

MINUTES

**BOROUGH OF RARITAN
REGULAR MEETING**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 7, 2023
6:30 P.M. – EXECUTIVE SESSION
7:00 P.M – REGULAR SESSION**

This Regular Meeting of the Governing Body was called to order by Council President Carra in the Meeting Room of the Raritan Municipal Building, 22 First Street, Raritan, NJ 08869 at 6:31 p.m. Tuesday, March 7, 2023.

Council President Carra announced the 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 January 5, 2023, posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building, on the Borough website and made available in the Office of the Borough Clerk.

ROLL CALL

Present: Council President Carra, Councilman Fritzingler, Councilwoman Hutzler, Councilwoman Melitsky (via telephone)
Also Present: Administrator/Borough Clerk Colvin, Assistant Administrator/Chief Financial Officer Cook-Vitale, Borough Attorney William Robertson, Borough Engineer Stanley Schreck
Absent: Mayor Bray, Councilman Orozco, Councilman Armahizer

INVOCATION AND FLAG SALUTE

Councilwoman Melitsky

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution No. 2023-03-040

Entering Executive Session
Personnel
Police Department

On a motion by Councilman Fritzingler, seconded by Councilwoman Hutzler, Council moved to Approve Resolution No. 2023-02-036.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Carra, Fritzingler, Hutzler, Melitsky

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: Armahizer, Orozco

Motion Carried: 4-0

The Council convened in Executive Session at 6:34 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION ADJOURNMENT

Council moved to Reconvene in Regular Session unanimously.

Council exited Executive Session, and resumed Regular Session at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENTATIONS

Raritan Borough Fire Department Budget

Raritan Chief Fire Chief Brian Kredatus presented the Council with the Fire Departments 2023 Budget. The items discussed were requests for an increase in the annual budget due to inflation, salaries/wages, apparatus, fleet maintenance and general operation expenses. Council President Carra inquired about rental expenses. Fire Chief Kredatus said that rent remains low in comparison to other local municipalities. The Fire Company owns the Firehouse, with the Fire Department occupying 70%. Administrator/Borough Clerk inquired about the request for a Ladder Truck. Fire Chief Kredatus answered that the Ladder Truck has been out of service for 3 years and was not added to the previous budgets. A new truck will be needed by the summer of 2023.

Alternatives, Inc. – 2023 CDBG Project

Director of Housing Tilayah Johnson came before the Council to request their approval to fund improvements in the amount of \$50,000.00 to their corporate office. The project is not funded by the Borough, but as a formality approval is needed by the Council as outlined by Somerset County. The improvements would include Americans with Disabilities Act compliance for residents with hearing disabilities, sprinkler system, fire panel, smoke detector and carbon monoxide connectivity. The Council agreed unanimously.

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)

Council President Carra opened the Public Comment portion of the meeting for members of the public to wishing to speak.

Seeing and hearing no additional members of the public, Council President closed Public Comment.

MINUTES - February 21, 2023

On a motion by Councilwoman Hutzler, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to Approve the Minutes of February 21, 2023.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Carra, Fritzinger, Hutzler, Melitsky

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: Armahizer, Orozco

Motion Carried: 4-0

OLD BUSINESS

Recreation Master Plan

Council President Carra said the Recreation Committee, Finance Committee, Recreation Director and Assistant Recreation Director met on February 23rd to begin the process of working on the Master Plan and Capital Budget. A tour is planned for Thursday, March 2nd of all the parks and facilities to prioritize items on the project.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Request for Street Vacation**

Borough Attorney William Robertson informed the Council of a request made by a resident residing on the corner of LaGrange and Reimer to vacate a portion of the street that leads back to the railroad right of way. Should the Council feel that it would be in the Public's best interest to vacate the paper street an ordinance would be needed to introduce, and a public hearing would produce a final determination allowing release of the right of way as though it were never in existence and the property would be returned to the owner. He asked for the Council's permission to have Borough Engineer Stanley Schreck investigate the easements.

On a motion by Councilwoman Hutzler, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to Allow Borough Engineer Stanley Schreck Investigate the Easements for Public Utilities at LaGrange and Reimer Streets.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Carra, Fritzinger, Hutzler, Melitsky

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: Armahizer, Orozco

Motion Carried: 4-0

2. **Online Payments**

Administrator/Borough Clerk Colvin said that research has begun for the utilization of online payments for monthly Railroad Parking, Residential Off-Street Parking, Cat/Dog Licensing, and any and all types of payments that a resident previously would come in person to complete. Additional information to follow. Council President Carra asked Administrator/Borough Clerk Colvin if research continues on the audio/visual equipment for Council Chambers. Administrator/Borough Clerk Colvin answered a meeting had been made with a vendor for the upcoming week.

