

INDEPENDENCE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
Meeting held at the Municipal Building, Great Meadows, NJ.
April 14, 2020 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

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 7:06 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 NJ Herald 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.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Mayor Robert Giordano, Bonnie Kelsey, Mike Pennington, Glenn Cogle, Tim Norton and Debi Hrebenak. Also present were Attorney Leslie Parikh, Mike Finelli and Derek Macchia

Absent: none

Resolution 20-30 2020 Budget Adoption

2020 BUDGET INFORMATION:

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>\$ INCR</u>	<u>% INCR</u>
TOTAL BUDGET	5,449,212	4,911,214	537,998	11.0%
TOTAL TAX	2,913,891	2,885,140	28,751	1.0%
TAX RATE	0.5791	0.5739	0.0052	0.9%
TAX ON AVG HOUSE 228,800	1,325	1,313	11.99	0.9%
TAX PER 100,000 ASSESSMENT 100,000	579	574	5.24	0.9%
RATABLE BASE	503,184,500	502,767,500		

Mr. Pennington made a motion to open up discussion on this resolution to the Public. Mr. Cogle seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

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

Nays: None recorded

Abstain: None recorded

As there were no comments, a motion was made by Mr. Norton to close the public hearing. Mayor Giordano seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

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

Nays: None recorded

Abstain: None recorded

Resolution 20-38

RESOLUTION TO AMEND INTRODUCED BUDGET

WHEREAS, the local budget for the year 2020 was approved on the 10th day of March, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the public hearing on said budget has been held as advertised; and

WHEREAS, it is desired to amend said approved budget;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the governing body of the Township of Independence of the County of Warren that the following amendments to the approved budget of 2020 made:

Record Vote

(insert last name)

AYES {		NAYS {
{		{
{		{
{		ABSTAINED {
{		{
{		ABSENT {
{		{

	From	To
REVENUE		
1. Surplus Anticipated	1,464,100.00	1,462,133.00
3. Miscellaneous Revenues – Section B: State Aid Without Offsetting Appropriations		
Garden State Trust	3,625.00	5,592.00

A motion was made by Mr. Norton to approve Resolution 20-38 as written. Mrs. Kelsey seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

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

A motion was made by Mr. Norton to adopt Resolution 20-30 as written. Mrs. Kelsey seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

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

Minute Approval 2.11.20 and 3.3.20

A motion was made by Mr. Norton to approve 2.11.20 Minutes as written. Mrs. Kelsey seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

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

A motion was made by Mayor Giordano to approve 3.3.20 Minutes as written. Mrs. Kelsey seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

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

CONSENT AGENDA:

Resolution 20-37

**EMPOWERING TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE TO AUTHORIZE PAYMENT OF
LAND USE BOARD PROFESSIONAL BILLING DURING A PUBLIC
EMERGENCY**

WHEREAS, pursuant to Executive Order No. 103, Governor Phil Murphy declared that a Public Health Emergency and State of Emergency exist in the State of New Jersey as a result of an outbreak of Coronavirus disease 2019 (“COVID-19”) is a contagious, and at times fatal, respiratory disease; and

WHEREAS, on March 16, 2020, the Township of Independence (the “Township”) declared that a local public health emergency and state of emergency exist in the Township; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Executive Order No. 107, Governor Phil Murphy ordered that all public gatherings be cancelled until further notice; and

WHEREAS, to protect the public health, safety, and welfare the Township Land Use Board (the “Board”) cancelled its recent meetings; and

WHEREAS, the Board’s professionals currently have outstanding bills that will accrue late fees or interest before the Board is able to meet again and approve the payment of outstanding bills; and

WHEREAS, the Board has forwarded the bills and claims received by it for review and approval by the Committee.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Independence is hereby authorized to approve the payment of Land Use Board bills and claims as part of its bill list at each regular meeting during times of emergency when the Board is prevented from meeting.

