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**TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM
April 28, 2020 VIRTUAL MEETING
7:30 PM REGULAR MEETING
MEETING MINUTES**

ROLL CALL:

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

Also, present:

John Mills, Township Attorney
Bob Casey, Interim Administrator
Maria Coppinger, 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 3, 2020. The Notice of Change in Meeting Format was given to the Daily Record and Star Ledger on April 21, 2020. Notice was posted on the bulletin board in the township offices, front door of Town hall and notice was filed with the Township Clerk.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

COVID-19 UPDATE

Mayor Neibart presented statistics based on Stephanie Gorman's report. The number of cases of Covid19 is low in relation to other towns. Individuals who had the virus are starting to retest. Data is posted Monday through Friday on the County website. A decline in cases is anticipated. Since there are non-household cases reported, it appears that residents are following guidelines. Guidance is still needed from the state health department regarding the rapid test. The Governor has issued operating guidelines for essential business such as reduced shopping hours and occupancy, installation of barriers and required face protection. Residents are urged to report violations to the Governor's office or to the local police department. The Governor announced his 'Road Back' plan introducing six principles to ensure public health and safety. Mayor Neibart reminded that she sends county updates nightly to the Committee via email.

PRESENTATION

Introduce 2020 Municipal Budget – Karen Fornaro, Chief Financial Officer

Ms. Fornaro shared a PowerPoint presentation outlining details of the 2020 budget. Ms. Fornaro explained that the municipal budget represents daily operations, limits expenditures and allocates resources, and reflects the priorities of the Governing Body. The Township Committee engaged in a discussion concerning the details in Ms. Fornaro's presentation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Mayor Neibart read the following letter she wrote to the school board:

Dear School Board Members,

Unfortunately, I am unable to call into your meeting this evening because I have a Township Committee meeting at the same time. As some of you know, I see my role as Mayor of Mendham Township not just as a figurehead of the town, but as an advocate for our residents and problem solver for our community members. This evening, I write to you as a community partner. A partner who knows that we all share the same values and want what's best for our community.

At this point, most of you have probably heard about my offer to the Superintendent for the Township to go out for debt through short term notes for the proposed buses. I am willing to bring a bond ordinance in front of the Township Committee as well as a proposed resolution that would detail the township's contract with the local school district.

At last week's board meeting and the past two open houses, I have requested that the School Board go out for debt for the buses instead of paying for the buses in cash. I know that many of you do not want to do that because doing so would require the matter to be on the November ballot and I understand that is not conducive to your timeline. I am concerned that the future of public and school busing is unknown and

that we might not be able to provide this service in the manner you expect. However, I know how important this is to the board, so I want to help you do this in a cost-effective and timely way.

We need to continue to deliver quality services to educate and protect our community members, but we need to do it reasonably. I urge you to consider this offer so that an increased financial burden is not levied on our residents at a time of incredible stress and uncertainty.”

Mayor Neibart encouraged everyone to attend the school board meeting next Tuesday May 5th.

- Ms. Duarte will address the Mendham Gives Back Campaign
- Blood drive with Mendham Borough on May 11th
- Virtual workouts sessions continue- contact the Recreation department website for information
- Mendham township is sponsoring a Pet Show
- Flags still fly at half staff in town honoring those affected by or lost to Covid19
- Sirens for Solidarity continues every Monday at 6pm to honor front line workers
- Financial disclosures for Township Committee members and those appointed to boards are due; there will be a penalty for lateness

Deputy Mayor Monaghan announced the passing of a former long-time member of the First Aid Squad. Cindy Slate died in Connecticut after a short battle with Covid19. Mr. Monaghan added that the Squad continues a tradition of reading a ‘ditty’ that Cindy initiated and is still read every year at the 4th of July parade.

Ms. Duarte announced that the Environmental Commission is hosting a lunch and learn free webinar by ANJEC regarding information on single use plastics on April 30th. Register at info@anjec.org. The Wildlife Committee suggests hiking in Mosle but to be cautious of a bear and cubs that have been spotted there. Meadowood Preserve is also recommended. The Stigma Free Task Force invites residents to a join a webinar on May 20th to learn how to deal with stress and depression during the Covid crisis. The National theme is ‘Tool2Thrive’ and information is available at mendhamstigmafree@gmail.com. The Stigma Free facebook page also offers daily updates and activities @mendhamstigmafree. Ms. Duarte commented on the legacy of Cindy Slate, deceased former First Aid Squad member. The First Aid Squad requested a reminder that volunteers are needed. The Recreation Committee’s program, Mendham Gives Back, has been successful with the help of the DPW and police department. Residents are reminded to drop off clothing in bags, canned goods, pet food and gently used sporting items to the trailer behind the elementary school from Monday through Friday 10-4, open until 7pm on Wednesday and Saturday.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mr. Baio moved. Ms. Duarte seconded the motion to open the meeting to the public.

