

**TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM
REORGANIZATION MEETING
JANUARY 2, 2020 - 7:30 p.m.**

CALL TO ORDER BY TOWNSHIP CLERK

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 8, 2019. Notice was posted on the bulletin board in the township offices and notice was filed with the Township Clerk.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

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INVOCATION – Father Michael Drury

STATEMENT OF DETERMINATION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY CANVASSERS – Township Clerk

A Statement of Determination of the Board of Canvassers, relative to an Election held in the Township of Mendham, County of Morris and State of New Jersey, for the election of certain Municipal Officers for the Municipality on the 5th day of November, 2019.

The said Board does determine that at the said election:

Thomas Baio and Jordan Orlins were duly elected to the office of Township Committee for the term of three (3) years.

SWEARINGS-IN

COMMITTEEMEMBERS

- Oath of Office administered to Thomas Baio by Assemblywoman Aura Dunn
- Oath of Office administered to Jordan Orlins by Mayor Christine Glassner of Mendham Borough

ROLL CALL

Mr. Baio
Ms. Duarte
Mr. Monaghan
Ms. Neibart
Mr. Orlins

NOMINATIONS FOR OFFICE OF MAYOR FOR 2020

Ms. Coppinger called for nominations for the position of Mayor for 2020. Mr. Monaghan nominated Committee member Sarah Neibart to the position of Mayor and Mr. Baio seconded the nomination. No other nominations were presented which resulted in the election of Sarah Neibart to the position of Mayor. Ms. Duarte explained her reasons for not voting in favor of Ms. Neibart, which are attached hereto and made part of the minutes. All members present voted to approve the nomination for Mayor Neibart except for Ms. Duarte who voted no. Attorney John Mills administered the oath of office to Ms. Sarah Neibart.

NOMINATIONS FOR OFFICE OF DEPUTY MAYOR FOR 2020

Mayor Neibart called for nominations for the position of Deputy Mayor for 2020. Mr. Baio nominated Committee member Nick Monaghan to the position of Deputy Mayor and Mr. Orlins seconded the nomination. Ms. Duarte explained her reasons for not voting in favor of Mr. Monaghan, which are attached hereto and made part of the minutes. All members present voted to approve the nomination for Deputy Mayor except for Ms. Duarte who voted no. Assemblywoman Aura Dunn administered the oath of office to Mr. Nick Monaghan.

WELCOME – 2020 Mayor

Mayor Neibart's remarks are attached hereto and made part of the minutes.

OATHS OF OFFICE TO FIRE COMPANIES AND FIRST AID SQUAD – Oath of Offices were administered by Township Clerk Maria Coppinger

BROOKSIDE ENGINE COMPANY NO. 1 OFFICERS:

Chief – Nicholas Witzcak

Oath of Office administered as a group:

Deputy Chief – Stephen M. Sauerma
First Assistant Chief – Thomas Jones
Lieutenant – Connor Beggan

Chief Witzcak's remarks are attached hereto and made part of the minutes.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF NEW MEMBERS:

New members:

Senior Member

Dan Wood

Junior Members

Trey Vanderbeek

Shan Ali

Kevin Berman

Will Ackerman

RALSTON ENGINE COMPANY NO. 1 OFFICERS:

OATH OF OFFICE ADMINISTERED AS A GROUP:

Chief - Tom Montgomery

Assistant Chief - Scott Mortensen

Captain - Jeffrey Betz

President – Joe Gomeringer

MENDHAM TOWNSHIP FIRST AID SQUAD OFFICERS:

OATH OF OFFICE ADMINISTERED AS A GROUP:

Captain – George Budd

Lieutenant - Kyle Wiggins

Quartermaster – Bill Dunlevy

Assistant Quartermaster East - Janet Wood

Assistant Quartermaster West – Patty Marold

President - Leslie Dunlevy

Treasurer – Ellen Twill

Secretary - Harriet Zimmerman

Training Coordinator - Robin Johnston

Data Steward - Alex Kane

CONSENT AGENDA

The following resolutions were submitted to the Township Committee for review and were adopted by one motion.

Mayor Neibart opened the meeting to the committee for any questions or discussions on resolutions 2020–001 through 2020–027.

