

MINUTES

BOROUGH OF RARITAN REGULAR MEETING

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 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, November 21, 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, Councilman Orozco

Also Present: Administrator/Clerk Colvin, Borough Attorney William Robertson

Absent: x

INVOCATION AND FLAG SALUTE

Councilwoman Melitsky

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution No. 2023-11-173

Entering Executive Session

1. Personnel
Administration, Police, DPW
2. Contract Negotiations
Hidden Pond, Stone Bridge, Block 3 Lot 22
3. Attorney Client
Orlando Drive, Tillman Street
4. Potential Shared Services
Fire Prevention

On a motion by Councilwoman Melitsky, seconded by Councilwoman Hutzler, Council moved to Enter Executive Session.

Recorded Vote

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

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

The Council convened in Executive Session at 6:30 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION ADJOURNMENT

Council moved to Reconvene in Regular Session unanimously.

Council exited Executive Session, and resumed Regular Session at 7:05 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 the Public Comment portion of the meeting for members of the public wishing to speak.

Abdul Ferozan, 25 Anderson Street: Stated that he has spoken about the flooding issue he is experiencing at his property, 52 Thompson Street, due to a newly built parking lot and he would be listening today for an answer.

Karen Eastland, 114 Avonridge Road: Voiced that she and multiple other members of the Historic and Cultural Committee were attending this meeting to request space at the new municipal building to display Raritan's artifacts and to make a museum.

Catherine DeBellis, 17 Doughty Street: Said there used to be a plaque at the Raritan Rescue Squad building and she would like that plaque to be found and displayed with the artifacts that the Historic and Cultural Committee has, she thanked them for their great work.

Sammy Sherwin, 23 Hidden Pond Court: Mrs. Sherwin read aloud a statement from the Hidden Pond Condominium Association, in which she is the president. The statement included concerns from the Hidden Pond Condominium Association regarding a negotiation agreement with the Borough that they were supposed to receive before tonight's meeting. She stated that the agreement is in regard to costs for streetlights and fire hydrant expenses.

Neither seeing nor hearing any additional members of the Public, Mayor Bray closed Public Comment.

MINUTES

1. Regular Meeting - September 19, 2023
2. Regular Meeting - October 3, 2023

Council President Carra stated that he had some minor fixes on the September 19, 2023, minutes, which he already expressed to Administrator/Clerk Colvin.

Mayor Bray asked for a motion to Approve the Minutes in Unison.

On a motion by Councilwoman Melitsky, seconded by Councilman Fritzingler, Council moved to Approve September 19, 2023, and October 3, 2023, Minutes.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Carra, Fritzingler, Hutzler, Melitsky, Orozco

Nay: x

Abstain: Armahizer

Absent: x
Motion Carried: 5-0

OLD BUSINESS

1. First Avenue Turns (EC)

Administrator/Clerk Colvin stated that after Council President Carra and Councilwoman Melitsky's concerns at the last council meeting regarding lefthand turns from Fifth Street and Farrand Street onto First Avenue, he reached out to the County Engineer and the County Traffic Engineer. They stated that the Borough could decide to restrict turns onto County roads, which are considered local jurisdiction turns. A brief discussion ensued between Mayor and Council, Borough Engineer Joseph Brosnan and Administrator/Clerk Colvin, which resulted in Administrator/Clerk Colvin needing to obtain comments from Chief of Police Nolte to present at the next council meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Engineer's Report (SS/JB)

Borough Engineer Joseph Brosnan delivered the following engineer's report:

2023 NJDOT – Richard Street Drainage Improvements Phase 1

The Borough of Raritan was awarded a NJDOT Local Aid Grant in the amount of **\$347,580**. Fieldwork has been completed; construction drawings are being prepared as well as a report summarizing the findings as presented previously.

Update: County has approved the design, however we suggest pushing the improvements back into the start of next year to be combined with the other project which was approved. We strongly suggest hosting a public information session to bring attention to the permanent road closing to the residents and emergency response officials.

2024 NJDOT – Richard Street Drainage Improvements Phase 2

The Borough of Raritan was awarded **\$395,316** for stormwater improvements in the area around Rhine Boulevard. Our intent is to resolve similar issues on the other side of the hill similar to the 2023 NJDOT grant. We are planning on constructing both projects at the same time to save on cost and time.

