

Councilwoman Karen Chew

March/ April 2018 Report

Website and Television Update: Please continue to refer to it and the cables stations for information. There is a lot of information and updates posted on these media. Don't forget to follow us on both Twitter and Facebook use "@ChesilhurstBoro" for Twitter and "Chesilhurst Borough" on Facebook. Have you missed attending the monthly Council meetings? Do you miss the airings that occur Mondays at 7PM on Fios and Xfinity? Not to worry, you can watch the meetings anytime 24 hours a day 7 days a week. We have launched the Chesilhurst Borough Channel on YouTube. You can use the link on the website home page or search for the Chesilhurst Borough Channel on YouTube. Subscribe to the channel and never miss viewing another meeting again!

Continue to look for additional information at Borough Hall. There are many new flyers with important information posted on the bulletin board so stop by to see if there are answers to questions you may seek. Please see Ms. Rose before posting any flyers. Any community flyer not authorized will be removed.

Personnel Committee: We have not set a date for the next meeting as of yet.

Finance: There is nothing to report from this Committee. Spoke to CFO regarding funds for purchase of Pedal Kits for DUI simulations. Forwarded information to Council for consideration.

Are you having financial issues? Do you have to choose between basic technology and necessities? There is help for utilities such as electric bills, heating, energy efficiency, and telephone bills. Both Federal and State assistance is available. Check the information below for programs that may help you.

Assistance

Did you know that if you are having trouble affording your utility bills, there are many options for help?

- PAGE Program
- Comfort Partners
- LIHEAP
- Universal Service Fund-Energy
- Winter Termination Program
- Lifeline Program (Energy Assistance)
- NJSHARES
- Telephone Assistance
- NJ EASE
- NJ Energy Assistance Brochure (English/Spanish)

PAGE Program

The Payment Assistance for Gas and Electric (PAGE) Program was established by the Board to provide relief on natural gas and electric bills for low to moderate income New Jersey households who are experiencing a temporary financial crisis. Eligible applicants cannot be receiving or be eligible for a Universal Service Fund (USF) benefit or a Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) benefit. PAGE is administered by the Affordable Housing Alliance. For a list of eligibility requirements for these programs, or to apply online njpoweron.com. If you have questions, please call (732) 982-8710.

Comfort Partners

This Program is designed to improve energy affordability for income eligible households through direct installation of free energy efficiency measures and education about steps everyone can take to save energy. Participants are asked to partner with the program to develop and carry out a household energy savings Action Plan.

For more information please call 1-888-773-8326 or [click here](#).

LIHEAP

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is administered by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs and helps New Jersey households pay for heating costs and certain medically-necessary cooling expenses. Renters who have their heating costs included in their rent may also qualify. Applications for LIHEAP are accepted from October 1st through April 30th of each year. To print applications, review eligibility requirements and locate your county application agency go to: www.energyassistance.nj.gov or call the hotline at: 1-800-510-3102.

Universal Service Fund-Energy

The Universal Service Fund (USF), was created by the Board to help make energy bills more affordable for qualifying households whose annual household income is at or below 175% of the [Federal Poverty Level](#) (FPL). The program was designed so that households most in need receive the highest benefit by using a percentage of income formula. Benefits appear as a credit on the household electric and/or gas bill (capped at \$1,800 per year). USF is administered by the Department of Community Affairs.

- **Fresh Start:** Fresh Start, a special program under USF, allows eligible New Jersey households participating in USF for the first time to earn forgiveness for pre-existing arrearages by making full, on-time payments for 12 months. You cannot apply for Fresh Start, but if you are eligible you will be enrolled by your utility company and receive information about the program in the mail.

For more information about USF, please go to www.energyassistance.nj.gov or call toll free at: 1-866-240-1347

Winter Termination Program

Administered by the BPU, the Winter Termination Program (WTP) protects specific categories of customers from having their gas or electric shut off between November 15th and March 15th. Those enrolled in specific programs (such as SSI, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, USF and Lifeline) are protected by WTP, and an additional “catch-all” category is included for people unable to pay their utility bills because of circumstances beyond their control such as unemployment or illness.

For more information on the Winter Termination Program, please call 1-800-624-0241.

Lifeline Program (Energy Assistance)

Lifeline is administered by the New Jersey Department of Human Services and provides a \$225 annual energy benefit to seniors and the disabled who meet the PAAD eligibility requirements or who receive SSI. The benefit is also available to customers who have electric and gas costs included in their rent. For more information about Lifeline, please call 1-800-792-9745 or [click here](#)

NJSHARES

NJ SHARES is a non-profit corporation that provides assistance to income eligible New Jersey households in paying their energy, telephone and water bills. Applications for NJ SHARES grants can be made at any of the more than 270 participating social service agencies throughout the state.

