

**MINUTES - TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
TOWN OF BELVIDERE
WARREN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY
691 Water Street
OCTOBER 20, 2016**

Mayor Kennedy opened the workshop meeting of the Belvidere Town Council with the Pledge of Allegiance and Teresa Yeisley read the following notice in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act:

In accordance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975, notice of this meeting was given by way of notice filed with the Star Gazette and/or the Express-Times, filed in the Municipal Clerk's Office and posted in the Belvidere Town Hall, 691 Water Street, Belvidere NJ.

Roll Call:

Present - Mayor Kennedy, Councilwoman Miers, Councilwoman Napolitani, Councilman Tutka
Absent - Councilman Fitzgerald, Councilman Zmigrodski

Public questions and comments regarding library referendum:

Councilwoman Miers gave a synopsis of how the Council came to the decision to have a referendum on keeping or dissolving the library. The Councilwoman continued with the questions that were received via email and regular mail.

Kevin Benbrook gave an overview of the statute governing a referendum to keep or dissolve a municipal library.

John Mooney gave an overview of the library finances, an explanation of the required municipal funding and the costs involved in joining the County library system. Mr. Mooney also reported on the stocks held by the library.

The following were comments or questions regarding the library referendum:

Benjamin Ritter - employee benefits and building maintenance paid by the Town and not charged to the library in the past. The library is not treated like other municipal departments.

Carolyn Cerbone - when library trust funds have been depleted, what then

Mayor Kennedy - service vs. dollars issue. Hours not compliant with State library requirements.

Resident - County cost moving forward. Why the rush?

Charlie Makatura - Why wasn't the stock sold as advised in the audit? Can the building be sold? Board needed a plan for sustainability.

Marcia Haag - stock split

Janey Rehab - moral obligation to follow intent of the will. Should spend down the remainder of the bequeathed funds with a five-year plan.

Resident - something should be done to let people know there is additional money

Mayor Kennedy - referendum may have been pulled had Council known about the additional funds provided through the stock split but Mayor was excluded from executive session discussion.

Information regarding referendum provided at library inappropriate and unethical. When the availability of additional funds was discovered by Council, it was too late to cancel referendum.

Teresa Aicher - only providing voter registration information

Jacquie Lindsay - not telling people there is additional money. Library an asset to the community.

Susan Beale - provided information on grants used to refurbish library

Kevin Benbrook - structure of referendum question is statutory and referendum is binding

Linda Stettler - Does Council have a plan for the building?

Mayor Kennedy - feasibility study being done by Councilwoman Miers and Councilwoman Napolitani. Use of basement for file storage. Other options will be considered.

Nancy Brown - library budget and audit.

John Mooney - explained cost of municipal library vs. County library.

Harry Brown - every tax payer needs all the information to make an informed decision.

Benjamin Ritter - property values would effect the cost of join County library system.

John Mooney - cost determined by equalized valuation, not assessed value

Clifford Ghetti - who was getting the stock information. Thanks for having this information meeting.

Heather Durr - disposition of stock

Kevin Benbrook - the disposition of the stock is yet to be determined

A motion was made by Councilwoman Miers to adjourn the special meeting of the Belvidere Town Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Teresa A. Yeisley, RMC/CPM
Municipal Clerk/Administrator