



**TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM
JANUARY 23, 2018
Regular Session 7:30 PM**

ROLL CALL:

Mr. Blood	Present
Mr. Cioppettini	Present
Ms. Duarte	Present
Mr. Gisser	Present
Mayor Diegnan	Present

Also Present: John M. Mills, III, Esq., Township Attorney
Deborah Bonanno, Administrator
Mary Beth Zichelli, Township Clerk

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

STATEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE:

Adequate notice of this meeting of the Township Committee of the Township of Mendham was given as required by the Open Public Meetings Act as follows: Notice was given to the, Observer Tribune and Daily Record on January 4, 2018. Notice was posted on the Bulletin Board in the Township Offices and Notice was filed with the Township Clerk.

ANNOUNCEMENTS --

6th-12th grade mountain bike NJ NICA league had their season kick off in town hall on Sunday, January 21st. It was well attended and if you could not attend and are interested, you can email them at info@WMchainbreakers.org.

Free radon kits are being offered in the Board of Health office. You can come in or call extension 218 for information.

Emerald Ash Borer Presentation – Ms. Bonanno explained the problem of the Emerald Ash Borer and stated the Township Office would be setting up a presentation to explain how to handle the Emerald Ash trees.

CORRESPONDENCE

Morris County Freeholder's Budget Meeting will hold an informal gathering on Tuesday, February 13th and give the public a chance to understand the budget.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

December 18, 2017, regular session

Mayor Diegnan called for a motion. Mr. Cioppettini moved. Mr. Gisser seconded. Ms. Duarte abstained. All other members voted to approve.

December 18, 2017, executive session

Mayor Diegnan called for a motion. Mr. Gisser moved. Mr. Cioppettini seconded. Ms. Duarte abstained. All other members voted to approve.

January 5, 2018, regular session

Mayor Diegnan called for a motion. Ms. Duarte moved. Mr. Blood seconded. All members voted to approve.

January 8, 2018, regular session

Mayor Diegnan called for a motion. Mr. Gisser moved. Mr. Blood seconded. All members voted to approve.

January 8, 2018, executive session

Mayor Diegnan called for a motion. Mr. Gisser moved. Mr. Cioppettini seconded. All members voted to approve.

ORDINANCES FOR SECOND READING

ORDINANCE 2018-1

MODEL ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK

Mayor Diegnan called for a motion to introduce. Ms. Duarte moved. Mr. Gisser seconded. This ordinance was introduced at the January 8, 2018 Township Committee meeting. The Mayor opened it up to public hearing.

Larry Corsi, 323 Mendham Road West, asked about the CAP bank and Ms. Bonanno explained.

Michael Merritt, 73 Mountainside Road, suggested ordinances have an explanation added to the agenda for residents to better understand the content.

All members voted to approve.

RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION 2018-20

ELECTING PARTICIPATION IN THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY TEMPORARY DISABILITY PLAN

Mayor Diegnan called for a motion. Ms. Duarte moved. Mr. Cioppettini seconded. Mr. Gisser commented that this was a nice improvement for the employees. All members voted to approve.

RESOLUTION 2018-21

APPROVING A RAFFLE LICENSE

Mayor Diegnan called for a motion. Ms. Duarte moved. Mr. Cioppettini seconded. All members voted to approve.

RESOLUTION 2018-22

TO APPROVE SETTLEMENT OF REAL PROPERTY TAX APPEAL

Mayor Diegnan called for a motion. Ms. Duarte moved. Mr. Cioppettini seconded. Mr. Cioppettini expressed his concern regarding the assessments and reduction of taxes which causes negative repercussions for the Township. All members voted to approve.

RESOLUTION 2018-23

AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR AN ASPHALT MIXER

Mayor Diegnan called for a motion. Ms. Duarte moved. Mr. Cioppettini seconded. The Mayor commented that the mixer will use millings and then recondition and reuse them. It will be a good investment over the long run. All members voted to approve.

RESOLUTION 2018-24

APPOINTING MEMBERS TO VARIOUS BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

This resolution was tabled. The Mayor explained that after researching the history of the HPC, there was never an ordinance establishing the Committee and the Township Committee would be working on an ordinance to be introduced in February.

