

MINUTES

BOROUGH OF RARITAN REGULAR MEETING

TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 2024
6:30 P.M. – EXECUTIVE SESSION
7:00 P.M – REGULAR SESSION

This Regular Meeting of the Governing Body of the Borough of Raritan was called to order by Mayor Carra in the Meeting Room of the Raritan Municipal Building, 22 First Street, Raritan, NJ 08869 at 6:32 p.m. on Tuesday, April 16, 2024.

Mayor Carra announced the Regular Meeting was called 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 3, 2024.

ROLL CALL

Present: Council President Tozzi, Councilman Agrawal, Councilman Fritzinger, Councilwoman Melitsky, Councilman Patente
Also Present: Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin, Borough Attorney William Robertson, Borough Engineer Joseph Brosnan, Borough CFO Paige Elster
Absent: Councilman Armahizer

INVOCATION AND FLAG SALUTE

Councilman Agrawal

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution No. 2024-04-073

Entering Executive Session

1. Personnel
Police, Administration, Court
2. Attorney Client
Tillman Street, Raritan Mall, Agway, 1201 Old York Road
3. Contract Negotiations
Municipal Court, Property Maintenance, 9 West Somerset Street, B3 L22

On a motion by Councilman Fritzinger, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to Approve Resolution No. 2024-04-073.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Fritzinger, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: Armahizer

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 5-0

Council convened in Executive Session at 6:32 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.

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

Roger Copt, 1120 Route 202 South: Mr. Copt voiced his opinion that the zoning for the Raritan Mall property should not be changed from commercial to multi-use and he does not want to see more apartments built in Raritan. Mr. Copt also voiced his disappointment with the Planning Board granting various parking variances to the medical marijuana store.

Joyce Fritchie, 445 Vanderveer Road: Mrs. Fritchie confirmed that the Larkin building was rezoned from commercial to residential.

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

PROCLAMATION

Mayor Carra read aloud a Proclamation Honoring Dorothea DiNorcia upon Her Retirement.

MINUTES

None

COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

Councilman Armahizer – Absent

Councilman Agrawal – Councilman Agrawal recognized the Finance Department, calling out CFO Paige Elster on her job well done for negotiating a higher percentage back with the bank.

Councilwoman Melitsky – Councilwoman Melitsky echoed Councilman Agrawal’s words and thanked the Finance Department.

Councilwoman Melitsky reported that the Basilone Parade Committee will announce their Grand Marshall on May 1, 2024.

Council President Tozzi – Council President Tozzi read the Property Maintenance report which consisted of four violations and two fines totaling in \$750.

Council President Tozzi reported that Recreation currently has about 80 young kids participating in their soccer camp that started this month, he also reported that DPW and Recreation are looking into adding more soccer fields in the Borough. Council President Tozzi announced that there is dodgeball on Wednesday nights at JFK and there is still time to sign up for summer camp. Council President Tozzi reported that the pool is being repaired and that Habitat for Humanity is painting the pool free of charge and he announced that County will be removing the white barricade in front of the Nevius Street bridge.

Councilman Fritzing – Councilman Fritzing read the Public Works report, which consisted of routine maintenance, replacing street signs, sewers being maintained, catch basin repairs, flower planters will be placed along Somerset Street next week, and he stated that DPW purchased a new pavement repair roller and that herbicide applications started on Monday. Councilman Fritzing announced that DPW will be starting a crack sealing programs for roads throughout the Borough and on May 18, 2024, there will be a one-day electronic waste and tire drop-off at DPW.

Councilman Fritzing read the Building Department report which consisted of 43 permits, totaling in \$53,456.

Councilman Fritzing shared that the Historic and Cultural Committee will be meeting at Borough Hall tomorrow, April 17, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.

Councilman Patente – Councilman Patente read the Municipal Court report for March 2024, which consisted of 236 cases filed, 248 cases were disposed, and the total collected was \$18,828 with \$8,889 going to the Borough.

Councilman Patente read the Office of Vital Statistics report for March 2024, which consisted of two marriage licenses, nine certified copies and 86 death certificates.

