

**THIS WAS A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ORANGE TOWNSHIP HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL, 29 NORTH DAY STREET, ORANGE, NEW JERSEY ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2016, AT 6:30PM.**

The Chair led all assembled in a Salute to the American Flag.

**Roll Call:**

**Present:** Councilman Kerry Coley, East Ward  
Councilman Elroy A. Corbitt, At-Large  
Councilwoman Tency A. Eason, North Ward  
Councilman Harold Johnson, Jr. West Ward  
Councilwoman Jamie Summers-Johnson., South Ward  
Councilwoman Donna K. Williams, At-Large (arrived@ 6:54)  
Council President April Gaunt-Butler, At-Large

**Also Present:**

Joyce L. Lanier, City Clerk  
Dwayne D. Warren, Mayor  
Marty Mayes, Acting Business Administrator  
Martin Townes, Legislative Research Officer  
Margarette Homere, Clerk's Office

City Clerk announces that the requirement of N.J. S.A. 10:4-9 et. seq., "Sunshine Law" has been met a public notice was sent to the Orange Record and published with the Star Ledger on January 23, 2016, posted on the Bulletin Board in City Hall and filed in the Office of the City Clerk.

**MUNICIPAL COUNCIL DISCUSSION ON THE ORANGE RECREATION CENTER (YWCA) 395 MAIN STREET, ORANGE, NEW JERSEY.**

Councilman Johnson, Jr. Commented that he represents residents of the West Ward and he will continue to ask questions regarding the Recreation Center. Councilman Johnson, Jr. asked the Mayor to comment on 3 items that the Council received from the Mayor. The Mayor responded below.

Mayor Warren stated that he foresees the Recreation Center opening upon the closing of February 28, 2016. The YWCA is functioning today, it has activities and groups playing there now. The rehabilitation of the building is not in the first stage of the planning. The key focus is around the swimming pool. While the pool is being repaired the City intends to use the building. There is mode in the locker areas and the pool area. There will be a new ceiling in the pool area and new surface areas around the pool area. The ceiling areas that are bad will be replaced.

Councilman Coley stated that the Council has not received a report about the mode from a certified tech. Acting BA Mayes showed the Council were in the Recreation packet the

mode report was. Councilman Coley wanted a certified remediation company. Acting BA Mayes will get information on the certification of the people that did the report. Coley wants an independent company to do the report so there is no bias. The tested material had been sent to a lab for the reported results.

Councilman Johnson, Jr felt that the contaminates that were discovered should be taken care of before residents are allowed in the building also he stated that the report does not show any cost associated with the cleanup.

Acting BA Mayes would have the professionals come to the Council to address these concerns. All of the repairs have to go out to Bid and then come before the Council for approval. The packet is to show the Council what has to be done.

Councilwoman Eason stated that the Recreation Center is needed and the remediation should be done just like it was done with some of the schools in Orange that were built in the 1800s. Councilwoman Eason believes that the Council needs to move forward with the project.

Mayor Warren stated that the report shows things that need to be fixed but that should not prevent the City from purchasing the building. The negotiations are just like buying a house; the city has free money to buy the building and make repairs.

Councilwoman Williams asked for a complete schedule of events that are currently taking place and any current revenue figures. The Mayor could give a schedule of events by the City but not of YWCA events. He will find out if there is any revenue for City events, but he was not sure that there were any City events. Councilwoman Williams asked if the City had an appraisal of the building in perfect condition. The Mayor did not have that kind of appraisal done. The Mayor thought there was grant revenue for the summer programs of 2015 but no revenue by the people currently using it.

The Mayor stated that the people in recreation would be handling the Recreation Center. Council President Gaunt-Butler stated that the organization chart that was given to the Council was not current but from a past administration. The Council needs a current organizational chart because more people have been hired since the last Administration. The table of organization should be broken down to personnel. The Mayor stated there will not be a table of organization for the Recreation Center.

Councilwoman Williams stated that the grant had a Director's salary and she wanted to know if that would be a current employee of a new hire. There was no answer to that question of a new hire for the Director or a current employee by the Mayor.

Council President Gaunt-Butler asked about the maintenance crew that would be taking care of the building. Would they be hired or current employees? The Council President stated that these questions need to be answered so the Council knows the cost of this and if the City can afford it. She understood that there was grant money for the purchase and repairs of the building but these questions need to be asked to determine if the City will

be in the frame work of these dollars or be off the back of tax payers. The Mayor stated that the persons taking care of the building would be assigned from Public Works. The Council Presidents stated that the report does not say that. Salaries for new people would certainly be part of our determination if the City will be in the frame work of the dollars needed to support the building. The Mayor stated that you shouldn't expect any new salary and wages from the tax payer's dollars being spent on the Recreation Center. There is no money that is going be spent. The Council president requested that it be put in writing. The Mayor stated that he would put that in writing.

Councilwoman Summers-Johnson spoke about the rumors that are in the City and in the newspapers about this Recreation Center. The Councilwoman would like in writing that the Recreation Center people will be coming from recreation and the maintenance people will be coming from DPW so the Council can get past this issue and vote.

Councilwoman Williams stated that the table of organization that was given to the Council in May or July did add additional positions to it. Mayor Warren stated that if there are grant dollars that go with it then the positions can be created, if necessary, if there are no grant dollars then the positions will not be created.

Councilwoman Williams asked the Mayor if he was still taking the position that Orange residents will not have to pay a fee. The Mayor agreed. The Councilwoman asked how long did he think that would be. The Mayor stated the demands that are on recreation now are such that we need to have a center to meet those demands. As demands grow the City may have to charge a fee for what the City is offering at this point there will be no fee to the residents.

