

**OXFORD TOWNSHIP MEETING**  
**March 15, 2023**

The meeting of the Township Committee of Oxford Township was held on March 15, 2023 in the Oxford Township Municipal Building, 11 Green Street, Oxford, NJ.

Notice of time, date, location and agenda of this meeting, to the extent then known was provided at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the commencement of this meeting in the following manner pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 231 of the law of 1975 “the Open Public Meetings Act”:

- Emailing to the Express Times / Warren County NJ Zoned Edition
- Posting on the Township web-site and Facebook page

In attendance was Gerald Norton, Georgette Miller and Linda Koufodontes, Township Committee, Matthew Hall, Township Administrator, Richard Wenner, Township Attorney, Michael Finelli, Township Engineer, and Susan Turner, Deputy Clerk.

Mayor Norton opened the meeting at 7:01 PM.

**Meeting Minutes:** March 1, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes - Georgette Miller moved to approve the March 1, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes. Seconded by Linda Koufodontes and passed unanimously by roll call vote. Ayes: 3, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0, Absent: 0.

**Public Comment on Agenda items:** - No Public Comment

**Presentations:**

Boy Scout Brendon Hale, Troop 141, presented his proposed Eagle Scout Leadership Project for a swing set at Oxford Lake. The project would include a defined, level area covered with rubber play mulch in which a commercial grade swing set would be erected. The swing set vendor’s professional installer would advise regarding installation. Because it will be a public facility, Matt Hall will forward a digital copy of the presentation to Statewide Insurance for review. He also requested contact information for the vendor to be sent to Statewide. Mayor Norton stated the swing set will be a nice addition to the lake.

**Ordinances: 1st Reading/ Public Hearing** – No Ordinances for 1<sup>st</sup> Reading

**Ordinances: 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading/Public Hearing** –

**ORDINANCE 2023-03**  
**CALENDAR YEAR 2023**  
**MODEL ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS**  
**AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK**  
**(N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14)**

**WHEREAS**, the Local Government Cap Law, N.J.S. 40A: 4-45.1 et seq., provides that in the preparation of its annual budget, a municipality shall limit any increase in said budget up to 2.5% unless authorized by ordinance to increase it to 3.5% over the previous year’s final appropriations, subject to certain exceptions; and,

**WHEREAS**, N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.15a provides that a municipality may, when authorized by ordinance, appropriate the difference between the amount of its actual final appropriation and the 3.5% percentage rate as an exception to its final appropriations in either of the next two succeeding years; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Governing Body of the Township of Oxford in the County of Warren finds it advisable and necessary to increase its CY 2023 budget by up to 3.5% over the previous year's final appropriations, in the interest of promoting the health, safety and welfare of the citizens; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Township of Oxford hereby determines that a 1.0 % increase in the budget for said year, amounting to \$ 11,993.17 in excess of the increase in final appropriations otherwise permitted by the Local Government Cap Law, is advisable and necessary; and,

**WHEREAS** the Township of Oxford hereby determines that any amount authorized hereinabove that is not appropriated as part of the final budget shall be retained as an exception to final appropriation in either of the next two succeeding years.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED**, by the Governing Body of the Township of Oxford, in the County of Warren, a majority of the full authorized membership of this governing body affirmatively concurring, that, in the CY 2023 budget year, the final appropriations of the Township of Oxford shall, in accordance with this ordinance and N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14, be increased by 3.5 %, amounting to \$41,976.10, and that the CY 2023 municipal budget for the Township of Oxford be approved and adopted in accordance with this ordinance; and,

**BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED**, that any that any amount authorized hereinabove that is not appropriated as part of the final budget shall be retained as an exception to final appropriation in either of the next two succeeding years; and,

**BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED**, that a certified copy of this ordinance as introduced be filed with the Director of the Division of Local Government Services within 5 days of introduction; and,

**BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED**, that a certified copy of this ordinance upon adoption, with the recorded vote included thereon, be filed with said Director within 5 days after such adoption.

Georgette Miller moved to approve Ordinance 2023-03. Seconded by Linda Koufodontes and passed unanimously by roll call vote. Ayes: 3, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0, Absent: 0.

**Resolutions:**

**RESOLUTION 2023-28**

**A RESOLUTION AMENDING WASTEWATER USER FEES**

**WHEREAS**, the Township of Oxford conveys wastewater to the Pequest River Municipal Utility Authority (PRMUA); and

**WHEREAS**, the Township of Oxford has experienced substantial increases in wastewater fees as mandated by the PRMUA for two consecutive years; and

**WHEREAS**, fees charged by PRMUA have a direct impact on the Township of Oxford sewer utility budget and necessitate corresponding user fee increases;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Township Committee of the Township of Oxford in the County of Warren, State of New Jersey, that the following rate for one (1) EDU be set for 2023 pursuant to § 260-17.C:

**ONE (1) EDU = \$1050.00 PER ANNUM**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a copy of this resolution shall be immediately forwarded to the Chief Financial Officer and Tax Collector.

