

MINUTES OF THE MARCH 31, 2025 SENIOR ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Chairman Ken Miller called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM at the Mystic Shores Clubhouse.

There was a Flag salute and a moment of silence for our military and world peace.

Roll call was taken. Board members in attendance were: Ken Miller, Chairman, Nancy Cotter, Diane Coyle, Barbara Jo Crea, Richard Dutton, Donna O'Brien and Lisa Stevens. Township Committee liaison Ken Laney (in place of Dan Maxwell) was also in attendance.

The minutes of the last meeting of the Board on February 24, 2025 were then approved by motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried.

The first speaker was Chief Jim Hawkins of the Little Egg Harbor ("LEH") Police Department, who began by describing three programs for the LEH community sponsored by his Department, an eight-week "citizens' police academy" which was about to conclude in which participants would receive both basic first aid and CPR certificates and which will be repeated next year; a "cops and crayons" program which about 500 children attended; and a basketball game in which junior high school students will be pitted against police officers.

He then reported that the biggest culprit who had been annoying Harbor Bay residents with his dirt bike riding had been identified and arrested. He also repeated the advice that at night you should be sure to close your garage door, lock the doors to your house and cars, and not leave any keys or fobs visible inside your car, as there have been car burglaries lately in an area near Mystic Shores. Finally, on the subject of fraud, he reported that there have again been cases in which a senior receives a phone call purporting to be from a grandchild in an emergency situation requesting the immediate transfer of money, and that there have also been fraudulent real estate listings of houses that are not for sale using photographs obtained from Google and similar sources. If you have any questions or concerns as to whether something is legitimate you should not hesitate to call his Department's non-emergency number, 609-296-3666 x100, to speak to someone about it.

The next speaker was New Jersey State Assemblyman Brian Rumpf, a longtime LEH resident who was formerly a Township Committee member and Mayor and has served in the State Legislature since 2003. He reported that he regards the biggest issue at the moment to be utility fees, and said that he feels that the clean energy plans involving solar power and windmills were being implemented too quickly without first filling the void created by reducing other sources of energy, so that New Jersey has gone from being a net exporter of energy to other states in the grid--which resulted in rates here being reasonable for years--to creating only about 65% of the energy we require, so that, ironically, as a result we now use energy from so-called "dirty" states like coal-producing West Virginia, and are years away from reversing this. He said that he favors, and is pressing legislation that will implement, use of small nuclear energy sources that could be connected to the existing grid in Lacey Township. He also noted that in June electrical bills are expected to increase by about 20%.

With regard to the New Jersey state budget, he said that he is a member of the Budget Committee and that the State's \$58.05 billion budget has increased substantially under Governor Phil Murphy, state pensions are now fully funded, and education is also supposedly fully funded as well, but the amounts local schools receive have been cut. He added he has been meeting with state commissioners and others to try to arrange for belt-tightening. He then noted that he also serves on the Military and Veterans Committee and the Assembly has passed a bill that would give veterans with less than 100% disability a reduction in their property taxes proportional to the respective percent they are disabled. He said that such reductions would not come from Township tax dollars but rather are an obligation that would be transferred to the State. Finally, he noted that he and his colleagues in the 9th Legislative District now have a new office in Manahawkin to better serve residents of the southern part of Ocean County.

The next speaker was Dayna Wilson of the LEH Tax Collector's Office, who said that her office will be assisting seniors in completing Form PAS-1 to apply for three possible types of property tax relief on Wednesdays in April and May from 1 to 3 PM at Town Hall, 665 Radio Road. For information (or to volunteer to help provide such assistance to fellow seniors), call her at 609-296-7241 x243.

Township Committee liaison Ken Laney then said that leaf pickups in LEH will end in April and will not resume until October, and that there are plans for a paper shredding truck to be made available sometime in September. Kathy Tucker, LEH Recreation Director, then provided some information and upcoming dates: A lunch for seniors is held at the Senior Center on Radio Road every Tuesday at 11:30, up to 30 seniors can be accommodated, and you must call to reserve a place. Seniors are also invited to play cards and board games at the Center on Mondays and Thursdays from noon to 3 PM. On April 19 the LEH Environmental Commission will sponsor a community cleanup and a "green fair" at the LEH Community Center; the annual Senior Expo will take place on May 7 from 9 AM to noon also at the Community Center; a Memorial Day parade on May 26 will start at St. Theresa's Church and end at Veterans' Park; and arts and crafts fairs are planned for June 28, September 13 and November 8 from 11 AM to 3 PM. Details with regard to events like these have been or will be posted on the Township web page under the Recreation Department heading or can be obtained from her office by calling 609-296-7241 x251.

The next meeting of the Senior Advisory Board will be on Monday, April 28, 2025 at 10:00 A.M. at the Cranberry Creek Clubhouse. All seniors are welcome and urged to attend.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:30 AM.

*Respectfully submitted,
Richard Dutton, Acting Secretary, LEH Senior Citizens' Advisory Board*