# TOWNSHIP OF MOUNT LAUREL

## ORDINANCE 2023-3

## AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 4 OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MOUNT LAUREL ENTITLED "ADMINISTRATION OF GOVERNMENT" TO ESTABLISH MEETING PROCEDURES FOR PUBLIC MEETINGS

**WHEREAS**, throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the Township conducted business through both in person and online meetings; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township seeks to update its code to formalize procedures for meetings conducted in either environment; and

**WHEREAS**, Chapter 4 of the Township Code speaks broadly to in person meetings but does not address online meeting procedures; and

**WHEREAS**, while the Township is hopeful that the public health emergency has dissipated minimizing the likeliness of online meeting and the need for such procedures, it is helpful to have such procedures established in advance of any unforeseen return to social media platforms;

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED AND ENACTED**, by the Mount Laurel Township Council that Chapter 4 of the Municipal Code entitled Administration of Government is amended to add the following language:

4-8.1 Online Meeting Procedures

A. When it is necessary to conduct an online public meeting, the Township Clerk shall cause the link to be published on the Township's website and posted at the municipal building to encourage public participation in such meetings.

B. The meeting will be recorded and retained as required by the State's document retention guidelines. Failure to record all or a portion of the meeting will not void or nullify any action taken during the meeting.

C. To avoid interference with the meeting, when members of the public enter a public meeting, each person should do so with their microphone muted to avoid disturbance with the conduct of the meeting

D. Members of the public wishing to use their camera should choose a background that is appropriate for a public meeting.

E. At appropriate times of the meeting, members of the public may use the raise hand feature to be called on to allow public comment. See section 4-8.2 for procedures for public comment.

F. The Township will not use the chat feature during the meeting and it will be disabled.

G. Any member of the public that refuses to follow the above procedure will be asked by the presiding officer to conform to the rules. After the second warning, the individual may be removed from the meeting by the municipal official serving as the meeting host.

4-8.2 Procedure for public comment.

A. The Chair will receive and direct all questions from and answers to the public using the following guidelines.

(1) Public wishing to make comment shall start by stating the person's name and home address.

(2) While there is a presumption that a person speaks in an individual capacity, if the member of the public is a member of another body (for example, the school board or homeowner's association), the speaker shall acknowledge whether the comments are made as an individual or a member of that body.

(3) Speakers are encouraged to limit discussions to matters directly impacting Mount Laurel Township.
(4) Speakers providing materials for consideration shall submit the materials to the Clerk or Secretary of the Board for dissemination to the body.
(5) Comments including answers from the body shall be limited to three minutes to ensure that all members of the public have an opportunity to speak. Speakers may not yield time to other speakers. The Chair may waive the three minute requirement. The three minute requirement shall not apply to public hearings on ordinances or objection to land use applications.
(6) In response to comments or questions, the Board may respond (or ask the Manager or Solicitor to do so), or may also opt to take the matter up at a future meeting so that the matter is researched by the Township administration.
(7) No board or body will discuss matters of personnel, litigation or negotiations in public.
(8) The presiding officer may interrupt, warn, or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too lengthy, abusive, obscene, repetitive, or irrelevant.

Introduction Date: January 2, 2023

| | MOTION | AYE | NAY | ABSTAINED | ABSENT | TRANSMITTED |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cohen** | | ✓ | | | | |
| **Janjua** | | ✓ | | | | |
| **Moustakas** | 1 | ✓ | | | | |
| **Pritchett** | 2 | ✓ | | | | |
| **Steglik** | | ✓ | | | | |

Publication Date: January 10, 2023

Public Hearing Date: February 6, 2023

| | MOTION | AYE | NAY | ABSTAINED | ABSENT | TRANSMITTED |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cohen** | 2 | ✓ | | | | |
| **Janjua** | | ✓ | | | | |
| **Moustakas** | 1 | ✓ | | | | |
| **Pritchett** | | ✓ | | | | |
| **Steglik** | | ✓ | | | | |

**TOWNSHIP OF MOUNT LAUREL**

BY: _____
Stephen Steglik, Mayor

ATTEST: _____
Meredith Ricuity, Township Clerk

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