



Founded 1749

**TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM
September 22, 2020
IN-PERSON & REMOTE VIA ZOOM
7:30 PM REGULAR MEETING**

ROLL CALL:

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

Also, present:

Bob Casey, Interim, Township Administrator
John Mills, Township Attorney
Maria F. 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 Observer Tribune and Daily Record on September 16, 2020. Notice was posted on the bulletin board in the township offices and notice was filed with the Township Clerk.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

COVID-19 UPDATE

Mayor Neibart provided the following update:

- As of today, there are 457 new cases in New Jersey
- Total of 200,580 cases in New Jersey
- 7 additional deaths which brings the death count to 14,285
- Mendham Township currently has a count of 49 cases.

RECOGNIZING NEW MEMBERS

Chief Witczak introduced Blaise Esquire who has applied to be an explorer at the Brookside Engine Company #1.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Neibart announced that the Township Committee will host a Town Hall on the Mendham Township Construction Project with Cornerstone Architectural Group on Thursday, October 1st at 7:00 pm at the Mendham Township Middle School. This construction project will include the town hall, library, and police department.

Ms. Duarte made several announcements on upcoming Recreation events and Stigma-Free webinars. She noted that September is Hispanic Heritage Month, during the month the US government celebrates the contributions of more than 60 million Hispanic Americans to our culture and society.

Mr. Baio is happy to report that the number of building permits last month is the highest number ever recorded, at least since our great building secretary, Beth Foley, has reported to him. Last month we had almost \$40,000.00 in income from building permits. The average is about \$12,000.00 a month.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Ms. Duarte moved. Mr. Monaghan seconded the motion to open the meeting to the public. All members present voted to open the meeting to the public.

Diana Orban Brown, Ironia Road – Mrs. Orban Brown asked the liaisons of the standing committees, to remind their committees to post their meeting minutes to the website.

Jack Curtis - 4 Michael Road – Mr. Curtis reported on the tax money that has been sent to the Washington DPW for repairs on Mendham Township’s 39 school buses. Mr. Curtis also spoke on farmland assessments. Handouts are attached to the meeting minutes.

Michael Merritt – Mountainside Road - He emphasized his concern that the Mendham Township is insisting on in-person / indoor meetings; unnecessary gatherings especially indoors are a clear infection risk. Mr. Merritt also spoke on resolution 2020-182 which he expressed is an appalling call for 3-days of indoor machine voting. He expressed that this resolution has no programmatic purpose for the 2020 elections, it is pure propaganda. As such, it inappropriately encourages machine voting as superior to paper when in fact, paper ballots are the gold standard for election integrity. Mr. Merritt expressed that the committee should be encouraging voters to fill-out their ballots carefully, and mail or place them in the drop box in the Mendham Borough police station, and then monitor their status online.

Matthew Borinshtyen – Knapton Hill Road – Mr. Borinshyten spoke on the Sharing Project. Their mission is to help families in need get fresh, healthy food; across a partnership of high schoolers with local gardeners and farming communities. He is present tonight to present a proposal to build a dedicated garden in Mendham where the Sharing Project volunteers can grow crops for donations and space for the community to grow their crops. The plan is to build the garden by the Mount Pleasant field, and they hope to get the committee’s support on the project.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

REGULAR MINUTES OF JUNE 8, 2020

TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE	MOTION	SECOND	MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION	SECOND	ROLL CALL		
					YES	NO	ABSTAIN
Mr. Baio			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Ms. Duarte	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mr. Monaghan		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mr. Orlins					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mayor Neibart					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

RESOLUTIONS

2020-178 RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM AWARDING WINNER FORD THROUGH THE STATE CONTRACT# 88728 FOR 2021 FORD UTILITY INTERCEPTOR BASE VEHICLE NOT TO EXCEED \$32,000

TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE	MOTION	SECOND	MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION	SECOND	ROLL CALL		
					YES	NO	ABSTAIN
Mr. Baio	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Ms. Duarte		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mr. Monaghan					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mr. Orlins				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mayor Neibart					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

2020-179 RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM FOR THE RENEWAL OF CLUB LIQUOR LICENSE MENDHAM GOLF AND TENNIS CLUB.

TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE	MOTION	SECOND	MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION	SECOND	ROLL CALL		
					YES	NO	ABSTAIN
Mr. Baio			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Ms. Duarte	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mr. Monaghan		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mr. Orlins					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mayor Neibart					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

2020-180 RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM FOR THE RENEWAL OF THE RETAIL CONSUMPTION LIQUOR LICENSE FOR SAMMY’S YE OLD CIDER MILL.

TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE	MOTION	SECOND	MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION	SECOND	ROLL CALL		
					YES	NO	ABSTAIN
Mr. Baio			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Ms. Duarte	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mr. Monaghan		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mr. Orlins					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mayor Neibart					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

2020-181 RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM AUTHORIZING THE EXTENSION OF A NON-FAIR AND OPEN CONTRACT FOR PROFESSIONAL ARCHITECT SERVICES WITH CORNERSTONE ARCHITECTURAL GROUP FOR ADDITIONAL SERVICES RELATIVE TO THE TOWN HALL FEASIBILITY STUDY

TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE	MOTION	SECOND	MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION	SECOND	ROLL CALL		
					YES	NO	ABSTAIN
Mr. Baio	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Ms. Duarte			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Mr. Monaghan		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mr. Orlins					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mayor Neibart					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

Mr. Casey explained that the original contract with Cornerstone was for the Police Department to be located in Town Hall. Now the concept plan is revised significantly, with the Police Department having a stand-alone building. The design and schematics of that stand-alone building are outside the original scope of their contract. The quote we received for \$5,500 is basically to do the preliminary layout (of the stand-alone building) and an exterior image of the building.

Ms. Duarte expressed her concern with the project, noting that the committee has spent quite a bit of time and money, and it seems like we are back at square one, which is the proposal presented last year. Ms. Duarte noted that she is somewhat reluctant to continue with the resolution. Ms. Duarte will not support the resolution but wants the project to move forward, but she sees the price tag going up, and it worries her.

Mr. Orlins explained that last year we were presented with 7,500 square feet and if the bill cost, we are told, is now the reality, moving it down to something close to 5,000 square feet is going to save the township over a million dollars. Mr. Orlins is happy to spend \$40,000 to save \$1.1 million.

Mr. Monaghan is comfortable with the resolution. He expressed that even though we are potentially looking at a site next door for the police department, we also now realize the extent of work that needs to be done in the building.

As an architect, Mr. Baio commented that things do take studies, and studies do result in good outcomes. As a professional, these things do not come for free, and he advocates that we continue to use professionals to help us determine these right decisions. The process is a work in progress. He would only add that in light of the building to continue to look at the old police station's feasibility as an additional alteration renovation. Mr. Baio has had conversations with NJDEP, and the feasibility of expanding the building is there. The restrictions are definitely in place. The Township Engineer has indicated that it has come down to the determination of the brook or stream alongside the building. Mr. Baio would advocate compensating the architects, but he asked that we throw in an extra effort to look at the feasibility of the current police building.

Mr. Baio noted that a letter of interpretation was never obtained regarding the footprint comment. He agrees with everything except the footprint can't be expanded. He is asking for the architect to look into the inquiry. It was clarified that the Township Engineer made a determination on the footprint.

2020-182 RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM URGING THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE COUNTY CLERKS TO UTILIZE IN PERSON MACHINE VOTING IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE MAIL IN BALLOTING IN THE GENERAL ELECTION OF NOVEMBER, 2020 AND ALL FUTURE ELECTIONS

TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE	MOTION	SECOND	MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION	SECOND	ROLL CALL		
					YES	NO	ABSTAIN
Mr. Baio	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Ms. Duarte						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Mr. Monaghan					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mr. Orlins		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mayor Neibart					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

Mr. Monaghan expressed that voting in person is no less safe than going to the grocery store; it's perfectly reasonable to erect barriers and wear masks. He noted that of all of the things that you are going to cut out and say you can't do; voting should not be the one. He expressed that it is a fundamental thing that should be done in-person. He explained that if you look at the number of rejected ballots between the Primary in 2019, which was predominately machine vote, and the number of rejected ballots in the 2020 primary (vote by mail) the number of ballots rejected is 230% higher. This is 230% of disenfranchised voters whose votes were thrown out. Mr. Monaghan expressed that we cannot allow ourselves to get to a point where we are disenfranchising voters for really very little reason because we can vote in person safely.

