
BOROUGH OF WASHINGTON, WARREN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

WASHINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL MINUTES

May 19, 2020

The regular meeting of the Borough Council of Washington, Warren County, New Jersey was held via ZOOM live stream at 7:00 P.M.

Roll Call: Conry, Cox, Duchemin, Noone, Norris, Valle and Higgins.

Also Present: Matthew Hall, Manager
Laurie A. Barton, Borough Clerk
Tara St. Angelo, Attorney
Natasha Turchan, CFO

Mayor Higgins led everyone in the flag salute.

Mayor Higgins read the following statement into record:

“The requirements of the Open Public Meetings Law, 1975, Chapter 231, have been satisfied in that adequate notice of this meeting has been published in the Star Gazette and posted on the bulletin board, borough website and Facebook stating the time, place and purpose of the meeting as required by law.”

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dirk Higgins, Washington Borough Fire Chief, asked for the support of the Governing Body for the opening of the Fire Academy for training. Two proposals submitted to the County with regards to social distancing were proposed.

Motion

Motion made by Norris and seconded by Noone to authorize the Manager to put together a resolution in support of opening the fire academy.

Hearing no further public comment, motion made by Noone and seconded by Conry to close the public portion, all were in favor.

Roll Call: Conry, Cox, Duchemin, Noone, Norris, Valle and Higgins.
Ayes: 7 Nays: 0
Motion passes.

Fire Chief Dirk announced a memorial drive for fallen firefighter Brian Heinrich on May 29th who was killed in a line of duty in 1980. A parade will be held on Route 57/Washington Avenue with Honor Guard, Police, fire apparatus and members of the Heinrich family. Area Fire departments from Sussex, Hunterdon, Warren and Morris are invited. It will be livestreamed on Facebook.

Manager Hall added that the entrance to the rear parking area behind Gibson Gym alleyway will be named Brian Heinrich Memorial Way. Manager Hall is working with DOT on parking signage and to create a memorial sign.

Mel Thiel, BID Executive Director, reported that several more businesses are open for curbside services.

Manager Hall added that another Washington Borough teacher will be featured Thursday May 11th, Ms. Mullen from the Memorial School, on NJTV, will be teaching a lesson on fractions.

Hearing no further public comment, motion made by Norris and seconded by Valle to close the public portion, all were in favor.

MINUTES

Motion made by Conry and seconded by Valle to approve the minutes of May 5, 2020.

Roll Call: Conry, Cox, Duchemin, Noone, Norris, Valle and Higgins.

Ayes: 6 Nays: 0 Abstain 1 (Duchemin)

Motion passes.

RESOLUTIONS

Motion made by Noone to open the public hearing for Resolution 2020-75, Amending the 2020 Budget.

Hearing no public comment, motion made by Norris and seconded by Conry to close the public hearing, all were in favor.

Motion made by Noone and seconded by Conry to approve Resolution 2020-75.

Roll Call: Conry, Cox, Duchemin, Noone, Norris, Valle and Higgins.

Ayes: 6 Nays: 1 (Valle)

Motion passes.

Motion made by Conry and seconded by Noone to adopt the 2020 Budget as amended.

Roll Call: Conry, Cox, Duchemin, Noone, Norris, Valle and Higgins.

Ayes: 5 Nays:2 (Cox and Valle)

Motion passes.

	<u>FROM</u>	<u>TO</u>
3. Miscellaneous Revenues - Section G: Special Items of General Revenue Anticipated with Prior Written Consent of Director of Local Government Services - Other Special Items		
Reserve for Shade Tree	0.00	500.00
Animal Control Trust Fund	5,500.00	0.00
Total Section G: Special Items of General Revenue Anticipated with Prior Written Consent of Director of Local Government Services - Other Special Items	26,500.00	21,500.00
Summary of Revenues:		
1. Surplus Anticipated	600,000.00	602,560.19
3. Miscellaneous Revenues		
Total Section A: Local Revenues	1,184,000.00	1,164,000.00
Total Section D: Interlocal Agreements	235,000.00	181,866.88
Total Section F: Public and Private Revenues	178,260.57	163,298.57
Total Section G: Special Items of General Revenue	26,500.00	21,500.00
Total Miscellaneous Revenues	2,217,136.57	2,123,841.25
Subtotal General Revenues	3,225,136.57	3,134,401.44
6. Amount to Be Raised By Taxes for Support of Municipal Budget		5,413,880.88
a) Local Tax for Municipal Purposes Including Reserve for Uncollected Taxes	5,413,291.89	5,413,880.88
Total Amount to be Raised by Taxes for Support of Municipal Budget	5,561,675.81	5,562,064.80
7. Total General Revenues	8,786,812.38	8,696,466.24
8. General Appropriations:		
a. Operations Within "CAPS":		
Administrative and Executive-Other Expenses	65,700.00	85,700.00
Animal Control-Salaries and Wages	0.00	4,500.00
Total Operations (Items 8(A) Within "CAPS"	3,140,074.89	3,164,574.89
Detail		
Salaries and Wages	1,182,886.89	1,187,386.89
Other Expenses	1,957,188.00	1,977,188.00
E. Deferred Charges and Statutory Expenditures - Municipal within "CAPS"		
Animal Trust Shortage	0.00	449.18
Total Deferred Charges and Statutory Expenditures	267,600.00	268,049.18

