

May 26, 2020

The regular meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Victory Gardens held on May 26, 2020.

Mayor Holeman called the meeting to order and declared a quorum present.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of our Country.  
Please remain standing for a moment of silence for our military.

This meeting has been advertised in one newspaper, The Daily record, in compliance with the New Jersey Open Public Meeting Act.

ATTENDANCE: Councilman Glass, Councilwoman Hedgepath, Councilman Lorenzo.

ABSENT: Councilwoman Cheatham, Councilwoman White, Councilwoman Garcia Montes.

Motion to accept the minutes of May 12, 2020 as received by Councilman Lorenzo, seconded by Councilwoman Hedgepath and approved on verbal vote. None opposed.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Rockaway Township - I received a call from Peter, our Health Officer today. There have been no new cases of COVID 19 for the past 2 weeks. We are still at 40 cases. We also have a total of 82 negative results.

Motion to accept the correspondence as received by Councilman Lorenzo, seconded by Councilwoman Hedgepath and approved on verbal vote. None opposed.

VOUCHERS:

The Mayor asked if there were any questions or comments on the vouchers? Hearing none, he asked for a motion to pay the bills.

Motion to approve the vouchers for payment by Councilman Glass, seconded by Councilman Lorenzo and approved on roll call:

Councilman Glass	Yes
Councilwoman Hedgepath	Yes
Councilman Lorenzo	Yes

<u>Voucher #</u>	<u>Payable to:</u>	<u>Type of Service</u>	<u>Amount</u>
5/16/2020	Anderson & Denzler	Engineering, NJNG & Gar.Plk&Tft proj.	4,307.82
5/17/2020	Deborah Evans	Clerk OE - Petty cash receipts	55.60
5/18/2020	Dover Board of Education	School Taxes	84757.75
5/19/2020	Dover Municipal Court	Muni Court Dover	1,529.79
5/20/2020	Herbert Evans, Jr.	Bldgs. & Grnds.	350.00
5/21/2020	JCP&L #2	Utilities	302.39
5/22/2020	JCP&L #3	Street Lighting	622.18
5/23/2020	Optimum	Clerk OE	11.45
5/24/2020	Philip Feintuch, ESQ	Legal Services - Monthly fee	2,104.17
5/25/2020	RVRSA	RVRSA Share	11,397.00
5/26/2020	Verizon - 366-5312 #2	Utilities	243.61
5/27/2020	WEX Bank - Shell Gas	Streets & Roads	296.57
5/28/2020	VSP Insurance Co.	Group Insurance	98.70
5/29/2020	AT&T	Utilities	39.20
		TOTAL	106,116.23

DEPARTMENTS REPORTS:

Building Department - No permits issued for May 2020.

Property Maintenance - No report. Ron is just starting back to work.

Municipal Court - Courts have been closed. They are just starting back.

TaxCollector - Total Tax Receipts Month To Date: \$ 86,588.06  
Total Tax Receipts Year To Date: \$ 569,636.09

Registrar - There was 1 marriage licensed issued for May. Total collected:  
\$28.00

Finance Officer - Everyone has a copy of the CFO report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: NONE

Motion to approve the reports by Councilman Lorenzo, seconded by Councilwoman Hedgepath and approved on verbal vote. None opposed.

Councilman Lorenzo asked about Eddie. He is still over in Puerto Rico. He can't get a direct flight to Newark. They just started letting people fly out. However, if you don't fly in to your home state, where ever the plane lands you have to stay in that state for 2 weeks. Then when you are able to leave, you have to be self quaratined for another 2 weeks. He is trying to get a direct flight. Right now he is using his sick time. He is trying to come into Newark.

NEW BUSINESS: NONE

OLD BUSINESS:

PUBLIC HEARING/ADOPTION OF SALARY ORDINANCE - the Clerk said she has to ready by title only and then you have to open it to the public for comment.

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH A SALARY RANGE AND FIXING SALARIES OF OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE BOROUGH OF VICTORY GARDENS

Motion was made to open this portion of the meeting to the public on the adoption of the ordinance only. Motion made by Councilman Lorenzo, seconded by Councilwoman Hedgepath and approved on verbal vote. None opposed.

Jim Janone - How many changes were done on this Ordinance? Mine was increased, Secretary/Deputy Clerk was increased, Tax Assessor, Tax Collector, Construction Code Official, Building, Plumbing, Electrical Inspectors. That was it. Why are we doing this? Are you saying that they are getting close to making the money that we currently have as maximums? Yes. When will we have to do this again? In two years? The Clerk said she hopes it doesn't have to be done for several years.

No other comments from the public.

Motion to close this portion of the meeting on the salary ordinance. Motion made to close the meeting by Councilman Lorenzo, seconded by Councilwoman Hedgepath and approved on verbal vote. None opposed.

