

REORGANIZATION MEETING – LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING
COUNCIL MEETING ROOM

Thursday, January 1, 2009 – 12 Noon

The Reorganization Meeting of the Lawrence Township Council was held on Thursday, January 1, 2009, at the Lawrence Township Municipal Building – Council Meeting Room at 12 Noon.

The Municipal Clerk read the following statement of proper notice:

“Adequate notice of the January 1, 2009 Reorganization Meeting of the Lawrence Township Council was forwarded to The Times, The Lawrence Ledger and the Trentonian on December 26, 2008.”

Reverend Marella Holmes, delivered the Invocation, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, led by the Municipal Clerk.

The roll call of continuing Council members was then called as follows:

Present: Councilmen Bostock, Miller, Powers, Councilwoman Mount
Absent: None.

Richard S. Krawczun, Municipal Manager, and Kevin Nerwinski, Esq., Municipal Attorney, were also present.

The Municipal Clerk called for nominations for Office of Mayor for the year 2009.

“Madam Clerk it would be my pleasure to nominate Pam Mount for Mayor for 2009. Pam has been one of the hardest working members of this Governing Body, she’s been an outspoken advocate to Open Space Preservation, she has led the efforts in terms of sustainability in our community and it is my pleasure to give my nomination”

Mr. Powers nominated Pamela Mount for Office of Mayor for the year 2009.

The Municipal Clerk thanked Mr. Powers and asked if there are any other nominations?

“Yes, Madam Clerk, it is my honor and pleasure to nominate Councilman Rick Miller for Mayor. Councilman Miller has a started his sixteenth year of service on this Body, he has a lot of experience as a Councilman, strong record of accomplishments over the years. I think given his experience and knowledge he would make an excellent Mayor for 2009, it’s my pleasure to nominate him”

Mr. Miller nominated Robert M. Bostock for Office of the Mayor for the year 2009.

The Municipal Clerk thanked Mr. Bostock and asked if there are any other nominations?

There being no other nominations, the Municipal Clerk declared the nominations as closed and proceeded with the following roll call vote in alphabetical order.

The roll call vote for Mr. Miller:

RECORD OF VOTE

COUNCIL	AYE	NAY	PRESENT	ABSENT	ABSTAIN	MOVED	SECOND
Mr. Bostock	X					X	
Mr. Miller	X						
Mrs. Mount		X					
Mr. Powers		X					

Mr. Powers stated, “It is a partisan form of government, traditionally the party of the majority has elected the Mayor, I will be voting “no”.”

The roll call vote for Mrs. Mount:

RECORD OF VOTE

COUNCIL	AYE	NAY	PRESENT	ABSENT	ABSTAIN	MOVED	SECOND
Mr. Bostock		X					
Mr. Miller		X					
Mrs. Mount	X						
Mr. Powers	X					X	

Mrs. Mount asked Mr. Nerwinski to please inform them and the public on the procedure to follow to elect a Mayor.

Mr. Nerwinski stated in anticipation of this he had the opportunity to research and what he would like to do is read on the record his interpretation and the process that should be followed by Town Council, which should take about five minutes.

Mr. Nerwinski proceeded to read the following: Lawrence Township Code 2-9 is the code that provides for the selection of Mayor, it states and I quote, *“At noon on the first day of January following each election of councilmembers, the municipal council shall assemble at township hall, organize and elect one of the councilmember’s mayor of the township. In non-municipal election years, the municipal council shall assemble for the annual reorganization meeting at township hall and elect one councilmembers mayor of the township. The mayor shall be chosen by ballot of majority vote of all members of the council. If the members shall be unable in five ballots to be taken within two days of the organization meeting to elect a mayor, then the member who in the last election from members of the municipal council received the greatest number of votes shall be mayor. Should such person decline to accept the office, then the person receiving the next highest vote shall be the mayor and so on until the office is filled - that’s our Code.”*

“Therefore, in following the Township Code, the election of Mayor shall be brought by a vote by the Municipal Clerk upon nominations by Councilmembers. If after five ballots votes or nominations by Councilmembers a Mayor is not elected the highest vote getter in last election shall be the Mayor. If he or she declines the next highest vote getter shall be the Mayor. The Municipal Clerk should have on hand a certified copy of the last election results available to read on the record for purposes of determining Mayor. (He then asks the Municipal Clerk if she had that on hand – a silent gesture of yes was given.)

Additionally, there is a State Statute N.J.S.A. 40:69A-86 entitled, Mayor Election by Council or by Voters. This should be read in Para material to be read together with Lawrence Township Code 2-9, and it provides and I quote, *“That the mayor shall be elected by the members of council, in which case, on the first day of July or January as appropriate following their election, the members elect of the municipal council shall assemble at the usual place of meeting of the governing body of the municipality and organize and elect one of their members as mayor. The mayor shall be chosen by ballot of the majority vote of all members of the municipal council. If the members shall be unable within five ballots to be taken within two days of set reorganization meeting to elect the mayor, then the member who in the election for members of the municipal council received the greatest number of votes shall be the mayor. Should such person decline to accept the office then the person receiving the next highest votes shall be the mayor, and so on until the office is filled and quote.”*

Clearly, this Statute contemplates reorganization to occur only after the election of members to Council. In addition, the process upon which council members select the mayor also fails to contemplate staggered elections since the members elect are to gather and select one of their members as mayor. It is not reasonable to conclude that the legislature intended that the determination of the highest vote getter was to require review of the total votes cast for the council

members from the past two elections held two years apart, in which, not involves council members running against each other.

It is my opinion that the use of highest vote getter as a determining factor for this election of Mayor applies only in the circumstance if all members of Council run against each other in their prior election. Accordingly, the State Statute is not in conflict with the Lawrence Township Code, but rather provides for a process for selecting a mayor in terms of less specific, as a Township Code and under separate circumstances.

It is certainly unusual circumstances that confront this Governing Body; the vacancy created by the resignation of Mark Holmes effective December 28, 2008 has left the Councilmembers split with (2) Democrats and (2) Republicans. Since the Lawrence Township Code requires Reorganization to occur on every year, the Governing Body must reorganize prior to the fifth seat and ultimately the deciding vote being filled on Council.

The additional fact that the Township has staggered elections only further serves to complicate the selection of Mayor at Reorganization, since it precludes two members from consideration for the office of Mayor when a member is not selected after five ballots are taken. Of course, if the Council vacancy were filled prior to Reorganization Day this issue would not exist.

As a result of the above, it is my recommendation that the Lawrence Township Council follow the expressed language of its own Code since it provides a clear process referring to the highest vote getter in the last election, to determine at the Reorganization Meeting which one of its members shall serve as Mayor for 2009.

