

MINUTES

BOROUGH OF RARITAN
SPECIAL MEETING

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2024
6:00 P.M. – EXECUTIVE SESSION
7:00 P.M – REGULAR SESSION

This Special 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 6:01 p.m. on Tuesday, October 8, 2024

Mayor Carra announced the Special Meeting of the Governing Body was called pursuant to applicable portions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Adequate Notice of this Special Meeting was posted in Borough Hall, on the Borough website and communicated to *The Courier News*, *The Star Ledger* and *The Breeze* on August 27, 2024.

ROLL CALL

Present: Council President Tozzi, Councilman Agrawal, Councilman Armahizer, Councilman DiGraziano, Councilman Fritzingler, Councilman Patente
Also Present: Borough Administrator Colvin, Acting Borough Clerk Mathewson, Borough Attorney William Robertson and Borough Engineer Joseph Brosnan
Absent:

INVOCATION AND FLAG SALUTE

Councilman Agrawal

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution No. 2024-10-170

Entering Executive Session

1. Attorney Client
Alpine Way
2. Litigation
Raritan Mall

On motion by Councilman Fritzingler, seconded by Council President Tozzi, Council moved to approve Resolution No. 2024-10-170.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Armahizer, DiGraziano, Fritzingler, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: x

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

Council convened in Executive Session at 6:03 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION ADJOURNMENT

Council moved to reconvene in Regular Session unanimously.

Council exited Executive Session, and resumed Regular Session at 7:09 p.m.

RESOLUTIONS & OATHS OF OFFICE

Resolution No. 2024-10-171

Hiring Probationary Patrol Officer
Manny Huerta

**Borough of Raritan
Oath of Office**

State of New Jersey }
County of Somerset } ss.

I, MANNY HUERTA, DO SOLEMNLY SWEAR, THAT I WILL SUPPORT THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES, AND OF THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AND THAT I WILL BEAR TRUE FAITH AND ALLEGIANCE TO THE SAME, AND TO THE GOVERNMENTS ESTABLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES, AND IN THIS STATE, UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE PEOPLE, AND THAT I WILL FAITHFULLY, IMPARTIALLY, AND JUSTLY, PERFORM ALL OF THE DUTIES, OF BOROUGH OF RARITAN POLICE PATROL OFFICER, TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY.

On a motion by Councilman Patente, seconded by Councilman Armahizer, Council moved to Approve Resolution No. 2024-10-171

Resolution No. 2024-10-172

Hiring Probationary Patrol Officer
Rodrigo Pacheco

**Borough of Raritan
Oath of Office**

State of New Jersey }
County of Somerset } ss.

I, RODRIGO PACHECO, DO SOLEMNLY SWEAR, THAT I WILL SUPPORT THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES, AND OF THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AND THAT I WILL BEAR TRUE FAITH AND ALLEGIANCE TO THE SAME, AND TO THE GOVERNMENTS ESTABLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES, AND IN THIS STATE, UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE PEOPLE, AND THAT I WILL FAITHFULLY, IMPARTIALLY, AND JUSTLY, PERFORM ALL OF THE DUTIES, OF BOROUGH OF RARITAN POLICE PATROL OFFICER, TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY.

On a motion by Councilman Patente, seconded by Councilman Fritzinger, Council moved to Approve Resolution No. 2024-10-172

PROCLAMATION

Honoring Linda Lella Upon Retirement

Proclamation

**HONORING LINDA LELLA
ON HER RETIREMENT FROM THE BOROUGH OF RARITAN**

WHEREAS, Linda Lella was born to parents Pete and Annie Lella in Raritan Borough, New Jersey, where she grew up alongside her older sister, Diane; and

WHEREAS, Linda proudly owns her own home in Raritan Borough along with her partner of 17 years, John; and

WHEREAS, Linda Lella's hobbies include gardening, decorating her house, both inside and out, shopping, cooking and listening to really loud disco music; and

WHEREAS, Linda started her career in the legal profession in 1981 and has been with the Borough of Raritan Court since 1992, where she held the title of Deputy Court Administrator for four years before being promoted to Court Administrator; and

WHEREAS, Linda Lella feels that her biggest accomplishment was successfully obtaining her Professional Certification on her first attempt and the countless number of constituents she helped navigate through the sometimes intimidating maze of traffic, criminal and civil regulations; and

WHEREAS, Linda's most memorable experience during her time with the Borough were the people she crossed paths with along the way; and

WHEREAS, Linda Lella retired from Raritan Borough on September 30, 2024 and she is looking forward to spending more quality time with friends and family, including a trip to Chicago to visit John's youngest daughter; and

WHEREAS, Linda Lella would like to thank everyone who helped make her time at the Borough of Raritan memorable, she also wants everyone to celebrate every day of their careers at the Borough and wishes good luck to all; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Nicolas J. Carra, Mayor of the Borough of Raritan, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey do hereby honor Linda Lella for her hard work, dedication and commitment to the Borough she served for 32 years and wish her a long, healthy and happy retirement.

