

MONTAGUE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

**MAY 10, 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, and Mayor Innella. Also present was Municipal Clerk Eileen DeFabiis, Municipal Attorney Robert Rossmeissl, Municipal Accountant/Auditor Heidi Wohlleb and Chief Financial Officer Sharon Yarosz.

Excused: Mr. Zitone

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

MINUTES None

ORDINANCES (First Reading)

None

ORDINANCES (Second Reading)

2022-07 AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MONTAGUE, COUNTY OF SUSSEX, AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY, RELEASING, EXTINGUISHING, AND VACATING THE RIGHTS OF THE PUBLIC TO A PORTION OF A PAPER STREET KNOWN AS REINHARDT ROAD IN THE TOWNSHIP OF MONTAGUE

Mr. Merusi made a motion to approve this Ordinance. Mr. Krumpfer seconded. Mr. Merusi made a motion to open to public for discussion regarding Ordinance 2022-07. Mr. LeDonne seconded, and the motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

With no comment from the public, Mr. Merusi made a motion to close to public. Mr. Krumpfer seconded, and the motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

Municipal Clerk DeFabiis then called the roll, and the motion to approve Ordinance 2022-07 carried with a unanimous roll call vote.

RESOLUTIONS

2022-060 2022 LOCAL MUNICIPAL BUDGET READ BY TITLE ONLY

Clerk DeFabiis read the Resolution, in full, to all in attendance and certified that a copy of the 2022 budget was available for public inspection from April 13, 2022 through the public hearing held today, May 10, 2022. Mr. Merusi made a motion to approve Resolution 2022-060. Mr. Krumpfer seconded, and the motion carried with a unanimous roll call vote.

2022-061 ADOPTION OF THE 2022 LOCAL MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Mayor Innella stated that the amount of appropriations and authorization for municipal purposes totals \$1,513,947.28. The Local Tax Levy was only .4236 or an increase of .00056%. The total budget for the year 2022 is 3,004,651.69, which is an increase of 1.463% over last year. The average home in Montague that is assessed at \$155,126 would see a rate increase of \$9.47.

Approved: May 24, 2022

Mr. Merusi made a motion to approve Resolution 2022-061 adopting the 2022 Local Municipal Budget. Mr. LeDonne seconded. Mr. Merusi made a motion to open to public for discussion regarding Resolution 2022-061. Mr. LeDonne seconded, and the motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

With no comments from the public, Mr. Krumpfer made a motion to close to the public. Mr. LeDonne seconded, and the motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

Clerk DeFabiis called the roll, and the motion to approve the adoption of the 2022 Local Municipal Budget carried with a unanimous roll call vote.

2022-065 A RESOLUTION AWARDING A CONTRACT TO WALLABY TALES FOR A WILDLIFE PRESENTATION SPONSORED BY MONTAGUE TOWNSHIP CLEAN COMMUNITIES FOR THE TOWNSHIP'S ANNUAL MONTAGUE DAY EVENT

Mr. Merusi made a motion to approve Resolution 2022-065. Mr. Krumpfer seconded and the motion carried with a unanimous roll call vote.

CORRESPONDENCE

County Board of Taxation – Acknowledge Final Equalization Table for the Year 2022 – The Committee acknowledged receipt of the Final Equalization Table for the Year 2022.

Mayor Innella commented that the following items will be approved with one motion:

- Blue Light Permit Approval for Logan Nemeth and Douglas A. Drake.
- Application for Membership (Joseph Koba)
- Application for Membership NJ State Fireman's Association (Joseph Koba)
- Relief Association Exempt Firefighter Applications
 - Keith Lamberson
 - Thomas DeGeorge
 - David Coss
 - Kyle Gottemoller
 - Kevin Kelly
 - Ryan Riegel
 - William McCullough
 - Jesse Brace-Revak

Mr. LeDonne explained that the Montague Volunteer Fire Department has been addressing many of these items in an attempt to get all members up-to-date with all permits, etcetera. The Relief Association is a State run program that is of no cost to the Township, but will pay out to the member or family of Firefighters in the event of an accident and/or death. Mr. LeDonne made a motion to approve all above listed requests. Mr. Merusi seconded and the motion carried in a unanimous roll call vote.

Land Easy LLC, Ilana Cohen – Request for Montague Township to Purchase Property at 9 Twin Brook Road (BL 19.02, LT 6) – Clerk DeFabiis commented that the Township currently owns about four pieces of property on Twin Book Road, but none that would adjoin to the aforementioned property. She also noted that it has not been typical for the Township to purchase property from anyone in the past, but she was sent the correspondence so wanted to present it either way to the Township Committee. The Committee agreed to decline the offer to purchase the property located at 9 Twin Brook Road.