All members present voted to open the meeting to the public.

Stephen Shaw – County Freeholder – Freeholder Shaw complimented the Committee for their service and leadership and he reiterated that thoughts and prayers go out to all who are suffering from this Covid19 crisis. Freeholder Shaw reported that the county is available for help and services. He commented that the Cares Act, as in the township’s upcoming resolution, is critical due to declining revenues. Freeholder Shaw mentioned that the county Covid task force will be evaluating the situation for years to come.

Mayor Neibart commented that the county has been very communicative during this crisis. The Mayor mentioned to the Freeholder that the township will be reaching out to resolve which trails are maintained by the county or the township.

Michael Merritt – Mountainside Road - Mr. Merritt commented on the Covid19 dashboard’s lack of definition or methodology. He added that statistics are reported randomly and not meaningful. He requested that the Governing Body reach out to the Freeholders to make sure that Covid19 numbers are posted daily so that history can be tracked by statisticians who should be hired to do so. Mr. Merritt also commented on the school board budget noting that he can’t speak to the details and viability, but the Mayor’s proposed bond funding proposal to support the bus acquisition is a positive, win-win proposal. It is far superior to last week’s regrettable proposal to move to a spring school budget referendum. Those of us in town and old enough to remember know how divisive and disruptive the school budget referendums were...up to and including buses blocking parents from entering the school grounds to pick up their children and vote. Such a punitive proposal by this highly partisan body can only complicate and threaten the long-term security and quality of our superb school system. The quality of our schools is the backbone of our property values, and threatening the schools only undermines our property values at a time when many Township families are already taking a financial hit. They cannot risk a lowering of value of likely their single most valuable financial asset.

Ms. Duarte moved. Mr. Orlins seconded the motion to close the meeting to the public.

All members present voted to close the public session.

RESOLUTIONS

2020-073 Resolution of the Township Committee of the Township of Mendham Introduction of the 2020 Municipal Budget and Establish Hearing Date

Motion made by Mr. Orlins and seconded by Ms. Duarte.

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

Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve.

2020-074 Resolution of the Township Committee of the Township of Mendham Authorizing the Award of a Non-Fair and Open Contract for Lawn Maintenance Services for Ralston Field

Motion made by Ms. Duarte and seconded by Mr. Orlins.

The Committee discussed using the contractor on a per cut basis in order to save money.

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

Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve.

2020-075 Resolution of the Township Committee of the Township of Mendham to Award a Non-Fair and Open Contract for Animal Control Services

Motion made by Mr. Monaghan and seconded by Mr. Baio.

Mayor Neibart explained that this is a shared service between Mendham Township, Mendham Borough and Chester Township. Mr. Casey announced that the package will come together by the end of the week. Ms. Fornaro responded to Ms. Duarte's question about savings, which will be a few thousand dollars.

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

Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve.

2020-076 Resolution of the Township Committee of the Township of Mendham To Approve a Shared Service Agreement with the Township of Chester and the Borough of Mendham for Animal Control Services

Motion made by Ms. Duarte and seconded by Mr. Baio.

Ms. Duarte proposed that the developer agreement be put on the town website. The Committee discussed the suggestion and decided that it would be appropriate after consulting the Planning Board Chairman.

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

Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve.

2020-077 Resolution of the Township Committee of the Township of Mendham Authorizing the Mayor and Clerk to Execute a Developer's Agreement for the Improvement of Sub-Divided Land Known As "Pitney Farm Estates"

Motion made by Ms. Duarte and seconded by Mr. Monaghan.

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

Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve.

2020-078 Resolution of the Township Committee of the Township of Mendham Authorizing the Mendham Township Tax Collector to Prepare and Mail Estimated Tax Bills in Accordance with P.L. 1994, C.72

Motion made by Mr. Monaghan and seconded by Ms. Duarte.

Ms. Fornaro explained that these state guidelines are already in place in the Township.

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

Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve.

2020-079 Resolution of the Township Committee of the Township of Mendham Authorizing Tax Anticipation Notes

Motion made by Ms. Duarte and seconded by Mr. Orlins.

Mr. Casey explained that this resolution represents a mechanism by which the township can meet state requirements in the event that a tax deficit occurs.

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

Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve.

2020-080 Resolution of the Township Committee of the Township of Mendham Authorizing Refund of Overpayment of Taxes Due to NJ State Tax Court Judgment

Motion made by Ms. Duarte and seconded by Mr. Baio.

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

Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve.

2020-081 Resolution of the Township Committee of the Township of Mendham Appointing Township Engineer Denis Keenan as Flood Plain Administrator

Motion made by Mr. Baio and seconded by Ms. Duarte.

