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BOROUGH OF WHITEHALL

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BOROUGH OF WHITEHALL

Emergency Meeting March 25, 2020

The Council of the Borough of Whitehall met via telephone on Wednesday, March 25, 2020, at 3:00 PM, for an emergency meeting. President Nagy called the meeting to order.

President Nagy announced that the meeting is in response to the evolving COVID-19 situation.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Linda J. Book
Kathleen N. DePuy
Philip J. Lahr
Robert J. McKown
Glenn P. Nagy
William J. Veith
John A. Wotus
James F. Nowalk, Mayor
Irving S. Firman, Solicitor

Absent: Scott Rusmiser, Engineer

STAFF: James E. Leventry, Manager
Courtney M. Wertz, Assistant Manager
Keith P. Henderson, Chief of Police
Jason C. Gagorik, Deputy Chief

The first item of discussion related to Borough taxes.

Mr. Firman stated that the tax bills have already been mailed out. They are now governed by state law which states a 2-month discount period and 4-month face value period. Other municipalities that are have pushed their payment deadline back have not yet sent their bills out. Borough Council can change the penalty and interest rate for the tax year if they so choose. Over 90% of the collected payments come in before the payment deadline.

Mr. McKown stated that he does not see a reason to change anything related to taxes at this time.

Mr. Leventy stated that the vast majority of property tax revenue is collected during the discount period and almost all is collected before the deadline. Only 2-3% are collected with a penalty.

Council agreed to not make any changes regarding tax payments. Penalty and interest rates will be addressed at a later time.

The second item of discussion related to the upcoming April 1, 2020 Council Meeting.

Mr. Leventry suggested cancelling the meeting. Council concurred.

Mr. Firman stated that the second meeting in April could be held via telephone but a public space would need to be set up to allow for public comment.

Mr. Nagy stated that the format of the April 15th meeting can discussed at a later time. There is always the option of hosting the meeting in the Community Room to allow for proper social distancing.

Mrs. Depuy inquired about the status of interviews for the position of police officer that are scheduled for next week. Chief Henderson stated that those interviews have been cancelled. He suggested setting a new interview date of April 27th with a rain date of May 4th. Council agreed to the new date(s).

Mayor Nowalk stated that he is considering using SwiftReach to reach out to homebound residents. Ms. Book stated that focus should be given to residents living alone. Chief Henderson stated that the Department has received calls from residents offering to reach out to homebound residents that are alone. He is wary of nefarious people preying on these individuals who are alone.

M-1 Mr. Lahr moved, seconded by Mr. Wotus to cancel the April 1, 2020 Council Meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting cancellation will be posted on the exterior doors of the Borough building and on the Borough website.

The meeting recessed to executive session at 3:30 PM.

The meeting reconvened at 3:55 PM.

M-2 Mrs. DePuy moved, seconded by Mr. McKown to accept the Whitehall Public Works proposal dated March 19, 2020 with certain parameters to be imposed by the Borough Manager and/or Borough Solicitor effective immediately. The motion carried 6-1 with Mr. Lahr dissenting

M-3 Mr. McKown moved, seconded by Mr. Wotus to instruct all Administrative staff, with the exception of the Borough Manager, to work from home unless directed by the Borough Manger. The motion carried unanimously.

M-4 Mr. Wotus moved, seconded by Mrs. DePuy to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

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The meeting adjourned at 4:00 PM.

READ AND APPROVED THIS DAY OF APRIL 15, 2020:

Manager