

REGULAR MEETING – MAY 5, 2020

A Regular Meeting of the Highland Park Mayor and Council was held via Zoom, on Tuesday, May 5, 2020, and was called to order by Mayor Brill Mittler at 7:01 PM. Mayor Brill Mittler read the Open Public Meetings Statement.

Present: Mayor Brill Mittler; Councilpersons Fine, Foster-Dublin, George, Hale, Kim-Chohan; Borough Attorney Schmierer; Borough Administrator Jover; Borough Clerk Hullings.

Absent: Councilperson Welkovits.

Mayor Brill Mittler asked the Council members to present their reports.

Councilman Hale reported that the Farmer's Market opened on May 1st with drive by pickup for orders that were placed online. There were seven vendors that participated. Instructions for ordering from the Farmer's Market can be found on the Main Street Highland Park website. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that she went to the Farmer's Market and she wanted to thank the Police Department, the CERT team and Main Street Highland Park for doing a good job.

Councilman Fine – No report.

Councilwoman Foster Dublin reported that the County Parks are now open and there have not been any incidents with people not following social distance guidelines. They did receive phone calls about people not disposing of their masks and gloves properly, people not wearing masks and potential reports of people not following social distance guidelines. Wearing masks is not mandatory; it is a suggestion. She thanked the EMT's from Kansas who served the Borough for 1-week answering calls for emergency service. The group left Friday and she wished them well. She thanked the CERT team for all of their work at the Food Pantry and the Farmer's Market; and for preparing meals and buying groceries.

Councilwoman Kim-Chohan thanked the Highland Park Arts Collective for hosting a Mask Design Competition with the proceeds going to the Food Pantry. She thanked all of the residents who emailed about making monetary donations to the Food Pantry as well as those who wished to drop off food. There is an Amazon wish list for the Food Pantry that can be utilized to make donations. In addition, gift cards can be sent electronically to the Food Pantry via their Gmail account. They are presently limiting the number of volunteers at the Food Pantry.

Councilman George reported that for reasons of safety and due to additional tasks, the Department of Public Works will be postponing bulk trash pickup indefinitely. The Tree Planting Project for the Schools and the Borough will begin tomorrow. County Parks are now open and people should observe social distancing rules. The revised water and sewer proposals were received and they will be scheduling a meeting to review them in the near future. Lastly, he reported that the SOP for the sidewalk program is near completion and will be submitted to the Public Works and Public Utilities Committee for review.

Borough Administrator Jover – No report.

Borough Attorney Schmierer - No report.

Mayor Brill Mittler reported that the census is very important to a municipality. As of last weekend, 64% of Highland Park residents completed and responded to the census. Unless the Borough makes tremendous progress, we stand to lose over \$1 million dollars in Federal and State funding. She is asking every Highland Park resident to call five people who can be counted on to fill out their census form. If you call five of your friends, check on how they are doing and ask them to go online and fill out their census data. They can find it at my2020census.gov. There is also an email that is available on the Borough's Facebook page to send around if you do not want to make phone calls. This will help to protect millions of dollars in government grants that help support the Police Department, the First Aid Squad, the Food Pantry, Free and Reduced Student lunches, Special Needs Programming, Senior Center Programming, Senior Activities, Children's programming, Teen Center programming, summer camp, summer day trips, etc. It is extremely important to get Highland Park residents to fill out the census. Finally, she has spent a lot of time of the past several months thanking our volunteers for going above and beyond to help the residents through this Coronavirus situation. She thanked the Borough employees for all the work they have put in during this time. She cannot think of how they would have been able to get through with some of the programming that has become so crucial without the help of the Borough Administrator, her Assistant, the Teen Center Director, the Police Department, the Department of Community Services and so many more people who are working day in, and day out, whether at Borough Hall or at home, to ensure that we get through this Coronavirus situation as best as we can.

