

BOROUGH OF TOTOWA

MINUTES OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL

YOUTH WEEK

May 26, 2020

Due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic and the Governor's Executive Order 107, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 10:4-8(b), this meeting was not open to the public, but was held by remote means on Zoom.

PRESENT: Mayor John Coiro, presiding, Council President Lou D'Angelo, Councilwoman Debra Andriani, Councilman Anthony Picarelli, Councilwoman Lisa Palazzo, Municipal Clerk Joseph Wassel and Municipal Attorney Kristin Corrado.

ABSENT: Councilman William Bucher and Councilman John Capo.

Mayor John Coiro called the meeting to order and asked Municipal Clerk Wassel to call the roll.

There was a motion by Councilman D'Angelo, seconded by Councilman Picarelli to adopt the following resolution authorizing the Youth Week Elected Officials to act in the place and stead of the Duly Elected Mayor and Council of the Borough of Totowa. On roll call vote, all members of the Council present voted in the affirmative.

RESOLUTION NO. 68-2020

YOUTH WEEK RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, in the observance of Youth Week, students have been designated in the place and stead of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Totowa; and

WHEREAS, the said students shall conduct the business of the said Governing Body of the Borough of Totowa under the guidance of the duly elected Mayor and Council.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Totowa, County of Passaic, State of New Jersey, that any and all actions taken on behalf of said Governing Body are hereby and herewith ratified and confirmed as the official actions of the Mayor and Council as if the same were acting directly and in person.

Mayor Coiro on behalf of the Mayor and Council welcomed all the students to the Zoom meeting format by introducing them and their title and congratulated them all on their election to their respective positions.

Youth Week Mayor Gianna Goow called the meeting to order and asked Borough Clerk Sara Castillo to call the roll of the 2020 Youth Week Council.

PRESENT: Mayor Gianna Goow, presiding, Councilwoman Catherine Snell, Councilwoman Kayla Perricelli, Councilwoman Jillian Tovar, Councilwoman Alexis Navarro, Councilman Ryan DeNunzio, Councilwoman Mary Reilly, Municipal Clerk Sara Castillo and Municipal Attorney Andrea Jean Colobong.

ABSENT: None.

Mayor Goow asked everyone to stand for the Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Borough Clerk Castillo recited the following Prayer of the Meeting: Dear Lord, the Mayor and Council pray, that courage and strength abundant be given that the actions of this Council be of benefit to all of the residents of the Borough of Totowa. Lord, we also pray, that you give courage and strength to the Youth Week Mayor, Council and Officials, so that we may fulfill our duties—under the guidance of this duly elected Mayor and Council—to the best of our abilities. And Lord, may you bless our families and friends, teachers and school officials, for all of their love and support.

Borough Clerk Castillo led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag with the public participating.

Mayor Goow asked Borough Clerk Castillo to read the statement of the meeting.

Borough Clerk Castillo read the following statement: This meeting of the Mayor and Council held on this day is being held in accordance with Chapter 231, P.L. 1975 of the State of New Jersey as amended. The agenda for this meeting has been prepared and distributed to the Mayor and Council and a copy has been on file in the Office of the Borough Clerk.

There was a motion by Councilwoman Snell, seconded by Councilwoman Perricelli to dispense with the regular order of business in order to hold a public hearing on Ordinance No. 06-2020 as advertised. On roll call vote, all members of the Youth Week Council present voted in the affirmative.

Borough Clerk Castillo announced that Ordinance No. 06-2020 has been advertised for a public hearing for Tuesday, May 26, 2020.

Borough Clerk Castillo read the legal notice and the title of Ordinance No. 06-2020.

There was a motion by Councilwoman Snell, seconded by Councilwoman Perricelli to open the public hearing. On roll call vote, all members of the Youth Week Council present voted in the affirmative.

CITIZENS HEARD:

Mayor Coiro announced that we have not received any emailed questions pertaining to this ordinance.

There was a motion by Councilwoman Snell, seconded by Councilwoman Perricelli to close the public hearing. On roll call vote, all members of the Youth Week Council present voted in the affirmative.

Borough Clerk Castillo read Ordinance No. 06-2020 by title.