Motion to call the question made by Mr. Baio and second by Mr. Orlins.

Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve.

2020-082 Resolution of the Township Committee of the Township of Mendham Authorizing a Stipend to be Paid to Evan Thomas for Serving as the Emergency Management Coordinator for the Township of Mendham

Motion made by Ms. Duarte and seconded by Mr. Baio.

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

Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve.

2020-083 Resolution of the Township Committee of the Township of Mendham Appointing Member(s) to Oversee the Project at the Mendham Township Historic Park at Pitney Farm

Motion made by Mr. Baio and seconded by Ms. Duarte.

Mayor Neibart announced that the appointees were Mr. Baio, Mr. Monaghan, and Ms. Orban Brown.

Ms. Duarte requested that additional members representing Recreation, the Environmental Commission and Historic Preservation be appointed to the Pitney Park Sub-Committee so residents would continue to have input in the process.

After some discussion regarding adding additional members it was decided that this resolution will be amended to add an ad hoc committee; said amendment to be proposed at the next town meeting.

Ms. Duarte moved to amend the resolution. Mr. Monaghan seconded.

Mayor Neibart mentioned that the Pitney email address is Pitney@mendhamtownship.org and is monitored daily by Diana Orban Brown.

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

Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve.

2020-084 Resolution of the Township Committee of The Township of Mendham Urging the State Of New Jersey To Provide Direct Stabilization Funding to Morris County from The Coronavirus Relief Fund by Utilizing the Formula Applied Through the CARES Act

Motion made by Ms. Duarte and seconded by Mr. Baio.

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

Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve.

2020-085 Resolution of the Township Committee of the Township of Mendham Authorizing the Payment of Bills

Motion made by Mr. Monaghan and seconded by Ms. Duarte.

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

Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve.

ORDINANCE FOR SECOND READING / PUBLIC HEARING

03-2020 An Ordinance of the Township of Mendham Providing for the Milling and Paving of Woodland Road and Appropriating \$280,000 Therefore, Including \$252,000 from the State of New Jersey Department of Transportation and \$28,000 from the Capital Improvement Fund - ***Ordinance was introduced on April 13, 2020***

Motion made by Ms. Duarte to open the meeting to the public on Ordinance 03-2020 and seconded by Mr. Monaghan.

No public comments

Ms. Duarte made a motion to close the public comment. Mr. Monaghan seconded.

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

Roll call vote: All members present voted to approve.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Motion to open public comment was moved by Mr. Baio and seconded by Ms. Duarte.

All members present voted to open the meeting to the public.

Diana Orban Brown - Ironia Road - Ms. Orban Brown commented that the process leading up to the Pitney grant did include a great deal of public input and will continue to do so. Ms. Orban Brown added that the role of the three facilitators is to ensure that the contract meets the grant guidelines, and to make sure that the matches that are required get met. Ms. Orban Brown mentioned that the Pitney email also goes to town hall where a file of comments is maintained.

Questions from the online chat room:

- In 2008/2009 taxes were decreased to offer residents relief from the economic situation. What will the township do now to mitigate this challenge? Mayor Neibart responded that the comment

is a fair one and the committee has been bringing this topic to the schools. The Mayor will look into what was done in 2008/2009.

- When will the township increase the rent for Randolph Township's use of the animal shelter and when does the agreement expire? Does the agreement with Randolph township to rent the animal shelter run out? Mayor Neibart responded that this was considered before the shared services contract was decided and unfortunately it did not work out for Mendham Township. The Mayor mentioned that there is a possibility that another organization will rent or buy one of the other buildings on the property.

**Motion to closed public comment was moved by Ms. Duarte and seconded by Mr. Monaghan.
All members present voted to close public session.**

DISCUSSION

Administration

- Mr. Casey reported on the steps that are being taken in town hall to ensure the staff and public will be adequately protected. Mr. Casey presented the memo that he received from staff in response to his suggestions for alterations. A dutch door will be installed so that the public can be invited in by staff, one or two at a time. Plexiglass shields will be installed and modeled after grocery store set ups. Since staff offices are small, individual meetings will be held in the main court room area. Mr. Baio agreed that the plan sounded reasonable and is working in stores. Ms. Duarte commented that signs at the front door area should advise that masks are required. Mr. Casey added that signage will also request that the public use the drop box for payment and only enter the building as is necessary rather than for social reasons.
- Mr. Casey addressed the sanitary sewer east situation. He reported that the township continues to receive bills for the excess flow however the grant that offsets that cost is now final. A surcharge will be added to the August quarter bills in order to keep the sewer fund in balance. There are nine residents that are affected, and hopefully the cause will be found by the plumbing inspector. If not, then smoke testing will be done.
- Mr. Casey reported on the good news that the NJ Joint Insurance Funds agreed to get into the BAN market which ensures that municipalities will have bidders for bond anticipation notes.

