CALL TO ORDER
The Annual Reorganization Meeting of the Raritan Borough Council was called to order by Mayor Charles McMullin at 5 p.m. The meeting was held in the second floor Meeting Room of Borough Hall, Borough of Raritan, 22 First Street, Raritan, NJ 08869.

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT
Mayor McMullin read the following statement:
This Annual Reorganization Meeting was called pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act. Adequate Notice of this meeting of the Governing Body was posted in Borough Hall, made available on the Borough website, in the Office of the Borough Clerk and communicated to The Courier News and The Star Ledger on December 4, 2018.

INVOCATION
Rev. Thomas Odorizzi – The Catholic Church of St. Ann

FLAG SALUTE
Mayor McMullin led all in attendance for a salute to the flag.

OATH OF OFFICE – COUNCIL
Municipal Court Judge Katherine Howes administered the Oath of Office to the following, newly-elected members of Borough Council:

Councilman Zachary Bray
Councilwoman Joyce Melitsky

ROLL CALL – MAYOR & COUNCIL
Borough Administer Jaxel called the following names for Roll Call:

Present: Councilman Bray, Councilman Carra, Councilman Giraldi, Councilwoman Melitsky, Councilman Orozco, Councilman Tozzi
Absent: x
Also Present: Borough Administrator Jaxel, Borough Clerk Colvin, Borough Attorney William Robertson and Borough Engineer Stanley Schrek

ELECTION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT & OATH OF OFFICE
Mayor McMullin asked for a nomination for Council President.

On motion by Councilman Bray, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to Elect Councilman Tozzi to serve as the 2019 Council President.

Recorded Vote
Yea: Bray, Carra, Giraldi, Melitsky, Orozco, Tozzi
Nay: x
Abstain: x
Motion Carried: 6-0

Mayor McMullin administered the Oath of Office to Council President Tozzi.
STATE OF THE BOROUGH
Mayor McMullin delivered the following 2019 State of the Borough:


This year, 2019, marks the 71st Anniversary of Raritan Borough as a municipality. As discussed last year, our town’s history extends back over 300 years to 1683 when the British Royalty deeded to John Robertson a 660-acre plot of land known as Rariton. The attraction of Raritan Borough in its earliest days was the Raritan River – a source of water, food and transportation.

As our Country evolved, roads were constructed to where the people and industry were located. As a result of our early population and commerce, Raritan became an impressive center and attracted an enviable transportation network to facilitate the movement of people and goods. Our community of just 2 square miles includes two Federal Highways (US 206 and US 202), one State Highway (NJ 28) and two major County Roads (First Avenue and Somerset Street) as well as a Train Station. To this day, we continue to benefit from an excellent transportation infrastructure that is important to our community.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the massive public investment into our National Interstate Highway network had significant and unexpected impacts on Borough’s like Raritan. These new Interstate Highways, while great for the region and our Country, created significant challenges for the Boroughs – especially their downtowns. During this time the suburban ‘land rush’ emerged and fostered huge residential developments in the Townships. Also, we witnessed a brand new and very significant economic creation - the “Regional Mall”. It attracted many businesses and droves of shoppers from the surrounding communities.

The suburbanization trend lasted for many decades. However, 2010 US Census provided insightful information indicating that this trend, at least in our region, is coming to an end. Population growth slowed or stalled and the Interstate Highways had increasingly evolved from a commuting dream to a “twice a day” headache due to traffic congestion. Many of the associated economic advantages of the suburbs have ‘played out’. Fortunately, the economic “hollowing out of downtowns” in Raritan and other well-located Boroughs is over and economic revitalization is increasingly occurring.

Consider for a moment the following that represent Raritan’s own reemergence.

