

**BOROUGH OF INTERLAKEN
WORKSHOP MINUTES
MARCH 16, 2016
7:00 P.M. AT BOROUGH HALL**

The workshop meeting of the Borough of Interlaken was called to order at 7:00 p.m., by Council President White. Sunshine Statement was read by Borough Clerk/Administrator Reibrich. "The notice of the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act has been satisfied by forwarding annual notice to the Coaster and Asbury Park Press. A copy of the annual notice is posted on the Borough bulletin board and is on file in the Borough Clerk's office."

Present: Council President White and Council members: Franks, Gunn, Horowitz, and Butler

Also Present: Borough Attorney Richard Shaklee, Borough Clerk/Administrator Lori Reibrich

Absent: Mayor Nohilly, Councilman Handerhan

1. LIBRARY – *Discussion of the merits of maintaining or closing the Interlaken Library*

Borough Clerk/Administrator Reibrich shared information/statistics provided by the Monmouth County Library Director, Judy Tolchin, as follows:

Ms. Tolchin provided information regarding Monmouth County support to the residents stating that Interlaken staff visited the County five times to borrow materials for long term loans. Long term loans totaled 754. The long term loans are rotated. Short term loans supplied to the Interlaken library were 158 items. Interlaken has a 2010 population of 820 residents. 266 residents hold an active library card with the Monmouth County Library system. Interlaken residents borrowed or renewed 4,765 items from one of the Monmouth County branches. Interlaken residents primarily use the Ocean Township branch of the library. They also use Headquarters and the Eastern Branch. It cannot be determined what electronic resources are used. In addition to borrowing privileges from the Monmouth County Library, Interlaken residents are eligible to use the Ocean County libraries, as well. Borrowing privileges are reciprocal.

Borough Clerk/Administrator Reibrich stated that the Borough pays a County Library tax. The amount of the tax is the same whether Interlaken operates its own branch or not.

Borough Clerk/Administrator Reibrich offered to find answers to any additional future questions regarding library.

Councilman Gunn asked for clarification that the County Library tax is not optional.

Borough Clerk/Administrator Reibrich confirmed that the County Library tax must be paid. There are a few larger municipalities that have autonomous libraries with their own inventory, staffing and services. They are not part of the Monmouth County library system. The residents of those municipalities must pay a membership fee, if they would like to use the Monmouth County libraries.

Councilman Gunn asked for confirmation that the amount paid for Monmouth County library taxes are based on the property valuation of Interlaken.

Borough Clerk/Administrator Reibrich confirmed that the taxes paid are based on property valuation.

Councilman Franks stated that he had met with the Borough Librarian, Vicki Labella to get some information as to what services the library performs. Councilman Franks stated that the library is a social and welcoming place. Many come to the library to sit, talk and share stories. The library has a history. The library fulfills special requests for books and DVDs, often getting them quicker than other branches. Special orders are picked up and delivered by the Manalapan branch. Patrons have Borough Librarian Labella's cell phone number to call in special requests. The library can be used by anyone with a Monmouth County Library card. Each satellite office can choose books six times a year. Borough Librarian Labella is mindful of patron preferences when choosing these selections. There is no late fee, if the book is needed for a longer time. The Monmouth County library often donates books for the permanent collection. The Interlaken library is an opportunity for our elderly residents to be in a social setting. If elderly patrons cannot make it in to the library, Borough Librarian Labella will drop books off to their homes. Young students seeking volunteer hours can donate their time.

Councilman Franks stated that the operating cost of the library is a little over \$5,000 per year. When broken down, it is just \$6 per household. The library is one of the perks of living in Interlaken. The Borough has had the library since 1923. The library is a place for residents to share time with other residents. Councilman Franks feels it is worth the cost.

Councilman Gunn stated that there are other options for receiving library services.

Councilman Franks stated that he was on the fence about the library, until he became aware of the services it is providing residents.