Georgette Miller moved to approve Resolution 2023-28. Seconded by Linda Koufodontes and passed unanimously by roll call vote. Ayes: 3, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0, Absent: 0.

**Resolution 2023-31**

**RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF OXFORD, COUNTY OF WARREN AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AUTHORIZING THE TOWNSHIP OF OXFORD PLANNING BOARD TO UNDERTAKE A PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE PROPOSED STUDY AREA, BLOCK 2 LOT 19 QUALIFIES AS AN AREA IN NEED OF NON-CONDEMNATION REDEVELOPMENT PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 40A:12A ET SEQ.**

**WHEREAS**, the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq. (“Redevelopment Law”), provides a mechanism to assist local governments in efforts to promote programs of redevelopment; and

**WHEREAS**, the Redevelopment Law sets forth the procedures for the Town to declare an area in need of redevelopment, along with the development and effectuation of a redevelopment plan; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to the required redevelopment procedures, specifically set forth in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6, no area of a municipality shall be deemed a redevelopment area unless the governing body of the municipality shall, by Resolution, authorize the Planning Board to undertake a preliminary investigation to determine whether a proposed area is a redevelopment area meeting the criteria set forth in N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5; and

**WHEREAS**, the New Jersey Legislature adopted, and the Governor signed, P.L. 2013, Chapter 159, which amended the Redevelopment Law, including the procedural requirements of N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5 and N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-6, “[t]he resolution authorizing the planning board to undertake a preliminary investigation shall state whether the redevelopment area determination shall authorize the municipality to use all those powers provided by the Legislature for use in a redevelopment area other than the use of eminent domain (hereinafter referred to as a “Non-Condemnation Redevelopment Area”) or whether the redevelopment area determination shall authorize the municipality to use all those powers provided by the Legislature for use in a redevelopment area, including the power of eminent domain (hereinafter referred to as a “Condemnation Redevelopment Area”); and

**WHEREAS**, the Township Committee desires to commission a study to determine if the Block 2, Lot 19 satisfies the criteria of an Area in Need of Redevelopment (Non-Condemnation); and

**WHEREAS**, the Township Committee finds it to be in the best interest of the Township and its residents to authorize the Township’s Planning Board pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-4 and N.J.S.A.

40A:12A-6 to undertake such preliminary investigation of the study area which includes properties Block 2, Lot 19 ( the “Study Area”);

**WHEREAS**, the Township of Oxford wishes to direct the Planning Board to undertake a preliminary investigation and to prepare the preliminary investigation to determine whether the proposed Study Areas qualifies as an area in need of Non-Condensation Redevelopment pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Township Committee of the Township of Oxford, in the County of Warren, and State of New Jersey, that the Planning Board is hereby authorized to undertake a preliminary investigation and to prepare the preliminary investigation, pursuant to the notice, conduct a hearing and comply with other requirements of the Redevelopment Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq., as amended, in order to recommend to the Township Committee whether the area comprising the study area is an area in need of **Non-Condensation Redevelopment** according to the criteria set forth in N.J.S.A. 4A:12A-5.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Planning Board shall submit its findings and recommendations to the Township Committee in the form of a Resolution with supporting documentation.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a certified copy of this Resolution is to be forwarded to the Planning Board of the Township of Oxford.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this Resolution shall take effect pursuant to law.

Georgette Miller moved to approve Resolution 2023-31. Seconded by Linda Koufodontes and passed unanimously by roll call vote. Ayes: 3, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0, Absent: 0.

Mayor Norton noted that this property is behind the County garage, in the Kaufman Drive area.

**New Business:**

-Noise Ordinance Review – Due to a large, loud party in a residential area Saturday night, about which the Mayor received many complaints, Mr. Wenner reviewed and advised regarding the Noise Ordinance. Currently, the ordinance contains an unreasonable / obnoxious standard clause. It also states that a person can be cited if noise is clearly audible to the average person 100 feet or more outside a residence. There are currently no timeframes included, except regarding a person yelling, whistling, etc. on a public road. Mr. Wenner recommends maintaining the ordinance as it is worded as it covers all hours of the day/night and general noise producing events. Mr. Wenner will compose an email detailing this information for the Mayor to send to residents.

-Pequest field – Mayor Norton stated the property is under contract for development and the developer requested a PILOT program. For this, a study must be done, the cost of which will be borne by developer funds placed in escrow. Rich Wenner and Mike Finelli stated the Township Planner should determine the amount.

-Oxford Lake – Mayor Norton stated the Lake Director was approached by a college student wanting to write a paper about the business model and marketing for Oxford Lake. Mayor Norton asked Mr. Wenner if this may cover sensitive information and/or require an OPRA request. Mr. Wenner stated there is no requirement that an OPRA request be filed.

-Blue Light Permit applications – Oxford Emergency Squad – Mayor Norton received two Blue Light Permit applications for members of the Emergency Squad: Hunter Gara and Edward Parra. Georgette Miller moved to approve the Blue Light Permit applications for Hunter Gara and Edward Parra. Seconded by Linda Koufodontes. Ayes: 3, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0, Absent: 0. Motion passed.

