

The virtual Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Freehold was held on Monday, May 18, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. through online video conference.

Mayor Kane stated that the notice of the time, date and location of the meeting had been provided pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 231 of the Laws of 1975 (Open Public Meetings Act).

Captain Steppat opened the meeting with the Salute to the Flag, followed by a moment of silence for those that have been lost to the COVID-19 virus and in memory of Freehold Borough Detective Schwerthoffer's father and Assemblyman Eric Houghtaling's mother.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT	MAYOR KEVIN KANE
PRESENT	COUNCILMAN MICHAEL DIBENEDETTO
PRESENT	COUNCILWOMAN ANNETTE JORDAN
PRESENT	COUNCILMAN ADAM REICH
PRESENT	COUNCILWOMAN MARGARET ROGERS
PRESENT	COUNCILMAN GEORGE SCHNURR
PRESENT	COUNCILWOMAN SHARON SHUTZER

Mayor Kane read Item No. 4 on the Agenda as follows:

“Resolution Authorizing Executive Session to Discuss Litigation.”

Councilman DiBenedetto offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilwoman Shutzer:

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS LITIGATION.

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Jordan, Reich, Rogers, Schnurr and Shutzer voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; absent none. Mayor Kane declared the motion adopted.

Mayor and Council entered into Executive Session.

Mayor and Council returned from Executive Session at 7:11 PM.

Mayor Kane read Item No. 5 on the Agenda as follows:

“Approval of Minutes: Council Meeting May 4, 2020.”

Councilman Reich offered a motion to accept the minutes and was seconded by Councilman DiBenedetto.

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Jordan, Reich, Rogers, Schnurr and Shutzer voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; absent none. Mayor Kane declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Kane read Item No. 6 on the Agenda as follows:

“Proclamation of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Freehold Declaring the Week of May 16 – 22, 2020 as National Safe Boating Week.”

Mayor Kane read Item No. 7 on the Agenda as follows:

“Resolution of the Borough of Freehold, County of Monmouth, State of New Jersey, Amending Temporary Appropriations for 2020.”

Councilman Schnurr offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilwoman Jordan:

RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH OF FREEHOLD, COUNTY OF MONMOUTH, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AMENDING TEMPORARY APPROPRIATIONS FOR 2020.

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Jordan, Reich, Rogers, Schnurr and Shutzer voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; absent none. Mayor Kane declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Kane read Item No. 8 on the Agenda as follows:

“Resolution Establishing and Adopting a Domestic Violence Policy.”

Councilwoman Rogers offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilwoman Shutzer:

RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING AND ADOPTING A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE POLICY.

Councilwoman Rogers stated this is a required policy.

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Jordan, Reich, Rogers, Schnurr and Shutzer voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; absent none. Mayor Kane declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Kane read Item No. 9 on the Agenda as follows:

“Resolution Confirming Personnel Appointments/Actions:

- a. **Forty-five day extension of medical leave of absence for Andrew St. Germaine through June 21, 2020.”**

Councilwoman Shutzer offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilman Reich:

RESOLUTION APPROVING PERSONNEL APPOINTMENT/ACTIONS: 9A.

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Jordan, Reich, Rogers, Schnurr and Shutzer voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; absent none. Mayor Kane declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Kane read Item No. 10 on the Agenda as follows:

“Resolution Approving the Following Application:

- a. Raffle License No. 18-20, BPOE 1454 Freehold Elks Lodge, Year round pull tab, beginning 7/1/20 to 6/30/21, 73 East Main Street.”**

Councilwoman Jordan offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilman DiBenedetto:

RESOLUTION APPROVING APPLICATIONS: 10A.

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Jordan, Reich, Rogers, Schnurr and Shutzer voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; absent none. Mayor Kane declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Kane read Item No. 11 on the Agenda as follows:

“Approval of Bills.”

Councilman Schnurr offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilwoman Jordan:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Freehold that the bills on the attached list in the amount of \$1,365,619.64 be paid as presented.

