

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Mazza called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

- 2. **"Sunshine Law" Announcement** - Adequate notice of this public meeting has been published in the Hunterdon Democrat and Courier News, posted on the municipal bulletin board and the Township website in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975. This notice has also been filed in the Municipal Clerk's office.

3. FLAG SALUTE

4. ROLL CALL

	Present	Absent
Mr. Severino	x	
Mr. Mazza	x	
Mr. Hirt	x	
Mr. Stiger		x
Mr. Stothoff	x	

Also, present Keri McNally, Esq., Robert Clerico, Engineer, Grace Brennan, CFO and Ella M. Ruta, Municipal Clerk.

5. APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

- a. Regular and Executive Session Meeting Minutes of October 20, 2021

Roll Call Vote	Moved	Seconded	Ayes	Nays	Abstain	Absent
Mr. Severino	x		x			
Mr. Mazza			x			
Mr. Hirt		x	x			
Mr. Stiger						x
Mr. Stothoff					x	

Motion carried

6. REPORTS RECEIVED – acknowledged

- a. Road Dept.- Week Ending; 10/15/21; 10/22/21; 10/19/21
- b. Zoning Officer – October 2021
- c. Public Safety Director – not present for the meeting. Written report submitted.
- d. Engineer's Report
 - Received a Notice of Grant Award from NJ DOT for VanSyckles Rd. Section 2 in the amount of \$203,034.00.
 - The lowest bidder for Baptist Church Section 2B Road Improvement Project is waiting for renewal of their State Certificate; therefore the bid cannot be awarded tonight. Mr. Clerico said the Township could award to the next lowest bidder that is \$25,000.00 higher. He said that in discussion with the Township Officials he recommended waiting a few days for the lowest bidder to receive their certification. He asked that a Special meeting be scheduled for November 19, 2021 to award the contract. After a brief discussion, the Committee agreed. A Special meeting will be scheduled for November 19th at 9:00 am.
 - Working with the Contractor to finalize VanSyckles Section 1 Grant.

7. CORRESPONDENCE/WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS – no comments

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Daniel Dix, 3 Rachel Court, asked permission to plant and decorate a Christmas tree in front of the Municipal Building. He said that he is hoping to have a tree lighting ceremony in the first week of December. He assured the Committee that there will not be any expense to the Township. Everything associated with planting and decorating will be donated.

A discussion followed regarding decorating Christmas Tree on governmental property and inclusion of all religious observances.

David DeGiralamo, 70 Driftway West, spoke in favor of having a tree and lighting ceremony.

Committee members agreed to check legal guidelines to decorate a tree on Township property.

9. PUBLIC HEARING

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

11. NEW ORDINANCES - 1st Reading

TOWNSHIP OF UNION ORDINANCE NO. 2021-10

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF UNION IN HUNTERDON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY
ACCEPTING THE DEDICATION OF A DRAINAGE EASEMENT ON
BLOCK 17, LOT 10.01, IN THE TOWNSHIP OF UNION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH N.J.S.A. 40A:12-1
ET SEQ.**

WHEREAS, Michael B. Lucas (the “Grantor”) is the owner of real property on Baptist Church Road in the Township of Union, County of Hunterdon, identified on the Union Township Tax Maps as Block 17, Lot 10.01 (the “Property”); and

WHEREAS, the Township of Union, County of Hunterdon (the “Township”) is rebuilding Baptist Church Road and constructing drainage improvements to address ongoing storm drainage problems; and

WHEREAS, the Grantor desires to grant a deed of easement for storm drainage purposes on a portion of the Property (the “Easement”) to facilitate modifications to an existing driveway culvert on the Property, which will be part of the storm drainage system; and

WHEREAS, the Grantee wishes to acquire said easement so it can construct the improvements to Baptist Church Road and the appurtenant storm drainage system; and

WHEREAS, the Township wishes to formalize its agreement to accept and maintain the storm drainage easement; and

WHEREAS, the Local Lands and Buildings Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:12-1 et seq., requires that easements be accepted by ordinance.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Council of the Township of Union in Hunterdon County, New Jersey as follows:

Section 1. Preamble Incorporated. The preamble to this ordinance is hereby incorporated and made a part hereof as if fully restated herein.

Section 2. Acceptance of Easement. The easement interest in the Property as described in the above recitals in furtherance of the above-stated purposes is hereby authorized.

Section 3. Execution of Documents. The Mayor, Clerk, Attorney, and other appropriate staff are hereby authorized and directed to execute any and all documents and undertake any and all acts as may be reasonably necessary and/or customary for the acquisition of interest in the Property as described in the above recitals.

Section 4. Repealer. All ordinances and resolutions or parts thereof inconsistent with this ordinance are repealed.

Section 5. Severability. If any section, paragraph, subsection, clause or provision of this ordinance shall be adjudged by the court to be invalid, such adjudication shall apply only to the section, paragraph, subsection, clause or provision so adjudged and the remainder of this ordinance shall be valid and enforceable.

Section 6. Effective Date. This ordinance shall take effect upon final adoption and publication and in accordance with law.

