

**MINUTES
TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
WORKSHOP MEETING
MARCH 7, 2023**

Mayor Felice called the Workshop Meeting of the Township Committee of the Township of Chatham to order at 6:32 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 4, 2023; notice was posted on the bulletin board in the main hallway of the Municipal Building on January 4, 2023; and notice was filed with the Township Clerk on January 4, 2023.

Roll Call

Answering present to the roll call were Committeewoman Ewald, Deputy Mayor Hamilton and Mayor Felice. Committeeman Choi and Committeeman Lois arrived at the beginning of Executive Session.

Executive Session

**RESOLUTION 2023-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 – Shared Service Agreements
 - b. Personnel Matters
 - c. 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.

Deputy Mayor Hamilton moved to adopt Resolution 2023-P-06 to enter Executive Session at 6:33 PM. Committeewoman Ewald seconded the motion.

Roll call: Committeeman Choi, Absent; Committeewoman Ewald, Aye; Committeeman Lois, Absent; Deputy Mayor Hamilton, Aye; Mayor Felice, Aye.

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

Mayor Felice led the Flag Salute

Mayor's Statement

Mayor Felice noted the recent passing of former Township employees David Wheelock and Joseph Smith. Both were Vietnam veterans. A moment of silence was held in their honor.

Mayor Felice welcomed some Boy Scouts from Troop 8 who are working toward a merit badge. For their benefit, Mayor Felice provided an overview of how workshop meetings work.

Hearing of Citizens

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

Reports

Library of the Chathams

Library of the Chathams Board of Trustees President Andy Hollander gave a presentation on the Library's activities in 2022. He emphasized that it was a year of welcoming the community back after the reduction of services during the pandemic. He also addressed plans for upgrades to the Library moving forward. Mr. Hollander further discussed the proposed Teen Room.

Committeewoman Ewald asked if there is a breakdown of the costs of the proposed upgrades. Mr. Shehady said that he and the Borough Administrator have been meeting with Library Director Karen Brodsky to discuss those costs. Mrs. Brodsky said that the humidity issue in the Library is the biggest problem to address.

Deputy Mayor Hamilton noted that the Friends of the Library Book Sale starts on Saturday.

Committeeman Lois asked if the Teen Space is intended to serve as a teen center. Mr. Hollander described the anticipated use of the Teen Space, and said he expects it to be a teen center.

Finance

Mr. Shehady addressed the need for an extension to the Temporary Budget.

Committeewoman Ewald asked when the full budget will be introduced. Mr. Shehady said it will be introduced at the April meeting.

Mr. Choi asked about the Capital Budget. Mr. Shehady said that the Capital Plan will be available after the Budget is introduced. CFO Debbie King clarified that the Operating Budget includes a Capital Plan. Mr. Shehady stated that Capital Ordinances are adopted to effectuate the Plan.

Engineering

Mr. Ruschke reported that the DOT approved going out to bid for the Lafayette Avenue Sidewalk Project, and he described the bidding process. Mr. Ruschke also noted that there are two additional SRTS Grants awarded to the Township that are still in the process.

Committeewoman Ewald said that a lot on Sunset Drive was clearcut, and she received complaints from residents. She said that the Tree Ordinance was going to be reviewed as part of Master Plan updates, however the update process did not occur. Committeewoman Ewald also noted that it appears easier for developers to clearcut a lot than for residents to take down a single tree, and the permit application is onerous.

Mr. Ruschke said that the tree ordinance winds up being reviewed roughly every four to five years. He noted that there is a balancing act between protecting trees and maintaining property owners' rights. Mr. Ruschke also noted attempts that have been made to regulate tree density.

Mayor Felice asked if the Committee wants to move forward with trying to simplify the tree ordinance.

Committeeman Lois advocated for simplifying the application process. He also noted that properties under development look bad when trees are removed but look much better once replacement trees and other landscaping have been planted.

Mayor Felice suggested that a subcommittee be formed. Committeewoman Ewald and Deputy Mayor Hamilton volunteered to serve on the subcommittee.

Mr. Ruschke addressed the pad from the Skate Park and said that the wetlands buffer includes the area where the pad is located. A DEP Permit would be needed for certain types of work. Planting of grasses and wildflowers through grant funding from NJ American Water was discussed. There was discussion of having Public Works do the removal of the base.

The setback issue on Yarmouth was discussed. Mr. Ruschke stated that there is a typographical error in the footnotes of the codified ordinances, and research will be performed to make the correction. He also said he will reach out to the Planning Board Chairman to see if the Board will be discussing the matter.

Mr. Shehady said that it was previously brought up by Committeeman Lois that there may be a loophole in the Township Code about impervious coverage. Committeewoman Ewald asked if the Code needs to be clarified. Mr. Ruschke advised clarification, and discussed pervious and impervious lot coverage. Mr. King will draft an ordinance for consideration.

Mr. Shehady said that the amendment to an easement will be on the next agenda for approval. Mr. King and Mr. Ruschke described the easement as opposed to how the sewer line was built.

Administration

Mr. Shehady said that the Tax Collector will have a report at the next workshop meeting.

Committeeman Lois asked about the Reserve for Uncollected Taxes, and if it will be used to the Township's greatest advantage. Mr. Shehady said that is part of budget development.

Mr. Shehady commented on the Opioid Settlement Grant, and there is not a rush to spend the money. Mayor Felice said she would like to include the Police Department in the discussion on how to spend the grant funds.

Committeewoman Ewald addressed a Morris County Historical Preservation Grant awarded to the Chatham Township Historical Society for the Red Brick Schoolhouse. As additional money is needed, the Township Committee has been requested to pass a resolution endorsing additional submissions. Mr. Shehady also stated that the Red Brick Schoolhouse has been awarded National and State Historical Status. Committeeman Lois recommended that Open Space Funds be used to advance money to the Historical Society. Mr. Shehady recommended that the budget process be completed, noting that recently the Open Space Trust has been treated as an open bank account with no consideration for debt service or operating costs.

Hearing of Citizens

Mayor Felice opened the Hearing of Citizens.

1. Christina Mott, Nicholson Drive, noted that although she serves as a trustee of the Library of the Chathams, the opinions expressed are her own. Mrs. Mott spoke in favor of the Teen Space at the Library. She also noted that the Library serves as a community center for a broad demographic.

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

Committeewoman Ewald moved to adjourn at 9:14 PM. Deputy Mayor Hamilton seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Gregory J. LaConte
Municipal Clerk