Mayor Brill Mittler opened the meeting for public discussion and called upon all those wishing to speak to identify themselves. The total time for this session is 21 minutes; three minutes maximum per speaker. Comments are limited to items on the agenda. If you want to speak on an item that is not listed, there will be an opportunity to do so later in the meeting.

Jeff Perlman, 116 North 3rd Avenue, commented that they need to provide more pedestrian and bicycle access. There is a public health need for it right now. He would like them to put up barriers so people can walk in the streets. He suggested that they use the adopted bike and pedestrian plan that was part of the master plan to make this happen. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that Councilman George has been working on a 5K route during this period. He has also been working with the Borough Administrator who will be meeting with the Safe Walking and Cycling Committee members to incorporate some of the things that are in the plan. Councilman George noted that they will be having more discussions with a possible recommendation ready for the next meeting. They hope to mimic the 5K route for people to walk, cycle or run. He has spoken with the Police Chief about safety concerns. Borough Administrator Jover noted that

they should consider separating out the routes throughout town. Road closures have not been discussed and they will have to check with the Public Safety Committee.

Jeff Vardaro, Wayne Street, echoed the comments of Mr. Perlman. Would like clarification of the 5K route and wondered if there would be street closures. Some residents in town have backyards for outdoor recreation. Just getting to the parks in town is risky, as sidewalks are narrow. The Council needs to start talking about road closures during certain time periods. The Council needs to get more serious and give people an opportunity to use the public streets for recreation, walking and biking.

No one else appearing to be heard, the Mayor closed the public portion.

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted on motion made by Councilman George, seconded by Councilwoman Foster-Dublin, and carried by the following roll call vote, to wit:

Ayes: Councilpersons Fine, Foster-Dublin, George, Hale, Kim-Chohan.

Opposed: None.

Absent: Councilperson Welkovits.

No. 5-20-149

WHEREAS, a need has arisen to provide adequate funds for certain budget items pending adoption of the Local Municipal Budget for 2020 and NJSA 40A:4-20 provides for the making of emergency appropriations in such cases; and

WHEREAS, the total emergency temporary resolutions adopted in the year 2020 pursuant to the provisions of NJSA 40A:4-20 (Chapter 96, PL 1951), as amended, including this resolution, total \$11,672,211.00; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of Highland Park (not less than two-thirds of all members thereof affirmatively concurring) that in accordance with NJSA 40A:4-20;

1. An emergency temporary appropriation be and the same is hereby made for the budgetary appropriations herein:

2020 TEMPORARY OPERATING BUDGET

DESCRIPTION	ACCOUNT NUMBER	2020 TEMPORARY BUDGET
GENERAL GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS		
BOROUGH ADMINISTRATION		
Salaries & Wages	20-100-1	89,871.00
Other Expenses	20-100-2	11,875.00
MAYOR & COUNCIL		
Salaries & Wages	20-110-1	16,518.00
Other Expenses	20-110-2	5,994.00
MUNICIPAL CLERK		
Salaries & Wages	20-120-1	78,910.00
Other Expenses	20-120-2	13,188.00
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION		
Salaries & Wages	20-130-1	46,462.00
Other Expenses	20-130-2	67,350.00
ANNUAL AUDIT		
Other Expenses	20-135-2	13,500.00
TAX COLLECTION		
Salaries & Wages	20-145-1	37,806.00
Other Expenses	20-145-2	8,200.00
TAX ASSESSMENT		
Salaries & Wages	20-150-1	27,956.00
Other Expenses	20-150-2	6,875.00
LEGAL SERVICES		
Other Expenses	20-155-2	175,000.00
ENGINEERING & PLANNING		
Other Expenses	20-165-2	10,000.00
COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT		
Salaries & Wages		3,570.00

