

MINUTES

BOROUGH OF RARITAN REGULAR MEETING

TUESDAY, MAY 2, 2023
6:30 P.M. - EXECUTIVE SESSION
7 P.M. – REGULAR SESSION

This Regular Meeting of the Governing Body was called to order by Mayor Bray in the Meeting Room of the Raritan Municipal Building, 22 First Street, Raritan, NJ 08869 at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 2, 2023.

Mayor Bray announced the Regular Meeting was called to order by pursuant to applicable portions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Adequate Notice of this Regular Meeting was posted in Borough Hall, on the Borough website and communicated to *The Courier News*, *The Star Ledger* and *The Breeze* on January 5, 2023.

ROLL CALL

Present: Council President Carra, Councilman Armahizer, Councilman Fritzingler,
Councilwoman Hutzler, Councilwoman Melitsky (via telephone), Councilman Orozco

Also Present: Administrator/Clerk Colvin, Assistant Administrator/Chief Financial Officer Cook-
Vitale, Borough Engineer Schrek, Borough Attorney Robertson

INVOCATION AND FLAG SALUTE

Councilwoman Hutzler

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution No. 2023-05-073

Entering Executive Session

1. Personnel
DPW, Administration, Police
2. Contract Negotiations
Reimer Street, Hidden Pond, 9 West
Somerset Street

On a motion by Councilman Fritzingler, seconded by Councilwoman Hutzler, Council moved to Approve Resolution No. 2023-05-073.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Armahizer, Carra, Fritzingler, Hutzler, Melitsky, Orozco

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

The Council convened in Executive Session at 6:31 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION ADJOURNMENT

Council moved to Reconvene in Regular Session unanimously.

Council exited Executive Session, and resumed Regular Session at 6:55 p.m.

PRESENTATION

Duke Farms

Duke Farms Public Engagement Manager William Wilson provided information and a presentation on a proposed Duke Farms Farmers Market and made a request to Council to provide a location. The Farmers Market is held weekly on Sundays from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The market was previously held from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. but moved due to capacity issues and conflict of use with the Duke Farms Community Garden. Topics included:

- 40 vendors
- Heralded as the number 1 Farmer’s Market in the State of New Jersey
- Vendor Registration and vetting process
- Grant Opportunity
- Duke Farm Vendor Fees
- Duke Farms and Somerset County support One Regional Farmers Market in the elimination of rival farmers markets in neighboring communities in support of local farmers/vendors
- Washington School - inclusive and accessible to all Somerset County residents
- Duke Farms would support financial and relocation impact for Borough and residents.

Mayor Bray asked when Duke Farms would begin the Farmers Market at Washington School once approved. Mr. Williams answered it would commence May 2024.

Councilman Orozco asked if the Farmers Market qualified as a Shared Services Grant opportunity as it is shared within neighboring communities in Somerset County. Mr. Williams said it would depend on the type of grant or agreement the Borough was looking to obtain, and added the USDA Grant described in the presentation does not specify a specific municipality/region or non-profit but does require a specific entity to apply. Mr. Williams said Somerset County has expressed interest as the applicant for such an agreement.

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 the Public Comment portion of the meeting for members of the public to wishing to speak.

Roger Copt, 1120 Route 202; - Mr. Copt commented on the local Cannabis Dispensary known as Valley Wellness, the 23 parking spaces, lack of parking, dedicated parking, off-site parking for employees, pedestrian safety for the employees, ordinance requirements and variances. Mr. Copt asked if the Borough had received a request for off-site parking and asked if they were following Borough rules and regulations. He asked if the Borough was going to allow pedestrians to walk along Route 202.

Borough Engineer Schrek said he would verify compliance with Construction Official Lou Gara.

Mayor Bray said the Borough does not have the authority to restrict pedestrian travel on Route 202, and all the items mentioned are not within the jurisdiction of the Borough Council, and added the Planning Board reviewed and vetted the application and variances.

Councilman Orozco said he agreed with Mr. Copt's comments regarding the parking at Valley Wellness, and asked Council President Carra who is also a member of the Planning Board for comment on the matter. Council President Carra said a Traffic Engineer completed studies for Medical and Recreation use of Cannabis, with the expectation of 80 customers per day, the actual amount per day is approximately 30, with the general agreement by its members that the Borough's ordinance is restrictive in comparison to other municipalities, and furthermore there was no expectation for customers to retrieve the order themselves. Councilman Orozco again reiterated his previous comments of agreement with Mr. Copt, but stated they are within the Planning Board's authority to make those decisions.