Councilwoman Horowitz stated that she is sad to see changes to the quaintness of the Borough. Councilwoman Horowitz asked if there was a way of enhancing the library, as opposed to taking it down. The demographics in the Borough are changing. Maybe more things can be provided to the community through the library. Councilwoman Horowitz believes delivering books to the elderly is a good service and would like to investigate a way the library can be enhanced and kept open.

Council had a discussion regarding additional services the library can offer.

Councilman Butler suggested that the librarian work with the town historian. If there is no library, there is no platform to build upon.

Councilman Gunn asked who would manage a utility use expansion.

Council President White stated that in the past the Recreation Committee has organized and promoted events at Borough Hall.

Councilman Gunn stated that there is nothing that takes place at this branch that is not provided at the Ocean Township branch. It is a facility that is staffed and more capable of providing services most of the week. Councilman Gunn asked why \$5,200 is being utilized for an Interlaken branch when it can be given back to the residents. Councilman Gunn stated that it was hard for him to think that the library will be some sort of springboard for a community center.

Councilman Butler stated that even if it does not become a community center, it is a nice thing and a unique service. It can be built upon.

Councilman Franks stated that the Borough needs to get the word out that these library services are available.

Borough Clerk/Administrator Reibrich stated that the Borough office promotes the library services often, at the counter, when new residents come in to ask questions about services like recycling.

Councilman Gunn stated that he is not denying there is value being provided. It is just an observation that that same value can be received at the Ocean Township Branch for which we are already paying. Councilman Gunn does not see this branch as a special location. The Ocean Township branch can provide the same value on a larger scale. Councilman Gunn stated that the facility can have social value, but challenges the Council to see the relevance of the library to the situation. If Council wants to use the facility for a sense of pride and a sense of excitement, then let's do it. The library is not needed for that. Councilman Gunn does not see the connection.

Councilman Franks stated that a dollar value cannot be put on the value of having the library. There are people who cannot go to the Ocean Township library for one reason or another. The library provides a sense of community. Books are delivered to those who cannot get to the library. Interlaken does not want to lose services. Councilman Franks feels the library is worth the nominal amount being paid.

Council President White stated that Interlaken has unique services that give a sense of community. Other branches are not going to take care of our residents like we can take care of our residents. Other branches will not deliver items to our elderly residents.

Councilman Gunn stated that there are alternatives to the having the library branch. Friends and family and neighbors help each other when residents cannot get to the store or doctor. Councilman Gunn stated that he does not see the necessity in terms of the library. Everything that is happening at the Interlaken branch today can still happen by other means and those other means would not cost the Borough \$5,200 a year which is a significant portion of this Borough's discretionary budget.

Councilman Gunn stated that every Council member should be heard and asked that the discussion be continued when there is full attendance.

2. **NEW BUSINESS** – *Items to be considered for future meetings*

No new business.

3. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC** – Council President White opened the floor for public comment.

Catherine Cleary, 209 Grassmere Avenue, said that she could not stress more strongly the importance of this library to our community. Ms. Cleary stated that she was a librarian and all libraries are trying to have more of an outreach. The County is trying to investigate. The County will provide additional services in addition to the services provided by Borough Librarian Labella. Borough Librarian Labella's services are personal. Ms. Cleary stated that she tried to go to the Ocean Township library branch and the selection does not pertain to the community. Borough Librarian Labella picks books depending on the readership. Borough Librarian Labella knows to get English mysteries for half the readers or American contemporary fiction for others. It's a personal selection and Borough Librarian Labella will go and deliver these books. Not that these patrons don't have families, Borough Librarian Labella brings the books to those who cannot get to the library. Borough Librarian Labella makes the extra effort to go and help people. It is extremely important to our community to maintain this.