My conclusion is further supported by the following that focus on the doctrine of home rules and deference that is give to municipalities:

The New Jersey Constitution Section 7 - Article 11, which provides, the provisions of this Constitution and of any law concerning the municipal corporation form for local government were concerning counties shall be liberally construed in their favor. The powers of counties and such municipal corporations shall include not only those granted in expressed terms, but also those necessary for verification or incident to the powers expressly conferred or essential thereto and not inconsistent with or prohibited by this constitutional law.

N.J.S.A. 40:42-4, *Municipalities Given Fullest Authority*, provides, in construing the provisions of this subtitle all Courts shall construe the same most favorably to municipalities, if it being the intention to give all municipalities to which this subtitle applies the fullest and most complete powers possible over the internal affairs of such municipalities for local self government.

Finally, N.J. S. A. 40:69A-29, *Powers of Municipalities*, which provides, in part, each municipality governed by an optional form of government pursuant to this act shall subject to provisions to this act or general laws have full power to –

Subsection (A) Organize and regulate its internal affairs and to establish, alter or abolish offices, positions and appointments and to define the functions, powers and duties thereof and fix their terms, tenure and compensation.

Based upon that, it is my recommendation that we follow the Lawrence Township Code to procedure.

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Councilman Bostock: Madam Clerk, can you tell us who the highest vote getter was at the last municipal election?

Municipal Clerk: Mr. Michael Powers - 3, 468, second was Mrs. Mount, 3, 441.

Councilman Bostock: Therefore, given the recommendation of the Attorney and to save time rather than go through five ballots, I will nominate my colleague Councilman Powers to serve as Mayor for 2009 since he was the top vote getter, and if we go through five ballots and remain deadlocked the position would be offered to him anyway.

Councilman Powers: I gladly accept the 2010 Councilman Bostock (some laughter) but the 2009 I must decline.

Councilman Bostock: May I ask why...?

Councilman Powers: Traditionally, we rotate the Mayor of the majority party and in terms of the rotation Councilwoman Mount would be up for the rotation for Mayor this year. There is a lot of planning in terms of organizing the year. As you know, the Mayor is the leader for this year on Council and sets the Agenda for that particular year, and I know Councilwoman Mount has prepared a lot of ideas for 2009, that she would like to take movement on, in terms of sustainability, in terms of the transportation that we are all concerned about with the truck traffic on Route 206, in terms of working together in a collaborative way.

Councilman Bostock: I'm glad to hear that you are aware of her of the Councilwoman's agenda for the next year. I'm pleased to hear this for the first time today – sounds like a good agenda. Thank you for sharing this with me.

Mr. Nerwinski: What I propose that we do is we follow the letter of the Code and we have three more ballots, and if we are deadlocked at that point in

time, we will follow the Code and Mr. Powers will either decline or accept at that point.

Councilman Bostock: Well, I'll nominate Mr. Miller, again.

Councilman Powers: I'll nominate Councilwoman Mount, and again I urge my colleagues on the Republican side of the isle to reconsider given the fact that the current majority party traditionally picks; and, like it or not we have a partisan form of government and when the citizens of Lawrence Township decided to choose which form of government they want they could have chosen a non-partisan form of government, as we have in some of the other surrounding municipalities. They chose the partisan form of government, we run as Republicans – we run as Democrats. The Democrat Party is the majority although there is a vacancy of one Democratic seat, which leaves the situation staggered. So, I would again urge reconsideration by my Republican colleagues to consider my Democratic colleague for Mayor.

Councilman Bostock: Well, I appreciate the Councilman's comments; I would suggest if the Democrats were in the majority here, we would have one ballot to cast.

Mr. Nerwinski, Township Attorney: Let's take care of it.

Councilman Miller: I will nominate Councilman Bostock. I 'm glad to hear that talk about the truck traffic. That's something that Bob has taken up this year working on the Blue Route and also working on a resolution which was submitted to the Legislature and the Governor about enforcement of truck traffic which I co-sponsored with him to allow our local police to enforce where the State police are not, it's not on their agenda to do that, because they have too many other things that take precedence. As far as the open space, Bob has been an advocate and has gotten legislation through and monies approved to clean up the Dyson Tract. It's part of our open space inventory – it's a hot bed literally. So we were able to get funds under Bob's pushing of that. And, also he worked with former Mayor Holmes, Chief of Police Posluszny and Richard Krawczun on racial profiling appearance, and I won't say it's a problem, but the appearance that has been highlighted in newspapers. So, I would like to nominate Councilman Bostock for the position of Mayor for 2009.

Councilman Powers: Obviously, there is a communication issue that we have to work out. Like it or not, we have a partisan form of government. You're a Democrat or Republican, but we are one community here in Lawrence Township. I think in terms of our job as Council people we have to work on serving the best interest of the residence - the best interest of the community. And, the fact that we are Democrats or Republicans I think the public doesn't really care about that. They care about what this Governing Body does in terms of serving their best interest, and traditionally we've done that here.

One of the things that I like to point to that makes Lawrence Township different than other communities is that at the end of an election, the losing candidates in the municipal election come over to the headquarters of the prevailing party and offer congratulations and recognizes that we are one community. With the split votes that we had in the recent election we've gotten away from that tradition and at this level of partisanship, we've got to increase communication on this Governing Body. And, I think it's unfortunate and I think its going to come back to haunt us, because the public is not going to put up with this partisanship; they want to see us move forward in the best interest of the community.

I know it is nice to be Mayor and be able to go and cut the ribbons with the big scissors and perform marriage ceremonies, but the Mayor has an equal vote with the rest of the Council members. Obviously, to set the Agenda; but, we work as a deliberative body; we work as a governing body. I've worked with Councilman Miller on a bipartisan basis in terms of Pay-to-Play reform. When I was Mayor in 2006, Councilman Miller was consulted and supported the position I took in opposition of the hospital that was proposed for Princess Road, and ironically one of my Democratic colleagues opposed that.

So, we don't vote in a block - Democrats and Republicans - on the issues. We vote in the best interest of the community. I think we are starting the silly season a little early - it's going to be an election year, and it's fine for the silly season, you know, if you take positions. But, as far as governing day-to-day operations you have to put our partisanship aside and work on the best interest of the community.

Councilman Bostock: Well, I'm delighted to hear that you are going to put the partisanship aside and hope that is true with appointments of Councilmembers to committees. I hope it's true with appointments to boards and committees and members of the public - not the case last year, one exception. I hope it true this year; it would be great to see it. I also hope, speaking of putting aside partisanship and I will have more to say about this later, when it comes to filling the vacancy that we can work together and not have dates set without any consultation with us - a process set without any consultation with us. So, that we can go forward in filling this vacancy in an open transparent proper and through way, the way that the voters and the residents of this town deserve to see us do. I'm delighted that you're going to look to work in a more bipartisan fashion.

