

**SPECIAL JOINT MEETING  
SHARED SERVICES  
PARK RIDGE AND MONTVALE MAYOR & COUNCIL  
TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2010 – 7:20 P.M.  
PARK RIDGE COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

Sign in sheet distributed and attached.

- **Councilman Maughan** welcomed those present.
  - Stated that this evening's meeting was an opportunity for the Council's to meet one another
    - Look at collaborative efforts
    - Conceptual framework for Shared Solutions
  - Those present introduced themselves
- **Mayor Fyfe as well as the majority of the Montvale Council was present**
- **Maureen Iarossi-Alwan, Montvale Administrator/Clerk present**
- **Council President John Kane as well as the full Park Ridge Council was present**
- **Helene Fall, Park Ridge Administrator**
- **Bill Beattie, Park Ridge Director of Operations**
- **Kelley O'Donnell, Park Ridge Borough Clerk**
  
- **Councilman Maughan** presented the following information to those in attendance
  - Review of Park Ridge demographics
  - Park Ridge Political Composition
  - Park Ridge Services – 64 total employees
  - Independent School System
  - Official Park Ridge Positions and Boards
  - Park Ridge Committees – each with a Councilmember as liaison
  - **Review of 2010 Municipal Budget**
  - **Revenues**
    - 72% Real Estate Taxes
    - Other sources
      - Rents
      - Surplus
  - Review of Top 5 taxpayers in Park Ridge
    - Bears Nest represents the largest tax payer
  - Councilman Maughan reviewed Revenue Conclusions for those present
  - **Expenses**
    - 48% Salary/Wages, Pension and Health Care costs
    - 13% Sewer and Recycling fees
  - Councilman Maughan reviewed Expense Conclusions for those present
    - 2010 Municipal Budget Headcount reduction discussed
  - **Councilman Maughan** reviewed the major changes between the 2009 and 2010 Municipal Budgets
    - \$890,000 Revenue and Surplus loss
  - **Major Savings**
    - \$350,000 savings in Health Insurance costs
  - **Major Increases**

- 4% inflation
- Extraordinary Legal fees
- **Review of Statutory Cap constraints**
- Municipal tax increase projected for this year
  - \$155 on average assessment of \$516,000
- Councilman Maughan reviewed the Tax Rates for Park Ridge
  - 2004 – 2009
    - Change on the municipal level over the past 5 years totaled \$150
- Councilman Maughan discussed the Borough's plan to strategically deal with future Tax Appeals
- Borough is also faced with Terminal Leave payouts with total liability at the end of 2009 amounted to \$772,000
- Employee Costs – Salary/Wages & Health Care Costs escalating
  - Need contribution from employees
- State looking at 2.5% cap for 2011
- **In conclusion Councilman Maughan stated that the Boroughs need to look at opportunities for Shared Services**
  - Commitment needed for sustained, ongoing dialog
  - Need to establish sub committees and set meeting dates
- **Montvale Council President Lane**
  - Reviewed for those present the demographics of Montvale
    - Major point of difference between Park Ridge and Montvale is the significant corporate presence in Montvale
  - Review of Montvale Departments and Services
    - Montvale recently merged Planning and Zoning Boards; titled Planning Board
  - Budget Challenges
  - **Major factors**
    - Cut in State Aid - \$275,000
    - Revenues down
  - Montvale has had steady increases in taxes over the past years
    - Despite spending cuts
    - Revenues were lost
    - Departments were asked to look for additional savings in their budgets this year
  - 2010 Proposed municipal tax increase of \$143.50 on average assessment of \$652,280
  - This year Montvale hopes to replenish surplus through a number of sources
    - Excess Sewer usage fees
    - Cell tower fees, sale of property, permit fees
  - Opportunities for Shared Services
    - Boroughs need to move aggressively
    - Utilize attrition as much as possible to eliminate layoffs
    - Open financial books totally in all areas
      - Share with employees the planning process
      - Educate and involve the public in the entire process
- **Councilman Maughan** invited comments from those present
  - **Mayor Fyfe** – first, wanted to state the towns know that they need to look at consolidated services

- Tri-Borough has been one of the first in the State
- Tri Borough Radio move to Northwest Dispatch was a 2 year planning process
  - Substantial amount of money was saved
- Understands that the towns are in favor of “home rule” himself included
  - Further stated that “home rule” could be a Tri Borough Home as opposed to Park Ridge or Montvale as Home
- Feels that everything is possible, not just the Municipal Court
  
