

This Regular Meeting of the Borough of Raritan Governing Body was called to order by Mayor Zachary Bray utilizing the Zoom virtual platform, as a result of the COVID-19 health pandemic, on Tuesday, March 9, 2021 at 6p.m.

The Mayor announced this Regular Meeting was called pursuant to applicable portions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Adequate notice was communicated to *The Courier news*, *The Star Ledger*, and *The Breeze* on March 4, 2021, posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building and on the Borough website.

ROLL CALL

Present: Council President Carra, Councilman Giraldi, Councilwoman Harris, Councilwoman Melitsky, Councilman Orozco, Councilman Patente
Also Present: Mayor Bray, Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin, Borough Attorney Robertson, Borough Engineer Schreck

Absent: None

INVOCATION AND FLAG SALUTE

Councilman Patente

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution No. 2021-02-052

Entering Executive Session

1. Personnel
Police, Public Works, Administration, Recreation
2. Attorney Client
Improvement Authority License Agreement, Areas in need of Development
3. Contract Negotiations
Lease Agreement

On a motion by Councilman Orozco, seconded by Councilman Giraldi, Council moved to Reconvene in Regular Session.

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Harris, Orozco Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain:

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

Council exited Executive Session and resumed Regular Session at 6:38 p.m.

MINUTES

1. February 23, 2021

On a motion by Councilman Giraldi, seconded by Councilwoman Harris, Council moved to Approve the Minutes for February 23, 2021 Regular Session.

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Harris, Melitsky, Orozco, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

OLD BUISNESS

1. Borough Hall (EC)

Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin said Borough Hall will be open to the Public by appointment only beginning Thursday, March 11. He said there will be temperature checks for individuals entering the building and a questionnaire that must be filled out for contact tracing purposes.

2. Food Insecurity & Wellness (PO)

Councilman Orozco said a location for the Raritan Food Pantry has been secured and thanked the Somerset County Food Pantry for assisting the Borough with this project. Councilman Orozco then asked to make a motion to authorize a lease agreement with the landlord of 28 Thompson Street for the purpose of housing the Raritan Food Pantry.

Mayor Bray asked Attorney Robertson to explain the stipulations that must be adhered to regarding the proposed Resolution.

Attorney Robertson said he commends Councilman Orozco for his hard work on this matter and would just like to check on the insurance requirements as well as the lease agreement and payment.

Mayor Bray also had a question about the lease agreement and asked Councilman Orozco and Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin when the first payment is due and if that date would coincide with the date the money from the County is expected.

Councilman Orozco said the landlord is not expecting payment until the grant from the County is funded. He said the landlord has been very accommodating and wanted to extend his gratitude.

On a motion by Councilman Orozco, seconded by Councilwoman Harris, Council moved to Approve Resolution 2021-03-058

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Harris, Melitsky, Orozco, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

NEW BUISNESS

1. Recreational Cannabis (NC)

Council President Carra said he spoke with Borough Attorney Robertson about the recent legislation that was signed regarding recreational cannabis and what that meant for the Borough.

Borough Attorney Robertson said the legislation contains language that indicates the Borough must act by Ordinance within 180 days to either prohibit, limit, or restrict recreational cannabis establishments. He said failure to do so would result in these establishments being permitted to operate in industrial and commercial areas within the municipality. Borough Attorney Robertson said there were discussions between the Governing Body and the Planning Board regarding designating locations for medical dispensaries and an Ordinance was prepared but has never been formally adopted.

Mayor Bray said he would like to have the information re-circulated to the Governing Body so an educated discussion can be held at the following meeting. The Mayor then gave Sarah Trent the opportunity to speak to the Governing Body and members of the public.

Ms. Trent said her company, Middle Valley Partners applied for a medical cannabis permit in 2019 and the process is still ongoing. Ms. Trent said at this time, she is seeking to operate for medical use only.

2. Town-Wide Yard Sale (PO)

Councilman Orozco said he would like to give his time to Jim Foohey who has been coordinating the garage sale.

Mr. Foohey said plans for the Town Wide Yard Sale are in the process of being worked out. He said the event will be socially distanced and masks will be encouraged.

Mayor Bray said the advertising for the event must include a notification that the Borough is not liable for any potential COVID-19 transmission.

On a motion by Councilman Orozco, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to approve Resolution No. 2021-03-059 – Town Wide Yard Sale Date.

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Harris, Melitsky, Orozco, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

3. Little Food Pantry (MP)

Councilman Patente said a group of residents would like to set up a little food pantry in the Borough. He said the materials needed to build the pantry, as well as the food and supplies have been donated. The Councilman said the residents are asking to put the food pantry in Basalone Park near the street so that it is easily accessible.

Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin and Borough Attorney Robertson suggested the discussion be tabled until more information can be gathered from the Board of Health and the Borough Risk Manager.

Mayor Bray said the Little Food Pantry is a good idea and agreed with Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin and Borough Attorney Robertson regarding reaching out to the appropriate parties to make sure everything is done according to certain guild lines.

4. Request for Waiver- Delinquent Tax Fee (ZB)

Mayor Bray said a resident reached out about a tax payment that was charged a delinquent fee. The resident explained the reason for the late payment was due to the issues at the post office and has asked that the fee to be waved.