One thing that's true is you know bipartisan always looks different from which side you are on. If you're on the majority bipartisan often means – the other guys need to do what we want because we got the majority, that's not what bipartisanship is about. So, if we can see more consultation, more cooperation, more consensus building, I would welcome it and I hope the first, the first opportunity we have to do that would be in filling this vacancy and I hope that you

would work with us with the kind of process such as the one we proposed to you before we said anything about it publicly in an attempt to work this issue through.

Councilman Powers: And that happened before you were on Council, Councilman Bostock, but I think we have to look at the history of your service on this Council. We had an issue with the cell towers and the Mayor asked for us to wait until we got to the Council meeting to have our deliberations and prior to that meeting you and Councilman Miller issued a press release without consulting Councilwoman Mount, and without consulting myself and without consulting the Mayor, and acted with Councilman Miller as a voting block, saying you would not vote for the cell tower issue.

When we talked about transportation issues, you wrote a piece in The Trenton Times, you and Councilman Miller, but you didn't consult with your colleague Councilwoman Mount. She's been involved with the transportation issue since her first time as the Mayor in 2001, and she serves on the large truck committee for the New Jersey League of Municipalities, and she is part of the task force for the Township in terms of the truck traffic on Route 206, but you didn't bother to consult her before you submitted an article to the Trenton Times. So, bipartisanship, as you said, cuts both ways - you can do it, so can I, which is really dumb.

Councilman Bostock: Well, I'm sorry, I must have missed somewhere in the Administrative Code here that before a Councilman makes a public statement he's got to get it approved by all the vote counts or all his other colleagues.

Mr. Nerwinski: I would recommend Council that we take the ballots at this time. We all agree with that pretty much. So, we have one ballot that's done.

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The Municipal Clerk stated the roll call vote would be for Mr. Bostock. She then continued the roll call vote in alphabetical order until the (5) ballot voting process was completed for each of the following nominees.

The roll call vote for Mr. Bostock:

RECORD OF VOTE

| COUNCIL     | AYE | NAY | PRESENT | ABSENT | ABSTAIN | MOVED | SECOND |
|-------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|-------|--------|
| Mr. Bostock | X   |     |         |        |         |       |        |
| Mr. Miller  | X   |     |         |        |         |       |        |
| Mrs. Mount  |     | X   |         |        |         |       |        |
| Mr. Powers  |     | X   |         |        |         |       |        |

Mr. Powers said, "no" for the reasons stated.



The roll call vote for Mr. Miller:

RECORD OF VOTE

| COUNCIL     | AYE | NAY | PRESENT | ABSENT | ABSTAIN | MOVED | SECOND |
|-------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|-------|--------|
| Mr. Bostock | X   |     |         |        |         |       |        |
| Mr. Miller  | X   |     |         |        |         |       |        |
| Mrs. Mount  |     | X   |         |        |         |       |        |
| Mr. Powers  |     | X   |         |        |         |       |        |

Mr. Powers said, “no” for the reasons stated.

The roll call vote for Mrs. Mount:

RECORD OF VOTE

| COUNCIL     | AYE | NAY | PRESENT | ABSENT | ABSTAIN | MOVED | SECOND |
|-------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|-------|--------|
| Mr. Bostock |     | X   |         |        |         |       |        |
| Mr. Miller  |     | X   |         |        |         |       |        |
| Mrs. Mount  | X   |     |         |        |         |       |        |
| Mr. Powers  | X   |     |         |        |         |       |        |

Mrs. Mount stated “yes” for obvious reasons.

After the roll call voting process was completed, Mr. Nerwinski asked the Municipal Clerk the election results.

The Municipal Clerk confirmed the election results for Township Councilmembers at the November 6, 2007 Election; highest vote getter was Mr. Powers at 3, 468, second highest were Mrs. Mount at 3, 441.

Mr. Bostock asked who was the third highest?

The Municipal Clerk advised that the third highest was Mr. Bostock.

Mr. Nerwinski asked Mr. Powers if he would accept.

Mr. Powers stated that he would accept for 2010, but “no” for 2009.

Mr. Nerwinski advised that the second highest vote getter is Mrs. Mount.

Mrs. Mount thanked Mr. Nerwinski and advised that she would “accept” the position as Mayor.

The Municipal Clerk advised that Senator Shirley K. Turner would administer the Oath of Office.

Senator Turner stated, “Good Afternoon” and wished everyone a very happy, healthy, and peaceful New Year prior to administering the oath, and

indicated most of all if they all work together they will all have a prosperous New Year.”

Senator Shirley K. Turner then administered the Oath of Office to Mayor Mount.

Mayor Mount welcomed everyone and stated it is really an honor to have so many people in attendance at the Reorganization Meeting, and proceeded to give special recognition to the following attendees: *Congressman Rush Holt, Assemblyman Reed Gusciora, State Senator Shirley Turner, Mercer County Surrogate, Diane Gerofsky, Freeholder Pasquale Colavita, John Cimino Anthony Carabelli, Former Mayors, Gregory Puliti, Robert Kusek, Frank Nerwinski, Former Councilman Joseph Cermele, Director of Ewing-Lawrence Sewage Authority, Robert Filler, Chief of Police, Daniel Posluszny, Health Officer, Carol Chamberlain, Director of Public, Gregory Whitehead, Superintendent of Recreation, Steven Groeger, President of the School Board, Laura Waters, Headmaster of The Lawrenceville School, Elizabeth Duffy, VP of Rider University Treasurer of Finance, Julie Barnes, Chair of the Clean Air Council for DEP, William O’Sullivan, Former Assemblyman Skip Cimino, County Executive, County Clerk, Paula Sollami-Covello, .*

Mayor Mount’s Mayoral remarks:

“Well, welcome all... now it’s my turn to say a few words and thank you so much for coming today, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009 - “Happy New Year!”

“It’s my honor again to serve as Mayor. I want to thank my family for their support of my habit of public service – Gary, Reuwai, Tannwen and their wonderful families.

Also, I want to thank Richard Krawczun and his great staff for keeping the town on track and prosperous. Lawrence is a wonderful town. You, the residents, have made it so. As a state, a county and a town, we all face unprecedented challenges this year. With such staggering difficulties there may be opportunities.

When Gary and I first bought our farm, I heard Mr. Hawkins of Smith and Hawkins talk about how he had built a national retail business. His theory was “money is not the answer.” We were glad to hear that because we didn’t have any money. Businesses, he said, “Think that they can throw money at the problem and it will be solved, but really the key issue is using all your resources, being creative and planning it out. Money is part, but the most important part is how you manage the resources that you have.”