Councilman Schnurr noted the top four bills:

1. \$504,000.00 – Seacoast Construction (Paving Bannard St.)
2. \$365,000.00 – Monmouth County Improvement Authority
3. \$288,000.00 – Payroll
4. \$ 66,000.00 – Quality Electric – Little League Lights

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Jordan, Reich, Rogers, Schnurr and Shutzer voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; absent none. Mayor Kane declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Kane read Item No. 12 on the Agenda as follows:

“Clerk – Late Communications.”

“Late Communication:

- a. Resolution Authorizing an Agreement with the County of Monmouth for Reimbursement to Assist Municipalities During the COVID-19 Outbreak Utilizing the Coronavirus Relief Fund Program.”**

Borough Administrator, Steve Gallo explained the grant Monmouth County received from the Federal Government and how it will be distributed throughout the county. Mr. Gallo stated an agreement has to first be executed to then receive the application.

Councilwoman Shutzer offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilwoman Jordan:

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN AGREEMENT WITH THE COUNTY OF MONMOUTH FOR REIMBURSEMENT TO ASSIST MUNICIPALITIES DURING THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK UTILIZING THE CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND PROGRAM.

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Jordan, Reich, Rogers, Schnurr and Shutzer voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; absent none. Mayor Kane declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Kane read Item No. 13 on the Agenda as follows:

“Item for Discussion:

- a. Government Energy Aggregation”**

Borough Administrator, Steve Gallo explained a law was past several years ago which allows municipalities to bundle all of the residential energy consumption within the community to try to get a better price from the market, cheaper than what is available from the current utility. He detailed how this works and explained how the town can work together with other towns to try to get a better price. Mr. Gallo stated residents have to participate unless they opt out of the program. He stated it is an opportunity to achieve significant savings for the residents and allows the town to support sustainable energy generators and receive Sustainable Jersey Points. Mr. Gallo stated Council needs to decide if they want to move forward and put a Resolution before the Council to join the consortium.

Councilwoman Jordan questioned how many residents currently have a third party provider. She questioned how the better pricing is actually achieved with a smaller number of customers compared to the number of customers JCP&L would have.

Mr. Gallo stated if consultants were not able to get a better price, they would not be doing it. He has done this in two other towns and has achieved excess of 10% savings. He stated there would be no commitment if the price was not advantageous.

Councilwoman Jordan asked about getting out of the contract if the price jumps from year to year.

Mr. Gallo stated bids are done at the end of the contract. If the bid price is not advantageous it defaults back to JCP&L. He stated residents can opt out or in at any time during the contract year. He stated there is six months' worth of work to be done to get it going. Mr. Gallo stated if the decision is to proceed, the consultants will schedule a Town Hall Meeting, mailings and reach out to the community.

Councilwoman Shutzer stated in the interest of transparency, she does want to see this move forward without more input from the residents first.

Mr. Gallo stated this is something some people are not happy with when it happens.

Councilman DiBenedetto stated there is currently a great relationship with JCP&L and questioned what kind of service there will be if the provider changes every year.

Mr. Gallo stated the service will be exactly the same. He explained JCP&L delivers and bills the electricity as well as responds to services calls. He added there is no change in service.

Councilman Schnurr confirmed approving this resolution allows council to explore this further.

Mr. Gallo confirmed it is in the preliminary stage and nothing happens until Council votes on it.

Councilwoman Jordan stated she is not 100% on board but will explore anything that will provide a savings for the residents. She stated she also wants to ensure the level of service remains the same.

Councilwoman Rogers stated she is willing to explore it, but is concerned about people being able to opt out if they desire to.

Mr. Gallo listed some of the neighboring towns that are discussing this. He stated there is a website the consultant provides which outlines the actual savings for residents. Mr. Gallo confirmed the program is on an opt out basis by law.

Mayor Kane stated this creates an option to see if money savings can be provided to our residents. He feels it should be explored.