Mr. Copt conveyed his belief that it is the Council's responsibility to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the employees of Valley Wellness, and asked that the Borough control automobile and pedestrian traffic.

Joyce Fritchie, 445 Vanderveer Road - Ms. Fritchie asked about Hidden Pond and why it has been on recent Agendas. Borough Engineer Schrek answered the matter concerns contract negotiations for municipal services currently being discussed in Executive Session.

Seeing and hearing no additional members of the public, Mayor Bray closed Public Comment.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Recreation Strategic Planning (NC)

Council President Carra, Councilwoman Hutzler, Administrator/Clerk Colvin, Assistant Administrator/CFO Cook-Vitale, Recreation Director Andrew Sibia, Director of Public Works Vince Lo Medico and a Recreation Member met last week to visit Washington School and tour the parks. Items were identified for immediate repair. Recreation Director Sibia has submitted work orders to Public Works. Council President Carra confirmed soil has been laid at one of the baseball fields, and said there is the potential for replacement of restroom facilities, improvements to the basketball courts, and lawn restoration. Council President Carra confirmed the parks visited to date include Washington School, Basilone and Frelinghuysen. Council President Carra stated they are additionally expected to visit Elizabeth Avenue, Cardinal Woods, and Canal Street Park with completion by month-end.

2. Reimer Street Vacation (NC)

Discussion regarding the Reimer Street Vacation has been completed and ready to move forward. Borough Attorney Robertson said a resident on LaGrange has a small subsection of Reimer Street and has requested a portion of their property be vacated and divided between the two property owners.

Borough Attorney Robertson and Borough Engineer Schrek are in the process of completing the Engineering work.

3. Building Investigatory Committee (NC)

Borough Council authorized the assembly of a committee to investigate and research the use and purchase of 9 West Somerset Street. The Borough is currently in negotiations to purchase the property. Council President Carra asked that Borough Engineer Schrek be added to the committee. Mayor Bray asked Borough Engineer Schrek if he agreed to join the Committee, and Borough Engineer Schrek said he concurred.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Special Meetings (PO)

Councilman Orozco stated the Borough Council has scheduled numerous Special Meetings to date and conveyed difficulty in scheduling personal time and Borough business while not providing televised viewing ensuring adequate transparency for residents. Councilman Orozco said the Borough is embarking upon expenditures of substantial funds and requested open discussion from the members utilizing Zoom for future Special Meetings therefore ensuring attendance and transparency.

Council President Carra said he had previous discussions with Councilwoman Melitsky regarding the option due to her present situation. Councilwoman Melitsky relayed a preference to attend by telephone, and added there are no rules or regulations to the contrary.

Mayor Bray stated that it is unchartered territory, and he has not attended a Special Meeting via Zoom in his 8-year tenure but agreed that it would be advantageous due to issues that are time sensitive in nature.

Councilwoman Melitsky thanked the residents and Council for allowing her to attend Council meetings via telephone. She said her current medical condition requires the use of a certain apparatus that would hinder her participation in that manner. Councilwoman Melitsky ensured the Council continued accessibility by phone and remain helpful in any manner that she could.

Mayor Bray asked Councilman Orozco to coordinate scheduling with Administrator/Clerk Colvin.

Administrator/Clerk Colvin asked Councilman Orozco if Zoom would only be required for Special Meetings. Councilman Orozco responded that his conflict is with Special Meetings only.

2. Shrine Chapel Annual Procession (EC)

Administrator/Clerk Colvin asked the Council to approve a request from the Shrine Chapel to hold their Annual Procession on June 11, 2023, to be located on Somerset Street from 11:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. No objection has been made by the County of Somerset, or Borough Police Department.

On a motion by Councilman Orozco, seconded by Councilman Fritzinger, Council moved to Approve Shrine Chapel's Annual Procession unanimously.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Armahizer, Carra, Fritzingler, Hutzler, Melitsky, Orozco
Nay: x
Abstain: x
Absent: x
Motion Carried: 6-0

ORDINANCE – SECOND READINGS & PUBLIC HEARING

Ordinance No. 2023-04

An Ordinance of the Borough of Raritan, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey Establishing A Cap Bank

Mayor Bray asked for a motion to Open Public Hearing for Ordinance No. 2023-04.

On a motion by Council President Carra, seconded by Councilwoman Hutzler, Council moved to Open Public Hearing for Ordinance No. 2023-04.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Armahizer, Carra, Fritzingler, Hutzler, Melitsky, Orozco
Nay: x
Abstain: x
Absent: x
Motion Carried: 6-0

Neither seeing nor hearing any member(s) of the public, the Mayor closed the Public Hearing.

