

INDEPENDENCE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
Meeting held at the Municipal Building, Great Meadows, NJ.
April 12, 2022 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.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Mr. Pennington, Mrs. Kelsey, Mayor Giordano, Mr. Cogle, Mrs. Gesumaria and Dena Hrebenak. Also present were Attorney Leslie Parikh and Mike Finelli.

Absent: none

Minute Approval: 3.8.22

A motion was made by Mike Pennington to approve minutes 3.8.22 as written. Mrs. Kelsey seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

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

Nays: None recorded

Abstain: Mr. Cogle

Public Hearing and Adoption of 2022 Budget-Resolution 22-28

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

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

Nays: None recorded

Abstain: None recorded

Mr. Barabas thanked everyone for doing a great job on the budget.

Mrs. Cogle made a motion to close the public hearing. Mr. Pennington seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

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

Nays: None recorded

Abstain: None recorded

A motion was made by Mr. Cogle to adopt Resolution 22-28 as written. Mr. Pennington seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

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

Nays: None recorded

Abstain: None recorded

CONSENT AGENDA:

Resolution 22-30 Approval of Junior Fire Department

Title or Subject: Approval of Junior Fire Department Member (Erin Mackowiak)

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

Whereas, Erin Mackowiak 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 *Erin Mackowiak* is hereby approved as a Junior member of the Independence Volunteer Fire Department.

Resolution 22-31 RESOLUTION DESIGNATING THE MONTH OF MAY AS “BAG UP NJ” MONTH

WHEREAS, P.L.202, c.117, signed into law on November 4, 2020 is the most progressive disposable bag law in the country, with the goal of phasing out single-use plastic and paper bags and encouraging the use of reusable bags throughout New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey is working to reduce reliance on single-use products to ensure that future generations have a clean and healthy environment to live, work, and recreate in; and

WHEREAS, banning or limiting the use of single-use plastic and paper carryout bags is a significant step in this effort; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Clean Communities Council, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, the New Jersey Department of State, policymakers, environmental and business groups, as well as other stakeholders, are working together to educate consumers, businesses, and communities about the new law and encouraging residents to "Bag Up" before the ban on single-use plastic bags goes into effect on May 4, 2022; and

WHEREAS, the comprehensive "Bag Up NJ" campaign will include educational programs, public and media engagement and reusable bag distribution programs throughout the state, with an emphasis on underserved communities; and

WHEREAS, this statewide public education campaign will provide residents, businesses and visitors with information about the types of reusable and sustainable bags and containers that they may use and where to access these products.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Independence Township Committee that it is critical to begin educating the public about this new law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that one way to gain important recognition is to deem the month of May each year as “Bag Up NJ” month in Independence Township, as a further reminder that all residents should bring their own reusable bags to the store; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution shall be transmitted to the NJ Clean Communities Council, and the New Jersey State League of Municipalities.

Resolution 22-32 Raffle DASACC

WHEREAS, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Crisis Center is registered by the State of New Jersey to operate legalized games of chance, (31-4-29993) and,

WHEREAS, they have submitted an application for a Tricky Tray Raffle to be held on May 20, 2022 and all fees have been paid,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Independence, that RA# 2022-01 be issued to Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Crisis Center.

Resolution 22-33 50/50 Raffle Hackettstown HS Baseball

WHEREAS, Hackettstown HS Baseball Booster Club is registered by the State of New Jersey to operate legalized games of chance, (181-5-43115) and,

WHEREAS, they have submitted an application for a Tricky Tray Raffle to be held on April 30, 2022 and all fees have been paid,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Independence, that RA# 2022-02 be issued to Hackettstown HS Baseball Booster Club.

Resolution 22-34 Raffle ITVFD

WHEREAS, Independence Volunteer Fire Department is registered by the State of New Jersey to operate legalized games of chance, (224-9-21561) and,

WHEREAS, they have submitted an application for a Tricky Tray Raffle to be held on October 20, 2022 and all fees have been paid,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Independence, that RA# 2022-03 be issued to Independence Volunteer Fire Department

Resolution 22-35 OEM Appointment Kinney

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Independence the following appointment is hereby made:

Ernest Kinney-Office of Emergency Management Coordinator, at a rate of \$ 2,904.00 per annum. For a three (3) Year Term of office, commencing May 1, 2022 thru May 1, 2025.

