

A Work Session of the Borough Council of the Borough of Avalon was held on Wednesday, February 10, 2021 at 4:01 p.m. in the Meeting Room, 3100 Dune Drive, Avalon, New Jersey.

Attendance: Public ----- 7

Reporters ----- 1

The meeting was called to order by Council President McCorristin.

<u>Roll call:</u>	Council President McCorristin	Present
	Councilman Deever	Absent
	Councilwoman Hudanich	Present
	Councilwoman Juzaitis	Present
	Councilman Wierman	Present

Also present:

Scott Wahl, Business Administrator
James Waldron, Assistant Business Administrator
Nicole Curio, Esquire, Borough Solicitor
Jeffrey R. Christopher, Police Chief
William McCormick, Director of Public Works/Utilities
Thomas R. Thornton, P.E., Borough Engineer, Mott MacDonald
Paul Short, Code Enforcement Officer

Council President McCorristin read the Open Public Meetings Act Announcement.

Notice of this Regular Meeting was included the annual Schedule of Meetings dated June 24, 2020. It was given to the news media and posted on the Official Bulletin Board as required by law.

Discussion regarding Resolution for the annual Avalon Garden Club Yard Sale to be held on May 8, 2021

After a brief discussion, Council agreed to proceed with a Resolution to be prepared for the February 24, 2021 Regular Meeting.

Discussion regarding Safety Incentive Program in accordance with the Atlantic County Joint Insurance Fund.

Scott Wahl read the following report:

Summary: Borough Council is being asked to approve, via Resolution, the Borough's participation in the Atlantic County Municipal Joint Insurance Fund Safety Incentive Program. The Program has been enhanced by the JIF and provides for more aggressive rules and activities for the Borough to qualify for incentive funding reimbursement by the JIF. This program was discussed at the December, 2020 ACMJIF Safety Committee (held virtually) where the Business Administrator serves as a committee member; at the general meeting of the ACMJIF in January, 2021 and various Avalon Safety Committee meetings in recent months whereas the Committee unanimously endorsed participation in this program and expressed benefits of the program for the Borough. Councilwoman Juzaitis sits on the Committee and is an active participant.

About the Program: The Safety Incentive Program has been something the Borough has participated in for many years. It incentivizes the Borough to follow best practices by the JIF to make sure that we reduce the Borough's exposures to risk, and establishes a culture of safety. This year, there are more requirements for which the Borough either already implements, or can implement without a great degree of difficulty. Some of these include, but are not limited to:

- Having Safety and Wellness on the Council agenda at least once a year (Avalon has an established wellness program and the Recreation Director will discuss the 2021 activities and goals at a Council meeting in the future);
- Establish a safety committee that meets at least quarterly (Avalon's meets monthly);
- Conduct regular Job Safety Observations and increase the number of observations filed;
- Continue to manage our claims in a timely manner;
- Conduct at least a dozen "toolbox talks" throughout the year, which is largely conducted by the Department of Public Works;
- Conduct a minimum of six facility safety checklists.

Approval: If approved by Council the Borough shall make sure we exceed all minimum requirements and apply financial rewards earned by the program to continue to enhance our safety efforts.

Councilwoman Juzaitis spoke highly of the program and recommended Council approve a Resolution to participate.

Councilwoman Hudanich thanked Councilwoman Juzaitis for her participation on the committee, while noting this program raises a level of awareness caring for the employees and their day-to-day work.

Council agreed to proceed with a Resolution to be prepared for the February 24, 2021 Regular Meeting.

Discussion regarding Resolution establishing Change Funds for Various Summer Functions.

After a brief discussion, Council agreed to proceed with a Resolution to be prepared for the February 24, 2021 Regular Meeting.

Discussion regarding amendment to Resolution No. 8-2021 increasing the "Not to Exceed" amount in the Blaney & Karavan Professional Services Contract.

Jim Waldron gave the following report:

Resolution 8-2021 capped the annual expenditure for Blaney & Karavan at \$15,000, which is the amount approved in January 2020 and before Council authorized a Special Project involving the DPWU which, while winding down, is nonetheless continuing. There are also pending disciplinary matters and one matter of civil litigation. These pending matters will exhaust the \$15,000 maximum well before the end of the first quarter ending March 30, 2021.

Administration is asking Council for permission to amend Resolution 8-2021 and the PSC authorized therein to increase the annual expenditure from \$15,000 to \$75,000. (The 2020 annual amount after all adjustments was approximately \$100,000.)

