

The Shamong Township Committee held a **Committee Meeting** on the above date at the Municipal Building.

Mayor Di Croce called the meeting to order at approximately 7:30 PM advising this meeting was originally scheduled for August 4th, but was rescheduled due to the recent storm.

The Clerk, Susan Onorato, stated the Sunshine Statement advising that proper notice of this meeting has been given in compliance with the Open Public Meeting Act.

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call (absentees noted)	Mr. Michael Cooney	A
	Mr. Michael Di Croce	P
	Mr. Timothy Gimbel	A
	Mr. Sean Gray	P
	Mr. Martin Mozitis	P

Also, in attendance: D. Heinold, Solicitor and J. Gray, Engineer

PUBLIC COMMENT – Agenda Items Only

Mayor Di Croce opened the meeting to the public for questions/comments, at which time there were none, so he closed this portion of the meeting to the public.

The Mayor commented this was the first meeting back live, advising Councilman Gray was present via phone and conveyed his thanks to the public for coming out to the meeting. The Mayor stated Shamong’s current positive COVID-19 case count stands at 61 (sixty-one) cases. The Mayor commented on the recent storms resulting in power outages, property damage and downed trees – but no one was hurt. The Mayor publicly thanked the Shamong Emergency Medical Services (EMS), the Fire Company and the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) volunteers, as well as all the neighbors helping neighbors.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE OFFICIAL ACTION:

On motion of Committeeman Mozitis, seconded by Committeeman Gray, approval of the July 14, 2020 Regular Session minutes were approved as submitted. A roll call vote showed all members present voting yes except Mayor Di Croce who abstained.

On motion of Committeeman Mozitis, seconded by Committeeman Gray, it was moved to approve to waive the Zoning Permit fees of \$85.00 for the Indian Mills Historical Society sign permit. A roll call vote showed all members present voting yes.

On motion of Committeeman Mozitis, seconded by Committeeman Gray, it was moved to approve the appointment of John Lyons to Fire Police for the balance of a 5-year term expiring April 1, 2024. A roll call vote showed all members present voting yes.

COVID-19 update – Mayor Di Croce stated in addition to his previous remarks, he advised to continue to wash your hands, wear your masks and practice social distancing. The Clerk advised that a grant was being worked on along with Mr. Lyons, OEM Coordinator, to try and receive reimbursement funding for modifications made at the Township and Personal Protection Equipment purchased due to COVID-19.

The Mayor expressed his thanks to the Clerk and Township employees for their efforts made in getting the Township office building back open to the public.

The 2020/2021 Tax rate has been finalized at 2.806/\$1,000 assessed value. The Clerk reported recently circulating the first ever estimated tax billing in Shamong with the estimated tax rate of 2.82%/\$1,000. The Clerk advised that estimated tax bills had to be done, as finalized numbers from the State had not yet been received – if the Township had waited, essentially two tax quarters would be due almost back to back. The Clerk stated that on the average assessed house, an approximate \$40.00 refund will now be made during the course of the year. The Clerk advised the next tax bill will be going out around the end of September. The Clerk summarized how tax billings are collected and required the Township to make payments to the School districts and Burlington County regardless of percentage of taxes collected. The Mayor commented that the Township is mindful of the situation and will strive to keep current Township services in operation.

The Clerk advised the CFO will be participating in a live virtual webinar, not a seminar. **On motion of Committeeman Gray, seconded by Committeeman Mozitis, it was moved to approve the Chief Financial Officer to attend a webinar on 9/23-9/25/2020 at a cost estimated at \$350. A roll call vote showed all members present voting yes.**

Update on 539 Oak Shade Road (Dr. Lazo's inquiry on 7/14/2020) – the Solicitor reported on communicating with the County Prosecutor's office and advised that the COVID-19 situation has seriously impacted the timeline on cases. Those cases where somebody is incarcerated ending a trial are prioritized over everything else. These criminal cases (Roberts/Corbett) do not involve somebody who is incarcerated. The Solicitor advised on the Corbett case, the 2nd case, that it is still in the pre-inditement stage. In the Roberts case, the 1st case, the Solicitor reported she has been indicted and that her attorney has been relieved of counsel. The Solicitor stated that Ms. Roberts made a request for a public defender, but she does not qualify and is currently without counsel. The Solicitor also advised that when residents call the Township to report about on-going issues, they are advised to call the State Police.