Resolution 20-39

Dedication by Rider

Whereas, permission is required of the Director of the Division of Local Government Services for approval as a dedication by rider of revenues received by a municipality when the revenue is not subject to reasonably accurate estimates in advance; and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-3 et seq. provides for receipt of Affordable Housing Trust Deposit by the municipality to provide for the operating costs to administer this act; and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:4-39 provides the dedicated revenues anticipated from the Affordable Housing trust fund are hereby anticipated as revenue and are hereby appropriated for the purpose to which said revenue is dedicated by statute or other legal requirement

NOW, THEREFOR, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Governing Body of the Township of Independence, County of Warren, New Jersey as follows:

1. The Governing Body does hereby request permission of the Director of the Division of Local Government Services to pay expenditures of the Affordable Housing trust fund (N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-3 et seq).
2. The Clerk of the Township of Independence, County of Warren is hereby directed to forward two certified copies of this Resolution to the Director of the Division of Local Government Services.

Resolution 20-40

EXEMPT PROPERTIES

WHEREAS, certain residents who are a disabled vet or serviceperson are entitled to Exempt Status and the taxes now Exempt.

WHEREAS, the exempt status of these properties make it necessary to cancel all or a portion of taxes and refund any payments made

WHEREAS, the 2nd quarter 2020 taxes to be cancelled is \$1,233.12. And any future 2020 billing, amount unknown.

WHEREAS, the total 2020 taxes to be refunded is \$853.72.

ASSESSED TO	PROPERTY LOCATION	BLOCK/LOT	AMOUNT
Meghan Jewell	8 Roosevelt Ave	1/49	\$853.72

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Independence, that the Tax Collector is hereby authorized to cancel 2020 Taxes Receivable for the amount of \$1,233.12 and any future 2020 taxes billed.

Resolution 20-41

**RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF INDEPENDENCE,
AUTHORIZING THE INDEPENDENCE TOWNSHIP TAX COLLECTOR
TO PREPARE AND MAIL ESTIMATED TAX BILLS
IN ACCORDANCE WITH P.L. 1994.C.72**

WHEREAS, the State of New Jersey has not certified Municipal County Budgets as of this date, and

WHEREAS, as a result thereof, the Warren County Board of Taxation is unable to verify Independence Township's tax rate and the Independence Township Tax Collector will be unable to mail the Township's 2020 tax bills on a timely basis;

WHEREAS, the Township of Independence Tax Collector, in consultation with the Township of Independence Chief Financial Officer, has computed an estimated tax levy in accordance with N.J.S.A. 54:4-66.3, and have both signed a certification showing the tax levies for the previous years, the tax rates and the range of permitted estimated tax levies;

WHEREAS, the total estimated tax rate of \$3.42 (101.66%) has been recommended which falls in the range of 95% to 105%, and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Township Committee of the Township of Independence, in the County of Warren and State of New Jersey on this 14th day of April 2020 as follows:

1. The Township of Independence is hereby authorized and directed to prepare and issue estimated tax bills for the Third Quarter of 2020 taxes. The Tax Collector shall proceed and take such actions as are permitted and required by P.L.1994. C.72 (N.J.S.A.54:4-66.2 and 545:4-66.3)
2. The entire estimated tax levy for 2020 is hereby set at \$17,205,956.92
3. In accordance with the law, the Third Quarter Installment of 2020 taxes shall not be subject to interest until the later of August 10 or the twenty-fifth calendar day after the date the estimated tax bills were mailed. The estimated tax bills shall contain a notice specifying the date on which interest may begin to accrue.

Resolution 20-42

Be It Resolved by the Independence Township Committee that the following salaries shall be paid to Township employees, effective January 1, 2020 unless otherwise noted.

