



Newsletter #28 ~ December, 2009

**IMPORTANT -- PLEASE NOTE:**

Your privacy is important. If you do not wish to receive emails from Jeff Grayzel, please click the unsubscribe link on the bottom of this page and your email address will be removed within 48 hours. Thank you.

## December, 2009 Update

Dear Neighbors,

I am writing to you one more time in 2009 to let you know of a Special Meeting that has been scheduled for Wednesday, December 30 at 8:30am at the Municipal Building. The sole purpose of this meeting is to discuss and vote on the "Public Contracting Reform Ordinance" which I introduced back at our September Township Committee meeting.

As a reminder, this ordinance is based on a model prepared by the non-partisan Citizens Campaign organization. It is a local-level pay-to-play measure that goes well beyond the State of New Jersey Pay-to-Play law (see details below). Ordinances just like this one have been passed by almost 70 governing bodies around the state of New Jersey. My hope is that we can pass it in Morris Township, as well, to ensure that our municipality maintains the highest ethical standard.

**Morris Township  
Committee  
Special Meeting:  
December 30, 2009  
8:30 AM  
Municipal Building  
Main Meeting Room**

In September I introduced, and Committeeman Ron Goldberg seconded, a local pay-to-play ordinance, The Public Contracting Reform Ordinance, for Morris Township. I believe it is significantly stronger than the State law. A hearing on the ordinance was to be at the Township Committee meeting of Dec. 16, but a clerical error put us out of compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act and forced a rescheduling. Now there is a special hearing on December 30 which ironically makes the meeting less open to the public – because we will be holding our meeting during business hours instead of in the evening, and doing it over a holiday period when people are away.

Please attend this year-end special meeting to participate in a debate on an ordinance that would reduce the cost of government and taxes through preventing "pay to play".

### About Pay-to-Play...

Absent of proper controls, public contracting is increasingly dominated by "pay-to-play" practices where large campaign contributions are traded for lucrative government contracts. In the process, taxpayers pay more for lower quality services and local elections become too costly for everyday Americans to contemplate running. Public contracting reform severs the link between campaign contributions and government contracts, ensuring that merit and cost effectiveness drive the contract process while leveling the playing field to run for political office.

Key Components of this ordinance are:

- Sets limits on contributions from professionals, such as attorneys, auditors, and engineers in

the year prior to negotiations.

- Bans all political contributions by contractors from the beginning of negotiations through the performance of the contract.
- Limits contributions to \$300 to town candidates and local political parties, \$500 to county political parties, PACs and \$2,500 in aggregate.
- Includes contracts awarded through a "fair and open" process.
- Individuals who break the law, or try to circumvent it are banned from receiving no-bid contracts for 4 years.

Some say we don't have pay-to-play in Morris Township, because that's only a Democratic practice, and Republicans are the majority party here. Some say there's not a good reason for the Morris Township Committee to vote in a pay-to-play ordinance that would plug the huge gaps left by the State laws. Some say "If it ain't broke, don't fix it".

I believe we should maintain the highest ethical standard in Morris Township -- and to do so we need to raise the bar. Let's join those municipalities that are already setting an example for New Jersey. Come to the December 30th meeting and tell the unconvinced Morris Township Committeemen that you want questionable campaign contributions to stop and the resulting contractor savings to translate from "public relations" costs to lower contract prices and lower taxes.

### **December 16 Township Committee Meeting...**

I am not writing a summary of the meeting this month, but you can view a copy of the agenda via a link to our Township website:

**[http://www.morristwp.com/agendas/twpcomm\\_agenda\\_12-16-09.pdf](http://www.morristwp.com/agendas/twpcomm_agenda_12-16-09.pdf)**

The text of each ordinance can be found online at:

**<http://www.morristwp.com/ordinances09.asp>**

The resolutions can be found here:

**[http://www.morristwp.com/resolutions09/twpcomm\\_resolutions\\_12-16-09.pdf](http://www.morristwp.com/resolutions09/twpcomm_resolutions_12-16-09.pdf)**

At this meeting the Mayor announced that the "Public Contracting Reform Ordinance" did not receive adequate public notice (publication in the newspaper was late). Thus discussion and vote were postponed until the December 30 special meeting.

