

**BOROUGH OF WESTWOOD
RESCHEDULED PUBLIC MEETING
OF THE MAYOR & COUNCIL
MARCH 24, 2020 MINUTES
MUNICIPAL COMPLEX
101 Washington Avenue
2:00 pm Public Session**

1. Opening of the Meeting:

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Arroyo at 2:00 pm. Mayor Arroyo then read the Open Public Meetings Law Statement: “This meeting which conforms with the Open Public Meetings law, Chapter 231, Public Laws of 1975, is a rescheduled Borough Council meeting. Notices have been filed with our local official newspapers and posted on the municipal bulletin board.”

Clerk’s note: This meeting was held in the Council Chambers but not physically accessible to the public, as the Borough Hall is closed to the public due to the Coronavirus/COVID-19 Health Emergency. A telephone number was posted on the Borough’s website for the public to call in and attend telephonically. Additionally, an email address was provided for residents to submit questions that would be addressed during the Public Forum. These procedures were required by Murphy Executive Order #107 and the guidelines established by the Department of Community Affairs, Division of Local Government Services.

2. Roll Call:

Mayor Arroyo – Present
Councilmember Bicocchi – Present
Councilmember Collins – Present
Councilmember Dell – Present
Councilmember Hodges – Present
Councilmember Murphy – Present
Council President Montana - Present
Borough Attorney Huntington – Present
Borough Administrator Kezmarsky - Present
Borough Clerk Hughes – Present

Committee Assignments:

Land Use
Public Properties
Finance, Administration & Capital Projects; Shared Services
Health & Recreation
Fire & Ambulance
Police & Emergency Management

3. Flag Salute

Councilmember Dell gave the invocation. Mayor Arroyo led those present in the salute to the flag.

4. Motion to Suspend the Regular Order of Business

Mayor Arroyo explained that the Council bylaws proscribe a specific order of business for council meetings. Due to the Coronavirus/COVID-19 Health Emergency and State of Emergency, Public Law 2020 Chapter 11 allows for providing notice of a meeting electronically, which occurred for this meeting, but limits business at such meetings to matters necessary for the continuing operation of government and that relate to the emergency. He asked for a motion to suspend the regular order of business for this meeting.

Motion to Suspend the Regular Order of Business: Councilmember Murphy Second: Councilmember Bicocchi

Voice Vote: A voice vote was taken with all present voting in the affirmative. The time was 8:00 pm.

5. 2020 Budget Introduction

Mayor Arroyo’s remarks: “The budget document, Councilwoman Dell will introduce, has been under construction since the fall of 2019. It is the product of economic realities - pre NJ’s CoVid-19 Health

Emergency. The Government's extraordinary containment efforts have left our local businesses shuttered ...and so many of our residents unable to earn a living: presenting a new reality. They throw into question the shape of things to come.

And so we all..... every elected official on the dais , thought it prudent to revisit the revenue projections that serve as the basis of this 2020 budgetto see if those assumptions were still valid... or if we'd need to make adjustments prior to introduction. And, given how fluid things are, this Council understands that it must continue to monitor eventsright up until FINAL adoption of this budget thirty days from now. (I just learned, today, that Trenton suspended the Homestead Tax Rebate Program moving its \$141,000,000 M set aside onto a Reserve line in the State budget.)

The Finance Committee, doing due diligence, conducted a second look and believes this budget can withstand anticipated revenue head winds for 2020. Passing it will buy us time to prepare for 2021 as the full impact of the ongoing state of emergency.... and the efficacy of any related Federal and State rescue efforts – as they are revealed.

It is necessary to introduce this budget today ...to ensure that the public health and safety operations of the borough are sustained with certainty and reliability , both of which are needed now....perhaps more than ever.”