ATTEST:

Ella Ruta, RMC, Municipal Clerk

Hon. Frank Mazza, Mayor

Introduced: November 10, 2021

Published: November 18, 2021

Adopted: December 15, 2021

Published

by title: December 23, 2021

Roll Call Vote	Moved	Seconded	Ayes	Nays	Abstain	Absent
Mr. Severino	x		x			
Mr. Mazza			x			
Mr. Hirt			x			
Mr. Stiger						x
Mr. Stothoff		x				

Motion Carried

12. NEW BUSINESS

CONSENT AGENDA: All matters listed under the Consent Agenda are considered to be routine by the Township Committee and will be enacted by one motion in the form listed below. There will be no separate discussion of these items. If discussion is desired, that item will be removed from the consent Agenda and will be considered separate.

Mr. Stothoff asked that the Resolution Approving a Road Improvement Contract for Baptist Church Road Section 2B be removed from Consent Agenda.

- a. **RESOLUTION #2021-103:** Authorizing the Tax Collector to Cancel Property Taxes for Block 24, Lot 2 Qualifier_C3007 Pursuant to 100% Disabled Veteran Exemption

RESOLUTION # 2021-103

TOWNSHIP OF UNION, HUNTERDON COUNTY

RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE TAX COLLECTOR TO CANCEL PROPERTY TAXES FOR BLOCK 24 LOT 2 QUALIFIER C3007 PURSUANT TO 100% DISABLED VETERAN EXEMPTION

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 54:4-3.00(a) the dwelling house and cartilage owned by a citizen or resident of New Jersey who is a veteran and has a total or 100% permanent disability as defined therein may be exempt from property tax; and

WHEREAS, a resident and citizen of New Jersey who served in active war time and was honorably discharged from the U.S. Armed Forces was declared by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to be totally and one hundred percent permanently disabled; and

WHEREAS, a resident owns legal title to the entire dwelling house and cartilage on the property identified as Block 24 Lot 2 C3007, which is his/her principal place of residence; and

WHEREAS, a resident filed an application and the Tax Assessor approved the exemption effective July 27, 2021 based on the application and information provided; and

WHEREAS, Colleen Dolan, Tax Collector advises that the prorated amount of 2021 taxes in the amount of \$1,377.14 need to be cancelled; and

WHEREAS, payments totaling \$3,181.36 have been received by the Tax Collector; and

WHEREAS, the disabled veteran should be refunded \$1,377.14 which represents an overpayment of property taxes paid in 2021; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Union, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey that remaining taxes in tax year 2021 for Block 24 Lot 2 Qualifier C3007 be cancelled and a refund be given in the amount of \$1,377.14 and the records of the Tax Collector be adjusted to reflect the exempt status of this property.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this Resolution is provided to the Tax Collector, Tax Assessor and Chief Financial Officer.

- b. **RESOLUTION #2021-104:** Appropriation Transfer(s)

Resolution #2021- 104

UNION TOWNSHIP, HUNTERDON COUNTY

APPROPRIATION TRANSFER(S)

Be it resolved by the Township Committee of the Township of Union, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey, that there are insufficient funds to meet the demands necessary for the 2021 Appropriations in the following accounts:

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING November 10, 2021

TO: Telephone	10544099	\$ 500.00
Road S & W	10529010	10,000.00
Roads OE	10529020	15,000.00
Total		\$25,500.00

WHEREAS, the following account(s) have sufficient excess funds to meet such demands:

FROM:

Employee Group Ins.	10522090	\$10,000.00
Mun. Clerk S & W	10512010	8,000.00
Planning Bd. S & W	10518010	7,500.00
Total		\$25,500.00

BE IT RESOLVED that in accordance with the provisions of R.S. 40A: 4-58 the Chief Financial Officer is hereby authorized to make the transfer(s) required to meet the obligations of Union Township.

c. Payment of Bills

Roll Call Vote	Moved	Seconded	Ayes	Nays	Abstain	Absent
Mr. Severino		x	x			
Mr. Mazza			x			
Mr. Hirt			x			
Mr. Stiger						x
Mr. Stothoff	x					

Motion Carried

End of Consent Agenda

c. Discussion – Purchase of a New Fire Truck for the Pattenburg Volunteer Fire Company

Fire Chief Narbonne said the Fire Co. is replacing the 2004 Pierce Fire Truck and briefly explained the need of purchasing a new Fire Truck. Questions/Comments from the Committee included: the cost of a new truck, applying for federal grants to help with funding, donations from neighboring municipalities that PVFC is serving, PVFC’s budgetary planning e.g. using Fire Co. funds to create a K-9 unit, consequences from unauthorized use of the Fire Truck, number of responses to accidents on I-78 and filing insurance claims for reimbursement and liquidation of unused equipment.

Fire Chief Narbonne answered Committee’s questions/concerns to the best of his knowledge. He said that it is his goal is to improve the relationship between the Fire Co. and the Township Committee.

Mayor Mazza reiterated the need to apply for federal grants since most of calls are in response to accidents on I-78.

