

**MINUTES
TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
MAY 4, 2020**

Mayor Kelly called the Special Meeting of the Township Committee of the Township of Chatham to order at 3:00 P.M.

Adequate Notice of this meeting of the Township Committee was given as required by the Open Public Meetings Act as follows: Notice was given to both *The Chatham Courier* and the *Morris County Daily Record* on April 29, 2020; notice was posted on the bulletin board in the main hallway and on the front door of the Municipal Building on April 29, 2020; and notice was filed with the Township Clerk on April 29, 2020. Notice was also posted on the Township website and sent to *The Alternative Press*.

Pursuant to Executive Orders Nos. 102, 103, 104 and 107 and to ensure the safety of all, during a State of Emergency declared by New Jersey Governor, Phil Murphy, on March 9, 2020 to “contain the spread of COVID-19”, the Township of Chatham limited the public from physically attending the Township Committee meeting to be held on Monday, May 4, 2020.

Mayor Kelly led the Flag Salute.

Roll Call

Answering present to the roll call were Committeewoman Ewald, Committeewoman Fondaco, Committeewoman Swartz, Deputy Mayor Ness and Mayor Kelly. All participated in the meeting via Zoom.

Approval of Agenda

Mayor Kelly said that he would like to add a public comment session on Resolution 2020-116 prior to the Township Committee voting thereon.

Committeewoman Ewald moved to approve the Agenda as amended. Committeewoman Fondaco seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Resolutions

**RESOLUTION 2020-116
RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF
CHATHAM, COUNTY OF MORRIS, STATE OF NEW JERSEY EXTENDING THE
GRACE PERIOD FOR SECOND QUARTER TAX PAYMENTS**

WHEREAS, under N.J.S.A. 54:4-66(a), second quarter property taxes are due May 1, 2020 for municipalities on a calendar year budget cycle; and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 54:4-67(a) provides that no interest shall be charged if payment of any installment is made within the tenth calendar day following the date upon which the quarter became delinquent, thereby establishing a grace period ending Monday, May 11, 2020 for second quarter property taxes; and

WHEREAS, on April 28, 2020, the Governor of the State of New Jersey issued Executive Order No. 130 authorizing municipalities to, by Resolution, modify the grace period for the second quarter real estate taxes to Monday, June 1, 2020; and

WHEREAS, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the State and Federal declarations of a major disaster throughout New Jersey, the Township of Chatham desires to utilize the authority granted by Executive Order No. 130 and extend the grace period within which the second quarter real estate taxes may be paid until Monday, June 1, 2020; and

WHEREAS, while Executive Order No. 130 authorized the modification of the grace period for the second quarter real estate taxes, it did not modify when the municipal payments to the County and Boards of Education are due; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Chatham will have to continue to meet these obligations when due; and

WHEREAS, the School District of the Chathams has agreed to accept their payment on Monday, June 1, 2020; and

WHEREAS, in order for the Township of Chatham to continue to meet its obligations when due, the Township encourages all real estate taxpayers to promptly pay the real estate taxes by the June 1, 2020 grace period; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Chatham in the County of Morris, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The grace period for the payment of the second quarter real estate taxes is hereby extended pursuant to Executive Order No. 130 until Monday, June 1, 2020.
2. If payment is not received by Monday, June 1, 2020, the interest for unpaid second quarter taxes shall be calculated from the date of payment back to the original due date of May 1, 2020.
3. If a payment is received by the Township of Chatham there will be no return or refund of payment unless a tax overpayment exists on the tax account. The refund will then be processed through the monthly bill list approved by the Township Committee.
4. That the Clerk forward a copy of this Resolution to the Director of the Division of Local Government Services within three (3) days of the adoption of this Resolution.
5. The School District of the Chathams is commended for its willingness to work together to serve our residents in this time of uncharted challenges.

Administrator Hoffmann explained that by statute, there is a 10-day grace period for payment of property taxes, and for the Second Quarter 2020 the period ends on May 11th. He further explained that Governor Murphy issued Executive Order No. 130 which allows municipalities to extend the grace period to June 1, 2020. Administrator Hoffmann also explained that the Township still needs to make statutory monthly payments to the County and the School District on May 15th. If the required payment is not made to the County, the Township will be required to pay a penalty. The School District was able to work with the Township and defer payment until June 1, 2020, and Administrator Hoffmann thanked Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mike LaSusa and Business Administrator Peter Daquila for working with him on this matter.

