

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP
OF WANTAGE, HELD AT THE WANTAGE TOWNSHIP BUILDING, 888 STATE ROUTE 23,
WANTAGE, NJ, HELD AT 7:00 P.M. ON
APRIL 23, 2020**

Mayor Morris called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and requested that the Clerk call the roll. Upon roll call, the following members of the governing body were present: Mayor Morris, Deputy Mayor William Gaechter and Committeeman Ronald Bassani. Also, present: Administrator/Clerk Michael Restel and Mr. Glenn Kienz, Esq VIA Call in

Mayor Morris stated, "This meeting is being held in compliance with the provisions of the Open Public Meeting Act, P.L. 1975, Chapter 231. It has been properly noticed and certified by the Clerk."

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Morris requested a motion to approve Resolution #38-2020 - #40-2020.

A motion was made by Mr. Bassani and seconded by Mr. Gaechter.

Upon Roll Call:

Ayes: Bassani, Gaechter, Morris Nays: None Absent: Abstain: None

Mayor Morris requested a motion to approve PO# 16949 Bassani Power in the amount \$172.29

A motion was made by Mr. Gaechter and seconded by Mayor Morris.

Upon Roll Call:

Ayes: Gaechter, Morris Nays: None Absent: Abstain: Bassani

TOWNSHIP OF WANTAGE

RESOLUTION #38-2020

**AUTHORIZE EXECUTION OF AGREEMENT WITH SUSSEX COUNTY MUNICIPAL UTILITIES
AUTHORITY FOR CERTIFIED RECYCLING PROFESSIONAL TO CERTIFY THE 2019 ANNUAL
RECYCLING TONNAGE REPORT**

WHEREAS, Township of Wantage desires to enter into an agreement with the Sussex County Municipal Utilities Authority for a certified recycling professional to certify the 2019 annual recycling tonnage report;

WHEREAS, the award of the contract pursuant to N.J.S.A. section 13:1E-99.14 and pursuant to N.J.S.A. section 40A:11-5(2) is an exception to the bidding requirements as set forth in the "Local Public Contracts Law;"

WHEREAS, the fee for Sussex County Municipal Utilities Authority is \$250.00; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Wantage, Sussex County, New Jersey that the Mayor and Municipal Clerk are authorized to execute an agreement for certified recycling professional with the Sussex Municipal Utilities Authority to certify the 2019 annual recycling tonnage report.

CERTIFICATION: I hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a resolution duly adopted by the Township Committee of the Township of Wantage, in the County of Sussex, New Jersey, at a meeting held on April 23, 2020.

Michael L Restel Administrator/Acting Clerk

**TOWNSHIP OF WANTAGE
RESOLUTION #39-2020**

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TAX COLLECTOR TO PROCESS
THIRD QUARTER "ESTIMATED" TAX BILLS, DUE AUGUST 1, 2020**

WHEREAS, in light of the disruption caused by the coronavirus outbreak, the State delayed the adoption of the State Fiscal Year 2021 Budget to September 30, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Division of Local Government Services (DLGS) cannot certify State Aid allocations to municipal budgets until State Aid Appropriations are known; and

WHEREAS, the DLGS cannot approve municipal budgets and the County Board of

Taxation cannot certify taxes until long after the June 30, 2020 deadline to process third quarter tax bills due August 1, 2020; and

WHEREAS, without an adopted 2020 Municipal Budget and without a 2020 Certified Tax Rate, the Tax Collector cannot process the final 2020 Tax Levy; and

WHEREAS, the DLGS *“strongly recommends”* under Local Finance Notice 2020-07 *“that municipalities prepare to issue estimated property tax bills for 2020;”* and

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer, computed and certified an estimated Tax Levy necessary to bill third quarter taxes due August 1, 2020 using 1.05% of the 2019 Tax Levy;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Governing Body of the Township of Wantage in the County of Sussex and State of New Jersey on this 23rd day of April, 2020 that the Tax Collector is hereby authorized and directed to process estimated tax bills for the third quarterly installment of 2020 taxes at an estimated rate of 2.821; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, the third quarterly installment of 2020 taxes shall not be subject to interest until the later of August 10, 2020 or the twenty-fifth (25) calendar day after the date the estimated tax bills were mailed. The estimated tax bills shall contain a notice specifying the date on which interest may begin to accrue.

This Resolution shall take effect immediately.



CERTIFICATION: I hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a resolution duly adopted by the Governing Body of the Township of Wantage, in the County of Sussex, New Jersey, at a meeting held on April 23, 2020.

Michael Restel, Administrator/Acting Clerk

TOWNSHIP OF WANTAGE

RESOLUTION #40-2020

AUTHORIZING REFUND

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector has recommended the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Wantage reimburse funds for redemption of tax liens.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Committee of the Township of Wantage, County of Sussex, does hereby authorize the refund of

\$6,594.71 to Cory Coulson, Block 150 Lot 16, 1207 Route 23, for redemption of tax sale certificate 2019.22.

\$21,493.56 to Parker Worth, Block 14 Lot 18, 51 Lewisburg Road, for redemption of tax sale certificate 2018-003.



CERTIFICATION: I hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a resolution duly adopted by the Township Committee of the Township of Wantage, in the County of Sussex, New Jersey, at a meeting held on April 23, 2020.

Michael Restel, Acting Clerk/Administrator

DISCUSSION:

Town Hall Hours during COVID-19:

Mayor Morris opened the floor to the Committee Members to discuss the Emergency Plan.