ORDINANCE NO. 06-2020

**CALENDAR YEAR 2020 ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE
MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO
ESTABLISH A CAP BANK (N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.14)**

There was a motion by Councilwoman Snell, seconded by Councilwoman Perricelli to adopt Ordinance No. 06-2020 on second and final reading. On roll call vote, all members of the Youth Week Council present voted in the affirmative.

There was a motion by Councilwoman Snell, seconded by Councilwoman Perricelli to revert to the regular order of business. On roll call vote, all members of the Youth Week Council present voted in the affirmative.

Mayor Goow asked if any Members of the Council, the Borough Clerk or the Borough Attorney wished to address the Council.

Borough Attorney Andrea Jean Colobong: Gave the following report.

Honorable Mayor and Council:

The State of New Jersey is now requiring all public employers to adopt a uniform domestic violence policy in accordance with N.J.S.A. 11A:2-6a. Our insurance carrier has also advised that it is necessary for the Borough of Totowa to adopt a Domestic Violence Policy. The purpose of this policy is to encourage employees who are victims of domestic violence, and those impacted by domestic violence, to seek assistance from their Human Resource Officers (“HRO”). The policy also provides a standard for HROs to follow when responding to employees. There is a requirement that the designated HRO must undergo training as well. It will be necessary to formally adopt a Domestic Violence Policy for the Borough of Totowa at an upcoming meeting.

As for current litigation, the Borough was recently named as a defendant in a lawsuit filed by a Plaintiff-Developer after their application for preliminary major sight plan approval was denied. The developer wants to construct a multi-family residential complex consisting of 81 units and 3 buildings. This proposed development would have included 18 affordable housing units. The Planning Board Commissioners raised concerns about the proposed construction project and the application was denied in August of 2019. A case management conference was held in March and a trial date was set for September of this year. I will continue to keep you informed as this matter proceeds.

Mayor Goow asked if any citizens wished to be heard.

CITIZENS HEARD:

Mayor Coiro announced that we have not received any emailed questions pertaining to the public portion of the meeting.

There was a motion by Councilwoman Snell, seconded by Councilwoman Perricelli to approve the Minutes of the Mayor and Council for the meeting of May 12, 2020. On roll call vote, all members of the Youth Week Council present voted in the affirmative.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE:

Borough Clerk Castillo announced that we will now have a report from the Tax Assessor and then the Tax Collector.

Tax Assessor Sofia Vargas: Gave the following report.

Honorable Mayor and Council,

2020 began with an increase in total ratables from 2019 of approximately 83 million dollars. This increase was due to added assessments, partial construction of the new Data Center and partial construction of other projects. The Assessment/Sales ratio increased from 106.90% to 97.38%.

The 2020 Tax Appeal deadline has not yet been established due to Covid-19. The Passaic County Board of Taxation has received nearly 1,000 appeals to date, of which nine (9) were filed by Totowa taxpayers. These appeals will be heard at some date in the future. Eighteen (18) State Tax Court appeals were filed so far. Thirty-one (31) Tax Court cases have been settled or withdrawn over the past year, leaving a pending total of forty-eight (48) at the State level. The Borough Tax Counsel, Appraiser and I continue to negotiate settlements or prepare for trial.

Two-hundred twenty eight (228) deeds were processed in 2019 which is a slight decrease over the year prior. Of these two-hundred twenty eight (228) only one-hundred eight (108) involved an exchange of money. So far for 2020, forty (40) deed transactions have been recorded but only seventeen (17) are considered valid for sales analysis.

As always, should you have any questions or comments, please stop by the office.

Tax Collector Alexa Riker: Gave the following report.

Honorable Mayor and Council,

In Totowa, there are 3,824 line items in total. Seventy-six (76) are for vacant land and 3,430 are for residential properties. There are 236 commercial properties, 78 industrial properties, 2 farms, and 2 apartment buildings. In addition, there are 100 exempt properties, 9 railroad properties, 2 schools, 67 public properties, 6 charitable properties, 9 cemeteries and 16 miscellaneous items.

Taxes collected in the year 2020 thus far equal \$24,112,238.98 and we have collected 2019 past due taxes in the amount of \$416,358.47. The amount distributed to the County/Open Space and Added Assessment taxes are \$7,582,796.27. Totowa Schools received \$7,272,940.40 and Passaic Valley High School received \$4,354,242.75. Last year at this time the collection percentage for the 2nd quarter taxes was 92.42%. Due to Covid-19 we extended the grace period for 2nd quarter taxes to June 1, 2020. (Under normal circumstances it would have been May 11, 2020.) The collection percentage for the 2nd quarter 2020 as of May 15, 2020 is 80.82%.

