

The minutes of the Special Public Meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Saddle Brook held on March 20, 2020 at 5:00 PM at the Senior Center, 8 Caldwell Avenue, Saddle Brook, NJ.

Council President Cimiluca called the meeting to order.

The Township Clerk called the roll:

Councilwoman D'Arminio – present
Councilman Gierak – present
Councilman Accomando – absent
Councilwoman Mazzer – present
Council President Cimiluca – present

Mayor White – present
Robert Hicswa – DPW Superintendent
Joe Polizzotti – Fire Chief
John J. Tuohy – Office of Emergency Management
Chief Robert Kugler – Saddle Brook Police Department/Emergency Management Coordinator
Bill Mergo, President of the Saddle Brook Volunteer Ambulance Corps

Council President Cimiluca asked everyone to please rise for the salute to the flag.

Council President Cimiluca announced that adequate notice of this meeting has been sent to all Council members by police messenger and to all legal newspapers in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975.

The Township Clerk announced that the public is hereby advised that any statements made during the meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Saddle Brook may not be privileged or protected and that persons or entities who take issue with such comments or are offended by same, may, and have in the past, sought legal redress through the courts.

Any member of the public who addresses the Council speaks for themselves and not for the Council.

Council President Cimiluca asked for a motion to open the meeting to the public.

Motion: Councilwoman D'Arminio Second: Councilman Gierak

Roll Call:

Councilwoman D'Arminio - yes
Councilman Gierak - yes
Councilman Accomando - absent
Councilwoman Mazzer - yes
Councilman President Cimiluca - yes

Hearing no one, Council President Cimiluca asked for a motion to close the meeting to the public.

Motion: Councilwoman D'Arminio Second: Councilman Gierak

Roll Call:

Councilwoman D'Arminio - yes
Councilman Gierak - yes
Councilman Accomando - absent
Councilwoman Mazzer - yes
Councilman President Cimiluca - yes

Council President Cimiluca stated the purpose of this meeting was for the Council to meet with people that are at the forefront for our town in trying to battle COVID-19 and to make sure that the town is taking all the precautions necessary and that our first responders are protected because they're on the front line in meeting this disease head on.

Council President Cimiluca asked Mr. Mergo of the Ambulance Corps if they had the proper safety equipment they needed.

Mr. Mergo said yes, we have some limited amounts of equipment. Captain Reid has instituted a protocol for ambulance calls and said in the case of respiratory distress a life support unit would be dispatched as well. He explained the process for ambulance calls and said we are trying to get the state to get us the equipment. We have contacted the normal vendors, and we have back orders on most of the equipment we need to sustain us for months going forward. He explained prices were exorbitant due to shipping costs from outside of the US and said we will do whatever we can working with our first aid council, working with the office of emergency management and following the county and state closely. He said today was the first day of testing, and we wanted to get some people tested but were turned away because the line was too long. We need more protective gear, we need more gowns, more respirators.

Council President Cimiluca asked how many respirators they have.

Mr. Mergo said enough to stock each of the ambulances, but if we have to sustain for months, I see this as an issue.

Council President Cimiluca asked Fire Chief Polizzotti how the fire department was doing on equipment. Chief Polizzotti said they were expecting an order of supplies for additional masks, gloves, cleaning wipes and items like that. He said some had been delivered and distributed to each fire house. He discussed their safety procedures.

Mr. Tuohy spoke about the status of emergency management. He made suggestions for getting information to people not using social media, including putting more information on the board at Town Hall. He said there should be more CDC information on there. Council President Cimiluca asked if You Tube videos could be put on Channel 38. Mr. Tuohy said yes. His concern was for seniors in town and suggested older meetings should be removed from the channel at this time.

Mayor White said everyone in this room is on the front line, and the information changes minute by minute. It's hard to keep up with it. We're in uncharted territory, and I think everyone is doing a good job. It's stressful. We're getting bombarded on the administrative side from every angle. What needs to be said is all the things that are being done are in an abundance of caution. That's exactly what it is. He said the whole reason they're doing this is they are trying to flatten the curve. They want people to take it seriously so that it doesn't peak too much. It hasn't peaked yet, but they're hoping that when it does peak, they will flatten it out a little where it won't be as bad as was predicted. As far as what's going on there with our emergency services, I think everything is being done. My only issue would be communication. I think Pete has been keeping you guys abreast of everything there is to know. I've been trying to get everything out to the public. I honestly think we've been doing pretty good with the fact that this is a crisis, and we're doing well.