Mr. Bassani raised his concerns pertaining to the current town hall plan and would like to see a new plan moving forward. Mr. Bassani stated at the time the initial plan was implemented it was a good idea, but now that we are month into the plan it should be revisited. Mr. Bassani stated he is fine with the split shifts but doesn't believe reduced hours are warranted. Mr. Bassani stated he would like the Town Hall to resume to normal business hours for the residents and tax payers of Wantage.

Mr. Gaechter stated now that we are a month into it, we need to think forward and return the Townhall hours back to normal. Mr. Gaechter spoke about before coming to the meeting he watched President Trumps news conference pertaining to COVID-19. Mr. Gaechter advised to look into whether or not we are over staffed and if some positions can be part time instead of Full-Time. Mr. Gaechter asked if Wantage should look into Furloughs or lay offs during this time. Mr. Gaechter agreed with Mr. Bassani at the time the current plan was ideal, now Wantage should use forward thinking and adjust current plan.

Mayor Morris stated the current emergency plan that is in place is the best plan moving forward, Mike and I have been on many conference calls with Sussex County Board of Health pertaining to COVID-19. Mayor Morris stated there is no user manual to this pandemic, Mike drafted this plan and I approved it. Mayor Morris stated the plan was emailed out March 22nd to the committee for review. Mayor Morris stated New Jersey Employees are all working from home, Sussex County Employees are on a revised schedule and surrounding municipalities as well. Mayor asked for suggestions for a new plan.

Mr. Restel stated to answer the questions pertaining to layoffs or furloughs, Wantage needs to see what the tax revenue will be like over the next 2 months. Mr. Restel stated May and June will be crucial for the tax collection revenue forecast. Mr. Restel advised the Mayor and Committee as per state statue Wantage cannot extend the 10-day grace period. Mr. Restel stated the I Bank is offering bonding to municipalities that anticipate a budget shortfall, Mr. Restel advised Bonding has always been for Capital Projects, this is a first. Mr. Restel stated we are seeing an uptick in phone calls for zoning and construction, residents are starting to receive their stimulus money.

Mr. Bassani stated Wantage should do a Phase-In with an hour be added each week starting Monday April 27th and would like an update for the May 14th Meeting. Mr. Gaechter stated he agrees with Mr. Bassani.

REPORTS:

Administrator/Clerk: Mr. Restel spoke about the DPW Mechanic Position and New Jersey Civil Service employees are working from home and can't gain access to the State Server to see the results.

Mr. Restel thanked all the workers that are on the front lines battling the COVID-19 pandemic.

Attorney: Mr. Kienz stated he is working on the paperwork to be submitted to Mr. Kevin Kelly pertaining to an issue within Wantage Township.

Mayors Report: Mayor Morris spoke about the Vietnam Moving Wall and its still a go, the drop dead will be July to see if the event will be cancelled.

Mayor Morris stated the Recreation had a meeting Wednesday April 22nd and multiple items were discussed. Mayor Morris stated the Wantage Works Out has been a huge success and to keep up the good work.

Mayor Morris stated Wantage Township Recreation created an Instagram to reach out to the community.

Mayor Morris spoke about the Fishing Contest and the date will be determined at a later time.

Mayor Morris spoke about Wantage Fall Festival and that it is to far out to make a decision on whether to hold it or not.

Mayor Morris spoke about the Berry Road project which was discussed at the Recreation Meeting. Mr. Bassani stated the Open Space Advisory Board is still looking into having an Open Public Discussion to be determined at a later date.

Mayor Morris spoke about the weekly phone calls himself and Mike have been on with Sussex County pertaining to COVID-19.

Mayor Morris stated FEMA has a grant available for counties and municipalities to recoup 75% of expenditures for COVID-19.

Deputy Mayor William Gaechter: Mr. Gaechter spoke about he was disappointed that State and County Parks are closed. Mr. Gaechter stated he frequently visits the High point State Park and Stokes and social distancing was be abided by.

Mr. Gaechter stated he has received messages from residents thanking the Township for keeping Wantage's parks open.

Committeeman Ronald Bassani: Mr. Bassani stated he also has received messages thanking Wantage Township for keeping the parks open.

Mr. Bassani thanked all the workers that are on the front lines battling the COVID-19 pandemic.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

A motion is in order to approve the minutes of the April 9, 2020 Mayor and Committee Regular Meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Bassani and seconded by Mayor Morris.

Upon Roll Call:

Ayes: Bassani, Morris Nays: None Absent: NONE Abstain: Gaechter

OPEN PUBLIC SESSION:

Kathy Gorman Fernwood: Mrs. Gorman stated 43 of 50 States have closed the State Parks down due to OCVID-19.

Mrs. Gorman spoke about a comment that was mentioned to her pertaining to speed bumps on Sherman Ridge Road and the Walking path connecting Berry Road Property to Woodbourne Park, discussion ensued.

Susan Weiss Sherman Ridge Road: Mr. Weiss spoke about an email sent to Mike about windows broke at the Berry Road house, Mayor Morris stated he will have DPW look into the matter.

Karen Merit Alpine road: Mrs. Merit asked the Committee to look into the possibility of making Berry road at the intersection of Sherman Ridge a dead end. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Merit asked if the Township could reach out to the High School for lawn signs to Honor the 2020 Graduating Seniors from high Point, discussion ensued.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Morris requested a motion to adjourn. Mr. Bassani made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Mayor Morris.

Upon Roll:

Ayes: Bassani, Gaechter, Morris Nays: None Absent: None Abstain: None

Meeting Adjourned 8:01PM

Respectfully submitted by

Michael L Restel

Administrator/Acting Clerk