

Approved: February 22, 2022

## **MONTAGUE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING**

### **MINUTES**

**February 8, 2022  
7:00 PM**

#### **OPENING STATEMENT**

Mayor Innella called the Montague Township Committee meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. announcing that adequate notice has been provided to the New Jersey Herald and the Sunday New Jersey Herald for publication in which notice was given of the date, time, place and general agenda of the meeting according to the Open Public Meetings Act.

#### **FLAG SALUTE**

The Pledge of Allegiance commenced.

#### **ROLL CALL**

Present were: Mr. Krumpfer, Mr. LeDonne, Mr. Merusi, Mr. Zitone and Mayor Innella. Also present was Municipal Clerk Eileen DeFabiis and Municipal Attorney Rob Rossmeissl

Absent: None

**VOUCHERS** Mr. Merusi made a motion to approve the vouchers. Mr. LeDonne seconded, and the motion carried with a unanimous roll call vote.

**MINUTES** Mr. Merusi made a motion to approve the Budget Meeting Minutes of January 20, 2022 and the Regular Meeting Minutes of January 25, 2022. Mr. Krumpfer seconded, and the motion carried with a unanimous roll call vote.

Before proceeding with any other items on the Agenda, Mayor Innella announced that the Township Municipal Building will be opening back up to the public and the next regularly scheduled Township Committee Meeting will also be held in person. Mayor Innella added that the Covid-19 case numbers have been declining in the past few weeks and the Committee feels comfortable in opening the building back up and getting things back to normal.

Mayor Innella also amended the Meeting Agenda sequence to hear a representative from the Montague Township Little League, Anthony Mastroeni, which was under New Business and will be heard now.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Little League – Mr. Mastroeni commented that there are quite a few items that the Montague Little League is in need of. He will be attending the next Recreation Committee Meeting to put in a formal request, but he also wanted to come before the Township Committee. Mr. Mastroeni then asked the Committee if through the American Rescue Plan Funding they could make some upgrades to the Zitone Ballfield. Mr. Mastroeni said the fencing at the Zitone Ball Field is in rough shape and needs repair and/or replacing. Mr. Zitone asked if Mr. Mastroeni received any quotes for the fence. Mr. Mastroeni replied saying he did get one from a local company right in Montague. The Committee asked Mr. Mastroeni if he could get at least two more quotes. Mayor Innella added that he would check to see if this item could also be added to the Township's requested spending that has been submitted to the Auditors through the American Rescue Plan Funds.

Mr. Merusi asked for a status update for the Ball Field on Route 206. Mr. Mastroeni responded saying that he is trying to get regular baseball going there as well as girls' softball. Mr. Mastroeni added when the weather breaks he is going to go over to the fields with a tractor and a York Rake and get the fields in nice condition just like the Zitone Field. Mayor Innella thanked Mr. Mastroeni for speaking tonight. The Route 206 ballfield has not been used in over two years, the Township Committee was thinking of not renewing the agreement with the National Park Service, but now will certainly reconsider this. Mr. Mastroeni added that they are hoping for a larger group this year and having an alternate field is always a good idea.

Mr. Mastroeni also asked if the Little League Board would be able to use the Community Center for their Meetings. Mayor Innella said that they would have to apply with the Clerk's Office to do so, but at this time they are not taking any rentals in the Community Center until some deficiencies with the building are rectified. Lastly, Mr. Mastroeni mentioned that last year the Township's Insurance Company determined that the bleachers at the Zitone Field were too high and they would need to be removed, which has been done. He asked what happened to, or where did the bleachers go, because the Little League had just replaced some of the boards on those bleachers the year previous and the boards are still good. Mr. Merusi replied that they are still at the DPW Yard.

**ORDINANCES** (First Reading)

2022-01 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 59 "STREETS" BY ADDING ARTICLE II, "INCIDENTAL DAMAGE CAUSED BY TOWNSHIP OPERATIONS," SECTION 59-7, "REIMBURSEMENT FOR MAILBOX DAMAGE," OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MONTAGUE

Mr. Zitone made a motion to approve Ordinance 2022-01. Mr. Merusi seconded, and the motion carried with a unanimous roll call vote.

2022-02 AN ORDINANCE FIXING SALARIES OF OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MONTAGUE, COUNTY OF SUSSEX AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY FOR THE YEAR 2022

Mr. Merusi made a motion to approve Ordinance 2022-02. Mr. LeDonne seconded, and the motion carried with a unanimous roll call vote.