	<u>FROM</u>	<u>TO</u>
(C) Capital Improvements	110,000.00	80,000.00
Total General Appropriations	8,786,812.38	8,896,466.24
Dedicated Redrevenue from Utility Anticipated Revenue		
Operating Surplus	470,555.00	709,129.00
Total Operating Surplus Anticipated	470,555.00	709,129.00
Total Sewer Utilities Revenue	2,745,555.00	2,984,129.00
Appropriation for Sewer utility Debt Service		
Infrastructure Trust Principal and Interest	83,340.00	96,914.00
Surplus (General Budget)	575,000.00	800,000.00
Total Sewer Appropriations	2,745,555.00	2,984,129.00

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that two certified copies of this resolution be filed forthwith in the Office of the Director of Local Government Services for her certification of the local municipal budget so amended.

Public hearing on this amendment will be held on May 19th at 7 p.m.

Participants should dial into the meeting using the following toll-free number: (877) 853-5247.

Upon dialing the number, please enter the following meeting ID: 935 2131 4017 followed by the pound sign.

If a participant ID is requested, please simply press the pound sign again. At that point you will be entered into the meeting but will be on mute.

In order to indicate that you would like to ask a question or make a comment, please press *9 which will signal to the meeting host that you would like to be heard.

It is hereby certified that this is a true copy of a resolution amending the budget, was introduced by the governing body on the 21 day of April , 2020.

Certified by me

_____, 2020

Municipal Clerk

Motion made by Noone and seconded by Conry to approve Resolution 2020-78.

Roll Call: Conry, Cox, Duchemin, Noone, Norris, Valle and Higgins.

Ayes: 7 Nays: 0

Motion passes.

RESOLUTION #2020-78

A RESOLUTION FOR REDEMPTION OF TAX CERTIFICATE

As per N.J.S.A.54:5

KNOW ALL PERSONS BY THESE PRESENTS THAT, WHEREAS, lands in the taxing district of Washington Borough, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, were sold on December 6, 2019 to US Bank Cust Pro Cap 8, 50 S 16th Street, Suite 2050, Philadelphia, PA 19102, in the amount of \$220.49 for taxes or other municipal liens assessed for the year 2018 in the name of Sec'try HUD %Information Systems as supposed owners, and in said assessment and sale were described as 170 Boulevard, Block 67 Lot 3, which sale was evidenced by Certificate #19-00018; and

WHEREAS, the Collector of Taxes of said taxing district of the Borough of Washington, do certify that on 5-6-20 and before the right to redeem was cut off, as provided by law, Comerica Bank on behalf of Corelogic Tax Services, claiming to have an interest in said lands, did redeem said lands claimed by US Bank Cust Pro Cap

8 by paying the Collector of Taxes of said taxing district of Washington Borough the amount of \$939.55 which is the amount necessary to redeem Tax Sale Certificate #19-00018.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, on this 19th day of May 2020 by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Washington, County of Warren to authorize the Treasurer to issue a check payable to US Bank Cust Pro Cap 8, 50 S 16th Street, Suite 2050, Philadelphia, PA 19102 in the amount of **\$939.55** (This amount consists of \$939.55 Certificate Amount redeemed).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Tax Collector is authorized to cancel this lien on Block 67 Lot 3 from the tax office records.

Motion made by Valle and seconded by Conry to approve Resolution 2020-79.

Roll Call: Conry, Cox, Duchemin, Noone, Norris, Valle and Higgins.

Ayes: 7 Nays: 0

Motion passes

RESOLUTION #2020-79
RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE REFUND OF
ESCROW DEPOSIT TO ELIZABETHTOWN GAS
HELD IN TRUST BY THE BOROUGH OF WASHINGTON

WHEREAS, Bridget Voorhees of Elizabethtown Gas has requested a refund for the \$500.00 escrow deposited in the Street Opening Account #7200020864 for 41-43 W. Washington Avenue;

WHEREAS, Kevin Smith, Borough Engineer has determined that the application did not require a permit as it was for killing service at 41-43 W. Washington Avenue and authorized the refund of the fee;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Washington, in the County of Warren, State of New Jersey that the Municipal Treasurer is hereby authorized to issue a check to Elizabethtown Gas in the amount of \$500.00.

Motion made by Noone and seconded by Conry to approve Resolution 2020-80.