Resolution 22-36 Deputy OEM Appointment Tagliareni

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Independence the following appointment is hereby made:

Whereas the Township Committee recognizes the importance and the need for additional staffing in the Township of Independence Office of Emergency Management to assist during times of disasters, that *Thomas Tagliareni* be appointed to the Office of Emergency Management for a three (3) year Term of Office, commencing on May 1, 2022 and terminating on May 1, 2025.

Mr. Cogle made a motion to approve Resolutions 22-30 and 22-37 as written. Mrs. Gesumaria seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

Ayes: Mr. Pennington (Abstain 22-30 & 22-34), Mr. Cogle, Mrs. Gesumaria, Mrs. Kelsey and Mayor Giordano

Nays: None recorded

Abstain: Mr. Pennington (22-30 & 22-34)

BILLS: A motion was made by Mr. Cogle to pay the bills as presented. Mrs. Kelsey 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

ORDINANCE:

ORDINANCE 2022-07 First Reading

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED SALARIES AND COMPENSATION

Be It Ordained by the Township Committee of the Township of Independence, the following salary ranges, being established for Township employees for the year 2022.

Construction	
Construction Official	\$ 10,000- \$ 15,000
Building Subcode	\$ 10,000- \$ 15,000
Fire Subcode	\$ 5,000- \$10,000

A motion was made by Mr. Cogle to adopt Ordinance 2022-07 for First Reading. Mrs. Gesumaria seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

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

Second reading and public hearing will be on May 10, 2022

2022-04 Second Reading/Public Comment

AN ORDINANCE LOCK BOX EMERGENCY ACCESS SYSTEM FOR USE BY THE FIRE DEPARTMENT DURING AN EMERGENCY OR ANY OTHER ACTION DEEMED NECESSARY BY THE INDEPENDENCE FIRE PREVENTION OFFICIAL AND ADDING SECTION MUNICIPAL CODE OF INDEPENDENCE TOWNSHIP TO CHAPTER 215 FIRE PREVENTION

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

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

Questions asked and answered. A motion was made by Mr. Cogle to close the public hearing. Mrs. Gesumaria seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

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

A motion was made by Mr. Cogle to adopt Ordinance 2022-04 as written. Mrs. Gesumaria seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

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

2022-05 Second Reading/Public Comment

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 293 OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF INDEPENDENCE REGARDING PEDDLING AND SOLICITING

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

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

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

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

A motion was made by Mr. Cogle to adopt Ordinance 2022-05 as written. Mrs. Gesumaria seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

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

2022-06 Second Reading/Public Comment

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED SALARIES AND COMPENSATION

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

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

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

A motion was made by Mr. Cogle to adopt Ordinance 2022-06 as written. Mrs. Gesumaria seconded the motion with roll call as follows:

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

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Tax Collector – Report submitted via email

Construction/Zoning – Reports submitted via email.

Environmental – Clean up on May 7th

Treasurer – Report posted

Recreation/Green Acres – Softball up and running. Working on snack stand and pavilion

Police – Report submitted via email

Emergency Services – Chief Vasquez spoke on number of calls. Working with Recreation on movie night June 11. Purchase LUCAS system. Part of the EMS taskforce – 5 volunteers. Fire Department is hosting a yard sale on April 30. Breakfast is May 8

DPW – Report submitted.

Municipal Clerk: everything going well. Special event permit approved.

Land Use Board – Joint Meeting with Township Committee on March 21 regarding cannabis issue/concerns. 1 new application being reviewed.

PROFESSIONAL REPORTS:

Attorney Parikh: Spoke on cannabis issue/concerns.

Engineer Finelli: Spoke on Stormwater Management plan, Russling Road DOT grant, and Wastewater.

OLD BUSINESS: none

NEW BUSINESS: none

PUBLIC COMMENT: Mr. Barabas asked about the cell tower and the senior center.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: 7:59 pm – 9:01 pm

The following Resolution was approved at 7:59 p.m. to enter Executive Session with a motion by Mr. Cogle, seconded by Mrs. Gesumaria 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:

Litigation/ Personnel

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 Mrs. Gesumaria at 9:01 p.m. to return to regular session, seconded by Mrs. Kelsey followed by a roll call of all ayes

ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Mr. Cogle to adjourn the meeting at 9:01 p.m. Mr. Pennington 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,

Dena M. Hrebenak, RMC
Municipal Clerk/Administrator