2022-03 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 36-7 "NON-LIFE HAZARD USES" AND SUPPLEMENTING AND AMENDING CHAPTER XXXVI OF THE TOWNSHIP CODE ENTITLED "FIRE CODE"

The Committee asked for clarification of the "R2 -Use Group" that is mentioned within the Ordinance as well as within the Ordinance to have Certificate of Smoke Detector and Carbon Monoxide Alarm and Fire Extinguisher Compliance written out in full as well as the shortened abbreviation (CSDCMAC). Mr. Merusi made a motion to approve Ordinance 2022-03. Mr. Zitone seconded, and the motion carried with a unanimous roll call vote.

**ORDINANCES** (Second Reading)

None

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

All items listed within an asterisk (\*) are considered to be routine and non-controversial by the Township Committee and will be approved by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Committee member so requests, in which case the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered in its normal sequence on the Agenda.

Mr. Merusi made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Krumpfer seconded, and the motion carried with a unanimous roll call vote for all Consent Agenda items.

<b>CONSENT AGENDA</b>	
<b><u>RESOLUTIONS</u></b>	
2022-020*	AUTHORIZATION TO CANCEL TOWNSHIP TAX SALE CERTIFICATES
2022-022*	TRANSFER RESOLUTION
2022-023*	RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MONTAGUE, COUNTY OF SUSSEX, AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY AUTHORIZING CERTAIN EXPENDITURES FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY CENTER AND FOR THE PURCHASE OF FIRE EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES, AT A TOTAL COST NOT TO EXCEED \$31,702.39, CLARIFYING THAT THE FUNDS FOR SAME SHALL COME FROM THE NET PROCEEDS OF THE SALE OF THE REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT BLOCK 18.42, LOT 5; 274 CLOVE ROAD IN THE TOWNSHIP, AND AUTHORIZING THE TRANSFER OF THE REMAINDER OF THESE NET PROCEEDS INTO THE TOWNSHIP'S CURRENT FUND

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

Altice “Cablevision of Warwick, LLC” – Acknowledge Receipt of 2021 Franchise Fee – The Township Committee acknowledged receipt of the 2021 Franchise Fee received from Altice for \$14,185.

Montague Volunteer Fire Department – NJ State Fireman’s Association Application Membership Approval (Alexander Dickson) – Mr. Merusi made a motion to approve this membership application request. Mr. LeDonne seconded, and the motion carried with a unanimous roll call vote.

Maureen Kaman, Township Historian – 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the American Revolution – Mayor Innella explained that the NJ Historical Commission and Crossroads of the American Revolution is preparing for a celebration in 2026 of the American Revolution. Ms. Kaman the Montague Township Historian has forwarded this to M.A.R.C.H. and is asking if there is anything in specific that the Township would like for her to do for this event.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Little League – Discussed previously with Amended Sequence of Meeting Items.

Website – Mayor Innella stated that the Township has been looking to upgrade the Township’s website, so they have reached out to a few different companies and received some quotes. Mayor Innella asked the Clerk and Deputy Clerk to make their recommendation to the Committee on which one they felt more comfortable with. Clerk DeFabiis said after speaking with the Deputy Clerk and discussing, they both felt that Revize had more to offer and an easier to use platform, where JPerlee Design had a similar operating system as the current Township Website, which is very time consuming to make changes. Mr. Zitone made a motion to approve the quote received from Revize. Mr. Merusi seconded, and the motion carried with a unanimous roll call vote.

Route 206 Ballfield – Mayor Innella had this item placed on the Agenda for discussion, since the Route 206 Ballfields have not been used in a couple of years. After speaking with Mr. Mastroeni of the Little League earlier tonight, it has come to light that that organization does plan on using and doing some maintenance to the fields this coming spring. Municipal Clerk DeFabiis will reapply for the Special Use Permit from the National Park Service.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