Regarding tax deductions given in the Borough of Totowa for 2020, they are as follows: 80 senior citizens, 11 disabled persons, 184 veterans and 59 widow of veterans.

Reporting on our tax liens, there are seven outside liens and three municipal liens.

There was a motion by Councilwoman Tovar, seconded by Councilman Snell to approve Resolution No. 2020-12 for the payment of bills. On roll call vote, all members of the Youth Week Council present voted in the affirmative.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY:

Borough Clerk Castillo announced that we will have a report from the Police Chief and then the Fire Chief.

Police Chief Brandon Veneziano: Gave the following report.

Honorable Mayor and Council,

I am happy to report that all members of our Police Department are healthy and back to work since the Covid-19 pandemic. As you were aware, staffing was reduced in an effort to isolate Officers and keep them healthy.

This year's countywide Aggressive Driving Task Force Program during Memorial Day weekend has been cancelled due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Our Police Department has typically participated in this event in conjunction with the Passaic County Traffic Officers Association and the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety.

The speed monitor trailer will be deployed at various locations that we have received complaints from with speeding vehicles. It has been stored for the winter season and was recently serviced by the Totowa DPW for the spring and summer months.

Our Department has recently purchased the Power-DMS system. Power-DMS is cloud-based software that stores and distributes content online. The application provides practical tools to organize and manage documents. It has come in handy at a critical time when Covid-19 guidelines change so frequently.

Lastly, to date we have participated in over 180 Birthday Brigades with the Totowa Board of Recreation Director Mark Monteyne. This small gesture has gone a long way to make people smile during this difficult time where large gatherings are prohibited. My Officers have done a great job participating in it, as well as the Totowa Fire Department, and the Totowa First Aid Squad. I would like to extend my gratitude to everyone involved in this. We want to see everyone have a safe, happy, and healthy summer.

Fire Chief Jesse Huang: Gave the following report.

Honorable Mayor and Council,

The Totowa Fire Department is operating at full capacity during the current health crisis. We have been fortunate to have all our member remain strong and healthy.

Volunteer Fire Company #1 recently has taken delivery of a new 100ft. E-one aerial ladder. We thank you for making this addition to our fleet of firefighting apparatus. It will help to provide fire protection to both our residential and business occupancies. Our borough has seen much growth in the recent years and through the help of the Mayor and Council, the Fire Department will be ready for the increasing demands in keeping everyone safe.

Tonight, we are asking approval for two new members to join our Fire Department. Both Marco Riccio and Nicholas DeNunzio are ready to move up from junior to full firefighter status. They will be an asset to our town and the department.

Again, the Totowa Fire Department thanks the Mayor and Council for their never-ending support in our mission to be here whenever we are called.

There was a motion by Councilwoman Snell, seconded by Councilman DeNunzio to approve fireman's applications, the purchase of fireman's equipment and authorize fireman's physicals for Marco Riccio for Volunteer Fire Company No. 1 and Nicholas DeNunzio for Fire Rescue. On roll call vote, all members of the Youth Week Council present voted in the affirmative.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS:

Borough Clerk Castillo announced that we will now have a report from the Superintendent of Public Works.

Superintendent of Public Works Daniel Pagano: Gave the following report.

Honorable Mayor and Council,

This time of year the Department of Public Works is very busy getting all the parks and fields in the Borough of Totowa cleaned up from the winter months. We are also aerating fields and parks with reseeding in addition to mulching and planting 325 flowers along Union Boulevard and the PAL grounds.

The American Legion Post 227 donated 200 pennants which have the American flag on them, saying "Welcome to Totowa" which will be installed on our decorative street lights along Union Boulevard.

We've also begun our road paving program which will include William Place, Haven Avenue, Jefferson Place, Raphael Road, Roseland Avenue, Adams Drive, Washington Place, Young Avenue and Peterson Road, just to name a few.

Next month, we will begin our annual fire hydrant flushing program which consists of exercising and flushing approximately 515 fire hydrants through the borough.

Public Service is just about finished with their Phase 2 High Pressure Gas Main Project, which consists of replacing old cast iron gas mains and installing plastic mains. The cast iron mains were prone to crack and leak. The project consisted of replacing approximately eight miles of pipe. PSE&G will repave the roads they dug up.