Breast Cancer Awareness – October 2024

Proclamation

DANCE FOR THE CURE'S PINK BOW PROJECT BREAST CANCER AWARENESS - OCTOBER 2024

WHEREAS, October is *National Breast Cancer Awareness Month*, an annual campaign to increase awareness of this disease, dedicated to increasing public knowledge about the importance of early detection of breast cancer diagnosis and treatment; and

WHEREAS, this year, Raritan Borough joined Dance for the Cure's Pink Bow Project for the first time; and

WHEREAS, Kathleen Cirioli is a three-time cancer survivor and former owner of the Kathleen Academy of Dance and present owner of JustTAP! located in Hillsborough, NJ. Her career in dance is how and why Dance for the

Cure was founded as she was supported by so many of her dance studio families while going through her own journey.

WHEREAS, Dance for the Cure is a not for profit organization committed to the prevention and cure of breast cancer through the celebration of dance; and

WHEREAS, the Pink Bow Project is one of Dance for the Cure's ongoing efforts to raise awareness and provide financial help to breast cancer patients in Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, and Somerset counties; and

WHEREAS, on September 28, 2024, Council President Tozzi and Dance for the Cure volunteers hung large pink bows along Main Street, thus spreading awareness; and

WHEREAS, Mayor Carra and Borough Council were enthusiastic about joining the effort, Council President Tozzi stated Raritan plans to make this an annual tradition.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Nicolas J. Carra, Mayor of the Borough of Raritan, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey do hereby declare October 2024 as ***Breast Cancer Awareness Month*** and urge all women and their families to increase their knowledge about breast cancer and join us to celebrate successes and memorialize lost battles.

PUBLIC COMMENT (AGENDA ITEMS ONLY)

(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.

Chris Allen, 11 Granitz Place: Mr. Allen detailed his concerns about the Raritan Mall's online furniture stores' ongoing operations without a valid certificate of occupancy, mentioning litigation and adding that he had to submit an OPRA request to find out there was no COO issued.

Debbie Thomas, 36 Canal Street: Mrs. Thomas commented on construction noise, requesting revisions to the existing Borough Code to further restrict noise activities at construction sites, particularly regarding unnecessary non-construction noise and activities on holidays and Sundays. Mrs. Thomas stated that some of the Council members walk around the Borough to hear what the residents have to say, she would like to see them visit all the neighborhoods, including hers, not just a select few. Mayor Carra asked Borough Attorney William Robertson and Borough Engineer Joseph Brosnan to look into amending the current noise Ordinance.

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

MINUTES

1. September 24, 2024 – Special

Mayor Carra asked for a motion to Approve the September 24, 2024 Minutes.

On a motion by Councilman Fritzing, seconded by Councilman DiGraziano, Council moved to Approve the September 24, 2024 Minutes.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Armahizer, DiGraziano, Fritzingler, Patente
Nay: x
Absent: x
Abstain: Agrawal
Motion Carried: 5-0

COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

Councilman Armahizer - No report.

Councilman Agrawal- Announced that full-time kindergarten will start fall of 2025. The library will have a trunk at Raritan Recreation's Trunk-or-Treat event on Sunday, October 27, 2024 located at JFK School.

Councilman DiGraziano- Reminded everyone that Raritan Recreation's Trunk-or-Treat event will be held on Sunday, October 27, 2024 from 1-3 p.m. located at JFK School, adding that Recreation is looking for more trunks and anyone who doesn't want to do a trunk can donate candy.

Council President Tozzi- Property Maintenance is moving forward, store fronts are getting cleaned up with painting, decals and tree/bush trimming are helping the Borough be neater. The Police had 1,231 calls, 259 motor vehicle stops, 190 violations, two drunk drivers and 20 speeding tickets.

Councilman Fritzingler- Read the Construction permit report for September 9, 2024 through October 8, 2024 which totaled in \$8,300 collected fees to the Borough. He thanked the Historic and Cultural Committee for their efforts which helped them receive a proclamation from the Main Library Alliance, which connects our library to 53 libraries throughout the state. Public Works purchased a new street sweeper, hydraulic lifts were installed at the Borough garage and routine vehicle maintenance can now be done inhouse. DPW has also been repairing sidewalks and paving on various streets will start around mid-October 2024. Council Fritzingler reminded all that the last grass drop-off is October 19, 2024 and the last bulk pick-up is this week.

Councilman Patente - No report. Announced that Raritan Court moved to Bridgewater on October 1, 2024 as part of a shared services agreement and he thanked Linda Lella for all her work during her many years at the Borough, adding that she did a great job.

Mayor Carra- Stated that he would like to nominate Christopher Dustman from the Environmental Committee to be a member of the Shade Tree Advisory Board and asked for a motion.

On motion by Council President Tozzi, seconded by Councilman Armahizer, Council moved to Nominate Christopher Dustman to be a Member of the Shade Tree Advisory Board.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Armahizer, DiGraziano, Fritzingler, Patente
Nay: x
Absent: x
Abstain: x
Motion Carried: 6-0

Mayor Carra stated that the Environmental Committee is looking into grants for the Shade Tree Advisory Board and two more members will need to be nominated for the Board to be active.

