

MONTAGUE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

May 24, 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 Deputy Municipal Clerk Dana Klinger and Municipal Attorney Robert Rossmessl

Absent: None

PRESENTATION

Eric Olsen, Director of Lands and Rivers at the Nature Conservancy in New Jersey (Open Space Discussion) – Toni-Lu Martin was also in attendance and introduced Director Olsen whom she has worked with over the past few years. Ms. Martin asked Director Olsen if he would be willing to speak with the Committee regarding all the State owned lands in Montague to give them some insight on what programs and grants are or could be available to the Township.

Director Olsen gave a brief overview of his experience, stating that he has been working in this area of Northern New Jersey for over sixteen years and has actually worked in the town for quite some time doing work with Trail Blazers Campground. Director Olsen added that having that experience, he can say first-hand that Montague is a spectacularly beautiful town with mountains, and is part of the Appalachian Mountains, the Delaware River runs through it, and Montague simply has some of the best natural resources in all of the State of New Jersey. Director Olsen further added that being here tonight he has no agenda and is simply here as a resource to the Township. Ms. Martin asked him to speak tonight because the Township is interested in the possibility of park development projects, future amenities. The Township seems to have a plethora of open space, at about 65% or so is preserved, but there are very few amenities such as trails, trailheads, fishing access, and so on. Mr. Krumpfer stated that the Township Committee is interested in adding, minimally some walking paths and or trails, which is something the Township desperately needs especially for the senior citizens in town. Director Olsen stated there are resources available to towns to do this type of work through the State of New Jersey, Green Acres Program. Green Acres offers grants and loans to municipalities to construct trails, playgrounds, ballfields, or any park development projects. There are several tiers that are available as well; the Green Acres program provides 50% matching grants to communities that have an approved open space/recreation plan. In order to have one of these plans the township would need to have a consultant come in to write such a plan, which could be totally anchored around recreation, such as improvement of existing parks, creation of parks, boat launches, etcetera. There would be a stakeholder process required; once the plan was created, it would then be sent to Green Acres for approval. Once it was approved, there would need to be a ballot question put out to the voters for a tax dedication or if the funds were readily available then the Township would simply need to pass an Ordinance. There is a lot of State land, but not much access, the State has the resources they just need the Township to push. Mr. Krumpfer asked if Director Olsen has a link to a checklist that they could use for reference to the exact steps that are required in order to be eligible for the Green Acres matching grants. If the Township submits a plan, they would then become eligible for 50% matching grants in perpetuity. Essentially every ten years the township would have to update their plan, but that is a very simple process. So long as the Township continues to spend the funds they would be eligible to apply even every year if they so choose. Director Olsen stated that there are also funds available in Sussex County, though these are diminishing. The County offers funding for trail

development/park development that are typically around the \$5,000 - \$10,000 range. There are very low rate loans available, which may not be ideal because the Township probably does not want to create debt, but they are available at say two percent at a twenty-year payback. Director Olsen added that there are funds available through the Recreational Trail Program, which are administered through the NJDEP. They are often funds that come through the Department of Transportation; these are typically available every other year and are best for small projects (\$15,000 - \$20,000). Depending on the complexity of the grant and what the Township wants to do most Engineers can handle writing these up, especially for the Recreational Trail Program. The Township can collaborate with the State Parks on some of these projects as well; they bring great resources to the table. The Committee thanked Director Olsen for his time and insight. The Committee also thanked Ms. Martin.

Mayor Innella then amended the meeting agenda to include under Old Business – Covid and Old Business – DPW Clothing Allowance.

MINUTES

Mr. Merusi made a motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of April 26, 2022. Mr. Krumpfer seconded and the motion carried with a unanimous roll call vote.

Mr. Merusi made a motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of May 10, 2022. Mr. Krumpfer seconded and the motion carried with Mr. Krumpfer, Mr. LeDonne, Mr. Merusi, and Mayor Innella all voting yes and Mr. Zitone abstaining.

Mayor Innella then took a moment to thank Mr. LeDonne for volunteering his time and lending a hand at the Annual Township Wide Cleanup Day.