Other Expenses	20-170-2	52,500.00
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY		
Other Expenses	20-140-2	54,750.00
CENTRAL SERVICES		
Other Expenses	20-316-2	42,250.00
LAND USE ADMINISTRATION		
PLANNING BOARD		
Salaries & Wages		3,570.00
Other Expenses	21-180-2	25,075.00
ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT		
Salaries & Wages	21-185-1	10,357.00
Other Expenses	21-185-2	6,075.00
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION		
Other Expenses	21-195-2	525.00
INSURANCE		
GENERAL LIABILITY/WORKERS COMPENSATION		
Other Expenses	23-211-2	206,660.00
EMPLOYEE GROUP HEALTH		
Other Expenses	23-220-2	645,029.00
PUBLIC SAFETY FUNCTIONS		
POLICE		
Salaries & Wages	25-240-1	1,759,173.00
Other Expenses	25-240-2	105,968.00
POLICE DISPATCH/911		
Salaries & Wages	25-250-1	119,361.00
Other Expenses	25-250-2	2,250.00
OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT		
Salaries & Wages	25-252-1	20,000.00
Other Expenses	25-252-2	13,250.00
FIRST AID CONTRIBUTION		
Other Expenses	25-260-2	7,500.00
FIRE		
Salaries & Wages	25-265-1	117,325.00
Other Expenses	25-265-2	36,465.00
LOSAP		
Other Expenses	25-265-2	8,250.00
MUNICIPAL PROSECUTOR		
Other Expenses	25-275-2	17,500.00
PUBLIC WORKS FUNCTIONS		
STREETS & ROADS		
Salaries & Wages	26-290-1	569,798.00
Other Expenses	26-290-2	60,350.00
APARTMENT COLLECTION		
Other Expenses	26-305-2	112,500.00
PUBLIC BUILDINGS & GROUNDS		

Salaries & Wages	26-310-1	22,496.00
Other Expenses	26-310-2	85,500.00
MOTOR POOL		
Salaries & Wages	26-315-1	38,359.00
Other Expenses	26-315-2	69,500.00
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FUNCTIONS		
BOARD OF HEALTH		
Other Expenses	27-330-2	525.00
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION		
Other Expenses	27-335-2	525.00
COMMISSION ON IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE AFFAIRS		
Other Expenses	27-336-2	263.00
SAFE WALKING & CYCLING COMMITTEE		
Other Expenses	27-337-2	1,313.00
SUSTAINABLE HIGHLAND PARK		
Other Expenses	27-338-2	1,150.00
HISTORICAL COMMISSION		
Other Expenses	27-339-2	263.00
PARKS & RECREATION FUNCTIONS		
COMMUNITY SERVICES - RECREATION		
Salaries & Wages	28-370-1	35,460.00
Other Expenses	28-370-2	8,250.00
COMMUNITY SERVICES - AGING		
Salaries & Wages	28-371-1	101,978.00
Other Expenses	28-371-2	14,603.00
ARTS COMMISSION		
Other Expenses	28-374-2	525.00
SHADE TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE		
Other Expenses	28-375-2	302.00
TEEN CENTER		
Salaries & Wages	28-373-1	34,959.00
Other Expenses	28-373-2	-
CELEBRATION OF PUBLIC EVENTS		
Other Expenses	30-420-2	5,000.00
UTILITY EXPENSES & BULK PURCHASING		
ELECTRICITY		
Other Expenses	31-430-2	55,000.00
STREET LIGHTING		
Other Expenses	31-435-2	85,000.00
TELEPHONE		
Other Expenses	31-440-2	26,000.00
FUEL OIL/GASOLINE/NATURAL GAS		
Other Expenses	31-460-2	50,000.00
SANITARY LANFILL		
Other Expenses	32-465-2	159,548.00
UNIFORM CONSTRUCTION CODE		
Salaries & Wages	22-195-1	171,336.00

