

**KNOWLTON TOWNSHIP
WARREN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY
PUBLIC SESSION MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 12, 2021**

The meeting of the Knowlton Township Committee was held on this date at the Knowlton Municipal Building, 628 Route 94, Columbia, New Jersey. This meeting was held by electronic means via ZOOM as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and various executive orders in connection with same and was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Mayor Starrs.

Mayor Starrs led the public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Starrs read the following statements "This meeting of the Knowlton Township Committee is being held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act: P: 1975, Chapter 231, noting that notice of all regularly scheduled meetings has been published in the *New Jersey Herald* and/or the *Star Gazette* as well as providing said schedule in the Municipal Clerk's office."

Open Public Meetings Act:

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ELECTRONIC MEETING STATEMENT:

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions on in-person public gatherings by executive orders of the Governor of New Jersey, meetings of the Knowlton Township Committee will be held remotely via Zoom. The Zoom platform allows for members of the public to participate via computer, mobile device, or telephone.

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:39-1.5(g): Both adequate and electronic notice of this meeting has been provided by publishing a revised annual notice in the two official newspapers designated by the Township, posting such notice on the door of the municipal building, and posting such notice on the municipal website. Such notice specified the time of this meeting and provided instructions on how to access the meeting remotely.

The following is an explanation of the procedures and requirements for making public comment as required by N.J.A.C. 5:391.4(h).

Please keep yourself muted until the meeting moderator requests that you unmute yourself. The Township reserves the right to mute or remove disruptive meeting participants after an initial warning. Disruptive conduct includes sustained inappropriate behaviors such as, but not necessarily limited to, shouting, interruption, and use of profanity.

Comments will be accepted in writing. Written comments must be no more than 450 words and must include your name and address. This equates to about 3 minutes of speaking, which is the amount of time allowed for each public comment. Such comments will be read into the record at the appropriate time. However, please be advised that the Township reserves the right to summarize duplicative comments consistent with N.J.A.C. 5:391.4(f). Comments can be emailed by

3:00 p.m. the day of the meeting to: Knowltonpubliccomments@knowlton-nj.com. Written comments may also be submitted via mail or dropped off at the municipal building by such day and time.

Comments will also be accepted during the appropriate times of the meeting via Zoom. If you wish to make a comment during the meeting please use the "raise hand" button on your screen if you are signed in via Zoom. If you are accessing the meeting via telephone, please hit *9 and the meeting moderator will call on you and identify you by the last few digits of your phone number. You can press *6 to unmute yourself. Please state your name and address before beginning your comment. As always, comments are limited to three minutes per person and there will be two comment sessions during the meeting.

Please be advised that this meeting is being recorded.

Roll Call

Cuntala--yes, Mazza--yes, Van Horn—yes, Starrs—yes

Absent- Shipps

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public Comment

ORDINANCES

Introduction

2021-04- Calendar Year 2021 Ordinance to Exceed the Municipal Budget Appropriation Limits and to Establish a Cap Bank (N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14)

WHEREAS, the Local Government Cap Law, N.J.S.A 40A: 4-45.1 et seq., provides that in the preparation of its annual budget, a municipality shall limit any increase in said budget to 2.5% unless authorized by ordinance to increase it to 3.5% over the previous year's final appropriations, subject to certain exceptions; and,

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.15a provides that a municipality may, when authorized by ordinance, appropriate the difference between the amount of its actual final appropriation and the 3.5% percentage rate as an exception to its final appropriations in either of the next two succeeding years; and,

WHEREAS, the Township Committee of the Township of KNOWLTON in the County of Warren finds it advisable and necessary to increase its CY 2021 budget by up to 3.5% over the previous year's final appropriations, in the interest of promoting the health, safety and welfare of the citizens; and,

WHEREAS, the Township Committee hereby determines that a 3.5% increase in the budget for said year, amounting to \$57,189.97 in excess of the increase in final appropriations otherwise permitted by the Local Government Cap Law, is advisable and necessary; and,

WHEREAS the Township Committee hereby determines that any amount authorized hereinabove that is not appropriated as part of the final budget shall be retained as an exception to final appropriation in either of the next two succeeding years.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED, by the Township Committee of the Township of KNOWLTON, in the

County of Warren, a majority of the full authorized membership of this governing body affirmatively concurring, that, in the CY 2021 budget year, the final appropriations of the Township of KNOWLTON shall, in accordance with this ordinance and N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14, be increased by 3.5%, amounting to \$57,189.97 and that the CY 2021 municipal budget for the Township of KNOWLTON be approved and adopted in accordance with this ordinance; and,

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that any that any amount authorized hereinabove that is not appropriated as part of the final budget shall be retained as an exception to final appropriation in either of the next two succeeding years; and,

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that a certified copy of this ordinance as introduced be filed with the Director of the Division of Local Government Services within 5 days of introduction; and,

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that a certified copy of this ordinance upon adoption, with the recorded vote included thereon, be filed with said Director within 5 days after such adoption.

Motion made by Starrs, second by Cuntala and approved by roll call vote: Cuntala-yes, Mazza-yes, Shipps-absent, Van Horn-yes, Starrs-yes, Ordinance 2021-04.