Administration would like Council to consider adopting a formal Resolution implementing the above at today's regular meeting. This will avoid the need to come back to Council for additional increases as was the case last year. The requested increase (\$15 k to \$75 k) is less than the amount expended / billed during 2020.

After brief discussion, Council agreed to proceed with a Resolution to be considered at today's Regular Meeting.

Discussion regarding proposal from Mott MacDonald concerning 2021 backpassing project.

Scott Wahl gave following report:

Since our last meeting, unfortunately South Jersey coast experienced a Nor'easter. Administration represented at a prior meeting that our North End beaches were right on the cusp of a minor backpassing project for the safety and in advance of a hydraulic beach fill next year. This Nor'easter exacerbated the problems on the North End to the point certain beach passes are not accessible to the public. The problem right now is severe in nature and a backpassing project of a larger magnitude is needed. William McCormick, Director of Public Works, has been actively working to secure the various equipment needed for this project. The discussion today is two-fold, there are two discussions that fall under the umbrella of the backpassing project. One of which, is a proposal from Mott MacDonald to provide the necessary engineering services to complete this backpassing project. As Council is aware, emergency permits were obtained from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) for the backpassing projects conducted in 2018 and 2019. Mott MacDonald worked with the NJDEP to include maintenance provisions in those permits (CAFRA and Waterfront Development) for future annual backpassing projects. Therefore, this project will not need additional permits. The work will be conducted by Avalon DPW staff with rented equipment. This heavy equipment has a certain width that needs a 12' lane to travel and is very heavy. Townsend's Inlet Bridge and Stone Harbor Bridge are automatically ruled out due to size and weight limitations. I reached out to Robert Church, Cape May County Engineer, the only way to bring that equipment into town is to have the concrete jersey barriers by a foot or a foot and a half. The movement of those barriers is only going to be possible when the concrete is poured on the new land that they are working on. The county engineer has represented to me this job has been slightly ahead of schedule and the concrete pour is expected no later than mid-April. This provides the Borough with a tight window to bring the equipment into town and conduct backpassing operations.

Thomas Thornton explained Robert Church is confident the Ingram's Thorofare Bridge project will be concluded by April 30, 2021, which would allow the Borough to begin work mid-April. As Council is aware, the north end beaches have undergone significant erosion in the last several months. It is likely that up to 60,000 cubic yards of sand may be available within the borrow area for this project. The Mott MacDonald proposal has been submitted, and is broken into three tasks: design phase, permit compliance, and construction phase. This project is different in that a contractor is not being used, but rather the Department of Public Works is performing the work. The first task covers the survey, design, and preparation of construction drawings. The Department of Public Works will be informed of where the sand is coming from, how deep they're able to scrape the sand to be in compliance with the permits, and where to place the sand. Mott MacDonald's scope of work includes the normal surveying in the borrow and fill areas. As Scott Wahl mentioned, the agencies have been convinced to use and modify the Borough's previous permits obtained on an emergency basis for the 2018 and 2019 projects to include future backpassing projects under those limitations, which saves the Borough \$60,000.00 a year by not having to apply for those permits again. The Borough must still comply with the conditions of those permits, which include limitations on the areas that can be scraped, including being unable to scrape an area that has been the subject of a piping plover or endangered species sighting, which is unlikely. There are also follow up requirements, including a post-project survey to demonstrate compliance by way of a color map illustrating the scraping and filling. All permit compliance detailed falls under the second task of the proposal. The third task is for construction phase services, the majority of which is our surveyor/inspector to be on-site at the time work is being done to set the stakes in the borrow and fill areas, and indicate on those stakes the depths of cuts and fill layers. The first two tasks include a scope that is clear and identifiable, therefore a lump sum is being assessed. The third phase covering the construction phase services will depend on the progress made, therefore it will be charged on a reimbursable basis. The tentative project schedule is included in the proposal, which was finalized before the conversation with the County. As a result, the timeline will be impacted accordingly.

Council President McCorristin noted winter storms can be detrimental to the beachfill areas, and asked if the equipment is readily available to reserve. He further inquired if the Borough will be charged if the equipment is reserved, and it cannot be mobilized onto the site due to the bridge construction.

Thomas Thornton replied yes.

William McCormick replied Public Works has been working with several vendors. Smaller equipment, such as dump trucks, is available to reserve while larger items, such as loaders, are not.

Council President McCorristin noted the public should be aware of any extensions.

