

**MINUTES
TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
WORKSHOP MEETING
MARCH 11, 2025**

Mayor Choi called the Workshop Meeting of the Township Committee of the Township of Chatham to order at 7:01 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 January 8, 2025; notice was posted on the bulletin board in the main hallway of the Municipal Building on January 8, 2025; and notice was filed with the Township Clerk on January 8, 2025.

Roll Call

Answering present to the roll call were Committeeman Alperowitz, Committeewoman Ewald, Committeeman McHugh, Deputy Mayor Rowland and Mayor Choi.

Executive Session

RESOLUTION 2025-P-06

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF CHATHAM IN THE COUNTY OF MORRIS, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AUTHORIZING CONFERENCE OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE WITH THE PUBLIC EXCLUDED

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 of the Open Public Meetings Act permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee of the Township of Chatham is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist.

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

1. The public shall be excluded from discussion of the specified subject matter.
2. The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows:
 - a. Contract Negotiations
 - b. Litigation
3. It is anticipated that the minutes on the subject matter of the Executive Session will be made public upon conclusion of the matter under discussion; and in any event, when appropriate pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-7 and 4-13.
4. The Committee will come back into Regular Session and may take further action.
5. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

Committeewoman Ewald moved to adopt Resolution 2025-P-06 to enter Executive Session at 7:02 PM. Committeeman Alperowitz seconded the motion.

Roll call: Committeeman Alperowitz, Aye; Committeewoman Ewald, Aye; Committeeman McHugh, Aye; Deputy Mayor Rowland, Aye; Mayor Choi, Aye.

The Township Committee returned to Public Session at 7:36 PM.

Mayor Choi led the Flag Salute.

Hearing of Citizens

Mayor Choi opened the Hearing of Citizens.

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

Reports

Engineering

Mr. Ruschke reported that the Lafayette Ave – Spring Street Sidewalk Project has mixed support from neighbors, however some of the objectors have moved. He said that the project has been

bid four times, and contractors have failed to appropriately fill out paperwork that is required. The DOT is still reviewing the most recent bid submissions. Mr. Ruschke also said that the design portion of a 2016 grant was done through a consultant, and the DOT had questions on the design work.

Mr. Ruschke said that a budget amendment will be requested for the tax map updates, as the process has been more of a reconstruction. Mr. Ruschke said that a final version has been sent to the State for review.

Mr. Shehady provided an overview of the 2025 Road Resurfacing Program. The costs of work on Hillside were discussed, and a grant was received from the DOT toward the costs. Mr. Ruschke said that the costs are high due to drainage work that needs to be done there. Efforts to appropriately budget for road maintenance were also discussed. Mr. Shehady said that there is a desire to get a contract awarded through the Morris County Co-op early so that the Township can be earlier in the queue.

The proposed roads for 2025 are:

1. Hillside Avenue
2. River Road
3. Dellwood Avenue
4. Old Farm Road
5. Ferndale Road
6. Wexford Road
7. Overlook Drive

Mr. Alperowitz asked about detours and if that would cause aggravation. Mr. Ruschke said that the milling and paving would be coordinated to minimize any inconvenience.

Committeewoman Ewald asked about Britten Road, noting that the Township is waiting for the EPA to address Rolling Knolls before repaving. Mr. Ruschke said that DPW keeps up with potholes as best they can. He also said it could be 20 years before the superfund site is addressed, and truck traffic from that effort would destroy any improvement efforts the Township may make if the road is repaved prior. Road improvements will be revisited in April at the workshop meeting.

Mr. Shehady said that he and Mr. Ruschke discussed whether or not there was a consensus about the Colony Pool walls. He said that he and Mr. Ruschke felt there should be an in-kind replacement unless any other improvements are proposed. Committeewoman Ewald asked about stairs on the side of the pool facing the snack bar. She also asked about safety concerns and the visibility of children in the deep end. Mayor Choi asked about having drawings on the Township website. Committeeman McHugh asked about timeline. Mr. Shehady said that he would like to have the project bid no later than July. Mr. Ruschke said he would like for the Township to bid on the project as early as April if possible.