New Jersey American Water Utility Improvements

The New Jersey American Water utility company is in the process of upgrading and replacing existing water mains within the Borough of Raritan, as well as testing for lead pipes. Many of the roads they are working on are in the same vicinity as the above projects. NJAW has agreed to repave the roads following their work. Therefore, in addition to drainage and utility improvements, this neighborhood of Raritan can receive repaved roads at no additional cost to the Borough.

2. Employee of the Month (AA)

Councilman Armahizer stated that he would like the Borough to implement an Employee of the Month award and possibly a Borough Volunteer of the Month award, to show appreciation and give recognition. He suggested that the assessment and selection process would be handled by Mayor and Council along with helpful input from department heads

and the Borough Administrator, adding that a designated employee of the month parking space should be created at the new municipal building.

On a motion by Councilman Armahizer, seconded by Councilman Orozco, Council moved to Implement Employee of the Month.

Recorded Vote

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

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

3. Annual Best Practices (EC)

Administrator/Clerk Colvin stated that he completed and submitted the Annual Best Practices to the State, adding that the Borough passed and will receive 100% of State funding.

4. School Referendum Tax Payment (EC)

Administrator/Clerk Colvin mentioned that the school referendum passed in fall, as a result payments are being passed onto the residents which tentatively will be collected in the first and second tax quarter of 2024. He added that County has not set the new tax rate yet.

5. Environmental Cultural Arts Performance Contribution (EC)

Administrator/Clerk Colvin tabled this until the next council meeting.

ORDINANCE – INTRODUCTION

None

ORDINANCE – SECOND READING & PUBLIC HEARING

Ordinance No. 2023-17

An Ordinance of the Borough of Raritan, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey Amending Chapter 92 (Animals) of the Borough Code to Add a New Article VIII Entitled, Potentially Dangerous or Vicious Dogs

On a motion by Council President Carra, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to Open Ordinance No. 2023-17 to the Public.

Tom Brown, 18 Elmer Street: Mr. Brown asked for clarification on who would be responsible for enforcing the Ordinance in the event that there is a problem. He asked who residents should call when there is an incident with a vicious dog and if the Raritan Police will have the authority to handle these issues. Mr. Brown also voiced his concerns about who will follow up on the delineations the Judge ordered in a current potentially dangerous dog case that are presently not being met by the owner. Administrator/Clerk Colvin stated that he would follow up with the Judge about Mr. Brown's concerns.

Motion Carried: 6-0

CERTIFICATION OF FUNDS

1. Bridgewater Resources – October Dumping Fees – \$24,801.66
2. Michels & Waldron – Design Phase and Progress Billing #1 – \$42,500.00

Mayor Bray asked for a motion to Approve Certification of Funds in Unison.

On a motion by Councilman Fritzingler, seconded by Councilman Orozco. Council moved to Approve the Van Cleef Engineering and Bridgewater Resources Fees.

Recorded Vote

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

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

Mayor Bray stated that there are two motions needed.

Mayor Bray asked for a motion to authorize employees of the Raritan Borough Police Department to donate paid time off to an employee who needs additional.

On a motion by Councilman Orozco, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky. Council moved to Authorize Donation of PTO.

Recorded Vote

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

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

Mayor Bray asked for a motion to authorize bringing HR back in house in January 2024.

On a motion by Councilman Armahizer, seconded by Councilman Orozco, Council moved to Authorize HR Being Brought Back in House January 2024.

Recorded Vote

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

Nay: x

Abstain: x

Absent: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

Councilman Armahizer – Reported that the Environmental Commission is aiming for another community cleanup event to be conducted sometime in April 2024, they also started adding stencil

outlines of aquatic life over stormwater drainage outlets throughout town to raise awareness of the impact water pollution has on local wildlife. The Environmental Commission's next meeting will be Thursday, January 18, 2024, at the municipal building.

Councilman Armahizer stated that the next Board of Health meeting will be conducted Wednesday, December 13, 2023, at the municipal building.

Councilman Orozco – Councilman Orozco announced that Mike Pepe won and will be the Board of Education representative for a three-year term, adding that he is glad to have him.

Councilman Orozco stated that while he was at the League of Municipalities he was informed by the company who is currently working on the basketball courts that they offer a private grant for an American Ninja Warrior style play area, he gave the application to Administrator/Clerk Colvin, the deadline is December 31, 2023.

