



TOWN OF DOVER MAYOR & BOARD OF ALDERMEN

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA ELECTRONIC MEETING SEPTEMBER 8, 2020

Mayor Carolyn Blackman called the September 8, 2020 Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen 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 August 20, 2020 and published in the Record and Ledger on August 26, 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.

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

Name	Present	Absent	Excused
Alderman Correa	X		
Alderman Tapia	X (Joined at 7:39p.m.)		
Alderman Ballesteros	X		
Alderwoman Rugg	X		
Alderwoman Cruz	X		
Alderman Valencia	X (Joined at 8:42p.m.)		
Alderman Quinones	X		
Alderwoman Wittner	X		
Mayor Blackman	X		

Seven members of the governing body were present and there was a quorum. Also in attendance was Acting Municipal Clerk John P. Schmidt, Municipal Counsel Lisa Thompson and Bill Isselin, Chief Code Enforcement Officer & Assistant Engineer.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board then acted upon the approval of the July 21, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes. A motion was made by Aldermember Ballesteros, seconded by Aldermember Wittner. Acting Clerk Schmidt then conducted a roll call vote which resulted in the following:

July 21, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes

	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
No									
Abstain									

The minutes of July 21, 2020 were approved 7-0.

PRESENTATIONS, MUNICIPAL CORRESPONDENCE

Acting Municipal Clerk Schmidt then reviewed the correspondence on the agenda this evening.

- 1) Correspondence from Roxbury Township Regarding Investigation of JCP&L
- 2) Correspondence from Pequannock Township Regarding Support of In-Person Voting
- 3) Correspondence from CME about the Reservoir Rd. Water Main Improvements

With no questions or comments Mayor Blackman then presented John O. Bennett III – candidate / nominee for the position of Interim Town Administrator. Mayor Blackman explained that the former Deputy Administrator recently resigned, and the Town currently does not have an Administrator. The Mayor introduced Mr. Bennett and who will be filling the role of Administrator on an interim basis. Mr. Bennett has previously been an administrator in three other municipalities and has also served as a DPW Supervisor, a Municipal Attorney, a member of the New Jersey legislature, including serving as Senate President and as Acting Governor of the State of New Jersey. He also holds multiple municipal state certifications including a CPM, RMC and QPA certification. The Mayor explained the details of the interim appointment which is being considered.

Aldermember Ballesteros asked Mr. Bennett about his current workload and if he would be full time with Dover. Mr. Bennett said he would be full time in Dover and he currently is the Municipal Attorney for Keansburg but does not handle some day to day issues such as labor matters. He also is Board Attorney for the Keansburg Board of Education. Aldermember Ballesteros asked him about his experiences in Woodbridge where he served as Administrator and how it relates to Dover. Mr. Bennett explained about Woodbridge, including having a high minority population. He also explains how he approaches the position of Administrator and the importance of collaboration and communication.

Aldermember Wittner asked if it would be possible to open the meeting to the public. Mayor Blackman stated that the governing body has an order of business and stated the Mayor and Board should follow the agenda.

Aldermember Rugg asked for clarification, regarding one year and what would occur if the Town found an applicant. Mayor Blackman stated that from experience it takes about six months at least to find someone usually and sometimes an individual may work under someone for a short period during a transition.

The Mayor then spoke about why she and the Personnel Committee are recommending a one-year appointment. The Mayor said that the Town needs stability at the moment. If the Town only did a six-month interim appointment, that puts us in the middle of budget preparation for the CY2021 Budget, which could be a bad time for a transition. The Mayor also stated that another reason to have Senator Bennett here for one year is to handle some redevelopment issues. She also spoke about having stability with the employees and that it is possible the Town of Dover will be working with a search firm to conduct a search to fill the Administrator's position.

Aldermember Wittner then asked Mr. Bennett about his experience with redevelopment. Mr. Bennett explained his background with redevelopment as a Municipal Attorney in Keansburg and as Administrator in Woodbridge which had roughly 20 projects. Aldermember Wittner asked if Mr. Bennett had any experience with home ownership redevelopment projects. Mr. Bennett stated he did and spoke about projects in Keansburg.

Members of the public asked when they could speak. Acting Municipal Clerk Schmidt asked people not to speak until public comment. He explained that he has to take minutes and hopes that the meeting can be orderly. Aldermember Wittner asked again if the public could speak. Mayor Blackman agreed to hold public comment just on the appointment of Mr. Bennett as Interim Administrator.