Mr. Baio added that there were some factual misstatements in the comments from the resident. Mr. Baio said that paper voting is not better than machine voting; paper voting is highly subject to tampering. He spoke on his experience when the county rejected his son's vote because he did not correctly seal the mail-in ballot. Mr. Baio noted that the process to complete a mail-in ballot is complicated. He said that it takes a lot of effort to count a vote, which he saw first-hand at the county offices. Mr. Baio supports the resolution, it doesn't do much, but it sends a very clear message that Mendham Township does count – it's symbolic.

Ms. Duarte expressed that her view on this issue is different; the resolution is symbolic, and at this point, it's so late in the game that the request would not be considered. She noted that at this point, elected officials should try to support the process, assure the voters that the process will work, that their vote will count and provide education and information. She also noted that she received different data on the rejected ballots from the board of elections, which shows that it was significantly lower than the previous primary. Ms. Duarte expressed that the state legislature has worked hard to ensure a solid election in New Jersey; we are in a pandemic, and we have reached a point of 200,000 Americans dying, which we should not lose sight of that. She expressed that we know what will happen (primarily vote by mail), let's support it, let's get all the information we can get out to voters, so they know what to do if their vote is rejected. Ms. Duarte will not support the resolution and it has nothing to do with political affiliation. She expressed that it's about trying to do what is right as an elected official in our community. Ms. Duarte noted that the Resolution mentions concerns of 'voter fraud,' which is a myth, and we should not perpetuate misinformation.

Mayor Neibart expressed that we have been incredibly supportive of the process, noting that she sent out a lengthy email detailing the specifics about the process to the residents. As an elected official, Ms. Neibart believes it's very important to increase voter access and decrease barriers. As somebody who used to work professionally in politics, Mayor Neibart noted that there are people who are scared to vote by mail and enjoy and value going to the polls. She expressed that because of the current situation and not allowing as many polling locations opened as previously were, it decreases access to in-person voting. Mayor Neibart noted that she would be voting by mail, which she has done for every election over the last couple of years. She will always increase voter education as well as access to the polls. She doesn't feel we should be supporting any barriers to voting. She expressed that the resolution allows us to make our voice heard on wanting to increase access to the polls for our residents.

2020-183 RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM APPOINTING ANTOINETTE GALLICCHIO AS CROSSING GUARD FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR

TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE	MOTION	SECOND	MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION	SECOND	ROLL CALL		
					YES	NO	ABSTAIN
Mr. Baio			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Ms. Duarte	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mr. Monaghan		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mr. Orlins					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mayor Neibart					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

2020-184 RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM AUTHORIZING THE PAYMENT OF BILLS

TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE	MOTION	SECOND	MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION	SECOND	ROLL CALL		
					YES	NO	ABSTAIN
Mr. Baio					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Ms. Duarte	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mr. Monaghan		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mr. Orlins				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mayor Neibart					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

2020-185 RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM AUTHORIZING DISCUSSION WITHOUT THE PRESENCE OF THE PUBLIC – PERSONNEL MATTERS

TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE	MOTION	SECOND	MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION	SECOND	ROLL CALL		
					YES	NO	ABSTAIN
Mr. Baio		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Ms. Duarte	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mr. Monaghan					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mr. Orlins					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mayor Neibart					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

ORDINANCES

**11-2020 ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM AUTHORIZING ACCEPTANCE OF A DEED
A DEDICATION OF THE ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY DESIGNATED AS BLOCK 137
AND BLOCK 127 ON THE OFFICIAL TAX MAP OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM MORE
COMMONLY KNOWN AS HAMILTON DRIVE**

TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE	MOTION	SECOND	MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION	SECOND	ROLL CALL		
					YES	NO	ABSTAIN
Mr. Baio					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Ms. Duarte			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mr. Monaghan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mr. Orlins		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mayor Neibart					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mr. Baio moved. Mr. Orlins seconded the motion to open the meeting to the public.

