



TOWN OF DOVER MAYOR & BOARD OF ALDERMEN

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
DOVER TOWN HALL
37 N. SUSSEX ST., DOVER, NJ 07801
May 19, 2020

Mayor Carolyn Blackman called the May 19, 2020 Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Board of Alderman to order at 7:07p.m. and read the Sunshine Statement that the meeting was being held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, also known as the Sunshine Law, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6. Notice of the meeting was sent to the Daily Record and Star Ledger on May 12, 2020 and published in the Record and Ledger on May 16, 2020. Notice was also posted on the Bulletin Board in Town Hall.

The Mayor then led those in attendance in the salute to the flag. Following the flag salute, Mayor Blackman asked for a moment of silence for all those in our community who have passed from COVID-19 and stated that there have been 654 cases in Dover and 50 deaths. Mayor Blackman also held a moment of silence for former Dover Board of Education member William Shuler, who served on the Board of Education for 52 years.

Acting Clerk Schmidt then conducted the roll which resulted in the following:

Name	Present	Absent	Excused
Alderman Correa	X		
Alderman Tapia	X		
Alderman Ballesteros	X		
Alderwoman Rugg	X		
Alderwoman Cruz	X		
Alderman Valencia	X		
Alderman Quinones	X		
Alderwoman Wittner	X		
Mayor Blackman	X		

Following the roll, the Clerk announced that all members of the Governing Body were present and there was a quorum. Also present at the meeting was Acting Municipal Clerk John P. Schmidt, Deputy Town Administrator Carlos Sanchez, Town Attorney Timothy P. Downs and Interim Chief Financial Officer Ashley Wilson.

After making comments, Mayor Blackman asked for a motion to approve the minutes of April 28, 2020. Alderwoman Wittner made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Alderman Ballesteros.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

April 28, 2020 Regular Monthly Meeting

	A.M. Correa	A.M. Tapia	A.M. Ballesteros	A.M. Rugg	A.M. Cruz	A.M. Valencia	A.M. Quinones	A.M. Wittner	Mayor Blackman
Motion								X	
Second			X						
Yes	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
No									
Abstain									

The minutes were approved by a vote of 9-0.

The Mayor then asked for a motion to approve the minutes of November 26, 2019 and December 10, 2020. Acting Municipal Clerk Schmidt provided background information on the minutes. He stated that the minutes were from last year and were left undone. Acting Clerk Schmidt said that the audio recording of the minutes was not recoverable. The audio could not be used in the preparation of the minutes and that Rey had to decipher the notes of the previous clerk to put together some type of minutes. The Acting Clerk reported that it was a long process to make sense of it all but the Town is required to approve minutes and hoped that background information was helpful.

Mayor Blackman thanked the Acting Clerk for the explanation. Alderwoman Wittner made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Alderman Quinones.

	A.M. Correa	A.M. Tapia	A.M. Ballesteros	A.M. Rugg	A.M. Cruz	A.M. Valencia	A.M. Quinones	A.M. Wittner	Mayor Blackman
Motion								X	
Second							X		
Yes						X	X	X	X
No									
Abstain									

The minutes were approved 4-0-5. (Aldermembers Correa, Tapia, Ballesteros, Rugg and Cruz were not on the Board of Aldermen in 2019 and did not vote).

REPORT OF COMMITTEES

The Mayor reported that over the past few weeks there have been several personnel committee meetings and also numerous meetings regarding the budget by the Finance Committee.

PRESENTATIONS, MUNICIPAL CORRESPONDENCE

Acting Clerk Schmidt spoke about a memo that was sent by the Morris County JIF to the Fund Commissioners Requesting Support for A3971 and S2474, which is on the agenda for the meeting.

ORDINANCES FOR FIRST READING AND INTRODUCTION

The Mayor and Board of Aldermen then considered Ordinance 13-2020, which is an Ordinance to Exceed the Municipal Budget Appropriation Limits and to Establish a Cap Bank. Acting Clerk Schmidt read the Ordinance in full into the record. Following the reading of the Ordinance Alderman Correa made a motion to introduce the Ordinance, seconded by Alderwoman Rugg.

Ordinance 13-2020

	A.M. Correa	A.M. Tapia	A.M. Ballesteros	A.M. Rugg	A.M. Cruz	A.M. Valencia	A.M. Quinones	A.M. Wittner	Mayor Blackman
Motion	X								
Second				X					
Yes	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
No									
Abstain									

The Ordinance was introduced by a vote of 9-0.

