

MINUTES

BOROUGH OF RARITAN REGULAR MEETING

TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2025
6:00 P.M. – EXECUTIVE SESSION
7 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 6:01 p.m. on Tuesday, January 21, 2025

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 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 8, 2025.

ROLL CALL

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

INVOCATION AND FLAG SALUTE

Councilman Fritzingler

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution No. 2025-01-020

Entering Executive Session

1. Personnel
Police
2. Attorney Client
Alpine Way, Anderson Street

On motion by Councilman Fritzingler, seconded by Councilman Patente, Council moved to Approve Resolution No. 2025-01-020.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, DiGraziano, Fritzingler, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: Agrawal, Armahizer

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 4-0

Council convened in Executive Session at 6:02 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 (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)

John Roglieri, 34 Vones Ln: Mr. Roglieri stated that he wanted to apologize to the Mayor regarding his comments at the last meeting, the Mayor was correct stating the increase in taxes was not the Municipal Tax. He then went on to express his concerns with the \$250,000.00 splash pad the Borough is looking to install. He stated there are many issues that need to be looked into before fully committing to that type of project. Mr. Roglieri then asked about the resolution listed for the Borough to appoint a QPA (Qualified Purchase Agent) at the last meeting. He asked if that was a necessary expense for the Borough to which Borough Administrator Colvin responded explaining that having a QPA for the Borough helps with the town's bid threshold. Mr. Roglieri expressed his concerns about how beneficial they really are to the Borough.

Zongqi Hu, 106 Anderson Street: Mr. Hu stated that he is still experiencing issues with parking on Anderson Street and asked if there was any update from Council about any action that can be taken to help eliminate the issues. Borough Attorney Rich Wenner responded stating that the Borough does not have any jurisdiction to restrict parking on Anderson Street. Mr. Hu continued to stress the ongoing parking issues and the effect it has been having in his neighborhood.

Jeff King, 47 Vones Lane: Mr. King reiterated the parking issues on Anderson and suggested the Borough look into some sort of sign to help eliminate the continuous problem. He added that the owner of Valley Wellness has been doing everything within her power to help these residents such as posting signs and even suggesting to customers to park over on Thompson Street. Borough Attorney Wenner responded stating that if more restricting parking signs were posted, there would need to be more policing in that area to enforce those restrictions. Discussion ensued between Mr. Kind and Mr. Wenner regarding the matter.

Roger Copt, 1120 Route 202: Mr. Copt stated that the real problem regarding the Valley Wellness parking issues comes from the Planning Board. He went on to explain that the Planning Board granted her a variance to allow for 25 parking spaces, instead of the original 45 that was required. When the State altered the rules about restricting the sale of marijuana, she would have needed to have another 45 spaces however, she still only has the 25 spaces. Mr. Copt went into further details explaining how this issue should have been handled correctly at the Planning Board.

Charles Saunier, 109 Anderson Street: Mr. Saunier expressed his disagreement with the Borough Attorney's response about restricted parking. Currently there is a two-hour restriction on parking on Anderson Street and Mr. Saunier asked what the difference would be if the restriction was for resident's only compared to a two-hour limit? Borough Attorney Wenner responded explaining that the difference is a policy decision. If you restrict parking to residents only, you are now prohibiting anyone from frequenting any businesses in that area. Mr. Wenner then added that if you restrict parking on Anderson for residents only, the Borough will then need to issue permits which would be another administrative cost for the Borough. Mr. Saunier continued to express his frustrations and the issues he personally has had to deal with due to the lack of solution from

the Borough. Mr. Wenner offered to speak with the residents after the meeting to discuss the matter further.