Patricia Zimmerman - 3 West Main Street – Ms. Zimmerman is surprised to hear that there will only be one possibility presented at the proposed October meeting on the proposed police station. She thought there would be a variety of ideas offered. She has spoken to some of her neighbors, and they have asked why aren't we building the police station at the Town Hall Building/current location. She also spoke on police shared services and what would happen to the large police building if the police department starting sharing services. She asked for clarification on who the "stakeholders" are.

Jack Curtis– Michael Road – Mr. Curtis commented on the election process. Mr. Curtis asked if there was a discussion on salting the roads. He also asked about the status of his suggestions to install new street signs.

Mayor Neibart mentioned that the Township Committee Members, members of the police force, and the library were present in the conversations about the building and its who she referred to as township stakeholders. In the last few months, we talked about these conversations with the public, and we also had the architects in August present the feasibility study. We scheduled this town hall meeting at our last meeting, we discussed having the different options, and it became apparent that the township committee was going in a new direction. We needed detailed plans to present to the public.

Mayor Neibart responded to Mr. Curtis’ inquiry if there was a conversation on salting township roads. At the last town meeting, the Township Committee discussed salting; however, the Township Committee did not finalize a recommendation.

Mayor Neibart is looking into reflective paint for the street signs. She has heard from residents that our street signs are not visible and she is continuing to look into options.

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

DISCUSSION

MEMO FROM POLICE DEPARTMENT TO MORRIS COUNTY FOR HUNTING PROGRAM AT OLD BARTENSTEIN PROPERTY - Mayor Neibart noted a section on the Old Bartenstein property paid for by local, county, and possibly Green Acres grants, which allows for hunting. The county likes to operate its hunting program on that land, but we have operated our hunting program on this property for years. Mendham Township wants to manage their hunting program on this property; they want to control who is applying for it and where people are hunting. Mayor Neibart received the full support of the committee to forward the memo to the county.

COMMUNITY GARDEN (PROGRAM) - Ms. Duarte explained that several students started a community garden during the pandemic; the vegetables were grown throughout different areas in the community and then donated to various food pantries. The students reached out to Ms. Duarte for assistance with a permanent location. They took a look at the location by DPW near the tennis courts. Ms. Duarte asked the Township Committee to allow the students to explore this idea. The students are not looking for us to approve anything or give them funding at this point. They will create a 501c3 non-profit, seek grant money and host a go fund me campaign to obtain funding. The Township Committee engaged in a discussion on the legality of using township property. Mr. Mills noted that you have some exposure when you make something like this (Community Garden) available to the public. The Township Committee likes the community garden idea to give residents access and rent their own space. The Township Committee is looking for the layout of the proposed area.

STORM WATER MANAGEMENT – Mr. Casey explained that the NJ Department of Environmental Protection has created a new set of standards governing stormwater development. The state has developed a new set of guidelines and has mandated that the municipalities adopt it by next March/April. Mr. Casey provided additional information on the new standards. The new standards will affect all

developments occurring after the end of this year; it supersedes your current stormwater management regulations. These new regulations will impact the land use ordinance.

RECREATION – David Guida provided the following report on the events held by the Recreation Department:

- This summer, we hosted 12 brand new events, including the Fireworks, National Night Out, Meadow Wood Hike, the Kids Fun Triathlon, Mendham Gives Back Campaign
- Mendham Township was the first town in Northern New Jersey to do drive-in movies once Governor Murphy permitted them
- Kept residents engaged during the stay-at-home order
- The beach revenue was about \$5,975

BRUSH PICK UP – Mr. Monaghan noted that due to manpower issues, DPW is faced with completing pothole repair on the roads and or picking-up brush. Dave Read, DPW Superintendent, would prefer to fix the potholes because they cause lasting damage to cars and roads. The issue means we will probably push off the fall brush pick-up to next spring, especially since we already picked up the brush from the storm. Mr. Casey noted that the governing body should be the one to make the recommendation to cancel Fall brush pick up since it was advertised on the website to the public for the last two months.

