

TOWNSHIP OF HARDWICK
TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY April 17, 2024

OPENING ROLL CALL:

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Jacksic at 7:00 pm. Present was Committeeman Lovell. Also, present were DPW Supervisor Campbell, Township Attorney Igor Bykov, and Municipal Clerk Shipps. Deputy Mayor Meuse was absent.

FLAG SALUTE:

SUNSHINE STATEMENT:

“Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act, P.L. 1975, Ch. 231 setting forth the time, date, place, and purpose of this Public Meeting through a legal notice published in New Jersey Herald and The Express times following the Township’s Annual Reorganization Meeting at which time the 2024 meeting schedule was adopted.”

Christine Dunbar- Paulins Kill Watershed Coordinator:

Ms. Dunbar provided the committee with brochures with programs on how to keep well and surface water healthy and clean. Ms. Dunbar explained projects that she has been involved with regarding water quality testing which is done two times a year in three locations of the Paulinskill. Planting trees in a flood plain is also another project Ms. Dunbar has been working on.

Ms. Dunbar explained the river friendly farm program. This program reviews five factors of the farm’s quality of soil, nutrients, pesticides, livestock, and water quality. If qualified the farmer will be presented with a plaque to place on the farm.

The committee thanked Ms. Dunbar for the valuable information she provided.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No public comment.

DEPARTMENT REPORT:

DPW Supervisor Tom Campbell reported that all the roads have been cleared from the recent wind. He stated that cleanup week will be held May 6- May 11.

CFO Rolef spoke about the municipal building roof and the trouble that DPW Supervisor is having in obtaining quotes with prevailing wage. Attorney Bykov was asked to investigate to see if the township could purchase the material and have a company install the roof. Attorney Bykov will report at the next meeting.

Bob Wolff- Fire Tower & Stillwater Hose Company.

Mr. Wolff stated that there are a total of five full-time employees for the fire tower. Discussion took place regarding the 911 calls and the delay that it takes for Stillwater Hose Company to

receive these calls. Mayor Jacksic will follow up with Deputy Mayor Meuse for a meeting with Warren County 911.

MINUTES:

February 21, 2024, Executive Session Meeting Minutes.

February 21, 2024, Public Session Meeting Minutes.

Motion made by Lovell, second by Jacksic and carried to approve the above-mentioned minutes.

PROCLAMATION:

Older American Month 2024.

Whereas May is Older Americans Month, a time for us to recognize and honor Hardwick Township older adults and their immense influence on every facet of American society; and

Whereas, through their wealth of life experience and wisdom, older adults guide our younger generations and carry forward abundant cultural and historical knowledge; and

Whereas, older Americans improve our communities through intergenerational relationships, community service, civic engagement, and many other activities; and

Whereas, communities benefit when people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds have the opportunity to participate and live independently; and

Whereas Hardwick Township must ensure that older Americans have the resources and support needed to stay involved in their communities — reflecting our commitment to inclusivity and connectedness; and

Now, therefore, we of Hardwick Township, do hereby proclaim May 2024 as Older Americans Month. This year's theme, "Powered by Connection," emphasizes the profound impact of meaningful interactions and social connection on the well-being and health of older adults in our community.

We call upon all residents to join me in recognizing the contributions of our older citizens and promoting programs and activities that foster connection, inclusion, and support for older adults.

Mayor Jacksic read the Older American Month Proclamation.

ORDINANCE:

Introduction:

2024-01_Ordinance of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, State of New Jersey Amending and Supplementing Section 13-90A Entitled” Application Requirements” of Chapter 13- Land Development to Establish a Procedure by which a Resident can Submit a Zoning Map Change Request.

WHEREAS, the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick has been made aware that no procedure or policy exists pertaining to a Zone Change request made by a party, seeking a change and/or an amendment to the Township’s Zoning Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee believes that by establishing such procedure, the Township staff and professionals will be better equipped to accommodate such a request; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee further believes that such amendment is in the best interest of the Township and its residents.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, that Section 13-90A entitled “Fees Enumerated” of Chapter 13 – Land Development –to establish a procedure instructing a party, seeking a change and/or an amendment to the Township’s Zoning Ordinance, on how to make a Zone Change request as follows:

SECTION I:

Additions to this Section shall be delineated by underlined text thusly.