Councilmember Dell's budget remarks:

- The 2020 proposed budget includes a municipal tax rate reduction of \$0.01 to \$0.777 as compared to 2019 municipal tax rate of \$0.788. Additionally, the municipal tax rate has decreased \$0.07 since 2016 while the average assessed home has increased to \$433,500 in 2020 from \$387,800 in 2016.
- As a result of our continued commitment to stabilize our municipal taxes, the 2020 proposed budget includes a tax increase of \$5 or \$0.42 per month on an average assessed home of \$433,500.
- We were able to achieve such a small increase through our continued strong fiscal policies. The highlights of the proposed budget are as follows:
 - 2020 Proposed Spending \$19,894,901 as compared to \$19,839,839 to 2019
 - This is an increase of \$47,005 or 0.24% Increase compared to 2019.
 - Overview of Capital and Debt
 - 2020 Capital Bonding Proposal: \$1,745,000
 - 2020 Grants to offset Capital \$528,532
 - 2020 debt due to be retired: \$2,135,718
 - 2020 estimated reduction of debt: \$1,000,000
 - Net decrease of \$1 million in debt.
 - Such decrease in debt includes our proposed Capital improvements of \$1,745,000. Proposed capital improvements include:
 - Our continued Road Paving/Improvement program of \$435,000
 - Phase I and II of Methane Investigation and Remediation at Westvale of \$350,000
 - A garbage truck and upgrades to the Pascack Road Pump Station for \$280,000
 - Anticipated grants to renovate the kitchen and bathrooms at the community center; an outdoor fitness gym at Westvale and renovations at the pistol range which in total amount to approximately \$461,000.

- 2020 proposed use of Surplus is \$1,355M for tax relief. This is approximately 31% of our total surplus which is the smallest percentage use of surplus in 14 years. The remaining estimated surplus is approximately \$3 million.
 - Maintaining such a strong surplus continues to benefit the Borough with lower borrowing rates and our ability not to be forced to incur additional debt in the event of any unplanned major expenditures.

Resolution #20- 74: Introduction of 2020 Municipal Budget

Motion to Approve Resolution #20-74: Councilmember Dell Second: Councilmember Collins

Roll Call: Councilmember Biccocchi - Yes Councilmember Hodges – Yes

Councilmember Collins – Yes Councilmember Murphy - Yes

Councilmember Dell – Yes Council President Montana – Yes

5. Ordinance # 20 - 8: An Ordinance To Exceed The Municipal Budget Appropriation Limits And To Establish A Cap Bank

BE IT RESOLVED that Ordinance #20-8 entitled “An Ordinance To Exceed The Municipal Budget Appropriation Limits And To Establish A Cap Bank” is hereby introduced by title; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Borough Clerk is hereby directed to advertise said ordinance with an April 21, 2020 hearing date in the official newspaper according to law.

Motion to pass the ordinance on First Reading: Councilmember Dell Second: Councilmember Biccocchi

Roll Call: Councilmember Biccocchi - Yes Councilmember Hodges – Yes

Councilmember Collins – Yes Councilmember Murphy - Yes

Councilmember Dell – Yes Council President Montana – Yes

7. Ordinances for Introduction/Adoption

Ordinances for Adoption

20-4 Bond Ordinance To Authorize The Installation Of Exercise Equipment And Yoga Platforms At Westvale Park In, By And For The Borough Of Westwood, In The County Of Bergen, State Of New Jersey, To Appropriate The Sum Of \$120,000 To Pay The Cost Thereof, To Make A Down Payment, To Authorize The Issuance Of Bonds To Finance Such Appropriation And To Provide For The Issuance Of Bond Anticipation Notes In Anticipation Of The Issuance Of Such Bonds

Mayor Arroyo suggested there be a motion to table this ordinance at this time, as it is not necessary for the continuing operation of government or related to the emergency. It can be reintroduced once the emergency has lifted.

Motion to Table Ordinance 20-4: Councilmember Hodges Second: Councilmember Biccocchi

Roll Call: Councilmember Biccocchi - Yes Councilmember Hodges – Yes

Councilmember Collins – Yes Councilmember Murphy - Yes

Councilmember Dell – Yes Council President Montana – Yes

8. Presentation of Bills, Financial Reports and Resolutions:

Councilmember Dell asked if there were any resolutions to add to the Consent Agenda. She stated that any Councilmembers who wished to remove any Resolution(s) to be voted upon separately could do so at this time, otherwise the Consent Agenda would be enacted in one motion.