MOTION TO CANCEL FALL BRUSH PICK-UP

TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE	MOTION	SECOND	MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION	SECOND	ROLL CALL		
					YES	NO	ABSTAIN
Mr. Baio		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Ms. Duarte						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Mr. Monaghan				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mr. Orlins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mayor Neibart					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

The Township Committee discussed the option of having one brush pick up a year. Ms. Duarte would like to hear feedback from the residents on this decision.

Mr. Orlins explained that brush pick-up is the single most labor and equipment intensive activity we do, right there with mowing and greater this year than snow plowing. It's huge, and it's not the most valuable thing we do.

Discussions continued on the options for brush pick-up (once vs. twice a year) for next year.

CARRY-IN / CARRY-OUT GARBAGE

Mr. Orlins explained that a resident suggested a carry-in/carry-out method for trash. This method has been discussed by Recreation and Environmental Commission. Mr. Orlins proposed that when we take the trash cans away from our fields at the end of this sports season, we do not put them back next spring. He suggested that we go all in, rip the band-aid off, and go “carry-in /carry-out.” There was a suggestion that we leave trash cans at the playground, particularly Wysong Park because parents with small kids may have special need. However, park officials recommended ripping the band aid off completely. Ms. Duarte agreed with Mr. Orlins suggestions; she also spoke with park officials and they use the same carry-in / carry-out method. She noted that parks for hiking used this method however, parks with picnicking options still have trash cans. Her preference would be for Ralston Playground to have at least one trash can at the park. She noted that the other piece that is important is signage.

Mr. Orlins made a motion that at the end of the sports season when we remove the trash cans away from our fields that we don't put them back in the spring. In the interim, lets communicate regularly and installs signs at each location that the park is carry-in / carry-out.

TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE	MOTION	SECOND	MOTION TO CALL THE QUESTION	SECOND	ROLL CALL		
					YES	NO	ABSTAIN
Mr. Baio					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Ms. Duarte		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mr. Monaghan					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mr. Orlins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mayor Neibart					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

LIASION REPORTS

- **Construction Department (Baio)** – The department has been really busy. The uptick in building permits is an indication that Mendham’s properties are about to be improved or benefitted.
- **Communications Committee, Marketing (Duarte)** – A meeting is scheduled for tomorrow.
- **Department of Public Works (Monaghan)** – DPW will be focusing on road repair and patching.
- **Environmental Commission (Duarte)** – There was meeting last night, and they discussed the sign purchases for some key locations, including Meadowood Park. One of the focal points of the meeting was DPW and trying to ensure that there is adequate attention paid to the trails, parking, and making sure residents have access to the parks. Ms. Duarte will send the lengthy report, that one of the members put together, that is very detailed and it talks about what they are hoping to get from DPW.
- **Health Department (Monaghan)** – Flu vaccination clinics are scheduled for October. Rabies vaccination clinic, in collaboration with Chester Township, is scheduled for November 6th.
- **Finance Committee (Orlins / Neibart)** – The first meeting for 2021 is scheduled for October 13th.
- **Fire Department (Neibart)** – No update
- **First Aid Squad (Duarte)** – The call volume is starting to increase. 31 calls in August which is in line with historical average of about 29 calls over the previous 5 years. They are working on recruitment, marketing, and a presentation to increase awareness and recruit more members.
- **Historic Preservation (Baio)** – They met at the Walled Garden at the historic Pitney Park Farm and one of the members cleaned the inside of the walled garden.
- **Library (Monaghan)** – The library is adding digital services with over 900,000 items available, e-books, audible, comics, movies, music, tv shows, all which are available for download. They are building a relationship with Mendham High School; they have issued 114 library cards for high school students. They started adult and kids’ crafts classes at the library. They had over 1, 000 library visits since September, loaned out 19,043 materials in September.
- **Mendham Sewer East & West (Neibart)** – Mr. Casey circulated a letter that he sent out, telling residents that flags are available for residents to mark their laterals.
- **Planning Board (Baio / Monaghan)** – Next meeting is scheduled for October.
- **Police (Monaghan)** – Reminded residents to keep up with the 9:00PM routine, make sure residents lock their cars and remove valuables. Drive Safely around schools.
- **Pitney Park (Monaghan)** – Attended Zoom call, construction plans are being disseminated by members of the public. There are requests to remove benches that are too close to the neighbor’s back yard. The bids will be submitted to the state and county for their review before we sent it out for bid.
- **Recreation Committee (Orlins)** – No additional update
- **Regional School District (Monaghan)** – No update
- **Shared Court (Neibart)** – No update
- **Stigma-Free Initiative (Duarte)** – They had a very productive meeting at the beginning of September, leading into (September) Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. An Instagram account has been launched. They are looking into sponsoring a Mental Health First Aid Training. She would the Township Committee to consider an ordinance that would establish a Stigma Free Task Force.
- **Surrounding Town Outreach (Orlins)** – No report
- **Tax Assessor (Neibart)** – Tax bills were mailed.
- **Tree Committee (Neibart)** – She was on a call with Mayors of Morris County, Legislative Delegation and the BPU. One of the main points that was brought up is more tree and vegetation clearance from JCP&L. BPU is working on a post storm report and they will request more tree and vegetation clearance.
- **Wildlife Management (Duarte)** – No update
- **Mendham Township School District (Orlins)** – Middle school sports were cancelled.
- **Mendham TV (Duarte)** – The station is working on documentary about Mendham and the re-opening after the lock down.
- **Zoning Board (Baio)** – No report