The Mayor said I want you to know you can call on us if you need anything. Feel free to give us a call.

Council President Cimiluca said I think we would be remiss to not have this meeting because we need to have the Council involved, and they are involved, but we need to call this meeting just so we have everybody together.

Councilwoman D'Arminio said if anyone tests positive you would get the report. Mr. Lo Dico said yes. Mayor White asked if there was a point of contact, and Chief Kugler said he was the point of contact for any positive location in the Township of Saddle Brook. Location, not name. We are establishing procedures that law enforcement becomes aware of the location in case of an emergency response. That was just approved yesterday by the Attorney General and the Department of Health. There are ongoing

discussions about how do we keep this confidential, how do we share it with people that need to be advised like EMS? That's still in the works. He said there's a lot of moving parts to this, but I think our community is doing well. I think all the disciplines hopefully are working together. It's an ever evolving situation, and I would hope that we all look at our TV Channel 77/38. Now is the time to get people to go to Saddle Brook Township website, Facebook and Channel 77. The priority right now is to get personal protective equipment to the Saddle Brook volunteer ambulance corps. Remember these are volunteers, they are the front line, and they should be appreciated. First responding police officers, fire department members, same thing. But the Saddle Brook volunteer ambulance corps are the real heroes here.

Council President Cimiluca asked what we do at the point that a location in question tests positive.

Mr. Lo Dico said the Mayor and I and Mrs. Nafash from the Health Department have been handling this through the County Health Department. We have spoken to the head of the County Health Department. I've spoken personally to one of the community nurses, and everything that we have done from the time we first heard about it has been above and beyond the protocols. We follow the protocols that were established from Sunday directly from the County Health Department.

Discussion followed of procedures taken in the fire houses.

Council President Cimiluca said his understanding was a couple of officers on their own had found N-95 masks. Chief Kugler said he learned that today. Council President Cimiluca asked if those masks could go to the ambulance corps. Chief Kugler said the national stockpile is very limited. Almost from day one we were told to get our own stock. We will share what we can.

Chief Kugler said the Mayor and I have been together every day sharing information. Council President Cimiluca asked regarding the masks that were donated, is there a problem of getting them to the ambulance corps?

Mr. Mergo said we are stocked, but everything is back ordered. We average five runs a day. We expect to get more respiratory calls. You need masks and face shields now. What are we going to do if we get five calls a day? That's a lot of equipment you are expending daily. That's my fear. Chief Kugler said and it happens every day with you guys. Mr. Mergo said it's accelerating. Mr. Lo Dico said the problem is getting the equipment, nobody seems to be able to get the equipment.

Discussion followed of how long current equipment will last.

Mr. Lo Dico said unfortunately every town is going to be in the same situation since we're all trying to get the same equipment. And we're trying to expedite our ambulance corps like other towns and the hospitals.

Council President Cimiluca asked if the masks that were donated by the officers be shifted over to the ambulance corps just in case. Chief Kugler said I don't see why not. Mr. Lo Dico said they're going to need them.

Councilwoman D'Arminio asked how long it would take to get supplies from out of the country. Mr. Mergo said within a week.

Council President Cimiluca asked about face shields. Council President Cimiluca said when you order an N-95 mask, does it come with a face shield? Mr. Mergo said no.

Council President Cimiluca asked if shields are on the way and they are protocol for PPE. Are we ordering them? Have we ordered them? Chief Kugler responded and said we are doing all we can do.

Mayor White mentioned shared services with Rochelle Park and Maywood. If we can, we're going to try to help each other. We're just inundated with information. He said the County Health Department website had the most up to date information.

Council President Cimiluca suggested playing the Mayor's latest You Tube video on channel 38 or 77 since seniors rely on that. They don't have Facebook. They don't have websites. We can put directions on there, go to this website, go to our Facebook, but maybe we can, in addition to the You Tube video, maybe put on there as best as you can more scrolls or some more information or also say please go to Facebook if they have it. But the people that don't have Facebook, if we can get what's on Facebook and put it on the TV, it may help out.

