

Minutes of the Special Council Meeting of the Borough of Hillsdale held at 10:30 AM on Friday, May 1, 2020 via:

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The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ruocco who also led the Salute to the Flag.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT:

This is a meeting of the Hillsdale Borough Council on this 1ST day of May, 2020. Notice of the time and place of this meeting has been provided to The Ridgewood News and The Record; a copy was posted on the Borough Website and on the Electronic Board and provided to any interested parties.

Please notify the Municipal Clerk for any disability requirements necessary for attendance at Mayor and Council meetings. Please silence all cell phones.

Mayor Ruocco reminded the Council to refrain from using the chat feature on the go to meetings or texting with your phones with other elected officials or Borough Professionals during this meeting. These are against the spirit of the Open Public Meetings Act and may be request by the public under the Open Public Records Act.

ROLL CALL:

Council Members DeRosa, Escobar, Council President Horvath, Lundy, Pizzella, Trochimiuk, Mayor Ruocco, (Borough Attorney Mark Madio, BA Christopher Tietjen, Borough Clerk Denise Kohan)

All are in attendance

Mayor Ruocco stated that before we get into the public comment period, he wanted to explain why we are here. Municipal officials around the state have requested that the Governor extend the 10-day grace period for the taxes due May 1st.

This measure would provide a small measure of relief to residents and commercial property owners who are running into financial difficulties. Media officials pointed out that the rising unemployment (inaudible) the severity of economic recession caused by the virus pandemic. Executive Order 130 signed by the Governor just two days ago allows Municipalities to extend the grace period from May 11 to June 1st or any date in between those two dates.

PUBLIC COMMENT (Time limited, new topics only, one topic per speaker):

Mayor Ruocco opened the Public Comment Period at this time. Seeing no one, the public comment period is now closed.

DISCUSSION:

RESOLUTIONS:

[R20091](#) Resolution Extending the 2020 Second Quarter Property Tax Grace Period

Motion Councilmember Lundy Second Councilmember Escobar

Mayor Ruocco opened this up if any council member would like to discuss or comment on this resolution, now is the time.

Council member Lundy stated that she just wanted to make sure that the residents understand that if this resolution should pass that we are not extending the due date, we are extending the grace period. If you pay after the June 1st, interest and penalties accrue going back to May 1st.

The BA replied that the Councilwoman summed it up correctly. The council can extend the grace period up until June 1st. The council can give any day in between but up until the first. The resolution for tonight gives the maximum time under the executive order. To reiterate what the councilwoman said was that should this resolution be passed by the governing body that if taxes are not paid by June 1st, you will accrue interest back until May 1st. This would be a full month of delinquency if you pay on June 2nd. I did send to the council a cash flow analysis on where we stand on Borough Finances. My position to the council is that I prefer the grace period remain as is so that the Borough can know its cash position as of May 11th, however if it is the pleasure of the council to extend the grace period to June 1st I am comfortable that my staff here can manage that.

Mayor Ruocco replied that he received the analysis that you did this morning, I looked at it and I agree with the BA's assessment with the cash inflows as well as our starting position. We seem to have the ability to extend that grace period without any material impact on our ability to pay our bills for the month of May.

Councilmember Lundy just wants to make sure that the Borough Administrator and the CMFO are both comfortable with this, as far as cash flow. They are the ones that have to deal with what's being paid. We don't have a budget passed yet. I am assuming that the budget is likely to pass on the 12th. I just want to confirm with the two of them that we have entrusted to use their discretion in paying everything that they are comfortable with this. The BA replied for him and for the CMFO that they are comfortable with this assessment. We won't know of any changes until at least the first, so I think this 20 day extension is fine.

Mayor Ruocco said that Mayors around the state have been expressing a desire for this as a tool. It's a small tool, but it's a way for municipalities to provide some relief to taxpayers who are stressed out. We have very high unemployment. A recent projection was made that unemployment is projected to reach 30% in this area. We know a lot of residents are out of work and we know that some of those residents don't make a lot of money to begin with. They are in the types of jobs that have been affected most directly by the pandemic and the resulting effects made by the executive order. This may provide a small amount of relief to the taxpayer in addition to the budget which will hopefully be passed on May 12th that has no increase in the property taxes.

Councilmember DeRosa said to simply summarize the Borough is concerned that given the circumstances that people might be able to pay their taxes on a timely basis. So our concern is will we have enough cash to pay our bills? Can we pay salaries, can we pay schools, Bergen County Utilities Authority? So what I believe is that the Borough Administrator confirmed that based on what we see now, we have sufficient funds to cover ourselves for the month of May. Is that correct? The Mayor replied that is correct. Councilmember DeRosa

said so we would be voting giving a little relief to the residents as far as timing goes. I think the Borough is in a good position to do that and a good thing for the Borough to do so I would support it.

Councilmember Trochimiuk wanted to clarify to Chris that actually the cash flow analysis that you sent this morning indicates that we are in a good cash flow position until August 1st. The BA responded yes. The analysis that I sent you did not assume any expenditures out of the temporary budget or out of the proposed adopted budget that is coming up on May 12th. In that analysis this is roughly a million dollars that will come out of a bills list for council consideration on the 12th. But despite that along with our conservative approach that I will implement here at the Borough, I think we will be in a good cash position at least through the end of June. We can then reassess in July as we prepare for the collection of third quarter taxes.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Council Members DeRosa, Escobar, Council President Horvath, Lundy, Trochimiuk

Absent: Councilmember Pizzella

Nays:

It was noted that Councilmember Pizzella was here for the roll call, but was absent for the resolution vote as he lost internet connection.

COUNCIL COMMENTARIES:

Councilmember Lundy just wanted to remind the residents to comply with the social distancing measures that are in place now that the parks will be reopening tomorrow and for everyone to stay safe.

Council President Horvath just wanted to thank all the council members, our BA and the CMFO for moving ahead with this extension. Our town desperately needs it at this time and it will give them a little bit of respite with the situation that we are undergoing.

Councilmember DeRosa said he would just like to add to Councilwoman Lundy's comments that while our Hillsdale parks will be open, if you read the flyer that the Administrator did and the order at the bottom, unfortunately there are no organized sports allowed. You can walk in and social distance but there is no organized sports.

Mayor Ruocco added a comment in regards to the blood drive that was held at Pascack Valley High School on April 23rd. They drew 61 residents and pulled 44 units of whole blood. I would like to thank Superintendent Gundersen for making the school available. He also coordinated with Valient in having a blood drive at Pascack Hills High School. This is all good for the Borough, for the residents and all the people of Bergen County.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn Councilmember Lundy Second Councilmember Escobar

All were in favor (Councilmember Pizzella is absent)

Meeting adjourned

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL WILL BE

TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2020 7:30 pm

Denise Kohan, Municipal Clerk

APPROVED AS PRESENTED