“What we do and how we manage it” is the question that Richard Krawczun asks when he puts together a budget. This year we have to believe Mr. Hawkins because we will not have any money to throw at our problems.

All of us, together, will have to pitch in, do our part, be creative and think differently. You might say, "How can I make a difference?" Well, let's look at the budget and see if we can find some ideas that save money, help the town, work together and be more sustainable.

Lots of your money is spent taking trash to the landfill. A few years ago when we decided that we could no longer pick up grass clippings, that year we saved \$100 thousand dollars. This year let's make a goal of recycling twice as much as we do. Every time you put something in the trash, think of your tax bill and recycle.

With your help it will make a difference...

Our fire companies, manned by volunteers and two paid staff answer an average of 600 hundred calls a year – over half are false alarms, because the alarms are not functioning properly. The slogan "change your clocks, change yours batteries", is important – everyone who did not change their batteries this past fall, go home and do it. Check your water heaters and furnaces, make sure they are not leaking Co2, which activates the Co2 alarms.

With your help It will make a difference...

Be the eyes and the ears of the police – see something suspicious, call!

With your help It will make a difference...

Clean up after yourselves and others. We take great pride in the beauty of our town, our parks and our schools. Pick up the trash, mow the vacant lawn in your neighborhood, and adopt a park or the side of a roadway. This year let's make the Mayor's Clean-up Day a town-wide event.

With your help It will make a difference...

Take an extra can of food to the food bank at the Neighborhood Center. Get to know your neighbors, ask for help or offer help. Think about having fun right here in town – block parties, potluck suppers, attend the town-wide events like Diversity Day, the Jubilee, the Bike Rodeo, and the Fourth of July fireworks. Volunteer to make these things happen, sponsor an event.

With your help It will make a difference...

Save money by saving energy, have an energy audit. Sustainable Lawrence is organizing an energy-saving program. Funding is available. Attend the "Green Expo" in March and find out other ways to be sustainable, save money, and help the environment. The town has received a grant to have all our

public buildings audited. We will fix the energy leaks, save fuel, be sustainable, help the environment and go green.

With your help It will make a difference...

Come to the town-wide community conversations sponsored by the Lawrence Community Foundation this spring. Share what you need, what you can do, join together with others.

With your help It will make a difference...

Frequent our own small businesses. The Community Foundation, Sustainable Lawrence, Mercer Chamber of Commerce and the Growth and Redevelopment Committee are collaborating together to put together a business directory so we will all know the over 900+businesses we have here in town and be able to support them.

With your help It will make a difference...

Laura Waters, School Board President, and I will again meet frequently. The Board and Council will have joint budget meetings. I will take the Council on the road again this year and every other month we will meet in different locations around town. Come out and let us hear from you.

With your help It will make a difference...

Ride the bus, walk to a store, bike to work, leave your car at home one day a week, allow your children to walk to school or ride the bus.

With your help It will make a difference...

Construction may be slower in town because of the economy but this gives us time to plan and focus on redevelopment. I will focus on Business Route 1; bringing together the Committee that I started the first time I was Mayor with the residents and the businesses. Heritage Village development will be opening in January – a huge accomplishment, and I want to publicly thank Senator Shirley Turner, Assemblyman Reed Gusciora and Assemblywoman Bonnie Watson-Coleman for helping us secure funding from DOT for the redesign of the roadway that we have been working on for years, that will now be built in 2011.

With your help It will make a difference...

Councilman Mike Powers has been helping the Eldridge Park residents with their redevelopment plans starting with the Vision Plan that the town received a grant to fund. And, on Spruce Street the Redevelopment Project is moving forward with the collaboration of Trenton, Ewing, and Lawrence with the

County taking the lead. Richard and I have been going to meetings for four years, but progress is being made, and;

With your help It will make a difference...

A core of residents has been tracking the truck and traffic problems in town with me this year. We are collaborating with Princeton Township and Borough. Our voices are being hear, and;

With your help It will make a difference...

So lets hear from you –

Volunteer your energy and ideas.

You are this town.

This town is you.

Thank you very much!"

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Mayor Mount administered the Oaths of Office of the Chiefs of the Fire Companies as follows:

Chief Rob Santello  
Chief John Britton  
Chief Ray Nagy

Slackwood Fire Company  
Lawrence Road Fire Company  
Lawrenceville Fire Company

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#### Public Participation

Mr. Michael Horan, 20 Rydal Drive, voiced his concerns about the events he has been reading about in the media with regards to the Council vacancy. Specifically, he would like to see the Council work together to fill the vacancy so that the Council can move forward to the governing of the Township.

Mr. Robert Immordino, 34 Lawn Park Avenue, stated that tomorrow is January 2<sup>nd</sup> and for many years he has been commemorating an event the took place here on Lawrence Township soil with the Colonel Hand March.

Mr. Immordino advised last week when he was away he drafted an article that he did not have time to get published, so he decided to take this opportunity to share with them the information concerning the first Battle of Trenton which

was the turning point of the American Revolution. However, it would have been a mere footnote in British History had not the resulting successes of the second Battle of Trenton taken place. And, the successes of the second Battle of Trenton could not have taken place except for what Colonel Hand did on Lawrence Township Maidenhead now Lawrence Township soil.

Mr. Immordino stated he feels Lawrence Township has been ignored too long concerning this whole thing, and indicated people hear all the time about the Battle of Trenton and the Battle of Princeton, but just remember if Colonel Hand had not done what he was told to do by General Washington there would not have been a Battle of Princeton nor any of the battles that followed. So, he thinks Lawrence Township needs to begin to blow their horn and make sure that others blow the towns horn, as well. Because, what Colonel Hand did certainly saved the American Revolution, at least, that is the way he sees it and the facts will support it.

Mr. William Aggress, 32 Pagoda Court, stated since Mr. Immordino gave the introduction, everyone is invited to the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Colonel Hand Historic March on Saturday, January 3<sup>rd</sup> at 10:00 a.m. at Town Hall. He also advised that Mr. Immordino started the march 47 years ago and this year they will have an exact replica of the Liberty Bell for the historic event.

There being no one else who wished to address Council, Mayor Mount closed Public Publication.

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### Resolutions

Resolution Nos. 1-09 thru 7-09 with the exception of Resolution 3-09 (Defeated) were approved by the following roll call vote:

| COUNCIL     | AYE | NAY | PRESENT | ABSENT | ABSTAIN | MOVED | SECOND |
|-------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|-------|--------|
| Mr. Bostock | X   |     |         |        |         |       |        |
| Mr. Miller  | X   |     |         |        |         |       |        |
| Mr. Powers  | X   |     |         |        |         | X     |        |
| Mayor Mount | X   |     |         |        |         |       | X      |

Mr. Miller moved to nominate Michael Gluck of Gluck-Walrath, LLP as Bond Counsel for 2009.

