



**TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE  
TOWNSHIP OF MENDHAM  
April 9, 2018  
Regular Session 7:30 PM**

**ROLL CALL:**

Mr. Cioppettini	Present
Ms. Duarte	Present
Mr. Gisser	Present
Ms. Neibart	Present (By Conference Call)
Mayor Diegnan	Present

Also Present:

Deborah Bonanno, Administrator  
Beth Foley, Land Use Secretary

**SALUTE TO THE FLAG**

**STATEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE:**

Adequate notice of this meeting of the Township Committee of the Township of Mendham was given as required by the Open Public Meetings Act as follows: Notice was given to the Observer Tribune and Daily Record on January 4, 2018. Notice was posted on the Bulletin Board in the Township Offices and Notice was filed with the Township Clerk.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Mayor Diegnan** announced that the evening's agenda items would be discussed out of order from the agenda that was distributed.

**Ms. Bonanno** announced that the Township commenced with the Spring Brush pickup today. She said that normally the Township limits the width of the limbs to 4 inches in diameter; however, due to the storm, the acceptable width has been extended to 12 inches in diameter. At this time there is no end date to the brush pickup.

**Ms. Duarte** announced that the Environmental Commission is sponsoring a clean-up in honor of Earth Day on Tempe Wick Road, Sunday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> from 9am to noon. Volunteers can register on the Township's website. Additionally, on Saturday April 14<sup>th</sup>, in honor of Earth Day, the Schiff Nature Preserve is sponsoring a stream clean-up. Volunteers will meet at the Nature Center at 8:45 am, and the event will continue until noon. Schiff is also sponsoring an Earth Day fundraiser at Piattino's Restaurant on East Main Street in Mendham, and the restaurant will donate 15% of all proceeds to the Schiff Natural Lands Trust on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. Flyers for both events are available in Town Hall. The Patriots Race will take place on June 16<sup>th</sup> and free registration for the 5k race is now open. The race begins at the Community Club and continues up and down Tingley Road. The tradition of awarding medals will continue in five-year age groups, and there will be a kiddie fun run as well. Ms. Duarte will also be participating in this race.

## **PROCLAMATION**

### **Former Governor Chris Christie**

**Mayor Diegnan** read a proclamation in honor of Governor Christie, which declared his long and distinguished history of public service to the State of New Jersey, Morris County, Mendham Township and the United States of America. The Mayor also recognized Governor Christie's family's dedication to living in Mendham Township. Additionally, the tribute lauded a list of the Governor's accomplishments while in office, especially his commitment to combating the opioid crisis in New Jersey. The proclamation concluded with the Mayor extending best wishes to the Governor as he embarks on a new chapter in his life.

**Governor Christie** thanked the Mayor and the Committee for the proclamation and for the Committee's daily public service. He expressed how much he and his family love Mendham and how grateful he was to return to the community after his Governorship. The Governor also thanked the Committee for the recognition on behalf of his wife, Mary Pat, who was unable to attend the meeting due to a previous commitment.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

### **March 27, 2018 Regular session minutes**

Mayor Diegnan entertained a motion to adopt. Mr. Cioppettini moved. Ms. Duarte seconded. Roll call vote – all members present voted to approve.

### **March 27, 2018 Executive session**

Mayor Diegnan entertained a motion to adopt. Ms. Duarte moved. Mr. Cioppettini seconded. Roll call vote – members present voted to approve, with the exception of Mayor Diegnan, who abstained since he was not in attendance.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

### **West Morris Regional High School Budget**

#### **Mr. Michael Ben-David, Superintendent for West Morris Regional High School District**

Mr. Ben-David's presentation included a review of the district's current focus and an explanation of cost and funding. Mr. Ben-David explained that the main responsibility of the district is to focus on student growth and achievement and that this is accomplished by hiring excellent faculty and staff, creating sound programs, maintaining facilities, and ensuring that these tasks are sustainable. A transcript of the presentation is available through the Board of Education.

