**BOROUGH OF CALIFON COUNCIL**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**MAY 18, 2020**

Mayor Charles Daniel called the regular meeting of the Borough of Califon Council to order at 7:55 pm 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 Council will hold their regularly scheduled monthly meetings conducted remotely through a web-based platform called Zoom until the Borough is fully opened and operational to the public. Public notification regarding access to the Council meetings will be posted on the Borough website and Facebook. Adequate notification of this change of format has also been provided to both the Hunterdon Review and the Hunterdon County Democrat.***

**FLAG SALUTE**

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

 **M. MEDEA, C. SMITH**

 **ABSENT: NONE**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion was made by J. Collins seconded by C. Smith to approve the minutes from the meeting held on May 4, 2020.

For: Unanimous

Opposed: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

**LIST OF BILLS**

Motion was made by R. Baggstrom seconded by J. Collins to approve the list of bills in the amount of $1,029,825.87.

For: Unanimous

Opposed: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

Mayor Daniel made an alteration to the meeting agenda. Jennifer Gross, resident of Philhower Ave. was present at tonight’s meeting. Mayor Daniel announced that Ms. Gross has volunteered to be a member on the Environmental Commission. Mayor Daniel formally appointed Jennifer Gross to the Califon Environmental Commission as a member for a three-year term to expire on 12/31/22. Mayor and Council thanked Ms. Gross for her service and expressed congratulations.

Ms. Gross addressed Mayor and Council saying that she has been in contact with JCP&L about standardizing the street lights in town with LED lighting, which would eliminate the orange sodium lights on 10-12 poles in town that she feels gives off an unpleasant light. Ms. Gross indicated that JCP&L will install LED lighting on all the street lights free of charge except for the charge to the town for installing new brackets if necessary. This would provide consistency with the lighting throughout town and would most definitely save on the cost of street lighting. Councilman Haversang stated that on the list of bills tonight, the street lighting charge was $701 for the month of April. Ms. Gross asked Mayor and Council if they wish for her to pursue this idea and she will follow through if in favor. Mayor and Council discussed and all were interested in pursuing, suggesting that Ms. Gross and Karen Mastro, EC Secretary, conduct a survey of the lights in town and check with members of the EC and decide on the quality of lighting they can all agree on. For safety reasons, Ms. Gross will also involve the Police department for their opinion on the brightness of the lighting agreed upon. Mayor and Council agreed that for the cost savings and reduction of light pollution, Ms. Gross pursue work on this survey and continue to work out a plan with JCP&L; reporting back to Mayor and Council with a status.

Mayor Daniel thanked Ms. Gross for her presentation before the Mayor and Council tonight.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**\_\_** Melissa Allen, Hunterdon County Public Works; approval for hanging of graduation banners on bridge

\_\_ Estimate from DPW for asphalt repair on Guinea Hollow; $2700

\_\_ comments from BPU and Rate Council on Hunterdon Area Energy Cooperative bidding documents

\_\_ Municipal Court report for April

\_\_ letter from Toby and Mary Lou Loyd; cat complaint at Coolidge Court; after discussion, Council asked that the Board of Health hear this complaint and take any action they deem necessary, if any.

\_\_ correspondence from Board of Election: Primary Election to be moved to July 7th with information on the procedure; mostly mail in ballots but one polling place to be open in each municipality

\_\_ Governor Murphy issued plan entitled: The Road Back; Restoring Economic Health through Public Health; 3 phases and “new normal”

\_\_ Main St. Improvement project; Top Line invoiced $290,460.40 coming in $95,131 under budget; did a great job

**OLD BUSINESS**

1. **RESOLUTION – APPROVING SURVEY WORK FOR RIVER RD. IMPROVEMENT DOT GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF $7500**

The following Resolution was introduced for adoption:

**RESOLUTION 2020-45**

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Califon that approval be granted to approve the expenditure of $7,500 to DMC Associates, Inc. Land Surveyors; for the preparation of an existing condition roadway survey for River Road (between Nellie Hoffman House and the municipal boundary of Lebanon); approximately $2,650+/- Linear Feet; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Mayor and Clerk are hereby authorized to sign and fully execute an Agreement between the Borough of Califon and DMC Associates, Inc. Land Surveyors for these services.

Motion was made by C. Smith seconded by L. Janas to adopt Resolution 2020-45 as read.