§ 13-81. Application Requirements.

a. [. . .]

f. Request to Amend Zoning Map. Any party requesting a zone change shall do so on a Zone Change Request form available at the Township Clerk's office, accompanied by an application fee of two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250.00), as well as a one-thousand-dollar (\$1,000.00) escrow fee. Any such request shall be submitted to the Township Clerk. Attached to the request shall be an appropriate scaled map identifying the area to be rezoned in specific relation to the neighborhood area and in relation to the entire Township. Zone boundary lines shall be provided in an accurately and clearly drawn format for an area within 1,500 feet of the proposed zone change area.

SECTION II. Repealer.

Any article, section, paragraph, subsection, clause, or other provision of the Code of the Township of Hardwick inconsistent with the provisions of this Ordinance is hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistency.

SECTION III. Severability.

The various parts, sections, and clauses of this Ordinance are hereby declared to be severable. If any part, sentence, paragraph, section, or clause is adjudged to be unconstitutional or invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction the remainder of this Ordinance shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION IV. Effective Date.

This Ordinance shall take effect upon final passage and publication as provided by law.

Motion made by Lovell, second by Jacksic and carried to Introduce Ordinance 2024-01.

Introduction:

2024-02 Ordinance to Exceed the Municipal Budget Appropriation Limits and to Establish A Cap Bank (N.J.S.A 40A:4-45.14).

WHEREAS, the Local Government Cap Law, N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.1 et seq., provides that in the preparation of its annual budget, a municipality shall limit any increase in said budget to 2.5% unless authorized by ordinance to increase it to 3.5% over the previous year’s final appropriations, subject to certain exceptions; and,

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.15a provides that a municipality may, when authorized by ordinance, appropriate the difference between the amount of its actual final appropriation and the 3.5% percentage rate as an exception to its final appropriations in either of the next two succeeding years; and,

WHEREAS, the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick in the County of Warren finds it advisable and necessary to increase its CY 2023 budget by up to 3.5% over the previous year's final appropriations, in the interest of promoting the health, safety and welfare of the citizens; and,

WHEREAS, the Township Committee hereby determines that a 3.5% increase in the budget for said year, amounting to \$41,698.30 in excess of the increase in final appropriations otherwise permitted by the Local Government Cap Law, is advisable and necessary; and,

WHEREAS the Township Committee hereby determines that any amount authorized hereinabove that is not appropriated as part of the final budget shall be retained as an exception to final appropriation in either of the next two succeeding years.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, in the County of Warren, a majority of the full authorized membership of this governing body affirmatively concurring, that, in the CY 2024 budget year, the final appropriations of the Township of Hardwick shall, in accordance with this ordinance and N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14, be increased by 3.5%, amounting to \$41,698.30 and that the CY 2024 municipal budget for the Township of Hardwick be approved and adopted in accordance with this ordinance; and,

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that any that any amount authorized hereinabove that is not appropriated as part of the final budget shall be retained as an exception to final appropriation in either of the next two succeeding years; and,

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that a certified copy of this ordinance as introduced be filed with the Director of the Division of Local Government Services within 5 days of introduction; and,

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that a certified copy of this ordinance upon adoption, with the recorded vote included thereon, be filed with said Director within 5 days after such adoption.

Motion made by Lovell, second by Jacksic and carried to Introduce Ordinance 2024-02.

CONSENT AGENDA:

2024-36– Self-Examination of Budget Resolution.