**Mr. Gisser** inquired as to whether the numbers presented in the revenue breakdown would be sustainable next year due to state aid increases and the fact that miscellaneous revenues increased. Mr. Ben-David responded that the two most challenging areas to be considered is the amount of state aid obtained along with the special education costs and that both costs could vary significantly every year. He emphasized that it is important to be prudent and conservative in planning. Mr. Gisser asked if the 22% allocation to special education has been fairly consistent, and Mr. Ben-David explained that the cost for special education continues to grow, not only for individual students, but also due to transportation costs for out of district students.

**Ms. Duarte** inquired as to how students and guests would navigate the new high school lobby during changing of classes. Mr. Ben-David explained that the new lobby procedures are for guests – not students. Currently, the front desk in the lobby is staffed by two people who would require guests to present their driver licenses. Ms. Duarte asked if there was a date scheduled for the staff/student safety panel, and Mr. Ben-David replied that coordination has been ongoing and that an announcement is targeted for Wednesday, April 25<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Duarte inquired about the status of the turf field, and Mr. Ben-David responded that the projected completion date would be some time in 2019. Also the lights will be installed in the existing stadium, and the second field will continue to be available to the community with extended hours. Ms. Duarte asked how the district is preparing for the enrollment decline, and Mr. Ben-David responded that yearly projections are made based on demographic studies.

**Mr. Cioppettini** thanked Mr. Ben-David for a fine presentation and for attempting to keep the tax payers' burden to a minimum.

**Mayor Diegnan** asked for an explanation with regards to the difference between a current officer and a Class Three officer. Chief Johnson responded that the Class Three officer must be recently retired (within 3-5 years), and that their sole responsibility is confined to school security. Mr. Ben-David added that the Class Three officer is in addition to the school resource officer.

Mayor Diegnan inquired as to whether there was a threshold point whereby enrollment affects staffing levels. Mr. Ben-David replied that enrollment affects staffing on an ongoing basis, which is why careful planning is vital. Mayor Diegnan commended Mr. Ben-David for the thoughtful

planning and attention to issues that attract people to the community. Mr. Ben-Davis commented that the administration benefits from having a tremendously, focused School Board.

**Mr. Cioppettini** wished the high school Mock Trial team well at the National Mock Trial Championship competition they will be attending in Reno, Nevada and that contributions are welcome from anyone wishing to help out with the cost of transportation to Reno for the team.

**Ms. Duarte** inquired whether the meeting could be open to the public for questions from the public with regards to the school budget, and Mr. Ben-David replied that school board meetings occur monthly and that questions should be addressed at those meetings.

## **RESOLUTIONS**

### **RESOLUTION 2018-56**

#### **APPOINTING EVAN THOMAS AS OEM COORDINATOR**

Mayor Diegnan entertained a motion to introduce. Mr. Cioppettini moved. Mr. Gisser seconded. This resolution was presented to reappoint Mr. Thomas for another three-year term, which is due to expire on December 31, 2020. Ms. Duarte commended Mr. Thomas for his exemplary work during the storms that occurred this winter season in addition to all of the volunteer work that he performs for the township.

Roll call vote - All members present voted to approve.

### **RESOLUTION 2018-57**

#### **PROCLAIMING MENDHAM TOWNSHIP A STIGMA FREE COMMUNITY**

Mayor Diegnan entertained a motion to introduce. Mr. Gisser moved. Mr. Cioppettini seconded.

The County of Morris has requested that all towns pass a resolution acknowledging that mental illness is an illness and a serious public health concern. It is often too embarrassing for individuals to come forward to obtain help and that by passing this resolution, the Township raises awareness for this issue and to the fact that there are resources available in the County and in the community to anyone who may need such services.

Ms. Duarte stated that she and Mayor Henry of Mendham Borough plan to meet regarding creation of a task force to address this issue.

Roll call vote - All members present voted to approve.

### **RESOLUTION 2018-58**

#### **AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF BILLS**

Mayor Diegnan entertained a motion to introduce. Mr. Gisser moved. Mr. Cioppettini seconded.

Roll call vote - All members present voted to approve.