For: Unanimous

Opposed: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

1. **RESOLUTION – APPROVING BOROUGH ENGINEER, TOM BOORADY, TO FILE APPLICATION FOR NEXT FOUND OF DOT GRANT FUNDING FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO BANK ST., PHILHOWER AVE. AND SECTION OF RIVER RD. – DEADLINE TO APPLY: 7/1/20; COST APPROX. $2,000**

The following Resolution was introduced for adoption:

**RESOLUTION 2020-46**

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Califon that Thomas Boorady, P.E., Borough Engineer for the Borough of Califon is hereby authorized to prepare an application to the Department of Transportation requesting a 2021 fiscal year DOT Grant for road improvements in the Borough of Califon; Engineer costs not to exceed $2,000 for preparation and submission of application; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the application for a 2021 DOT Grant will request funding for road improvements to Bank St., Philhower Ave., and a portion of River Rd.; deadline is July 1, 2020.

Motion was made by R. Baggstrom seconded by C. Smith to adopt Resolution 2020-46 as read.

For: Unanimous

Opposed: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

Councilwoman Smith asked when we will be working on a grant for Limerock/Crestmore/Cloverhill Roads and Mayor Daniel reminded everyone that we already have an approved grant for these roads which include Cokesbury Rd. in the amount of $220,000.

Councilman Baggstrom stated that Raritan Drive will need to be improved soon when we begin working on roads on the the other side of town.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. **RESOLUTION – ESTIMATED TAX BILLS FOR 2020 TAX QUARTERS**

The following Resolution was introduced for adoption:

**RESOLUTION 2020-47**

**AUTHORIZING THE TAX COLLECTOR TO**

**PROCESS THIRD QUARTER “ESTIMATED”**

**TAX BILLS, DUE AUGUST 1, 2020**

**WHEREAS,** in light of the disruption caused by the coronavirus outbreak, the State delayed the adoption of the State Fiscal Year 2021 Budget to September 30, 2020; and

**WHEREAS,** the Division of Local Government Services (DLGS) cannot certify State Aid allocations to municipal budgets until State Aid Appropriations are known; and

**WHEREAS,** the DLGS cannot approve municipal budgets and the County Board of Taxation cannot certify taxes until long after the June 30, 2020 deadline to process third quarter bills due August 1, 2020; and

**WHEREAS,** without an adopted 2020 Municipal Budget and without a 2020 Certified Tax Rate, the Tax Collector cannot process the final 2020 Tax Levy; and

**WHEREAS,** the DLGS “*strongly recommends”* under Local Finance Notice 2020-07, *“that municipalities prepare to issue estimated property tax bills for 2020;”* and

**WHEREAS,** the Tax Collector, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer, computed and certified an estimated Tax Levy necessary to bill third quarter taxes due August 1, 2020.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** by the Governing Body of the Borough of Califon, in the County of Hunterdon and State of New Jersey on this 18th day of May, 2020 that the Tax Collector is hereby authorized and directed to process estimated tax bills for the third quarter installment of 2020 taxes; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that, the third quarterly installment of 2020 taxes shall not be subject to interest until the later of August 10, 2020 or the twenty-fifth (25) calendar day after the date the estimated tax bills were mailed. The estimated tax bills shall contain a notice specifying the date on which interest may begin to accrue.

Motion was made by L. Janas seconded by J. Collins to adopt Resolution 2020-47 as read.

For: Unanimous

Opposed: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

1. **RESOLUTION – SUPPORT FOR BILL A-3971 – AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF “CORONAVIRUS RELIEF BONDS” IF NECESSARY**

The following Resolution was introduced for adoption:

**RESOLUTION 2020-48**

**WHEREAS,** A-3971 was introduced on May 4, 2020, which authorizes the issuance of “coronavirus relief bonds” by municipalities and counties; and

**WHEREAS,** municipalities and counties are experiencing revenue short falls and expenses overrun because of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

**WHEREAS,** these fiscal consequences of the pandemic are likely to continue and further impact the Borough of Califon; and

**WHEREAS,** the Borough of Califon has significant fixed statutory expenses and provides essential services; and

**WHEREAS,** the cost of providing many essential services is likely to increase as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic for an extended period afterwards; and

**WHEREAS,** A-3971 would allow counties and municipalities to borrow moneys through the issuance of bonds and notes to cover the revenue shortfalls and additional costs that are directly attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic; and

**WHEREAS,** this Bill would establish a new financing mechanism to enable the Borough of Califon to borrow moneys to address the costs attributable to increased expenses and revenue shortfalls due to COVID-19 and allow the Borough to pay back that money over a ten-year period; and

**WHEREAS,** the Bill would also require the Borough to thoroughly investigate and apply for financial assistance that my be available to it from the federal government, the State of New Jersey and other sources due to revenue shortfalls and expenditures because of the pandemic, prior to authorizing the issuance of the “coronavirus relief bonds”, and

**WHEREAS,** under A-3971, a municipality may use the proceeds from the sale and issuance of the coronavirus relief bonds to address a revenue shortfall experienced by the municipality and cover the cost of unanticipated expenses that are directly attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic and which occurred within 24 months after the end of the Public Health Emergency and State of Emergency; and

**WHEREAS,** A-3971 would be of great financial assistance to the Borough to help address all revenue shortfalls and expenditures directly attributable to this pandemic.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Council of the Borough of Califon that:

1. The town hereby supports A3971, which will offer relief to municipalities and counties to address their revenue shortfalls and expenditures directly attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. That a copy of this resolution be sent to the Office of the Governor, our State Legislators and the New Jersey League of Municipalities.