CFO Bond Anticipation Note – Series 2020 report – the Clerk advised that the Township went out to bid on the Bond Anticipation Note and three bids were received: Municipal Excess Liability Joint Insurance Fund (MEL JIF) at .95% was the winning bid. Also received was a bid from Investors Bank at 1.05% and a bid from Oppenheimer at 1.25%. The Solicitor commented this is a win-win because the MEL JIF is something all municipalities joined together to create as an insurance fund and those funds can do short-term financing to help municipalities.

RESOLUTIONS:

The Solicitor reported Big Horn is the entity pursuing the solar farm on Murphy's Pit and the adjacent landfill site. The Township has tax liens on the landfill site they are in the process of pursuing. As part of their due diligence, Big Horn is proceeding with analyzing the site and the Hold Harmless allows them on the site without liability to the Township. **On motion of Committeeman Mozitis, seconded by Committeeman Gray, it was moved to approve Resolution 2020R-76 Authorizing Execution of Hold Harmless Agreement in Favor of Township with Big Horn Landfill Solar Farm, LLC. A roll call vote showed all members present voting yes.**

The Clerk reported this is an innovative approach for Education Station to be able to serve as many kids as possible during COVID-19 while providing for social distancing. Education Station has worked with our Zoning and Construction official regarding adequate location and safe hookups, etc. The Solicitor advised the time limit for the temporary classroom is 60 (sixty) days after the end of the declaration of emergency for COVID-19. **On motion of Committeeman Mozitis, seconded by Committeeman Gray, it was moved to approve Resolution 2020R-77 Authorizing Temporary Modular Classroom at Education Station Day Care Center (107 Indian Mills Road). A roll call vote showed all members present voting yes.**

The Solicitor reported there are individuals who have connections to the municipality that file tax appeals creating a conflict with the Solicitors office, as well as Jay Renwick the Tax Assessor. There is a Deputy Assessor in place for these situations - Mr. Joe Rahman, who is the Tax Assessor in Medford Township. Mr. Tyler Prime, the Attorney in Medford Township, is recommended to step in as special counsel. The Mayor inquired if any of the Shamong Committee votes would be in conflict. The Solicitor advised he felt the Committee is legally doing what is needed to create separate counsel and stated the tax assess hearings are at the end of the month. The Clerk commented this would have been handled last week if not for the storm and that other Committee members would have been present at the meeting to vote. **On motion of Committeeman Mozitis, seconded by Committeeman Gray, it was moved to approve Resolution 2020R-78 Appointing Special Counsel for Tax Appeal Defense. A roll call vote showed all members present voting yes.**

The Clerk reported needing additional coverage for Mr. Ed Toussaint, Shamong Code Official, Keith Raveling has been recommended for appointment by Mr. Toussaint to ensure interim coverage from August 1, 2020 through July 31, 2021. **On motion of Committeeman Mozitis, seconded by Committeeman Gray, it was moved to approve Resolution 2020R-79 Appointing Interim Electrical, Plumbing, Building and Fire Inspector. A roll call vote showed all members present voting yes.**

The Clerk reported the tax lien holder, US Bank Cust Pro Cap 8, paid an additional \$20,000 at the time of tax lien sale on Block 15.02, Lot 7. **On motion of Committeeman Mozitis, seconded by Committeeman Gray, it was moved to approve Resolution 2020R-80 Authorizing refund of premium paid on tax sale lien. A roll call vote showed all members present voting yes.**

ORDINANCES:

The Solicitor reported the prior limitation was 600 square feet which resulted in many variant requests for accessory structures before the Joint Land Use Board (JLUB). Originally as written there was a floating scale, but it was decided to make it all one set square footage regardless of the type of accessory structure. It now reads as 865 square feet regardless if the structure is a pole barn, a three-car garage or whatever it may be. The Solicitor commented on a question raised by the public as a concern that pertained to a restriction that tied the size of the use to no more than 20% of the principal structure. After review, it was decided to remove that restriction.

