

**COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING**  
**Conference Call – No Physical Meeting Place**

**May 4, 2020**

**7:30 pm**

**ROLL CALL:**

Present: Council Members Albanese, Barr, Hund, Mazzarella, Smith, Toal, O'Connor

Also, Present: Sal Bonaccorso, Mayor; John Laezza, Business Administrator; Mark Dugan, Township Attorney; Edith Merkel, Township Clerk; Pedro Matos, Police Chief

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG: MOMENT OF SILENCE**

Dispensed

This meeting is in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6, Chapter 231, P.L.1975) as adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by mailing the Annual Schedule of meetings and by electronic advanced notice of at least 48 hours pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-9.1, as permitted during a declared emergency, to the Star Ledger, Union County Local Source, and TAP into Clark, by posting such Annual Meeting Schedule on the bulletin board in Town Hall reserved for such announcements, the Official Website of the Township and the proper filing of said Notice.

**RESOLUTIONS:**

1. Authorizing final payment to S. Brothers, Inc. for the 2019 NJDOT Road Improvements in the amount of \$35,509.81

Discussion: none

Mr. Laezza: Basically, the project has been completed and the maintenance money is available.

Council President Toal asked for a mover and second on this Resolution

Mover: Mazzarella Second: Barr

2. Award of Contract to Cifelli & Son General Construction for ADA Curb and Ramp Improvements

Township Clerk: I would like to just say that the amount is not there just yet because it has to be decided whether there will be six ramps constructed or all ten. Then I will put the amount before the May 18<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Council President O'Connor: Thank you for the clarification.

Discussion: none

Mr. Laezza: Basically, we got twenty thousand dollars from the CDBG for this program. According to my understanding because of the Covid-19, we may be getting some additional money. The contractor indicated that they would take the estimate (tape inaudible) for doing this job and then any other money he would keep the price to accommodate it.

Council President Toal asked for a mover and second on this Resolution

Mover: Albanese      Second: Smith

3. Authorizing the Mayor and/or Business Administrator to execute a Shared Services Agreement with the Plainfield Municipal Utilities Authority for an additional one-year term for Bulky Waste Type – 13 and Construction and Demolition Waste – Type 13C

Discussion: none

Mr. Laezza: Each year we had the bulky waste pickup.

Council President Toal asked for a mover and second on this Resolution

Mover: Mazzarella      Second: Barr

4. Re-appointing Josephine Burkhardt and Robert Tarantino as Constables for a three-year term

Discussion: none

Council President Toal asked for a mover and second on this Resolution

Mover: Smith      Second: Hund

### **CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS:**

5. Authorizing the Chief Financial Officer to refund overpayment of 2020 taxes in the amount of \$3,711.96

Discussion: none

6. Authorizing the Chief Financial Officer to apply sewer account balance adjustments as credit in the amount of \$326,715.18

Discussion: none

Mr. Laezza: Council, if you look at the sewer adjustments there are 53 major ones, meter issues with meters that were running fast. Panda Express gave about \$238,000.00, and Hyatt Hills Golf Course \$63,198.00. That was the majority of the \$326,000.00. The others were the usual kind of water issues.

Council President O'Connor asked for a mover and second on this Consent Agenda

Mover: Toal      Second: Albanese

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Council President O'Connor opened the Public Comments portion of the meeting and directed the Clerk to read emails and text messages received from the public for response by Council or Township Professionals as appropriate.

Township Clerk: No emails or text messages were received from the public.

Hearing no public participation Councilwoman Albanese made a motion to close the Public Comments portion of the meeting, seconded by Councilman Toal

Council President O'Connor directed roll call:

Aye: Albanese, Barr, Hund, Mazzearella, Smith, Toal, O'Connor

### **MAYOR, COUNCIL AND PROFESSIONAL COMMENTS:**

Council President O'Connor: Mayor, any comments?

Mayor Bonaccorso: Yes, Mr. President thank you very much. Just for the record our Covid-19 results of the town are moving downward in a very, very nice manner I'm very happy to see. I didn't have any fresh numbers today since last Friday. Nancy has been overwhelmed and she's starting to get her head above water, so I'll probably have a number to report tomorrow to everyone. But the number has been moving down and last week at one time I think we're down to about 7 active cases. The nursing home is our biggest problem in town, as we all know historically throughout New Jersey and probably other States, nursing homes are always an area of infestation for virus, and infections, and it's always a battle for those poor people that are put into nursing homes well before this virus has hit. So, I look at that one way, and I look at our town in general in another way, and we are doing very, very well.