Frank Tragno, 22 Wickapecko Drive, Mr. Tragno stated that, as the Human Resources Director for Monmouth County, he has been in touch with Judy Tolchin of the Monmouth County Library. Mr. Tragno stated that Ms. Tolchin would be happy to come to the Interlaken branch to describe the benefits of belonging to the Monmouth County Library system. Ms. Tolchin also shared with Mr. Tragno that the Borough is required to provide library services to Interlaken, regardless of whether the library is disbanded or not. Mr. Tragno stated that there is a cost factor that will be far greater than \$5200 per year to provide services as ordered by State statute that we provide library services to Interlaken. Mr. Tragno said there is a vast array of information that Ms. Tolchin can present. There are library services available to the Borough such as ebooks or having speakers come in. Mr. Tragno offered to coordinate a meeting with Ms. Tolchin to discuss the benefits of maintaining the library branch.

Tom Conway, 22 Wickapecko Drive, stated that Ocean Township branch is a big place. It is impersonal and somewhat cold. When Mr Conway comes to the Interlaken Branch there are always several people around to discuss books and what is being read. Mr. Conway stated that Borough Librarian Labella makes recommendations and Mr. Conway is able to get what he wants. Mr. Conway stated that it is a great service and would hate to be without it.

Toni McCudden, 616 Bendermere Avenue, stated that she uses both the Ocean Township branch and the Interlaken Branch. If you make a request to the Ocean Township branch you could wait three or four days. When Ms. McCudden calls Borough Librarian Labella she receives her request in one day. Ms. McCudden agrees with everything that has been said. Ms. McCudden does not like the idea that it is going to cost more by disbanding and having to go through the government chain for funding.

Council President White stated that he would verify the information, but believes the Borough already pays for library services through County taxes and the amount would not increase whether there is a branch in Interlaken or not.

Ms. McCudden stated that she plants the flowers in town. There are less to plant, because there will be less places to plant them due to the bridge construction. Ms. McCudden would like the money saved to go toward the library. Too many people use it. There is no real list.

Borough Clerk/Administrator Reibrich stated that a list of 39 patrons was provided by Borough Librarian Labella.

Ms. McCudden stated that her vote is to keep the library open.

Philip Book, 604 Windermere Avenue, feels the cost is minimal. Having the library is one of the few things in a very small town that make it a community. There are not many structures that we could possibly have in place in a small town to come together as a community. There is a benefit to that.

Ms. McCudden asked if the concept of closing the library was solely because of the dollars.

Council President White stated that he would like to give a better understanding of how this matter came up. Council President White explained that this is budget time. The budget is being introduced tonight. Every year the Finance Committee reviews the budget with the Borough CFO. The budget

is reviewed by the Committee and then presented to full Council. Council President White stated that Interlaken is a very small Borough. The only revenue is taxes paid by the homeowners. Every year the budget is reviewed line by line to look for things that could possibly be changed or improved upon. Council President White stated that the Council has done an outstanding job to maintain cohesive budget and not really increase municipal taxes the last seven years, as long as he has been on Council. The municipal portion of the taxes has been pretty steadfast, but each year Council discusses each line item and that is what Council is doing right now. Council President White told the audience that Council appreciates their attendance to let Council know that the library is important to those who use it. Council President White stated that the discussion regarding the viability of the library started as a budget discussion.

Mr. Fama asked, “It is not that, all of a sudden, the cost of having the library is greater than it used to be?”

Council President White answered that it was not.

Mr. Tragno asked if Council President White could share the Mayor’s view.

Council President White stated that the Mayor was doing his job and facilitating the opportunity for Council to have this discussion. The Mayor does not have a vote. The matter was brought up during a budget meeting. The Committee was asked to look at this line item. The matter was put on the workshop agenda for discussion.

Councilman Gunn polled the audience asking how many audience members have been to the library in the last month.

An audience member stated that Borough Librarian Labella brought them a book last night.

With no additional public comment Council President White closed the floor.

4. **ADJOURNMENT**- With no Council comments, Councilman Butler made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Franks and unanimously carried.

	Mayor Nohilly	Council President White	Councilman Handerhan	Councilman Franks	Councilman Gunn	Councilwoman Horowitz	Councilman Butler
Motion to Approve							X
Motion to Second				X			
Approved		X	X	X	X	X	X
Opposed							
Abstain/ Recuse							
Absent/ Excused	X		X				

Lori Reibrich, RMC
Borough Administrator/Clerk