1. More than a dozen years ago Middlesex Chemical, located just north of Orlando Drive, was demolished and remediated to be redeveloped to a luxury housing complex recently renamed “The Lena”;
2. The same is true regarding Federal Steel property, located just south of Route 202 that became “Stone Bridge”;
3. The former Southland Paint and Jelco facilities of many years ago located at First Ave south of the railroad tracks, have made way for the major expansion of LabCorp.
4. Gateway Motel and adjacent vacant buildings, located near the Circle and Route 206, were demolished to repurpose the property for Quick-Chek,
5. Somerset Brakes and Bearings/ Grigoletti Auto Body property located south of the railroads tracks and First Avenue, were remediated and will soon become the Transit Village - Raritan Crossings.

6. Looking forward to 2019, both the former Zeus Property as well as The Raritan Mall – more commonly known as Stop & Shop mall have the potential for an economic rebirth.

7. Recently multiple new businesses have chosen to locate in our Downtown. These businesses vary from Personal Care, to Gourmet Cupcakes and even to Candy Making.

It’s obvious that Raritan has entered a new era that promises its revitalization. In 2019 we will continue to experience growth that has been germinating over the past decade. To be sure we are in a period of anxiety about what the future holds as these changes continue to unfold. It is my observation that Raritan is experiencing a renaissance and we must plan carefully.

A major part of our planning efforts is in area of transportation. We are refocusing and placing a strong emphasis on supporting pedestrians and cyclists. This represents a significant and tangible shift away from the automobile that uses our Community as a thruway. Our infrastructure priority is our citizens and visitors and they deserve safe and walkable passage throughout our community. This process begun in early 2017 when the Governing Body successfully experimented with speed humps along Bell and Sherman Avenues. In 2018 we expanded their presence and further experimented with a four way stop intersection as well as a new one-way street with an eye to improved Pedestrian and Bike safety.

My colleagues on the Planning Board and I have begun to analyze and evaluate Safe Pedestrian and Bike initiatives throughout the entire Borough. Specifically, we are looking to prepare a coordinated and comprehensive Safe Pedestrian and Bike element of our Master Plan and, if needed, modify our Zoning Ordinance. We already have “buy-in” from two of our largest Corporate Residents (LabCorp and Johnson & Johnson). Additionally, we have significant grant funds from the NJTPA to construct safe passage between and among our Train Station, our Downtown and our Raritan River.

Parenthetically, last month Somerset County and Raritan Borough entered into agreements for a County Park along the north bank Raritan River. This will be south of Orlando Drive and extend from Route 206 to the County existing park area near the Basilone Bridge. This cooperative initiative with Somerset County Freeholders will return this area to its natural state and its former beauty.

Also, Somerset County and Duke Farms have entered into an agreement to provide an improved Bike and Pedestrian pathway connecting the Nevius Street Bridge to the North Gate of Duke Farms. This improved pathway is entirely Off-Road (about 50 feet east of River Road) and will be completed in the Spring of 2019. These initiatives are about quality of life for our residents and workforce. Raritan Governing Body in cooperation with the Somerset County Freeholders share a common objective. That is: “Raritan - a great and safe place to live, work and play”.
Now turning to Raritan’s Fiscal position. A quick overview: 1) our Municipal debt is low, 2) Annual Audits are clean and without exceptions, 3) Assessed Value to Market Value Ratio, based on recent sales, is very good and 4) our Tax Collection history is excellent.

During 2018 we have experienced much construction in Raritan. The more significant projects at LabCorp, Block 81 and J&J are not projected to be added to our tax base until 2020. What this means is that revenue growth from construction is de minimis for 2019. Our region unfortunately experienced record rainfall in 2018. As a direct result, our actual sewer charges from SRVSA are approximately $300,000 over their estimated 2018 charges provided last year. This is an immediate economic hardship as we enter 2019. Please be aware that we are not experiencing this alone; our neighboring towns are proportionally in a similar predicament regarding sewer charges. It is estimated that the total 2018 excess sewer charges are approximately $4 million over those estimated by SRVSA. It is our job to work through this significant budget overage.

The Municipal budget is not much different from everyone’s family budget. You buy what you can afford - when you can afford it.