Roll Call: Conry, Cox, Duchemin, Noone, Norris, Valle and Higgins.

Ayes: 6 Nays: 1(Cox)

Motion passes.

RESOLUTION 2020-80
APPOINTING DEPUTY REGISTRAR

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 26:8-17, the Deputy Registrar shall serve a term of office of three years subject to the same rules and statutes regarding the term of office of the registrar; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Borough Registrar to appoint Susan Turner as Deputy Registrar

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Washington, County of Warren, State of New Jersey as follows:

1. Susan Turner is hereby appointed as a Deputy Registrar for a term commencing immediately as follows: Term being May 19, 2020 until May 19, 2023.
2. Fees paid to the Deputy Registrar are paid in accordance with the Borough salary ordinance.
3. Copies of this resolution to appointee, Borough Registrar, Personnel Department, Finance Department.

VOUCHERS AND CLAIMS

Motion made by Conry seconded by Noone to pay the vouchers and claims.

ROLL CALL: Conry, Cox, Noone, Norris, Valle, Higgins.

Ayes: 6, Nays: 1 (Cox)
Motion Carried.

RECAP

COUNCIL REMARKS

Councilwoman Duchemin gave the following remarks:

- Wished everyone well and being cautiously hopeful in the progress of things re-opening.
- Excited about the borough's businesses being proactive in reopening and being safe. Excited to get back to normal.

Councilwoman Cox gave the following remarks:

- Hoping everything goes well for the Fire Department. Liking the idea of more stores opening up but added that no one should be lax in practicing safe distancing.

Councilman Norris gave the following remarks:

- Wishing everyone to be safe and would like to see more of the State opening.

Councilwoman Noone gave the following remarks:

- Reiterated the same in wishing everyone to be safe and follow guidelines. Everyone who works in the Borough and residents doing very well in a tough situation and to keep it up.

Councilwoman Valle gave the following remarks:

- Stated that everyone should be making sure they are meeting the guidelines in keeping safe and healthy. Asked for an update with Ray Rice and Taco Bell.

Deputy Mayor Conry gave the following statements:

- Praying everyone is keeping safe and keeping their distance in this pandemic.

Mayor Higgins gave the following remarks:

- Mayor Higgins recapped updates from the Governor's Office regarding businesses that can reopen, such as recreational and garden places. Elective surgeries will reopen next month. Today's count of infected in the borough stands at 50. There were 124 deaths county wide and 101 of those were from long term care facilities.
- Please still practice social distancing.
- Washington Township is running a sewer line down Route 31. Steps are moving forward. The Mayor of the Township wanted to get a feel if the borough is still interested in that project. Mayor Higgins asked permission to sit in on a video conference call on May 26th with the DEP and Highlands council regarding this matter. The consensus was unanimous and still interested and to have the Mayor sit in on call.
- Mayor Higgins spoke of the tragedy of Firefighter Brian Heinrich that was killed in a fire while on duty in 1980. Mayor Higgins encouraged everyone to tune in live on Facebook to watch the ceremonial parade.
- Mayor Higgins reflected on the importance and meaning of the upcoming holiday; Memorial Day.
- Asked everyone to please practice social distancing.
- Wished Jack a Happy Birthday.

**Councilwoman Valle unintentionally left meeting at 7:53 PM.*

Manager Hall gave the following remarks:

- Gave an example of a business in south Jersey defying Governor Murphy's order. They received a summons. Current gym owner here in the Borough Gibson Gym, in which they have been a fixture in the borough for over 40 years, has been talking and trying to get the press to change the narrative. Some businesses will be speaking with the Star Ledger on how these types of businesses can operate safely.
- Manager Hall discussed the borough's current situation on the number of employees. The borough currently has 16 full time and 14 part time employees, adding that the borough could easily have more employees but in recent years a lot of those positions been eliminated or consolidated. There are a lot of employees in borough hall who have a lot of

different hats and this saves the borough a tremendous amount of money along with shared services.

Councilwoman Cox responded stating that she sees a lot of cronyism going on. Attorney Parikh strongly advised to not speak about this at this time. Manager Hall stated to Councilwoman Cox that this was a strong accusation. Mayor Higgins suggested that Councilwoman Cox and Manager Hall along with Attorney Parikh have a separate conference call to discuss this Attorney Parikh stated that she is advising going any further into this area of discussion, Attorney Parikh stated she is not trying to shut anyone down but trying to determine the best manner to discuss it further.

**Councilwoman Valle reentered meeting at 8:13 P.M.*

Councilwoman Valle stated that she got frozen on Zoom and missed a question regarding reopening her salon. She stated that she is prepared to do it safely (re-open).

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, a motion was made by Valle seconded by Conry to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 pm.

Ayes: 7: Nays: 0
Motion Carried.

Mayor David Higgins

Laurie A. Barton, Borough Clerk