

**BOROUGH OF HOPEWELL
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**OFFICIAL MINUTES
APPROVED: 5/2/2019**

**REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 4, 2019**

The Regular Meeting of the Borough Council of the Borough of Hopewell was called to order by Mayor Paul Anzano at 7:04 pm on April 4, 2019. Ms. Hovan read the “Sunshine Statement” indicating the meeting was being held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act and Mayor Anzano led the flag salute.

Ms. Hovan called the roll and the following members of the Borough Council were present: Mr. Chris Fossel, Mr. Ryan Kennedy, Mr. David Mackie, Ms. Samara McAuliffe, Mr. C. Schuyler Morehouse and Ms. Debra Stuhler. Borough Administrator Michele Hovan was also present. There were 12 members of the public present to start and then more than 40 were in attendance by 7:15pm.

Mayor Anzano opened the meeting to the public, stating that the discussion about the bridge construction was listed as a separate agenda item.

There being no comments or questions, the meeting was closed to the public on motion by Mr. Morehouse, seconded by Mr. Kennedy and carried unanimously.

Discussion – Bridge Construction – CR 518 Closure

Mayor Anzano announced that he and the Borough Council were interested in hearing from the community about the detour and asked that attendees be mindful when statements are made or questions addressed to avoid repetition in the best interest of time.

Mr. Jon McConaughy, 20 Long Way, Hopewell Township, said that he may be representing the businesses but is not necessarily the spokesperson. Mr. McConaughy said that everyone recognizes the need to replace the bridges but wanted the Mayor and Council to know that because the work is not a declared disaster or otherwise claimable under their business insurance, they are losing money at a rate he calculates in a “back of the envelope” amount of \$10,000 per day. Mr. McConaughy said the duration of the work at 150 days is substantial and said that there was no notification to the businesses. Mr. McConaughy said that the signs went up on March 4th, the road closed on March 11th and that the businesses have been in crisis mode since. Mr. McConaughy said that the signage was convoluted and that it was wrong to detour to Cherry Valley instead of Aunt Molly or Provinceline Road. Mr. McConaughy said that the barricades make the area look like Beirut. He added that there should have been consideration of a partial instead of a full road closure and that 150 working days was unnecessary due to the ability to implement an Accelerated Bridge Construction technique. Mr. McConaughy said that the closure came at the worst time for the businesses and that no thought was given to the community. He said that the county awarded the contract to the lowest responsible bidder and that there was nothing responsible about the contractor according to his research. Mr. McConaughy asked what the businesses are supposed to do and asked why they aren’t notified when something is going on, or planned. Mr. McConaughy said that he is being asked to advocate for a shortened construction time, compensation for lost revenue, tax relief from Hopewell and said that the Borough can share the pain of not being able to meet its expenses. Mr. McConaughy said that the Borough could pitch in for signs and said that some event ideas they had included, “Detour of Hopewell,” “Dead End Party,” and “Taste of Hopewell” to replace Food Truck Friday and a beer garden party.

Mayor Anzano replied that the Borough has been engaged with the County regarding concerns expressed and the traffic issues, noting that the Hopewell Township Police reported less traffic backups than in the

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APRIL 4, 2019**

initial days of the closure. Mayor Anzano said that the Borough was willing to relax the sign restrictions to allow temporary signage as long as the locations, etc. are approved and that they should speak to Ms. Hovan regarding their ideas. Mr. McConaughy said that the signs the businesses need are outside of the Borough and asked that the Borough pay for them or share in the cost. Discussion followed regarding modifications to existing signs to add clarity.

Mr. Morehouse said that Broad Street is a major thoroughfare and suggested a letter-writing campaign to the County to express the concerns about impact. Considerable discussion followed. Mr. Michael Gray, owner of Sourlands Cycles, said that the businesses have written letters and have made calls to the County. Mayor Anzano said that he hadn't seen any of the correspondence. Mr. Kennedy said that the Borough is trying to advocate for the community to the County and that there has been much communication regarding signage and other issues and that it will continue as required. Following more discussion that involved notification about pending projects, Mr. Mackie said that those will only pertain to future projects and that perhaps there is a need to re-examine traffic patterns. Ms. Hovan offered to take a ride with Mr. McConaughy to view and discuss some of the issues along the route that he mentioned.

Ms. Rory Philpson, owner of Blue Bottle Café, said that the message boards note Kings Path and Aunt Molly Road and that people outside of the area might not know where that is. She suggested changing the language. Ms. Hovan and Mayor Anzano restated their willingness to go over the signage issues with the County.

Mayor Anzano said that he penned a Letter to the Editor that should run at the end of the week to try and promote Hopewell businesses and encourage people to take the detour to get here. Mr. Kennedy said that the Economic Development Committee has been trying for years to improve outreach to the businesses. Mr. Fossil said that over 200 people have signed up for email updates on the website and don't receive anything.