RESOLUTION 2020-001

APPOINTING TOWNSHIP PROFESSIONALS FOR 2020

RESOLUTION 2020-002

APPOINTING TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS FOR 2020

RESOLUTION 2020-003

RE-APPOINTING KAREN FORNARO, CERTIFIED MUNICIPAL FINANCIAL OFFICER TO THE POSITION OF CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

RESOLUTION 2020-004

APPOINTING LYDIA BLIDE AS TAX COLLECTOR, TAX SEARCH OFFICER, COLLECTOR OF SEWER FEES AND FINANCE CLERK

RESOLUTION 2020-005

APPOINTING MEMBER(S) TO THE ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

RESOLUTION 2020-006

APPOINTING MEMBER(S) TO THE BOARD OF HEALTH

RESOLUTION 2020-007

APPOINTING MEMBER(S) TO THE RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

RESOLUTION 2020-008

APPOINTING MEMBER(S) TO THE TREE PROTECTION COMMITTEE

RESOLUTION 2020-009

APPOINTING MEMBER(S) TO THE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

RESOLUTION 2020-010

APPOINTING MEMBER(S) TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

RESOLUTION 2020-011

APPOINTING MEMBER(S) TO THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REVENUE SHARING COMMITTEE

RESOLUTION 2020-012

AUTHORIZING THE AWARD OF A NON-FAIR AND OPEN CONTRACT FOR TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY

RESOLUTION 2020-013

AUTHORIZING THE AWARD OF A NON-FAIR AND OPEN CONTRACT FOR PROFESSIONAL AUDITING SERVICES
- KATHRYN L. MANTELL – NISIVOCCIA LLP

RESOLUTION 2020-014

AUTHORIZING THE AWARD OF A NON-FAIR AND OPEN CONTRACT FOR TAX APPEAL CONSULTANT –
THOMAS SATEARY, ESQ. – LINDABURY, MCCORMICK, ESTABROOK & COOPER, PC

RESOLUTION 2020-015

AUTHORIZING THE AWARD OF A NON-FAIR AND OPEN CONTRACT FOR 2020 LEGAL SERVICES – LABOR
ATTORNEY – ART THIBAUT, ESQ – APRUZESSE, MCDERMOTT, MASTRO & MURPHY

RESOLUTION 2020-016

AUTHORIZING THE AWARD OF A NON-FAIR AND OPEN CONTRACT FOR SPECIAL LEGAL COUNSEL
MATTHEW C. MOENCH – KING, MOENCH, HIRNIAK, MEHTA LLP

RESOLUTION 2020-017

AUTHORIZING THE AWARD OF A NON-FAIR AND OPEN CONTRACT FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING
SERVICES – DENIS KEENAN, P.E. – FRENCH & PARRELLO ASSOCIATES

RESOLUTION 2020-018

ESTABLISHING VARIOUS PETTY CASH FUNDS FOR THE YEAR 2020

RESOLUTION 2020-019

ESTABLISHING VARIOUS CHANGE FUND FOR THE YEAR 2020

RESOLUTION 2020-020

APPOINTING CROSSING GUARD FOR THE 2020 SCHOOL YEAR

RESOLUTION 2020-021

DESIGNATING OFFICIAL NEWSPAPERS AND FIXING CHARGES FOR NOTICES OF PUBLIC MEETINGS DURING
2020

RESOLUTION 2020-022

ESTABLISHING REGULAR MEETING DATES – 2020 TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

RESOLUTION 2020-023

ESTABLISHING 2020 OFFICE HOURS AND HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

RESOLUTION 2020-024

APPROVING THE CASH MANAGEMENT PLAN OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM

RESOLUTION 2020-025

ESTABLISHING INTEREST RATE-DELINQUENT TAXES AND SEWER FEES

RESOLUTION 2020-026

ADOPTING 2020 TEMPORARY BUDGET OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM

RESOLUTION 2020-027

DESIGNATING DEPOSITORY FOR TOWNSHIP FUNDS AND AUTHORIZING SIGNATURES ON TOWNSHIP
CHECKS

Motion to adopt resolutions 2020-001 through 2020-027 was made by Ms. Duarte and seconded by Mr. Monaghan. Motion to call the question made by Mr. Monaghan and second by Mr. Duarte.
Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve.

REGULAR AGENDA

RESOLUTION 2020-028

APPOINTING MEMBER(S) TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Motion to adopt resolutions 2020-028 was made by Ms. Duarte and seconded by Mr. Monaghan.

Ms. Duarte thanked the volunteers for their continued service on the committees and also welcomed the new members who have stepped up to help.

Motion to call the question made by Ms. Duarte and second by Mr. Monaghan.

Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve except for Mr. Orlins who abstained.

Mr. Orlins expressed that Mr. Robert Scialla is his father in law and as a result has abstained.

SUCH OTHER BUSINESS AS MAY RIGHTFULLY COME BEFORE THE COMMITTEE

PLANNING BOARD NOMINATIONS

Ms. Duarte nominated Committee member Tom Baio to the position of member of the Planning Board and Mr. Orlins seconded the nomination.

Motion to call the question made by Mr. Monaghan and second by Ms. Duarte.

Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve.

Mayor Neibart designated the Mayor's role on the Planning Board to Deputy Mayor Monaghan.

STATEMENT BY THE MAYOR / COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mr. Monaghan welcomed the new Township Committee members, Tom and Jordan. He also thanked everyone in the audience especially the Fire and First Aid volunteers for supporting the community. He congratulated Mayor Neibart and wished her all the best for a successful year and he looks forward to working with her to help Mendham Township grow and prosper. Mr. Monaghan is excited about the possibilities that this year holds, he noted that the finances are strong and the debt is being paid down at a considerable rate. The paid staff at Town Hall, Police Department and DPW continues to perform at a high level, demonstrating why Mendham Township is a desirable place to live and work. These are great foundations for a successful year and he looks forward to working with the committee to build on that foundation.

Ms. Duarte's statement attached hereto and made part of the minutes.

Mr. Baio thanked the public for their support in helping him arrive at the dais. He expects to bring his professional experience to bear on the formation of policy, affecting the statutory and regulatory obstacles which affect private re-investment in the town. He expects that these changes in a small way will seek to curve and perhaps sustain property value increases in both the mid and long term. He takes it upon himself to foster anything that he can do to encourage private re-investment both from the resident community and the developer community. As he said during his campaign, the greatest vote that a citizen in the township can cast, is not a vote for him or one of the other Township Committee members but rather a vote to cut their lawn, paint their home, or otherwise improve the residence that they live. The community pride and the spirit that is shown both in the form of private reinvestment in a home as well as in the decoration, floral arrangements and holiday set-up is exactly what makes Mendham Township a great town. He hopes we can effectuate a little bit of the statutory and regulatory obstacles that might prevent someone from doing that.

Mr. Orlins expressed that he has a short story and a request. He moved to Mendham Township in 2007. In that year, the property tax rate was 1.5% and today the property tax rate will be around 2.2% which is more than a 40% increase. He expressed, a noted that everyone can agree, that this is a bad trend. He noted that this trend is specifically the reason why he chose to run for and serve on the committee.

Mr. Orlins provided an example on ratios noting that on the top of the ration you have "property taxes" and on the bottom of the ratio you have "property values." He explained that both parts of this equation is going in the wrong direction. Since 2007, taxes are generally going up and values are generally going down and noted that all have experienced this.

Mr. Orlins explained that property values are driven primarily by job growth and unfortunately for New Jersey our state's corporate tax and regulatory regime are the worst in the nation and on net is driving companies to other states. He expressed that on the other hand, fortunately, the Township Committee controls the municipal portion of the property tax bill. He expressed that we have the ability, if we have the will, to make dramatic improvements to our efficiency as a township, to lower municipal spending, stop the growth in our tax rate and make the town more attractive relative to other towns in the area.

Now, that gets him to his request which is to hold the Township Committee accountable. He noted that he and Tom (Baio) came with a long list of ideas to make the town more efficient, many of these ideas they got from the taxpayers, while campaigning. He noted that they are already working them but they need the help from residents. He asked the residents to attend the Township Committee meetings and ask them, what they are doing to lower taxes. He expressed that 4/5 of the committee members ran on lower taxes as their #1 priority. He noted that it is the #1 issue for him and Tom and it is the first issue on Sarah and Nick's campaign website. His request to the resident is to hold the Township Committee accountable.

HEARING PERSONS PRESENT - Mayor Neibart opened the meeting to the public.