Mayor Neibart reported that on Tuesday May 5th there will be a public hearing and a vote by the Board of Education to adopt the final budget.

On Monday at 5pm the Township Committee will hold a workshop that is open to the public to discuss their vision of the capital plan.

LIAISON REPORTS

Construction - no update

DPW - Mr. Monaghan reported that spring brush pickup was completed on April 20th using the new claw equipment. Curb repairs begin on Thursday on Valley View and Coe Farm Road. Mowing has begun. Fields are being treated in-house taking advantage of Assistant superintendent Joe Guanill's knowledge. Street sweeping is complete. DPW back at full staff after a non Covid related sick leave has ended. Summer help starts on the 18th.

Environmental Commission – Ms. Duarte reported that at the recent Zoom meeting the student representatives considered hosting a webinar on single use plastics. Questions were raised about the about nitrate solution study which will be made available to the public at the next township meeting. Some cleanup was done for Earth day in Drakewick.

Finance Committee – Mr. Orlins commented as a follow up to the previous question regarding tax relief during the crisis. Mr. Orlins said that generally speaking the focus of the committee is to lower taxes which they seek to do day in and day out. Going forward for 2021, big initiatives are being considered.

Fire Department – Mayor Neibart reported that she is working on run cards and that protocols and responses have been updated due to the Covid crisis. Money will be appropriated from tender.

First Aid Squad – Ms. Duarte reported that since the beginning of the Covid pandemic Captain George Budd has been giving daily updates on their PPE supplies and available volunteers. Mr. Monaghan added that both ambulances are now in Brookside.

Historic Preservation – Mr. Baio reported that at the April 22 Zoom meeting, Pitney Farm was predominantly discussed. HPC has been assigned to work on a series of signs.

Library – Mr. Monaghan reported that digital content is mainly being used now by patrons which is more expensive than books. Programs are being delivered virtually. Kindness rock garden project was started. 11 new library cards were issued. Covid 19 extra care program continues to contact older patrons. Renovations continue. Positions are open on the board of trustees.

Mendham Sewer East & West – Mayor Neibart addressed a question as to how the surcharge would be distributed on the bills. Mr. Casey confirmed that all Drakewick residents would be assessed proportionally.

Mendham Township School District – Mr. Orlins shared a spreadsheet of the last 3 years of spending per pupil from the school budget document. Mr. Orlins encouraged residents to attend the May 5th school budget meeting to question why spending on certain areas of the budget are greater than for core learning.

Mendham TV – Ms. Duarte reported that a talk show style program was started before the pandemic that is now on hold; old programs are now being shown. Initiatives or fundraising can be promoted in between shows.

Planning Board – no update

Police – Ms. Duarte reported on behalf of Chief Johnson that when hiking on trails to maintain social distance and only hike with members in your household. Buttermilk Falls remains closed along with the fields on Ironia Road. Drive responsibly and slow down for bikers. Bears are active again so be careful with trash and bird feeders- never approach a bear with a cub. Follow police for updates on their Facebook page. Report suspicious activity and be aware of Covid scams.

Recreation Committee - Mr. Orlins reported that Mendham Gets Fit is still online and free. Patriots Race has been postponed until the fall. Mr. Orlins was asked by golfers to write to the Governor to open public and private golf courses via NJ.gov/contact us. Mr. Baio asked if the Mayor had the authority to open Buttermilk Falls. Mayor Neibart responded that she did have the authority and that she and Chief Johnson are discussing the issue and there will be an update soon. The Mayor suggested visiting other trails in the township in the meantime.

Regional School District - no update

Shared Court – Mayor Neibart reported that shared court has been busy.

Stigma-Free Initiative – Ms. Duarte requested that a proclamation for mental health awareness month be considered.

Surrounding Town Outreach – Mr. Orlins reported that the opportunity to work with the Borough is on hold right now due to the Covid crisis.

Tax Assessor – Mayor Neibart reported that the tax assessor met with the finance committee this evening and discussed reassessment and there is money in the budget for that. A resolution will be presented at the next town meeting regarding a phased reassessment.

Tree Committee – no update

Wildlife Management – no update

Zoning Board – no update

Ms. Duarte requested that notes be provided for the committee from the tax assessor before the next meeting. There will be a Kick off meeting on Thursday for Marketing Communications, the agenda will include a new resident survey to be sent by snail mail.

ADJOURN

Motion made by Mr. Monaghan and second by Ms. Duarte.

All members present voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Distributed: 6/4/2020

Approved: 6/9/2020

Maria F. Coppinger
Township Clerk