

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, May 25, 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 May 21, 2021, posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building and on the Borough website.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Council President Carra, Councilman Giraldi, Councilwoman Melitsky, Councilman Orozco, Councilman Patente

Also Present: Mayor Bray, Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin, Borough Attorney Robertson

Absent: None

**INVOCATION AND FLAG SALUTE**

Councilman Patente

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Resolution No. 2021-05-100

Entering Executive Session

1. Personnel  
Administration, Recreation, Police
2. Contract Negotiations  
Somerset County Improvement Authority, Orlando Drive
3. Attorney Client  
10 West Somerset Street, Columbus & Riverside Drainage

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

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Orozco Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 5-0

Council exited Executive Session and resumed Regular Session at 6:30 p.m.

**MINUTES**

1. May 11, 2021

On a motion by Councilman Orozco, seconded by Council President Carra, Council moved to Approve the Minutes for May 11, 2021 Regular Session.

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Orozco, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 5-0

**OLD BUISNESS**

1. Cannabis Ordinance (NC)

Council President Carra said Borough Attorney Robertson sent members of the Governing Body the most recent draft Cannabis Ordinance and asked if Borough Attorney Robertson had anything to add.

Borough Attorney Robertson said the draft Cannabis Ordinance that is on the Agenda for introduction prohibits the operation of all classes of cannabis establishments for recreational use and permits, as a conditional use only, the operation of an Alternative Treatment Center. Borough Attorney Robertson provided detail as to what the conditional use included and said the draft Ordinance also includes a section that allows the Borough to impose a medical transfer tax of up to 2%. The Borough Attorney said if the Governing Body votes to introduce this Ordinance, it would then have to be forwarded over to the Planning Board to ensure it is consistent with the Master Plan.

Mayor Bray asked Borough Attorney Robertson about his correspondence with Attorney Tipton.

Borough Attorney Robertson said Mr. Tipton is the Attorney for the Alternative Treatment Center. He said Mr. Tipton, on behalf of his client said he does not want to preclude the potential retail use for the Alternative Treatment Center when that became available. Borough Attorney Robertson said that language is not included in the draft ordinance.

Councilman Patente asked for clarification as to whether recreational cannabis would be prohibited.

Borough Attorney Robertson said according to the Ordinance, recreational cannabis will be prohibited. He said he will look at the wording to ensure there is no confusion.

Councilman Orozco said he does not support restricting the sale of recreational cannabis.

Council President Carra asked if the draft ordinance is reflective of what was outlined by the Planning Board.

Borough Attorney Robertson said the ordinance follows what the Planning Board has outlined.

Councilman Orozco said he does not support placing a transfer tax on medical cannabis.

2. DPW Trailer (EC)

Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin said the DPW Superintendent has been assessing the conditions of the Borough garage and has identified a lack of office space for himself and the Administrative Assistant. He said the DPW Superintendent suggested putting in an office trailer and obtained a quote of \$325.00 per month which is under the bid a quote threshold. Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin said if Mayor and Council has no objections, they would like to move forward with the project.

**NEW BUISNESS**

1. Engineer's Report (SS)

NJTPA/NJDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

NV5 is continuing to work on the Preliminary Design Drawings for the Thompson/Anderson pedestrian routes from the NJ Transit Station to the Riverfront. Project coordination between, NV5, VCEA and NJDOT will continue throughout this process. **Update:** Project is advancing through environmental review. Based on NJDOT schedule, this project will not be in construction in 2021.

Orlando Drive/Somerset County Transfer

The county has requested extensive files/information/data pertaining to all recent work and improvements to Orlando Drive. All requested documentation has been submitted. Follow up documents have been requested and have been submitted. Additionally, we are preparing a preliminary design for a new DPW building to be located at the county yard in Hillsborough. **Update:** Awaiting approval of new location and direction from Mayor and Council.

2019 CDBG – Canal Street Sidewalk Improvements

The grant is related to the installation of ADA ramps and sidewalk at the intersections of Loomis and Doughty Streets. The Bid Opening was held November 19<sup>th</sup>. Of 10 bids received, Your Way Construction of Irvington, is the lowest responsible bidder with a total base bid of \$46,743.06. The project is scheduled to begin construction.