Councilman Fritzing – Reported that DPW completed all routine street maintenance and repairs, chip brushed, performed maintenance on vehicles, cleaned retention areas, street sweeping is ongoing and the flowerpots on Somerset Street were put away to make way for Holiday decorations. Councilman Fritzing also reported that DPW replaced damaged/worn street signs, completed all routine maintenance on the sewers and the athletic fields. Councilman Fritzing added that DPW completed their last bulk pickup of the year and is now collecting leaves.

Councilman Fritzing read the Historic and Cultural Committee's treasurers report from their November 15, 2023, meeting. The Councilman encouraged everyone to check out HCC's Facebook page and their Christmas event at the Raritan Library.

Councilman Fritzing delivered the following report for the Construction Department: seven building permits, 15 plumbing, 18 electrical, 12 fire, one elevator and two mechanical, totaling 55 permits issued and a total to the Borough collected of \$14, 223.00 for the time period of October 18, 2023, through November 17, 2023.

Mayor Bray – Nothing to report.

Council President Carra – Reported that the Planning Board will meet Wednesday, November 29, 2023, at 6:30 p.m., currently the agenda contains a final site plan approval for the Grants building redevelopment.

Council President Carra stated that the Regional Center Partnership meeting on November 9, 2023, was cancelled and rescheduled for December 6, 2023, at 5 p.m. via Zoom.

Councilwoman Melitsky – Shared that she attended an Emergency Management Council meeting and a Local Emergency Planning Committee meeting run by OEM Coordinator, Sergeant Griffin, which went over safety procedures to divert emergencies. Councilwoman Melitsky stated that Raritan Borough is starting a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), and is looking for volunteer members, anyone interested in applying can reach out to OEM Coordinator, Sergeant Griffin via email - griffinb@raritanpd.org. Councilwoman Melitsky reported that water mains are being replaced on the side roads North of 202 and to expect periodic road closures through the remainder of the year.

Councilwoman Melitsky delivered the following report for Property Maintenance: 46 inspections were completed, 28 violations were given, three fines were issued, totaling \$1,000.00.

Councilwoman Hutzler – Stated that Economic Development Committee is excited to introduce a small business Saturday BINGO event, an initiative to showcase the wide variety of amazing

establishments in Raritan. She added that the BINGO cards will feature special offers and exclusive discounts, there will also be a Discovering Raritan gift basket the event will be Saturday, November 25, 2023.

Councilwoman Hutzler reported for Recreation that the Frelinghuysen basketball courts are completed and look great. She shared that Recreation will also be having free ornament decorating on Saturday, November 25, 2023, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. located at the Municipal building's community room, she added that participants must sign up for this event online via a link on Facebook or Instagram. Saturday, December 9, 2023, from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m., Santa will be coming to Frelinghuysen Park, more information can be found on Facebook the Councilwoman shared.

Councilwoman Hutzler delivered the following report for October 2023 Municipal Court: 195 total cases filed, 204 total cases disposed, total collected was \$19,003.81, with a total amount to the Borough of \$9,581.98.

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.

Jim Fidacaro, 812 Lynwood Street: Asked for clarification on Resolution No. 2023-11-175 and Resolution No. 2023-11-176. Mayor Bray explained that the Borough is terminating the shared service agreement with Manville and will be appointing Vince LoMedico full-time CPWM and Assistant Administrator.

Angela Kavalesky, 1 Hale Place: Voiced her various concerns about Mr. Ferozan's property, 52 Thompson Street, that he spoke about at the last council meeting and she asked if there were any updates on the matter. She also requested that someone from the Borough come out to the property to visually see the issues at hand, after she presented a news article on rainfall and flooding in New Jersey. Mayor Bray asked that Borough Attorney William Robertson and Borough Engineer Joseph Brosnan speak with Mrs. Kavalesky after the meeting.

Neither seeing nor hearing any additional members of the Public, Mayor Bray closed Public Comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Bray entertained for a motion to Adjourn the Regular Meeting.

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

Recorded Vote:

All in favor

Motion Passed: 6-0

Regular Meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Mayor Bray reminded everyone that the next council meeting is set for Tuesday, December 19, 2023, 6:30 p.m. executive session, 7 p.m. regular session.

Alyssa Cornella
Administrative Assistant/Deputy Registrar/BOH Representative

Approved: _____
Eric M. Colvin
Borough Clerk/Administrator

Date: _____