Assistant Administrator Cathy Cook-Vitale said according to statute, the Tax Collector is not permitted to wave late fees.

Following along with State statute, the Governing Body agreed to not waive the delinquency fee.

5. Board of Health Appointments – Gennifer Hoffmeister & Anna Louise Bongiovi (NC)

Council President Carra said there are two appointments to the Board of Health, Gennifer Hoffmeister who will be a new member and Anna Louise Bongiovi will be reappointed to the Board.

CONSENT AGENDA

Resolution No. 2021-03-053

Authorizing Disposal of Surplus Equipment

Resolution No. 2021-03-054

Authorizing Execution of First Addendum to
Route 202 Agreement – First Avenue
Improvements - NJDOT

Resolution No. 2021-03-055

Approving 2020 Budget Transfer

Resolution No. 2021-03-056

Authorizing Tax Lien Redemption

Mayor Bray asked if anyone would like to pull any Resolution on the Consent Agenda to discuss separately.

On a motion by Council President Carra, seconded by Councilman Giraldi, Council moved to approve Resolutions 2021-03-053 Through 2021-03-056.

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Harris, Melitsky, Orozco, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

BILL LIST

Resolution No. 2021-03-057

Approving Bill List

Mayor Bray asked if any members of the Council had any questions. Neither seeing nor hearing any member of Council, Mayor Bray asked for a motion to approve the bill.

On a motion by Councilman Giraldi, seconded by Council President Carra, Council moved to approve Resolution No. 2021-03-057.

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Harris, Orozco, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

Mayor Bray said there will be two resolutions added to the Agenda.

On a motion by Council President Carra, seconded by Councilman Orozco, Council moved to approve Resolution No. 2021-03-060- Authorizing Planning Board to Undertake Preliminary Investigation.

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Harris, Melitsky, Orozco

Nay: Patente

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried:5-1

On a motion by Council President Carra, seconded by Councilman Orozco, Council moved to approve Resolution No. 2021-03-061- Authorizing Execution of Funding Agreement.

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Harris, Melitsky, Orozco

Nay: x

Abstain: Patente

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 5-0

CERTIFICATION OF FUNDS

1. Fire Department – Fire Apparatus & Associated Equipment - \$1,000,000.00

On a motion by Councilman, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to approve Purchase Order No. 1

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Harris, Orozco, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

COMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS

Council President Carra – Council President Carra said he will be meeting with Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin and one of the Borough Auditors to discuss the 2021 budget. He said the Board of Health will be meeting at 7pm on Wednesday and the Planning Board will meet on March 24.

Councilman Giraldi – Councilman Giraldi said the Basilone Parade Committee will be meeting on March 17.

Councilwoman Harris – Councilwoman Harris said the Environmental Commission will meet on March 17

Councilwoman Melitsky – Councilwoman Melitsky said Captain Craig Monda's last day was February 26 and wished him a happy retirement. She said applications for Probationary Police Officer are available at Police Headquarters and on the Raritan PD website. The Councilwoman said for the Building Department, 63 inspections were conducted, 9 certificates were issued, and total construction cost was \$31,796.00. For Recreation, Councilwoman Melitsky said the community pass website for baseball and T-ball has been launched and programs are posted on the Raritan Recreation Facebook page. She said residents who are interested in serving on the Recreation Committee should complete a Volunteer Application. Councilwoman Melitsky said

the Recreation Director will be contacting vendors to discuss slides and other playground equipment, DPW has begun to order pool supplies and lifeguard recruitment will begin in April.

Councilman Orozco – Councilman Orozco said the Fire Department went on 8 calls which leaves them at 23 calls YTD.

Councilman Patente – Councilman Patente said the EDC has launched their new website and urged members of the public to go take a look. He also said the committee has been asking residents to adopt trees that have been placed on Somerset Street and said there has been great success with that project. Councilman Patente said the EDC is also beginning to plan for “Discovering Raritan”. Finally, the Councilman announced the EDC has open seats on the Committee and asked that any interested parties contact him or go to the Borough Website and fill out a Volunteer Application.

PUBLIC COMMENT

(In accordance with Section 29-1 of the Code of the Borough of Raritan, there shall be a five-minute limit per speaker)

Mayor Bray opened Public Comment for any member of the Public wishing to be heard.

Kellyann Gallagher- Ms. Gallagher began by thanking Mayor and Council for their support with the food pantry and said she is looking forward to helping members of the community.

Mayor Bray expressed his gratitude to Ms. Gallagher as well as other residents who have volunteered to create the food pantry.

Mayor Bray asked if there were any other members of the Public wising to be heard.

Neither seeing nor hearing any member of the Public, Mayor Bray closed Public Comment Session.

Council then motioned to re-enter Executive Session.

On a motion by Councilwoman Melitsky, seconded by Council President Carra Council moved to Re-enter Executive Session

Recorded Vote

Yea: Carra, Giraldi Harris, Melitsky, Orozco, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent:

Motion Carried: 6-0

REGULAR MEETING ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Councilman Giraldi seconded by Councilman Orozco, Council moved to Adjourn the Regular Meeting.

Recorded Vote:

All in favor

Motion Passed: 6-0

Regular Meeting adjourned at 8:32pm

Ashley Kurbanoglu,
Deputy Clerk

Approved: _____