Mr. Powers stated “no” because the existing bond counsel has done a wonderful job for the Township throughout the years, so he does not recommend changing the counsel.

Mayor Mount stated “no” because it is a job that takes skill and is not a partisan job.

Mr. Miller advised that Mr. Gluck served as Bond Counsel for Lawrence Township in the past and he is well respected, as well as, his firm – it's not partisan.

Due to a lack of majority vote, the nomination for Gluck-Walrath, LLC was defeated on the following roll call vote:

| COUNCIL     | AYE | NAY | PRESENT | ABSENT | ABSTAIN | MOVED | SECOND |
|-------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|-------|--------|
| Mr. Bostock | X   |     |         |        |         |       | X      |
| Mr. Miller  | X   |     |         |        |         | X     |        |
| Mr. Powers  |     | X   |         |        |         |       |        |
| Mayor Mount |     | X   |         |        |         |       |        |

Due to a lack of majority vote, Resolution Nos. 3-09 (c) for McManimon & Scotland was defeated on the following roll call vote:

| COUNCIL     | AYE | NAY | PRESENT | ABSENT | ABSTAIN | MOVED | SECOND |
|-------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|-------|--------|
| Mr. Bostock |     | X   |         |        |         |       |        |
| Mr. Miller  |     | X   |         |        |         |       |        |
| Mr. Powers  | X   |     |         |        |         | X     |        |
| Mayor Mount | X   |     |         |        |         |       | X      |

Mayor Mount advised that the issue would be postponed until the next Council meeting that has a full Governing Body.

Mr. Nerwinski stated that there is no table on the issue, there's just no appointment being made at this time.

Mr. Powers ask Mr. Nerwinski how would the non-passage of the resolution affect the functioning of the government?

Mr. Krawczun advised that they could contract on an issue-by-issue basis until the appointment is made.

Resolution No. 8-09 was approved by the following roll call vote:

| COUNCIL     | AYE | NAY | PRESENT | ABSENT | ABSTAIN | MOVED | SECOND |
|-------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|-------|--------|
| Mr. Bostock | X   |     |         |        |         |       |        |
| Mr. Miller  |     |     |         |        | X       |       |        |
| Mr. Powers  | X   |     |         |        |         | X     |        |
| Mayor Mount | X   |     |         |        |         |       | X      |

Resolution Nos. 9-09 was approved by the following roll call vote:

| COUNCIL     | AYE | NAY | PRESENT | ABSENT | ABSTAIN | MOVED | SECOND |
|-------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|-------|--------|
| Mr. Bostock | X   |     |         |        |         |       |        |
| Mr. Miller  | X   |     |         |        |         |       |        |
| Mr. Powers  | X   |     |         |        |         |       | X      |
| Mayor Mount | X   |     |         |        |         | X     |        |

Resolution Nos. 10-09 was approved by the following roll call vote:

| COUNCIL     | AYE | NAY | PRESENT | ABSENT | ABSTAIN | MOVED | SECOND |
|-------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|-------|--------|
| Mr. Bostock | X   |     |         |        |         |       | X      |
| Mr. Miller  | X   |     |         |        |         |       |        |
| Mr. Powers  | X   |     |         |        |         | X     |        |
| Mayor Mount | X   |     |         |        |         |       |        |

Resolution Nos. 11-09 thru 22-09 with the exception of Resolution 21-09 (u) (Defeated) were approved by the following roll call vote:

| COUNCIL     | AYE | NAY | PRESENT | ABSENT | ABSTAIN | MOVED | SECOND |
|-------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|-------|--------|
| Mr. Bostock | X   |     |         |        |         |       |        |
| Mr. Miller  | X   |     |         |        |         |       |        |
| Mr. Powers  | X   |     |         |        |         | X     |        |
| Mayor Mount | X   |     |         |        |         |       | X      |

Due to a lack of majority, Resolution Nos. 21-09 (U), Appointment of a Municipal Court Judge was defeated by the following roll call vote:

| COUNCIL     | AYE | NAY | PRESENT | ABSENT | ABSTAIN | MOVED | SECOND |
|-------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|-------|--------|
| Mr. Bostock |     | X   |         |        |         |       |        |
| Mr. Miller  |     | X   |         |        |         |       |        |
| Mr. Powers  | X   |     |         |        |         | X     |        |
| Mayor Mount | X   |     |         |        |         |       | X      |

All adopted Resolutions are spread in their entirety in 2009 Resolution Book.

Mr. Nerwinski stated for informational purposes according to N.J.S.A. 2B 12-4, Judge Catanese would serve as a carryover judge until a successor is appointed or he is reappointed.

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### Appointments to the Planning Board

Mr. Miller moved to nominate Mr. Falk Engel for a full seat on the Planning Board.

Mr. Powers moved to “table” the nomination, because they do not traditionally make appointments to the Planning Board at the Reorganization Meeting.

Mr. Miller stated after a long discussion at the December 16<sup>th</sup> meeting relative to the issue, it was Mr. Nerwinski’s recommendation that they make the appointment at the January 1<sup>st</sup> Reorganization Meeting, as they could not appoint someone on December 16<sup>th</sup> for a future date. So, because they have it open on today’s Agenda and the Council is not scheduled to meet again until the January 6<sup>th</sup>, and the Planning Board Meeting is scheduled to reorganize on January 5<sup>th</sup> he



is asking that Mr. Powers rescind his motion to “table”, so they can have a full body at the January 5<sup>th</sup> Planning Board meeting.

Mr. Powers stated it's a little ironic that they do not have a full body on Council although members of Council pushed to have the vacancy filled so they could have a full Governing Body. Now, they have to go through the full 30-day process with respect to the State Statute to fill the vacancy, and Mr. Miller wants to argue the point that the Planning Board position needs to be filled today because they have a vacancy when they have alternates on the Board just for that very reason. So, in light of that, he does not see the need to break tradition and appoint someone to that Board when they can reorganize with the two alternates they already have.

Mr. Miller stated he fails to see the logic that he and Mrs. Mount pushed for prior to the December 16<sup>th</sup> meeting to have the Planning Board positions filled in 2008.

Mayor Mount advised when they originally discussed the matter they had a full complement of Council. Since then things have changed to include the receipt of two additional applications for the Planning Board position and the traditional interview process that goes along with that process. So, she feels it would only be fair to wait until the fifth person is sworn in and they have a full Governing Body, so that he can be part of that selection process for the Boards and Committees.