## **DISCUSSION/COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Ms. Bonanno** presented a follow-up report on the concerns that Mr. Curtis expressed at the last meeting regarding the dangerous curve on Old Brookside Road along with the house that is in disrepair on that road. She reported that the Township Construction Code Official issued a notice to the property owner to either board up or demolish the house. In addition, the Township Engineer will offer recommendations regarding possible resolutions to the dangerous curve. The curve situation is challenging due to the narrowness of the road.

**Mr. Gisser** complimented both Dr. Constantino, Superintendent of the K-8 school district and Chief Johnson on their presentation addressing school security measures.

**Mr. Cioppettini** reported that the Finance Committee is moving forward in solving the issue of fire equipment for both fire stations and that a meeting will be scheduled with both Fire Chiefs on this matter. He also mentioned that the high school Mock Trial Team is short on funds for their transportation to Reno, Nevada and that the Rotary Club is sponsoring a dinner to support this trip.

**Ms. Duarte** announced that Mr. Gisser received an award at the Brookside Engine Company's award ceremony, and she offered congratulations to both the Company and Mr. Gisser for their excellent service. Ms. Duarte inquired about the status of the Master Plan review and if public input could be entertained at this point in time. Mr. Cioppettini replied that the Master Plan is the responsibility of the Planning Board and that the Master Plan is scheduled to be completed by June 1st. The appropriate venue for public questions would be at the next Planning Board meeting on May 16<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Duarte reported that the Ad Hoc Communications Committee is finalizing the communications survey.

**Ms. Neibart** asked whether Mr. Ben-David's presentation could be electronically provided to her. She reported that she has been working on cross-township communications, and when she returns from her overseas trip, she will have more information to report to the Committee at the meeting on April 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Mayor Diegnan** reported that the Recreation Committee is close to completing the Phase 1 playground plan and that the playground may be open sometime in June. Additionally, he reported that the Mendham Township Wildlife Management Committee had another successful year and that they are starting to plan conservation efforts for next year. The Environmental Commission is planning ideas for trail stewardship and more clarity regarding proposals for Pitney Farm is forthcoming in the near future. The Mayor thanked all of the Committees for the great work done this year.

## **HEARING PERSONS PRESENT**

Mayor Diegnan entertained a motion. Ms. Duarte moved. Mr. Cioppettini seconded.  
Roll call vote: All members voted to approve.

**Ms. Diana Orban Brown** of Ironia Road approached the microphone. Ms. Brown commented that she had expected to see on the agenda a revision to Resolution 2018-51 addressing the appointment of the engineer because it lacked detail such as the length of the contract and the rate. Mayor Diegnan replied that he did sign a resolution amending that issue and that a copy could be provided to both her and to the public online. Ms. Brown also suggested that in the future the meeting agenda should include a list of discussion items, if the Committee anticipates that a topic may elicit conversation. Ms. Brown also suggested that since very few people attended the Finance Committee Open Space presentation on Feb. 12<sup>th</sup> that the Committee should further explain the topic to residents before the next meeting on April 24<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Brown posed the question as to how the municipal tax rate could remain at under 2% next year utilizing savings from the reduction in Open Space taxes this year. Mr. Gisser explained that by Township ordinance, Open Space tax can only be utilized to pay debt. The focus of the Finance Committee is to pay off Open Space debt and that the Committee does not foresee a need for any sizable municipal tax increase. Ms. Orban Brown commended the work of the Finance Committee. Mr. Gisser added that the Open Space debt continues to decline with the last of that debt paid off in 2024.

**Mr. Peter Dumovic** of Shelton Road approached the microphone. Mr. Dumovic announced that there are two upcoming fundraisers at the Community Library. On Friday May 4<sup>th</sup> there will be a wine and cheese event from 7:30-9:30 pm featuring wine from 56 Degrees in Bernardsville. Also, Shredder Day will occur on May 5<sup>th</sup> in the Township parking lot from 8:30-noon and will allow residents to dispose of their documents in a secure way.

**Mayor Diegnan** entertained a motion to close. Mr. Gisser moved. Mr. Cioppettini seconded.  
Roll call vote: All members voted to approve.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**Mayor Diegnan** entertained a motion. Mr. Gisser moved. Ms. Duarte seconded.  
Roll call vote: All members voted to approve.

Respectfully submitted,  
Denise Bobinski  
Mendham Township