



Mayor Kevin Sullivan's Statement January 3, 2014

Good Afternoon and welcome to our 2014 Reorganization Meeting. I want to thank Committeeman and former Mayor Brower for nominating me for the position of Mayor. I am honored and look forward to working with all the members of the Township Committee. The township is the oldest form of government in New Jersey and as such, we are a committee of equals. I believe as a town we are fortunate to have such a talented group of individuals serving on this committee. Kathy Abbott, amongst other things, has an abundance of knowledge and experience working on environmental issues. Bob Gallop affords the committee a legal perspective to decisions and brings a passion for public safety. Bailey Brower, senior statesman and the most experienced member of the committee, has a wealth of knowledge on a wide variety of issues. Additionally, he brings a first person 'town historical perspective' to the committee. Curt Ritter, our newest member to the committee, is a communications specialist. Curt will bring much needed skills to the committee to enhance our capabilities to reach the residents of Chatham in a rapidly changing technological world. I would also like to thank former Mayor Nicole Hagner for her support over the past year in addition to her 9 years of service to the committee, the previous four years as Mayor. She made numerous accomplishments and contributions to the town.

I would like to welcome Mr. Albert Cruz, our new town attorney. The committee looks forward to working with Mr. Cruz who has extensive experience working with a variety of municipal governments.

While perusing John Cunningham's book, *Chatham at the Crossing of the Fishawack*, it was clear that even though the township has changed in the last 208 years, we as a governing body and a town are still dealing with similar issues. At one of the first township meetings in 1806 the issue on the agenda was stray dogs. While the dog issue seems to have been resolved, today we are dealing with bears and just last week a beaver in Roxbury chewed a tree down, falling on wires that knocked out power for several hours. The old maxim, the more things change, the more they stay the same was never more true. Maintaining that bucolic setting of 1806, in the face of urban sprawl and technological advancements will be a major challenge to this committee and those in future years.

As for 2014, issues may be a bit more complicated in nature but the challenges to the committee will remain the same. Delivering and improving on essential services where we can, while maintaining a strong financial position.

In the coming year we will be working again to update communications, make capital expenditures that will enhance the town's abilities to respond to emergencies, continued improvements to our roads and always keeping a focus on public safety. Our township engineer, John Ruschke, has been working on a major 6.9 million dollar upgrade to our sewer system. Our former Mayor Nicole Hagner and town administrator Tom Ciccarone, helped secure funding for this project at close to 0%. While we know there are no free lunches, taking advantage of the low interest rate environment and state sponsored programs is effective policy and helps keep us, as a town, in that strong financial position.

Last night's snow storm prompting a State of Emergency, and the everlasting reminder of Sandy, should remind us however, that government can not be all things to all people, nor should it be. As individuals we need to prepare ourselves for emergencies and for the safety of our families. Chatham Township has a finite amount of resources. As a committee we are ever mindful that those resources, your tax dollars, have been entrusted to us to be used prudently and efficiently. This committee has a fiscal record that we are, and should be, very proud of and is the envy of most towns in New Jersey. We as a committee will continue to strive for efficiency and excellence in all that we do. We will take the best of what others have to offer, but our goal is to make others look at us and say, Chatham Township should be our model. As Mayor, the guiding principle will be, "what is the need, at what cost and what are the alternatives." As a committee and a municipal government, we look to be resident friendly, supportive and open in all our discussions and activities, implementing the best policies with mindful consideration of how it effects the least amongst us.

Finally, one can not talk about Chatham Township without recognizing the dedication and professionalism of our town employees and volunteers. Our municipal workers, department of public works and police department, through the leadership of our Town Administrator, Tom Ciccarone help guide and shape our town every day and we thank them for sharing and implementing the values we want to see in our town.

As a town, we also depend a great deal on volunteers and on New Years day while driving down Southern Boulevard, I was reminded of such. I was following two volunteer firemen responding to a call as they quickly pulled into Southern Boulevard Fire Station. As I went about my business, in my rearview mirror I could see another member pulling in. It was New Years Day, and while most of us were home spending time with our families, for first responders, duty called. A duty that is 365 days a year, 24 hours a day. For our community, their commitment to us is a life saved, a house preserved, a mind put at ease. It was a great reminder of how fortunate we are to live in a town with so many dedicated and committed volunteers. On behalf of all the committee, who I know share these sentiments, I salute all our first responders, our Green Village and River Road firefighters and our Emergency Rescue Squad members.

Other volunteers too numerous to mention individually here today, serve on foundations to improve the quality of life of all Chatham residents. They sit on township boards and committees, coach our kids, help in our schools, lead our scouts, work in our library, provide counseling, teach religious education and assist our seniors. This selfless spirit, neighborly concern and on going desire to improve our quality of life makes Chatham Township a very special place to live.

Carl Woodward, our former town attorney, was fond of saying that the Township was the purest form of government, because we have direct contact with the people everyday. Our only authority as a committee is derived from you, the governed. I encourage citizens of the township to actively engage the committee. Sign up for Everbridge to be kept abreast of emergency situations and activities, visit our web site for contact information and updates and if so inclined, volunteer for an activity in town.

We are fortunate and blessed to live in Chatham Township. With your help and God's grace may we continue to build a better Chatham, today and for our posterity.

I wish everyone a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.
God Bless and Thank you.

Kevin Sullivan
Mayor, Township of Chatham
January 3, 2014