Mr. Miller stated he hopes that the word “he” is being used in a gender neutral way and not predetermined, which he does not think is the case. But, last year they held interviews with only four seated Councilmembers and that was fine, so why didn't they just hold off on all the interviews then?

Mr. Miller further stated they had set deadline dates in the past relative to the receipt of applications for the Planning and Zoning Boards, but he supposed they are now going to throw out those deadlines.

Mayor Mount stated the man he is proposing snuck in an application after the deadline last year, so you never know who will sneak in after the deadline date – might be an important guy. She then asks for the roll call vote.

Mr. Nerwinski stated they have a motion to table and asked for the roll call vote for that, first.

The Municipal Clerk called the following roll call vote for the motion to table the appointment of Falk Engel as a full member on the Planning Board:

| COUNCIL     | AYE | NAY | PRESENT | ABSENT | ABSTAIN | MOVED | SECOND |
|-------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|-------|--------|
| Mr. Bostock |     | X   |         |        |         |       |        |
| Mr. Miller  |     | X   |         |        |         |       |        |
| Mr. Powers  | X   |     |         |        |         | X     |        |
| Mayor Mount | X   |     |         |        |         |       |        |

The Municipal Clerk then called the following roll call vote for the motion to appoint Falk Engel as full member on the Planning Board:

| COUNCIL     | AYE | NAY | PRESENT | ABSENT | ABSTAIN | MOVED | SECOND |
|-------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|-------|--------|
| Mr. Bostock | X   |     |         |        |         |       |        |
| Mr. Miller  | X   |     |         |        |         | X     |        |
| Mr. Powers  |     | X   |         |        |         |       |        |
| Mayor Mount |     | X   |         |        |         |       |        |

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### Special Presentation

Mayor Mount stated it is now 1807 and they are having a Town Meeting in the Princessville Inn, and there are issues of concerns of the century.

Mayor Mount then requested the Township Historian, Dennis Waters, to come up and set the theme for the presentation entitled, "Turnpikes, Tolls and Traffic", which voiced the complaints of traffic at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Afterwards, there was short skit performed by various people in the audience reflecting the great history of the Township.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Mayor Mount stated the history of the Township is really important because it's such a great town with great heritage and the people have always been the driving force on issues and improvements that have come along. She indicated 1807 was not that long after the war, and the State and local governments did not have the resources to build a infrastructure and create a town that the people wanted to see happen. So, the people stepped forward, to build the turnpikes and built schools and hospitals the same way by putting up the monies and using the resources that they had and the people they knew who could build from their own community, in addition to thinking of ways to prosper in their communities. So, we should take a lead from our history and know that at this time in 1807 was not that different from this time 2009 and 2010 as we move forward. In closing, she said, "So... celebrate with all of us – our history and our future!" She then thanked everyone from coming out and advised that there will be a benediction."

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Mayor Mount asked Council for their remarks:

**Councilman Bostock made the following remarks:**

“Good afternoon and Happy New Year.”

“I regret that 2009 is not starting off on a very positive note for local government in Lawrence Township. Over the past two weeks we have witnessed what I can only describe as a deeply disappointing effort by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to subvert proper process in selecting a person to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of our former colleague Mark Holmes.

Under the state law that applies to our form of local government, when a councilmember resigns, the party to which he belongs is charged with recommending to the Township Council three persons from that party to fill the vacancy. The party has up to 15 days following the effective date of the resignation to make its recommendation.

The Township Council then has the responsibility to select one of those three people. It has as long as 30 days after the effective date of the resignation to make a selection. Should it fail to do so, the party who made the nominations can then name one person to fill the vacancy.

The meaning of this is clear. The person who eventually fills the current vacancy will be a Democrat. I have no quarrel with that. Indeed, it is only right that if a Democrat resigns a Democrat should fill that seat, just as should a Republican vacancy occur, a Republican should fill that seat. But that’s not all the law seeks to accomplish.

If we look at the law a little closer, it’s obvious that it was written with two additional goals in mind. The first is to ensure that the vacancy is filled within a reasonable time frame. The second is to give the governing body – all of its members – a choice from among several candidates.

Contrary to what some have suggested, the governing body – the Council – is under no obligation to select the one candidate that the party committee most prefers. If that were the case, the law would not require the naming of three candidates. It would allow the party committee to simply fill the vacancy. But it does not.

Rather, the Statute and case law provided to the Council by Mr. Nerwinski make clear that members of the council are expected to use their independent judgment in reaching a decision after considering all three candidates.

Assertions that Councilman Miller and I have no role to play in this decision-making process exhibit a profound lack of understanding of the law and a deep lack of respect for the democratic process.

So how does a responsible public official make such a decision? The answer seems clear, at least to me.

First, find out as much as you can about the candidates. That would include getting copies of their resumes and asking them to provide you with something in writing about why they want to serve.

Next, give the candidates a chance to talk with you – and to the public – about why they think they are the best candidate for the job and provide them with ample opportunity to answer any questions you might have. Listen with an open mind and give the candidates a fair chance to explain why they want to serve and why they should be selected.

Finally, deliberate with your colleagues about which of the three candidates would best serve the community and make your decision on that basis.

That is the process Councilman Miller and I have tried to put in place for filling the current vacancy. Regrettably, our efforts have been rejected out of hand. This is what has been offered instead.

Vote for a candidate without being provided with any information about them beyond their names.

Vote for candidate after a short, 15-minute interview, conducted in secret, hidden from the eyes of the public and the press.

And finally, don't expect your vote to make a difference, because no matter what you think, we're going to get a new system, so we can get who we want, one way or the other.

There is no way this discharge is responsible. Filling a vacancy on Council is not speed dating; it's picking someone to represent the 30,000 people of our community and it should be done thoughtfully and deliberately.

I have to admit; I am somewhat mystified that my Democratic colleagues so categorically rejected our proposal to conduct public interviews with the three nominees. Mr. Kownacki, Ms. Gur, and Mr. Puliti are all public-spirited citizens. I would think that their fellow Democrats on Council would jump at the chance to showcase these three individuals in open, public session. I certainly would if the situation were reversed.

Of course, I understand that my colleagues are having some trouble adapting to the current reality caused by Mr. Holmes' untimely resignation – untimely because he chose to make his resignation effective just days before this Annual Reorganization Meeting, which left his Democratic colleagues in the quandary they now face.

As a result, the members of the once and future – but not current – Council majority, seem positively unnerved by the very idea that they might actually have to work with Mr. Miller and me. I suppose, though, that's to be expected. After 13 years of exercising their majority status as if it conferred upon them the divine right of kings, they find themselves on unfamiliar ground. It is painfully obvious that this is terrain they are having trouble negotiating.

