

**MINUTES
WOOLWICH TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 22, 2016**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Schwager with the following statement:

The February 22, 2016 Special Meeting of the Woolwich Township Committee is being called to order. Adequate notice of this meeting has been given in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

Roll Call: Carleton: PRESENT Cavallaro: ABSENT Schlump: PRESENT
Rizzi: PRESENT Schwager: PRESENT

Also present on the dais were Solicitor Mark Shoemaker and Administrator/Clerk Jane DiBella.

Those present saluted the American Flag.

Motion was made by Committeeman Carleton and seconded by Deputy Mayor Rizzi to open the meeting to public comment. All were in favor.

Hearing no comment, Committeeman Schlump moved to close the public portion. Committeeman Carleton seconded. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Deputy Mayor Rizzi and seconded by Committeeman Carleton to approve resolution **R-2016-68 Resolution for Closed Session**. All were in favor.

The Committee entered closed session at 6:01 p.m. for the purpose of discussing personnel matters.

The regular meeting resumed at 6:56 p.m.

Solicitor Shoemaker advised that a disciplinary matter was brought before the Township Committee and that a mutually agreed settlement had been reached.

Sgt. Dominick Colavita was sworn in by Solicitor Shoemaker.

Sgt. Colavita was advised that he has been charged with violation of Section 7., subsection 28 of the Woolwich Township Police Departments Rules and Regulations.

Mr. Shoemaker further advised Sgt. Colavita of the terms of the mutually agreed upon settlement as follow:

Suspended without pay for a period of six months. If within the six months Sgt. Colavita is cleared by the Prosecutors Office to have his duty weapon returned, he can be reinstated but demoted to Patrolman 1st Class within the Woolwich Township Police Department. If the Prosecutors Office does not authorize the return of his duty weapon within those six months, he will be terminated from employment with the Woolwich Township Police department. Sgt. Colavita has no right of appeal, but reserves rights to appeal any decision made by or on behalf of the Prosecutors Office. Nothing extends the six month time frame. Sgt. Colavita will not file an application for FMLA. If Sgt. Colavita is reinstated

within six months of Feb. 22, 2016, once three years have passed and officer is in good standing, he may apply for an elevated position. During the six month period, the Township will maintain Sgt. Colavita's medical benefits. Prior 2016 thirty days of paid leave granted Sgt. Colavita count against accrued vacation and sick time.

Sgt. Colavita's attorney Mr. John Eastlack questioned Sgt. Colavita as to his understanding and approval of the charges and terms of the settlement. He responded in the affirmative.

The matter was closed.

The presence of Committeewoman Jennifer Cavallaro upon the dais was noted.

A recess was called by Mayor Schwager at 7:04 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 7:13 p.m.

Mayor Schwager read an introductory statement in the disciplinary matter regarding Police Records Clerk Gina Stebbins, for which she appealed an imposed discipline.

Mayor Schwager added that the Township is allowing the appeal hearing under due process, although nothing requires it.

Ms. Stebbins was represented by John Eastlack, Esq. and Jean Chetney Esq. represented the Township.

Mr. Eastlack provided an opening statement.

Ms. Chetney called on Police Chief Jaramillo for testimony. Chief Jaramillo was sworn in. Mr. Eastlack cross examined the witness.

Mrs. DiBella removed herself from the hearing during a portion of the Chief's testimony.

Upon the conclusion of the Chief's testimony, Mrs. DiBella was called as a witness. Mrs. DiBella was sworn in and provided testimony. Mr. Eastlack cross examined the witness.

Upon the conclusion of Mrs. DiBella's testimony, Lt. Sheldon Lewis was called as a witness. Lt. Lewis was sworn in and provided testimony. Mr. Eastlack cross examined the witness.

Upon the conclusion of Lt. Lewis's testimony, Ms. Chetney rested.

Mr. Eastlack called on Det. Breia Brenner of the Gloucester County Prosecutors Office as a witness. Det. Brenner was sworn in and provided testimony. Ms. Chetney cross examined the witness.

Mr. Eastlack called on former Woolwich Township Police Chief Russell Marino as a witness. The former Chief was sworn in and provided testimony. Ms. Chetney cross examined the witness.

Mr. Eastlack called on Holly Fisher, Asst. to the Records Clerk as a witness. Miss Fisher was sworn in and provided testimony. Ms. Chetney cross examined the witness.

Mr. Eastlack called on Woolwich Township Det. Sgt. Thomas Daniels as a witness. Det. Sgt. Daniels was sworn in and provided testimony. Ms. Chetney cross examined the witness.

Mr. Eastlack called on Woolwich Township Det. Chris Beckett as a witness. Det. Beckett was sworn in and provided testimony. Ms. Chetney cross examined the witness.

Mr. Eastlack called on Woolwich Township Lt. Joseph Morgan as a witness. Lt. Morgan was sworn in and provided testimony. Ms. Chetney cross examined the witness.

Mr. Eastlack called on Woolwich Township Police records Clerk Gina Stebbins as a witness. Ms. Stebbins was sworn in and provided testimony. Ms. Chetney cross examined the witness.

Both sides rested their cases.

Upon a motion by Deputy Mayor Rizzi, seconded by Committeeman Carleton and unanimously passed to approve resolution **R-2016-69 Resolution for Closed Session**, the Woolwich Township Committee entered closed session at 12:05 a.m. (February 23rd) to consider the matter.

It was noted for the record that Mrs. DiBella was not invited to participate in the closed session deliberation.

The regular meeting reconvened at 1:19 a.m.

Motion was made by Deputy Mayor Rizzi and seconded by Committeeman Schlump to provide the Solicitor authority to give a written decision as to the findings in the matter of disciplinary action taken against Gina Stebbins, as discussed in closed session.

Committeewoman Cavallaro noted that she does not agree with the decision reached by the Committee and will submit a letter of dissent to articulate her position and reasoning behind same.

All were in favor. Committeewoman Cavallaro voted no.

With no further action, motion was made by Committeeman Schlump and seconded by Committeeman Carleton to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 1:21 a.m., February 23, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane DiBella
Administrator/Clerk

Minutes not verbatim.
Audio recording on file.