The Mayor asked if there were any questions from the public at which time *Neil Wilkinson* inquired if the new square footage was independent of the Zonings. The Solicitor advised it is intended to deal primarily with the residential areas. Mr. Wilkinson commented that it appears there are a lot of pole barns going up on agricultural property that he did not see referenced in JLUB meeting minutes. The Solicitor advised this very possible with agricultural as there is a right to farm statute.

On motion of Committeeman Mozitis, seconded by Committeeman Gray, it was moved to approve Ordinance 2020-7 Amending Chapter 110 of the Township Code Governing various zones and “Schedule of Limitations” to set new square footage maximum of accessory structure and remove limitation of square footage of accessory structure in relation to square footage of principal residence. A roll call vote showed all members present voting yes.

BILL LIST:

The Mayor requested any questions or comments on the bill list; as there were none, **on motion of Committeeman Mozitis, seconded by Committeeman Gray, it was moved to approve the attached Bill List. A roll call vote showed all members present voting yes.**

REPORTS:

The Engineer Reported:

- Grassy Lake Road Phase 1 - currently under construction; American Asphalt on-site tomorrow; anticipate top paving next week.
- Grassy Lake Road Phase 2 – Township has received a grant for \$248,000; will continue work from the end of Phase 1 across Stokes Road south to the curve in the road; has been surveyed, signed and submitted to the DOT; Guzzi Engineering has received comments from the DOT which are being addressed for resubmission of plans and final approval.
- 2021 NJ DOT Grant – completed for the remainder of Grassy Lake Road and submitted on June 30th, 2020.

The Mayor expressed his appreciation to Mr. Gray and Guzzi Engineering for what is being accomplished with this project.

The Solicitor Reported:

- Advised he is still waiting on the title report for the six acres set off Springer's Brook Road. Once received, he can finalize the deed and file with the County Clerk.

The Administrator Reported:

- Township Fee Payment received on 7/22/2020 from TPM Enterprises (La Comp) for renewal of 2020-2021 ABC license.
- State Fire Safety inspections completed/approved and proper permits and Certificates of Inspection received for both Municipal/PWD buildings.
- Valenzano Winery annual Wine Fest has been rescheduled for September 19-20, 2020 although a much smaller format to meet the current state requirements of 500 guest for outside events.
- Mayor DiCroce will be meeting with Waterford Township Deputy Mayor Andy Wade and Tabernacle Township Mayor Kimberly Brown regarding future plans of Atco Raceway.
- Two residents reached out expressing their favor in continuing the Township Meetings in the Zoom format.
- Township Department reports and Municipal Court reports reviewed.

Rick Ferrara, President of IMAA (Indian Mills Athletic Association) reported on the challenges faced from the COVID restrictions and guidelines. He advised a recent tournament went well and gave the IMAA a better idea on planning these events and fall sports going forward. Mr. Ferrara commented that both the Stony Creek and Dingtletown fields look good and that the teams and practices are abiding by the rules.

The Clerk thanked Mr. Ferrara for all his help with agreements and staying within the State mandates. Mr. Ferrara expressed his thanks to Kevin Waropay as well. Mayor Di Croce also expressed his thanks to Mr. Ferrara.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mayor Di Croce opened the meeting to the public for questions/comments, at which time the following responded:

Neil Wilkinson (567 Oak Shade Road) – commented that his Farm Assessment form was postmarked July 29th and the due date was August 1st. The Clerk advised it came to light on July 29th that a mailing error had occurred and some forms were placed in the wrong envelope – the tax office was reaching out to the owners. Mr. Wilkinson also inquired about the limits of the dog ordinance and has anyone gone over the limit. The Solicitor advised there were two existing properties the Township was aware of when the ordinance was passed. Mr. and Mrs. Wilkinson commented on a possible dog business, unrelated to the other two cases, that just moved in on Oak Shade Road and just wanted to be sure they registered.

As there were no more comments, the Mayor then closed this portion of the meeting to the public.

There being no further business, **on motion of Committeeman Gray, seconded by Committeeman Mozitis and a roll call vote showing all members present voting yes, the meeting was adjourned.**

Attest:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan D. Onorato".

Susan D. Onorato
Municipal Clerk