Resolutions as Consent Agenda:

- a) Resolution #20 - 75: Bill List & Statement of Cash**
- b) Resolution #20 - 76: 2020 Budget Reserves Transfers**
- c) Resolution #20 - 77: Authorizing Refund of Taxes Due to Tax Court Judgement B1802 L25**
- d) Resolution #20 - 78: Authorizing Issuance of Moneys Without Requiring Vendor Certification**
- e) Resolution #20 - 79: Tonnage Grant Application**
- f) Resolution #20 - 80: CD Grant Endorsement – Thomas J. Riley Senior Center Corp.**
- g) Resolution #20 - 81: Authorizing Offer of Employment**
- h) Resolution #20 - 82: Authorizing The Auction Of Certain Surplus Property No Longer Needed For The Public Use By Westwood Borough Utilizing The Services Of Govdeals, Inc.**
- i) Resolution #20 - 83: Westwood Volunteer Fire Dept. – Matters of Personnel**
- j) Resolution #20 - 84: Street Closure & Use of Veterans' Park for Westwood Heritage Society's Craft Shows**
- k) Resolution #20 - 85: Approval of Ms. Barrantes-Grajales Request to Consume Alcoholic Beverages on Public Property for a Baptismal Celebration**
- l) Resolution #20 - 86: Building Safety Month**

Motion to Approve Resolutions #20-75 through #20-86: Councilmember Dell Second: Councilmember Collins

Roll Call: Councilmember Bicocchi - Yes

Councilmember Collins – Yes

Councilmember Dell – Yes

Councilmember Hodges – Yes, with recusal on bill list PO number 20-00365

Councilmember Murphy - Yes

Council President Montana – Yes

9. Items for Discussion -

1) Coronavirus

Mayor Arroyo's remarks: "Before we take public comment ...I'd like to give the public an overview of the Borough's OEM efforts over the last three weeks.

On March 7, Borough officials – the Borough Administrator , Board of Health Director, Police Chief, Council's Health Dept Liaison and I met with administrators at the Hospital. They briefed us on what we might expect and on their procedures/preparations for handling CoVid -19 admissions while keeping in house staff, including WWVAC, First Responders, and other patients - safe from the virus.

As of Governor Murphy's declaration of a Public Health Emergency (EO #103 – March 9) our OEM Command staff has met regularly to ensure interdepartmental operational responses are coordinated , complimentary and seamless. Items decided:

- a. Establishing uniform protocols for engaging with confirmed or likely positive CoVid- 19 residents needing service.

- b. These protocols include a series of questions to assess the probability of infection, donning proper Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), post intervention decontamination of responders' equipment and clothing.
- c. Determining which Emergency services will respond to what types of calls and minimizing how many First Responders will actually enter a scene to engage physically with the person or persons requiring assistance. These are best practices intended to limit our personnel's exposure – unnecessarily - to better conserve our human assets.
- d. Memorializing time and place of possible Covid-19 service calls should State Health Investigators require the same for follow up Containment efforts.
- e. WWPD has received a large quantity of medical supplies from the 1033 program including : surgical masks and gowns , and an inventory of HAZ MAT response kits featuring full body suits , face shields and booties that now travel with patrol .
- f. The OEM Director is monitoring the on-hand inventory of PPE across WWPD /WWFD and WWVAC; rationing, recording and tracking its use and replenishment.... on a daily basis.
- g. Ensuring additional PPE procurement is an ongoing effort, and that current allocation and depletion, is coordinated with expected delivery dates.
- h. The electric sign boards are flashing the Social Distancing Message and advising that WW parks are closed to groups of 10 or more.
- i. WWPD has introduced the 911 EYE system which enables Dispatch to visually contact an individual calling for service, through their smart phone. Dispatchers can see what the caller is seeing. This enhances the borough's ability to send the appropriate resources, without duplication, thereby further minimizing the risk of compromising First Responders.
- j. Finally , WWPD has completed its first auction of 1033 items no longer needed ...and has netted approximately \$22.000....which is a timely infusion of revenue that can be used to buttress the Department's CoVid-19 defenses.

Keeping First Responders available for duty is a critical element of our CoVid -19 defense. We must keep them safeto help them keep us all safe.

And I want to commend OEM Coordinator Darren Blankenbush, OEM Deputy Janet Dunn, Board of Health Director Sharon Behl, Fire Chief Kevin Woods , Ambulance Corp. Captain Robert Simac, Police Chief Michael Pontillo and Borough Administrator Ben Kezmarsky for their extraordinary leadership ... in preparing our Emergency Services to serve our the residents of our community during this public health crisis.

10. Agenda/Public Forum:

After determining with Mr. Kezmarsky that there were only a few people attending telephonically and it would not be necessary to suggest compressing the time frame for individual public comments in order to allow for as many speakers as possible, Mayor Arroyo explained how the Public Forum would work:

“In a few moments, Mr. Kezmarsky is going to unmute the public line. If you have the capability on your phone, I am requesting that right now you mute your phone so that we are not inundated with background noises. It will also keep everyone from all talking at once. If you cannot mute your phone, please go to a quiet area of your home to limit the background noise.