2020 CDBG

The subgrant agreement has been completed and returned to Somerset County for execution. The \$77,442 grant will be utilized for sanitary sewer investigation and repairs. Proceeding with design/specs, based on repairs know on Bell Avenue.

2021 CDBG Applications

We are recommending that the Borough submit an application for sanitary sewer and storm sewer repairs and maintenance within the CDBG designated areas. **Update**; Grant has been awarded.

We will proceed with a project combining 2020 and 2021 funding as both projects are related.

2021 NJDOT – Meehan and Helene

The Borough has been awarded both Priority 1 and Priority 2 grants for 2021 totaling \$750,000. We will be proceeding with survey and design subject to revisions to the capital ordinance adding \$100,000 for the anticipated Borough's share. Update: survey and base mapping has been complete. Proceeding with design

LaGrange Street Redevelopment

Awaiting revised proposal based on vacation of Reimer Street Right of Way.

Block 81

VCEA has reviewed work required to winterize both Second Avenue and Third Street which includes asphalt repairs along the existing curb. Contractor is working with the Project Engineer to finalize construction drawings related to the pedestrian walkway from Second Avenue to NJ Transit. The owner has requested a bond reduction. We will make a recommendation for a percentage reduction once inspections are completed. **Update**: Initial Certificates of Occupancy have been issued. **The Borough must finalize an amended lease agreement, with NJ Transit, to enable the construction of the pedestrian connection between the project and the NJ Transit parking lot. Construction of the connection is a condition of final approval.**

LabCorp

Sitework is progressing.

J&J

Sitework is progressing.

2. Meeting Dates & Times (EC)

Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin said the first meeting in June falls on Primary Election Day and would like to see how Council would like to proceed. He said there seems to be a consensus to skip the first meeting but would like to formally get the opinion of Mayor and Council.

On a motion by Council President Carra, seconded by Councilman Giraldi Council moved to Approve the Cancellation of June 8, 2021, Regular Governing Body Meeting.

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Melitsky, Orozco, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: x  
Absent: x  
Motion Carried: 5-0

Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin asked if there was any further thought given to the meeting time change.

Mayor Bray said it was discussed at the last meeting, but no formal action was taken.

On a motion by Councilman Orozco, seconded by Council President Carra Council moved to Move Meeting Start Time From 6:00pm to 6:30pm.

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Melitsky, Orozco, Patente  
Nay: x  
Abstain: x  
Absent: x  
Motion Carried: 5-0

3. Economic Development Committee (MP)

Councilman Patente said the Raritan Economic Development Committee would like to hold a “Discovering Raritan” event on July 31. The Councilman said they would need the streets of Nevius and Thompson closed down from 2pm-10pm and asked for approval of Council.

On a motion by Councilman Patente, seconded by Councilman Giraldi, Council moved to Approve “Discovering Raritan” Date.

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Melitsky, Orozco, Patente  
Nay: x  
Abstain: x  
Absent: x  
Motion Carried: 5-0

4. Historical & Cultural Committee Sign (MP)

Councilman Patente said the Historical and Cultural Commission would like to have a banner placed in town to honor the anniversary of Knox-Porter. He said the owner of the property where the banner is to be placed has given his approval.

5. New Probationary Patrol Officer (JM)

Councilwoman Melitsky said the Borough Police Department has hired a new Probationary Patrol Officer, Christopher Kosinski. The Councilwoman read a letter from Chief Nolte and welcomed Officer Kosinski to the Borough.

6. Masks & Social Distancing (EC)

Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin said Executive Order 242 will take effect on Friday and asked how Council would like to proceed regarding the requirement of masks and social distancing. He said he spoke with Attorney Robertson and Attorney Wenner and feels that masks should no longer be required inside of Borough Hall. He asked if Council had any objections and asked for their thoughts on the matter.

7. Camp Cost (ZB)

Mayor Bray said the recommendation from the Recreation Committee is to set the cost of Summer Camp at \$140.00 a week and would like to open the discussion to members of Council.

A discussion ensued, after which a motion to approve the cost change of summer camp was made.

On a motion by Councilman Orozco, seconded by Council President Carra, Council moved to Approve the Cost of Summer Camp at \$140.00 Per Week.