Council President Cimiluca said someone asked what we are doing for seniors in need. Do we have a program set up, like a reverse 911 to see if there's anybody who needs something? We're a community, I know from past disasters – the community pulls together. We're kind of famous for that. Is there anything that you think we can do or do better for our seniors?

Mayor White discussed a possible partnership with ACME and mentioned the Community Partnership hotline.

Mr. Lo Dico said I know the county has some information we just received from yesterday's call about senior services. We can put that on.

Council President Cimiluca said we're closed here. Normally the first thing would be to come here and find out what to do and try to get some help, but this is closed right now, so we might have to reach out to them. Mayor White said we're trying to encourage people who have elderly neighbors to check in on them, call them. They should avoid contact with people.

Chief Kugler said if you know anyone who may be in need of assistance and if you haven't seen them in a while let us know. We have to say keep away, social distance, shelter in place. Governor Murphy is looking at maybe tighter restrictions. The numbers are going to climb.

Chief Kugler discussed the county testing site. He said the National Guard was there. If you are asymptomatic, don't go.

Mayor White asked what we were doing as far as the police department. Are we letting the public into the vestibule? Chief Kugler said we are. We try and limit the exposure as best we could. The municipal court has been closed.

Mr. Lo Dico said we have closed the municipal buildings to the public. We have a box where people can drop off their water bills. We're not taking cash, and we are informing them to drop it off. The building department is trying to function as much as possible through the mail as far as requests for permits.

Mayor White spoke about the White Collar workers having a modified schedule and perhaps splitting them up. Mr. Lo Dico said we haven't come up with anything concrete.

Chief Kugler discussed possibilities for first responders. Mr. Mergo discussed the ambulance corps procedures for keeping first responders safe.

Council President Cimiluca asked if Mr. Polizzotti had seen any decrease in fire department attendance. Mr. Polizzotti said fortunately it has been very quiet.

Council President Cimiluca said obviously everyone has been told if you have any kind of symptoms to stay away from people.

Mr. Lo Dico said we told our employees if you are sick, don't come to work. Mr. Hicswa is monitoring DPW, and we are monitoring Town Hall. One cough, you go home.

Chief Kugler said having emergency plans for both fire and ambulance corps is very important.

Mr. Lo Dico mentioned again about HIPPA restrictions regarding not being able to share information about individuals who have tested positive.

Discussion of how the County is releasing information and the status of the testing line in Paramus followed.

Councilman Gierek discussed using Zoom to create online meetings or conference calls. Chief Kugler discussed state and county restrictions.

Council President Cimiluca said he appreciated everyone coming in, it was very informative, and Saddle Brook will get through this. Thanks, everyone for your help.

Council President Cimiluca said we are going to have to think about something to do for April. Mr. Lo Dico said we're working on teleconferencing for the next meeting.

Council President Cimiluca mentioned the public comment on second reading ordinances. Mr. Lo Dico said with the teleconferencing they will phone or they could email questions in. We haven't worked that out yet.

Mayor White mentioned live streaming, and Mr. Lo Dico said a lot towns are just trying to get through their meeting.

Mr. Lo Dico read the following resolution.

TOWNSHIP OF SADDLE BROOK RESOLUTION

CR# 320-61

WHEREAS, Governor Phil Murphy and Bergen County Executive Jim Tedesco have declared a state of emergency during the coronavirus outbreak; and

WHEREAS, the health and safety of the residents and employees of Saddle Brook are the highest priority of the Mayor and Township Council; and

WHEREAS, there will be times when emergency actions will need to be taken for this purpose; and

WHEREAS, the Township Council may not be able to meet to formally approve purchases to combat this emergency,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Council of the Township of Saddle Brook authorizes the following:

- 1) During this emergency period, the administration is authorized to take all action necessary for the protection of the residents and employees
- 2) The Township Administration shall make every effort to notify the council as soon as it is practically possible of the proposed expenditure or action.
- 3) Off line checks may be made as needed

Council President Cimiluca suggested 'proposed' should be added to the resolution. Mr. Lo Dico explained the possible need for emergency actions. He said we are prepared to operate remotely from Town Hall. Mr. Conte would have access off-site to the Munidex system and payroll, and my concern is not knowing what's going to happen. If we can even communicate or I'm just taking a precaution, so we can change that to proposed or action, but it may be an action that we have to take to do something. Council President Cimiluca said even if it's a minute before. Mr. Lo Dico said I'll try. It's been hectic. I'm going to try, but it could happen. By the time I let everybody know and you get back to me, not everybody checks emails right away because you're busy, everybody is busy. We just want the authority. You know me, I'm not spending unless it's something that's necessary. Council President Cimiluca said I think no one is going to say no to anything as long you just let us know what's happening. Mr. Lo Dico said when I can, I will. Council President Cimiluca said if you can't do it, you can't do it.