So, I would also like to inform the Council that I have to say that Nancy Raymond has done a job that is just next to unbelievable. She has worked seven days a week in most cases, in most weeks, and she's just doing a tremendous job for the community. Remember she's single handed and she doesn't even have a full-time secretary, so you know it's a lot of hours. She's even getting back out on inspections right now and I'm pleased to have worked with her. She really has been doing a great job.

Today we saw our Fire Department and Police Department in action as you know on a house fire on Jupiter. A fifty-five-year resident lost his home and his dog which was a shame. The resident is okay and seems to be doing well. He has been taken in by a family and I've known him for many, many years. I also would like to thank Cranford, Rahway, Linden and Union Fire Departments for being there, also, the Union County Fire Company and some of their different units. It was a bad fire, a very, very bad fire, to say the least.

We went through our spring lawn leaf cleanup. We are now going into the grass cleanup and branch pick up. Branches are put out the third week of the month, and are picked up the fourth week of the month. Bulky cleanup has been very, very heavy because everyone is home cleaning out their houses.

My Golf Outing is cancelled for this year. We just couldn't find a way to try to A; figure out if we could have one, and B; with the times the way they are, to ask people to donate and spend money to come and play golf is just a little bit overboard I think at this time, so I cancelled it.

Right now, I'm still planning for the July 4<sup>th</sup> Fireworks but we will see what happens as we go. The Memorial Day Parade has been cancelled due to the virus. I'm sure you all know, but again I'm saying this for the record, that school has now been cancelled for the rest of the year. The Board of Education is in session tonight and I'd like to see their ideas about graduation and trying to do something for the kids, you know it's day to day.

Our Governor is out there every day. I'm sure he is doing his best. It's a tough time everybody and I don't want knock anybody in this time but his Executive Orders are always full of loopholes and we don't know which way they are going. Last Friday, I was going to open up the playgrounds and the basketball courts.... when he (Governor Murphy) opened the parks, he kept the playgrounds closed. I got called by Chief Matos on Saturday morning that somebody called into Crime Stoppers to say I was violating the Governor's order. The Chief was called by the Prosecutor's Office telling me to cease and assist on doing that, which I did. There was another article in this week's paper about Congressman Malinowski's paper asking for all the Mayors and Freeholders to sign, to put a Bill up to, I think, ask for two hundred and eighty million or billion dollars, I can't remember, to help local towns. I chose not to sign that letter due to the fact I believe it's completely political at this time. It's a political piece. My reasons are very simple, I never, for the record, refuse money, we never refused money. I refuse to sign a letter asking for money. Now, my feelings are very simple on this, we are in the end of the first quarter of our year. How do I, or John know at this time if we are having revenue shortfalls, and it's going to last throughout the year? I think this would have been more appropriate to ask us in the third quarter to find out how our revenue is, and what kind of shortfalls we may be having, and try to project our fourth quarter out, you know, running two years back, on a two-year average what it would be. And at that time if we were running for major revenue shortfalls, I would be more than glad to tell the Congressman, and also have him understand how much of the pie we would be looking for. But at the end of the first quarter guys, I've been in politics twenty-five years, this is nothing more than a political scheme to say, "look what I'm doing for you". That's my feelings about that and that's my report.

Councilwoman Albanese: I just want to thank all the employees for their hard work. As the Mayor pointed out, Nancy Raymond has gone above and beyond her normal duties because of what's required with what we are dealing with. I did want to ask the mayor about the camps, is that a decision that being deferred at this point?

Mayor Bonaccorso: Right now, Councilwoman, camp and the swim pool is up in the air. We don't know if the Governor is going to allow it #1, #2 Ralph is sick over it, just let me tell you, Ralph is literally sick and he is just so upset by this, and so am I, and I'm sure you all are too. These are two great things we have in the community. How do you social distance first, second, third, fourth, fifth grade kids? None the less sixth, seventh and eighth graders too. Ralph did send out an email to the camp parents asking them if they would be interested in sending their child if it was opened. We had about, and I don't want to use the number because I did forget the number, we had some that said, "no, no matter what, we love the camp but we wouldn't send them this year." And then we had a few hundred more saying, "yes". But you know "yes" isn't the answer Angel. I don't know, Ralph is going to have to figure out how you can keep these kids separate. It's going to be very hard. Same thing up at the pool, the restrictions coming out for the pool are ridiculous at this point. You would have to take temperatures of everybody coming in the pool, social distancing, people would be fighting over the shaded area because you know you might get twenty people in the shaded area where now you can get about eighty. You would have to almost draw out with paint on the grass areas six-foot boxes so people could stay within their box. I don't know guys, it's going to be very, very difficult. The problem is that there might be no guest, there might not be this, or you can't do that, and you can't bring this, you have to bring your own chairs. It might get to the point where it's not worth it for the aggravation it's going to be. I don't mean aggravation for us, but for the pool members. It's not going to be a normal summer.