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Melitsky, Orozco, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 5-0

**ORDINANCE SECOND READING & PUBLIC HEARING**

Ordinance No. 2021-05

An Ordinance of the Borough of Raritan, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey Providing for the Construction of a Garage Building and a Police, Fire Department and Office of Emergency Management Building, Appropriating \$12,500,00.00 Therefor and Authorizing the Issuance of \$11,875,000 Bonds and Notes to Finance a Portion of the Costs Therefor, Authorized in and by Borough of Raritan, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey

Mayor Bray asked for a motion to open discussions up to members of the public for Ordinance No. 2021-05.

On a motion by Council President Carra, seconded by Councilman Orozco, Council moved to Open Discussions Up to Members of the Public.

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Melitsky, Orozco, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 5-0

Hearing none, Mayor Bray closed the Public Comment Section.

Councilman Patente asked Borough Engineer Schrek if the Project described in Ordinance No. 2021-05 would include a gymnasium and recreation room.

Borough Engineer Schrek responded it would not.

On a motion by Councilman Giraldi, seconded by Councilman Orozco, Council moved to Approve Ordinance No. 2021-05.

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Melitsky, Orozco,

Nay: Patente

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 4-1

Ordinance No. 2021-06

An Ordinance of the Borough of Raritan,  
County of Somerset, State of New Jersey  
Repealing Chapter 82, Article XVI of the  
Code of the Borough of Raritan

Borough Attorney Robertson said this Ordinance should be carried to the next meeting so that further investigations can be done.

On a motion by Council President Carra, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to Carry Ordinance No. 2021-05 to the following Governing Body Meeting.

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Melitsky, Orozco, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 5-0

**ORDINANCE INTRODUCTION**

Ordinance No. 2021-07

An Ordinance of Borough of Raritan,  
County of Somerset, Regarding the  
Operation of Medical and Adult Use  
Cannabis Establishments

Prior to introduction, Borough Attorney Robertson suggested the Ordinance be introduced as slightly amended. He explained there is one specific paragraph that he suggested being removed as it may be cause for confusion.

Councilman Orozco asked for clarification on what the amendment would include.

Borough Attorney Robertson outlined the section which he suggested being amended.

On a motion by Council President Carra, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to Introduce Ordinance No. 2021-07

**Recorded Vote:**

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: Orozco

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 4-1

**CONSENT AGENDA**

*(Resolution Nos. 2021-05-101 – 2021-05-104)*

Resolution No. 2021-05-101

Hiring Probationary Patrol Officer

Resolution No. 2021-05-102

Refunding Tax Overpayment

Resolution No. 2021-05-103

Approving Place-To-Place Transfer – Espo’s

Resolution No. 2021-05-104

Approving Police Chief Contract Extension

On a motion by Council President Carra, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to Approve Resolutions 2021-05-101 through 2021-05-105.

**Recorded Vote:**

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Melitsky, Orozco, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 5-0

**BILL LIST**

Resolution No. 2021-05-105

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 Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to Approve the Bill List.

**Recorded Vote:**

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Melitsky, Orozco, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 5-0

**CERTIFICATION OF FUNDS**

1. One Total Cleaning – \$9,500.00 – Cleaning & Sanitizing
2. One Total Cleaning – \$18,300.00 – Cleaning & Sanitizing

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

**Recorded Vote:**

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Orozco, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried:5-0

On a motion by Councilwoman Melitsky, seconded by Councilman Orozco, Council moved to approve Purchase Order No. 2

**Recorded Vote:**

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Orozco, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried:5-0

## **COMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS**

Councilman Patente – Councilman Patente said the Regional Center Partnership recently met and provided an update on the legislation regarding qualifying grants. He said a contract was awarded in the amount of \$19,000.00 per year to Bridgestone Marketing Services. Councilman Patente also mentioned the potential for the Borough to borrow different types of temporary parking and speed signs. Councilman Patente said the results from the speed study on Somerset Street should be coming in this summer. He said the Historical & Cultural Committee is still working on the Know-Porter Banner and they will be holding a Civil War uniform and weapon demonstration in July. The Councilman said the Economic Development Committee is working on their Discovering Raritan Event which will be held on July 31. The EDC will also be putting up a banner.

Councilman Orozco– Councilman Orozco said he received a call from the director of the Somerville Bike Race, Mike Malekoff and was informed that the race would not be taking place in Raritan. Councilman Orozco cited Covid protocols and extra expenses as the reason.