Darlene from A Step in Stone said that the pain is real and said that she hoped the governing body takes the issue seriously, adding that 150 days is ridiculous and that they need to accelerate the process.

Mr. Chris Weaver, North Greenwood Avenue, said that his commute has been 20-25 minutes longer and that the county set the detour route without thinking about it. Mr. McConaughy said that adding a temporary light with a left turn signal would be a good idea. Mr. Morehouse suggested that the contact information for the County be added to the website. Mr. McConaughy said that there are two issues: acceleration of the project and improved signage. Mr. Richard Moskowitz, 130 Hopewell-Rocky Hill Road and Brick Farm Group, said that he's been in contact with Senator Turner and County Executive Brian Hughes and that Mr. Hughes was unaware of negative impacts to the Borough. Mr. Gray said that the Borough needs a better communications plan. Mr. Morehouse said that the closure might be the ideal time to close Broad Street for Cruise Night.

Mr. Clark Reed asked how we will work together once the bridge opens and asked what the Borough is going to do to let more businesses open.

**BOROUGH OF HOPEWELL
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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APPROVED: 5/2/2019**

**REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 4, 2019**

Ms. Bradford Lyon, 110 West Prospect Street, said she is outraged that there was no notification to the EMS about the work and that the lack of notification is an insult to the community. Ms. Lyon said that if the issue is safety in repairing the bridge then safety should be the issue now. Ms. Lyon said that if one person dies because the ambulance can't get to them it will be the fault of the County. Continued discussion regarding fire/EMS worries, notification for future projects, etc. followed. Mr. Kennedy noted that the economic impact is real and would be interested in obtaining real figures to support the claims so that they could be communicated with county officials. Mayor Anzano closed the discussion topic after everyone had a chance to speak.

MINUTES – the meeting minutes from the April 4, 2019 regular meeting were accepted on motion by Mr. Kennedy, seconded by Mr. Mackie, and carried, with Mr. Morehouse abstaining due to absence.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS – there were no questions regarding the director's submitted report.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF WATER AND SEWERS- there were no questions regarding the director's submitted report.

Ordinance No. 829 – First Reading

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

Ms. Hovan read Ordinance 829 by title and explained that the calculations are used in the preparation of the budget to adjust the cost-of-living baseline and utilize the cap bank allowances.

Resolution No. 2019-41, as filed in the Municipal Clerk's office to introduce Ordinance No. 829, was adopted on motion of Mr. Morehouse, seconded by Mr. Mackie and carried unanimously.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Fossil, Kennedy, McAuliffe, Mackie, Morehouse, Stuhler
Nays: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

Ordinance No. 830 – First Reading

AN ORDINANCE RELATING TO WATER RATES AND AMENDING THE "REVISED GENERAL ORDINANCES OF THE BOROUGH OF HOPEWELL, 1975," AS AMENDED

Ms. Hovan read Ordinance 830 by title and explained that 2018 realized considerable lowered revenue for the utility due to the very wet year such that the increase requested in the ordinance is necessary to restore self-liquidating status. Resolution No. 2019-42, as filed in the Municipal Clerk's office to introduce Ordinance No. 830, was adopted on motion of Ms. Stuhler, seconded by Ms. McAuliffe and carried unanimously.

**BOROUGH OF HOPEWELL
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**OFFICIAL MINUTES
APPROVED: 5/2/2019**

**REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 4, 2019**

Roll Call:

Ayes: Fossel, Kennedy, McAuliffe, Mackie, Morehouse, Stuhler
Nays: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

Ordinance No. 831 – First Reading

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF HOPEWELL IN THE COUNTY OF MERCER, STATE OF NEW JERSEY RELATING TO SEWER RATES AND AMENDING "THE REVISED GENERAL ORDINANCES OF THE BOROUGH OF HOPEWELL, 1975," AS AMENDED

Ms. Hovan read Ordinance 831 by title and explained that like the water utility, the sewer utility suffered with the very rainy year, forcing higher costs in the sewer treatment area because of I&I. Ms. Hovan did note that the new manhole inserts have been installed to reduce I&I issues. Resolution No. 2019-43, as filed in the Municipal Clerk's office to introduce Ordinance No. 831, was adopted on motion of Mr. Kennedy, seconded by Mr. Mackie and carried unanimously.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Fossel, Kennedy, McAuliffe, Mackie, Morehouse, Stuhler
Nays: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

INTRODUCTION OF 2019 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Mayor Anzano thanked the finance committee for their work on the budget. Mr. Kennedy reported that a loss in assessment valuation required an increase just to reach prior levels and that a 3% salary increase was factored in across-the-board. Mr. Morehouse said that the budget was essentially flat but that the 4 cent per one hundred in assessed valuation included the concept of taking a higher bite with an extra penny to pay down debt. Mr. Morehouse said the worker's comp rates were down and thanked DPW for their very conscientious practices. Mr. Morehouse said that the Borough still needs to address the train station and DPW building but that \$4 million dollars of added debt is just not something the Borough can take on at this time. He added that the Borough would be pursuing grant funding to offset the train station project costs. Mr. Morehouse also thanked Ms. Hovan for her work on the budget.