Councilman Corbitt - Asked questions about a fee to use the pool and the Mayor stated that fees would be charged for the pool. Councilman Corbitt asked about current events taking place at the YWCA and are there fees being charge, specifically the repass that recently took place. Ms. Lilly Moore who currently runs the YWCA came to the podium and stated there were no fees. Councilman Corbitt asked about parties at the YWCA Ms. Moore stated that there were no parties and the people that are using the YWCA now do not pay a fee. No new bookings are being made at this point. If there is a baby shower there would be a minimal cost which would be the cleaning fee. Ms. Moore stated that the money is collected by herself for the YWCA. No money goes to the City.

Councilman Johnson stated that the questions he is asking are for his residents and it should not be considered as how he will vote on the purchase of the building. The Councilman feels that buying the building in as is conditions is taking a gamble on the purchase.

Councilman Coley asked what liabilities will the City be exposed to. Acting BA Mayes could not answer the question. Attorney Smith stated that there should be no liability provided the City does a good job taking care of the remediation. Attorney Smith stated that the City had not received any communication from the experts to indicate any danger to the public. Problem areas are not being used.

Councilwoman Williams asked about the cost and Acting BA Mayes stated that everything has to go out to bid before an accurate cost can be given. Attorney Smith stated that there will be outside attorneys doing the closing.

The Council Members spoke about the closing date and the date of the closing date on Feb 28, 2016 and how that date could be met.

Councilman Johnson requested some documents from Attorney Smith that he had not receiving. Attorney Smith stated he would get them to the Councilman the next day.

Councilwoman Summers-Johnson asked Attorney Smith if the Council could speak to the bankruptcy Attorneys and Attorney Smith stated questions for them should take place in executive session.

Councilman Johnson had Mr. Copeland, grant manager, answer some questions regarding the 2 grant installments for the property. If the repair money will be released in 2017 where is the money coming from to make repairs in 2016. Mr. Copeland stated the grant runs on a fiscal year. The second part of the grant money would be available in July 2016. The first part of the grant money should be collected before June 2016.

The Council president stated that the second part of the grant is a reimbursement by the State, so how is the city going to front that money. Mr. Copeland stated that the city can send a projection to the state along with bids on what will be done in the following year. Mr. Copeland stated that the grant requirements are not run as other reimbursement grants are done. The Council President requested to see something from the state showing the options that the City has with the second phase of the grant money.

Mr. Copeland stated that the pool expansion request to the state could not take place until 2017. When asked, Mr. Copeland stated that there have been no discussions with the Board of Education regarding funding help.

The Mayor had come back into the room and spoke about the participation of the Board of Education. Councilwoman Williams asked the Mayor to have Mr. Lee from the Board of Education attend and update the Council.

Councilman Johnson asked the Mayor about the first installment of the grant and what the balance of the grant money will be used for. The Mayor reviewed the use of money that the 1st installment of the grant would cover.

Councilman Corbitt had the Mayor explain what the process would be before the purchase of the YWCA property. The Mayor detailed the process from the beginning of it to what needs to happen next. The Mayor stated there was 'no done deal made, the Council has the final decision'.

The Council and the Mayor discussed the 3 items that Johnson had asked for. It was determined that the 3 items Councilman Johnson was asking about were in the documents of Resolution 112-2015.

Councilwoman Eason spoke on her frustration with regards to the meeting and the Council Member's questions that evening. The City needs the Recreation Center.

Councilwoman Summers-Johnson stated that if Councilman Johnson had received the information he had asked for by Administration when he asked for it, the Council meeting could have been shorter.

The Mayor announced that there was a news report on water quality and the City of Orange was not in that news report. A report on the Water Quality of the city will be given at the next Council meeting.

### **CITIZEN COMMENTS**

#### **The Clerk made the following statement.**

Please be apprised anyone wishing to discuss tonight's Agenda Items shall sign the book. Each person signing the book will be allowed to speak for a maximum of five (5) minutes.

Mr. Jeffrey Feld commented on the Court filings against the city.

Mr. Feld questioned where Attorney Harris was. Mr. Feld spoke about a letter that was sent to the Clerk's office asking 6 questions and has not received a response yet.

Mr. Feld stated that the City paid out \$16,000.00 for project management services and what was done for that dollar amount. When was there an ordinance creating the position of Grant Writer.

Ms. Katalin Gordon questioned the grant money and if the Council had looked at other options for that money. The Mayor stated that the city had not looked at that option nor would it be feasible. Ms. Gordon asked about the new positions and how many years will the grant money cover those salaries.

The Mayor could not estimate that but if the grant money ran out then the positions would run out; or it would have to be funded by the revenues the recreation center generated.

A Reverend from a local Church asked if there was a resolution for the spending of the \$100,000.00. The Council President stated that there was and it was to enter into a lease for one year. The Reverend then asked which came first the passing of the resolution or the approval to received grant money. The Council President stated the passing of the resolution. The Reverend felt that the evening discussion were healthy and the Council and City should get the property first and then get the experts to work on what needs to be done. The community needs the Recreation Center.

The Mayor stated for Councilwoman Williams that the pool expansion would be later rather than during the first phase.

The Mayor would get back to the Council on the \$16,000.00 bill.

The grant writer was in the budget for the City, not a YWCA grant writer.

Motion to adjourn by Councilwoman Eason, seconded by Councilman Johnson, Jr.

By consensus the regular meeting adjourned at 8:53 P.M

**APPROVED:**

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**Joyce L. Lanier**  
**Municipal Clerk**

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**April Gaunt-Butler**  
**Council President**