Other Expenses	22-195-2	6,675.00
UNCLASSIFIED		
CABLE TELEVISION		
Other Expenses	30-411-2	5,000.00
ACCUMULATED SICK LEAVE		
Salaries & Wages	30-415-1	40,000.00
COMMUNICATIONS		
Salaries & Wages	20-105-1	52,833.00
Other Expenses	20-105-2	11,591.00
CORONAVIRUS MITIGATION		
Salaries & Wages		5,000.00
Other Expenses		25,000.00
MUNICIPAL COURT FUNCTIONS		
MUNICIPAL COURT		
Salaries & Wages	43-490-1	90,012.00
Other Expenses	43-490-2	6,325.00
PUBLIC DEFENDER		
Other Expenses	43-495-2	3,000.00
LIBRARY		
Salaries & Wages	29-390-1	328,256.00
Other Expenses	29-390-2	176,143.00
INTERLOCAL MUNICIPAL SERVICE AGREEMENTS		
COUNTY HEALTH SERVICES		
Other Expenses	42-401-2	22,664.00
M.C.I.A. RECYCLING		
Other Expenses	42-402-2	5,384.00
ANIMAL CONTROL SERVICES		
Other Expenses	27-340-2	7,800.00
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROGRAMS		
NJDEP Radon Awareness	41-724-2	-
Art & History Grant		3,750.00
Township Match		938.00
Rivers Reforestation Grant		2,335.00
Middlesex County Census Grant		2,000.00
STATUTORY EXPENDITURES		
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM		
Other Expenses	36-472-2	164,630.00
UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION INSURANCE		
Other Expenses	23-225	15,000.00
PUBLIC EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM		
Other Expenses	36-471-2	489,601.00
POLICE AND FIREMAN'S RETIREMENT SYSTEM		
Other Expenses	36-475-2	837,812.00
DCRP		
Other Expenses	36-476-2	5,775.00

	SUBTOTAL	7,884,935.00
DEBT SERVICE		
BOND PRINCIPAL		
Other Expenses	45-920-2	625,000.00
INTEREST ON BONDS		
Other Expenses	45-930-2	242,369.00
M.C.I.A. LEASE/LOAN		
Other Expenses	45-950-2	291,704.00
DBIZ LOAN		
Other Expenses	45-925-2	-
	SUBTOTAL	1,159,073.00
	GRAND TOTAL	9,044,008.00

2020 TEMPORARY WATER AND SEWER BUDGET

DESCRIPTION	2020 TEMP
OPERATING	
Salaries & Wages	120,444.00
Other Expenses	1,239,409.00
Middlesex County Utilities Authority	740,900.00
STATUTORY EXPENDITURES	
Public Employee Retirement System	-
Social Security System	-
DEFERRED CHARGES	
Overexpenditure Budget Appropriation	-
	SUBTOTAL
	2,100,753.00
DEBT SERVICE	
Payment of Bond Principal	460,000.00
Interest on Bonds	67,450.00
	SUBTOTAL
	527,450.00
	GRAND TOTAL
	2,628,203.00

- Said emergency temporary appropriations will be provided for in the 2020 budget under the various captions listed herein.
- A certified copy of this Resolution will be filed with the Director of the Division of Local Government Services.

The Clerk reported that an ordinance entitled, CALENDAR YEAR ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK (N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.14), had been introduced in writing by the Finance Committee for consideration of passage on first reading by title.

On motion made by Councilman Fine, seconded by Councilman George, the ordinance entitled as above was duly adopted on first reading by title by the following roll call vote, to wit:

Ayes: Councilpersons Fine, Foster-Dublin, George, Hale, Kim-Chohan.

Opposed: None.

Absent: Councilperson Welkovits

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted on motion made by Councilman Fine, seconded by Councilman George, and carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote:
No. 5-20-150

WHEREAS, an Ordinance entitled, **CALENDAR YEAR ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK (N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.14)**, has been introduced and duly passed on first reading;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that this Council meet at the Borough Hall, 221, South Fifth Avenue, Highland Park, New Jersey, on Tuesday, June 9, 2020 at 7:00 PM, for the purpose of considering said Ordinance on final passage.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that said Ordinance be published once at least one (1) week prior to the time fixed for further consideration of said Ordinance for final passage in the "Home News Tribune", of East Brunswick, New Jersey, a newspaper published in the County of Middlesex and circulating in this municipality, there being no newspaper published in this municipality, together with a notice of the introduction thereof and of the time and place when and where said Ordinance will be further considered for final passage as aforesaid.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of said Ordinance shall be posted on the bulletin board at Borough Hall, 221 South Fifth Avenue, Highland Park, New Jersey, forthwith and that the Borough Clerk have available in her office for the members of the general public of Highland Park copies of said Ordinance for those members of the general public who may request the same.

