

# **BOROUGH OF HASBROUCK HEIGHTS**

## **MINUTES**

**January 17, 2007**

A Special Meeting of the Governing Body of the Borough of Hasbrouck Heights was called by Councilman Leonard Introna, Councilwoman Maryetta Saccomano, Councilman Anthony DiNanno and Councilman Stephen Altobelli for January 17, 2007 at 8:19 p.m. at Borough Hall, 320 Boulevard, Hasbrouck Heights, NJ. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss New Jersey's fair and open process in accordance with State Law N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.4 and 20.5.

Borough Clerk Rose Marie Sees stated that the meeting complied with the Sunshine law, adequate notice of this meeting having been made to all members of the Council by personal service on January 12, 2007 and transmitted to The Observer, The Record and The Herald News on January 12, 2007.

**ROLL CALL:** Present: Mayor Ronald R. Jones, Councilman Justin A. DiPisa (arrived at 9:04 p.m.) Councilman Leonard Introna, Councilwoman Carol J. Skiba, Councilwoman Maryetta Saccomano, Councilman Anthony DiNanno, Councilman Stephen Altobelli

Absent: None

**SALUTE TO THE FLAG AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Mayor Jones led in the Salute to the Flag and Pledge of Allegiance.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Discussion of New Jersey's Fair and Open Process in Accordance with State Law N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.4 and 20.5.

Councilman Introna first asked for verification of the date that applicants may apply and that new appointments could be made following the Council's failure to do make those appointments on January 1, 2007. He was advised the mayor had the lawful authority to make nominations for the first 30 days, if the Mayor's nominations fail, thereafter, the Council may make its nominations. He requested the Borough Clerk to read the resolution he presented to her.

He was questioned why this resolution was not given to the Governing Body beforehand. He referred to what was done the previous year. Borough Attorney Chandless explained in detail the Borough's past experience and criteria used. He and a committee comprised of Mayor Jones, Councilwoman Skiba and Councilman DiPisa reviewed the original ordinance on Pay to Play, and in finding that it was more stringent

**NEW BUSINESS (cont'd):**

than State Statute, recommended using the formula applied by State Statute whereby each appointee was requested to abide by the \$300 threshold on donations. As it became apparent later in the year that the Borough may be faced with appointees who may have made larger donations, so the committee again proposed a new ordinance which was adopted on December 28, 2006, which provides that even if you put out requests for proposals, those appointees will be subject to the \$300 limitation. Councilwoman Skiba referred to an editorial in the county daily. Councilwoman Saccomano questioned Mr. Chandless on the pay to play ordinances. He went into a more detailed explanation, stressing that the ordinance adopted in December 2006 went back to the original ordinance which calls for no loopholes for professional services solicited through proposals, with no exception for bids and imposes the \$300 limitation for all. Councilman Introna questioned if family members could each also contribute \$300, that with the new Democratic Council new laws are made. Mayor Jones' commented on the loss of courtesy in calling meetings, having appointees familiar with Hasbrouck Heights, and that laws should be changed to make less corruption.

Wilfredo Ortiz, as a member of the audience, began to speak and this resulted in an encounter which caused Mayor Jones to have him removed from the council chambers by Capt. Joseph Cronin, as he was disrupting this meeting.)

Councilman DiNanno asked to move on the resolution proposed. Councilwoman Skiba said she had not seen the resolution to be voted on. He later expressed his sorrow that all the Council was not given the resolution beforehand.

**MISCELLANEOUS FROM PUBLIC:**

Mayor Jones invited Mr. Ortiz back into the Council Chambers.

Sonya Buckman, 239 Central Avenue, had researched the Democratic donations and had some questions.

Wilfredo Ortiz, 15 Washington Avenue, Emerson, highly disputed the Borough Attorney's assertion that this is an exception to the pay to play law, authorized under the N.J. Statute. A discussion of corruption between himself and Mayor Jones followed, including Mayor Jones giving a lengthy report of his sons' employment with the Borough, and the events of the past year regarding the appointment of Joseph Jones as Judge. He also referenced a proposed anti-nepotism ordinance that would have found no fault in the appointment. The Borough Attorney position was discussed including salary and various functions.

A question of recusing oneself when appropriate was asked and what should be a nepotism law.

**MISCELLANEOUS FROM PUBLIC (cont'd):**

The Borough Attorney reminded the Council that this was a special meeting and scope of the meeting is a discussion of the statutory provision of the pay to play statute.

Cindy Schwalb, 167 Field Avenue, questioned the PAC, and was told it is a Political Action Committee of any party with no residency restriction. She also questioned previous Council on how their campaigns were funded.

Rose Heck, 501 Collins Avenue, read a portion of an editorial that appeared in today's Record "...West Milford should serve as an example to Emerson and other north Jersey communities. It has shown that a municipality can act on its own to end what Governor Corzine has aptly called 'the toxic mix of politics, money and public business' permeating the state. New Jersey has statewide laws that attempt to restrict awarding of government business to political contributors, but these laws have loopholes so wide you can drive a Brinks truck through them and that's exactly what some politically connected companies do..."

**ADJOURN:**

There being no further business to be conducted by the Mayor and Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:43 p.m.

I, ROSE MARIE SEES, Borough Clerk of the Borough of Hasbrouck Heights, do hereby certify that the foregoing Minutes are to the best of my knowledge a true account of the Mayor and Council Meeting held on January 17, 2007.

---

Rose Marie Sees, RMC  
Borough Clerk