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

PRESENTATION

Mayor Carra announced that the Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity representatives had arrived and were going to be discussing a potential project on a property located on Railroad Avenue that could be a location of a single-family home. Jessica Abbott, Executive Director of the Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity, and Sue Harkins, Director of Resource Development explained that they were there from Habitat for Humanity and were going to discuss potential possibilities for the Borough. Ms. Harkins started off by explaining a little bit about Habitat for Humanity and their approach towards affordable housing. She explained that they work in partnership with a future homeowner as well as community volunteers to construct a home. The homes are built to energy star standards and then customized for the particular lot it will be built on. She continued to explain that the homeowners get vetted based on income and their willingness to partner with Habitat and the surrounding community. The potential homeowner works with volunteers to help them understand the responsibilities of homeownership and how to keep their budget on track. Ms. Abbott and Ms. Harkins both explained the ‘sweat equity’ the Habitat program requires of potential homeowners. They also added that the host a groundbreaking ceremony and once the home is built they host a dedication ceremony that the community would be invited to. Discussion ensued between Council members as well as members of the public asking specific questions relating to the vetting process as well as if the selected applicant could be from Raritan directly or could be from surrounding areas.

MINUTES

1. November 26, 2024 – Special

Mayor Carra asked for a motion to Approve the November 26, 2024 Minutes.

On a motion by Councilman Fritzingler, seconded by Councilman DiGraziano, Council moved to Approve the November 26, 2024 Minutes.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, DiGraziano, Fritzingler, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: Agrawal, Armahizer

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 4-0

2. December 3, 2024 – Special

Mayor Carra asked for a motion to Approve the December 3, 2024 Minutes.

On a motion by Councilman DiGraziano, seconded by Council President Tozzi, Council moved to Approve the December 3, 2024 Minutes.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, DiGraziano, Fritzingler, Patente
Nay: x
Absent: Agrawal, Armahizer
Abstain: x
Motion Carried: 4-0

COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

Councilman DiGraziano-Councilman DiGraziano reported that Recreation for 2024 was a great success with the Trunk or Treat event being so successful as well as a soccer program for about 80 kids. The tennis courts will hopefully be ready for the spring and currently you can sign your child up for Tee-Ball. Councilman DiGraziano added that they are hoping to get softball up and running in March as well as trying to get a Dodge Ball event in May. He continued stating they are also looking into a town wide bar-b-que event and an 8-week summer camp.

Councilman Patente-Councilman Patente stated that he did not have anything to report. He added that he attended the latest Recreation meeting and is excited for the upcoming activities they are looking to offer. The Councilman added that the Board of Health hosted a rabies clinic this past Saturday, which he attended and was happy to see how busy it was. Adding that the vaccines are provided by the State and the clinic is not restricted to only Borough Residents.

Councilman Fritzingler-Councilman Fritzingler stated the Historical and Cultural Committee met on January 15th reporting the treasury balance for the month was \$2,626.98 and their trust account was in the amount of \$1,199.15. The group is currently looking to commission a historical mural on the side of the Mangia Buono building. Lastly the Councilman added that it had snowed recently and the DPW employees did a great job clearing the Borough and expressed his gratitude.

Council President Tozzi-Council President Tozzi reported that the holiday decorations will be coming down next week by DPW and added what a great job they did plowing the snow from the storm we just had. He expressed his appreciation for all they do keeping the roadways safe and clean. Council President Tozzi added that he endorses former Assemblymen Jack Ciattarelli for governor.

Mayor Carra-Mayor Carra announced an update regarding the Town Hall meeting with the State Legislatures, the meeting was recently rescheduled to Monday, February 24th at 6:30 p.m. at the Municipal Building. He added that the main topic of discussion would be the recent NJ Transit issues. The Mayor encouraged any resident to attend the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Area in Need of Rehabilitation (NC)

Mayor Carra asked if Borough Engineer Brosnan would give some information relating to the Area in Need of Rehabilitation as he is the planner for the Planning Board. Mr. Brosnan stated that Angela Knowles provided a presentation at the Planning Board in regard to the downtown rehabilitation plan. He stated that the Planning Board had a few comments but generally agreed with her recommendations. Mayor Carra clarified that there would be no action taken tonight adding that he had a question for the Borough Attorney about potential tax abatement options. Borough Attorney Wenner stated that you do not get a 30-year tax exemption under an area in need of rehabilitation. He went on to explain the regulations with

