chief Finance Officer and approved by the Chief Finance Officer for payment, be paid.

On motion by Councilman Romano, seconded by Councilman Thornton and carried by a majority of the following roll call vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted. Councilman Wachterhauser abstained.

Councilman Wachterhauser asked why there were two purchase order numbers, PO#31686 and PO#31765 for project #080374, both for the Engineer, which have the same dollar amount. Administrator McNeilly stated they are most likely for stormwater quality. After a certain amount

of rainfall, the Engineer must go out and inspect all the stormwater retention basins and create a report. Those would have a standard charge and there were a few storms back to back recently. Councilman Wachterhauser stated there are a number of stormwater basins throughout the town which are deteriorating especially in the downtown area which are in need of repair. Administrator McNeilly stated there are no stormwater retention basins on this side of town, they are catch basins.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Kuncken – yes
Councilman Riccardi – yes
Councilman Romano – yes

Councilman Simpson – yes
Councilman Thornton – yes
Councilman Wachterhauser – abstain

ATTORNEY REPORT

Attorney Ursula Leo, asked to have an additional item added to the Closed Session this evening regarding Attorney Advice.

CITIZEN'S TO BE HEARD

Mayor Wronko opened the meeting to the public after advising attendees that there is a five (5) minute time limit for each speaker.

Bill Eaves stated the octagon structure that has been built at 20 Main Street is for a game and it is called a gaga ball pit.

Seeing no one further from the public wishing to speak, Mayor Wronko closed the public portion of the meeting.

CLOSED SESSION

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231 P.L. 1975 permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exists;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The public shall be excluded from discussion of and action upon the hereinafter specified subject matter(s).
2. The general nature of the subject matter(s) to be discussed is as follows:
 - 1 – Personnel – Chief Pittigher's Request for an Altered Work Day
 - 1 - Potential Litigation – PFAS Litigation
 - 2 - Attorney-Client Matters – Financial Disclosure Statements and General Attorney Advice
3. It is anticipated at this time that the above stated subject matter(s) will be made public at the conclusion of each individual specified subject matter.
4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

On motion by Councilman Romano, seconded by Councilman Riccardi, and unanimously carried by voice vote, the foregoing resolution was adopted.

The Mayor and Council went into Closed Session at 7:39 P.M.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

At the conclusion of the Closed Session, the Mayor and Council reconvened the public meeting at 8:15 P.M. with all present.

DISCUSSION

Budget – Administrator McNeilly stated with regard to sports, outside entities such as the fire department (on the building side), ambulance squad, the regional planning board, and the seniors club, any monies they receive stays static until the governing body receives the request in writing. Funds are not released until a written request and required documentation is received. These procedures are in place to protect the Borough and the entity making the request. Councilman Wachterhauser stated, while the governing body is building the budget going forward and knowing that costs are all increasing, he is of the opinion the increases should be anticipated. His concern is the requestors will submit requests next year for significantly higher amounts because they fell short this year. Mayor Wronko stated it is on the entity to ask. Administrator McNeilly stated this year is unique. Budget discussions should almost be a 12-month discussion, 10 months at the outside. The budget timeline begins in July for the following year. This gives everyone almost six months to submit their budgets and capital budgets. This year has been done a little differently due to the fact some of the members of the governing body were changing in January. It benefitted the discussions to begin in January. Councilman Wachterhauser stated he understands it is up to the entities to make their requests however, these entities affect the Borough on the whole. They are providing a service to the community. Councilman Thornton stated who better to decide what is needed than the people doing the job. Councilman Wachterhauser stated he agrees it is up to the groups to make the requests but he is of the opinion funds should be budgeted in case they are requested. Councilman Thornton stated it would be helpful to be able to budget for certain future expenses such as the reassessment but the system does not permit that. Administrator McNeilly stated there are only seven (7) funds which we can prepare for and a revaluation is not one of them. Councilwoman Kuncken stated the Fire Department is responsible for making the request for what is needed. Administrator McNeilly stated the Borough supplies the best of the best equipment for the volunteers. The volunteers here are our neighbors and we protect them. Councilwoman Kuncken stated the Fire Department is handled differently than the Ambulance Squad. The Fire Department is under the Borough. The Ambulance Squad does not have a budget within the Borough but they do receive a donation and fuel at a discounted rate. Administrator McNeilly stated if a problem arises and the Fire Department needs funding for an emergency they can come to the Mayor and Council who can then approve a transfer if necessary. This has not happened in many years which ultimately means the department is adequately funded. Much discussion took place regarding what if scenarios. Councilwoman Kuncken stated the different entities have been told over the years that the Borough will give them the tools and equipment needed to remain safe and do their jobs, but they may not always get what they want.

RESOLUTION

Attorney Leo dictated the following resolution:

Resolution 055-24

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF PFAS LETTER OF ENGAGEMENT

This resolution authorizes the execution of the Letter of Engagement in accordance with the October 11, 2023 correspondence from Wilentz, in order to allow the Mayor and the Administrator to execute the Letter of Engagement, and other required documents, for representation of the Borough of Stanhope in the PFAS litigation.

On motion by Councilman Romano, seconded by Councilwoman Kuncken and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Kuncken – yes
Councilman Riccardi – yes
Councilman Romano – yes

Councilman Simpson – yes
Councilman Thornton – yes
Councilman Wachterhauser – yes

DISCUSSION

Special Meeting - Mayor Wronko asked the governing body if they were available to attend a special meeting on January 30th at 6:30pm to discuss the budget and for a closed session with the Attorney Leo to discuss annual operations and ethics. The governing body members agreed to the date and time.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Councilwoman Kuncken, seconded by Councilman Romano and unanimously carried by voice vote the meeting was adjourned at 8:32 P.M.

Approved:

Linda Chirip
Deputy Clerk