The Clerk reported that the 2020 Municipal Budget and Tax Resolution were introduced in writing by the Finance Committee for consideration of passage on first reading. Copies of the full text will be

available at the Highland Park Public Library and Borough Hall. The full final budget as adopted and approved will appear in the minutes of the meeting at which the budget is finally adopted.

Borough Administrator Jover explained a power point presentation depicting a pie chart of all the taxes the Borough is responsible for collecting. The Tax Collector's Office collects all of the taxes on behalf of the Borough, the schools and the County. The total tax levy is \$48,967,035.02. 61% goes to the schools, 27% stays with the municipality, 10% goes to the County and 1% each to Middlesex County open space and the Library. The Borough also contributes additional money to the Library beyond what is required statutorily. The average homeowner in Highland Park does pay a high tax of approximately \$12,000 per year. The average assessment is \$144,299. The typical household pays approximately \$1,000 a month in property taxes. This year, the property tax rate will decrease by 0.0156, resulting in a \$22.41 reduction in property tax bills. The municipal budget is \$16,886,101.88 for 2020, as introduced. The biggest portion of the Municipal Budget goes for public safety, which encompasses Police, Dispatch, Fire, and the Municipal Court. The various categories do not include insurance, pension, etc. as that is allocated in a separate category. The 2020 municipal budget has increased from 2019 by \$776,567.12.

On motion made by Councilman Hale, seconded by Councilman George, the 2020 Municipal Budget and Tax Resolution were duly adopted on first reading by the following roll call vote, to wit:

Ayes: Councilpersons Fine, Foster-Dublin, George, Hale, Kim-Chohan.

Opposed: None.

Abstained: None.

Absent: Councilperson Welkovits.

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted on motion made by Councilman Hale, seconded by Councilman Hale, and carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote:
No. 5-20-151

Municipal Budget of the Borough of Highland Park, County of Middlesex for the Year 2020

BE IT RESOLVED, that the following statements of revenues and appropriations shall constitute the Municipal Budget for the year 2020;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that said Budget be published in the Home News Tribune, Neptune, N.J. in the issue of May 22, 2020.

The governing Body of the Borough of Highland Park does hereby approve the following as the Budget for the year 2020:

General Appropriations

Appropriations Within "CAPS"

Municipal Purposes \$13,596,839.00

Appropriations Excluded from "CAPS"

Municipal Purposes 3,089,262.88

Reserve for Uncollected Taxes – Based on

Estimated 99.59 Percent of Tax Collections 200,000.00

Total General Appropriations 16,886,101.88

Less: Anticipated Revenues Other Than Current

Property Tax 3,425,527.73

Difference: Amount to be Raised by Taxes

For Support of Municipal Budget:

Local Tax for Municipal Purposes Including

Reserve for Uncollected Taxes 12,925,562.81

Minimum Library Tax 535,011.34

Water & Sewer Utility Operating Fund:

Total Water & Sewer Utility Revenues \$4,984,767.21

Total Water & Sewer Utility Appropriations \$4,984,767.21

Notice is hereby given that the Budget and Tax Resolution was approved by the Mayor and Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park, County of Middlesex, on May 5, 2020.

A hearing on the Budget and Tax Resolution will be on Tuesday, June 9, 2020 at 7:00 o'clock P.M. at which time and place objections to said Budget and Tax Resolution for the year 2020 may be presented by taxpayers or other interested persons.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and pursuant to the provisions of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, *N.J.S.A. 10:4-8(b)*, this meeting will be held by means of the use of electronic communications equipment. The public may participate by phone by dialing 1 (929) 205-6099 and entering in Webinar ID 828 5971 5633 or by computer/smart device via the following link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82859715633>.