- **Council President Kane** – stated that the economic times have brought us to where we are today
  - Need to look at sharing equipment; i.e. bucket truck
  - Credited Councilman Maughan for putting tonight’s meeting together
  - Need to establish a formal structure
    - Appoint committee members, at a minimum suggests 1 member per town
  
- **Councilman Maughan** repeated what Council President Lane stated that the municipalities need to allow themselves flexibility and room to grow, realizing it takes time
- **Mayor Fyfe** stated that each community must have the right to bail out
  
- **Councilman Maguire** advised those present of the committees that he is liaison for
  - Sees an opportunity for our Cable access groups to work together
    - Asked the savings Montvale realized by combining Planning and Zoning Boards
    - Mayor Fyfe said the savings was not large - \$7,000 to \$9,000
  - The merger of the boards created more cohesiveness and easier for the applicant
  - Mayor Fyfe further mentioned that this year they have 2 large applications which is unusual
    - Development is fading
    - Councilman Maguire stated that the reality is there is less open space
  - **Council President Lane** stated that as liaison to the Planning/Zoning Board it was very important that the expertise of the Zoning Board be brought to the “new” board
    - Eventually the board will shrink to a more manageable size
  
- **Councilman Maughan** stated that Park Ridge can utilize Montvale’s experience with the Excess Sewer Usage fees and likewise Montvale can use Park Ridge’s experience with cell tower leases
  
- **Councilman Misciagna** – Big supporter of Shared Services
  - Tonight’s meeting is a great start
    - Need to get affected parties involved, including residents
    - Committee should look at the most obvious areas and start with the specifics
      - ◆ Mayor Fyfe stated that the boroughs had looked at a shared DPW Supervisor
        - Montvale would have realized a savings immediately
        - Park Ridge would not have
  - **Council President Lane** stated that the decisions on shared services may not be ideal, that there will definitely be an impact on the services
- **Council President Kane** stated that any agreements need to have an “opt out” option with a time factor built in to reevaluate

- **Councilman Talarico** – His opinion is that the Councils have been more project oriented instead of goal oriented
  - Determination needs to be made, as in the court study, which town is ideal for hosting certain services
    - Stated that all present were favor of “home rule”
      - ◆ Further stated that different shared services or projects will need to be approached differently
- **Councilman Viola** - Feels that the boroughs should look at the “low hanging fruit” for initial sharing of services and projects
  - Severe structural impediments for the larger projects
    - Identify the “easy” things; i.e. leaf pick up
      - ◆ Montvale bags their leaves, Park Ridge picks up loose
  - He further stated that with regard to the Shared Court study his opinion keeps changing on what would be best
  - **Councilman Viola** feels that if the municipalities don’t take the initiative on shared services Trenton of the County will force it
- **Mayor Fyfe** stated that if the towns were willing to take a shot and move a very important service like the Tri-Borough Radio room to Northwest is should be an easy decision to try other things like Court or leaf pick up
- **Councilman Viola** stated that the boroughs need to set small goals, take baby steps.
- Discussion on meeting with Woodcliff Lake. Councilman Maughan stated that it will be set up in June or July.
- Discussion that there is no denying that shared services result in diminished services and people will lose their jobs
  - **Councilman Maughan** stated that it could be coordinated with retirement schedules
    - Not a question of “if”, it is”when”
- **Councilman Viola** stated that it is very important to have the residents deeply involved in the process
  - He further stated that no sharing of services should be entered into that will result in diminished services, unless it is approved by a majority vote of the residents
- **Maureen Iarossi-Alwan** – Reminded those present of the DPW Shared Services Study that was conducted a year ago. In her opinion the study should be reviewed, included items such as; purchase of capital equipment and supplies
- **Councilwoman LaMonica** stated that the time is now. Tax payers should be involved eventually. This group has started the process.
- **Councilman Hopper** – Great opportunity last year with Montvale and Woodcliff Lake
  - Consideration to combine Town Picnics
  - Also discussed splitting fireworks with Montvale
    - The shared events did not take place