Once we have the motion to open the floor to the public, I will ask if anyone wishes to be heard. Please state your name clearly if you wish to speak. There may be several of you trying to speak at once. I will identify by name which person has the floor. At that point please restate your name and

your address for the record, then proceed with your comments.

Let me remind you that there is a three minute limit on your comments in order that we may accommodate as many residents as possible. Please be concise, and speak clearly so that those listening can hear and understand what you're saying.

This is a public comment period. Questions, unless the answer is simple and straightforward, will be referred to the Borough Administrator for follow up over the course of the next few days. Please be prepared to provide contact information in that case."

Motion to open Agenda/Public Forum: Councilmember Dell Second: Councilmember Murphy
Voice Vote: A voice vote was taken with all present voting in the Affirmative.

No one wished to be heard.

Motion to close Agenda/Public Forum: Councilmember Bicocchi Second: Councilmember Murphy
Voice Vote: A voice vote was taken with all present voting in the affirmative.

Mr. Kezmarsky advised that there is a written comment to address.

Motion to reopen Agenda/Public Forum: Councilmember Bicocchi Second: Councilmember Murphy
Voice Vote: A voice vote was taken with all present voting in the Affirmative.

Mr. Kezmarsky read a question submitted via email from resident Gary Conkling, who asked if the budget will be posted online. He responded that it will be posted on the Borough website.

Motion to close Agenda/Public Forum: Councilmember Hodges Second: Councilmember Murphy
Voice Vote: A voice vote was taken with all present voting in the affirmative.

11. Items for Discussion Continued

B. Coronavirus Economic Recovery Task Force

Mayor Arroyo remarks: "Also I am putting together a CoVid 19 – Economic Recovery Task Force. I still need to work out some of the details with Council President Montana, however it will be comprised of Westwood stakeholders most adversely impacted by this unprecedented event.

The current health threat must be presently managed...but we must also begin planning for the economic recovery that MUST follow.

The panel's mission will be to develop and implement strategies, seek out and utilize various resources to preserve, intact, as much of what we stand to lose ... and figure out how to pull the rest.... out of the wreckage.

This is going to take a united Westwood ...and an all-hands-on deck approach. It's going to be about Westwood, nothing more and nothing less. Every councilmember on this dais will be part of this organized, recovery effort. Some have already begun its work.

1. Council President Montana (Liaison to the WWCC) and Councilwoman Murphy are currently working with CBD merchants to figure out how to best promote the limited business EO #107 allows.
2. Councilwomen Collins (Local Assistance Board Liaison) and Councilwoman Hodges (Board of Health Liaison) are working with WW House , the Riley Center and an ad hoc group of truly compassionate resident volunteersto provide meals, maintain the borough's food

pantry and schedule escorted shopping trips for our local seniors who are struggling with this novel situation.

3. Councilmen Bicocchi will bring his years of Planning Board experience and his profession as a procurement/ facilities manager to assist in the recovery. And Councilwoman Dell, as Finance Liaison, can also work closely with the staffs of our Federal, State and County representatives to identify legislative programs intended to help pull us out of the ditch. She has already been in touch with Assemblywoman Schepisi 's Chief of Staff (Former Councilwomen Alyssa Dawson) who is cataloging these programs.

My job (as I have seen it since becoming Mayor in January) will be to place our Council people, with their considerable talents and interests, in the best position for them to succeed. And then do whatever I can to facilitate that success. Their success in these collective recovery efforts will mean the town's success.

Rather than succumb to dumb, divisive and destructive partisanship that infects our national politics – this particular bipartisan group of elected representatives is , I think , uniquely poised to demonstrate what mutual respect and cooperation can achieve in serving the interests of the people WE were elected, or appointed, to represent.

That is my hope. And after meeting with the Council President....and you all individually.... I will formalize the panel's structure and membership.

12. Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn: Councilmember Hodges Second: Councilmember Bicocchi

Voice Vote: A voice vote was taken with all present voting in the affirmative.

The time was 2:25 pm.

Attest:

(signed) Karen Hughes

Karen Hughes, RMC, Borough Clerk

Proofed by: Stefanie Stokes, Tax Collector