Speaker: Sergio Rodriguez

Address: 37 Pine Street, Dover NJ

Municipality/County: Dover / Morris County

Mr. Rodriguez expressed concerns regarding the appointment of Mr. Bennett. He also wanted to know how he was recommended for the position and why Dover is taking him on. He spoke about Mayor Blackman being the first black Mayor of Dover and implied this appointment is going backwards. Mayor Blackman stated in regards to his previous position in Woodbridge, Woodbridge was an all Democratic Town. Mayor Blackman also said she does not look at race when considering applicants.

(Alderman Tapia joined the meeting at 7:39p.m. he stated he could hear the meeting from the beginning)

Speaker: Felipe Davila

Address: 100 Morris Ave., Dover NJ

Municipality/County: Dover / Morris County

Mr. Davila expressed concerns and thoughts about Mr. Bennett. He also stated that Mr. Bennett will not represent the best interests of Dover.

Speaker: Angela Andradea

Address: 148 Thompson Ave., Dover NJ

Municipality/County: Dover / Morris County

Ms. Thompson expressed concerns regarding the appointment of the Mr. Bennett and how the arrangement with Mr. Bennett came about. She also spoke about a petition being passed around.

Speaker: De'Vante Montgomery

Address: 19 Hillside Ave., Dover NJ

Municipality/County: Dover / Morris County

Mr. Montgomery stated that he is a recent resident to, having moved to Dover eight months ago. He stated that he is appalled and disgusted because the Town did not do adequate research into Mr. Bennett. He spoke about the importance of the operations of the Town and concerns regarding the appointment.

Speaker: TC McCourt

Address: 32 Davis Ave., Dover NJ

Municipality/County: Dover / Morris County

Mr. McCourt said he agreed with a lot of what was said. He said he believes that political party should not matter but expressed concerns regarding Mr. Bennett's past experiences. He also stated that he believes there is another qualified person available. Mr. McCourt also commented that Woodbridge and Dover are not comparable municipalities.

Speaker: Leidy Londano

Address: 4 Winthrop Place., Dover NJ

Municipality/County: Dover / Morris County

Ms. Londano stated that she is disappointed with the secrecy and lack of disrespect shown to the residents. She also expressed concerns regarding Mr. Bennett and asked that other candidates/recommendations should be made public. Ms. Londano also spoke about the proposed salary.

Speaker: Jessenia Flores

Address: 19 Julia Terrace., Dover, NJ

Municipality/County: Dover / Morris County

Ms. Flores spoke about last year's campaign and the lack of transparency with the prior administration. Ms. Flores expressed concerns with the lack of transparency with this process. She also spoke about salaries and stated that Newark pays their administration \$63,000. She urged the governing body to reconsider the appointment.

Speaker: Alina Martinez

Address: 28 Adams Ave., Dover, NJ

Municipality/County: Victory Gardens / Morris County

Ms. Martinez stated that she stood behind Mayor Blackman but is concerned about the process and how her tax dollars are being spent. She asked Mayor Blackman what she will do about the concerns raised. Ms. Martinez stated as a Dover resident, this will not be taken lightly.

Acting Municipal Clerk Schmidt asked Mayor Blackman if she wanted him to explain the salary issue and comments which were mentioned. Mr. Schmidt stated the Administrator of Newark makes upwards of \$260,000 a year based on online information, if they are to be believed. Mr. Schmidt also stated that as of December 2019, the then Dover Administrator was making \$165,000 and was receiving an additional \$3,600 in compensation for a car allowance. Mr. Schmidt said that the Town was also paying \$12,000 annually for a QPA. He stated that the cumulative total was \$180,600.

Speaker: Thea Czachorowski

Address: 39 Linwood Ave., Dover, NJ

Municipality/County: Dover / Morris County

Ms. Czachorowski commented that the salary is not a concern but about the credibility of the nominee for the position. She stated more thought should be given to the process.

Speaker: Isiah Strickland

Address: 46 Grace Street, Dover NJ

Municipality/County: Dover / Morris County

Mr. Strickland spoke about transparency and stated he believes this administration is falling into the trap of the old administration. He stated he was opposed to the appointment of Mr. Bennett.

Speaker: Noreen Staples

Address: Brookside, NJ

Municipality/County: Mendham Township / Morris County

Ms. Staples asked if the job went out to BID. She also asked and expressed concerns about the CFO and the Clerk. She stated that Dover deserves excellence.

With no other members of the public wishing to be heard, Mayor Blackman closed the portion of the meeting to the public.