We are in the process of renovating the Library bathrooms with new fixtures, new tile and ceilings.

In February, we ordered a new International Dump Truck with plow and salter. In the past four years, we allotted monies in our budget to be able to purchase the truck without going out to bond. This new dump truck will be replacing a 1993 GMC Top Kick.

We also purchased two diesel generators with FEMA grant money. One of the diesel generators was installed at the DPW and the other one at the Shepherds Lane water pump station. In case of a power outage, the DPW Building Gas Pumps and Shepherds Lane water pump station will still be operational.

There was a motion by Councilwoman Navarro, seconded by Councilwoman Reilly to approve Change Order No. 1 for a net increase of \$11,357.90 and Payment Estimate No. 4 in the amount of \$18,680.66 to Manor II Electric, Inc. for the DPW Garage and Shepherds Lane Pump Station Generator Improvements. On roll call vote, all members of the Youth Week Council present voted in the affirmative.

COMMITTEE ON ENGINEERING & PUBLIC PROPERTY:

Borough Clerk Castillo announced that we will now have a report from the Municipal Engineer.

Municipal Engineer Sara Barrise: Gave the following report.

Honorable Mayor and Council,

The 2017 NJDOT Roads Project is partially funded by a Municipal Aid Grant issued by the New Jersey Department of Transportation. The project limits are on Jefferson Place is from Union Boulevard to Crosby Avenue and on Raphael Road are from Totowa Road to St. James Place. The work generally includes new curbing and the replacement of the roadway surface through a milling and paving process. New handicapped curb ramps will be installed pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Standby Generators were partially funded by a grant from FEMA and included the installation of two diesel generators. One generator was located at the Department of Public Works garage on Furler Street. The second generator was located at the Shepherd Lane pump station. The generator at the pump station was elevated on a steel frame so as to keep it above the flood elevation.

The 2018 Road Program project includes William Place, Haven Avenue and Roseland Avenue. The work generally includes the replacement of the roadway surface through a milling and paving process. New handicapped curb ramps will be installed pursuant to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The 2018 & 2019 NJDOT Roads Projects are partially funded by a Municipal Aid Grant issued by the New Jersey Department of Transportation. The project includes Winifred Drive, Adams Drive, Peterson Road and Young Avenue. The work generally includes new the replacement of the roadway surface through a milling and paving process. New handicapped curb ramps will be installed pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Hydraulic Modeling Services project involves the modeling of the Borough's potable water network. The model will allow investigations into ways to enhance flows and pressures by locating inefficiencies in the distribution system, by simplifying investigations into the impact of proposed development on existing pressures and flows, etc.

For the Sanitary Sewer Main Rehabilitation – Phase IX, the contract documents for this project are under way. The work will be partially funded by a Community Development Block Grant and consists of the lining of the sanitary sewer main in Boyle Avenue from Totowa Road to Franklin Place. The sewer main in this area consists of very old clay pipe. This style of pipe is subject to the inflow of groundwater through the pipe joints. The groundwater that infiltrated the pipe creates more flow for the Borough's pump stations to pump to the treatment plant operated by the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission. Reducing the infiltration reduces pumping and treatment costs. Reducing infiltration also allows for the connection of new buildings without the need to increase pumping capacities.

There was a motion by Councilman DeNunzio, seconded by Councilwoman Perricelli to adopt the following Resolution Authorizing Professional Engineering Services For The Construction Of A Synthetic Turf Field At The Totowa PAL. On roll call vote, all members of the Youth Week Council present voted in the affirmative.

RESOLUTON NO. 69-2020

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SYNTHETIC TURF FIELD AT THE TOTOWA PAL

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Totowa have recommended that the grass field located at the Borough of Totowa PAL recreational grounds should be converted to a synthetic turf field; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Totowa desire to retain services of a professional engineering firm to provide design services, prepare bid documents, assist in the bidding process and supervise construction of the Totowa PAL synthetic turf field; and

WHEREAS, the proposed scope of work includes but is not limited to preparing a topographic survey plan, performing subsurface soil investigations, developing a concept plan, designing specifications and overseeing construction of the Totowa PAL synthetic turf field; and