**Old Business:**

- Handicapped parking space request – Mike Finelli distributed a memo outlining his findings. The potential cost to remove part of the existing walkway and refit the space to ADA standards is excessive and he does not recommend installing the handicapped parking space. Mayor Norton will email this information to the resident who requested the space.

**Township Committee Reports and Correspondence.**

- Linda Koufodontes attended the Board of Education meeting on March 9, 2023. State funding for the next school year is a wash. Preschool expansion is proceeding and will bring in revenue. A new Superintendent was hired. He will attend the March 23, 2023 meeting.

- Georgette Miller stated the Lake wants to purchase another blow up attraction using Lake Trust Fund monies. She will forward specs of the attraction to Matt Hall for review by the insurance company. Linda Koufodontes moved to approve the purchase of a blow up attraction for Oxford Lake, using Lake Trust Fund monies, contingent upon review and approval by Statewide Insurance. Seconded by Mayor Norton. Ayes: 3, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0, Absent: 0. Motion passed.

-Georgette Miller stated that someone did donuts on Lake property causing damage. She would like to purchase cameras for the parking lot.

- The Eagle Scout project of a raised tent site and table at the Lake has been completed.

- Georgette stated Warren Hills Project Graduation would like to do a roadside cleanup fundraiser event. Matt Hall will confirm with the CFO if Clean Communities funds are available. Georgette Miller moved to approve a Warren Hills Project Graduation roadside cleanup if Clean Communities funds are available. Seconded by Linda Koufodontes and passed unanimously by roll call vote. Ayes: 3, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0, Absent: 0.

-Mayor Norton stated the DPW cut back trees along Jensen Drive and it looks nice.

**Township Administrator:** Matt Hall stated he met with the owner of Valley View Estates and the County 911 Coordinator regarding renumbering residences and renaming the roads. The renumbering plan will be done first and the Township may accept the road name changes via resolution.

**Township Engineer Report:** Mike Finelli stated the Kent Street project should begin next month. They completed the grant application for the footbridge but he is concerned that the project is not big enough. The administrative costs are large. Mayor Norton stated to submit the application for the grant. His office is looking at options for the culvert under Kent Street.

The Floodplain ordinance was finalized and sent to the state last month.

Stormwater Management Tier change – Oxford and all Tier B municipalities are eligible for a \$75,000 state grant to pay for the increased cost of compliance incurred by being redesignated as Tier A. \$25,000 will be available when the application is submitted and the remaining \$50,000 will be paid next year.

OTI – Mike stated the owners have 4 steps involving approvals and permits to complete before they can begin cleanup of the property and the solar conversion. Approval from BPU has been received.

**Township Attorney's Report:** No report.

**Washington Police Department** – Lieutenant Smith reported that the traffic detail on Buckley Avenue and Mine Hill Road resulted in some tickets being issued. When the detail is completed, he will supply a detailed report.

**Motion To Pay Bills:** Georgette Miller moved to pay all bills presented to and approved by the Committee. Seconded by Linda Koufodontes. Ayes: 3, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0, Absent:0. Motion passed.

**Public Comment:** Mrs. Halloran asked about the removal of trees on a property on Orams Lane. Mayor Norton and Mike Finelli stated the new property owners were not aware they needed approval to remove trees. Mike instructed them to stop cutting and clean up the downed trees.

Robert Davenport, Orams Lane, addressed the same issue and asked if a cease and desist order could be issued. He stated their actions were not compliant with the Highlands Act or Woodlands Management. He asked if new homeowners could be advised of regulations in order to prevent this from happening in the future.

Sharon Cannon- 80 Valley View Estates had questions about the renumbering of residences and renaming of road within Valley View. Mayor Norton stated they need to be done to help first responders find the correct residence. He said the Township will review the renumbering plan before any approval is given. Mrs. Halloran asked why the sewer rate was increasing and if there are new houses built, will the current system handle the increase. Mayor Norton stated the cost increase is due to the increased fee issued by PRMUA. PRMUA will conduct a study. He stated that any new houses will pay the same rate. Mayor Norton urged the public to attend PRMUA meetings.

Mr. Fisher, 32 Scranton Parkway, stated there is light industrial work and tree removal being done on a property near him and heavy equipment is being stored there. The owners have cut in a roadway. Mayor Norton will have it investigated. Mike Finelli stated he had staff investigate the property who found nothing problematic. But Mr. Finelli stated that heavy equipment is not light industrial work and the property will be investigated again.

**Meeting Recap:**

Matt Hall will schedule a meeting with Georgette Miller and Statewide Insurance regarding the new blow up attraction.

Matt will contact the 911 call center regarding the renumbering in Valley View Estates.

Matt will contact Bill Brock regarding the Eagle Scout swing project.

Rich Wenner will draft a Noise Ordinance summary.

**Executive Session** – No Executive Session

**Adjourn:**

Mayor Norton moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 PM. Seconded by Linda Koufodontes. Ayes: 3, Nays: 0, Abstain: 0, Absent: 0. Motion passed.

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Susan Turner, Deputy Clerk