Councilman Reich agreed it is worth exploring and suggested any educational components get started as soon as possible so residents have time to understand and get their questions answered.

Mayor Kane confirmed all in favor to have Mr. Gallo get more information except for Councilwoman Shutzer.

Mayor Kane read item No. 14 on the Agenda as follows:

“Public Comments.”

Marie Chapman, 67 Brinckerhoff Avenue, thanked the police for the speed monitor on Brinckerhoff and asked if it could be turned in the other direction.

Captain Steppat responded the monitor records speeds from each direction.

Ms. Chapman asked what happens if a lot of residents don't complete the Census.

Borough Administrator, Steve Gallo stated the Census date has been pushed back and Census workers will go out to follow up with people that don't complete the Census to get the data.

Christine Velasco, 3 Phyllis Road, asked if the \$65,000 used for the Little League Lights was from the Participatory Budget.

Councilman Schnurr responded yes.

Ms. Velasco asked if the temporary appropriations that were approved were for items that were forgotten about when the budget was done.

Mr. Gallo explained the budget has been approved but not adopted. He stated this is a measure used to allow for government to function while the budget is being finalized.

Councilwoman Shutzer made a motion to close Public Comments, seconded by Councilman Schnurr.

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Jordan, Reich, Rogers, Schnurr and Shutzer voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; absent none. Mayor Kane declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Kane read Item No. 15 on the Agenda as follows:

“Council Comments.”

Councilman DiBenedetto wished everyone well and offered condolences for the families who had recent losses. He thanked everyone for their understanding and patience as Council continues to be creative while addressing daily changes regarding COVID-19.

Councilman Schnurr stated municipal government has many rules that must be followed and there is no play book for handling something like this. He announced the changes for the Memorial Day Parade and how veterans will be honored.

Councilwoman Rogers thanked everyone and stated she hopes all are well. She thanked the community who has provided meals five days a week in various locations.

Councilman Reich thanked everyone for waiting through the Executive Session. He thanked all of the First Responders for participating in the Birthday Parades and stated Freehold is a great community. He hoped everyone stays well.

Councilwoman Jordan stated meals are actively given out, three days a week meals are prepared by one of the downtown restaurants and delivered to seniors. She stated money is raised to pay for these meals. Councilwoman Jordan announced the Library is moving forward with their grant application. She stated ideas can be submitted to the Participatory Budget Committee for consideration.

Councilwoman Shutzer offered condolences to the Schwerthoffer family and the Houghtaling family for their losses. She thanked all that participate in the meal distributions and stated she is so impressed with their efforts. Councilwoman Shutzer stated the seniors who receive the meals are overwhelmed and immensely grateful.

Mayor Kane asked Borough Attorney, Kerry Higgins and Borough Administrator, Steve Gallo if they had any comments.

Ms. Higgins wished Councilwoman Shutzer a happy birthday.

Mayor Kane reported a thank you note was received from a senior in gratitude for the meals she receives and thanked Councilwoman Shutzer for all of her hard work. Mayor Kane announced the Memorial Day ceremony must adhere to the Governor's Executive Order and not have gatherings of more than 10 people. He encouraged everyone to watch the live stream from home. Mayor Kane reported May 15th was the first time in 50 days that Freehold Borough did not have a new COVID case but we are far from out of the woods and encouraged everyone to follow social distancing rules. He said things will start to open in slow steps. Mayor Kane stated the community has to work creatively to get companies and restaurants open and sustain their business. He stated everyone needs to work together. He thanked Jeff Friedman for all of coordination and hard work of the Food Safety Net. Mayor Kane stated Main Street can't be closed to allow restaurants more seating because they are State and County roads.

Councilwoman Shutzer offered a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilwoman Jordan.

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Jordan, Kane, Rogers, Schnurr and Shutzer voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; absent none. Mayor Kane declared the motion adopted.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



TRACI L. DIBENEDETTO, RMC
BOROUGH CLERK