WHEREAS N.J.S.A.40A:4-78b has authorized the Local Finance Board to adopt rules that permit municipalities in sound fiscal condition to assume the responsibility, normally granted to the Director of the Division of Local Government Services, of conducting the annual budget examination; and,

WHEREAS, N.J.A.C.5:30-7 was adopted by the Local Finance Board on February 11, 1997; and,

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.A.C.5:30-7.2 thru 7.5 the Township of Hardwick has been declared eligible to participate in the program by the Division of Local Government Services, and the Chief Financial Officer has determined that the Township of Hardwick meets the necessary conditions to participate in the program for the 2024 budget year, so now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick that in accordance with N.J.A.C.5:30-7.6a & b, and based upon the Chief Financial Officer's certification, the governing body has found the budget has met the following requirements:

1. That with reference to the following items, the amounts have been calculated pursuant to law and appropriated as such in the budget:
 - a. Payment of interest and debt redemption charges
 - b. Deferred charges and statutory expenditures
 - c. Cash deficit of preceding year
 - d. Reserve for uncollected taxes
 - e. Other reserves and non-disbursement items
 - f. Any inclusions of amounts required for school purposes
2. That the provisions relating to limitation on increases of appropriations pursuant to N.J.S.A.40A:45.2 and appropriations for exceptions to limits on appropriations found at 40A:4-45.3 et seq. are fully met. (Complies with the "CAP" law.)
3. That the budget is in such form, arrangement and content as required by the Local Budget Law and N.J.A.C.5:30-4 and 5:30-5.
4. That pursuant to the Local Budget Law:
 - a. All estimates of revenue are reasonable, accurate and correctly stated;
 - b. Items of appropriation are properly set forth;
 - c. In itemization, form, arrangement and content, the budget will permit the exercise of the comptroller function within the municipality.
5. The budget and associated amendments have been introduced, publicly advertised and adopted in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Local Budget Law, except that failure to meet the deadlines of N.J.S.A.40A:4-5, shall not prevent such certification.
6. That all other applicable statutory requirements have been fulfilled.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Director of the Division of Local Government Services.

2024-37 Approving Payment of Vouchers.

WHEREAS all claims as reviewed and listed on the attached bill list are approved as reasonable and proper claims against the Township of Hardwick to be paid from its current fund; and

WHEREAS, the CFO has certified that funds are available to pay such claims.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Hardwick, County of Warren, State of New Jersey that the bills on the attached bill listed are authorized to be paid.

Motion made by Lovell, second by Jacksic and approved by roll call vote: Lovell—yes, Meuse—absent, Jacksic—yes, the April 17, 2024, Consent Agenda.

Introduction of the 2024 Budget.

Motion made by Lovell, second by Jacksic and carried to approve the Introduction of the 2024 Budget.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Spring Valley Rd update.

No update.

RAVE text update.

Tabled.

Cell Tower Lease.

Attorney Bykov stated that a revision needs to be made to the lease regarding tenants of the cell tower.

Motion made by Lovell, second by Jacksic and carried for Attorney Bykov to prepare the revision to the lease.

Tree Removal Sample Ordinance.

Tabled for a future meeting.

Stormwater Ordinance-updated 3/29/2024.

Ordinance will be on the agenda for introduction at the next meeting.

Vass Farmstead Lease.

Mayor Jacksic reached out to Senator Steinhardt who will reach out to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection to get the lease within the next week.

Post Cards.

Have been received and will be mailed out in the next few days.

NEW BUSINESS:

Altice/ Optimum Township Lease was tabled.

CORRESPONDENCE:

March 28, 2024, Warren County Mosquito Control Commission

RE: Use of Drones in Mosquito Control.

April 5, 2024, Sussex County NJ

RE: Public Notice – CR 521 Maple Ave.

April 11, 2024, Board of County Commissioner of the County of Warren

RE: Resolution 235-24 Resolution in Support of Senate Bill S-725 Concerning Unlawful Occupancy of Dwellings and Supplementing Title 2C of the New Jersey Statutes of the State of New Jersey.

Resolution for support of the County resolution 235-24 will be on the agenda at the next township meeting.

TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY:

Attorney Bykov reported that there has been no correspondence from Mr. Anderson or his attorney.

TOWNSHIP CLERK:

Furniture has been picked out and a resolution will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Committeeman Lovell

Thanked the DPW for the signs that were hung around the town.

Mayor Jacksic

Mayor Jacksic read the call outs for the Animal Control.

Mayor Jacksic thanked the local fire departments for their efforts on Mallard Rd.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

There were no matters to be discussed in the executive session.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion made by Jacksic second by Lovell and carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Kristin Shipps, RMC