NEW BUSINESS

DPW Summer Hours – The DPW staff is requesting approval of Summer Hours from 6:00AM to 2:30PM to begin Tuesday, May 31, 2022 through September 2, 2022. Mr. Merusi made a motion to approve this request. Mr. Krumpfer seconded and the motion carried with a unanimous roll call vote.

Municipal Online Payments – Mayor Innella stated that he was speaking with the Township Tax Collector who also works in the Town of Newton. The Town of Newton uses a service called Municipalpay to process online payments. There is no fee to the Township to use the service, but there is a small convenience fee that is charged to the user/residents. The Township Tax Collector will be getting more information on this service.

Ballfields – Mayor Innella stated that the ballfield on Clove Road could use some updating and maintenance items. There is a grant available that Clerk DeFabiis had forwarded to the Committee members that would help to address some of these items, but it is not available until 2023. The Township will be applying for the Grant and is currently in the process of getting quotes for the items that they would like to address. The smaller items are already in the process of being addressed, the DPW has paved a good portion of the driveway that was in rough shape, the dugouts will be painted, some of the railroad ties need to be replaced. Mr. Merusi will work with the DPW Foreman on continuing to make these improvements to the ballfield. Mr. Merusi added that Skyland’s Stadium will be holding a Montague Township Night Out event on Friday, June 3, 2022. The game will start at 7:00PM and there will discounted tickets available for purchase for all Montague Township residents.

OLD BUSINESS

American Rescue Plan Spending – Chief Financial Officer, Sharon Yarosz explained that the Township had sent a very detailed listing of the items/projects that they would like to purchase/pay for with funding received from the American Rescue Plan. After sending their listing to the Treasury, a very vague response was received. Ms. Yarosz went on to say one of the items that the Township wanted to use the money for was to assist Blue Ridge Rescue Squad in purchasing a new ambulance, but this was agreed upon by multiple towns, which would require all three towns, Sandyston, Montague and Frankford to go into an agreement with Blue Ridge Rescue Squad. Attorney Rossmeissl stated that the response was imprecise. After looking at the listing that the Township put together, in his opinion, based on the final treasury ruling, the Township should be able to use the American Rescue Plan funding for the following items: Well Drilling; Air Duct Cleaning; replacement of HVAC system; New Phone System; Replacement of Windows; and the Drainage in Front Parking lot. If the Township were to claim revenue loss then the allowable spending is even broader. Attorney Rossmeissl lastly stated that the funds do not necessarily need to be spent by 2024, but they do need to be encumbered. Ms. Yarosz said she just filed the report and claimed the Standard Revenue Loss. Ms. Yarosz stated that she would like to work on the agreement for the ambulance for Blue Ridge Rescue Squad first and then work off what is left over. Mayor Innella stated that he would like to get the sprinkler system put in at the Community Center, this way they can get the kitchen completed and use the building as they imagined. The architect said the estimated cost would be around \$150,000. Mr. Krumpfer suggested getting estimates for some of the items and prioritize based on those findings. Attorney Rossmeissl and Ms. Yarosz will be working on these and determine which items will fall under a category of allowable expenditures, then they can go out and get quotes for everything.

Land Sale Auction – Attorney Rossmeissl said at this time there is no update to this item, besides reminding all members of the public that on June 14, 2022 at 2:00 PM the Township will hold a Land Sale Auction in the Township Committee Room.

REPORTS

Construction Department – April 2022 – There were 14 permits issued for the month of April 2022, and 13 Certificates of Approvals for a total collected of \$7,327.

Municipal Updates – Mr. Merusi explained that he was at an event and spoke with Senator Oroho. They discussed the Designation of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area to the Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve. Senator Oroho shared that he was quite sure that the opposition is staggering. Congressmen Gottheimer is against it, he is against it, Sussex County and Pike County are against it, Warren County was initially in support, but have since reneged on that. Mr. Merusi added that Senator Oroho was very encouraging.

Mr. Krumpfer then asked if there had been an update from Harold Pellow’s Office yet regarding the plan for the Walking Path. Mayor Innella said he has not heard anything just yet, Mr. Krumpfer will follow-up.

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.

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

Approved: May 24, 2022

ADJOURN

Mr. LeDonne made a motion to adjourn at 7:45 PM. Mr. Krumpfer seconded, and the motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted:

**DANA KLINGER, RMC
DEPUTY MUNICIPAL CLERK**