RESOLUTION 2018-25

AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF BILLS

Mayor Diegnan called for a motion. Ms. Duarte moved. Mr. Cioppettini seconded. All members voted to approve.

DISCUSSION

Ms. Duarte discussed the Hearing Persons Present portion of the agenda and asked the Mayor to reconsider putting it back at the beginning of the meeting, as well as the end.

Mr. Blood commented that in other towns they open up it up twice; once in the beginning just for agenda items and a second time at the end for any discussion. He noted that only one appearance per session is allowed and has observed that it does work.

Mr. Gisser noted that he supports the idea.

The Mayor agreed and stated that he gave it thought since the last meeting and suggested trying it and it will go on the next agenda.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Duarte informed the residents that she was named the liaison for the Fire Departments, First Aid, Environmental Commission, Mendham TV and Historic Preservation Committee and the regional school district. She is also heading a communications Adhoc committee to help improve communications between residents as well as working on a volunteer study with the Administrator.

Mr. Cioppettini announced the finance committee has been working on the 2018 budget and are working to get the budget reduced. There is a 5.25 % increase and he feels it is too much.

Mr. Gisser noted the change of dates to introduce the budget on March 12th and adoption on March 27th and additional public meetings for February 12th and 27th.

Mr. Cioppettini stated that the tax base has been reduced with less property value and increased expenses, therefore asking departments to reduce their expenses.

Mr. Gisser announced the launching of a letter campaign to close out any open applications and permits which will help with the property evaluation issue and he began discussions with the tax assessor. He stated that the residents could expect more information regarding taxes in late spring. He also told the residents that he is the liaison to Mendham Township school district and plans to set up a time to meet with Dr. Constantino.

Mr. Blood told residents he is the liaison for recreation, public works, and the sewer utilities. He has been involved with the field allocations in the past, and will further discuss the Public Works budget items. Mr. Blood also mentioned the plant upgrades to be completed as scheduled and will be meeting with Veolia to go over their operating budgets.

Mayor Diegnan told residents he will be meeting with the police subcommittee next week and he is waiting on Friends of Pitney to come up with a strategic plan for the Pitney building destroyed by fire. The Mayor also informed the residents that he requested the Planning Board and Zoning Board professionals to look at their proposals and think about changing their fees.

HEARING PERSONS PRESENT

Larry Corsi, 323 Mendham Road West, commented that the budget increase proposed is much too high, asked if the Township has any shared services and has the Township ever petitioned to have a traffic light at Roxiticus Road.

Ms. Bonanno explained some of our shared services such as equipment, court, coordinated informal police activities with the Borough.

Chief Johnson stated that it has been an ongoing discussion and investigation for over twenty years. Traffic engineers have found it does not warrant a light, unless enough residents can petition for it.

Ryan Guthrie, 28 Cold Hill Road, expressed his dismay about the Township Committee not reappointing Mr. Brusco to the Zoning Board.

Jack Curtis, 4 Michael Road, asked about the settlement for the police officer and where he could get the information regarding the settlement. He was told to submit an OPRA request to the Clerk.

Patricia Zimmerman, 3 West Main Street, expressed her concerns regarding the installation of the nodes without the establishment of the Historic Preservation Committee.

Michael Merritt, 73 Mountainside Road, talked about the three items the Mayor discussed at the Reorganization meeting; communication, volunteer relations and process.

Nick Monahan, 20 West Main Street, thanked the TC for adding another Hearing Persons Present section of the agenda and suggested it begin with no restrictions and see how it works.

Diana Orban Brown, Ironia Road, read a letter she had written after the last meeting.
(Attached)

Mayor Diegnan explained that the executive session length was necessary in order to choose members for both committees and difficult decisions were made.

ADJOURNMENT

The Township Committee adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Beth Zichelli



Township Clerk

Dear Mendham Township Committee of 2018,

Congratulations and good wishes to the new, nearly new and continuing members of the Mendham Township Committee. As a body, you come to the task with an incredible skill set: knowledge of the law and relationships with the county; insider's knowledge of municipal government; financial acumen; business experience with entrepreneurial insight; and public relations and grant-writing skills.

