

Town of East Hampton
Town Council Regular Meeting
Tuesday, March 24, 2020
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

MINUTES

Present: Chairman Pete Brown, Vice Chairman Dean Markham, Council Members Tim Feegel, Derek Johnson, Barbara Moore, Mark Philhower, and Kevin Reich and Town Manager David Cox.

Call to Order

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda:

A motion was made by Mr. Markham, seconded by Mr. Johnson, to adopt the agenda as written. Voted (7-0).

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Moore, seconded by Mr. Markham, to approve the minutes of the Town Council Public Hearing of March 10, 2020 as written. Voted (6-0-1). Mr. Johnson abstained.

A motion was made by Mr. Philhower, seconded by Mr. Johnson, to approve the minutes of the Town Council Regular Meeting of March 10, 2020 as amended. Voted (7-0)

Public Remarks

None

Presentations

None

Bids & Contracts

None

Resolution/ Ordinances/ Policies/ Proclamation

None

Continued Business

None

New Business

Update on Coronavirus Related to Town Operations

Mr. Cox provided a special Town Manager Report that focuses on the Town's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and how the town departments are handling operations. The report will be included with the minutes filed in the Town Clerk's office and is available on the Town website.

Chairman Brown thanked the members of the education staff for the work they have done for the students and distance learning. East Hampton is way out in front of other towns in distance learning. Paul Smith appreciated hearing this and noted the real heroes are the cafeteria and custodial staff working on food preparation and delivery for the students.

Update & Discussion on Budget Process and Council Direction Regarding Budget Preparation

Mr. Cox indicated in his report that the budget process has been delayed in response to the pandemic and the Governor's emergency declarations. The Governor has authorized and mandated some changes to the method by which towns will be approving budgets for the upcoming fiscal year. In consultation with the Town Attorney, the Finance Director and Town Manager are developing a resolution for consideration of the Town Council that will outline a new process. The process will utilize as much of the normal process as possible including a public hearing plus a written public comments period coupled with the usual Board of finance workshops. It is anticipated that the Board of Finance will still recommend a budget to the Council but, in accordance with the Governor's directive, the Town Council will act as the final approval authority.

Mr. Johnson asked that the resolution and the Governor's declarations be posted to the Town website as soon as possible. He also asked questions about the municipal debt market. Mr. Jylkka indicated the town is not in the market to issue debt until September. Mr. Markham asked if two separate resolutions – one for the budget process and one for the process for Council adoption – be done if possible. Mr. Philhower recommended the town and school look at the budgets and consider the recommendations in Alannah Coshow's letter. Her letter will be included with the minutes filed in the Town Clerk's Office. Mr. Philhower asked if the Governor may consider waiving fees on delinquent tax bills. Mr. Cox will continue to monitor the Governor's declarations.

Potential Action on Fee Waivers for Various Town Services

Council members discussed waiving fees for the transfer station in order to begin accepting bulky waste again.

A motion was made by Mr. Philhower, seconded by Mr. Feegel, to waive fees at the Transfer Station for bulky waste with the limitation of one load per day and to exclude tires, until the State of Emergency is lifted by the Governor. Voted (7-0)

Town Manager Report

Mr. Cox announced the resignation of the current Assessor Gail Gwiazdowski. The position will be posted this week.

Mr. Markham asked for an update on the progress of the list of pending building permits as discussed at the last Council meeting. Mr. Cox will follow up.

Appointments

None

Tax Refunds

None

Public Remarks

Chris Goff, Chairman of the Board of Education, thanked Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith for making everything happen with education during the pandemic. He said the Board of Education can distribute information on the transfer station change. He also asked that Alannah Coshow's letter be sent to the Board of Education.

Communications, Correspondence & Announcement

Chairman Brown thanked Mr. Cox and the town staff for their assistance during this time.

Mr. Philhower asked that the attorney opinion on cancelling meetings be incorporated into the Council by-laws/policies. This will be on a future agenda.

Mr. Feegel thanked the school system for all the work they have done on distance learning for the students.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Mr. Reich, seconded by Ms. Moore, to adjourn the meeting at 7:30pm. Voted (7-0)

Respectfully Submitted,

Cathy Sirois
Recording Clerk