Councilman Patente stated that Board of Health suggested that residents put their trash bags out in garbage cans to help alleviate the rodent problem and they are working on guidelines for mattresses to be wrapped in plastic for bulk pickup.

Mayor Carra – Mayor Carra stated that Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin and himself have met with a member of DEP regarding the current brownfields in the Borough and the best way to move forward with them, he will give an update after their next meeting.

Mayor Carra stated that Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin, Council President Tozzi and himself met with County’s Economic Development Manager who put them in touch with New Jersey Business Association and a walking tour of downtown Raritan will be arranged.

Councilman Patente – Councilman Patente also shared that Somerset County is waiting on grants to become available to start their safety audit of along main street Raritan.

Mayor Carra – Mayor Carra stated that the TAP grant’s final design should be ready around August/late summer this year.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Treaty of Raritan (AA)
Tabled due to Councilman Armahizer’s absence.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Orlando Drive Soccer Field (DT)
Council President Tozzi reported that Recreation and DPW are working to get the field on Orlando Drive set up as an adult soccer field, he will share updates as they come.
2. Trash Receptable Ordinance (DF)
Councilman Fritzing stated he would like to introduce an amendment to the current trash receptable ordinance to read:
“For residential user, each dwelling unit or user shall be permitted three (3) containers or bags. Any bags or containers in excess of three (3), shall not be permitted. All garbage

shall be drained of liquids and placed securely in bags or refuse receptacle. All plastic bags shall be no less than two (2) mills thickness. The containers shall not exceed fifty (50) gallons in capacity.”

3. June Meeting Dates (EC)

Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin stated that the first scheduled meeting in June 2024 falls on Primary Election Day and he is suggesting to move the June 4 and June 18, 2024 Council Meeting dates to the second and fourth Tuesdays in June, June 11 and June 25, 2024.

EXECUTIVE SESSION MOTION

Mayor Carra stated that from Executive session, Somerville asked Raritan for a shared service agreement for Property Maintenance, which will make that position full-time. Mayor Carra asked for a motion to advertise the full-time shared service Property Maintenance position.

On a motion by Council President Tozzi, seconded by Councilman Agrawal, Council moved to Approve Advertising for Property Maintenance Shared Service Full-time Position.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Fritzinger, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: Armahizer

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 5-0

ORDINANCE – INTRODUCTION

Ordinance No. 2024-08

An Ordinance of the Borough of Raritan, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey Amending Chapter V, Boards, Committees and Commissions to Repeal Article V, Economic Development Committee

The purpose of this Ordinance is to abolish the Economic Development Committee.

On a motion by Councilman Fritzinger, seconded by Council President Tozzi, Council moved to Introduce Ordinance No. 2024-08.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Fritzinger, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: Armahizer

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 5-0

Mayor Carra stated that the second reading and public hearing for Ordinance No. 2024-08 is set for May 7, 2024.

Ordinance No. 2024-09

An Ordinance of the Borough of Raritan, County of

Somerset, State of New Jersey Amending Chapter 217,
Section 4, Garbage and Receptacles; Collection, of the
Code of the Borough of Raritan

The purpose of this Ordinance is to amend the existing
Code to limit the number of trash containers permitted to be
placed at curbside for collection.

On a motion by Councilwoman Melitsky, seconded by Council President Tozzi, Council moved to Table Ordinance No. 2024-09.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Fritzinger, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: Armahizer

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 5-0

ORDINANCE – SECOND READING & PUBLIC HEARING

Ordinance No. 2024-06

A Bond Ordinance of the Borough of Raritan, County of
Somerset, State of New Jersey, Providing for the
Construction of a New Municipal Building and
Reconstruction of the Existing Municipal Building for Use
by the Borough Police Department

The purpose of this Ordinance is to allow for funding of the
22 First Street and 9 West Somerset Street construction
projects.

On a motion by Council President Tozzi, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to Open Public Hearing on Ordinance No. 2024-06.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Fritzinger, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: Armahizer

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 5-0

The Mayor opened the Public Comment portion of the meeting for members of the public wishing to speak on Ordinance No. 2024-06.