You are able to begin your work after a productive 2017, as evidenced by the excellent report given by Administrator Bonanno (which, by the way, I hope will be posted on the Township website). Progress was made on a number of issues that had been postponed year after year after year; action was taken in a number of important new areas; lingering problems were resolved in many cases; due diligence was followed; and new initiatives were launched.

For the most part, decisions were made with the full attention, involvement and respect of the various committee members. Not all decisions were popular, but as Reverend Howard said in his invocation at the beginning of 2017, a governing body needs to make decisions with courage, and now I paraphrase, even when those decisions don't please all of the people all of the time.

However, it is clear that on a national level – and even, often, on the state level – we have been living through nine to ten years of what is in my experience an unprecedented period of government dissension and dysfunction. Governance and leadership have given way to keeping score. Please don't let that filter down to the local level.

Please vow that you will dedicate yourself to compromise. But know that compromise is not horse-trading or if-you-get-one-I-get-one. It is reaching a consensus – an agreement with dignity and respect – that works for the good of all the residents. The campaigns are over, the governing begins. There should be no BFFs or special interests that take precedence over the common good. The squeaky wheels deserve no more grease than the quietest taxpayer in town.

Mendham Township enjoys – is blessed with – one of the finest professional employee cohorts in the state. These individuals are dedicated and committed to the residents – and are darned nice, to boot. You are the governing body not the floor supervisors. In lay terms, you are the board of directors. Your professionals are the CEO, CFO, Chief, Superintendent, and so forth. You set goals; let them get the job done.

Please resist the temptation to micromanage them or monopolize their time. They have 5,864 other residents to serve who are as important as you are. In other words, minimize the time you hang out in Town Hall and let them get their work done. Remember, they are not your administrative assistants. And under no circumstances use your position for your or others' personal gain. It is unethical – and most likely against the law. Instead, use your skills to supplement their efforts – when they request your help and when you can make their job more effective and efficient – and let's face it – easier.

I mentioned progress in 2017. That was good, but there are still some important open items to be resolved: the Pitney property needs to become a useful asset for the town, the playground needs to be

built, the police need a new headquarters, tax assessments needs to be brought into reality, the fire department needs an updated ordinance, the derelict buildings at the Mosle Preserve need to be cleared out, we need to find revenue sources (such as grants) outside of taxes, and we need to have more citizen involvement in our key committees, such as Finance, Public Safety and Public Works.

That means a lot of consensus and cooperation.

I am now going to add a short observation that wasn't in my original letter. You will recall that former Governor Brendan Byrne died a short while ago. He and former Governor Tom Kean had a weekly column in the Star-Ledger that I always looked forward to reading. They would each make observations – based on their experience and politics – as they responded to questions posed by the Star-Ledger editorial board.

Tom Kean wrote the last column last week. Here's an excerpt:

Governor Kean said: "I will miss Brendan terribly as a friend. Brendan and I first got know each other when I was the Republican leader of the state Assembly and he was the newly-elected Democratic governor. We disagreed on a number of issues, and did so publicly - and privately. And what happened is what should always happen in politics and doesn't. Even though we disagreed, I found myself gaining respect for Brendan Byrne every time we talked. I think he felt the same way. He was a sincere Democrat and I was a sincere Republican, but we could always see the other's point of view. The friendship deepened as time went on, and extended to the tennis court, where we had some fierce matches - and, as we got older, onto the golf course. We'd go to shows together, have lunches and dinners together. Seeing Brendan was like opening a new bottle of champagne. I hope he felt that way, too. "

So, most of all, build friendships with each other based on respect – given and received. Disagree when you have to, but do it after thoughtful consideration of the other person's position. Resist the temptation to grandstand, or engage in one-upsmanship or feel that you have to have a sound bite for every issue – major or minor. Work for the good of the town, not for your own interests or ambitions.

Finally, get my roads paved, spiff up my fields, give me a playground, a new police station, two new fire trucks, better Town Hall furniture and – oh, yes – reduce my taxes!

Good luck and godspeed,

Diana Orban Brown, about to be former mayor of Mendham Township