Mr. Bennett then made a brief statement. He appreciated the comments he heard from the residents of Dover and stated he hoped to convenience people that what might have been read on a blog site is not totally accurate and many of the comments are not totally accurate. He spoke about his departure from Woodbridge, which was mutual and that he was not ousted. He stated that when he was Governor, it was a wonderful experience and that he individually paid for dinners not the taxpayers. He also stated that he has never had an ethics complaint filed against him. He also stated that he is no longer active in politics. He also stated that if he is appointed he would encourage all residents to come in and sit down with him to discuss what they want to see in the Town.

Aldermember Wittner moved to table Res. 209-2020 because the Board should have the opportunity to meet Mr. Bennett and take into account the comments of the public. The motion was seconded by Aldermember Ballesteros.

Aldermember Rugg also agreed to table.

Aldermember Cruz commented that she would like to meet Mr. Bennett.

Aldermember Quinones stated he would like to table this as well because he would like to sit down with Mr. Bennett.

Mayor Blackman then asked Legal Counsel Lisa Thompson about the process to table. Ms. Thompson provided her opinion.

Aldermember Wittner also commented we should put the job posting out. Aldermember Rugg asked what would happen with this position if it is not filled. Mayor Blackman said that would be a discussion for tomorrow.

Mayor Blackman then asked the Clerk to conduct the roll call on the motion.

Motion to Table Res. 209-2020 Appointing Interim Town (Municipal) Administrator

	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	
No		X							
Abstain	X								X

The motion to Table Res. 209-2020 was passed 5-1-2.

Acting Clerk Schmidt stated to the Mayor that the decision to table changes the agenda.

Aldermember Ballesteros asked if we should go into recess and made a motion to recess for 10 minutes, second by Aldermember Wittner.

Motion to Recess

	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
No									
Abstain									

By voice vote, the motion to recess was approved 8-0.

The Mayor and Board took a recess at 8:28p.m.

The Mayor and Board resumed the meeting at 8:42p.m. (Alderman Valencia joined the meeting)

Mayor Blackman stated that we will adjourn tonight's meeting and a meeting will be held Thursday because we have to have a person on a short term basis to be Administrator and CFO so that business of the Town can be conducted. Legal Counsel Thompson stated that it should be announced the meeting will be held on September 10th at 7:00p.m.

Aldermember Wittner asked if the September 10th meeting will be an informal meeting or a Special Meeting. Acting Municipal Clerk stated it would be an Emergency Meeting. Aldermember Wittner asked Acting Municipal Clerk Schmidt if he could approve the bills list. Acting Municipal Clerk Schmidt said that the bills list was prepared by the CFO and the CFO's last day is tomorrow.

It was decided to act on items which could be acted on.

APPROVAL OF BILLS

The Mayor and Board of Aldermen then considered the Bills List (Res. 210-2020). A motion was made by Aldermember Wittner, second by Aldermember Correa.

Bills List Res. 210-2020

	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									

Res. 210-2020 was approved 9-0.

Aldermember Wittner asked if it was possible to move forward with any items. It was determined that the following Resolutions could be voted upon: Res. 211, 212, 218, 226, 227.

APPROVAL OF RESOLUTIONS

- 1) Res. 211-2020 – Resolution Regarding Chapter 159 Clean Communities 2020
- 2) Res. 212-2020 – Resolution Regarding Chapter 159 Asst. to Firefighters
- 3) Res. 218-2020 – Resolution for Lien of Redemption
- 4) Res. 226-2020 – Resolution Approving the Renewal of Alcoholic Beverage Licenses for 2020-2021
- 5) Res. 227-2020 – Resolution Approving the Renewal of Alcoholic Beverage License #1409-33-002-009 for 2018-2019 Term

A motion was made to adopt Resolutions 211, 212, 218, 226 and 227. Aldermember Ballesteros made a motion, second by Aldermember Wittner.

Resolutions – 211, 212, 218, 226 and 227

	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									

Resolutions 211, 212, 218, 226 and 227 were approved 9-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

The Mayor then opened the meeting to the public.

Speaker: Cindy Conoran

Address: 44 Livingston Ave., Dover NJ

Municipality/County: Dover / Morris County

Ms. Conoran spoke about Mr. Bennett's comments. She stated the public should not have to meet with the Administrator, but they should meet with their elected officials. She also spoke about salary issues. Ms. Conoran asked if other candidates were considered. Ms. Conoran also spoke about the meeting platform.