APPROVAL OF BILLS

The Governing Body then considered the approval of the bill list / Res. 145-2020. Alderman Correa had a question about the bill list and wanted to separate three bills on the bills list. Alderman Correa made a motion to remove PO #20-00319 / \$738.00 for T-Shirts for the Columbian Festival, PO# 20-00921 / \$75.00 for Municipal Clerks Association Membership and PO #20-00568 / \$1,410.00 for Movies in the Park. The motion was seconded by Alderwoman Wittner. Acting Clerk Schmidt asked if there were any objections. Hearing none, a voice vote was held with all members voting in favor of the motion to remove the PO’s 9-0.

Motion: Correa

Second: Wittner

Yeas: Aldermembers Correa, Tapia, Ballesteros, Rugg, Cruz, Valencia, Quinones, Wittner and Mayor Blackman.

Nays: NONE

Alderman Ballesteros then asked about Res. 154-2020 approving a refund of taxes because of an overpayment. That amount is also on the bills list. He asked if the Resolution should be voted on prior to the bills list. The Mayor asked Attorney Downs to provide a response. Attorney Downs advised that Res. 154-2020 could be moved for vote prior to the bills list.

Alderman Ballesteros made a motion to move Res. 154-2020 from the Consent Agenda to be voted on prior to the bills list. The motion was seconded by Alderwoman Wittner and a voice vote was held.

Motion: Correa

Second: Wittner

Yeas: Aldermembers Correa, Tapia, Ballesteros, Rugg, Cruz, Valencia, Quinones, Wittner and Mayor Blackman.

Nays: NONE

The Governing Body then acted on Resolution 154-2020. A motion was made by Alderman Ballesteros, seconded by Alderman Correa.

Resolution – 154-2020
Approving a Refund of Overpayment of Taxes in the amount of \$1,919.81 for Block 1314, Lot 14 in the Town of Dover

	A.M. Correa	A.M. Tapia	A.M. Ballesteros	A.M. Rugg	A.M. Cruz	A.M. Valencia	A.M. Quinones	A.M. Wittner	Mayor Blackman
Motion			X						
Second	X								
Yes	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
No									
Abstain									

Resolution 154-2020 was approved 9-0.

Following the vote, Alderman Correa made a motion to approve the bills list as amended without the three items removed (PO #20-00319 / \$738.00 for T-Shirts for the Columbian Festival, PO# 20-00921 / \$75.00 for Municipal Clerks Association Membership and PO #20-00568 / \$1,410.00 for Movies in the Park). The motion was seconded by Alderman Ballesteros.

Res. 145-2020 – Bills List (As Amended)

	A.M. Correa	A.M. Tapia	A.M. Ballesteros	A.M. Rugg	A.M. Cruz	A.M. Valencia	A.M. Quinones	A.M. Wittner	Mayor Blackman
Motion	X								
Second			X						
Yes	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
No									
Abstain									

The bills list / Res. 145-2020 was approved 9-0.

Following the vote, it was decided to revisit the three removed items at the next meeting and the Board of Aldermen considered resolutions on the agenda.

APPROVAL OF RESOLUTIONS
-CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS

Acting Municipal Clerk Schmidt then read by title the below resolutions and provided a summary of some of the resolutions.

- 1) Res. 146-2020 – Authorizing a Contract for Appraisal Services for 15 N. Sussex St., Dover NJ with Toohey Real Estate in an amount of \$2,000.00.
- 2) Res. 147-2020 – Dedication by Rider – COVID-19
- 3) Res. 148 -2020 – Authorizing Interlocal Agreement Between the Town of Dover and County of Morris Regarding the HOME Program
- 4) Res. 149-2020 – Appointing Captain Jonathan Delaney as Deputy Chief of Police.

- 5) Res. 150-2020 – Authorizing a Stipulation of Settlement in the Plosia Cohen Matter, MRS-L-000778-20.
- 6) Res. 151-2020 – Authorizing the Execution of a Revenue Cycle Receivable Management Agreement with Revenue Guard Medical Claims Management LLC
- 7) Res. 152 -2020 – Supporting New Jersey Assembly Bill A3971 and Senate Bill S2474 regarding the Issuance of Coronavirus Relief Bonds for Municipalities and Counties.
- 8) Res. 153-2020 – Supporting the Dover Water Commission Reservoir Ave Improvements.