Pratip Chattopadhyay - 12 Brookrace Drive – commented that in a relatively short period of time, there have been two prominent acts of hate and intolerance in community. During his wife's campaign, while knocking on doors, he learned of other cases perhaps not as overwhelming in there details but very clear in the discomfort that they caused and the pain that they resulted in. He expressed that the Township has to condemn in the strongest terms possible with fierce public statements, as quickly as possible, any acts of hate or intolerance in the community. He expressed that when he heard that someone vandalized the public menorah during Hanukkah, it broke his heart – and it should have broken the Township Committee's heart too which the public needed to hear, immediately, afterwards from each committee member. He expressed that the community

needed to hear a statement by the Township via press releases and social media post. He expressed his disappointment with the way the issue was handled because when something like this happens, it cuts the fabric of the community and it tears up the small town decency that makes the community that residents have all chosen happily and eagerly to raise a family. He, respectively, submitted to the committee that the township needs to confront head on the diversity problem – diversity needs to be talked about often and forcefully, forcefully work to show the world that this is not a closed community. He would like to meet with members of the committee to discuss some ideas for action on the issue of diversity. He is looking for the committee's assistance to shape the ideas, believe in the ideas and to participate in the ideas. He commented that governance is not just about property taxes and shared resources; it is about the community the residents want to live in. He suggested the following game plan: (1) forceful, immediate and official condemnation (2) official support for diversity initiatives (3) public building of the Township's reputation on these issues.

Taylor Buonocore – 28 Cold Hill Road – congratulated the Township Committee on their new roles. She would like to learn more about the process and criteria for selecting the leadership roles (Mayor and Deputy Mayor) – the interest comes from her professional and business background and also her interest in the town. Her understanding is that the choice, historically, has been made along dominate party lines. Ms. Buonocore expressed some suggestions on how to make a choice when they are two or more qualified people. She suggested making a list of criteria – what makes somebody the right person for the leadership roles. The list she made consist of the following criteria and she hopes to see Mayor Neibart and Deputy Mayor Monaghan rise to those criteria which are accessibility, attendance, results and a deep understanding of the town and community that comes from being out there. She expressed that continuing the involvement in the community is so critical and she looks forward to spending time with the committee members. She did her evaluation and her selection were not necessarily who is, currently, up at the dais. She would hate to feel that the choices, decisions and policy that get made, get made along party lines – she feels everyone is quiet tired of that. She expressed that Warren Gisser left big shoes to be filled and she hopes the committee can look to Warren Gisser's leadership. She is confident that Mayor Neibart will fill those shoes.

Motion to close hearing person present made by Mr. Monaghan and second by Mr. Orlins. All members present voted to approve.

Ms. Duarte thanked the public for speaking up at the meeting which takes a lot of courage. She expressed that she personally did speak out, immediately, on social media and through the newsletter about the acts that occurred. She welcomed the suggestions on what the township can do and she encouraged the members of the public to join the Stigma Free Task Force. She encouraged the public to attend the task force because the focus is to make sure that people are looking at Mendham in terms of buying homes. She assumed we all want to keep our taxes low which is why she did not speak about the topic and contrary to what was said she also ran on shared services and trying to lower taxes. She noted that one of the initiatives that she worked on last year was to bring in a little bit of a decrease in everyone utility bill through energy aggregation. She expressed that its 5 of 5 committee members who want to keep our town running efficiently and keep the taxes as low as possible also while investing in parks, recreation, etc.

ADJOURN

Ms. Duarte made a motion. Second by Mr. Baio

Roll call vote: All members present voted to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:25PM.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Ms. Duarte's remarks regarding the nominations for Mayor and Deputy Mayor
2. Mayor Neibart's remarks during the Welcome section
3. Chief Witzak's remarks after the swearing-in of the members of Brookside Engine Company
4. Ms. Duarte's remarks during the Committee Member's statement section

Respectfully Submitted,

Distributed: 01/31/2020

Approved: 02/10/2020

Maria Coppinger, Township Clerk

Remarks by Committee member Duarte regarding no vote for Mayor and Deputy Mayor

I will not be voting in favor of this nomination. I was at the high school track meet this afternoon, so sports are on my mind.

We as a Township Committee work together like a team. By virtue of being elected, we all made the team. And as a team we should be allowing full participation by everyone who made it.

The tradition has been to rotate the roles of deputy mayor and mayor among the five members of the Township Committee, so that everyone has an opportunity to fully participate as a leader and to represent the voters.

I'm disappointed — but not surprised — that I am being passed over for the position of mayor, as last year I was passed over for Deputy Mayor. I am effectively being left on the bench and on the sidelines, instead of being put out on the field. So for that reason, I will be voting No.

Good Evening Everyone!
Happy New Year, and Welcome to Mendham Township!

On behalf of the whole Township Committee, I want to thank our Township Administrator Debbie Bonanno and our Township Clerk Maria Coppinger for putting everything together for tonight. I also want to thank our outgoing Mayor Warren Gisser for being here tonight and for his leadership and commitment to this town. As many of you know, 2019 was a busy year for the Township!