Resolution Nos. 5-20-152 through 5-20-155 were duly adopted on motion made by Councilman George, seconded by Councilman Fine, and carried by the following roll call vote, to wit:

Ayes: Councilpersons Fine, Foster-Dublin, George, Hale, Kim-Chohan.

Opposed: None.

Absent: Councilperson Welkovits.

The following resolution, introduced by the Public Safety Committee, was duly adopted as above:
No. 5-20-152

WHEREAS, Yahya K. Eleiwa has filed with the Clerk of this Borough an application for a License to operate taxicabs under the provisions of the Ordinance providing for such Licenses for the year 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Chief of Police and/or his designee has investigated said applicants and has reported favorably upon said applications;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that said applicants are qualified and that public necessity and convenience would be served by the issuance of said Licenses.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Borough Clerk be and is hereby authorized and directed to issue an Operator Licenses to the aforesaid applicants.

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted as above:
No. 5-20-153

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 54:5-43a permits the invalidation of a Tax Sale Certificate which was inadvertently issued and purchased; and

WHEREAS, on December 18, 2019, Highland Park Tax Sale Certificate 19-00055 was issued and purchased; and

WHEREAS, the Highland Park Tax Collector has determined that this Tax Sale Certificate should be invalidated and redeemed from the purchaser in order to discharge a lien on the real property which was the subject matter of said certificate.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park in the County of Middlesex that Highland Park Tax Sale Certificate No. 19-00055 be and the same is hereby invalidated; and

BE IT FURTHER, RESOLVED, that the Borough of Highland Park Tax Collector shall contact the purchaser of said certificate and arrange for its redemption as required by law; and

BE IT FURTHER, RESOLVED, once Highland Park Tax Sale Certificate No. 19-00055 is redeemed said Tax Collector shall facilitate the discharge of a lien against the property which is the subject matter of said Tax Sale Certificate; and

BE IT FURTHER, RESOLVED, that a certified true copy of this resolution upon its adoption shall be furnished to the Borough of Highland Park Tax Collector.

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted as above:
No. 5-20-154

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2020, Governor Phil Murphy declared the concurrent invocation of both a State of Emergency pursuant to N.J.S.A. App. A.:9-33 et seq. and a Public Health Emergency as contemplated by N.J.S.A. 26:13-1 et seq., which action invoked the authority and powers contemplated by N.J.S.A. 26:13-3, the Emergency Healthy Powers Act; and

WHEREAS, by reason of the serious conditions which presently exists or will exist in the Borough of Highland Park due to the global outbreak of COVID-19 which may affect the health, safety, welfare and finances of the residents and businesses of the Borough; and

WHEREAS, it has been determined by the Mayor and Borough Council that the Borough of Highland Park should enact certain measures in order to ensure that it has the financial resources available in order to address said conditions and that it is appropriate to promulgate budgetary guidelines to protect the health, safety and welfare of its residents.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park do hereby promulgate the following budgetary guidelines effective immediately and up until such time as the conditions improve and this resolution is rescinded;

1. All non-essential expenditures and proposed budgetary increases shall cease until the health emergency lessens. All requests for exceptions must be reviewed and approved by the Borough Administrator and Chief Financial Officer.
2. There shall be a moratorium on hiring non-essential personnel and salary increases for existing Borough employees shall be limited to those obligated by contract or as appropriate to adequately address Coronavirus issues or economic recovery needs.

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted as above:
No. 5-20-155

BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that all claims presented prior to this meeting as shown on a detailed list prepared by the Borough Treasurer, and which have been submitted and approved in accordance with Highland Park Ordinance No. 1004, shall be and the same are hereby approved; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Borough Clerk shall include in the minutes of this meeting a statement as to all such claims approved as shown in a Bills List Journal in accordance with said Ordinance.

The bills approved for payment at this meeting, Bills List 5/5/2020 can be found in the Bills List Journal Book No. 40.