The Raritan Governing Body has successfully maintained very stable Local Municipal Taxes. It will be up to our Governing Body to work hard to maintain, for the fourth year, $0.617 cents tax rate for municipal purposes in 2019. However, we do have economic challenges - the de-minimis growth in our tax base coupled with the above mentioned $300,000 sewer overage makes it clear that 2019 is not a year for new unfunded initiatives. Based upon work from our Tax Assessor, we will experience, in 2020, significant additions to our tax base. As a consequence, we need to postpone new unfunded initiatives until 2020 budget period when, without resorting to a tax increase, we will have availability of funds. The 2019 budget process will challenge our Governing Body. I look forward to working with our Council members and Administration to once again arrive at a flat tax for municipal purposes. In brief, we support stable taxes for our residents and businesses

This does not mean that improvements to our community will not occur in 2019. To the contrary, it is important for the Governing Body to focus on implementing funded projects. Over the past three years, the Raritan Governing Body aggressively pursued and was awarded over $2.2 million in grants. As we begin 2019, we have available construction funds in excess of $1.2 million as well as economic planning grants of $150,000.

Before I conclude I’d like to review how we did with last year’s list of “Forward Looking Objectives” as stated in the 2018 State of the Borough Address. They were:

1) Completion of the unfinished projects previously discussed – Quick-Chek’s facility opened in late 2018 and the Gateway Motel is no more. As above discussed, construction continues at LabCorp, Block 81 and Route 202/Anderson St/Second Avenue strip mall with completion schedules for 2020.

2) Managing through the disruptive transition from project approvals to completion of construction – Construction Challenges have been managed with the help of Lou Gara -
Building Inspector, Police Officers, Dept of Public Works and Stan Schrek - Borough Engineer.

3) **Carefully planning for the challenges of managing expenses as we await the anticipated tax revenue from these approved projects** – Raritan Governing Body again maintained a stable Municipal Tax Rate for local purposes in 2018.

4) **Selection and implementation of laborsaving smart technology to control expenses while improving services to our residents and businesses** – This was shelved in 2018 however we continue to explore opportunities.

5) **Restart of the planning process for new Police and Fire Facilities as Block 81 progresses from paperwork and drawings to reality.** – Governing Body in 2018 agreed to work with Somerset County Improvement Authority and their Architects as well as Somerset County Professionals to develop preliminary design and project budget. Also, as part of Somerset County agreement for a linear park along the Raritan River; a site and new DPW Building will be designed and constructed at the South County facility which is 2.5 miles from the Basilone Bridge.

6) **Revitalization of our downtown as the spillover economics of these projects accrue to our local economy** – Successfully awarded NJTPA Grant in 2018, as discussed above, to develop strategies for successful revitalization. Also, we completed construction of a much-needed sidewalk connecting our Downtown with the John Basilone Statue and Veteran’s Park.

7) **Integration of our Train Station and weekend parking availability with Duke Farms.** This is a work in progress however, Somerset County is scheduled to complete, in the Spring of 2019, an off-road Pedestrian/Bike path from Nevius Street Bridge to the North Gate of Duke. This initiative is Raritan’s much-needed conduit to Duke Farms. Additionally, The NJTPA $1 million construction grant awarded to Raritan will begin in 2019. The purpose of this grant is to build Pedestrian and Bike Friendly and Safe connections among our Raritan Train Station, our Downtown and Nevius Street Walkbridge.

8) **Continue to explore initiatives to improve Raritan’s Quality of Life for the people who live and work in our town.** Expansion of speed tampering and safe street in 2018. These included additional speed humps, crosswalk, four-way stop street and the implementation of one-way street initiatives. Raritan was also awarded NJDOT grant funds to construct in 2019 Pedestrian and Bike Safe passage improvements on several streets north of the railroad tracks.

