

**MINUTES OF KNOWLTON TOWNSHIP
WARREN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY
Public Session Meeting Minutes
March 26, 2020**

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 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Starrs.

Mayor Starrs led the public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Starrs read the following statement “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.”

Roll Call

Present: Committeewoman Cuntala, Deputy Mayor Shippis, Committeeman Van Horn, and Mayor Starrs. Also present was CFO Christine Rolef and Township Auditor John Mooney

Absent: Committeeman McNinch

PRESENTATION: Christine Rolef, CFO, 2020 Budget Discussion

A copy to the budget was sent via email to committee members prior to the meeting. CFO Christine Rolef and Township Auditor discussed the 2020 Budget. Mrs. Rolef talked about two big purchases that the township will be making this year: a Mason truck for the DPW department and air packs for Fire & Rescue. Mrs. Rolef explained because no one can predict what is going to happen this year because of the COVID 19, she recommends not using the surplus to purchase these items but to go out for Bond Ordinance. Mr. Mooney agreed with Mrs. Rolef that would be the best course of action and stated that the Township has aggressively paid down over \$600,000 in debt in recent years. This will also help to keep a flat tax rate for the township. Committee agreed with this suggestion. Mr. Mooney also suggested to have Bond Council prepare a tax anticipation notice. Mrs. Rolef will have that ready for a future meeting. Introduction of the Budget is scheduled for the April 23, 2020 meeting. Mr. Mooney addressed the effect that Covid-19 is likely to have on state budgets-- that tax collection rates are likely to go down and the state may pull grant funding for roads or other areas. He stressed that the Township will be legally responsible for paying the county and schools the full amount they need on time regardless.

PUBLIC COMMENT—Clerk Shippis asked each member of the public (who appear as phone numbers or names) individually for comments, but there were none.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Office of Emergency Management –OEM Frank Makowski and Deputy OEM Mike Bates were present and gave us an update on the COVID 19. Currently there are 36 cases in Warren County, none in

Knowlton. Mr. Bates said that Knowlton Elementary School donated 12 boxes of gloves that were sent down to the county. Fire & Rescue will be staffing themselves adequately. Mr. Makowski also mentioned that food banks are in need of help with supplies.

RESOLUTIONS

2020-51 Resolution Authorizing Pre-payment of Certain Bills for 2020.

WHEREAS, the Township of Knowlton has budgeted funds for payment of obligations including, utilities, payroll, debt service, governmental fees and other statutory payments, insurance, and for the advertising, printing and mailing costs of the Township; and,

WHEREAS, the payment of these items occasionally arrives out of time for placement on the next available list of bills and claims, thereby inadvertently placing these bills and mailings in arrears because of the schedule of meetings; and

WHEREAS, the Township's Chief Financial Officer and Township Attorney have advised that the governing body may provide for the pre-payment of these items, so that they may be paid in a timely manner without penalty.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Knowlton, Warren County, State of New Jersey that the Chief Financial Officer be and is hereby authorized and directed to make pre-payment of the following items prior to the same appearing on the next meeting's list of bills and claims:

1. Utilities (electric, gas, water, sewer and telephone, cellular telephone, gasoline, diesel fuel, internet providers, etc.).
2. Township payroll and payroll agencies.
3. Debt service as evidenced by pre-authorized bonds and/or notes.
4. Health, dental and other insurance premiums and/or claims.
5. Governmental fees and other statutory payments (school, county, sewage authority, state and county fees).
6. Bills pertaining to the advertising, printing, and mailing costs of the Township.
7. Third party fees collected through pre-authorized credit/debit card processing.
8. Bills where vendor discounts are granted for timely payment. (Example 2% discount for payments made within 10 days.) Maximum dollar amount allowed is \$20,000.
9. Inter-fund Obligations
10. Purchase of Investments

Motion was made by Committeewoman Cuntala, second by Deputy Mayor Shipps and approved by Roll Call vote: Cuntala–yes, McNinch–absent, Shipps–yes, Van Horn–yes, Starrs–yes to Resolution 2020-51.

2020-52-Empowering Township Committee to Authorize Payment of Land Use Board Professional Billing during a Public Emergency

WHEREAS, pursuant to Executive Order No. 103, Governor Phil Murphy declared that a Public Health Emergency and State of Emergency exist in the State of New Jersey as a result of an outbreak of Coronavirus disease 2019 (“COVID-19”) is a contagious, and at times fatal, respiratory disease; and

WHEREAS, on March 15, 2020, the Township of Knowlton (the “Township”) declared that a local public health emergency and state of emergency exist in the Township; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Executive Order No. 107, Governor Phil Murphy ordered that all public gatherings be cancelled until further notice; and

WHEREAS, to protect the public health, safety, and welfare the Township Land Use Board (the “Board”) has temporarily cancelled its upcoming meetings; and

WHEREAS, the Board’s professionals currently have outstanding bills that will accrue late fees or interest before the Board is able to meet again and approve the payment of outstanding bills; and

WHEREAS, the Board has forwarded the bills and claims received by it for review and approval by the Committee.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Knowlton is hereby authorized to approve the payment of Land Use Board bills and claims as part of its bill list at each regular meeting during times of emergency when the Board is prevented from meeting. **Motion was made by Committeewoman Cuntala, second by Deputy Mayor Shipps and approved by roll call vote: Cuntala–yes, McNinch–absent, Shipps–yes, Van Horn–yes, Starrs–yes to Resolution 2020-52.**

2020-53 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 Committeewoman Cuntala, second by Mayor Starrs and approved by Roll call vote: Cuntala–yes, McNinch—absent, Shipps–yes, Van Horn–yes, Starrs – yes to Resolution 2020-53 with the exception of Gebhardt & Kiefer.

OLD BUSINESS– No Old Business

NEW BUSINESS– No New Business

CORRESPONDENCE– No Correspondence

PUBLIC COMMENT– No Public Comment

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Mayor Starrs, second by Committeewoman Cuntala and carried to adjourn tonight's Township meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristin Shipps
Municipal Clerk