

**NOVEMBER 18, 2020
WORK MEETING**

The Business Meeting of the Hope Township Committee convened at 4:00 P.M. at the Hope Township Municipal Building with the following members present: Mayor Timothy McDonough, Committeeman Christopher John Kruk (Via Zoom – left at 4:38 PM for a fire call) and Deputy Mayor Terry Urfer (Via Zoom). Also present were DPW Foreman Donald Whitmore; Municipal Clerk, Robin Keggan, RMC; Deputy Clerk, Zondra Belstra; Ted Rodman and Township Engineer (Zoom).

FLAG SALUTE AND SUNSHINE STATEMENT

Under the provisions of the “Open Public Meetings Act”, adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by publishing notice in the New Jersey Herald and the Star Gazette and by posting notices in the Hope Post Office and on the Township Web and Bulletin Boards.

ELECTRONIC MEETING STATEMENT

In addition, as a result of the State of Emergency issued by Governor Murphy, the Township has provided the pertinent information for residents to participate in, or listen to, this meeting via Zoom. The public will be muted for the meeting but will be able to participate via a dialogue (chat) box during the public session portion of the meeting.

Roll call: Mr. Urfer- present

Mr. Kruk – present

Mayor McDonough- present

Reports:

Mayor Tim McDonough: See updates below on Traffic Study and Altice.

Committeeman Christopher John Kruk: Nothing new to report.

Deputy Mayor Urfer: Updated the public on the Community Center Grant that was applied for. Hope Township received \$150,000 to renovate the Community Center (Hope Township will need to come up with 25% of the grant monies). Nine different projects applied for the grant and 2 (Hope Township being one of them) projects received 100% funding. Windows, floors fire doors, etc. are some of the projects that will be undertaken with this money.

Mr. Urfer thanked Monica Sobon for her hard work on the calendar.

Mr. Urfer also made mention of Rick Gardner retiring (Freeholder) and the fact that the Township should recognize him in some way.

Tax Collector’s Report: October 2020 - \$555,214.89; YTD \$5,452,424.60

Health Department: No report filed with Clerk.

Animal Control Officer: Report on file with Clerk

Hope Volunteer Fire Department Report: No report filed with Clerk.

Township Engineer Report: Mr. Rodman updated the Committee on the Town Center project. Tilcon has ordered the grates/EcoGuards, however, they are on backorder. The striping in the center of town has been completed with the exception of the handicapped parking space by the post office. Mr. Rodman will facilitate a meeting with Tilcon, Mr. Urfer, Mr. Whitmore and himself to discuss the payment due to Tilcon for Heller Hill Road (inferior paving quality). He will get back to the appropriate personnel with the meeting information.

Payment of Bills: Receipts – October \$8,564.94. Bills for the month of November totaled \$811,150.57. On a motion made by Mr. Kruk; seconded by Mr. Urfer and a Roll call vote: Mr. Kruk – yes; Mr. Urfer – yes; Mayor McDonough – yes, payment of bills was approved subject to Mr. Kruk and Mr. Urfer looking over and signing the vouchers.

Old Business:

Traffic Update: Mayor McDonough reported that the DOT is still finalizing their traffic study report. We are requesting that White Township, Knowlton Township, Blairstown and Warren County pass a Resolution similar to the one we adopted for weight limits on 519 and agreeing with what the DOT is trying to accomplish.

Internet: Continuing to work with Altice. The Mayors of Hope, Knowlton, Blairstown, Hardwick and Frelinghuysen had a conference call via Zoom regarding the Altice contract that they are still putting together and negotiating. There are a few concessions that were noted that they would like to make uniform for all of the municipalities (i.e., senior discounts) since it seems that some municipalities are receiving different things in their agreements versus neighboring municipalities. Possibility of all of these municipalities joining together for one franchise agreement. Altice does have a list of all the streets currently in need of internet services.

Events: The Christmas Tree Lighting is still moving forward at this time. The firehouse will not be open to the public nor will Santa be able to visit with the children. Instead, he will ride by on the firetruck. The Lantern Tour is still being planned to take place the second weekend in December. Luminaries will definitely be lit along the street in town center and someone will hand out pamphlets for self-guided tours of the buildings (outside only) at the very least. Will be fine-tuned in the coming weeks. To-date 25 people are signed up for tours. Ann Rhinesmith is in charge of reservations for the tours.

P.I.E. Grant: Tabled.

525 Blairstown Road: A detailed memo was received by the Township Committee from the Zoning Officer summarizing the actions of each item being investigated. Things seem to have ceased for the time being. The Zoning Officer is still working diligently on this item.

New Business:

Salt Shed was discussed. Mr. Whitmore reported being able to find the concrete blocks necessary to build the salt shed should the Township decide to undertake doing the project themselves. (SCC Concrete out of Phillipsburg, NJ - \$65 per block, \$300 delivery). \$40,000 in our budget for it (insurance monies).

Public.

Ann Rhinesmith mentioned the speeds cars are traveling on Ridgeway Avenue. The possibility of a speed bump was discussed. Mention was made that perhaps the State Police should monitor it for a period of time to ascertain the speeds being traveled more accurately. Mention was made that this road is slated for paving through a DOT grant in 2021 (the two ends of the road).

Monica Sobon discussed streetlights due to the observatory/dark skies and asked if the Township Committee is open to any suggestions made in order to lessen the effect of the lighting in town on the observatory. Mr. Urfer made mention that JCP&L will switch to LEDs and that that should be looked into in more detail. She also mentioned the old town dump and what can be done with that property.

The DEP still needs to cap the landfill, however, the State of New Jersey/Jenny Jump Forest have already made known their interest in that piece of property.

Approval of Minutes: None

Seeing there was no other business for tonight, this meeting of the Hope Township Committee was adjourned at 4:55 p.m. on a motion made by Mr. Urfer, seconded by Mayor McDonough. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin L. Keggan, RMC
Municipal Clerk