Mr. Severino stated that he does not feel comfortable approving or disapproving the purchase of a new Fire Truck. He said that the two new Committee members, who will be sworn in January, should be involved in making a decision to spend \$800,000.00 for the new Fire Truck.

The Committee members thanked Fire Chief Narbonne for the information and answers he provided tonight.

Assistant Chief Van Fossen addressed comments about creation of the K-9 Unit. He said the Unit from the beginning was supported by him and his father and public donations.

The Committee agreed that a meeting be scheduled with Page Stiger, Marc Strauss, Jason Narbonne and possibly the Township Attorney to look into available grants to help with financing the new Fire Truck.

13. REPORTS

a. Attorney's Report –

Mr. Stothoff reported that he spoke with Township Atty. Waterbury-Cecil regarding submission of 2022 License Renewal Application by Clinton Quarry. He said the application that was submitted is incomplete. Mr. Stothoff said that Atty. Waterbury-Cecil wrote a courtesy letter to Atty. Thatcher who is representing the Quarry, advising them that the 2022 license must be obtained by January of 2022.

b. Committee Report

Mr. Hirt reported the following:

- Thanked Engineer Clerico for a job well done improving Baptist Church Road.
- Debris is being dumped on the old bank property next to Clinton Station Diner. Mr. Stothoff said that Marc Strauss, Public Safety Director, is inquiring into the matter.

Mr. Severino reported the following:

- Recommended that the Township look into the possibility of conducting hybrid Committee meetings. Mr. Severino will explore that possibility.

Mr. Stothoff reported the following:

- Suggested that the Township contact GovOffice about redesigning the Township's website. The contract with GovOffice provides for updating and refreshing of the website.

c. Finance Officer's Report -

d. Pattenburg Volunteer Fire Dept.

- Chief Narbonne said the water tank installed at Glacier Way (PS Construction) has PBC pipe coming out of the tank with no support. Mr. Narbonne will contact Engineer Richard Roseberry who is overseeing the project.

e. Mayor's Report

- Received a phone call from a resident that she damaged two car tires by driving over debris (small wood pile) on Finn Road. She asked if the insurance claim to replace the tires could be submitted through the Township. Mr. Stothoff said that her comprehensive insurance should cover the damage.
- Spoke with a new Liaison from JCP&L about ash trees they are cutting and leaving on the side of the road. The Liaison said they will not cut trees into smaller pieces.

14. PUBLIC COMMENTS

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING November 10, 2021

Richard Lordi, 186 Main Street, asked for an update on the electrical box left hanging at the entrance to the Stonebridge Development. Mr. Severino offered to check into the issue and report back to the Committee.

Mr. Lordi asked how one would understand the cost of a new Fire Truck. Fire Chief Narbonne said he would be willing to meet at the Fire Station and provide a detailed explanation.

Mr. Lordi said that it was mentioned before that one of the benefits of having a new Fire Truck would lower a homeowner insurance premium. He asked how an individual resident would apply for the discount.

Fire Chief Narbonne gave a brief explanation and said homeowners have to contact their insurance agent who would then contact the Fire Company to confirm/verify the information.

Kathy Whitely stated reasons home insurance agents would lower the premium.

Millie Contie complained about high grasses at Hoffman Park.

David DeGiralamo asked if a decision was made regarding the problem with the Jutland Dam in Lakeside Estates as per previous discussion.

Engineer Clerico stated that he does not directly respond to third party questions. Mr. Clerico mentioned that none of the developments surrounding the Lake drain in its direction. Erosion issue that could have occurred from various storms is controlled by the County Soil Conservation District.

Mr. Severino questioned the Township's liability on private properties.

The Committee agreed to schedule a meeting with the Township Engineer, Township Attorney and representatives from Lakeside Estates HOA.

Mr. DeGiralamo said phone calls to the NJ DEP offices are not being returned.

Mr. Stothoff said that currently, unless you know a specific person or have a cell phone number for a NJ DEP employee, it is very difficult to conduct business with the State. He advised that an Engineer for Lakeside Estates HOA try contacting the State.

Mr. DeGiralamo said the Lakeside HOA contacted him for assistance. He said he contacted members of County Commissioners and recommended that HOA contact the Township directly for support dealing with NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection.

Mr. Lordi asked if the Fire Truck is not ordered/purchased this year would the price increase. Fire Chief Narbonne answered that "yes it would".

Mr. Lordi said a notice was left in his mailbox regarding "quiet zone" designation at the railroad crossing. He asked if the idea was entertained in the past. Mayor, Engineer and Committee members said that it was and explained that the Township does not qualify for a "quiet zone". Major upgrades would have to be done to meet Federal Rail requirements to qualify for a "quiet zone" designation.

Jason Narbonne, Fire Chief stated that overgrown hedges blocking traffic vision have been cut down by the Pattenburg House. Mayor Mazza said Mr. Stiger worked on the issue with the County.

Installing flashing light by the overpass bridge in Pattenburg was briefly discussed.

15. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Township Committee at this time Mr. Stothoff made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m. Mr. Hirt seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous favorable roll call vote.

Transcribed by: Ella M. Ruta, Municipal Clerk

Frank Mazza, Mayor