

WALPACK MAYOR AND COMMITTEE

MINUTES

September 26, 2023

Opening Statement: Mayor Maglio stated: "This remote meeting is being held in compliance with the Open Public Meeting Act, having been duly advertised."

Roll Call:

Approval of Minutes:

Mayor Maglio requested a Motion to approve the August 29, 2023 Mayor and Committee Meeting Minutes. Motion by Committeewoman Happe. Second by Mayor Maglio. All in Favor.

Resolutions:

R-30-23 approving bills and vouchers for payment (Bill list attached)

Mayor Maglio requested a Motion to approve R-29-23. Motion by Committeewoman Happe. Second by Mayor Maglio. All in Favor.

Public Comment:

Mayor Maglio opened the meeting to the Public for comment.

Ken Bechtold advised that the meeting he had scheduled has been postponed and not yet rescheduled. He advised that donations to the Walpack Historical Society have been converted to CDs. The interest may be able to cover the building expenses on the school for a year. \$4,500 to \$5,000 is needed per year to cover school expenses. The roof may need to be retarped. A grant may be sought to repair the roof, the cost of which is anticipated to be between \$45,000 and \$65,000. The chimney needs to be taken down. The cupula and bell are currently housed at the church.

Mayor Maglio requested that the Walpack Historical Society present a proposal to approve these actions to the Walpack Township Committee and Attorney Kienz.

Hearing no further public comment, Mayor Maglio closed the meeting to public Comment.

New Business:

The Mayor and Committee members discussed a recent contact from a movie company. The company is making a movie entitled "Walpack," a horror film. Initial contact was through Township Attorney Glenn Keinz. Mayor Maglio subsequently spoke with their representative by phone, as well. The company requested use of Township facilities and vehicles, while offering some financial compensation in return. They also offered to use residents in the film if anyone so desired. They further requested access

to the Church building and the Municipal Building. Their intent was to spend several days on-site in Walpack for their filming.

Mayor Maglio informed them that, with the sole exception of the municipal building, the remainder of the buildings in Walpack Center were the property of the National Park Service (NPS), as are all the public roads within the Township. As such, the Township had no authority to grant access to NPS buildings. Mayor Maglio strongly recommended that the company contact NPS Headquarters both to request any such access, and to inform the NPS of their intentions, noting that the NPS might have special events scheduled for the specific weekend filming was being planned. Regarding Township properties and residents, Mayor Maglio informed their representative that the matter would need to be discussed at an upcoming Township Committee meeting. Following that meeting, Mayor Maglio would get back in contact and discuss the decisions of the Committee.

All members of the Committee participated in the discussion. There was a shared general concern with having the name of Walpack identified with a horror film. To our knowledge, there is no other town in the Country with the name "Walpack." That means that everything portrayed in the film could only be identified with our municipality and its people, past and present. Walpack has a unique and valued history. The Committee agreed that we have an obligation to past residents, as well as current residents, to guard the good name of Walpack. All members further agreed that such an obligation far outweighs any potential financial compensation that might be offered. The following specific concerns were raised:

- We do not want to grant access to the old schoolhouse, our municipal building, for filming of this movie.
- We do not want names on private mailboxes or names on headstones filmed in such a manner that the effect would be one of implicitly identifying non-consenting individuals, past and present, with this fictional horror story. We understand that we cannot prevent them from filming the area from public (NPS) roadways, but we feel obligated to request respect for our residents, both past and present. We want to guard both the history and culture of Walpack, including respect for the religious/spiritual values of residents, past and present, protecting them against identification with the storyline of this horror film.

All agreed that Mayor Maglio should convey these thoughts and concerns to the company representative in his follow-up phone call.

Mayor Maglio requested a Motion to Adjourn. Motion by Committeewoman Happe. Second by Mayor Maglio. All in Favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine M. Von Oesen
Clerk
Walpack Township