William McCormick added the projected arrival time of the equipment is May 3, 2021, which is the County deadline for the completion of the bridge. In advance of the equipment rental, workers can begin digging underneath the pier, get the well points set, and pumps running so the dump truck can travel to the borrow area, as the equipment to be used for that is owned equipment.

Councilwoman Hudanich asked if the County has this equipment available.

Scott Wahl replied no.

Council agreed to proceed with a Resolution to be prepared for the February 24, 2021 Regular Meeting.

Discussion regarding proposal from Mott MacDonald concerning Water Meter Replacement Program.

Scott Wahl read the following explanation:

Council approved Middlesex Water Company to go out to bid and manage this project. Robert Fullagar, Vice President of Operations for Middlesex Water, expressed his concerns with the staff undertaking this project as he feels they do not have the expertise. Currently, the Borough of Avalon uses the manual water meters and the proposal is to replace these meters with an advanced meter system. Middlesex can accommodate this change, but they do not have the expertise to write the specs to go out to bid. The Borough has a pledge from Middlesex Water Company they will support us through the installation process. Mott MacDonald has experience with these services and will be assuming responsibility for this project.

Thomas Thornton reported Mott MacDonald has completed several similar projects for other municipalities in the State of New Jersey over the past several years. A proposal for this scope of work has been submitted to Borough Council. This project will replace all existing meters with Advanced Metering Infrastructure. The current meters are read with a wand. The new meters would require

installation of antennas that would be able to read all data from those meters from a central location. It is proposed to have two locations receiving the data, in the event one antenna goes down for any reason. Each location, which is both water tanks, would be fully capable of reading all meters in the Borough. To install the antennas, a cable that would be run up along the legs of the tank onto the catwalks, which gets the infrastructure in place. As Scott Wahl alluded, the infrastructure needs to be compatible with the Oracle system. The specs will be written and the infrastructure installed in such a way that if and when the Oracle system is not used, and at a future date if the Borough wishes to transfer to the Edmunds Financial System, that could be done in a straightforward manner. Once the antennas are installed, the meters can be replaced. There are approximately 6,500 meters in the Borough of Avalon, which will all need to be upgraded with the new setup. Most of the meters will be entirely replaced, while more recently installed meters will simply have the data handling device replaced. Mott MacDonald's proposal includes the survey and base map preparation for the base of the water tanks where the electric infrastructure will be installed. The design and preparation of the specifications for the contractor to bid on and the project to be constructed includes preparation of the plans and cost estimates. Task 2 includes bid phase services, which are the same for all projects bid. Task 3 covers the construction phase engineering services, which include issuance of the notice of award, the review of the submittals of the contractor, the preconstruction meeting, review and approval of shop drawings, and part-time observation services. It is estimated the overall project will take approximately 20 weeks to complete. The project schedule is included within the proposal. If the Borough agrees to move forward, the project could go out to bid in April, with bids being received in May and awarded in June. This schedule would allow for notice to proceed to be issued in early to mid-summer so that some of the infrastructure work behind the fences of the water tanks can be completed without any disruption to the tourist season. Project completion is estimated to be February of 2022.

Council President McCorristin asked if the AMI meters will automatically transmit meter readings upon installation.

Thomas Thornton replied yes, and explained with the infrastructure is in place, the readings will be instantaneous. He cautioned there may be timing issues related to the phasing in of the meters; however, coordination with Middlesex Water Company will help all involved to understand the logistics.

Councilwoman Hudanich questioned the software compatibility for future billing.

Thomas Thornton explained the Borough is guaranteed that the general contractor is responsible to comply with the specifications. He assured Council there will be no technological difficulty, but there will be a marginal cost to have the software built-in to adapt to the future change in billing software.

Scott Wahl explained the system currently used by Oracle can read these types of remote-read meters.

Thomas Thornton added the product the contractor will be supplying are the meters, which are proprietary Neptune meters. Oracle is also proprietary through Middlesex Water.

Councilwoman Hudanich asked why the contractor, who is supplying the hardware, such as the water meter, will be held accountable for the methodology used for billing, while noting the capturing of the data will go into a database, but to generate the bills, there will be a different process. She voiced concern as to why the supplier of the water meter being burdened with the way the Borough bills.

Thomas Thornton noted the contractor is responsible for providing the software to be compatible with both. There are multiple sub-contractors and it is possible to ensure this is being handled properly during the construction phase.

Council President McCorristin asked if Council could be provided with the original proposal from Middlesex Water Company to compare it to Mott MacDonald's proposal.

Scott Wahl indicated the original proposal was provided to Council approximately 3-4 months ago. To confirm, this project will not exclude Middlesex Water. Middlesex will be involved in every step of this project outside of writing the specs.

