

# MINUTES FOR BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP CONFERENCE MEETING

Monday, May 4, 2020

7:00 PM – Mayor’s Conference Room, 1 Municipal Plaza, 2nd Floor, Municipal Building



## I. Sunshine Compliance Statement

Mayor Venezia called the meeting to Order at 7:00 p.m.

Notice of the time, date, location and agenda of this meeting, to the extent then known was provided at least forty-eight

(48) hours prior to the commencement of this meeting in the following manner pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 231 of the Law of 1975 (The Open Public Meeting Act).

1. By posting such notice on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building, and
2. By email notification generated by IQM2 to the offices of the Independent Press, Bloomfield Life, the Star Ledger, Patch, Baristanet and TAPinto Bloomfield

## II. Pledge of Allegiance

This was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

## III. Roll Call

Roll Call showed the following:

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Jenny Mundell	First Ward Councilwoman	Present	
Nicholas Joanow	Second Ward Councilman	Present	
Sarah Cruz	Third Ward Councilwoman	Present	
Wartyna Davis	Councilwoman	Present	
Ted Gamble	Councilman	Present	
Richard Rockwell	Councilman	Present	
Michael J. Venezia	Mayor	Present	

### A. Absent

**B. Also Present:** Louise Palagano, Municipal Clerk; Michael Parlavecchio, Township Attorney; Sam DeMaio, Public Safety Director; Jean-guy Lauture, IT Director; Kim Duva, Personnel Director; Catherine Finkler, Deputy Municipal Clerk

## IV. Presentation

There were no presentations at this time.

## V. Public Comment

There were no public comments at this time.

**VI. TOWNSHIP ADMINISTRATOR:****1. 2020 Budget Presentation**

Township Administrator Matt Watkins presented the 2020 budget to the Mayor, Town Council and residents. Mr. Watkins talked about the revenue loss and extraordinary expenses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. He projected the budget to be \$90 million plus utilities which adds about \$6 million. The budget is only increasing by 2.75 percent. The township is only looking at a tax increase that is the same as last year – annually on the average home which would be about \$10.00. Mr. Watkins also explained how the reval has changed the numbers, but the rate has dropped. In 2019, the tax rate was 1.515 per \$1,000 but now the rate has changed to 1.163 which is a 35 cents per \$1,000 rate change. Mr. Watkins also said there will not be a certified tax rate until after September 1, 2020 when the state adopts their budget. He also spoke about the unknowns and changes looking ahead that any government faces at this moment. He said the Township tried to keep the budget as small as possible and aren't doing any capital planning at this time except for the ongoing projects like Lion Gate and the water improvements. Mr. Watkins did note that the Township had to increase the costs of insurances because they are self-insured and that so far the Township has used \$12 million of their fund balance. The biggest concern is looking ahead to third and fourth quarter taxes and how they will impact next year. There are still a lot of unknowns later this year and heading into next year. The budget will be introduced by resolution on May 18 and set to be adopted on June 22.

**2. Bloomfield Response to COVID-19 Pandemic**

Township Administrator Matt Watkins provided an update on the Township's response to the COVID-19 including bringing part of the work force who has been remote, back to the office starting May 11<sup>th</sup>. On May 18<sup>th</sup> another portion of the staff will return. By May 26, full staff should be at Town Hall, however, it will still be closed to the public until the state says otherwise. Mr. Watkins talked about the safety measures put into place for township employees as well as the public for when they can enter the building again. Some of these measures include gloves, masks and temperature taking for employees as well as Plexiglas installation in public areas for both the employees and residents. He also showed a chart which has the trending average of COVID-19 cases in Bloomfield which has a downward trend since a peak on April 11, 2020. Mayor Michael Venezia commented on the trend and discussed the importance of contact tracing, especially if a new wave hits in the fall as predicted. Councilwoman Wartyna Davis asked about employees impacted from the school closures. Mr. Watkins explained how by law those employees have been placed on administrative leave for the moment. Mayor Venezia also said the State Civil Service Commission has ruled in this situation that employees are allowed to work from home or stay home without consequence of loss of sick or vacation time until school is over. Personal Director Kim Duva said this applies to any child under 18 or a child older than that with a disability who cannot care for themselves. Councilwoman Davis asked for more details on the contact tracing and if there is a way to improve the lag time. Mayor Venezia agreed that changes do need to be made.

**3. Discussion of Award of Contract - Lion Gate Phase 2**

Township Administrator Matt Watkins discussed the results of the bid for Lion Gate Phase 2. They received a low bid of about \$4.5 million dollars to finish the upper field - the soccer field and the parking lot. They left off the field house and the environmental center to stick to the current budget. Mr. Watkins recommended approving Your Way Construction, Inc. for the award of contract. Councilman Joanow asked whether the low bid included alternate number one and two and Mr. Watkins responded yes.