Mr. Ruschke reported on proposed upgrades to the Water Pollution Control plant. He also discussed the financing available through iBank. Mr. Alperowitz asked about the life expectancy of the upgrades. Mr. Ruschke said that the headwalls should last 60-70 years, and pump replacement is a maintenance issue. Mr. Shehady commented on the need for a rate study. Mr. Ruschke commented on the headworks upgrades, and discussed what would happen if the headworks fails. He noted that the Primary Clarifier is probably the next major component that will need to be replaced.

Administration

Mr. Shehady said that there will be a resolution at the next meeting to authorize a Municipal Alliance grant application. There will also be a resolution for a 5-year copier lease. It is hoped that there will be a resolution for an amended agreement with Vernon Grove. An ordinance for the sale of an outlier parcel on River Road will also be on for introduction. The hiring of a new Colony Pool Manager and assistant managers will also be on the next agenda for ratification.

Mr. Shehady said that at the last workshop meeting, there were questions on the memo from the Land Use Board Manager about the proposed fee amendments. A revised memo has been circulated which clarifies the request, and an ordinance for introduction will be prepared for the next meeting.

Committeewoman Rowland asked how often amended site plans are received. Mrs. Cofoni said that it is very common for planning boards to receive them. She said that having a fee is fully justified and appropriate. Mrs. Cofoni also said that amended site plans are submitted when there are changes to a previously approved plan.

Clerk

Committeewoman Ewald asked about the timeline for implementing online registration and renewal for pet licensing. Mr. LaConte said that the plan is to have the portal go live on April 1st.

Public Works

Mr. Shehady reported that there will be a resolution on the next agenda for purchase of new pumps and motors for WPC. There will also be a resolution for the hiring of a new PDW employee.

Tax Assessor

There will be a resolution at the next meeting concerning a tax appeal. Mr. Shehady provided an update on the revaluation process, and the tax map updates need to be complete before other steps move forward.

Finance

Mr. Shehady presented the 2025 Municipal Budget. He first provided an overview of the preparation process. Use of fund balance was also discussed. Mr. Shehady commented on some rising costs, particularly energy costs. He also noted the costs incurred by the Township when an OPRA case went to the NJ Supreme Court, and the legal fees are having an impact on the 2025 Budget. Road paving will also have an impact on the 2025 Budget. Mr. Shehady presented the percentages of each tax dollar that got to County, Municipal and School District purposes. He also discussed anticipated revenues, including anticipated taxes. Mr. Shehady also discussed the proposed revenues and appropriations for the Sewer Utility. A rate study will be conducted to ensure that the utility is self-liquidating.

Deputy Mayor Rowland commented on the intensive process that goes into budget preparation, and also praised the staff's involvement.

Committeeman McHugh thanked the Township Administrator and the department heads for their input on the budget.

Committeewoman Ewald asked about the Open Space Tax. Mr. Shehady said that plans are to keep it at the \$0.02 per \$100 that was approved by voters. Committeewoman Ewald asked about the Reserve for Uncollected Taxes (RUT). Mr. Shehady said that the RUT is the same as last year.

Mayor Choi asked how much of the capital funds are unallocated. Mr. Shehady said it is pretty much all allocated, as there is a capital plan. He also said that the Township would try to avoid borrowing money as much as possible.

Committeeman Alperowitz asked about debt for the Sewer Plant. Mr. Shehady said that there is current debt service for former projects at the Sewer Plant. He described how that and future debt is worked into the budget, and said that the rate study will assess if the current sewer charges collect sufficient revenue. Mr. Shehady said that sometimes new debt is added when old debt is falling off depending on payment schedules.

Hearing of Citizens

Mayor Choi opened the Hearing of Citizens.

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

Committeeman McHugh moved to adjourn at 9:26 PM. Committeewoman Ewald seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Gregory J. LaConte
Municipal Clerk