GeoScape Solar – Attorney Rossmeissl gave an update on the contract with GeoScape Solar whom the Township has a contract with for the installation of solar panels at the New Firehouse and Community Center. Under the Resolution that the Township Committee had passed, the contract was to provide power to the DPW Building, the Municipal Building and the Community Center. The Committee was hoping that the installation would have happened in the fall before the weather had turned, but they were also waiting for approval from Jersey Central Power and Light for what is called an interconnect. JCP&L has come back now and said that the particular transformer that they would need to loop into for this particular solar system cannot accommodate for the size system that the Township had planned for which was a 100KW system. The cost to replace the transformer would be about \$15,000 - \$20,000 which neither the Township nor GeoScape will want to foot the bill for. GeoScape has now proposed instead of doing a 100KW system, they start with a 60KW system that would power just the Firehouse and Community Center. Then in the meantime, they propose a separate system that would be 40 or 50 KW’s that could be placed on the Municipal Building and then be looped into another transformer, which would still be at no cost. GeoScape will be in contact with Attorney Rossmeissl with an update on the cost savings for a 60KW system rather than the originally planned 100KW system. Mr. Zitone suggested taking the time to see the new figures for the energy cost savings before making a decision on whether they would like to proceed with the addendum to the contract.

### **REPORTS**

Township Historian – 2021 Annual Report – Mayor Innella gave a brief overview of the Township Historian’s Annual Report. Mayor Innella thanked Maureen Kaman for her dedication and efforts once again this year; she is greatly appreciated by the Committee and Residents for her work.

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Construction Department – January 2022 – There were 6 permits issued for the month of January 2022 for a total collected of \$2,043.

Tax Collector – January 2022 - Current taxes collected for the month of January 2022 totaled \$572,703.73. Prior year's taxes collected totaled \$22,319.32. Tax Title Lien's Receivable totaled \$23,715.14. Interest collected for the month of January totaled \$1,069.77. Total collected for the month of January \$619,807.96

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** (limited to three minutes per person)

Mr. Merusi made a motion to open to the public. Mr. Krumpfer seconded, and the motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

Edison Avecillas – River Road – Mr. Avecillas thanked the Committee for the consideration in updating the Township's website to make it more user friendly. Mr. Avecillas agreed with Clerk DeFabiis' thoughts on upgrading the website, the provider that the Township selects should allow for a platform that would not make the website obsolete in the next few years. Mr. Avecillas then asked if the website would allow for online tax payments. Mr. Avecillas also asked if either of the companies are providing any protections for ransomware. Clerk DeFabiis replied, saying they are in the early stages of talking about items such as online payments, and will check into the security details that were provided. Clerk DeFabiis added that the Township is required through their insurance to have certain cyber security measures. Mr. Avecillas again thanked the Committee for their efforts.

There being no further comment from the public, Mr. LeDonne made a motion to close to the public. Mr. Merusi seconded, and the motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Zitone recused himself from the meeting before the other Committee members moved to Executive Session.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mr. Merusi made a motion to enter into Executive Session. Mr. LeDonne seconded, and the motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

**MONTAGUE TOWNSHIP**

**RESOLUTION 2022-021**

**WHEREAS** the Township of Montague is authorized, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 to exclude the public from that portion of this meeting for purposes of discussing specific matters as permitted by N.J.S.A. 10:4-12; and

**WHEREAS** the Township intends to discuss certain matters which are deemed confidential pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 in Executive Session; and

**WHEREAS** at this time the Township cannot determine the time when the discussions to be held in Executive Session will be made public but will disclose the minutes of the Executive Session when the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

**NOW THEREFORE**, be it resolved by the Township Committee of the Township of Montague that this meeting shall be adjourned to an executive session (closed session) and the public will be excluded in order that the Committee may, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 10:4-13(a), discuss Attorney Client Privilege without taking action, and after reconvening this public meeting action may be taken and the Mayor or her designee will announce, if possible, the time when and the circumstances under which the discussion conducted in Executive Session will be disclosed to the public. This resolution is authorized and allowed by and pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-13.

**NOW THEREFORE**, be it further resolved by the Township Committee that pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-13(b) the time when and the circumstances under which the discussion conducted in closed session of the public body can be disclosed to the public is when the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

Mr. Merusi made a motion to close Executive Session. Mr. LeDonne seconded, and the motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

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Mr. Merusi made a motion to open to Regular Session. Mr. Krumpfer seconded, and the motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

**ADJOURN**

Mr. Merusi made a motion to adjourn at 8:17 PM. Mr. Krumpfer seconded, and the motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted:

**EILEEN DEFABIIS, RMC  
MUNICIPAL CLERK**