

# Fiscal Irresponsibility and the Flemington Business Improvement District (FBID)

## *A personal message from Township Committeeman Reiner*

Flemington and its Business Improvement District (FBID) has had many opportunities to create a sustainable ratable base. They have dropped the ball on each and every one of those opportunities. The Union Hotel, Agway Feed Mill, Flemington Cut Glass, the gas station property, these and other redevelopment projects are at a standstill, blocked at every turn by government bureaucracy. For five consecutive years the (FBID) has spent millions without any tangible business improvement. The prospects for revitalizing Main Street and Flemington's economic future is bleak to say the least. What has the (FBID) done in five years other than give top administrators VIP treatment and award over \$1.4 million in contract deals to politically connected law firms and consultants? What did "Branding Consultant" Roger Brooks do to earn his \$92,500 fee?

To paraphrase Ronald Reagan: Are Flemington residents and business owners better off today than they were five years ago when the (FBID) was established? Thus far, the Flemington Business Improvement District has been little more than a slush fund with administrative costs accounting for \$220,000 out of a \$362,000 budget, 61% for administration.

[http://www.nj.com/hunterdon-county-democrat/index.ssf/2014/12/flemington\\_council oks bid bud.html](http://www.nj.com/hunterdon-county-democrat/index.ssf/2014/12/flemington_council oks bid bud.html)

If we merged, would FBID Chairwoman Susan Peterson and her Vice Chair Robert Shore expect to levy their special property tax on commercial real estate in Raritan? Raritan business owners are in a better position to determine how best to allocate their resources versus unelected bureaucrats on the (FBID) who know nothing about the private sector. Raritan Township taxpayers should know a whole lot more before merging and taking on the debt of a town on the verge of bankruptcy.

In 2011, Washingtoncitypaper.com published an article about BID salaries. The highest salary to assessment revenue ratio in D.C. BID organizations in 2011 was 13%.

<http://www.washingtoncitypaper.com/blogs/housingcomplex/2011/12/08/bid-heads-do-pretty-well/>

Flemington beats them all in salary to assessment revenue ratio.

1. **Flemington** - \$220,000 salary—\$362,000 revenue—61%
2. **Adams Morgan** - \$80,520 salary—\$616,640 revenue—13%
3. **Capitol Hill** - \$138,254 salary—\$1,309,659 revenue—10%
4. **Capitol Riverfront** - \$167,308 salary—\$1,724,546 revenue—10%
5. **NoMa** - \$179,249 salary—\$1,844,237 revenue—10%
6. **Golden Triangle** - \$258,467 salary—\$3,509,761 revenue—7.0%
7. **Downtown** - \$405,437 salary—\$10,351,018 revenue—4%
8. **Georgetown** - \$139,167 salary—\$4,763,572 revenue—3%

With 20% of Raritan's population and a land mass of 1.077 square miles to Raritan's 37.8 square miles, Flemington retains 17 police officers to Raritan's 32. Nearly twice as many officers as Raritan on a per capita scale. Flemington does receive more 911 calls on a per capita scale than Raritan and does have more crime. That said, such an arrangement may work well for Flemington considering the culture of policing in both communities is very different. Raritan, however is in no position to take on the expense of another town's PD as far as unit hours, benefits and longevity are concerned. Any merger would mean Raritan Township taking on 17 additional officers increasing its force by over 50% from 32 to 49 officers. Considering there are no plans to layoff cops in either community, such an arrangement would mean higher taxes for Raritan Township.

Flemington has no ratables to speak of to ease the burden of

taxation coming from the Flemington Raritan School District. Flemington has a waste water treatment facility that lacks capacity and starves for nearly \$2 million in infrastructure upgrades the borough does not have. Flemington has a huge affordable housing obligation under COAH. Raritan doesn't have the sewer capacity to meet its own COAH obligation, let alone Flemington's.

I see no upside in this for Raritan. The greatest downside would be a windfall of Raritan's hard earned tax dollars being pumped into a black hole only to benefit Flemington while Raritan pays the freight.. Although I sympathize with Flemington's predicament, my allegiance is to Raritan Township. I would be hard pressed to spend Raritan's hard earned tax dollars to bail out a town that has been unable to get it's budget and finances in order and live within its means. Raritan Township taxpayers are not obligated to fix Flemington's problems. Raritan has enough of its own problems to solve.

I would like to express my appreciation to the good folks of Raritan Township for taking time to read this message. Please remember to vote on Tuesday, November 3rd, 2015.



*Louis Carl Reiner*  
Raritan Township Committeeman

# **VOTE "NO" ON MERGING**

## **Tuesday, November 3rd**

This message was paid for by Louis Carl Reiner

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## How Would Raritan Township Fare In A Merger With Flemington?

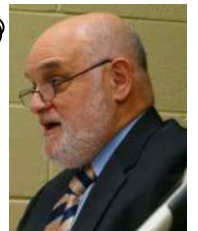
As my first year in office as a Township Committeeman draws to a close, I am reaching out to Raritan Township voters with some facts about the merger question with Flemington that will appear on the November 3rd general election ballot. **Facts those pushing the deal do not want Raritan Township voters to know about!**

My goal is to ensure Raritan voters have the facts and understand the costs and potential risks jumping into this merger blindly could have on Raritan Township. Mayor Greiner of Flemington estimated it would cost **\$50-\$100,000** to just look at the idea. A more sensible approach would be to run the numbers for free. Given Flemington's aging infrastructure, dismal ratables, grim financial prospects, crushing overhead and debt it is easy to see why Raritan Township voters should **reject the merger proposals!**

Comparators:	Flemington Census Data	Raritan Census Data	Flemington vs. Raritan
2015 Budget Numbers:	\$5.2 million	\$17.29 million	\$1,135 per person vs. \$779 per person
Debt:	\$9 million (\$1,964/person)	\$18 million (\$811/person)	<b>1/2</b> of Raritan's total debt but <b>2.4</b> times the per person debt
Ratables	\$473,746,762	\$3,929,879,988	Has 12% of Raritan's tax ratables
Population	4,581	22,185	= 20% of Raritan's population
2014 911 calls (# calls / person)	12,631 (2.7 calls/person)	27,664 (1.2 calls/person)	Flemington has over twice the 911 calls per person! <b>Does this = twice the crime?</b>
General Tax Rate	3.054	2.345	= 30 % larger than Raritan's
Size (square miles)	1.077	37.690	= 2.85% the size of Raritan
Median Household Income	\$39,886	\$109,941	= 36.2% of the income
Median Family Income	\$51,582	\$130,514	= 39.5% of the family income

**A merger would only benefit Flemington leaving Raritan Township taxpayers to pick up the tab for what Flemington Councilman Joey Novick christened "Flemington Township?"**

**Does Raritan Township really want to be Flemington's ca\$h cow?**



**Joey Novick**

**Flemington's Democratic Councilman**

Flemington's tax base is more porous today than ever before with more and more businesses leaving the borough. Flemington also has a disproportionate percentage of tax exempt real estate being supported by the few taxpayers left in a dying town. Two County courthouses, two jails, the old Annex Building, County Administration Building, County Hall of Records, County Clerk's Office, County Sherriff's Office, Old Prosecutor's Office and a number of church properties add up to nearly 30% of Flemington's tax base.

To paraphrase Nancy Reagan: **"JUST SAY NO"** ... to a merger between Flemington and Raritan Township.