Jim Foohey, 710 Rhine Boulevard: Mr. Foohey questioned why there was a bond ordinance being put in place if there is already a \$2,000,000 grant for this project, Mayor Carra explained that the bond ordinance needs to be in place as a precaution in case the bids go over the grant amount, a line of credit. Mr. Foohey also asked is there was an estimated cost for the new building's construction yet and Mayor Carra stated that the project went out to bid in March 2024.

Neither seeing nor hearing any additional member of the Public, Mayor Carra closed the Public Hearing on Ordinance No. 2024-06.

On a motion by Councilwoman Melitsky, seconded by Councilman Fritzinger, Council moved to Adopt Ordinance No. 2024-06.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Fritzinger, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: Armahizer

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 5-0

2024 MUNICIPAL BUDGET & PUBLIC HEARING

Resolution No. 2024-04-074 Adopting 2024 Municipal Budget

On a motion by Council President Tozzi, seconded by Councilman Patente, Council moved to Open Public Hearing on Resolution No. 2024-04-074 – 2024 Municipal Budget.

Recorded Vote

All in favor

The Mayor opened the Public Comment portion of the meeting for members of the public wishing to speak on Resolution No. 2024-04-074 – 2024 Municipal Budget.

Jim Foohey, 710 Rhine Boulevard: Mr. Foohey asked how much surplus will be leftover in the budget, Borough CFO Paige Elster stated \$3.4 million. Mr. Foohey confirmed that the tax rate will remain stable as there was enough money in surplus to cover the fees. Councilman Agrawal stated that the Finance Committee and Borough CFO Paige Elster put in a lot of time and effort into going over the budget to cut costs where they could and also utilized the surplus.

A conversation about surplus ensued amongst Mr. Foohey, Borough CFO Paige Elster and Council.

Tom Brown, 18 Elmer Street: Mr. Brown stated that the money coming in from J&J and LapCorp construction is a one-time income, and he voiced his concern about future funding, adding his view that local Raritan businesses cannot get loans for their needed improvements. Mr. Brown shared his opinion that the Borough's income should not just be utilized to level out taxes, but also to help improve the Borough, adding his opinion that an increase in taxes is worth it for the Borough's quality of living to be improved.

A brief conversation about the Rehabilitation Fund, Fair Share Housing and disencumbered funds ensued amongst Mr. Brown, Borough Administrator/Clerk Colvin and Mayor and Council.

Councilman Agrawal reminded everyone that Council works to keep the Municipal taxes (23 percent) flat, but there are four parts to a tax bill, the others being school (60 percent), County (16 percent) and library (about one percent).

On a motion by Councilman Agrawal, seconded by Councilman Patente, Council moved to Adopt Public Hearing on Resolution No. 2024-04-074 – 2024 Municipal Budget.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Fritzinger, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: Armahizer

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 5-0

CONSENT AGENDA

(Resolution No. 2024-04-075 through No. 2024-04-082)

Resolution No. 2024-04-075	Authorizing Hiring & Position Clarifications – Municipal Court Staff
Resolution No. 2024-04-076	Approving Extension – Shared Service Contract – Chief Financial Officer
Resolution No. 2024-04-077	Approving Participation – Cooperative Purchasing Venture – National Purchasing Partners
Resolution No. 2024-04-078	Appointing Special Counsel – Savo, Schalk & Corsini
Resolution No. 2024-04-079	Authorizing Borough Attorney to Draft an Ordinance and Corresponding Contract for Purchase of B3 L22
Resolution No. 2024-04-080	Authorizing Hiring and Execution of Contract – Chief of Police – Thomas Fisher
Resolution No. 2024-04-081	Authorizing Execution of Agreement – PBA Local #82
Resolution No. 2024-04-082	Reconfirming Appointment – Alyssa Cornella

On a motion by Council President Tozzi, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to Approve Resolution No. 2024-04-075 through Resolutions No. 2024-04-082 – Consent Agenda.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Fritzinger, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: Armahizer

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 5-0

BILL LIST

Resolution No. 2024-04-083	Approving Bill List
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On a motion by Councilman Agrawal, seconded by Councilwoman Melitsky, Council moved to Approve Resolution No. 2024-04-083 – Approving Bill List.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Fritzinger, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: Armahizer

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 5-0

CERTIFICATION OF FUNDS

1. Bridgewater Resources, Inc. – \$22,008.48 – March Dumping Fees
2. Van Cleef Engineering – \$29,935.25 – Various Engineering

Mayor Carra asked for a motion to approve the certification of funds together.