But the reality is this: today, and for the next several weeks, neither party has a majority. Until the current vacancy is filled, they must reach across the aisle, in a truly bipartisan fashion, if they want to get anything done.

Bipartisanship is a two-way street; it requires consultation, communication, cooperation, compromise, and consensus. It means trying to find common ground. An attitude of “my way or the highway” is not what bipartisanship is about.

It appears to me that their desire to retain absolute control over such important matters as appointments to committees and boards – without even the slightest interruption – has led my Democratic colleagues to pursue a course that any reasonable person would immediately understand is profoundly undemocratic and unwise. This does not reflect well on them. I believe they will come to regret it.

I am eager to fairly and thoroughly evaluate all three of the nominees we have been presented. To accomplish that goal, Councilman Miller and I are asking them to provide us with a current and complete resume and a statement of candidacy. We also ask each of them to meet with us, in an open forum at a mutually convenient time, to discuss their desire to serve on the Council. I hope and trust that, as public-spirited citizens who are seeking the privilege of serving the people, they will agree to do so.

Selecting someone to serve on the Town Council is an important responsibility that I take very seriously. By insisting on a thoughtful and deliberative process, I am simply seeking to discharge my duty as I see it. If given that opportunity, I look forward to voting for one of the three nominees to serve our community as a member of this body for the balance of this year.

But under no circumstances, should any one think that by discharging my duty as I see fit, no matter how inconvenient it may be, for my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that, I am going to shirk from doing so for even a moment.

That is not how a democracy works, you can be in the minority - you can have a point of view - you ought to be able to express that point of view, and have people respect the fact that you differ with them. That, my friend, is what a democracy is about. It is not about a majority acting in tyrannical fashion to work their will on a legislative body such as this.

Thank you and Happy New Year.”

**Councilman Miller made the following remarks:**

“Good afternoon.”

“Most of you know that I’m a man of few words. I usually don’t give long speeches. That being said, I’m forewarning you to make yourselves comfortable, because I have a lot to say.

Today marks my 16<sup>th</sup> Reorganization Meeting, more than anyone else sitting here beside me.

For most of those meetings I was in the clear minority.

I knew that my vote was not needed to elect our ceremonial Mayor, but only once during those years was I even asked for my support. I usually found out whom my Democrat colleagues had selected to be the Mayor when I showed up for the vote or from the newspapers.

The decision was predetermined. Only once in those years did I withhold my vote for their selection.

The resignation of Councilman Mark Holmes, who for several years served this town as my Republican colleague, provided our town with this, with a chance for bipartisan cooperation. Something that we have not seen for a long time.

Instead, our Democrat colleagues issued a directive for the replacement of Mr. Holmes. As usual, without considering Councilman Bostock or myself.

Their plan, which Councilman Bostock outlined, was simply not something that we could agree to. It flies in the face of open and transparent government. The kind of government that Republican candidates have been campaigning on for years.

My Democrat colleagues claim that our opposition is political. I state that it’s purely governmental.

I vowed to those people who elected me that I would vote for open government.

I will keep my word...

A day for cooperation and mutual respect was dashed away last Sunday, when I called Acting Mayor Mount to discuss a proposal, their proposal and concerns that Councilman Bostock and I had. I asked her to work with us to openly and thoroughly consider the three candidates that her party had selected to succeed Mr. Holmes.

At her kitchen table, without any consideration, Ms. Mount dismissed our proposal for an open, thoughtful and deliberate process to review the candidates selected by the Lawrence Township Democrat Municipal Committee. Ms. Mount stated to me that she saw no reason for the candidates to submit written statements of interest, resumes or to hold interviews in an open public meeting.

Please understand, I was not asking her for her to delay the timeline as set forth in law. Under the plan we proposed, we would still meet the deadline for filling the vacant seat by January 27<sup>th</sup>.

Let me take a minute to explain to you why we take the process of replacing a councilperson so seriously.

The person who we select will be a full voting member of this Governing Body – one without any public input whatsoever.

I viewed this selection as a huge responsibility. Our selection process will act as substitute for the traditional 6-month long campaign.

The law clearly lays out parameters to replace a Council member.

And yes, part of the responsibility rests with a political machine. However, there's a time when politics needs to be left at the door and government takes over. My Council colleagues don't seem to understand this.

After outlining our proposal for a thoughtful and deliberative process, Ms. Mount said she would have to discuss it with the Democrat Committee. I countered and told her that she needed to discuss this with Councilman Powers, not the political powers of the Lawrence Democrat Club.

She then informed me that the local, the political committee had already selected former Councilman Greg Puliti to be appointed to the vacant seat.

If this was the case, the entire process is really nothing more than a sham.

I was surprised that she would so clearly state that her vote as a Councilwoman was predetermined. I had hoped that we could work together in the best interest of Lawrence Township.

While I am acquainted with all three candidates and have served with Greg Puliti, I don't think that we should take a path that would make the process less thoughtful and deliberate.

I have not rendered an opinion on any of the three candidates, as I haven't had the opportunity to review their strengths and qualifications or to ask them why they want to serve and what they hope to accomplish as government official of this Township.

Councilman Powers has implied that I've already made up mind on who will receive my vote. While my democrat colleagues may have already made up their minds, I can tell you that I have not made up mine. He went on to insinuate that my only consideration was my campaign for reelection.

Let me clearly state, that no one... that he is the one bringing politics into Town Hall, not me.

I have lived in this town my entire life. I've served this community as Councilman for a long time. Believe me when I tell you, I do not do it for any glory or fame. It is often a thankless job that takes me away from my family – as it does anyone who chooses to serve in this capacity.

I continue to serve because I feel that I make a difference.

I do it because people have asked me to stay involved and help this town.

I do it because I was brought up in a family that taught me it was my responsibility to give back.

I was also brought up to respect people, but I feel less and less respected as an individual on this governmental body.

I don't expect my colleagues always to agree with me, but I do expect to be listened to and I expect for my thoughts to be considered in the same manner that I consider theirs. Sadly, any level of mutual respect seems to have disappeared.

If I seek to run again, I'll campaign for the seat in the same way that I have campaigned in the past – on my record - no matter who chooses to run against me.



Campaigns are designed to allow the voters a chance to understand the people who they are selecting to represent them, and I welcome that opportunity.

As former Councilman Holmes said on several occasions, it's about the process and let the process play out. There's a process and we should follow it as openly as we can.

I understand that there are three Democrat seats and two Republican ones. However, I don't believe that because they have one more vote than we do, that cooperation and negotiation should be nonexistent. I know that in the end, the democrats can select the Council member – and the Mayor -- of their choosing.

I continued my conversation with Ms. Mount asking for her and Councilman Powers to consider the suggestions of Councilman Bob Bostock and myself for some appointments to boards and committees.