Although the Stop & Shop /Raritan Mall was not included in the above 2018 list, there is some progress. As previously discussed, the bank that took possession of the property due to mortgage non-payment was itself suffering serious financial challenges according to their SEC filings. In October, 2018, they reported that they entered into an agreement with significant third-party group of investors to address their financial issues. I am hopeful the Bank and its employees are now able to refocus attention from survival as an ‘ongoing concern’ to pursuing businesses to locate or, if appropriate, purchase the Raritan Mall. It has been difficult to see this important area of our community virtually vacant. We look forward to working with the Bank as well as prospective renters or purchasers. I submit that Somerset County locating a linear park just south of the Raritan Mall is also very positive for the property future.
In conclusion, we are all people and people make things happen. Simply put, the above progress would have been impossible without my colleagues on the Governing Body, our dedicated municipal workers and our many, many volunteers, our professional consultants and lawyers and importantly our NJ Elected Officials and our very capable Somerset County colleagues.

I sincerely thank you for the opportunity to serve as Mayor and I wish you a Healthy, Safe and Prosperous New Year. May God continue to bless Raritan and our great country.

ADOPTION OF 2019 GENERAL RULES OF ORDER

On a motion by Councilman Carra, seconded by Council President Tozzi, Council moved to Approve Resolution No. 2019-01-01.

Recorded Vote
Yea: Bray, Carra, Giraldi, Melitsky, Orozco, Tozzi
Nay: x
Abstain: x
Motion Carried: 6-0

2019 COUNCIL STANDING COMMITTEES
Mayor McMullin acknowledged the following, 2019 Standing Committees:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>1. Council Member Melitsky</th>
<th>2. Council Member Carra</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; Personnel</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Engineering &amp; Public Works</td>
<td>1. Council Member Tozzi</td>
<td>2. Council Member Bray</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>1. Council Member Carra</td>
<td>2. Council Member Orozco</td>
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<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>1. Council Member Giraldi</td>
<td>2. Council Member Melitsky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public &amp; Private Properties</td>
<td>1. Council Member Bray</td>
<td>2. Council Member Tozzi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Safety</td>
<td>1. Council Member Orozco</td>
<td>2. Council Member Giraldi</td>
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2019 COUNCIL LIAISON ASSIGNMENTS
Mayor McMullin acknowledged the following, 2019 Council Liaison Assignments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Council Member Carra</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board of Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Municipal Court</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning Board</td>
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MAYORAL APPOINTMENTS without Consent of Council
Mayor McMullin announced the following appointments, which do not require Council consent:

Environmental Commission  
Member – Mike DeCicco  
3-year term – 1/1/2019 to 12/31/2021  
Member – Denise Carra * filling unexpired, terminating 12/31/2019

Historic and Cultural Committee  
Member – Jane Fidacaro  
3-year term – 1/1/2019 to 12/31/2021  
Alt. No. 1 – 1-year term – 1/1/2019 to 12/31/2019 – Pat Mastice  
Alt. No. 2 – 1-year term – 1/1/2019 to 12/31/2019 – Bob McGinley  
Alt. No. 3 – 1-year term – 1/1/2019 to 12/31/2019 – Christine Torres

Municipal Land Use Board  
Terms Vary  
Class III Member – 1-year term – 1/1/2019 to 12/31/2019 – Council Member Carra  
Class IV Member – 4-year term – 1/1/2019 to 12/31/2022 – Richard Miller  
Class IV Member – 4-year term – 1/1/2019 to 12/31/2022 – John Gausz  
Class II Member – 3-year term * unexpired – 1/1/2017 to 12/31/2019 – Denise Carra  
Alt. No. 1 – 1-year term – 1/1/2019 to 12/31/2019 – Michael DeCicco  
Alt. No. 2 – 1-year term – 1/1/2019 to 12/31/2019 – Samuela Sherwin
Alt. No. 3 – 1-year term – 1/1/2019 to 12/31/2019 – Fred Sinagra

Regional Center Executive Board
1-year term, 1/1/2019 to 12/31/2019
Member – Mayor McMullin
Member – Donald Tozzi
Member – Councilman Bray
Member – Angela Knowles

Sold Waste Advisory
1-year term, 1/1/2019 to 12/31/2019
Member – Councilman Orozco
Member – Recycling Coordinator, Robert Fulminante