Motion to adopt the ordinance by Councilwoman Hedgepath, seconded by Councilman Lorenzo and approved on roll call:

Councilman Glass	Yes
Councilwoman Hedgepath	Yes
Councilman Lorenzo	Yes

HOUSING OFFICER - The Clerk said this is on the agenda because I want Council to look at this and think seriously about hiring someone for this position. It will cost us for the position, but should be well worth the expense. I can't do anything about a family owned and occupied house in here. If you own your house and its a two bedroom, I can't do anything if you have 5 children. There is nothing in the state codes to prevent this. I've asked the Attorney and he said there is nothing we can do about that. On the other hand, we can do something about renters. This would be the absentee landlords. The Attorney said this would help in our other codes, because we know nothing about how many people are in the apartments, condos, houses unless we actually get a complaint. This will be a part time position. This is something the Clerk needs approval on so she can look into this position. I don't want to do all the work unless the Council gives me the

HOUSING OFFICER CONTINUED - ok to check into it. The Mayor said we want an ok from everyone but Council did give an ok to the Clerk to start looking into this.

Councilman Lorenzo asked what will happen with this? The landlord will have the responsibility to get the tenants out if there is over crowding. The landlord will be fined.

The Attorney said if they are at the end of their lease the landlord can just tell them they have to move, he will not renew. If they are in a contract, for the landlord to get them out they would have to pay them 6 months rent for them to move. Unless they come up with an agreement with the landlord. All of it would have to go before the Judge. The Judge would have to make the call.

Councilman Lorenzo asked how the Judge would be able to throw someone out? The attorney said we have a code. The code has to be upheld. You either keep fining the landlord or the people move. That is up to the court to decide.

The landlord knows how many people are in his place. That is his responsibility. We can find them and the Attorney said they can be fined everyday. Councilman Lorenzo asked what the housing officer would do? He would have to get in the home and he would have to measure by square footage. He would notify the landlord. The landlord would have so much time to get them out or the landlord would be fined. There would be a summons issued and the landlord would have to go to court.

Councilwoman Hedgepath said the problem is, we have 61 new kids in here compared to last year. Where are they? Our taxes are going up \$700 for the year just on the schools alone. It is worth it for us to hire someone to get in here and take a look at this.

The Clerk said she received a list from Victory Hill East apartments today. He told me how many kids he has coming from there that are going to the Dover schools. Our lists don't match. I sent him a list that I got from the schools. He is looking into that. I did the same with Brook Run Apartments. I sent them the list. They are going to go door to door and find out who is in the apartments. None of our lists match. I heard from a condo owner that is renting out his condo. He has 2 adults in there and 4 children. It's a 2 bedroom. I'm still waiting to hear back from others that I mailed letters out to.

We are spending almost \$250,000 on busing our kids. I sent a letter to Lakeland Bus and asked him if they would transport our kids and how much it would cost? They are getting back to me within the next week.

Councilman Lorenzo asked about what the Clerk was talking about with East Dover kids? We send 50 kids to East Dover. If the schools are out of a 2 mile radius we have to bus. East Dover isn't 2 miles away. We can take busing away from those students. People will holler about it. I would have to get the breakdown from Dover as to what it costs for transport to East Dover. I think that is one reason why people come here. They know the kids are bused and they don't have to worry about how they will get to school.

Councilwoman Hedgepath said our taxes went up over \$700 for the year. I think we need to try to figure this out. It is worth it for us to try and get the housing inspector.

Councilman Glass said we should go by the list the schools gave us not by what the landlords have. I am going by the school list. Do we need an inspector to do this? Yes.

The Attorney said he spoke with Dover. We have 9% of the kids in Dover schools. Therefore, we pay 9% of the budget. Councilman Glass asked the Attorneys opinion on this. The Attorney said that people aren't going to leave just because we tell them they have to. Once the landlord starts getting fined for having more people in there than allowed, then he will have to take steps to evict them. Somebody has to go in and do the inspections.

Council gave the Clerk permission to go out and ask about a housing officer. Motion made by Councilman Glass, seconded by Councilman Lorenzo and approved on roll call:

Councilman Glass	Yes
Councilwoman Hedgepath	Yes
Councilman Lorenzo	Yes

Motion to open the meeting to the public by Councilman Lorenzo, seconded by Councilwoman Hedgepath and approved on verbal vote. None opposed.

Jim Janone - Jim was researching on line. It says that DYFS has rules. It says that children of the opposite sex can not share a bedroom. It doesn't say anything about age. It's everyone. You can also ask your fire official about fire codes. I have done that. I spoke to Chris.

I looked over Leons bill for RVRSA. He said he takes an hour to fill a form out that has 6 questions. The Mayor told Jim to talk to Leon about that. It's a monthly report that Leon sends to RVRSA every month. All answers are the same.

I saw in here that in December of 2019 we purchased 2 gifts cards from Shop Rite for \$200 each. What was that for? It says senior luncheon. Who bought these? Councilwoman Hedgepath said she purchased them. We were going to have a senior luncheon in the New Year and we had money left over from the holiday parties in 2019 so we used that left over money and purchased the gift cards for the senior luncheon to be used to buy the food for the party. The Clerk said the CFO gave permission to do it this way.

There is an Attorney bill from January regarding the RVRSA. Why are we just getting it now? The case is still ongoing. This was for a partial summary judgement. We won the underlying case. We are not waiting to see what kind of damages we are able to collect. That part of all this is scheduled for June or July.

Motion to close the meeting to the public by Councilwoman Hedgepath, seconded by Councilman Lorenzo and approved on verbal vote. None opposed.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Councilwoman Hedgepath, seconded by Councilman Lorenzo and approved on verbal vote. None opposed.

Submitted By:

*Deborah Evans*

Deborah Evans  
Borough Clerk