Mayor Carra announced that there will be a Community Outreach meeting regarding the Washington School property on Wednesday, November 7, 2024 from 5 p.m.- 7 p.m. in the Borough Community Room.

On October 23, 2024 at 4 p.m., Kathy Guzman, NJ Economic Development Authority and Senior Small Business Liaison, will be walking Main Street along with the Mayor and Council President Tozzi to visit and meet the business owners.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

1. Engineer's Updates (JB)
Borough Engineer stated that there are two items to discuss, both are associated with 9 West Somerset Street. The first is a change order regarding adding a kill switch to the power to the building. Initially when looked at the original kill switch was thought to be adequate however, it only killed power to some of the building, not the entire building. The second change order is to replace the CT cabinet that is severely damaged and should be replaced now. Discussion ensued amongst Council and Mr. Brosnan about particulars for the 9 West Somerset Building. Mr. Brosnan requested a motion from Council to allow him to sign off on the change orders.

On motion by Council President Tozzi, seconded by Councilman Armahizer, Council moved approve COP-6, the power kill switch.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Armahizer, DiGraziano, Fritzing, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: x

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

On motion by Councilman Fritzing, seconded by Councilman Patente, Council moved approve COP-7, the CT cabinet replacement.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Armahizer, DiGraziano, Fritzing, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: x

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

Discussion continued about any other change orders or updates regarding the construction at 9 West Somerset Street between Council and Mr. Brosnan.

ORDINANCES – SECOND READING & PUBLIC HEARING

Ordinance No. 2024-24

An Ordinance of the Borough of Raritan, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey amending Chapter 5 of the Borough Code to create Article VII, Veterans' Advisory Committee.

The purpose of this Ordinance is to create a new committee for veterans residing in the Borough of Raritan

Mayor Carra opened the Public Hearing portion of the meeting for members of the public wishing to speak on Ordinance No. 2024-24.

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

On motion by Council President Tozzi, seconded by Councilman Armahizer, Council moved to adopt Ordinance No. 2024-24.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Armahizer, DiGraziano, Fritzing, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: x

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

ORDINANCES – INTRODUCTION

None

CONSENT AGENDA

(Resolution No. 2024-10-173 through No. 2024-10-175)

Resolution No. 2024-10-173

Authorizing Final Payment for Reimbursement of Health Benefit – Sebastian Paiz

Resolution No. 2024-10-174

Refunding Monthly Parking Pass – Bravo Astudillo

Resolution No. 2024-10-175

Refunding Tax Payment – Subeena Surmust

On a motion by Councilman DiGraziano, seconded by Councilman Agrawal, Council moved to approve Resolution No. 2024-10-173 through Resolution No. 2024-10-175 – Consent Agenda.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Armahizer, DiGraziano, Fritzing, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: x

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

BILL LIST

Resolution No. 2024-10-176

Approving Bill List

On a motion by Councilman DiGraziano, seconded by Councilman Agrawal, Council moved to approve Resolution No. 2024-10-176 - Approving Bill List.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Armahizer, DiGraziano, Fritzing, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: x

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

CERTIFICATION OF FUNDS

1. Archer & Greiner – Tax Appeal Settlement - \$146,471.45
2. Crossroads Paving – Work on Colby, Berwick & Arnold - \$311,171.06

Mayor Carra asked for a motion to approve the Certification of Funds together.

On a motion by Councilman DiGraziano, seconded by Councilman Fritzing, Council moved to approve the Certification of Funds – Tax Appeal Settlement and Work on Colby, Berwick & Arnold.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Armahizer, DiGraziano, Fritzing, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: x

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 6-0

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.

Jim Foohey, 710 Rhine Blvd: Mr. Foohey wanted to notify the Council that he has heard that the trains are idling again at night in the Raritan Train Yard. He wanted Council to aware and added that when he was on Council previously, they dealt with the same issue. AT that time the Borough received a written letter from NJ Transit that they would take care of it, and they did. He suggested Council look into the matter.

Dilette Patente, 30 Glaser Ave: Ms. Patente asked about a store that opened across from Uncle Vinnie’s. She stated that the store has no sign stating what the name is or what type of store it is. She suggested the town look into it.

Debbie Thomas, 36 Canal St: Ms. Thomas agrees with Ms. Patente’s comment and stated that she had reached out to Lou. She stated that Lou has been advising the store owner of how the business should be cleaned up and suggestions on how to update it. Ms. Thomas continued to stress her concerns about the state of the store in the Borough and urged Council to enforce what needs to be enforced.

Tom Brown, 18 Elmer St: Mr. Brown wanted to advise Council that he has noticed commercial vehicles being parked overnight on the streets. He stressed the importance of enforcement of our Borough Ordinances by the Police Department.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Carra asked for a motion to adjourn the Special Meeting.

On a motion by Council President Tozzi, seconded by Councilman DiGraziano, Council moved to adjourn the Special Meeting.

Recorded Vote:

All in favor

Motion passed: 6-0

Regular Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Kimberly Mathewson
Acting Municipal Clerk

Approved: _____
Eric M. Colvin
Borough Administrator

Date: _____

Next Regular Council Meeting

Tuesday, October 22, 2024
6:30 p.m. – Executive Session
7 p.m. – Regular Session