On a motion by Councilwoman Melitsky, seconded by Councilman Fritzinger, Council moved to Approve March Dumping Fees & Various Engineering Services.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Fritzinger, Melitsky, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: Armahizer

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 5-0

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

Joyce Fritchie, 445 Vanderveer Road: Mrs. Fritchie asked for clarification on the garbage ordinance amendment. DPW Director/Assistant Administrator Vince LoMedico clarified the amendment is to limit how much one single household can put out.

Tom Brown, 18 Elmer Street: Mr. Brown voiced his aggravation with the required millimeter thickness of garbage bags going up, stating that the price of the bags is too high. DPW Director/Assistant Administrator Vince LoMedico stated he can use a garbage can in place of bags. Mr. Brown shared his disappointment with the new rules related to trash pickup, including grass clippings.

Councilman Fritzinger stated that starting May 1, 2024, DPW will be open Monday through Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. for brush and grass clipping drop-off.

Jim Foohey, 710 Rhine Boulevard: Mr. Foohey asked if someone bought the Agway property and what the use would be, Mayor Carra told him yes and the owner presented a mixed-use concept plan to the Redevelopment Committee. Mr. Foohey asked for more details about Resolution No. 2024-04-07 Appointing Special Counsel – Savo, Schalk & Corsini, Mayor Carra stated it is for a property on Old York Road in Construction violation and the Borough’s Attorney has a conflict with that property, so special counsel is needed to issue summons to court. Mr. Foohey confirmed if Resolution No. 2024-04-079 Authorizing Borough Attorney to Draft an Ordinance and Corresponding Contract for Purchase of B3 L22 is considered wetlands.

Michael Pepe, 810 Old York Road, Apt. 2: Mr. Pepe thanked Chief of Police Nolte and the Police Department for keeping JFK safe, adding that the Superintendent asked him to thank Councilman Agrawal for promoting the Strategic Planning meetings, the outcomes will be announced at the May 14, 2024, School Board Meeting. Mr. Pepe also stated that spring sports are going on and BRHS will be putting on their spring musical May 2, May 3 and May 4, 2024. Mr. Pepe announced that next year JFK will be

celebrating their 60th Anniversary and asked if anyone has any memorabilia or artifacts to contact the Principal, Mr. Russo.

Jim Foohey, 710 Rhine Boulevard: Mr. Foohey reminded everyone that the registration deadline for the May 4, 2024, townwide yard sale is extended until Monday, April 22, 2024.

Bill Cunningham, 31 Glaser Avenue: Mr. Cunningham asked how many apartment complexes pay for their own garage removal, Mayor Carra told him all but one. Mr. Cunningham asked about future apartment complexes' trash and Mayor Carra stated every application submitted to the Planning Board has been the owner's responsibility.

Fabiana LoPiccolo-Stewart, 707 Rhine Boulevard: Ms. LoPiccolo-Stewart stated that the Borough website does not state the meeting dates and times of the Redevelopment Advisory Committee and she asked if they met yet this year, Mayor Carra stated that they meet on an as-needed basis and have met three times this year, March 4, March 25 and April 11, 2024. Ms. LoPiccolo-Stewart asked where the meeting dates and times are advertised, Mayor Carra stated on the Borough website's calendar.

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

ADJOURNMENT

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

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

Recorded Vote:

All in favor

Motion Passed: 5-0

The Mayor announced the next Council Meeting will be held on May 7, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.

Alyssa Cornella
Deputy Clerk/Assistant to the Borough Administrator
Deputy Registrar/BOH Representative

Approved:

Eric M. Colvin
Borough Clerk/Administrator

Date: _____