Deputy Mayor Ness thanked the School District for working with the Township, and asked why the County was not able to do the same. Administrator Hoffmann said that by State Statute the County was not afforded the option to waive fees for municipalities who submit payments after May 15th.

Committeewoman Ewald said that many payments come from banks and mortgage companies, and asked what percentage of quarterly payments have been made. Administrator Hoffmann said that he did not have the percentage available, and said that most institutions will likely send payments this week.

Committeewoman Swartz asked what percentage of payments come from mortgage companies and what percentage comes from property owners. Administrator Hoffmann estimated that at least 30% of property owners do not have mortgages, and he does not know the percentage of payments that have been made. Committeewoman Swartz wondered how many municipalities will be unable to extend the grace period due to a lack of on-hand funds. Committeewoman Swartz also said that the fact that the Township has a surplus is the reason why the grace period can be extended. Administrator Hoffmann said that Township staff reviewed all the steps that must be taken for the grace period to be extended, and that State did not consider the back end implications of the extension.

Committeewoman Ewald asked that the Township Committee receive updates during the week on the percentage of payments received. Committeewoman Swartz noted that Third Quarter tax payments are due on August 1st, and wondered if the Governor will allow for extensions for those payments as well.

Deputy Mayor Ness opined that the grace period is being extended to be helpful to residents in need during trying times.

Mayor Kelly opened a Public Hearing on Resolution 2020-116. Seeing no public comment, Mayor Kelly closed the Public Hearing.

Committeewoman Ewald moved to Adopt Resolution 2020-116. Deputy Mayor Ness seconded the motion.

Roll call: Committeewoman Ewald, Aye; Committeewoman Fondaco, Aye; Committeewoman Swartz, Aye; Deputy Mayor Ness, Aye; Mayor Kelly, Aye.

Hearing of Citizens

Mayor Kelly announced that members of the public wishing to participate in the Hearing of Citizens were able to be heard by utilizing the Raise Hand feature on the Zoom platform. He also noted that people who have dialed in can hit Star-9 to raise their hand.

Mayor Kelly opened the Hearing of Citizens.

1. Tom Evans, 21 Birch Hill Drive, asked when the Township Committee meetings would revert to a 7:30 PM start time. Mayor Kelly said that there is still an 8:00 PM curfew in place as part of a State of Emergency, and regular meetings have been temporarily moved up to 5:30 PM to allow the Township professionals to be able to get home on time. Mayor Kelly noted that this special meeting was set at 3:00 PM based on the participants' schedules. He also noted that many people are home during the day due to social distancing measures, and said that the Township Committee would need to act on Resolution 2020-116 in a timely manner in order for residents to be able to take advantage of the extended grace period.
2. Brian Frohnafel, 66 Southern Boulevard, commented that it is helpful to have all the Township Committee members participate in meetings via Zoom so that viewers can hear them better and view body language. He asked that future meetings have the video and audio for all participants. Mr. Frohnafel also commented on the safety of Group Homes, citing traffic concerns. He said that the increased number of cars pulling in and out of a driveway would present a traffic safety hazard.

Seeing no further public comment, Mayor Kelly closed the Hearing of Citizens.

Other Business

Committeewoman Ewald reported that <https://www.rosenet.org/1269/Tri-Town-Cares> has resources available regarding mental health and anxiety issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as substance abuse and suicide prevention resources.

Committeewoman Swartz added that she recently spoke with former Governor Richard Codey, and the mental health impacts of COVID-19 were discussed. She noted that now that parents are spending a lot of time with their children, they may become aware of how over-scripted and over-scheduled their children's' lives are.

Mayor Kelly thanked those who practiced proper social distancing at the various parks in the Township that were reopened this past weekend. He also said that an updated Mayor's Message will be posted on the Township website with COVID-19 statistics, and unfortunately there have been additional deaths in the Township. Mayor Kelly also said that the numbers show that social distancing is still necessary as regulations are progressively relaxed.

Committeewoman Ewald moved to adjourn at 3:32 PM. Deputy Mayor Ness seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Gregory J. LaConte

Municipal Clerk