Councilwoman Juzaitis asked Mr. Thornton to conduct research regarding Council's concerns, since they have coordinated similar projects in other municipalities. She asked that the research also include information regarding when municipalities incorporated new meters, what happened during those times, if the costs increase, and what problems were encountered.

Councilwoman Hudanich asked for further clarification concerning the methodology for the billing, specifically if the fields are going to match or if they are proprietary, and if there are iterations of technology to match the Oracle program.

Thomas Thornton explained the initial billing will be compatible with Oracle because that is what is currently being used. No challenges are anticipated.

Councilwoman Hudanich made note that the specifications in the proposal specifically state within the bidding requirements that it will be compatible with Edmunds in the event a change is made in 2022.

Council President McCorristin expressed concerns that the Borough may be paying more money than necessary on this project.

Scott Wahl stated Mott MacDonald's projected costs are lower than what was quoted by Middlesex Water Company.

Councilman Wierman agreed with taking this task out of Middlesex Water Company's hands, which makes it receptive to changes in the future as opposed to pigeon-holing the Borough into using the Oracle system.

Scott Wahl noted the Middlesex contract expires in June of 2022 and there is no guarantee they will be the successful bidder on the next contract.

Council agreed to proceed with a Resolution to be prepared for the February 24, 2021 Regular Meeting.

Discussion regarding endorsement of the County of Cape May project to improve Ocean Drive from 62nd Street through 80th Street.

Scott Wahl read the following report:

On January 28, 2021, he received an email from Robert Church, Cape May County Engineer, explaining the County will be resurfacing Ocean Drive from 62nd to 80th Streets as part of a FY 2021 Federal Aid project. This item has been discussed in the past and the Borough is undertaking a drainage conveyance project in advance of our project. Council was provided with a copy of the 60% status plans for the project, so that this item can be posted on our web site with a notification advising the public of the upcoming project. Actual construction will not begin until early March 2022, and at this time the County will be evaluating whether the project can be completed entirely in the spring or if we they will have a seasonal shut down and final completion by May 2023. If the latter is selected, the work in the spring of 2022 will be limited to concrete work in order to minimize disturbance over the summer. The County is requesting that the Borough provide a Resolution of endorsement of the project as soon as possible for their file.

After brief discussion, Council agreed to proceed with a Resolution to be prepared for the February 24, 2021 Regular Meeting.

Discussion regarding Resolution authorizing participation in Cape May County Cooperative Pricing Agreement 25CMACP for the purchase of Rock Salt.

After a brief discussion, Council agreed to proceed with a Resolution to be prepared for tonight's Regular Meeting.

Public Comments:

Jack Dunleavy, 3109 First Avenue, voiced his concerns about the meeting platform used to accommodate social distancing, noting speakers were difficult to hear and identify. He further expressed displeasure with the Business Administrator's report regarding the January 12th Planning/Zoning Board meeting, indicating the meeting was difficult to follow due to the technical difficulties.

Martha Wright, 632 7th Street, mirrored Mr. Dunleavy's comments and reiterated her previous concerns that speakers in the meeting are inaudible and there is sometimes a failure of speakers identifying themselves. She expressed the opinion that it is very hard to participate when you have to overcome these barriers.

Travis Marshall, 897 21st Street, spoke in support of comments made by Mr. Dunleavy and Ms. Wright.

Council to check over the agenda for the Regular Meeting.

Council proceeded to check over the agenda for the Regular Meeting.

Motion made by Councilman Wierman, seconded by Councilwoman Juzaitis to adjourn the Work Session.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

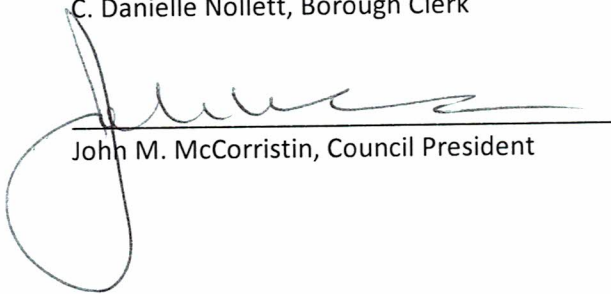
Councilman Deever	Absent
Councilwoman Hudanich	Aye
Councilwoman Juzaitis	Aye
Councilman Wierman	Aye
Council President McCorristin	Aye

Work Session adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



C. Danielle Nollett, Borough Clerk


John M. McCorristin, Council President