At the conclusion of the meeting I made the following final remarks:

*I expected this would be our last meeting of the year and my last opportunity to make one final remark as a member of this governing body. But we are now having a Special meeting on December 30, so I will have one more opportunity. However, since so many people are here in the audience tonight I thought I would make my farewell statement now.*

*First, I would like to say thank you to my colleagues on the Township Committee for their resolution of recognition. I appreciate the gesture.*

*I want to take this opportunity to thank those of you who came out tonight to support me and to those of you who have been attending our Township Committee meetings throughout the year. I urge you to continue to attend these meetings. It is important for the Township Committee to hear the opinions of our residents before we make our decisions. Your input is very important for us to make educated decisions about how residents want to see things done in our town.*

*This is a sad day for me. I am sorry to be leaving this body. I have enjoyed working for the people of Morris Township and had wanted to continue my efforts here on the Township Committee. I want to give a hearty "Thank You!" to those of you who supported me during the election and during my term here. Thank you for seeking balance in our local government.*

*When I began my term, I said I would work to open government, increase public participation, improve information flow, increase public understanding of land use decisions, seek some remedy to traffic and congestion, and assure that good quality of life was my guiding principle.*

*I am pleased with what I have accomplished during my term. I will continue to monitor the Township Committee and continue to make suggestions on how we can improve.*

*I have also worked hard to increase debate and discussion amongst members of this committee. At times, our discussion of issues became lengthy and our meetings ran long, but I think that kind of debate is healthy. We have one more debate and discussion session scheduled for our special meeting on December 30th when we'll discuss the Public Contracting Reform Ordinance, also known as the local pay to play ordinance that should have been discussed tonight. I am sorry this debate could not have taken place in front of this large audience, but I invite everyone in the public back for one more meeting. I have sought to make Morris Township a better place, and this new ordinance will raise the ethical standard at which we operate. I think it is an important piece of legislation to pass and I urge my colleagues to vote for it.*

*In closing, it has been a true honor and privilege to serve the residents of Morris Township for the past two and a half years. I thank you all for giving me this opportunity.*

*As for the coming year, I wish my colleagues on the Township Committee well in 2010. It will be a difficult one financially for our town and every other municipality in New Jersey. Times are tough and I wish all of the Committeemen the wherewithal to navigate it.*

*Finally, best wishes for a happy holiday and a health new year to all our residents and to all the dedicated employees of Morris Township.*

### **Holiday Recycling Tip...**

Most holiday gift-wrap is recyclable. Even if it crumpled up you can still stuff it into a paper bag and put it out for recycling.

Remember, by recycling we are all keeping more waste from being taken to the garbage dump, which costs taxpayers \$\$\$ to dispose of. Recycling is win-win: reduce cost by sending less to the dump while increasing revenue from payments from the recycling company.

### **Holiday Health Tip...**

Don't drink and drive. As I reported in my last newsletter, the Morris Township Police Department is running a drunk-driving enforcement program called "Over the Limit Under Arrest". This year-End crackdown will run December 7th to January 3rd. This statewide crackdown is in now full force. Believe it or not, over the first two weeks of this enforcement program we are averaging one drunk-driving arrest per day in Morris Township. The Police Department is out there in full force to make our roadways as safe as possible for the holiday season. So please drink responsibly.

### **Contact Jeff...**

Although I will not be communicating with the public as frequently as in the past, please feel free to contact me by e-mail with questions or comments about anything happening in Morris Township. I will continue to respond to e-mails sent to [Jeff@JeffGrayzel.com](mailto:Jeff@JeffGrayzel.com)

### **Upcoming Committee Meeting...**

The first Township Committee meeting of the new year (will take place on

Wednesday January 6th. The draft agenda will be available shortly online at <http://morristwp.com/>

This is the annual "Township Reorganization Meeting" where the next Mayor is elected by the Committee and he announces all his appointments to various Boards and Committees. In addition, the new, 2010 Committee will contract for professional services (including several lawyers, our Prosecutor, Planner, etc). The outcome of the Dec. 30 Pay to Play ordinance vote will be very meaningful at this point.

I urge everyone to attend our Township Committee meetings. It is the best way to stay informed on how our local government is operating.

Best wishes to all for a happy and healthy 2010.

**JEFF**

Committeeman, Morris Township

**NEXT  
TOWNSHIP  
MEETING:  
Wednesday  
Jan. 6th**

[Jeff's Web Site](#) | [Contact Jeff](#)

©2009 Jeff Grayzel