I also asked her to allow us to put forth names of two appointed professionals to serve this town. I didn't think that was a whole lot to ask for.

For the Democrats to think that this one vote majority gives them the undeniable right to control everything in this town saddens me.

There should be give and take. Councilman Bob Bostock and I were willing to do just that. This was my second attempt to reach across the aisle that day.

I was hoping the hand would reach back, but instead I received a slap. I was rejected without any consideration.

Acting Mayor Pam Mount even threatened to cancel today's meeting, rather than consider any of our proposals. This was clearly not the spirit in which I called to meet with her.

In fact, the whole meeting flew in the face of a quote that appeared in the December 23<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Lawrence Ledger.

Councilwoman Mount said, "The moral of the story is, we have to help each other out. I hope that in this year we will be able to remember that and everyone will pull together in the best interests of everybody."

Apparently, those words don't apply to working with Councilman Bostock and me.

I'm sorry if my remarks today seem melancholy.

Over the years, my remarks at Reorganization have been more hopeful – and brief – but I can honestly say that this is a sad day for me as a representative of this town.

Never have I witnessed such a petty quarrel.

What is so bad about our proposal? Is it just because the Republicans proposed it? "

I would like to congratulate our fire chiefs – you and your members work very hard for this town and your service is very commendable. I want to also thank you for your commitment and for your families of giving you.

I wish here everyone a Happy New Year and all the residents for Lawrence Township.

I truly hope that today provides an opportunity to put the past behind us and begin the New Year with a newfound sense of cooperation.

We all know that this year will bring us challenges. I hope that we can tackle them together in the best interest of the town where we all choose to make our home.

Thank you."

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**Councilman Powers made the following remarks:**

"Well, I'm not a professional speechwriter, so... I am going to try to do the best to speak from the heart. I am not going to read my remarks. I am going to tell you what I am thinking about right now from my heart.

First of all, "Happy New Year" everyone, I want to recognize my wife, Victoria, my children, Hunter and Christopher, my mother-in-law, Felicity and my father-in-law, Alan, are here. And, I am sort of embarrassed here, because grownups shouldn't behave the way we behaved today up on this Council dais.

One of my New Years resolutions was to work together with my colleagues from both sides of the aisles. The level of partisanship increased dramatically in 2008. And with the new year of 2009, I said, "You know what, I am not going to get into the bickering, but already the bickering has begun, and we need to rise above it.

Because, guess what folks, there was an election for a President where people have responded overwhelmingly because they are tired of the partisan

bickering. We are not red states – we are not blue states – we are one United States, and we are one community in Lawrence Township.

An, that's the way we need to act as Council people. We need to serve the residents and act in the best interest of the residents. Let me tell you, that is not an easy job, when you have a Council chamber full of angry residents screaming – not in my backyard.

Politically, it's easy to say "yes" we'll give you what you want, but it takes courage - it takes guts to say "no" this is going in your backyard because this in the best interest of the Township. We had that with the cell towers.

We had an opportunity to make \$160,000 in revenue that's desperately needed for this community - our residents are hurting financially. Residents don't want a cell tower in their backyards; they came out in anger and expressed to the Council – a room full of angry people – not in my backyard.

Councilwoman Mount, now Mayor Mount showed her courage... exercised political courage. She lives in that neighborhood and she said, "yes" to the cell tower because she knew that's going to be in the best interest of our community, it's going to provide much needed taxpayer relief to the residents – and that was the right thing to do.

And, guess what folks, we're coming into an election season where there is going to be a budget and the State is broke. There's not any money for municipal aid. We've had municipal aid flat for number of years. Last year, we faced a cut from municipal aid, and we can certainly expect another cut in municipal aid, which means, unfortunately, to maintain the level of services that our residents demand - taxes are going to have to go up.

And, it is an election year and you can play politics and say, "I'm not going to vote for this budget - it just a tax increase." But, guess what, the Democrats run a pretty tight financial ship.

Greg Puliti came up with this idea with the cell towers for revenue for our firefighters. Last year, we reached out to The Lawrenceville School, Ms. Duffy is here, the Headmaster. And, she has provided \$35,000 of annual relief to help offset the cost to our municipal government. She's not required to do that, The Lawrenceville School is tax-exempt, but she's reaching out to help our community.

That was an effort the Democrats brought. But, to hear the minority party, most would say, "I disagree with what you're doing". But, it's a different thing to think outside the box and provide an agenda to have us move forward. It is easy to call a press conference and send press releases. I chose to do my business

here at the Council's dais. Maybe, you know, we'll have to start doing some media operations Pam, and work on our speechwriting.

But, I wanted to speak from the heart today, tell you what I am feeling. I think we can work together because I'm not up for reelection in 2009. Councilman Miller, if he chooses to run for re-election will be judged by the voters by his time, but by his behavior at this Council dais. So, I hope we can all act as grownups, get through the year and continue working to overcome the challenges that our township faces.

Thank you – Happy New Year.”

**Mayor Mount's closing remarks:**

“When I ran last time, I thought this town knew me well enough, and luckily they did and re-voted for me to return to Town Council. However, when Mr. Bostock had decided that he, I guess, decided he was going to run, started campaigning way before the campaign.

He brought two ethics charges against me, before we even knew what or who he was. And, they were overturned unanimously by the Ethics Board. Having said that, this is silly stuff and shame on the person who put that forth, Mr. Bostock.

I never brought that up during the campaign. I try to stay above politics. I don't know what politics are – I'm a farmer and a social activist and I don't do this stuff. But, for Mr. Miller and Mr. Bostock to say it is irresponsible of us to provide a government that is sound, thoughtful, efficient, and careful and considerate of the residents of Lawrence Township is a travesty - and I won't stay silent.

I, as you all know, am driven to get things done. And, I got you all here, because you help do all that – with us. And, we will continue that, we have a job to do this year in this town and for many years ahead – it's going to be a rough road.

I praise the three candidates who have stepped up to be part of the Town Council, if they are chosen. But, the will of the Democratic Committee, the top vote getter of that when they called for the vote was Greg Puliti, and they made it very obvious that that was their choice.

They are elected by the residents of Lawrence Township from each voting district to represent them. This is no closed door, this is no behind the scenes – this is democracy. We all need to remember that this is our town, these are our neighbors, and we love the town and we love each other. Let's move forward.

In closing, Mayor Mount thanked everyone for coming out and advised that a reception and lunch would be served downstairs after the closing prayer and asked Reverend Marella Holmes for the closing prayer.

On motion by Mr. Bostock, seconded by Mr. Miller, the meeting adjourned.

1:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kathleen S. Norcia  
Municipal Clerk

Attest:

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Pamela H. Mount, Mayor