On a motion by Council President Carra, seconded by Councilman Fritzingler, Council moved to Adopt Ordinance No. 2023-04.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Armahizer, Carra, Fritzingler, Hutzler, Melitsky, Orozco
Nay: x
Abstain: x
Absent: x
Motion Carried: 6-0

ORDINANCE – INTRODUCTION

Ordinance No. 2023-11

An Ordinance of the Borough of Raritan, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey Fixing and Determining the Salaries, Wages or Compensations Range for Employees of the Borough of Raritan

On a motion by Councilman Fritzingler, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to Introduce Ordinance No. 2023-11

Recorded Vote

Yea: Armahizer, Carra, Fritzingler, Hutzler, Melitsky, Orozco
Nay: x
Abstain: x
Absent: x
Motion Carried: 6-0

2023 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Public Hearing

Resolution No. 2023-05-074

Adopting 2023 Municipal Budget

Mayor Bray asked for a motion to Open Public Hearing for Resolution No. 2023-05-74 - Adopting 2023 Municipal Budget.

On a motion by Council President Carra, seconded by Councilman Orozco, Council moved to Open Public Hearing for Resolution No. 2023-05-074 - Adopting 2023 Municipal Budget.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Armahizer, Carra, Fritzingler, Hutzler, Melitsky, Orozco
Nay: x
Abstain: x
Absent: x
Motion Carried: 6-0

Neither seeing nor hearing any member(s) of the public, the Mayor closed the Public Hearing.

Mayor Bray asked for a motion to Adopt Resolution No. 2023-05-74 - Adopting 2023 Municipal Budget.

On a motion by Council President Carra, seconded by Councilman Orozco, Council moved to Adopt Resolution No. 2023-05-074 - Adopting 2023 Municipal Budget.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Armahizer, Carra, Fritzingler, Hutzler, Melitsky, Orozco
Nay: x
Abstain: x
Absent: x
Motion Carried: 6-0

Mayor Bray relayed his thanks and commended the efforts of the team that completed the 2023 Municipal Budget, with special mention to Administrator/Clerk Colvin, Assistant Administrator/CFO Cook-Vitale, and Finance Department. Mayor Bray relayed special praise to Assistant Administrator/CFO Cook-Vitale on her performance in her first year as CFO.

CONSENT AGENDA

(Resolution Nos. 2023-05-075 – 2023-05-080)

Resolution No. 2023-05-075	Authorizing Letter of Credit with Peapack Gladstone Bank
Resolution No. 2023-05-076	Authorizing the Execution of CJHRC Annual Contract Renewal
Resolution No. 2023-05-077	Amending Resolution No. 2022-10-154 – Deputy Office of Emergency Management Coordinator
Resolution No. 2023-05-078	Authorizing Execution of Dog Park Lease with Somerset County
Resolution No. 2023-05-079	Authorizing Execution of Contract – RT Environmental
Resolution No. 2023-05-080	Appointing Tax Collector – Tori Cesario

Mayor Bray moved to Amend Adoption of the Consent Agenda Removing Resolution No. 2023-05-080 for separate consideration.

Mayor Bray congratulated Deputy Tax Collector/Finance Collector Tori Cesario on her graduation from the State of New Jersey Tax Collector Certification Program and asked the Council to vote individually in honor of her achievement.

Mayor Bray asked for a motion to Adopt Resolution No. 2023-05-080 - Appointing Tax Collector - Tori Cesario.

On a motion from Council President Carra, seconded by Councilwoman Hutzler, Council moved to Adopt Resolution No. 2023-05-080 - Appointing Tax Collector – Tori Cesario.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Armahizer, Carra, Fritzingler, Hutzler, Melitsky, Orozco
Nay: x
Abstain: x
Absent: x
Motion Carried: 6-0

Mayor Bray asked for a motion to Adopt Resolution Numbers 2023-05-075 through 2023-05-079 of the CONSENT AGENDA.

On a motion from Councilman Fritzingler, seconded by Council President Carra, Council moved to Adopt Resolution Numbers 075, 076, 077, 078 and 079 of the CONSENT AGENDA.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Armahizer, Carra, Fritzingler, Hutzler, Melitsky, Orozco
Nay: x
Abstain: x
Absent: x
Motion Carried: 6-0

BILL LIST

Resolution No. 2023-05-081

Approving Bill List

Mayor Bray asked for a motion to Approve Resolution No. 2023-05-081 - Approving the Bill List.