Mayor Brill Mittler noted that item #15 is a resolution regarding the grace period for 2020 2nd quarter taxes. The Governing Body was happy that Governor Murphy followed the lead of Highland Park, Metuchen and Edison by extending the 2nd quarter grace period for tax payments. Does not know what will happen with the 3rd quarter, but they have already been discussing this issue. This extension will help resident sin the short term.

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted on motion made by Councilman Fine, seconded by Councilwoman Foster-Dublin, and carried by the following roll call vote, to wit:

Ayes: Councilpersons Fine, Foster-Dublin, George, Hale, Kim-Chohan.

Opposed: None.

Absent: Councilperson Welkovits.

No. 5-20-156

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 54:4-67a permits the Governing Body by resolution to fix the rate of interest to be charged for the nonpayment of taxes, assessments, or other municipal liens or charges, on or before the date when they would become delinquent; and

WHEREAS, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Governing Body by Resolution No. 4-20-148 dated April 21, 2020 authorized the reduction of interest on delinquent second quarter 2020 taxes to 0.000001% per annum in order to assist Borough taxpayers who may be having difficulty due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic paying the second quarter 2020 taxes; and

WHEREAS, Governor Philip D. Murphy issued Executive Order No. 130 on April 28, 2020 allowing the Governing Body to adopt a resolution instituting a grace period concluding not later than June 1, 2020 for the payment of second quarter 2020 real property taxes and thus eliminating having Borough taxpayers pay any delinquency charge.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park in the County of Middlesex that a grace period is hereby established for the payment of the second quarter

2020 real property taxes until June 1, 2020 payment. Any second quarter 2020 real property taxes paid not later than June 1, 2020 will not be subject to any delinquency charge; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 4-20-148 is hereby superseded and replaced by this resolution.

Mayor Brill Mittler opened the meeting for public discussion and called upon all those wishing to speak to identify themselves. Speakers are limited to 3 minutes and the discussion to end at 9:00 PM.

Matthew Hersh, 333 Felton Avenue, thanked the Governing Body for passing budgetary guidelines. He suggested that they go by what the Governor suggests, as there is a State of Emergency in effect.

Charlie Kratovil, Suydam Street, New Brunswick, commented that he is very concerned about voting rights. He referenced the by-laws and constitution of the Middlesex County Democratic Committee of which Councilwoman Foster-Dublin is a member/Officer. He asked why it is necessary to cancel the committee elections and double the length of those terms. Mayor Brill Mittler asked the Borough Attorney for clarification as his comments have to do with the County Democratic Committee and politics should not be discussed at Council meetings. Borough Attorney Schmierer suggested that Mr. Kratovil speak to Councilwoman Foster-Dublin separately from this meeting. Mr. Kratovil noted that people have the right to vote on these items in the primary. He hopes that she has a defense for this action. Her committee's proposal is to take away rights to vote and he wants to hear the reason why from Councilwoman Foster-Dublin and he also wants to know why the coronavirus is being used as an excuse. Mayor Brill Mittler again asked for clarification from the Borough Attorney as she is uncomfortable discussing democratic committee issues at a Borough Council meeting. Mr. Kratovil commented that voting rights matter and he thinks this is a public interest matter. Councilwoman Foster-Dublin commented that he has sent emails, comments and concerns to the Democratic Committee. They will be addressed in that forum and he can speak with her offline about this matter.

Robin Loewenstein, 116 South 4th Avenue, commented that at the last Council Meeting it was stated that there would be a more comprehensive report from Public Safety about the First Aid Squad and that was not done. Presently, the squad is only answering calls 3 nights per week and not on weekends. The First Aid Squad lost 40% of their senior riding members. She noted that the position of Fire Chief is currently vacant and is being filled by a paid Borough Employee.

Mohammed Raad, Jackson Avenue, Edison, commented about the changes being proposed by the Middlesex County Democratic Committee and that he hopes that Councilwoman Foster-Dublin does the right thing and not take away people's right to vote.