Resolution No. 2019-45, as filed in the Borough Clerk's office and to authorize a self-examination of the 2019 municipal budget was adopted on motion by Mr. Kennedy, seconded by Mr. Morehouse and carried unanimously.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Fossel, Kennedy, McAuliffe, Mackie, Morehouse, Stuhler
Nays: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

**BOROUGH OF HOPEWELL
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**OFFICIAL MINUTES
APPROVED: 5/2/2019**

**REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 4, 2019**

Resolution No. 2019-45A, as filed in the Municipal Clerk's Office and to introduce the 2019 Municipal Budget, was adopted on motion of Mr. Morehouse, seconded by Mr. Kennedy and carried unanimously. Ms. Hovan announced that the public hearing on the budget would be held on May 2, 2019.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Fossel, Kennedy, McAuliffe, Mackie, Morehouse, Stuhler
Nays: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution Nos. 2019-46 through 2019-48 and 2019-50, as filed in the Municipal Clerk's Office, were adopted on motion of Mr. Kennedy, seconded by Mr. Morehouse, and carried unanimously.

2019-46	Emergency Temporary Appropriations
2019-47	Recycling Tonnage Grant
2019-48	2019 Salaries
2019-50	Support of an accurate count in the 2020 Census

Roll Call:

Ayes: Fossel, Kennedy, McAuliffe, Mackie, Morehouse, Stuhler
Nays: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

Resolution No. 2019-49, as filed in the Municipal Clerk's Office, was adopted on motion of Ms. Stuhler, seconded by Mr. Mackie, and carried, with Mr. Kennedy abstaining due to a possible conflict.

2019-49	Tax Lien Assignments (B31/L1, B31/L2, B31/L19)
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Roll Call:

Ayes: Fossel, McAuliffe, Mackie, Morehouse, Stuhler
Nays: None
Absent: None
Abstain: Kennedy

Proclamation – Arbor Day 2019

Mayor Anzano noted the annual proclamation for the record.

Departmental Reports

The following departmental reports were accepted on motion by Mr. Morehouse, seconded by Ms. McAuliffe and carried unanimously.

**BOROUGH OF HOPEWELL
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**OFFICIAL MINUTES
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**REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 4, 2019**

Municipal Clerk	March	\$	320.00
Tax Collector	March	\$	1,587,434.18
Registrar	March	\$	28.00
Zoning	March	\$	100.00
Facility Rentals	March	\$	125.00
Pet Licensing	March	\$	30.00

Claims for Payment

The Claims for Payment, as attached, were approved on motion of Mr. Morehouse, seconded by Mr. Kennedy and carried unanimously.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Fossel, Kennedy, Mackie, McAuliffe, Morehouse, Stuhler
 Nays: None
 Absent: None
 Abstain: None

Mayor Anzano opened the meeting to the public. There being no questions or comments, the meeting was closed to the public on motion by Mr. Morehouse, seconded by Mr. Kennedy and carried unanimously.

Council Liaison Reports

Ms. McAuliffe reported that the Green Team was working on a Green Fest event.

Ms. Stuhler reported that the Board of Health was pleased to welcome a new member.

Mr. Mackie reported that the Planning Board held a record 4-minute meeting to adopt a resolution approving developing the funeral home site for residential housing.

Mr. Kennedy reported that the Hopewell Valley Open Space group is working with FOHVOS to list priorities for preservation, adding that he hoped some of the State money will come back to Hopewell Valley. Mr. Kennedy also reported that the EDC met to discuss the bridge and that Jim Waltman from the Watershed is coming in soon to discuss educational opportunities for the plastic bag ban. Mr. Kennedy also announced that Cruise Night was coming up on May 3rd.

Mr. Fossel had no report.

Mr. Morehouse reported that the I&I issue put Stony Brook at 90% capacity and that the problem is real and that they were going to have to demonstrate to NJDEP how to mitigate possibly going over capacity. Mr. Morehouse reminded everyone that the park clean-up day is on May 4th and said that one of the projects might be painting the bridge. An extended discussion about clean-up days past and future was held.

Mayor Anzano said that he was working on a committee with the Chief Justice regarding the consolidation of municipal courts and that he was working with key legislators to draft legislation that would enable the Borough to recover legal fees paid from the Verizon case.

Ms. Stuhler said that she reviewed the website for suggested improvements with resident Doug Dixon, a technology expert, and asked that a subcommittee be formed to take next steps. Mr. Kennedy volunteered to serve. Mr. Morehouse asked that former Councilman Bob Lewis be invited to join the group.

**BOROUGH OF HOPEWELL
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**OFFICIAL MINUTES
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**REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 4, 2019**

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 9:19 pm on motion by Mr. Morehouse, seconded by Mr. Kennedy and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Hovan
Borough Administrator/Clerk