Motion was made by C. Smith seconded by R. Baggstrom to adopt Resolution 2020-48 as read.

For: Unanimous

Opposed: None

**MOTION CARRIED**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Councilman Medea reported that the basketball nets were delivered and are being held in the garage bays at the Municipal Bldg until they can be erected at Island Park. Chris Keiser has someone removing the old goals tomorrow. Paving of the basketball court will be done by Pips Paving, a local, family-fun business; cost under $10,000.

Graduation from Califon School will take place virtually this year. The school would like the Mayor to present the Citizenship Award. Mayor Daniel agreed that he will present this award at the graduation.

Councilman Janas reported that the Planning Board meeting is cancelled for May. Councilman Janas reported that he spoke with Rita Lemley who has indicated that the school Steering Committee work is on hold until the summer months, when the new CSA will begin her new position.

Councilman Haversang reported that the Recreation Committee met last Wednesday and kicked around some possible ideas for events in the fall. Mayor Daniel suggested a drive-in movie night at the Park. It will cost approximately $750. to rent the screen and projector. Councilman Haversang will present this idea to the Committee.

Councilwoman Smith reported that the Board of Education met on May 13th. Graduation will be held on June 9th at 7:00 pm and the Kindergarten graduation will be held on June 10th.

Dr. Ruberto has deemed that there will be no summer programs at the school. Dr. Ruberto has also engaged the services of Laura Bishop, LLC, who will run a promotional campaign to recruit tuition paying students for a fee of $5000.

Netz Sacro will be sworn in on June 20th as a new member on the Board of Education.

Councilman Baggstrom reported that the Police have been very present in town. Councilman Baggstrom reported that the crosswalk sign at the bridge is still missing. Councilman Janas suggested he look behind the Fire Dept. collection box; it may be there.

Councilman Baggstrom will speak to Kevin about the asphalt work that they suggested be done on Guinea Hollow Rd.

Councilman Baggstrom stated that the new signs for Philhower Ave. and Main St. look great; they are modern and extruded.

Councilman Collins reported that the BOH will meet on June 3rd and they will be discussing the complaint received from Toby and Mary Lou Loyd regarding a nuisance cat, belonging to their neighbor, who is causing serious problems on the Loyd’s property. They will also be discussing a septic waiver for the Califon Book store on Main St.

The Environmental Commission has a new member, Jennifer Gross, who spoke earlier in the evening about a plan to synchronize the street lights in town for better lighting. Karen Mastro, EC Secretary spoke to the CFO about the donation of money from Trout Unlimited for the Weis Dam environmental assessment. The CFO suggested putting the donation into an escrow account. The town will still need to get permission for this environmental assessment from the County.

**MAYOR’S REPORT**

Mayor Daniel informed Council that he had written a letter from the Mayor to residents of Califon that was posted on the website, Facebook and throughout town. The contents of the letter were to explain the Council’s decision to keep the grace period for the 2nd tax quarter at the 10th of May and not extend it to June 1st. The letter was informative and included important links for State and County information regarding this issue. Councilman Collins asked if there has been any backlash on the grace period issue and the Mayor and Clerk answered that there had not been any issues that have arisen. There was a short discussion on the status of local businesses; consensus being that the food establishments are doing well with takeout, etc. however, other businesses are not doing well. Councilman Baggstrom stated that most businesses are doing their best to keep residents buying local.

Mayor Daniel commended County Freeholder, Shaun Van Doren for his work on setting up a testing site at Raritan Valley Community College and gave thanks to Senator Malinowski for his efforts to attempt to get federal relief funds to municipalities under 550,000 population.

Mayor Daniel informed Council that Michael Pennucci, member of the Califon Fire Co. will be moving this weekend and relocating to Pittstown and joining the Fire Co. there. Mayor Daniel will execute a Proclamation honoring Mr. Pennucci for his dedicated service on the Califon Fire Co.

**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Reporter Jane Primerano commented on the cat complaint letter that was discussed earlier in the evening.

There being no further business to come before Council motion was made by C. Smith seconded by M. Medea and unanimously accepted to adjourn the meeting at 9:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Laura G. Eidsvaag, RMC

Municipal Clerk/Administrator