Catherine Hunt, Monroe Township, commented about the changes being proposed by the Middlesex County Democratic Committee extending term limits of Committeemen and Committeewomen.

Christo, 14 Fox Road, Edison, commented that he supports the Librarians, the Police Department and Highland Park teachers. He denounced Councilwoman Foster-Dublin for changing rules on the Middlesex County Democratic Committee and taking away people's right to vote. He quoted Roberts Rules of Order and the fact that they rushed the previous speaker off the phone.

No one else appearing to be heard, the Mayor closed the public discussion.

Work Session:

Water & Sewer Operations RFP Update – Borough Administrator Jover noted that they would know by the end of the week the results. Will be working with Councilman George and the evaluation committee and will have a recommendation for the next Council Meeting.

Walking/Running Path – Councilman George noted that there are a number of options on the table and he hopes to present those to the Governing Body at the next meeting. Councilman Hale brought up the fact that people usually host block parties. It is not a walking route but an idea for people needing to get out and not having a yard to do so. He asked him to consider having people do block parties as an alternative. Councilman George noted that he has concerns about social gatherings but had a thought more along the lines of using some of the streets adjacent to the parks as more of a funnel. The big issue is having the manpower to do that. It needs to be further discussed by his committee.

Phase II Microgrid Grant Application to BPU – Mayor Brill Mittler commented about how important a microgrid is to Highland Park, especially after Super storm Sandy. Highland Park made it through the first round of grants and now it is time to start looking at the second round. Borough Administrator Jover noted that the Borough has a Phase I study that shows that the Borough has a concept that can work from a technological standpoint. This will give us funding to fully explore how to set up a microgrid that would essentially allow the Borough's operations to have power in the event the PSE&G grid is down. The second phase of funding would allow the Borough to draw down on some of the engineering costs and how it would be set up economically, as well as any regulatory things that need to be resolved. The hope is to have a second round application submitted by the end of this month and she wants to put a resolution on for the next Council meeting in support of the application as well as naming Gabel Associates, through a Co-Op, as Energy Consultants to help in the submittal. For Phase II, there are no matching municipal funds necessary.

Goals

Councilman Hale noted that part-time employees are not coming back to work, as unemployment is better than employment. There are some jobs available in town. Mayor Brill Mittler suggested that he work with the Communications Officer to publicize this information. Councilman Hale also mentioned CDBG grants and the fact that there are fewer restrictions right now. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that they are starting to get funds from the Federal Cares Package and those funds will be distributed the same as the CDBG funds.

Councilwoman Foster-Dublin noted that every morning at 9:00 a.m., they have a meeting with all Public Safety entities, OEM, CERT, and various departments to go over what is happening, strategies, supplies, resources, etc. Teen Center is working on virtual graduation for graduating seniors and hoping to put together care packages for college. They will be seeking donations.

Councilman Fine noted that the Recreation Advisory Committee would be meeting to discuss summer camp and virtual exhibits by the Arts Commission.

The following resolution, introduced by the Council as a Whole, was duly adopted on motion made by Councilman George, seconded by Councilman Hale, and carried by the following roll call vote, to wit:

Ayes: Councilpersons Fine, Foster-Dublin, George, Hale, Kim-Chohan.

Opposed: None.

Absent: Councilperson Welkovits.

No. 5-20-157

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, the Borough Council is of the opinion that such circumstances exist.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park, in the County of Middlesex, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The public shall be excluded from the closed session at close of tonight’s open session.
2. The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows:
(Contract Negotiations: 433 Cleveland Avenue Redevelopment Agreement)
3. It is anticipated at this time that the above stated subject matter will be made public when these matters are resolved or as soon thereafter as it is deemed to be in the public interest to do so.
4. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

There being no further business, on motion made by Councilman Hale, seconded by Councilman Fine, and carried by affirmative voice vote of all Councilpersons present, the meeting adjourned at 9:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Hullings
Borough Clerk