- Our Recreation Department revitalized Brookside Beach
 - The Ralston Playground finally Opened
 - Our Twp. Administrator and DPW Superintendent restructured the Department of Public Works
 - Our town received a grant from the State of NJ and a grant from the County of Morris totaling \$642,253 dollars to build the Park at Pitney Farm.
 - We expanded and continue to expand Shared Services Opportunities by adding Chester Borough to our Shared Court with Chester Twp. and leading an inter-local services initiative with five other towns for animal control services
 - Our Planning Board approved several development applications
- AND
- We continued making incredible strides in paying down our debt obligations.

Going into this next year, our committee is poised to make even greater improvements. We are a committee of equals - We are a team charged with the responsibility of serving the community together. All of us have initiatives that we are personally focused on and I am sure you will hear some of them later tonight, but something that I think we can all agree on is that property taxes are just too high.

When I joined the Twp. Committee in 2018, property taxes were my number one issue; so the Mayor – at the time - appointed me to the Finance Committee. I quickly realized that our town operates on a pretty slim budget, and within that budget we are obligated to fund the unfunded state mandates and navigate the state regulations. To offset these costs, we work tirelessly to share services and utilize land and buildings for multi-use services, but without a vast retail or commercial district and without a growing rate-able base it is pretty difficult to sustain.

I know the municipal portion of property taxes is only about 20% of the overall property tax levy, **but** I believe it is **my** job and **every person's job** on this dais to do whatever they can in their role to be creative and work to find efficiencies to alleviate the tax burden on our residents.

As Mayor of our town and Chair of the Finance Committee, I believe that we can deliver a budget this year with **no** property tax increase. There will be tough decisions to be made, but it can be done while also continuing to pay down our debt.

In addition to cutting spending, we need to address our revenue problem. One way is to revise our Master Plan to help broaden our tax base.

Our tax levy is highly dependent on our aggregate assessed value, which we need to grow. We are challenged by our dependence on a tax base that is almost completely residential. We have taken some steps to broaden our tax base through recent approvals of development, and I know that we have applications on the horizon, but we need a proactive approach to this problem. Over the years, a lot has been said about what types of homes new families are looking to buy, and we will have to take a serious look to see if our current zoning standards are conducive to attracting those families. We also need to have a conversation about expanding the retail district that includes the Post Office and Harmony Brookside. I am excited to see what the Master Plan Subcommittee comes up with this year.

Another less traditional way to increase revenues is to encourage residents to focus their Charitable Contributions to our town. We had great success with raising money for the Ralston Playground, and I believe we can continue to succeed in raising money for the Park at Pitney Farm and other projects and initiatives coming down the line.

There are many other ideas out there and I encourage all of you to be part of the conversation in the year to come.

Thank you again for coming this evening.....

It is my honor to serve as Mayor of Mendham Township... I promise to put all I can into serving this community along with my colleagues on the Township Committee to make 2020 a great success!

Chief Witzak's remarks 1/2/2020

Good Evening to the Township Committee and we extend a warm welcome and congratulations to our new committee members and mayor.

The Brookside Engine Company had a very busy 2019 serving our wonderful community. We have a few highlights to share.

In 2019 we answered 306 Calls for service, while it was down 10 calls from the year prior we are averaging 50 calls more these past 2 years then we were 5 years ago.

Our average response time was 12 minutes and 4 seconds and we are still 2 minutes faster on average than the national standard for a community of our size.

In 2019 we welcomed 5 new members – Senior Member Dan Wood and 4 Junior members – Shan Ali, Will Ackerman, Trey Vanderbeek and Kevin Berman.

Our members volunteered a total of 4,042 hours to the community in training, call response, community service events and all of the extra business work that goes into being a part of a volunteer fire department.

With firefighting being a dangerous occupation including a rise in the exposure to cancer causing carcinogens and toxins, we were proud and fortunate to have 0 on the job injuries and 0 occupational known or discovered illnesses to our members in 2019.

Our clambake was the best yet with the highest attendance we have ever had and we look for to all of you joining us again this year, the 1st Saturday in September after Labor day, across the street at the Community Club.

We look forward to a great year in 2020 in serving our community.

It will be the first time in 9 years dating back to 2011 that our fleet of apparatus will finally be back to the level and capability that is necessary to maintain our Insurance Services level 3 rating which is among the best in the state. It also enables us to provide the excellent level of service that our citizens have come to know and expect from our fire company.