On a motion from Councilwoman Melitsky, seconded by Councilwoman Hutzler. Council moved to Approve Resolution No. 2023-05-081 - Approving the Bill List.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Armahizer, Carra, Fritzinger, Hutzler, Melitsky, Orozco

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

PURCHASE ORDER REQUESTS

1. Axon Enterprises, Inc. – \$14,551.00 – Body Worn Camera Software & Maintenance
2. The Rodgers Group, LLC. – \$10,098.00 – Annual Accreditation Maintenance

Mayor Bray asked for a motion to Approve Purchase Order Requests.

On a motion from Councilman Orozco, seconded by Councilman Armahizer, Council moved to Approve Purchase Order Requests.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Carra, Fritzinger, Hutzler, Melitsky, Armahizer, Orozco

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

Councilman Armahizer

The Environmental Commission will meet on May 18, 2023 at Borough Hall.

Councilman Orozco

The Basilone Committee will meet on May 17, 2023 at Borough Hall.

Councilman Fritzinger

Councilman Fritzinger gave the Building Report from April 19 to April 28, 2023. The Department of Public Works is routinely patching streets, chip and brush continues in all areas if the Borough, maintenance of all vehicles/equipment, replaced traffic parking signs, general weekly sewer utility work, street sweeping, garbage pick-up at parks, trim trees, grass cutting with removal of mulch at Borough Hall, weed pull at Washington School, general maintenance at the shop and installation of Handicap Parking spaces at the Raritan Library, Stop Sign at Route 202 and Anderson. Bulk pick-up is scheduled for May 11, 2023. Councilman Fritzinger gave the Treasurer's report for the Historical Committee.

The Historical Committee is looking for ideas on ornament styles for their Christmas Sale and reminded anyone interested may contact Dawn Wilde or any member of the Committee. A date for the unveiling of the Historical Sign is yet to be considered. An update will be forthcoming. The Historical Committee will meet on May 17, 2023 at the Raritan Library.

Councilwoman Melitsky

The Fire Department responded to 19 calls in the month of April, with a year-to-date total of 81. The Fire Department continues to recruit new members. Those interested in joining the Fire Department can obtain information at www.raritanfire.com or can inquire in-person at the North Thompson Street Fire House, Thursdays at 6:00 p.m. The Police Department held its Annual Chief for A Day Event on April 14, 2023. J.F.K. Student Chase Kinney served as Chief for the Day, learned about the day-to-day operations of the Police Department, and accompanied Sergeant Everett Holt for a tour of the Somerset County Communications Center and K9 Demonstration. Councilwoman Melitsky announced the retirement of Police Officer Robert Jones. Officer Jones officially retired Sunday, April 30, 2023, and she wished him luck in all his future endeavors. Councilwoman Melitsky gave the Property Maintenance Report for April 14 through May 2, 2023.

Council President Carra

The Regional Center Partnership has not met since March. The next meeting will be held on May 10, 2023 via Zoom at 5:00 p.m. The 2023 Budget was passed. Council President Carra thanked the Finance Department, Administrator/Clerk Colvin, Assistant Administrator/CFO Cook-Vitale for their efforts on the 2023 Budget. The Planning Board met last week and passed resolutions for Char Restaurant and Valley Wellness. The application for Colfax was heard for preliminary approval. Hearings will continue on April 24, 2023 for the Colfax application.

Councilwoman Hutzler

The Economic Development Committee will meet on May 9, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at Borough Hall. The Recreation Department is collecting applications for Summer Camp. Applications and information for Summer Camp can be obtained on the Department's Facebook page and Borough website. The Recreation Department is looking for a Camp Director and Assistants. Anyone interested in applying should contact Recreation Director Andy Sibia.

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 the Public Comment portion of the meeting for members of the public wishing to speak.

Roger Copt, 1120 Route 202 - Mr. Copt asked for the Borough Engineer to investigate the legality of the No Stopping or Standing Sign located on the electric pole in front of Valley Wellness. He asked if Valley Wellness had a contract for parking at their facility and enforcement of the 2-hour parking limitation.

Sheila Slovin, 55B LaGrange Street - Ms. Solvin asked when the next public hearing would be held regarding vacated properties around LaGrange Street and when residents would be made aware of how much property they obtained and surveys.

Borough Attorney Robertson provided an explanation of the division of the property and surveys and said Introduction of the Ordinance will be held on May 16, 2023, with a Public Hearing at the meeting in June.

Seeing and hearing no additional members of the public, Mayor Bray closed Public Comment.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Council President Carra, seconded by Councilman Fritzingler, Council moved to Adjourn the Regular Meeting.

Regular Meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Patricia Gravatt
Deputy Clerk/HR Coordinator

Approved: _____
Eric M. Colvin
Borough Clerk/Administrator

Date: _____