The Governing Body met to discuss the litigation matter with respect to Fran Brooks v. Township of Tabernacle (BUR-L-002065-19)

Solicitor Lange met with members of the Township Committee to discuss the ongoing litigation and allegations that surround the selection for persons of the year hosted by the Holy Eucharist Church Annual Pine Barrens Festival and representation to the Emilo Carranza Memorial. The allegation being made is that there was a meeting conducted electronically in violation of the statute. Fran Brooks sued the Township to be compelled to prepare and adopt minutes associated with these allegations of holding electronic meetings, which were nothing more than contact between the Township Committee concerning these two issues. Fran Brooks made other allegations concerning the acceptance of the Public Safety Director with no specific account, but a pattern of practice of Township Committee members to have meetings electronically.

Solicitor Lange advised the Township Committee of a meeting held with Judge Covert in which the position of the Township Committee was explained not to litigate but pursue to dismiss the lawsuit. It would not be worthwhile to spend any public funds or discuss their suggested preference.

Mr. Lange spoke of this being a minor issue and would like to amend our answer to express that the Township is not interested in wasting taxpayer money to defend themselves frivolously over an issue that does not mean anything in the first place. Mr. Lange stated that he will not voluntarily allow for interrogatories, subpoenas, phone records, email records or depositions, which Ms. Brooks wants over this issue and recommends the Township bring this to a quick conclusion and admit the allegations in the complaint. The only thing that should not be agreed to is an injunction against any future electronic meetings.

Members of the governing body held discussion of proposing one email address for the public to communicate.

The Governing Body discussion matters Relating to contract negotiations (RFPs and Professional Services)

Solicitor Lange excused himself from discussion.

Mayor Barton advised the Township Committee of the Land Development Board’s RFP review and their interests of keeping their current professionals. The Land Development Board select for their conflict professionals will be addressed during their reorganization.

Mayor Barton spoke of the added positions for the Township which includes the positions of Conflict Engineer, Special Counsel and Conflict Township Attorney. Members of the Governing Body discussed the position of the professionals for 2020. The RFPs were discussed regarding the added positions.

Seeing nothing further, members came out of closed session and returned to the regular meeting 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

La Shawn R. Barber, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Draft submitted: 02/15/2020
Approved: 2/24/2020

RELEASE DATE: 12/17/2020