Somerset County Municipal Water Waste Management Plan Committee
1-year term, 1/1/2019 to 12/31/2019
Elected Official Rep – Councilman Orozco
Planning Board Chair – Rick Miller
Borough Engineer – Stanley Schrek
RSA Member – Edward Machala
Recycling Coordinator – Robert Fulminante

MAYORAL APPOINTMENTS with Consent of Council
Mayor McMullin announced the following appointments, which require Council consent:

Board of Health
3-year term, 1/1/2019 to 12/31/2021
Member – Marie Ciufo
Member – Mary Pat Gausz
Member – Jane Fidacaro *filling unexpired, 12/31/2020
Member – Don Esposito *filling unexpired, 12/31/2019
2019 BOE Rep. – Ann Marie Mead

Library Board of Trustees
5-year term, 1/1/2019 to 12/31/2023
Member – Amy Urbanowicz
Member – George Wells
Coordinator – Linda Shulte *1-year term

Community Program & Events Committee
3-year term, 1/1/2019 to 12/31/2021
Member – Frank LoCascio *1-year term

Sports & Facilities Committee
Coordinator – Linda Shulte *1-year term

On a motion by Councilman Giraldi, seconded by Council President Tozzi, Council moved to Approve the Appointments Listed Above.

Recorded Vote
Yea:  Bray, Carra, Giraldi, Melitsky, Orozco, Tozzi
Nay:  x
Abstain:  x
Motion Carried:  6-0
CONSENT AGENDA

Resolution No. 2019-01-02  Appointing Borough Attorney
Resolution No. 2019-01-03  Appointing Bond Counsel
Resolution No. 2019-01-04  Appointing Labor Counsel
Resolution No. 2019-01-05  Appointing Special Counsel
Resolution No. 2019-01-06  Appointing Registered Municipal Accountant
Resolution No. 2019-01-07  Appointing Insurance Agent
Resolution No. 2019-01-08  Appointing Municipal Prosecutor
Resolution No. 2019-01-09  Appointing Public Defender
Resolution No. 2019-01-10  Appointing Administrative Officials
Resolution No. 2019-01-11  Appointing Depositories/Financial Institutions
Resolution No. 2019-01-12  Appointing Custodians of Accounts
Resolution No. 2019-01-13  Adopting 2019 Temporary Budget
Resolution No. 2019-01-14  Fixing Interest Rates – Delinquent Taxes and Sewer
Resolution No. 2019-01-15  Canceling 2018 Property Taxes – Open Balances Less Than $10.00
Resolution No. 2019-01-16  Designating Official Newspapers
Resolution No. 2019-01-17  Designating Paid Holidays
Resolution No. 2019-01-18  Establishing 2019 Calendar of Meetings
Resolution No. 2019-01-19  Appointing Alternate Public Defender

On a motion by Councilman Carra, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to Approve the Consent Agenda.

Recorded Vote
Yea: Bray, Carra, Giraldi, Melitsky, Orozco, Tozzi
Nay: x
Abstain: x
Motion Carried: 6-0
PUBLIC COMMENT
Mayor McMullin opened this Public Comment portion of the meeting for members of the Public wishing to speak. Neither seeing nor hearing any member of the Public, the Mayor closed this Public Comment portion of the meeting.

Councilman Bray said he and newly elected Councilwoman Melitsky would like to thank their family, friends and supporters. The Councilman then invited everyone in attendance to a reception at Frank's Pizza in the Borough after the meeting.

Councilwoman Melitsky said she and Councilman Bray look forward to helping Raritan realize its potential and working with fellow council members.

ADJOURNMENT
On a motion by Councilman Bray, seconded by Council President Tozzi, Council moved to Adjourn the Meeting.

Recorded Vote
All in Favor
Motion Carried:  6-0

2019 Reorganization Meeting adjourned at 5:33 p.m.

___________________________________
Eric M. Colvin
Borough Clerk

Approved: ____________________