

INDEPENDENCE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
Meeting held at the Municipal Building, Great Meadows, NJ.
January 12, 2021 7:00 p.m.

This is a regular meeting of the Township Committee of Independence Township, Warren County, New Jersey. This meeting was called to order by Mayor Robert Giordano at 7:00 p.m. with the following announcement: "Adequate notice of this meeting was given in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act by providing a schedule of regular meetings to the Herald Times and The Express Times, posting a copy thereof on the Township bulletin board and filing a copy thereof in the office of the Municipal Clerk." The Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag was led by Mayor Giordano.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions on in-person public gatherings by executive orders of the Governor of New Jersey, meetings of the Independence Township Committee will be held remotely via Zoom. The Zoom platform allows for members of the public to participate via computer, mobile device, or telephone. Both adequate and electronic notice of this meeting have been provided by publishing a revised annual notice in the two official newspapers designated by the Township, posting such notice on the door of the municipal building, and posting such notice on the municipal website. Such notice specifies the time of this meeting and provided instructions on how to access the meeting remotely.

Comments can also be emailed by 3:00 p.m. the day of the meeting to dhrebenak@independencenj.com. Written comments may also be submitted via mail or dropped off at the municipal building. Written comments must be no more than 450 words and must include your name and address. Such comments will be read into the record at the appropriate time.

Live comments will also be accepted during the appropriate times of the meeting via Zoom. If you wish to make a comment during the meeting please use the "raise hand" button on your screen if you are signed in via Zoom. If you are accessing the meeting via telephone, please hit *9 and the meeting moderator will call on you and identify you by the last few digits of your phone number. You can press *6 to unmute yourself. Please state your name and address before beginning your comment. The Township reserves the right to mute or remove disruptive meeting participants after an initial warning. Disruptive conduct includes sustained inappropriate behaviors such as, but not necessarily limited to, shouting, interruption, and use of profanity.

Please be advised that this meeting is being recorded.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Mr. Cogle, Mrs. Kelsey, Mr. Pennington, Mrs. Gesumaria, Mayor Giordano, and Debi Hrebenak. Also present were Attorney Leslie Parikh and Engineer Mike Finelli
Absent: None

CONSENT AGENDA:

Resolution 21-19

**Redemption of Tax Lien
Certificate #20-00036**

WHEREAS, on November 20, 2020, Tax Lien Certificate #20-00036 or property assessed to JAMES & ELIZABETH BARTON and known as Block 15; Lot 7.16, Sold to BALA PARTNERS, LLC

WHEREAS, redemption of Certificate # 20-00036 was made by MAHER & MAHER

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Independence, that the Tax Collector, having received redemption monies

from MAHER & MAHER, and having received Tax Lien Certificate #20-00036 from BALA PARTNERS, LLC be authorized to forward said redemption monies to BALA PARTNERS, LLC the amount being \$20,229.35.

ALSO, the Premium which was paid by BALA PARTNERS, LLC be returned to BALA PARTNERS, LLC in the amount of \$68,000.

Mr. Cogle made a motion to approve Resolutions 21-19 as written. Mayor Giordano seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

Ayes: Mr. Cogle, Mrs. Kelsey, Mr. Pennington, Mrs. Gesumaria and Mayor Giordano

Nays: None recorded

Abstain: None recorded

Resolution 21-20

Title or Subject: Approval of Fire Department Member (Olivia P Pennington)

WHEREAS, there is a need for members on the Independence Volunteer Fire Department; and

Whereas, *Olivia P Pennington* has made application for membership to the Fire Department and has been approved by the Membership Committee; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Independence, that *Olivia P Pennington* is hereby approved as a member of the Independence Volunteer Fire Department.

Mr. Cogle made a motion to approve Resolutions 21-20 as written. Mayor Giordano seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

Ayes: Mr. Cogle, Mrs. Kelsey, Mrs. Gesumaria and Mayor Giordano

Nays: None recorded

Abstain: Mr. Pennington

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Tax Collector – Report submitted via email

Construction/Zoning – Reports submitted via email.

Environmental – Collection of plastic bags. No meeting

Treasurer – Working on Budget

Recreation/Green Acres – WC Softball meeting to discuss the season at the end of the month.

Police – Report submitted via email

Emergency Services – Chief Snyder gave a report, Captain Vasquez gave a report and spoke on the paid service.

DPW – Report submitted via email.

Municipal Clerk: Dog licenses are being issued. Working on budget. 1/2021 Emergency Services to be paying for fuel.

Land Use Board – Master Plan was discussed

Seniors – Meeting on Thursday.

Board of Education – Swearing in of new board members.

PROFESSIONAL REPORTS:

Attorney Parikh: Report submitted via email.

Engineer Finelli: Report submitted. Discussed NJDOT Grant Asbury Road section 2. Senior Center Grant was discussed. Need to go out for bid again.

Mr. Cogle made a motion to move on the NJDOT Grant Asbury Road section 2. Mrs. Gesumaria seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

Ayes: Mr. Cogle, Mrs. Kelsey, Mr. Pennington, Mrs. Gesumaria and Mayor Giordano

Nays: None recorded
Abstain: None recorded

OLD BUSINESS: none

NEW BUSINESS: Re-appointment to the Musconetcong River Management Council

PUBLIC COMMENT: Mrs. Neuman asked about the recreation committee terms expiration.

BILLS: A motion was made by Mr. Cogle to pay the bills as presented. Mayor Giordano seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

Ayes: Mr. Cogle, Mrs. Kelsey, Mr. Pennington, Mrs. Gesumaria and Mayor Giordano
Nays: None recorded
Abstain: None recorded

EXECUTIVE SESSION: 7:40 pm – 8:40 pm

The following Resolution was approved at 7:40 p.m. to enter Executive Session with a motion by Mr. Cogle, seconded by Mayor Giordano and followed by a unanimous roll call.

WHEREAS: N.J.S. 2:4-12, Open Public Meetings Act, permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist:

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Independence, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, as follows:

The public shall be excluded from discussion of the hereinafter specified subject matters;

The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows:

Personnel Matter

It is anticipated at this time that the above matter will be made public upon completion of the matter discussed.

A motion was made by Mr. Cogle at 8:40 p.m. to exit the executive session, seconded by Mayor Giordano followed by a roll call of all ayes

Mayor Giordano stated that Personnel Matter issues were discussed and no action will be taken at this time.

A motion was made by Mr. Cogle to use 80 hours of sick time for bonding time. Mayor Giordano seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

Ayes: Mr. Cogle, Mrs. Kelsey, Mr. Pennington, Mrs. Gesumaria and Mayor Giordano
Nays: None recorded
Abstain: None recorded

A motion was made by Mr. Cogle to pay Officer in Charge Lt. Prell a stipend of \$6,000.00. Mrs. Kelsey seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

Ayes: Mr. Cogle, Mrs. Kelsey, Mr. Pennington, Mrs. Gesumaria and Mayor Giordano
Nays: None recorded
Abstain: None recorded

ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Mr. Cogle to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m. Mrs. Gesumaria seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

Ayes: Mr. Cogle, Mr. Pennington, Mrs. Kelsey, Mrs. Gesumaria, and Mayor Giordano

Nays: None recorded

Abstain: None recorded

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah M. Hrebenak, RMC/CMR
Municipal Clerk