WHEREAS, Richard A. Alaimo Engineering Associates has submitted a proposal dated May 19, 2020 for the design, bid assistance and construction supervision services for the Totowa PAL synthetic turf field at a cost not to exceed \$163,985.00, a copy of which is on file in the office of the Borough of Totowa Municipal Clerk; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Totowa on May 26, 2020 did examine the proposal submitted by Richard A. Alaimo Engineering Associates; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the applicable New Jersey State laws, these professional services may be awarded without public bidding.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Totowa do hereby accept the proposal submitted by Richard A. Alaimo Engineering Associates for professional engineering services for the Totowa PAL synthetic turf field in the amount of \$163,985.00.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Totowa do hereby authorize Richard A. Alaimo Engineering Associates to perform the professional services as set forth in their proposal.

COMMITTEE ON LIAISON & INSPECTION:

There was a motion by Councilwoman Perricelli, seconded by Councilwoman Navarro to adopt the following Resolution Authorizing A Grant Agreement Between The Borough of Totowa And The County Of Passaic For Funding Associated With The Coronavirus Aid, Relief And Economic Security Act ("CARES Act"). On roll call vote, all members of the Youth Week Council present voted in the affirmative.

RESOLUTION NO. 70-2020

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A GRANT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE BOROUGH OF TOTOWA AND THE COUNTY OF PASSAIC FOR FUNDING ASSOCIATED WITH THE CORONAVIRUS AID, RELIEF AND ECONOMIC SECURITY ACT (“CARES ACT”)

WHEREAS, SARS-CoV-2 is the virus that causes Coronavirus Disease 19 (“Covid-19”), a contagious and at times fatal, respiratory disease; and

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2020, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy issued Executive Order No. 103 declaring a Public Health Emergency and State of Emergency in the State of New Jersey in response to the Covid-19 outbreak; and

WHEREAS, on March 27, 2020, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (“CARES Act”) was enacted; and

WHEREAS, the CARES Act established the Coronavirus Relief Fund (the “Fund”) and appropriated \$150 billion to be used to make payments for specified uses to States, certain local governments, the District of Columbia, United States Territories and Tribal governments; and

WHEREAS, the County of Passaic was appropriated \$87,564,767.20 from the Fund to be used for expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19, and were not accounted for in the budget most recently approved as of March 27, 2020, and were incurred during the period that begins March 1, 2020 and ends on December 30, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Passaic County Board of Chosen Freeholders (the “Board”) is going to appropriate a portion of the Fund received by Passaic County to its 16 municipalities, based on population, as part of a grant to offset eligible expenses in responding to the Public Health Emergency; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Totowa is being appropriated \$630,415.00 by the Board from the Fund, to be distributed by way of reimbursement and subject to certain terms and conditions as set forth in the Grant Agreement; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Totowa desire to enter into a Grant Agreement with the County of Passaic for funding associated with the CARES Act.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Totowa do hereby authorize the Borough of Totowa to enter into a Grant Agreement with the County of Passaic for funding associated with the CARES Act.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Municipal Council of the Borough of Totowa does hereby authorize the Mayor and Municipal Clerk to execute any and all necessary instruments related thereto.

COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE & ORDINANCES:

There was a motion by Councilwoman Reilly, seconded by Councilwoman Tovar to introduce on first reading and advertise for public hearing the following entitled ordinance. On roll call vote, all members of the Youth Week Council present voted in the affirmative.

ORDINANCE NO. 07-2020

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF TOTOWA
CHAPTER 398 ENTITLED "VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC", ARTICLE II, "PARKING",
SECTION 12, "MUNICIPAL PARKING LOTS"**

There being no further business to come before the Council, there was a motion by Councilwoman Snell, seconded by Councilwoman Perricelli that the meeting be adjourned. On roll call vote, all members of the Youth Week Council present voted in the affirmative.

Mayor Coiro, on behalf of the Mayor and Council thanked all for participating in the Youth Week Council Meeting via Zoom, said that he noticed some of their name plates in front of them and posters behind them and once again congratulated the Youth Week participants on winning their respective elections and complimented them on a job well done. Explained that every year we usually take all the Youth Week Elected Officials on a tour of the town, but that unfortunately due to the current situation that we are all living through that will not be possible this year. Mayor Coiro wished them all a happy summer and good luck wherever they will be going to high school.

Joseph Wassel, RMC
Municipal Clerk