Mayor Neibart cancelled Executive session.

ADJOURNED AT 10:31

Motion made by Mr. Baio and second by Mr. Orlins.
All members present voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Distributed: 1/21/2021
Approved: 1/25/2021

Maria F. Coppinger
Township Clerk

ATTACHMENTS:

Jack Curtis – 4 Michael Road

\$1,179,535

Over the past five years \$1,179,535 of Mendham Township tax money has gone to the Washington Township DPW for repairs on Mendham Township's 39 buses. See chart below

2014-2015 Bills Service Center
\$221,820
2015-2016 Washington BOE
\$222,239
2016-2017 Washington BOE
\$187,730
2017-2018 Washington BOE
\$260,300
2018-2019 Washington BOE
\$308,780
2019-2020 Washington BOE
\$200,486 (invoices from July to
March due to COVID)

Why pay another DPW all that money when with a little negotiation and cooperation that tax money could actually stay in Mendham Township and support the Mendham Township Department of Public Works. It would also mean that there would be less travel time involved, less gas used, less drivers' time to be paid for shuffling the buses to and from Washington Township, and less mileage and wear on the buses if the half hour travel time to the Washington Township DPW garage was eliminated and the buses could stay in Mendham Township for any repairs that might be needed.

Every time that a bus needs any kind of attention it involves a half hour trip to and from the DPW garage in Washington Township. That just doesn't seem to be a financially prudent business practice.

Paying \$1.2 million to another department of public works to do work that could easily be done by the Mendham Township Department of Public Works lacks common sense and leaves people wondering why would the town decide to pay another town's DPW to do work that could be done more economically in house all while helping to keep the Mendham Township DPW financially solvent. It is certainly a very strange situation that \$1,179,535 is being paid to another town's DPW department when there are active discussions going on to drastically reduce your own Mendham Township DPW.

Also, keep in mind that at one point the Mendham Township Board of Education formed out the repair work for their buses to private garages, but they found that the Washington Township Department of Public Works was a cheaper alternative for doing the repairs. Imagine that!!!! **Privatizing apparently wasn't the cheapest route to go!**

Apparently, the Washington Township Town Council doesn't view its 22-member DPW in their town as just a bunch of lawnmower jockeys!

\$1,099,928

*According to the attached chart supplied by the Township, the **1,584.86 acres of farmland assessed land is valued at \$520,100 after the 2% farmland assessment feature is applied.**

* If you take the **\$520,100** amount and multiply it by the additional 98% of the land value that is not being applied, the land is really worth **\$50,969,800 in actual, assessed value** without the farmland assessment discount being applied.

