**BOROUGH OF CALIFON COUNCIL**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**APRIL 20, 2020**

Mayor Charles Daniel called the regular meeting of the Borough of Califon Council to order at 7:30 p.m. with the reading of the following Sunshine law announcement: ***“I would like to announce and have placed in the minutes that adequate notice of this regular meeting of the Califon Borough Council has been provided in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act by publication of the annual notice in the Hunterdon Review and the Hunterdon County Democrat.***

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the State of Emergency imposed by Governor Phil Murphy, the Borough of Califon will hold its regularly scheduled monthly meetings conducted remotely through a web-based platform called Zoom until the Borough is fully opened and operational to the public. Adequate notification of this change of format has been provided to both the Hunterdon Review and the Hunterdon County Democrat.

**FLAG SALUTE**

**ROLL CALL: PRESENT: R. BAGGSTROM, J. COLINS, E. HAVERSANG, L. JANAS,**

 **M. MEDEA, C. SMITH**

 **ABSENT: NONE**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion was made by M. Medea seconded by C. Smith to approve the minutes from the meeting held on April 6, 2020.

For: Unanimous

Opposed: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

**LIST OF BILLS**

Motion was made by C. Smith seconded by J. Collins to approve the list of bills in the amount of

$12,698.63.

For: Unanimous

Opposed: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

**CORRESPONDENCE**

\_\_ Califon Municipal Court report for month of March

\_\_ e-mail from County of Hunterdon Engineering Dept.; Melissa Allen – detour routes for bridge reconstruction project; Hickory Run; Bridge L-6 Rt. 513

\_\_ New Jersey State League of Municipalities; options currently available to municipalities to assist property owners facing fiscal challenges, i.e.: establishing the rate of interest for delinquent taxes

\_\_ Estimate from DMC Associates, Inc. Land Surveyors for roadway surveys for River Rd. and

Cokesbury, Crestmore, Cloverhill and Limerock – in the amount of $19,400.

\_\_Dept. of Transportation – applications now being accepted for NJDOT Fiscal Year 2021 State Aid programs – deadline: July 1, 2020

The following discussions between Mayor and Council arose from the correspondence outlined above:

Mayor and Council discussed this new round of grants for 2021 fiscal year. Mayor Daniel reported that there was a road maintenance inventory done in 2013. Council needs to look at it to determine what road projects come next that can be applied for. Mayor Daniel stated that the other consideration with whether or not to apply for another grant is the financial impact of going into more debt. Mayor Daniel stated that so many of the Borough’s roads are aged and have not been maintained in years, so if there is money available through the DOT, it may be prudent to apply again. Councilwoman Smith said that she is concerned about the condition of Bank St. and that perhaps Bank St. can be considered. Councilman Janas stated that he would like to keep up the maintenance momentum, however he is concerned about the additional debt that would be incurred. Councilman Medea suggested that everyone take a look at the inventory done in 2013 and come up with a 5-10-year plan. Mayor Daniel will forward the inventory to all Council members to look at and come to an agreement on the next roadway improvement project so that our Borough Engineer can make the application for a grant.

Mayor Daniel and Council discussed the estimate from DMC Associates for survey work on River Rd. and Cokesbury, Crestmore, Cloverhill and Limerock in the amount of $19,400.

Clerk Eidsvaag stated that the Borough Engineer could break out the estimate into the two separate projects if Mayor and Council wish; but it is more efficient and possible less costly to do the two together at the same time DMC is in the Borough. Mayor Daniel will speak to the Borough Engineer about this estimate and get back to Council. A brief discussion arose regarding the condition of the Coles Mill Dam and the breach that is causing the water to head toward River Rd. Councilwoman Smith is very concerned about the close proximity of the water to the road now. Mayor Daniel stated that the dam is owned by the property owner on First St. and is responsible for any damage to the road. Mayor Daniel stated that our project on River Rd. is down farther by the Nellie Hoffman house and will not be in the area of the dam.

Mayor Daniel discussed the detour routes recently sent to us by the Hunterdon County Engineer’s Office regarding the L-6 bridge project at the intersection of Rt. 513 and Hickory Run Rd. The project is to commence on 5.4.20 and Rt. 513 will be closed down to Hoffman Crossing.