Res. 146-2020 to 153-2020

	A.M. Correa	A.M. Tapia	A.M. Ballesteros	A.M. Rugg	A.M. Cruz	A.M. Valencia	A.M. Quinones	A.M. Wittner	Mayor Blackman
Motion	X								
Second				X					
Yes	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
No									
Abstain									

The Consent Agenda Resolutions were approved 9-0.

Following passage, the Mayor commented that in regards to Res. 150-2020, this was an issue from last year. After the Mayor’s comments Acting Municipal Clerk Schmidt administered the Oath of Office to Deputy Chief Jonathan Delaney.

OLD BUSINESS

Acting Clerk Schmidt reminded members of the governing body about the MEL/JIF Online Course Seminar. For each official who takes the online seminar, the Town receives a \$250 credit. The deadline to take the course was extended until June 1, 2020 and all members of the Board of Aldermen were registered by Administration.

The Acting Municipal Clerk also reminded everyone that FDS forms needed to be filed by April 30th. The forms were still due on April 30, 2020 but a grace period/extension was given until July. Clerk Schmidt reminded everyone to complete the form and if anyone needed help they could reach out to him.

NEW BUSINESS

Acting Municipal Clerk Schmidt spoke about the Liquor License letter which would be going out to Liquor License holders about renewals. He said that the Clerk’s office is working on making a minor change and discussing the process to receive municipal fees, which would include drop off payments or appointments. He wanted to let the Board know that the letter was going out in case any of the Board members received a question.

Mayor Blackman asked Board members to call Acting Clerk Schmidt to make sure they get the FDS done and thanked the Acting Municipal Clerk for the information about the items he discussed in Old and New Business.

The next item was the introduction of the budget. Mayor Blackman made some comments about the challenges with the budget that was left to the new administration. She also thanked the staff and the work of the Finance committee and Chairman Correa. Interim Chief Finance Officer Ashley Wilson gave a review of the budget process. She explained that the introduction is the first step in the process and that there is a public hearing and adoption later. Changes can also be made. Interim CFO Wilson discussed the process in preparing the budget and spoke about the challenges, including the low fund balance which needs to be built back up and COVID-19. She also mentioned that budget last year was supported by the fund balance and this year's budget had a \$1,000,000.00 deficit to start.

Interim CFO Wilson then went over some issues with the budget process overall, the Internal Budget Process and 2020 Budget Goals. She then explained some issues which drive the budget. Besides the Fund Balance, payments to the Rockaway Valley Regional Sewerage Authority increased by \$386,000, Debt Principal payment and interest increased by \$400,000, Contractual increases in various Union Collective Bargaining Agreements increased by \$250,000, Pension Appropriations increased by \$224,000 and as a result of COVID-19 the municipality is planning on a potential reduction of 7% as court revenues and permit fees will be down. CFO Wilson then discussed revenues and appropriations. For budget appropriations, Salaries/Wages have decreased by \$298,245 from \$9,999,373 to \$9,701,128; Other Expenses which includes RVRSA increased by \$456,975.58 from \$9,609,510 to \$10,066,48 and Debt Service increased by \$396,165 from \$1,618,810 to \$2,014,975. Overall when the budget process started the Town was facing a 9.77% increase, which has since been worked down to 6.68%.

Following the presentation and discussion by Interim CFO Wilson, Deputy Administrator Carlos Sanchez thanked the staff for the number of hours they put into the budget. He also thanked the Finance Committee and commented that he has never seen a Finance Committee spend the amount of time, in particular Chairman Correa to really understand the process and to go through the budget and give suggestions and ideas. Deputy Administrator Sanchez stated the budget does have a decrease in revenues as mentioned by Interim CFO Wilson. He also said that the budget includes personnel changes and a realignment of staffing and some reduction in personnel. He also said the budget includes a potential furlough plan. In closing he thanked the efforts of staff and the countless hours of the Finance Committee.

Mayor Blackman thanked the Deputy Administrator. The Mayor said that the budget is still an ongoing process and it has been a challenging process. The Mayor did mention that no services are being cut and will still be provided to our residents. Mayor Blackman then asked Alderman Correa, who is the Finance Chairman if he had any reports or comments he wanted to make.

