

**MINUTES
TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
WORKSHOP MEETING
FEBRUARY 13, 2024**

Mayor Ewald called the Workshop Meeting of the Township Committee of the Township of Chatham to order at 6:30 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 3, 2024; notice was posted on the bulletin board in the main hallway of the Municipal Building on January 3, 2024; and notice was filed with the Township Clerk on January 3, 2024.

Roll Call

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

Executive Session

**RESOLUTION 2024-P-02
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 Rowland moved to adopt Resolution 2024-P-02 to enter Executive Session at 6:31 PM. Deputy Mayor Choi seconded the motion.

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

The Township Committee returned to Public Session at 7:31 PM.

Mayor Ewald led the Flag Salute.

Hearing of Citizens

The Clerk indicated that no written comments were received.

Mayor Ewald opened the Hearing of Citizens.

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

Reports

Tax Assessor

Mr. Shehady provided an overview of the report to be addressed by the Tax Assessor.

Mr. Sherman provided the timeline of the revaluation that the Morris County Tax Board has ordered the Township to undertake. He said that first the Township's tax maps need to be updated. Mr. Ruschke said that the map updates are underway. Mr. Sherman said that following the update of the tax maps, the revaluation can begin. Mr. Sherman said he wants to have the evaluation specs prepared this year as well. In 2025, the Township will need to go out to bid for the revaluation work. He noted there are only two firms in New Jersey that can perform the work. Once the contract for revaluation is awarded and approved by the County Board of Taxation, then the work can begin. Mr. Sherman provided an overview of the work that the revaluation company will perform, and he said the data collection phase is the most time-consuming part of a revaluation. Mr. Sherman said that the completed report is due in 2026, and the new assessments will take effect in 2027. Anyone wishing to appeal their new assessment will need to file an appeal by May 1, 2027.

Committeeman Lois asked about the informal reviews with taxpayers. Mr. Sherman said that the assessment information can be posted online so that taxpayers can be informed for the review meetings. He also explained that the informal reviews are done so that residents can understand the assessment and make sure that the information used for the assessment is correct.

Engineering

Mr. Ruschke addressed road resurfacing, and said that a grant has been received for a portion of River Road and Mt. Vernon Avenue. Township roads are being reviewed and evaluated for repaving in 2024, and a recommendation should be available shortly. The DOT is still reviewing the Lafayette Avenue SRTS Project. Mr. Ruschke commented on grants for recreation. He also reported on the need for a public hearing for the Safe Routes to School project.

Committeeman Lois asked about the Fiber-Optic Public Safety Project, and if the funds need to be dispersed in a specific amount of time. Mr. Ruschke said that he will follow up to make sure there are not any issues with getting extensions. Mr. Shehady said that the DOJ and the Treasury Department did not yet have the process in place until recently for the Township to move forward with this project.

Mr. Shehady reviewed the legislative actions coming up for engineering at the next regular Township Committee meeting.

Mayor Ewald asked about the WPC Project and if capacity will be improved. Mr. Ruschke said that the plant has a treatment capacity of 1 MGD. He said that when the two plants were combined, the NJPDES Permit was updated to allow discharge of up to 1.15 MGD. He also commented on changes to the sewer service area over the past twenty years.

Committeeman Lois asked about the draft floodplain management ordinance. Mr. Ruschke said that the draft is an update to meet the minimum FEMA standards. He also said that the Township does not have many properties in a floodplain, and he does not recommend the additional contingencies allowed by the model ordinance.

Public Works

Mr. Shehady reported on the need to go out to bid for tree removal services.

Administration

Mr. Shehady reported on the actions that need to be taken to assist the Environmental Commission with their efforts to recertify for Sustainable Jersey. There will also be a resolution to confirm the hiring of an administrative assistant. Mr. Shehady further noted that there is a resolution needed for a grant for the municipal Alliance.

Committeeman Lois commented on planning for grant applications. Mr. Shehady explained that the Capital Plan is the plan that directs grant applications, and he described the process by which grants are chosen for applications. Committeeman Lois commented on potential grants for equipment for the fire departments. Mr. Shehady discussed his budget meetings with the fire departments, and said that plans are being made for the requests they have submitted.

Mr. Shehady gave an update on the opioid settlement funds and potential uses. He recommended that the Township wait until the additional \$17,000 is received before deciding on what program to enact to use the funds.

Clerk

Mr. LaConte discussed an outdated section of the Township Code that requires building subcode inspections of movie theaters before licenses are issued. He said that the UCC only allows building subcode inspections if there is an active permit. He recommended that this inspection be removed from the Code Book to conform with State laws, and noted that there are fire prevention and health department inspections still required.

Committeeman Lois expressed his objections to holding workshop meetings. He noted lack of attendance from the public and the press as a reason to discontinue the workshop format. He also objected to only taking official action at one meeting per month. Committeeman McHugh said that he finds the workshop format to be helpful, and he observed that he was more informed as a resident by observing the workshop meetings. Committeewoman Rowland opined that public attendance at Township Committee meetings is usually a symptom of problems, and the lack of attendance is a sign that things are going well. Deputy Mayor Choi said he is less concerned about meeting format and more concerned with making sure that the Township Committee is productive. Committeeman Lois expressed concern about not having agenda packets available online for workshop meetings. Mayor Ewald spoke in favor of workshop meetings, noting that they allow the Township Committee to take time to digest material before taking action.

Finance

Mr. Shehady explained the need for some reserve budget transfers. He also addressed the budget adoption schedule, noting that the cap bank ordinance will follow the same schedule as the Budget.

Regarding the Cash Management Plan, Mr. Shehady reported on meetings that have been held with the current depository and other banks to discuss options. Committeewoman Rowland reiterated her offer to meet with Committeeman Lois once the cash flow analysis is complete.

Police

Mr. Shehady said that the new officer will be sworn in at the next meeting.

Public Works

Mayor Ewald noted the proposed auction of surplus materials.

Mr. Shehady discussed the proposed resolutions authorizing purchase of Basic Aluminum Chloride and Sodium Hydroxide 50% Caustic Solution. He said that even though the chemicals will be bought through State Contract, a resolution from the Township Committee will be necessary due to the anticipated aggregate cost.

Recreation

Mr. Shehady said that the Pool Manager candidate has accepted the offer, and there will be a resolution at the next meeting to ratify the appointment. Mr. Shehady reported on the proposed 2024 Colony Pool Fees. Committeeman Lois said that higher rates do not necessarily lead to higher revenue. He also said that the Colony season needs to be marketed earlier in the year. Committeeman Lois also advocated for having the Colony Pool Committee become a functional

committee that provides input on the fee structure. The percentage increases for the fees were discussed.

Hearing of Citizens

Mayor Ewald opened the Hearing of Citizens.

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

Committeeman McHugh moved to adjourn at 9:37 PM. Deputy Mayor Choi seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Gregory J. LaConte
Municipal Clerk