Councilwoman Melitsky – Councilwoman Melitsky said the Frelinghuysen pool is scheduled to open on June 23 and mentioned the Borough is still seeking lifeguards. The Councilwoman also said there is still time to sign up for summer camp. Councilwoman Melitsky said she attended the Raritan Neighborhood Watch meeting where measures were discussed that help keep the neighborhood safe. She said if anyone is interested in attending future meetings, they can reach out to the Police Department.

Councilman Giraldi – Councilman Giraldi said he had nothing new to report.

Council President Carra – Council President Carra said there were 143 cases filed with the Municipal Court in the month of April and 226 cases were disposed. He said the Borough collected \$12,280.37 in fines and was allotted \$5,126.37. The Council President said for the Board of Health, the total number of fees collected was \$546.00. He said the Planning Board will meet on May 26 on Zoom at 6:30 p.m.

## **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.

Joe Kempe (114 Sherman Avenue) – Mr. Kempe said he is disappointed to hear about the bike race and would like to volunteer to organize a community style bike ride. Mr. Kempe also said he would like to thank the Raritan Police Department for their assistance in national bike to school day.

Kristen Rozanski (80 Meehan Avenue) – Ms. Rozanski said she sent an email to the members of Council regarding speed humps on Meehan Avenue.

Mayor Bray asked Borough Engineer Schrek if he could speak to the project on Meehan.

Borough Engineer Schrek said they are still in the process of approving this project. He explained this is being done in conjunction with the Police Department and the OEM. Borough Engineer Schrek said DOT will look at the project and supplement the cost.

Ms. Rozanski said she does not often see Police vehicles traveling down Meehan Avenue and asked if that were something that could be addressed.

Mayor Bray said he would have a higher Police presence on the road.

Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin asked if there was a time frame for this project.

Borough Engineer Schrek said there will be a speed study done first.

Carriann Youngman (13 Elmer Street) – Ms. Youngman wanted to thank Council for approving the price of Summer Camp. She said the Recreation Committee spent time at their meeting coming up with that number based on salaries needed to be paid to the Counselors as well as the Camp Director and Assistant Director. She said the Recreation Committee also decided to hold Summer Camp in July. Ms. Youngman asked if the link for Summer Camp registration could be placed on the Borough website. She also said for August, the minimum number of registrations needed to run the Summer Camp would be 15.

Jim Foohey – Mr. Foohey said he wanted to update Mayor and Council on the town-wide yard sale. He said there are currently 56 houses signed up and registration has been extended one more day. He said he plans on printing the directory on Thursday and making it available to the public by Friday.

Councilman Patente said he would like to get approval from Council for the Economic Development Committee to be able to put up their sign.

On a motion by Councilman Patente, seconded by Council President Carra, Council moved to Authorize the Economic Development Committee to Display Banner.

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Orozco, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried:5-0

John Ruggini (304 La Grange Street) – Mr. Ruggini said he wanted to discuss a situation dating back to 2016. He explained a neighboring property has moved out of town but continues to rent the property. Mr. Ruggini said when the homeowner moved, the property stopped being

maintained. He said he has reported the situation to the Borough Property Maintenance Officer and is having trouble getting someone over there to inspect the property.

Mayor Bray said he will follow up with the Property Maintenance Officer and reach out to the Somerset County Health Department regarding this issue.

Jim Fidacaro (812 Lynwood Street) – Mr. Fidacaro asked Borough Engineer Schrek about the progress of the sign that was to be placed at the end of the Nevius Street Bridge.

Borough Engineer Schrek said a map was sent to the County confirming where the sign was to be located but have not heard anything back.

Mayor Bray asked if any other members of the public wished to be heard.

Hearing none, Mayor Bray closed the public comment section.

Mayor Bray informed members of the public that Council will be re-entering executive session and upon entering back into public session, formal action may be taken.

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

Recorded Vote:

Yea: Carra, Giraldi, Orozco Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Abstain:

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 5-0

REGULAR MEETING ADJOURNMENT

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

Recorded Vote:

All in favor

Motion Passed: 5-0

Regular Meeting adjourned at 8:12 pm

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Ashley Kurbanoglu,  
Deputy Clerk

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_