3. **Second Meeting Date Change**

Administrator/Borough Clerk Colvin asked permission of the Council to move the meeting of March 21st to March 20th due to scheduling conflicts. The Council agreed unanimously.

4. Special Election – School District

Administrator/Borough Clerk Colvin reminded the Council and residents of the upcoming Special Election Referendum taking place on March 14, 2023, located at the JFK Primary School, 255 Woodmere Avenue. All voting for the 5 districts will take place at the school. The polls open at 6:00 a.m. and close at 8:00 p.m. The drop box will also be open from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., located in front of Borough Hall.

ORDINANCES – INTRODUCTION

Ordinance No. 2023-01

An Ordinance of the Borough of Raritan, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey Amending and Supplementing the Code of the Borough of Raritan, Chapter 315, to Update the Borough Stormwater Management Plan

On a motion by Councilwoman Hutzler, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved Introduce Ordinance No. 2023-01.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Carra, Fritzinger, Hutzler, Melitsky

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: Armahizer, Orozco

Motion Carried: 4-0

Ordinance No. 2023-02

An Ordinance of the Borough of Raritan, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey Amending the Code of the Borough of Raritan to Adopt Flood Hazard Maps to Designate a Floodplain Administrator and Providing for Severability and an Effective Date

On a motion by Councilwoman Fritzinger, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to Introduce Ordinance No. 2023-02.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Carra, Fritzinger, Hutzler, Melitsky

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: Armahizer, Orozco

Motion Carried: 4-0

CONSENT AGENDA

(Resolution No. 2023-03-041 – Resolution No. 2023-03-044)

Resolution No. 2023-03-041

Renewing Alcoholic Beverage Retail Consumption License No. 1816-44-007-004, Amrutha, LLC. t/a Wine Grand Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 33:12.18 and N.J.S.A. 33:12.39 Relief for the 2021-2022 License Term

Resolution No. 2023-03-042

Renewing Alcoholic Beverage Retail Consumption License No. 1816-44-007-004, Amrutha, LLC. t/a Wine Grand Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 33:12.18 and N.J.S.A. 33:12.39 Relief for the 2022-2023 License Term

Resolution No. 2023-03-043

Approving Place-To-Place Transfer of Alcoholic Beverage Retail Consumption License No. 1816-44-007-004, Amrutha, LLC. t/a Wine Grand

Resolution No. 2023-03-044

Amending the 2023 Temporary Budget

Councilwoman Hutzler moved to adopt the **CONSENT AGENDA**. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky and carried unanimously.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Carra, Fritzinger, Hutzler, Melitsky

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: Armahizer, Orozco

Motion Carried: 4-0

BILL LIST

Resolution No. 2023-03-045

Approving Bill List

On a motion by Councilman Fritzinger, seconded by Councilwoman Hutzler, Council moved to **Approve Resolution No. 2023-03-045 – Bill List.**

Recorded Vote

Yea: Carra, Fritzinger, Hutzler, Melitsky

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: Armahizer, Orozco

Motion Carried: 4-0

CERTIFICATION OF FUNDS

None

COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

Councilwoman Melitsky – Councilwoman Melitsky gave a report for the Fire Department which responded to 18 calls in the month of February with a total of 39 calls to date. She announced the Department's participation in the St. Patrick's Day Parade being held on March 12, 2023. Anyone interested in joining next year's Parade Ride-a-Long should consider joining the Fire Department. Information can be found at www.raritanfire.com or can inquire in-person at the North Thompson Street Fire House, Thursdays at 6:00 p.m. for additional information. Officer for the Office Emergency Management Ben Griffin would like to create a Community Response Team. A Community Response Team is a group of neighbors that assist other neighbors in emergency and disaster preparedness. The team meets and trains regularly to prepare for emergencies such as emergency shelter set-up, disaster food resource distribution, surveying of damage, evacuation assistance, information distribution and large area searches. Interested individuals must take a free course in Certification Basics with classes beginning in April through early May. Contact Officer Griffin at (908) 725-6700 for more information. Councilwoman Melitsky and the Raritan Police Department congratulated Lieutenant James Ranieri for graduating the New Jersey State Association of Chief's Police Command and Leadership Course. Councilwoman Melitsky gave the Property Maintenance Report for February 12, 2023 to March 6, 2023. The Borough has been receiving numerous calls regarding Bulk Pick-up with residents putting out items before the start date of March 9, 2023. Residents may notify Borough Hall and report it to Property Maintenance.