RESOLUTION

2021-44- Self-Examination of Budget

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:4-78b has authorized the Local Finance Board to adopt rules that permit municipalities in sound fiscal condition to assume the responsibility, normally granted to the Director of the Division of Local Government Services, of conducting the annual budget examination; and

WHEREAS, N.J.A.C. 5:30-7 was adopted by the Local Finance Board on February 11, 1997; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:30-7.2 through 7.5, the Township of Knowlton has been declared eligible to participate in the program by the Division of Local Government Services, and the Chief Financial Officer has determined that the local government meets the necessary conditions to participate in the program for the 2021 budget year.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the governing body of the Township of Knowlton that in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:30-7.6a & 7.6b and based upon the Chief Financial Officer's certification, the governing body has found the budget has met the following requirements:

1. That with reference to the following items, the amounts have been calculated pursuant to law and appropriated as such in the budget:
 - a. Payment of interest and debt redemption charges
 - b. Deferred charges and statutory expenditures
 - c. Cash deficit of preceding year
 - d. Reserve for uncollected taxes

- e. Other reserves and non-disbursement items
- f. Any inclusions of amounts required for school purposes.

2. That the provisions relating to limitation on increases of appropriations pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.2 and appropriations for exceptions to limits on appropriations found at N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.3 et seq., are fully met (complies with CAP law).

3. That the budget is in such form, arrangement, and content as required by the Local Budget Law and N.J.A.C. 5:30-4 and 5:30-5.

4. That pursuant to the Local Budget Law:

- a. All estimates of revenue are reasonable, accurate, and correctly stated,
- b. Items of appropriation are properly set forth
- c. In itemization, form, arrangement, and content, the budget will permit the exercise of the comptroller function within the municipality.

5. The budget and associated amendments have been introduced and publicly advertised in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Local Budget Law, except that failure to meet the deadlines of N.J.S.A. 40A:4-5 shall not prevent such certification.

6. That all other applicable statutory requirements have been fulfilled.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution will be forwarded to the Director of the Division of Local Government Services upon adoption.

Motion made by Starrs, second Cuntala and carried to approve Resolution 2021-44.

BUDGET INTRODUCTION

CFO-Christine Rolef and Township Auditor John Mooney of Nisivoccia

Mr. Mooney explained that the budget is flat with no impact to local tax payers. Surplus is good, and debt is being paid down. Mr. Mooney would like to see the tax collection rates go up a little more for 2020. Committeeman Van Horn asked if there is any guidance regarding the COVID money. Mr. Mooney had not seen any guidance as of yet but does believe that the money will be available by the fall. Mayor Starrs asked Mr. Mooney where he sees the township now that they do not have the courts. Mr. Mooney felt that it was a good move. The township may not see alot of revenue, but court cost will go down. Discussion also took place regarding debt service which Mr. Mooney said is controllable but should be more aggressive in the future.

Motion made by Starrs, Second by Cuntala and approved by roll call vote: Cuntala-yes, Mazza-yes, Shipps-absent, Van Horn-yes, Starrs-yes, the Introduction of the 2021 Budget.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Knowlton Township Fire & Rescue

Chief Mulligan, Mike Bates and Travis Christine discussed quotes that they have received for refurbishing of a fire truck. CFO Christine Rolef advised them that the cost of the refurbishment is over the bid threshold and will need to go out for bid.

Mayor Starrs stated that she was part of a meeting with Gottheimers office and it was discussed for the fire & rescues of surrounding times to do a joint grant application. Mayor Starrs will provide contact information to fire & rescue and they will look into it.

RESOLUTIONS

2021-45 - Resolution Approving Payment of Vouchers

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Knowlton, Warren County, New Jersey, that all claims attached are hereby approved as reasonable and proper claims against the Township of Knowlton.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that approval for payment is hereby given to the Chief Financial Officer to pay said claims, subject to the availability of funds.

Motion made by Cuntala, second by Van Horn and approved by roll call vote: Cuntala-yes, Mazza-yes, Shipp-absent, Van Horn-yes, Starrs-yes resolution 2021-45.

OLD BUSINESS

Marijuana Ordinance

Mayor Starrs explained that township ordinance regarding marijuana is no longer valid. Attorney Parikh explained that townships have 180 days to adopt an opt out ordinance. Discussion took place regarding the current ordinance which is use of medical marijuana. With a split committee it was decided to discuss at a later meeting when there is a full quorum.

Properties for Foreclosure

Mayor Starrs asked the committee to add 150 Vail Rd. to the list of properties up for foreclosure. 1 of the 4 that was originally approved was redeemed so this property will take the place of that. Committee agreed and Mayor Starrs will have a resolution ready for the next township meeting.

Renting out Tunnel Field/COVID

Committee agreed to have Recreation start taking applications for use of the pavilion beginning July 1st. Attorney Parikh will send a waiver to the township to be part of the rental agreement.

NEW BUSINESS

Grant for Walking Path

A new grant became available called FY2021 Local Recreation Improvement grant which is for the repair of local parks and recreation centers. Playground, walking paths and recreation facility equipment among other things are eligible.

Committeewoman Cuntala agreed to meet with Township Engineer French & Parrello at Tunnel Field to see what can be added for this grant. Committee agreed to have French & Parrello submit with addition.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Cuntala, second by Starrs and carried to adjourn tonight's m