Alderman Correa asked Interim CFO Wilson about the Fund Balance, which is the Town's Emergency Reserve Funds. Alderman Correa asked what is a healthy amount for a municipality / budget our size and what do we have right now. He also asked why the fund balance is so low. Interim CFO Wilson said that our Fund Balance on the low end should be in upwards of \$2.5 million dollars. She commented that to be healthy and to make sure the Town has a good bond rating, the Fund Balance for the Town of Dover should be around \$5 million dollars. In regards to the other question, she stated she could not speak to past practices but did say that in order to keep the tax rate down the budget was supported by the Fund Balance. The 2018 budget was

supported by \$1 million dollars and last year was higher. The Town currently has a Fund Balance of just shy of \$850,000.

Alderman Correa thanked Interim CFO Wilson and clarified that to keep taxes low, the Emergency Reserve Funds were used by the Town. Interim CFO Wilson said that was correct.

The Mayor then asked if any Aldermembers had any comments. Alderman Ballesteros asked if other economic recessions such as in 2008 and Hurricane Sandy, if those years had a significant increase in the tax rate. Interim CFO Wilson said that she would look into it and get back to him. Mayor Blackman then stated that because the municipality did not increase taxes as it should in past years, it has caught up to the Town this year.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Blackman then opened the meeting to the budget.

Susan Shauer, 346 W. Clinton Street, Dover NJ – Ms. Shauer thanked the budget committee for working on the budget during these unusual times. She commented that in prior years, the municipality and the Board of Education worked together to keep the tax level low. She said that there has been increases every year between the municipality and Board of Education. She commented that some municipalities in the area have informed the local Board of Education that they would have to withhold payments of the monthly taxes. Ms. Shauer asked if Dover will have to do the same thing. Ms. Shauer also asked if the 6.68% increase includes the school as well. Interim CFO Wilson responded that the total tax increase for was 4.45% and Deputy Administrator Sanchez stated that the budget does not include delaying payments to the County or School District.

Hearing no one else who wished to comment, the Mayor closed the Public Comment section.

It was then commented that a vote was needed on the introduction of the budget. Alderman Correa made a motion to introduce the 2020 budget, seconded by Alderwoman Cruz.

Introduction of the Budget

	A.M. Correa	A.M. Tapia	A.M. Ballesteros	A.M. Rugg	A.M. Cruz	A.M. Valencia	A.M. Quinones	A.M. Wittner	Mayor Blackman
Motion	X								
Second					X				
Yes	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
No									
Abstain									

The budget was introduced by a vote of 9-0.

Mayor Blackman spoke about COVID-19. The Town continues to be in communications with State and County officials as well as to groups in the community including business owners. The Mayor also recognized our first responders and thanked our fire and police. Mayor Blackman also thanked numerous volunteers and restaurants helping to serve meals. She said the Table of

Hope is helping to feed over 300 families every Friday. Mayor Blackman also thanked the Board members as well. The Mayor stated that it is going to take time, but we will get through this. She spoke about guidelines and reminded everyone to continue to practice social distancing.

Mayor Blackman also thanked Interim CFO Wilson, Town Staff, Town Attorney for their work tonight in regards to aspects of the budget.

The Mayor then shared a statement which she sent to all employees. Mayor Blackman stated that the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic has left virtually nowhere untouched, including our hometown of Dover and Town Hall is also not exempt. She commented that it has impacted one of our employees who may be infected and as a result, the Personnel Committee decided to require that 6 Town officials who had direct contact with the affected individual work from home for the next 14 calendar days, even though none of them are experiencing symptoms. Mayor Blackman said that extensive sanitization protocols and other plans have been developed and put into place and that she did not anticipate any interruptions to municipal services.

Mayor Blackman shared that she was one of the people who had contact with the affected individual and will be in self-quarantine for the next 14 days. The Mayor said that she feels fine and has been in contact with her primary care doctor who is closely monitoring her. Mayor Blackman said that she will be working from home and that she recognizes that she must live by the same rules as everyone else.

Mayor Blackman thanked everyone for their support and cooperation with the modifications to our normal lives. She requested that residents continue to remain calm and patient as we all cope with the struggles of this difficult time in our history as a nation, state, and town. Mayor Blackman also asked everyone for their prayers for our front-line workers and our town employees who work every day to provide essential services.

Mayor Blackman then entertained a motion to adjourn. Alderman Ballesteros moved to adjourn, seconded by Alderwoman Wittner. On voice vote, 9-0 (Aldermembers Correa, Tapia, Ballesteros, Rugg, Cruz, Valencia, Quinones, Wittner and Mayor Blackman in favor) the meeting was adjourned at 8:33p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



John P. Schmidt, MLS
Acting Municipal Clerk