* **\$50,969,800 X .02158** (current tax rate) = **\$1,099,928.28** that would be the standard, non-farmland assessed taxes that would be owed on those **1584.86 acres**. The typical excess acreage (Farmland, Woodland) assessment amount in Mendham Township is about **\$30,000 per acre**-many properties are higher.

* That is **\$1,099,928.28** in taxes that are not being paid by the **140 property owners** who claim to be farmers and use the farmland assessment exemption.

* **\$1,099,928.28 divided by 2,126** (the number of properties in town that pay the normal tax rate) = **\$517.37** that each of those other **2,126 non-faux farmer, Mendham Township taxpayers** must pay to make up in taxes so that those **140 folks** can use a loophole to save all that money!

* **\$1,099,928.28** divided by the **140 farmland assessed properties** = **\$7,856.63** (average per faux-farm that they are not paying in taxes).

* **\$520,100** (total assessed value for the 1,584.86 acres of farmland assessed property) X **.02158** (current tax rate) = **\$11,223.75** actually paid in taxes for those **1,584.86 faux-farm acres!** **1,584.86 acres in Mendham Township yields only \$11,223.75 in tax revenue!**

* **\$11,223.75** divided by **1,584.86 acres** = **\$7.08** paid per acre for each farmland assessed acre!

*That's quite the bargain to be paying **\$7.08 per acre** for land in Mendham Township! But, it is similar to the tax per acre that people like John Whitman, Donald Trump, Jon Bon Jovi, Steve Forbes, Woody Johnson, and Donald Newhouse paid in other New Jersey towns.

* That's something that the other 2,126 residential taxpayers who pay full freight should think about each time they sit down to write out a check to pay their full, non-farmland assessed taxes!

* If people can afford to own large tracts of land in Mendham Township, then they should be able/willing to pay the going rate that the other 2,126 residential property owners pay. Read the attached, actual real estate ad and decide if the person who ended up with that **24 acre property** with a **\$2.598 million dollar manor**, as it was referred to in the real estate ad, was more interested in raising turnips or getting a huge tax break because **22 of the 24 acres was farmland assessed!**

ACTUAL REAL ESTATE AD THAT APPEARED IN THE DAILY RECORD IN NOVEMBER OF 2014

A real estate ad appeared in the Nov. 16th Sunday Real Estate section of the Daily Record that sums up the hypocrisy of Governor Christie's argument that the very wealthy in New Jersey can't afford to pay just a bit more to finance the Millionaire's Tax!

The description of the property for sale is as follows: With more than 24 sweeping acres with pastoral views, this manor is a 12-room Colonial home, custom-designed to provide residents with grand and luxurious living space. Offered at \$2.598 million, this 5-bedroom, four-and-two-half bathroom home is now being shown. Wrought-iron gates create additional privacy for this 24-acre estate, **22 acres of which are farm-assessed**. The grounds feature an in-ground swimming pool, hot tub, patios and a designer pool house. A large driveway and two garages offer abundant parking. Hidden in a rural setting, the property is located about a mile from trains to New York City."

The most telling part of the ad was the part that mentioned the 24 acres in Mendham Township with 22 of the 24 acres being "farm-assessed"! Seriously, if one can afford a 2.598 million dollar "manor" with all the accoutrements, then perhaps the 22-acre "farm assessment" is nothing more than a tax dodge! Perhaps with the money that the owners will save with the "farm assessment" they could pay their fair share of a millionaire's tax! The farmland tax assessments reduce the regular property tax by 98%!

\$7.08 per acre in property tax in Mendham Township is a joke!

\$7,856.63 average tax not paid on the 140 Farmland/Woodland assessed properties. $\$7,856.63 \times 140$ properties = \$1,099,928.28 in lost taxes! That's \$1,099,928.28 that the other 2,126 residential property owners have to make up in the town budget! That's \$517.37 per residential property that these people have to pay because 140 other faux-farmers feel they should get a tax break! Truly amazing!

