

## LWV Park Ridge Observer Report

**Meeting:** Maine Township Board Meeting

**Date:** August 6, 2018

**Observer:** Mary Upson

**Start/End Time:** The meeting started at approximately 6:35. This observer arrived at 6:46. Observation notes of the beginning of the meeting were made through watching the posted video on the township website

**Members Present:** Trustee Sweeny, Trustee Carabotta, Trustee McKenzie, Attorney Aspoth

**Members Absent:** Trustee Jones, Supervisor Morask, Clerk Gialamas, Highway Commissioner Kazmierczak, Assessor Moylan Krey and regular Attorney Krafthefer were all absent. Due to Supervisor Morask's absence, Trustee Sweeny made a motion for herself to be chairperson of the meeting. The motion was seconded and passed with a unanimous vote.

**Meeting:** This was a special Board meeting with only one agenda item: to discuss and vote to release and disclose, including posting on the township website the sexual harassment investigation report. The report can be found here: [http://mainetown.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/investigation\\_report\\_18-08-06.pdf](http://mainetown.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/investigation_report_18-08-06.pdf)

**Citizen Comment Non Agenda Item:** One citizen praised the township for cutting the budget then expressed displeasure that "money found" was used for bonuses for employees. His displeasure toward politicians was met with applause.

**Discussion/Action:** After the first citizen comment Trustee Sweeney made a motion to vote to release and post the report. It was seconded. The vote unanimous. There was then some confusion due to the fact that the vote was taken before public comment on the agenda item. The attorney present stated that public comment was not required before the vote.

### **Citizen Comment:**

1. Speaker 1 questioned why public comment was after the vote and questioned why the meeting was taking place without all parties present. She was thankful for the transparency and that the report would be released. She also spoke of being supportive of women and that while cases like this may lack evidence it does not mean that an accuser is a liar, unless there is evidence of lying. Calling women liars can be damaging to victims of harassment.

2. Speaker 2 provided an emotional defense of Trustee Carabotta. He expressed frustration about Board Members not in attendance: "I have watched the lies and fabrications", "They chose not to show up", "They want him to walk away".

3. Speaker 3 thanked the Board for the release of the report.

4. Speaker 4 appreciated the transparency and thanked the Board.

5. Speaker 5 felt that better procedures should have been followed and that the attorney for the board should not have advised trustees to confront each other. She felt that a third party should have been involved in the investigation.

6. Speaker 6 agreed with speaker 5 that the Board's attorney should not have been involved and called for an investigation as to why Ancel Glink completed the harassment investigation when there was a conflict of interest. He praised the three new trustees for pushing for transparency – this was met with applause. He stated the other Board members are opposed to transparency and that the person that “sits in the middle is constantly lying.” This was met with applause. He discussed the budget issues brought up by the citizen at the beginning of the meeting.

7. Speaker 7 praised the trustees in attendance for looking out for the community's tax dollars. But that the other members chose to go after Trustee Carabotta. He referenced the tabloid press and was very upset by what he read “in that rag”. He had good things to say about Trustee Carabotta. “They picked on the wrong guy”. “Dave is a hugger”. “But if he did something wrong, shame on him”. He stated we needed transparency.

8. Speaker 8 asked “what happens now?” Trustee Sweeney replied that the report will be posted and all board members have had access to it for the past week and the report is final. She also stated that “we did go round and round with dates so everyone could be present”.

9. Speaker 9 asked “what happens next time, what are the ramifications, guidelines?” The attorney present responded that the township has a sexual harassment policy in place. The speaker then thanked Trustee McKenzie for requesting actual numbers during an audit and thanked the Board regarding the tax levy.

**Trustee Sweeney then made a motion for the meeting to be adjourned.** Because the observer arrived late to the meeting, she was very confused when the meeting was adjourned after public comment. The agenda stated the discussion and vote would happen after the public comment.

### **League Action Needed:**

Agreeing with speaker 1, the optics of the board meeting with so few board members present is concerning. While this observer appreciates the urgency in which the board members who were present wanted to release the investigation report to the public and that the report contained no redactions, this led to limited discussion, which may have been very insightful to the public. It may be worth finding out how the decision was made to have the meeting on the date chosen.