Councilwoman Albanese: This is a separate item regarding the State. They changed their year-end to September 30<sup>th</sup> right now because they don't know what their revenue is etc., etc. Just concerned

about whether the State will be able to get the State Aid they need to send to us, our one million seven hundred and fifty-eight thousand. We're probably not going to know that until maybe September.

John Laezza: If we get any money, it won't be until October.

Mayor Bonaccorso: Well, it depends when the Governor wants to open the State. (John Laezza: right.) You know my understanding is the man is cautious and I understand. When you are in decision of.... in charge of people, you don't want to make a decision and hear the numbers spike and you know another five hundred just died, I get all that. But you also are dealing with a Governor who couldn't handle snow two winters ago, we didn't have any this year, that he was calling state of emergencies before snow even hit, closing schools, and the next day there wouldn't be any snow. Grossly salting and brining highways with no ice or snow on them. Because he got a beaten that November from everybody, and I don't think he can handle negative publicity. I think in opening the State he is going to be so, so cautious for his own reason at this point. I think it's going to get beyond him worrying about people, or worrying about the beaten he may or may not get if doesn't work right. Then we might see a real dark New Jersey. He might run this State right into bankruptcy. And you know they're looking to the White House to bail them out for their pension payments too. And I'm glad the President is standing strong with States that were a wreck before this happened, don't think we're coming in to bail them out, it's not our problem and he's right.

Councilwoman Albanese: Okay, the only last point I want to make tonight is I thank the employees. Just so the citizens know even though the doors are closed people are working, doing their jobs. Same thing for the library, although the doors are closed there are resources available online at the library, try to take advantage of it. Thank you.

Councilman Barr: Thank you Mr. President. Basically, I just want to say that as things supposedly easing with the virus. I have been speaking to a lot of the seniors and I try to keep telling them to remember that seniors are a much more susceptible to the virus, so be careful.

Councilman Hund: Thank you Mr. President. I just would want to say everyone in town to stay safe and healthy as possible. Thank you

Councilman Mazzarella: Thank you Council President. I just want to reach out to Mayor Sal to thank him for all your reports every day. I know I have mentioned it on Facebook but you know what, it makes a world of difference to people not knowing what's going on that we get a local report from you every day. Thank you for your reports, it is really nice of you to do that.

Mayor Bonaccorso: Frank thank you, but I also want to thank Nancy and Jennifer who put that report together every day also for the record.

Councilman Mazzarella: Absolutely, they are fantastic what they've been doing for our town and for our residents. With that everybody, stay safe, be well, and stay at home as much as you can, thank you.

Councilman Smith: Thank you Council President. I just want to thank the mayor and the rest of council for their condolences for my wife Susan's mother who passed away from, we believe, Covid-19, but she also had pneumonia on top of that. It is a sobering statistic from the nursing home she was in, on her floor 16 of 30 residents have passed away from Covid-19. So that is a little over 50%, so it is affecting the elderly much more than the younger generations. So, to the elderly please stay safe and keep social distancing. Thank you.

Councilman Toal: Thank you Council President. I received a phone call from my neighbor saying there's a house fire on Jupiter Street. I just want to bring up what Councilman Barr says at every meeting about thanking the firemen. I want to thank the firemen for what they did that day. The resident is okay, his family is okay, but the dog was lost and we are sorry for that. We have a great fire department and a great police department. Thank you.

John Laezza: Basically, I want to say one thing I forgot during the meeting. This is Public Works Week, and if any public works department should get an accolade, it's ours. They've been right out there during this Covid-19, and they continue to do their job. So, I think we should basically, maybe Elizabeth you can put something in (Tap into Clark), to accommodate our public works department and recognize their strong efforts for the citizens of Clark. Thank you.

Police Chief Matos: I have no comments.

Attorney Dugan: No comment.

Township Clerk: No comments. Everybody, just stay safe.

Council President O'Connor: My final comments are that I've seen the police around town doing their job. I've passed by the tennis courts, as you all do, and I guess some people have thought it was okay to play tennis, and the police pull up they were very polite and very non-confrontational and advised them it was closed and the people left. They are doing a great job around town. Other than that, just stay safe. May is Motorcycle Safety Month, so I want to make sure everybody is aware, you know, "Look Twice Save a Life". I'm sure you've seen a lot more motorcycles on the road now more than ever, because less car traffic is always going to equal more motorcycle traffic because it is difficult to ride around this area with all the cars. So, it is an opportunity to get out on a bike, so just please be careful.

Council President asked for a motion to adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Councilwoman Albanese, seconded by Councilman Toal

ROLL CALL: All Ayes

Aye: Albanese, Barr, Hund, Mazzearella, Smith, Toal, O'Connor

ADJOURNMENT