Please call NJSHARES for more information at 1-866-657-4273 or visit their website at: www.njshares.org

Telephone Assistance

The telephone assistance program provides a discount on your monthly bill. Eligibility is determined based on your income or participation in other assistance programs. In general, if you participate in any of the following programs you also may qualify for telephone assistance: Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Temporary Assistance to Needy Families/Work First New Jersey (TANF), General Assistance, Lifeline Utility Credit/Tenants Lifeline Assistance, Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged and Disabled (PAAD), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP/HEAP), Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance, National School Lunch Program.

Telephone assistance is available to you if you are a qualified residential telephone customer. When you are seeking telephone assistance, please keep in mind that each telephone company and/or each program has different eligibility requirements, different benefits available and different restrictions. Some programs have restrictions on the optional services available to participants.

The following list of telephone service providers participate in Lifeline Assistance and Link Up programs in New Jersey:

- 1) If you are a Verizon New Jersey customer, please call NJSHARES at 1-888-337-3339 or visit them at [NJSHARES](#) for more information.
- 2) CenturyLink/United Telephone Company of New Jersey – 1-800-201-4099 – www.centurylink.com/Pages/Support/LifeLine
- 3) Warwick Valley Telephone Company - 1-800-952-7642
- 4) Tracfone - 1-800-977-3768 - www.safelink.com
- 5) Nexus - 1-877-870-9222 CustomerFeedback@REACHOUTMOBILE.COM
- 6) Virgin Mobile - To learn more about Assurance Wireless and to apply, New Jersey residents should call 1-888-898-4888, or visit www.assurancewireless.com. Information is available in English and Spanish.

NJ EASE

NJ EASE (New Jersey Easy Access, Single Entry) is the easy way for seniors and their families to get information about and access senior services.

NJ EASE is one toll-free telephone number to put you in touch with someone to help you learn about and apply for important programs and benefits. NJ EASE staff members are trained to provide you with answers and information on a wide variety of topics, including:

- Healthcare
- Insurance
- Home Care Services
- Long Term Care Options
- Transportation
- Social Activities
- Nutrition
- Volunteer Opportunities
- And more...

NJ EASE promotes independence, dignity and choice for New Jersey's older adults.

For more information, call 1-877-222-3737 or [click here](#).

For those who may not have access to the Internet visit the County Library located across from the Winslow School complex on Cooper Folly Road. You can apply for a free County Library card which gives you access not just to bound books and publications but also use of the computer network and more. These services are paid for by your tax dollars so take advantage of them.

Finally, both Comcast and Verizon provide programs designed to assist those who qualify. Check with either of those providers for more information.

Economic Development: There is nothing to report from this Committee. I am still waiting for replies from business I have contacted.

Emergency Management: As a reminder please use caution as you use open flame and other heat sources during this Winter season. Practice fire safety by not leaving any fire or heat source unattended. Remember to check the batteries in your smoke and CO2 detectors often and change the filter in your heat system. This is the time to check to see if you are truly prepared to weather any major storms or other disaster such as power outages, fires, gas leaks, mandatory evacuations, etc. There are many providers and websites available to help you prepare a survival kit for you and your family. You can contact the Red Cross, Homeland Security, and FEMA

just to name a few. Don't wait until the disaster is knocking at the door. Do your part to keep you and your family safe and ready for what Mother Nature throws at you.

Chief Smith and I met with Warshauer Generator LLC a NJ State Contract provider to discuss purchasing generators needed to make the Borough better prepared for emergencies. A site survey was conducted and quotes were provided to the Council for review. Any questions will be forwarded to the vendor before a decision to purchase is made.

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Emergency Winslow/ Waterford Medical Service (EMS), and Winslow Fire Department are always looking for volunteers. If you are qualified or are able to become qualified please contact these agencies and help your community when needed.

Veterans Affairs: There is nothing to report.

Historical Committee: I emailed the Department of Anthropology at Rutgers to possibly help or advise us on preserving the Elam Avenue cemetery site. After researching the Borough Codes and finding no restrictions I am also asking the Council to create and pass a resolution to declare the property a local historic site. This was the recommendation made by Bob Craig of the NJ Department of Environmental Protection Historic Preservation Office. An application for a grant from Home Depot is being made to purchase materials to construct a proper entry and or gravel pathway. I have also contacted Rutgers archeological department for a possible collaboration project to preserve the plots.

Our Town: Continue to refer to the Public Events Calendar found on the website for information in and around our Borough.

To help prepare for another successful Chesilhurst Day I have contacted CERT, Camden County Technical Schools and Solid Rock Baptist Church to participate by providing demonstrations and or activities for the public. I have also investigated options for the DUI simulator as stated in my report.

Do you have some noteworthy news you would like to share? I am still looking for information to post in the "Our Town" segment of my report. If you have information you would like to share regarding appointments, promotions, graduations, honors, births, etc. please email me at Councilwoman.Karen.Chew@gmail.com. We would be happy to share your great news. As a reminder if you have a community event that you would like posted on the website or cable station, please send the information to me no later than two weeks in advance for publication.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Chew

5 Apr 2018