The recommendation was approved for the adoption of the appropriate Resolution. Vote showed the following:

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [6 TO 0]</b>	<b>Next: 5/18/2020 7:00 PM</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Jenny Mundell, First Ward Councilwoman	
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Wartyna Davis, Councilwoman	
<b>AYES:</b>	Mundell, Cruz, Davis, Gamble, Rockwell, Venezia	
<b>ABSTAIN:</b>	Nicholas Joanow	

#### **4. Resolution Adopting Municipal Services Act Agreement**

Township Administrator Matt Watkins talked about a Municipal Services Act Agreement for the Forest Hills Apartment Complex that would allow them to pick up their own garbage. Under the law the Township will have to reimburse them an agreed amount which the Township Attorney has negotiated.

The recommendation was approved for the adoption of the appropriate Resolution. Vote showed the following:

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>	<b>Next: 5/18/2020 7:00 PM</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Nicholas Joanow, Second Ward Councilman	
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Sarah Cruz, Third Ward Councilwoman	
<b>AYES:</b>	Mundell, Joanow, Cruz, Davis, Gamble, Rockwell, Venezia	

#### **5. BCA Audit Waiver**

Township Administrator Matt Watkins spoke about a letter from the Director of the Bloomfield Center Alliance asking that the 2019 audit be waived due to the fire that impacted their headquarters in January. Councilwoman Jenny Mundell commented that going forward the BCA should look into digitizing their records for data storage. Councilwoman Davis responded that their data is being compiled and stored in both a cloud and hard drive now.

The recommendation was approved for the adoption of the appropriate Resolution. Vote showed the following:

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>	<b>Next: 5/18/2020 7:00 PM</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Wartyna Davis, Councilwoman	
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Richard Rockwell, Councilman	
<b>AYES:</b>	Mundell, Joanow, Cruz, Davis, Gamble, Rockwell, Venezia	

**6. Stop Sign Intersection**

Township Administrator Matt Watkins spoke about the request from the Police Department to put a four way stop sign at the intersection of Liberty Street and Walnut Street.

Vote showed the following:

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>FIRST READING [UNANIMOUS]</b>	<b>Next: 5/18/2020 7:00 PM</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Richard Rockwell, Councilman	
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Ted Gamble, Councilman	
<b>AYES:</b>	Mundell, Joanow, Cruz, Davis, Gamble, Rockwell, Venezia	

**VII. TOWNSHIP ATTORNEY:**

**1. Update to Towing Ordinance**

Township Attorney Michael Parlavecchio talked about a potential update to the Township’s Towing Ordinance. Mr. Parlavecchio suggested expanding the limit to 2.5 miles from the Township’s limits to cast a wider net and keep the three licensees. Mayor Venezia disagreed because he believes it is more beneficial to residents to keep this within the town boundaries. He wants to make sure when someone gets their car towed they have easy access to retrieve it. Mr. Parlavecchio said they were trying to keep it close to the town, but he understands and this was just an effort to get a little more competition. Councilwoman Davis asked why there was a need to increase competition. Public Safety Director Sam DeMaio explained that to expand to other companies there were no other companies but the one in the Township so they would have to expand the borders outside the Township. Mayor Venezia asked whether other companies could rent land within the Town and Director DeMaio explained the criteria. Both Mr. Parlavecchio and Director DeMaio agreed they wouldn’t want residents to travel far for towing purposes and said they can revisit the ordinance again. Mayor Venezia stressed the need to keep this within the town limits for residents to make it as easy as possible for them.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>DISCUSSION NO VOTE</b>
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**VIII. FINANCE DIRECTOR:**

**1. Tax Exemption for Permanently Disabled Veteran**

Township Administrator Matt Watkins talked about the cancellation of taxes for a disabled veteran.

The recommendation was approved for the adoption of the appropriate Resolution. Vote showed the following:

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>	<b>Next: 5/18/2020 7:00 PM</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Jenny Mundell, First Ward Councilwoman	
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Nicholas Joanow, Second Ward Councilman	
<b>AYES:</b>	Mundell, Joanow, Cruz, Davis, Gamble, Rockwell, Venezia	

**IX. TOWNSHIP ENGINEER:**

**1. Change Order No 1 - Final - Clark Avenue Lead Service Replacements**

Township Administrator Matt Watkins talked about the one change order and final close out of a contract for the Clark Avenue Lead Service Replacement Line. The small change order was \$9243.87

which was a 4.5% increase because more work was performed there than what was originally considered.

The recommendation was approved for the adoption of the appropriate Resolution. Vote showed the following:

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>	<b>Next: 5/18/2020 7:00 PM</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Sarah Cruz, Third Ward Councilwoman	
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Nicholas Joanow, Second Ward Councilman	
<b>AYES:</b>	Mundell, Joanow, Cruz, Davis, Gamble, Rockwell, Venezia	

## **2. Emergency Sewer Main Replacement - Vicinity of 1169 Broad Street**

Township Administrator Matt Watkins talked about the emergency sewer main replacement in the area of 1169 Broad Street which would be \$24,000.