Speaker: Noreen Staples

Address: Brookside, NJ

Municipality/County: Mendham Township / Morris County

Ms. Staples stated the voting was not announced. She also asked about the OPMA requirements. She also stated she sees that the meeting is being recorded as was the last meeting and wanted to know if the meetings will be posted online.

Acting Municipal Clerk Schmidt and Mayor Blackman stated the vote was 5-1-2 with one absent. In regards to the OPMA, Acting Municipal Clerk Schmidt said that the OPMA requirements will be met for an Emergency Meeting. The OPMA statute is N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et. seq. Acting Municipal Clerk Schmidt stated he rather not go into a detail answer without having the statute in front of him. Ms. Staples wanted to know if a vote for the meeting would have to be held. Attorney Thompson stated that the basis for the emergency is that the positions of Administrator and CFO are needed for the daily functions of government. Acting Municipal Clerk stated that tonight's current meeting is on YouTube but there were issues with August 25, 2020. He stated the August 25, 2020 meeting is not on YouTube but this one is.

Speaker: Felipe Davila

Address: 100 Morris Ave., Dover NJ

Municipality/County: Dover / Morris County

Mr. Davila asked about resolutions from last meeting. He also asked how the clean-up went.

Mayor Blackman stated there was only a minor clean-up. Aldermember Ballesteros mentioned that a majority of it was cancelled because of the storm. Mr. Davila also asked about his first question regarding the resolution from the last meeting. Mayor Blackman stated that has not be finalized yet because of other issues which needed to be addressed.

Speaker: Susan Shauer

Address: 346 W. Clinton St., Dover NJ

Municipality/County: Dover / Morris County

Ms. Shauer thanked the Aldermembers who voted to table Res. 209-2020 concerning Mr. Bennett. She spoke about Zoom and the meeting was an atrocity because not all the Aldermembers can be seen.

Speaker: TC McCourt

Address: 32 Davis Ave., Dover NJ

Municipality/County: Dover / Morris County

Mr. McCourt said he hoped the Board would also be reconsidering the appointment of Mr. Barrett as Interim CFO. He stated the proper due diligence to fill these positions was not done and thanked the Aldermembers who spoke up tonight.

Speaker: Karol Ruiz

Address: 86 S. Morris St., Dover NJ

Municipality/County: Dover / Morris County

Ms. Ruiz thanked the Mayor and Board to go through the process of hearing comments. Ms. Ruiz asked if the position was posted online and the requirements and made comments about the position.

Mayor Blackman thanked Ms. Ruiz for her comments and said the Mayor and Board will be doing work over the next 48 hours. Mayor Blackman stated most jobs are posted on the bulletin board and advertised.

Speaker: Angela Andradea

Address: 148 Thompson Ave., Dover NJ

Municipality/County: Dover / Morris County

Ms. Thompson asked if this job was posted. Mayor Blackman stated this job because of the short timeframe it was not posted. Ms. Thompson also asked if the public will have input on who is appointed. Mayor Blackman explained that the process that is normally followed is that a candidate is put forward by Administration and considered by the Board. Ms. Thompson also stated the job should be posted.

Hearing no other comments, the Mayor closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

Attorney Thompson and the Mayor stated that the Board needs to vote to carry the meeting to Thursday.

Aldermember Ballesteros asked if the Board should vote on the Capital Ordinance. It was determined to hold that item.

Aldermember Wittner asked if the job will be posted tomorrow meeting so hopefully, we could attract possible candidates. The Mayor said that the job would be posted to see if we can attract candidates.

A motion was needed to carry the meeting to September 10, 2020. The reason for the Emergency is to fill positions on an interim basis so that the daily functions of government can continue until a permanent appointment is made and that no additional items other than what was on the September 8, 2020 agenda can be considered.

Alderman Ballesteros made a motion to carry the meeting and hold an Emergency Meeting on September 10, 2020 to include Ord. 21-2020 and Resolutions 2020-213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224 and 225 given that these items are related to essential services that are deemed to be handled immediately. The motion was seconded by Aldermember Wittner.

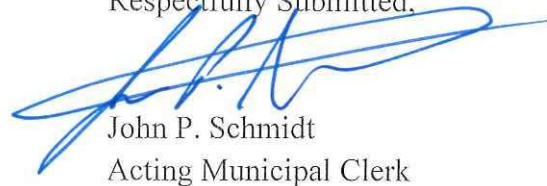
Motion to Hold Emergency Meeting on September 10, 2020

	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 motion was approved 9-0.

The September 8, 2020 meeting concluded at 9:23p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



John P. Schmidt
Acting Municipal Clerk