

**MANCHESTER TOWNSHIP
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 11, 2017**

The meeting of the Manchester Township Council was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Council President Sam F. Fusaro, Jr. The following statement was read by Sabina T. Skibo, Municipal Clerk:

“Adequate notice of this meeting was provided in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act, pursuant to Public Law 1975, Chapter 231. Said notice was advertised in the Asbury Park Press, Star Ledger and was posted in the lobby of the Municipal Building.”

FLAG SALUTE

ROLL CALL

The following roll call was taken by the Municipal Clerk:

Councilwoman Joan Brush – present
Councilman Charles Frattini – present
Councilman Craig Wallis - absent
Councilman Sam F. Fusaro, Jr. – present
Councilman James A. Vaccaro, Sr. – present

The Municipal Clerk noted for the record that also present were Robert Chilton and Jesse Castellanos from Gabel Associates.

Council President Fusaro addressed those in attendance with opening comments. He said the Council is aware that many residents are concerned about this contract and have heard of the many scams pertaining to contracts with third party providers. The primary reason for entering into this contract is to provide for the residents. The contract was not written by the energy company. The bid specifications are per the State, with safeguards added by Council. The rate will be .07994 cents for the two year contract period. The only change will be if the Federal or State government levies an additional tax. JCP&L is presently .1002 and will go down to .0950 June 1. The easiest way to calculate the savings is to look at an actual bill and deduct 10%. JCP&L has a four cent delivery charge. It was explained that JCP&L will still maintain the wires, provide repairs during outages and do the billing. It is a requirement of the State that all residents of the municipalities are to be enrolled and there is an opt-out option.

PRESENTATION

Mr. Chilton of Gabel Associates gave a power point presentation on energy aggregation. He explained that the program is regulated by the Board of Public Utilities. The purpose of the law is to provide another vehicle for municipalities to put residents together for purchasing power when they go to the marketplace seeking to buy power for lower prices. He stated that the first step is the municipality passes an ordinance. Initially the township was considering entering into a cooperative with Stafford and Lacey Townships, but ultimately decided to go on their own. The process begins with developers’ bid specifications, which are submitted to the State for review to ensure they are consistent with regulations. The bids were received in February and Tri-Eagle Energy made the best offer and was awarded the contract. There are no hidden fees, prices may vary through the seasons. The contract starts with the June meter reading for a two year period. JCP&L will still issue the bills. The only change will be the power supplier. Tri-Eagle Energy sent letters in April after the contract was awarded. The letters contained a program summary, a list of frequently asked questions and a postcard to opt out. May 3, 2017 is the date to opt out.

Following are comments/questions from residents in attendance:

It was asked if JCP&L would charge a re-application fee. Mr. Chilton said State law prohibits charging this fee.

A resident inquired about dual meters – they will still be handled in the same manner.

An inquiry was made regarding the source of the energy – solar, wind, nuclear, coal. Mr. Castellanos said the grid is the same one used by JCP&L and is comprised of a mixture of the various sources.

There was concern regarding budget plans and energy assistance plans. Mr. Castellanos stated there would be no change, everything would remain the same.

There was a question regarding calculating and monitoring budget accounts. It will be done once a year unless there is a concern on consumption. They want to true up the accounts so residents won't get hit with an excessive bill. It was also asked if there would be late fees. Mr. Castellanos said there are no late fees or set up fees. There are also no termination fees.

A resident asked if Tri-Eagle Energy is a Canadian company. Mr. Chilton said the parent company is a Canadian firm. Tri-Eagle is an American firm based in Texas. The resident asked Council why they did not make it a requirement for the company to be an American one.

An individual spoke of information she read on the Better Business Bureau website regarding Tri-Eagle Energy. They have late fees, shut off and reconnection fees. Mr. Castellanos said this is not accurate. It may be Tri-Eagle's general policy, but it is not permitted in the contract with the Township.

A woman thanked Council for taking the initiative to obtain better rates for residents. She has an all-electric home and struggles with the monthly cost. She is looking forward to the new program and is very grateful for Council's help.

A woman stated that she just looked up Tri-Eagle Energy on the Better Business Bureau website and they have an A+ rating.

Seeing no further comments from the public, Council President Fusaro closed this portion of the meeting.

Council President thanked Mr. Chilton & Mr. Castellanos for attending and told everyone they work for Gabel Associates and they receive their fee from Tri-Eagle. He said if you have difficulty reaching Tri-Eagle, just contact them. Mr. Fusaro asked the attendees to please pass on their knowledge to their neighbors.

REPORTS

No reports were given

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further comments or business to come before Council at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m. on a motion by Councilman Vaccaro, seconded by Councilwoman Brush and approved by the following roll call vote: Councilpersons Brush, Frattini, Vaccaro and Fusaro; yea.

Sam F. Fusaro, Jr.
Council President

Sabina T. Skibo, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Date Approved