- Another area to note is branches
  - Park Ridge picks up branches
  - Montvale uses a tub grinder
- Montvale's Garbage contract and Park Ridge's are up in 2011, maybe that can be looked at as a Shared service
- **Councilman Ghassali** – Stated that he lives in Montvale but has an office in Park Ridge
  - The first comment he wanted to make was “What took so long?”
  - His opinion a Steering Committee is needed to develop a 3 year Master Plan
    - Pilot tests – nothing new
    - Gives full support to the idea
- **Council President Lane** stated that the elected officials often hear from the residents that they should run the Borough like a business
  - Realize that there are some limits to this concept
    - But that is should be thought of as such
- **Helene Fall** – Issue of Shared Services is deeply imbedded in the Pascack Valley, especially the Tri Borough
  - Advised that you need to look at more than just dollars
  - Don't want to diminish services
  - Should include department heads in discussions, they are the doers
  - Ms. Fall further stated that she is in favor of a Tri Borough or Bi Borough as it may be
- **Councilwoman Cudequest** – Wanted to clarify that Tri Borough Ambulance is a separate entity with minimum support from the towns
- **Council President Lane** stated that maybe the boroughs need to explore more privatization of services
- **Council President Lane** further stated that if we look to Orangetown, NY, it is comprised of 3 distinct communities
  - Services are shared
- He further stated that he appreciates the desire to provide quality services, however may not be able to financially
- **Council President Kane** stated that the Tri Borough National Night Out was a huge success, why can't the same be done for fireworks and town picnics
- **Helene Fall** stated that the times are forcing us to return to the basics
  - Refocus as a necessity
  - Remember that we are “People serving people”
- **Councilman Viola** stated that if we think outside the box you can still provide quality services
  - The more things that are done together, the easier it is to make changes
    - Start with the easy stuff, recreation

- Move to larger things; i.e. courts, emergency services
- Council can make changes, not just talk about them
  
- **Councilman Maughan opened the floor to the public**
  
- **Rich Bosi** – 108 Eat Avenue, Park Ridge
  - Stated that the idea sounds good
    - Have not heard any dates to meet again
    - Supports the effort if done properly
- **Mayor Fyfe** stated the he would make appointment at next public meeting
- **Council President Kane** stated that he will discuss with **Mayor Ruschman** the need to appoint
- Steering Committee membership and then sub committees as needed
  
- **Council President Kane** stated that one way to fast track the approach is to get resident “buy in”
  - Suggested 2 council members and 2 residents from each town
- **Council President Kane** would like to add a Borough employee
- **Council President Lane** stated that he would recommend Borough employee appointment on specific areas
  - Steering Committee should be separate and decide which departments should be looked at
  - Steering Committee should have a minimum of quarterly meetings
    - Need to look to see if there is anything that could be done for 2011
    - Steering Committee needs to work aggressively
  
- **Councilman Maughan** stated that time is not our ally
  - Committee cannot talk, need to act
  
- **Council President Lane** stated that there is nothing preventing employees from making recommendations
  
- **Councilman Maughan** stated that the boroughs need to get employees and residents on board
  
- **Objective for next meeting**
  - Proposal and “buy in”
  - Execute quickly
  
- **Councilman Viola recommends that 2 people should be appointed from Montvale and Park Ridge tonight**
  - Almost full Councils are here from both towns
- **Councilman Misciagna** stated that **Mayor Ruschman** was not present and that he should have input
- **Council President Kane** stated that he would follow up with **Mayor Ruschman** prior to the next meeting

- **Mayor Fyfe appointed Council President Lane, Councilwoman LaMonica and himself as an alternate**
  - **Montvale representative would come to meeting with Woodcliff Lake**
- **Councilman Viola disagreed with Council President Kane's and Councilman Misciagna's decision to discuss with Mayor Ruschman.**
  - **Mayor Fyfe stated** that in the Mayor's absence Council President Kane could make the appointment
- **Council President Kane appoints Councilman Maughan and Councilman Misciagna to the Committee with Mayor Ruschman as an alternate.**
- **Council President Lane** stated that the residents of any of the towns could be included
- **Jerry Ritz, Park Ridge** – Advised those present that 38 years ago there was a Tri Borough Council which consisted of the 3 Mayors, 3 Council Presidents and 3 Finance Committee Chairs
  - Met monthly
  - Shared Sewer Cleaner
- **Kevin O'Brien, Woodcliff Lake** –
  - He had brought ideas of shared services to Woodcliff Lake Council
  - Has a list of suggestions
  - Recommends Park Ridge and Montvale Councils reaching out to their residents
- **Tom Mazarella, Park Ridge** – Wanted the Council to know that several of the employees are residents as well and they have ideas that would also save their jobs
- **Leigh Hopper, Montvale**- Is aware of an Interlocal agreement with a number of towns for their construction department
  - No longer a shared service but that was due to personalities
- **Jerry Ritz, Park Ridge** stated that the success of failure lies in the hands of the governing bodies
- **Councilman Maughan stated that now is the time.**
- **Rich Bosi, Park Ridge** asked what the cost savings is by moving the Tri Borough radio to Northwest Central dispatch
  - **Mayor Fyfe stated that he believed it was \$100,000 per community.**

**Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,



Kelley R. O'Donnell, RMC  
Borough Clerk