ORDINANCES (First Reading)

2022-09 AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MONTAGUE, COUNTY OF SUSSEX, AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY, PROVIDING FOR THE REPAIR AND RESURFACING OF VARIOUS ROADS AND APPROPRIATING \$80,000.00 FROM THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND (IMPROVEMENTS TO ROADS) AVAILABLE IN THE CAPITAL FUND FOR SUCH PURPOSES

Mr. Merusi made a motion to approve this Ordinance. Mr. LeDonne seconded and the motion carried with a unanimous roll call vote.

ORDINANCES (Second Reading)

2022-08 AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MONTAGUE, COUNTY OF SUSSEX, AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AUTHORIZING THE SALE OF CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY OWNED BY THE TOWNSHIP OF MONTAGUE NOT REQUIRED FOR PUBLIC PURPOSES PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 40A:12-13, ET SEQ.

Mr. Merusi made a motion to approve this Ordinance. Mr. Krumpfer seconded. Mr. Krumpfer made a motion to open to public for discussion regarding Ordinance 2022-08. Mr. Merusi seconded, and the motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

Edward Zelinsky – Shore Drive – Mr. Zelinsky stated that he is aware that the Township has to advertise the Land Sale a certain number of times, but he was curious if any other disclosures would be available. For instance Zoning and tax assessments, any HOA fees that may be assessed from the High Point Country Club. Attorney Rossmeissl replied that generally with municipal land sale auctions the properties are listed as is and are incumbent upon the bidder to do their research on the parcels. Mr. Zelinsky also asked if pre-registration would be required in order to participate in the auction. Attorney Rossmeissl answered that the public can just show up on the day of. Mr. Zelinsky also asked for clarification on sections 4(E) and 4(H) within the Ordinance.

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

Deputy Municipal Clerk Klinger then called the roll, and the motion to approve Ordinance 2022-08 carried with a unanimous roll call vote.

RESOLUTIONS

2022-066 A RESOLUTION REIMBURSING THE MONTAGUE TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT FOR THE PURCHASE OF METAL ROOFING AT A COST OF \$2,619.02 FOR THE NEW FIRE PIT.

Mr. Merusi made a motion to approve Resolution 2022-066. Mr. LeDonne seconded and the motion carried with a unanimous roll call vote.

CORRESPONDENCE

Montague Volunteer Fire Department – Application for Membership (Robert O’Brien and Shane Lock) – Mr. LeDonne made a motion to approve both membership applications. Mr. Merusi seconded and the motion carried with a unanimous roll call vote.

Kittatinny Regional High School – Resolution Opposing the Designation of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area to the Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve – The Township Committee acknowledge receipt.

NEW BUSINESS

None

OLD BUSINESS

Reinhardt Road – Attorney Rossmeißl explained that the public hearing for vacating a portion of Reinhardt Road will be reheard as the proper notices were not sent out initially before the hearing that was scheduled on May 10, 2022. This new public hearing date will be on June 14, 2022 after all effected property owners are noticed.

Covid – Mayor Innella asked the other members of the Committee to be on notice should they feel that the Municipal Building reclose for Covid as numbers are going up once again. Mr. Zitone commented that the employees can get Covid from anywhere, it is his feeling at this time not to shut down the building, and this was the majority opinion of the other members as well.

DPW Clothing Allowance – The Committee discussed the 2022 Department of Public Works clothing allowance. They agreed upon each member having a \$600 clothing allowance.

REPORTS

Tax Collector’s Report – April 2022- Tax Collector – April 2022 - Current taxes collected for the month of April 2022 totaled \$662,787.11. Prior year’s taxes collected totaled \$42,222.51. Outside Liens totaled \$5,624.56. Township Liens totaled \$28,012.70 Interest collected for the month of April totaled \$20,435.60. Total collected for the month of April \$759,082.48

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (limited to three minutes per person)

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

Mr. Zelinsky – Shore Drive – Mr. Zelinsky asked about the potential to rent the Community Center as a meeting area regarding the increase in the water rates for the High Point Community Center. If so, what category would they fall under in the fee schedule? The Committee referred to the fee schedule for the community center and advised.

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

ADJOURN

Mr. Merusi made a motion to adjourn at 8:00 PM. Mr. Krumpfer seconded, and the motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted:

**DANA KLINGER, RMC
DEPUTY MUNICIPAL CLERK**