One of the detours is northbound up Hickory Run Rd. to Hill Rd. and over to Sliker and the second detour is southbound at Hoffman Crossing bridge down River Rd. to Main St. Councilwoman Smith and others expressed grave concerns about pedestrians and bicyclists on River Rd. while this detour is in effect; especially now that the trail is closed. All agreed that it will be hard to enforce speeding and the park Rangers are not issuing summonses for gatherings; just for fishing without licenses. Mayor Daniel reiterated that the Police Chief has said he will do his best to strictly enforce the speed limit and put additional officers on the road when the project begins. Lebanon Twp. police will be stepping up enforcement as well as the WT police.

**OLD BUSINESS**

1. **2020 BRUSH PICK-UP**

Kevin Pyatt, DPW Supervisor, has confirmed that the DPW will conduct the 2020 brush pick-up during the week of May 25th; actually, beginning on Tuesday, May 26th due to the 25th being Memorial Day. Kevin has asked that the same guidelines that we used last year be in effect this year as well. The dates will be posted on the website and Facebook, on the bulletin board; on the sandwich board in front of the Municipal Bldg. and flyers in the post office.

Mayor and Council discussed the upcoming Recreation Committee events and, after a short discussion, all concurred that the Memorial Day Parade and the Trout Fest and Camp-out will be cancelled for this year, due to the corona virus. The Chairperson of the Committee, Amanda Altavilla, will be notified. Some suggestions for alternative events when things can re-open were fireworks in July and a movie in the Park. All are hoping that the Street Fair can go off as planned.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**NONE**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Councilman Medea reported that he ordered the basketball nets for the court in the Park.

He reported that the Park appears to be empty and under control. He confirmed that the Park itself is open; playground has been closed.

Councilman Haversang reported that the Recreation Committee funds that would have been used for the Memorial Day Parade should be put toward other Recreation activities.

Councilman Janas reported that the Planning Board meeting for April has been cancelled. There has been no news about the school Steering Committee.

Councilwoman Smith had no report for tonight’s meeting.

Councilman Baggstrom highlighted the Califon Municipal Court report for the month of March.

Councilman Collins reported that Trout Unlimited has reached out to inform the EC that they are in favor of funding the environmental assessment study needed prior to the acquisition of parkland from the County to the Borough. Councilman Collins reminded Mayor and Council that Hunterdon County would have to approve this study before the Borough makes a commitment.

Councilman Collins reported that from the article asking for volunteers for the Green Team, Hilary Cussen, from the Environmental & Sustainable Engineering Academy responded that she would very much like to work with our Green Team.

Councilman Haversang reported that there is approximately $2300 from the Rec budget that will be saved from cancelling the Memorial Day parade that can be used for other Rec activities.

**MAYOR’S REPORT**

Mayor Daniel reported that a memo came out from the New Jersey League of Municipalities with a recommendation that municipalities adopt a resolution to decrease the interest rate on delinquent taxes. He explained that currently the interest rates are 8% on the first $1500 or delinquency and then 18% on the delinquency over $1500. Mayor Daniel further explained that currently the grace period is until the 10th of each quarter; for the May quarter, the date will be the 11th since the 10th falls on a Sunday. Mayor Daniel expressed concern that this recommendation from the NJLM has not come from the Div. of Local Government Services, who would normally issue a Local Finance Notice endorsing this recommendation. After researching, Mayor Daniel stated that neither MSI or Edmonds has the software capability to handle any changes to the interest rate. Mayor Daniel wrote a letter to Senator Doherty with a listing of his concerns and the potential repercussions of such an action. There was a brief discussion with Council on the concept of extending the grace period from the 10th of each quarter to a later date. Mayor Daniel was not sure of the State status on initiating this action but his feeling was that it might pose a problem for banks and the tax escrow accounts.

**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Jason Beard joined Mayor and Council on Zoom to report that the Recreation Committee has come up with the idea of starting a Califon Covid-19 Coping Cookbook. Jason explained that there is a form to download on google docs to complete with your own recipe, name and information. Jason asked that the recipes be personal and not plagiarized. This will be advertised on Facebook. Jason urged Mayor and Council to get the word out on this fun activity during the current lockdown.

There being no further business to come before Council at this time, motion was made by C. Smith seconded by R. Baggstrom and unanimously accepted to adjourn at 8:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Laura G. Eidsvaag, RMC

Municipal Clerk/Administrator