Even with increased training hours, higher call volume and more commitments than ever, We still have managed to provide a superior level of service while maintaining fiscal responsibility in having the lowest budget in the county.

As always, our doors are always open, feel free to stop by and say hello. Should you have any questions feel free to reach out and ask. Thank you.

TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING 1/2/2020- MS. DUARTE'S REMARKS DURING STATEMENT BY TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE SECTION

First, the Environmental Commission asked me to mention there is a Styrofoam Recycling -on Saturday, Jan. 11, from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., at the Borough Department of Public Works facility at 37 Ironia Road. They are taking Block-type Styrofoam, used for packing — no peanuts.

First, I want to congratulate my new colleagues Thomas Baio and Jordan Orlins and welcome them to the Township Committee. I know they worked hard during their campaign, and it was the closest election we have ever seen in Mendham. So congratulations. I look forward to working with both of them in the coming year.

I also want to congratulate the new officers in the Brookside Engine Company, Ralston Engine Company and the First Aid Squad — and thank all the first-responders for their service. For the past two years, I have served as liaison to those volunteer groups and have a real deep appreciation for the many hours they dedicate to helping us in times of crisis.

I also want to thank the residents who were appointed tonight to our Committees and Boards. Whether it's clearing trails, organizing recreational events, working to save our town's history or making decisions about planning and zoning, our local government could not function without their help.

I want to thank Township Administrator Deborah Bonanno, Township Clerk Maria Coppinger, CFO Karen Fornaro, Police Chief Ross Johnson, DPW Supervisor Dave Read and all the employees of our town. At our final meeting of 2019, Ms. Bonanno read a six-page list of achievements by our municipal employees — and it was impressive. If you have a chance, go to the town's Website, and take a look.

Finally, I want to thank all of you for coming out tonight. I hope you stay engaged and interested in our local government throughout the year. I hope you continue to come to Township Committees meetings to provide us with your input and ideas. And consider volunteering to serve on a committee. You can go online and complete the form to volunteer.

It's been a pleasure to serve on the Township Committee for the past two years, and I am excited to start the third year of my term. I want to share a few thoughts that I have as we begin 2020:

First, I will continue advocating for transparency and open government. I will keep holding Office Hours to meet with residents; and sending out regular communications through e-mails and on social media. Residents don't always have time to show up for meetings — so we need to be proactive in keeping them informed. And, the feedback I have gotten for the past two years is they want to be informed. With that in mind, I plan to propose reviving the Ad Hoc Communications Committee that was created two years ago and which I chaired. This group worked on updating the town's Website and launching a town newsletter. They had other recommendations that I would like to see us move forward on implementing.

Secondly, last month, we witnessed a beautiful milestone in our community with the first lighting of a menorah — and then the awful vandalism that took place a few days later. It was heartwarming on the last night of Hanukkah to see community members stand together in solidarity to show that we do not tolerate hate in Mendham. There is no place in our community for hate or bigotry because of someone's religion, race, ethnicity or sexual orientation. And, we as elected officials should speak out — loudly against it — when we see it. With that in mind, I want us to pass a Proclamation in support of June as Pride Month. I believe strongly that we should show our support for the LGBTQ community — and especially show a message of inclusion and support to our youth.

That brings me to the third area — the Stigma-Free Task Force. Two years ago, we proclaimed Mendham a Stigma-Free Community, and I created a Mendhams Task Force. I have served as the Chair with the support of volunteers from the Township and the Borough and both Police Chief Johnson and Chief Camoia, from the Borough. We have held workshops on difficult subjects like drug use, Youth Mental Health and Teen Suicide Prevention.

This year, I want us to make this Task Force a permanent Committee across the Mendhams to support the work being done in the schools; to continue sponsoring workshops; and to look for other ways that we as a community can tackle the difficult challenges faced by our young people. These are really tough subjects and conversations to have, but with events that have unfolded in our community over the past two years, and more recently, it's absolutely critical. I hope I will get support for that idea.

Finally, to close, I want to go back to the idea of us — the Township Committee as a team — Team Mendham. I know everyone up here has the best interests of the community at heart and wants to work toward making our town even better.

There is an excellent quote from Michael Jordan: "Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships."

With that, I hope, we have a successful 2020 and a year from now can all be proud of what we were able to accomplish on behalf of the residents as a Team.