Councilwoman Hutzler – The next Raritan Recreation Meeting will be held on March 14, 2023, located at the Raritan Library. Baseball sign-up continues through March 20, 2023. The Annual Easter Egg Hunt is scheduled for Saturday, April 1, 2023, at Frelinghuysen Park with a Rain Date planned for April 8, 2023. The Recreation Committee continues work in concert with the Finance Committee on their Master Plan. There is a CPR Course scheduled. Individuals interested in attending the course can find information on Facebook at Raritan Recreation. The Economic Development Committee continues to actively promote Raritan Borough as an attractive destination for business investment, and research opportunities with current business through advertising. Restaurant Week continues, and will run from March 4th through March 11th. Councilwoman Hutzler gave the Court Report for the month of February. Court is now being held in person and virtually doubling the amount collected in the last month.

Councilman Fritzinger – Councilman Fritzinger gave the Building Department Building Activity Report for February 21, 2023, through March 3, 2023. The Public Works Department was spared a harsh Winter and turned their efforts on building repair. The Street Sweeper has been repaired and is operational. Bulk Pick-up begins the second Thursday of every month starting on March 9 and ending October 12, 2023. The History and Cultural Committee temporary budget is in operation with monies being utilized for storage. Images for the remaining park benches are progressing. A search for a mason to encase the corner stone from the woolen factory continues. The next meeting will be held on March 16, 2023, at 6:30 p.m., located at the Raritan Library. Councilman Fritzinger presented a wood card table that was discovered by resident Dennis Smith while cleaning out his home. The card table dates back to 1952 with businesses that existed at that time, with Mayor Rocco DeMelio and Chief of Police Reinze presided during that time period. Councilman Fritzinger said the Borough accepts the kind donation and will the table will remain in the care of Administrator/Borough Clerk Colvin at Borough Hall.

Council President Carra – The Planning Board met on February 22, 2023. Application for the Granetz Plaza Building began in January and testimony continues. A Special Meeting for the Planning Board is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on March 8, 2023, located in the Community Room at Borough Hall. The Board of Health will meet at 6:30 p.m. on March 8, 2023, located in the Council Chambers at Borough Hall for discussion on Char Steakhouse and Valley Wellness. The Regional Center Partnership will hold a meeting via Zoom on March 15, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. The Finance Committee will meet Tuesday, March 14, 2023, to work on the budget. The Council commended Administrator/Borough Clerk Colvin and Assistant Administrator/Chief Financial Officer Cook-Vitale for their efforts.

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)

Council President Carra opened the Public Comment portion of the meeting for members of the public wishing to speak.

Susan Mosca-Grosso, 122 Sherman Avenue asked why item number 2, entitled Property Investigation Authorization was skipped on the Agenda. Ms. Mosca-Grosso asked for an explanation of what the item concerned, and which committee moved the meeting from March 21, 2023, to March 20, 2023.

Council President Carra apologized for skipping item number 2 on the Agenda, and said the item entitled Property Investigation was to request permission from the Council to schedule a tour of the closed PNC Bank for the proposed use and expansion of a new Borough Hall. The property would give access to the main street, with needed additional parking and added room then the offices currently provided and to ask for permission to allow the Borough Attorney to reach out to the realtor and Architect Michaels and Bond Counsel to form a working group with the Chief Financial Officer and Tax Assessor on the proposal. Council President Carra answered the meeting for March 21, 2023, to March 20, 2023, was moved for the Borough Council due to scheduling conflicts.

On a motion by Councilwoman Hutzler, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to Approve the Property Investigation of PNC Bank.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Carra, Fritzinger, Hutzler, Melitsky

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: Armahizer, Orozco

Motion Carried: 4-0

Michael Patente Glazer Avenue suggested Saint Joseph's School be considered for the new Borough Hall and Community Center. Mr. Patente commended the detail described in the Ordinances outlined in tonight's meeting Agenda, as well as the chart provided to residents for the Borough's dates of operation and Solid Waste Service magnet. Mr. Patente asked where the new ABC License will be located. Administrator/Borough Clerk Colvin said the license was a Pocket license which has been inactive as was previously known as Borough Liquors.

Mr. Patente suggested that the Borough look into placing fees on residents who reside in apartments to facilitate the purchase of equipment for trash removal and amenities such as a Community Center for

March 7, 2023
Regular Session

community use. He asked if the new apartments being built are part of a PILOT Program, and if the Council could provide a breakdown of the tax impact it has on the residents. He expressed that it would be of value to himself and others.

Council President Carra answered the apartments built on First Avenue was a PILOT Program Project and would look into providing more information.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Councilwoman Hutzler, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to Adjourn the Regular Meeting.

Regular Meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

Patricia Gravatt
Deputy Clerk/HR Coordinator

Approved: _____
Eric M. Colvin
Borough Clerk/Administrator

Date: _____