The recommendation was approved for the adoption of the appropriate Resolution. Vote showed the following:

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>	<b>Next: 5/18/2020 7:00 PM</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Nicholas Joanow, Second Ward Councilman	
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Sarah Cruz, Third Ward Councilwoman	
<b>AYES:</b>	Mundell, Joanow, Cruz, Davis, Gamble, Rockwell, Venezia	

## **X. TOWNSHIP CLERK**

### **1. ABC Renewals**

Township Clerk Louise Palagano explained the annual review of incident reports for the ABC Licenses.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>DISCUSSED</b>
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## **XI. TOWNSHIP COUNCIL**

### **1. Board of Health Appointment (Venezia)**

Mayor Michael Venezia requested that Chelsea Fosse be appointed to a vacant position on the Board of Health.

The recommendation was approved for the adoption of the appropriate Resolution. Vote showed the following:

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>	<b>Next: 5/18/2020 7:00 PM</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Jenny Mundell, First Ward Councilwoman	
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Nicholas Joanow, Second Ward Councilman	
<b>AYES:</b>	Mundell, Joanow, Cruz, Davis, Gamble, Rockwell, Venezia	

### **2. Liaison Reports**

Councilwoman Davis talked about the upcoming virtual Voter Information Session which will be held by the Civil Rights Commission on May 27 and Township Clerk Louise Palagano will present voter information and answer questions about the upcoming primary and general election. Councilwoman Davis gave an update on the BCA and their strategic planning around upcoming events like Dinner under the Stars or the Harvest Fest that may be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Councilwoman Davis also discussed the Health Department working with Toni's Kitchen to provide meals to people at Park

United Methodist Church and Heritage Village. The Health Department has also been working with the Board of Education and Bloomfield Police to provided meals at four schools in town. Councilwoman Davis and Councilwoman Cruz both handed out food at Carteret School last Friday. Councilwoman Davis encouraged residents to mail checks to the Town Hall for food drives because there are residents in need. Mayor Venezia also said residents can purchase gift cards and send them to the Health Department who will then distribute them to families in need.

Councilman Rockwell explained how the Recreation Department paired up with the Historical Society for five day history quiz challenge which was very successful. About 60 residents participated and would like more.

## **XII. Items for Action**

Since the Council would not be returning from Closed Session, Mayor Michael Venezia asked for a motion on the Bill List action item. The item was moved by Councilman Gamble, seconded by Councilwoman Davis and approved by the Council. The Council headed into Closed Session at 7:49 P.M. with a motion by Councilwoman Cruz which was seconded by Councilman Joanow.

### **1. Approved Bill List May 4, 2020**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Ted Gamble, Councilman
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Wartyna Davis, Councilwoman
<b>AYES:</b>	Mundell, Joanow, Cruz, Davis, Gamble, Rockwell, Venezia

## **XIII. CLOSED SESSION:**

**WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 allows for a Public Body to go into closed session during a Public Meeting, and**

**WHEREAS, the Governing Body of Township of Bloomfield has deemed it necessary to go into closed session to discuss certain matters which are exempted from the Public; and**

**WHEREAS, the regular meeting of this Governing Body will reconvene;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township of Bloomfield will go into closed session for the following reason(s) as outlined in N.J.S.A. 10:4-12:**

**Any matter which, by express provision of Federal Law, State Statute or Rule of Court shall be rendered confidential or excluded from discussion in public;**

**Any matter in which the release of information would impair a right to receive funds from the federal government;**

**Any matter the disclosure of which constitutes an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy;**

**Any collective bargaining agreement, or the terms and conditions of which are proposed for inclusion in any collective bargaining agreement, including the negotiation of terms and conditions with employees or representatives of employees of the public body;**

**Any matter involving the purpose, lease or acquisition of real property with public funds, the setting of bank rates or investment of public funds where it could adversely affect the public interest if discussion of such matters were disclosed;**

**Any tactics and techniques utilized in protecting the safety and property of the public, provided that their disclosure could impair such protection. Any investigations of violations or possible violations of the law;**

**Any pending or anticipated litigation or contract negotiation in which the public body is or may become a party. Any matters falling within the attorney-client privilege, to the extent that confidentiality is required in order for the attorney to exercise his ethical duties as a lawyer;**

**Any matter involving the employment, appointment, termination of employment, terms and conditions of employment, evaluation of the performance, promotion or disciplining of any specific prospective public officer or employee or current public officer or employee employed or appointed by the public body, unless all individual employees or appointees whose rights could be adversely affected request in writing that such matter or matters be discussed at a public meeting;**

**Any deliberation of a public body occurring after a public hearing that may result in the imposition of a specific civil penalty upon the responding party or the suspension or loss of a license or permit belonging to the responding party as a result of an act of omission for which the responding party bears responsibility;**

**Any matter involving the employment, appointment, termination of employment, disciplinary action unless individual in writing requests a public meeting;**

**Any deliberations of the public body occurring after a public hearing that may result in the imposition of specific civil penalty.**

#### **XIV. Adjournment**

Mayor Venezia asked for motion for adjournment which was moved by Councilman Nick Joanow, seconded by Councilwoman Jenny Mundell, and agreed to by all of the Councilmembers present. The meeting adjourned without going back into Closed Session at 8:48 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

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Louise M. Palagano, Municipal Clerk