Administration	
Mayor	\$ 7,562
Deputy Mayor	\$ 3,864
Township Committee Member	\$ 3,228
Municipal Clerk/Registrar	\$ 89,395
Administrator	\$ 11,112
Tax and Finance	
Chief Financial Officer	\$ 37,975
Tax Collector	\$ 26,520
Tax Assessor	\$ 27,052
Payroll Clerk	\$ 3,129
P/T Clerical(1)	\$ 25.00/hr.
Municipal Court	
Judge	\$ 17,962
Prosecutor	\$ 8,776
Court Administrator	\$ 14,832
Violation Clerk	\$ 15.00/hr.
Filing Clerk	\$ 15.00/hr.
Public Works	
Supervisor	\$ 83,000
Truck Driver 1	\$ 28.97/hr.
Truck Driver 2	\$ 22.29/hr.
Truck Driver 3	\$ 21.85/hr.
Construction/Zoning	
Construction Official/ Bldg. Sub Code Official Building Inspector	\$ 24,379
TACO	\$ 20.00/hr.
Fire Sub Code Official	\$ 3,657
Electrical Inspector	\$ 6,364
Plumbing Sub Code Official	\$ 7,312.00
Zoning Official	\$ 15,240
Vacant and Abandoned Property Stipend	\$ 6,763
Land Use Board Administrator	\$ 9,144
Recreation/Seniors	
Recreation Director	\$ 20,000
Public Safety	
Chief of Police	\$ 104,040
Clerk-Typist	\$ 45,900
Police Matron Call Out	\$ 54.13/2 hr
Matron Hrs, After Call Out	\$ 21.66/hr.
Emergency Management Coordinator Stipend	\$ 2,782
911 Coordinator	\$ 1,564
Police	
Lieutenant	\$ 100,064
Sergeant 1 st . Class	\$ 97,480
Patrolman 1 st . Class	\$ 92,068
Patrolman 2 nd . Class	\$ 87,120
Patrolman 3 rd . Class	\$ 79,132
Patrolman 4 th . Class	\$ 73,878
Patrolman 5 th . Class	\$ 68,628
Patrolman 6 th . Class	\$ 55,036
Probationary / Recruit	\$ 45,048

Resolution 20-43

**Title or Subject: Official Newspapers
Amended from January 7, 2020**

Be It Resolved, by the Township Committee of the Township of Independence, that the following newspapers be designated as official newspapers of the Township of Independence for the purpose of legal notices:

NJ Herald
Express-Times

Deputy Mayor Cogle made a motion to approve Resolutions 20-37, 20-39 thru 20-43 as written. Mrs. Kelsey seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

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

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Tax Collector - Posted

Construction/Zoning – Reports were submitted.

Environmental – Spring Clean and shredding event on hold

Treasurer – Posted

Recreation/Green Acres – no meeting. Discussion on the field of dreams status

Police – Report has been submitted.

Emergency Services – phone meeting with the mayor and OEM every morning. Blood drive May 15 at the fire house. Signup online.

DPW – Report was submitted.

Municipal Clerk: Building closed Residents using drop box, email or phone.

Land Use Board – meeting on April 20

Seniors – building closed.

Board of Education – school closed at this time

PROFESSIONAL REPORTS:

Attorney Parikh: Report submitted. Updates legislation on the covid-19

Engineer Finelli: Discussion on the bid opening of the senior center. 5 bids received. Spoke on the Asbury Road 2020 grant. Notification of the 2021 grants due July 1st.

OLD BUSINESS:

Second Reading/Public Hearing of Ordinance 2020-02

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED SALARIES AND
COMPENSATION**

Deputy Mayor Cogle made a motion to open up discussion on this ordinance to the Public. Mrs. Kelsey seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

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

As there were no comments, a motion was made by Mr. Norton to close the public hearing. Mayor Giordano seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

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

Nays: None recorded

Abstain: None recorded

A motion was made by Mr. Norton to adopt Ordinance 2020-02 as written. Mrs. Kelsey seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

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

Nays: None recorded

Abstain: None recorded

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NEW BUSINESS: none

PUBLIC COMMENT: none (3 phone-in via zoom)

BILLS: A motion was made by Mr. Norton to pay the bills as presented. Mrs. Kelsey seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

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

Nays: None recorded

Abstain: None recorded

ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Mr. Cogle to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 p.m. Mrs. Kelsey seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

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

Nays: None recorded

Abstain: None recorded

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah M. Hrebenak, RMC/CMR
Municipal Clerk