Councilman Gierrek said in the event an emergency arises you can send that e-mail out and then hand the check out. I don't have a problem. Mr. Lo Dico said yes, but I might not be able to do that right away, that's the problem. Councilman Gierrek said I hear you. I'm on board. I trust you. I know you're doing the right thing. Council President Cimiluca said it could be afterwards. Mr. Lo Dico said I'm looking for the auditor, so when he says you have an expenditure and we don't have a resolution. And it might be the bill list in April because we may send out a bill list, but that you'd see ahead of time so we can pay bills. We don't know what's going to happen next week or tomorrow. Things are just changing.

Councilman Gierrek said probably it's going to get worse. Mr. Lo Dico said that's what I'm anticipating. It will be.

Motion: Councilwoman D'Arminio Second: Councilwoman Mazzer

Roll Call:

Councilwoman D'Arminio - yes
Councilman Gierrek - yes
Councilman Accomando - absent
Councilwoman Mazzer - yes
Councilman President Cimiluca - yes

Discussion followed on extending the interest grace period for water bills due on March 31st.

TOWNSHIP OF SADDLE BROOK RESOLUTION

CR# 320-62

WHEREAS, the Saddle Brook Water Utility, per state statute, charges interest on delinquent accounts, and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 virus has swept New Jersey and Governor Murphy has declared an emergency ordering non-essential businesses to close and residents not to travel, and

WHEREAS, this order has an impact on our residents going to the municipal building or to mail their payments,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Council of the Township of Saddle Brook that it hereby waives all interest due on the water bills for the first quarter for a 90-day period. The grace period will now be extended to June 30, 2020.

Motion: Councilwoman D'Arminio Second: Councilwoman Mazzer

Roll Call:

Councilwoman D'Arminio - yes
Councilman Gierrek - yes
Councilman Accomando - absent
Councilwoman Mazzer - yes
Councilman President Cimiluca - yes

Council President Cimiluca asked for a motion to go in to closed session at 6:43 PM.

TOWNSHIP OF SADDLE BROOK RESOLUTION

CR# 320-63

WHEREAS, the Township Council of the Township of Saddle Brook desires to meet for the purpose of a closed session to discuss personnel; and

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act does make an exception and allows a public body to hold a closed session to discuss these items,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Saddle Brook that the closed session to take place on March 20, 2020 at 5:00 PM or as soon thereafter as the matter can be reached at the Municipal Building be closed to the public and the press and that the results of the discussion at the closed session will be released to the public when the reason for discussing and acting on it in closed session no longer exists.

Motion: Councilwoman Mazzer

Second: Councilwoman D'Arminio

Roll Call:

Councilwoman D'Arminio - yes
Councilman Gierak - yes
Councilman Accomando - absent
Councilwoman Mazzer - yes
Councilman President Cimiluca - yes

Council President Cimiluca asked for a motion to come out of closed session at 7:24 PM.

Motion: Councilwoman Mazzer

Second: Councilwoman D'Arminio

Roll Call:

Councilwoman D'Arminio - yes
Councilman Gierak - yes
Councilman Accomando - absent
Councilwoman Mazzer - yes
Councilman President Cimiluca - yes

COMMENTS

Council President Cimiluca asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion: Councilwoman D'Arminio

Second: Councilwoman Mazzer

Roll Call:

Councilwoman D'Arminio - yes
Councilman Gierak - yes
Councilman Accomando - absent
Councilwoman Mazzer - yes
Councilman President Cimiluca - yes

Meeting adjourned at 7:26 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Lo Dico, R.M.C. CMC
Township Clerk

Andrew M. Cimiluca
Council President

Approved: April 9, 2020