a 5-year tax abatement which would benefit the property owner. They would not get hit with the full assessed value for the improvements until the five years has expired and then whatever the improvement changes were, would be added back to the taxable. Engineer Brosnan added that Angela would be presenting solely the designation of the area, establishing the boundary of that area. Councilman Patente asked for clarification on the letter they received asking for Council to approve something from the Planning Board. He added that there was no detail with the letter. Engineer Brosnan responded stating that the letter written by the Planning Board Attorney, Matt Flynn, was just stating that the Planning Board affirmed Angela's recommendations. The Councilman continued to bring up and state his issue regarding a vote from early fall of 2024 that Council authorized \$10,000.00 for Ms. Knowles to review Somerset Street. Discussion ensued between Councilman Patente and Mayor Carra about the specifications given to Ms. Knowles for the study. The Mayor stated that the Borough did not spend more than the authorized \$10,000.00 on the study and reiterated that the letter from the Planning Board was a recommendation to Council. Further discussion ensued amongst Councilmembers, Mayor Carra and Engineer Brosnan.

Mayor Carra wanted to add for the record that during Executive Session, the Police Chief's contract was discussed. Council agreed with the terms discussed during Executive Session to authorize Resolution No. 2025-01-031, Police Chief Contract for the year 2025 through 2027.

On a motion by Council President Tozzi, seconded by Councilman Fritzingler, Council moved to Approve Resolution No.2025-01-031.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, DiGraziano, Fritzingler, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: Agrawal, Armahizer

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 4-0

NEW BUSINESS

1. CDBG Representatives (EC)

Administrator Colvin stated that this is the Community Development Block Grant where the County disperses Federal HUD money to local communities each year. All of the County participates and have two representatives which would include myself as Administrator and last year it was also Assistant Administrator Vince LoMedico. The CDBG group has asked that one person is appointed by the Mayor and the other by Council. Mayor Carra announced that he would appoint Administrator Colvin and asked for a motion to appoint representative Vince LoMedico.

On a motion by Councilman Fritzingler, seconded by Council President Tozzi, Council moved to Appoint Vince LoMedico as a representative for the CDBG.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, DiGraziano, Fritzingler, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: Agrawal, Armahizer

Abstain: x
Motion Carried: 4-0

2. Addition to Recreation Plaque (NC)

Mayor Carra announced that at the Recreation meeting it was discussed to add Rosemary Shickora's name to the recreation plaque at Frelinghuysen Park. Ms. Shickora has been the secretary or a member of the Recreation Committee for 48 years.

On a motion by Councilman DiGraziano, seconded by Councilman Fritzingler, Council moved to Add Rosemary Shickora's name to the Recreation plaque at Frelinghuysen Park.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, DiGraziano, Fritzingler, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: Agrawal, Armahizer

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 4-0

ORDINANCES – SECOND READING & PUBLIC HEARING

None

ORDINANCES – INTRODUCTION

Ordinance No. 2025-01

Bond Ordinance providing an appropriation of \$2,200,000 for various improvements and purposes for and by the Borough of Raritan, in the County of Somerset, New Jersey, appropriating \$2,090,000 thereof and authorizing the issuance of bonds or notes of the Borough to finance part of the cost thereof.

The purpose of this Ordinance is to authorize the expenditure for various road improvements relating to ongoing drainage issues.

Mayor Carra stated that this ordinance is related to the drainage issues in the Richard Street, Columbus Avenue area. Engineer Brosnan added that after multiple discussions with multiple Borough Officials this ordinance is to ensure we are budgeting the total cost of the project in the event that there may be timing issues with the Department of Transportation reimbursing the Borough. Councilman Patente requested holding off on voting in this until the next meeting adding his concerns that two members of the Council were not present to vote. Mayor Carra stated that the vote this evening was only to introduce the Ordinance and that there would be further discussion amongst Council at the Public Hearing/Adoption at the next meeting.

On a motion by Councilman Fritzingler, seconded by Council President Tozzi, Council moved to Introduce Ordinance No. 2025-01.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, DiGraziano, Fritzingler, Patente

Nay: x
Absent: Agrawal, Armahizer
Abstain: x
Motion Carried: 4-0

CONSENT AGENDA

(Resolution No. 2025-01-021 through No. 2025-01-029)

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Resolution No. 2025-01-021 | Appointing Fund Commissioner and Alternate Fund Commissioner – Statewide Insurance Fund |
| Resolution No. 2025-01-022 | Appointing Risk Management Consultant for 2025 Fund Year |
| Resolution No. 2025-01-023 | Approving 2025 Tower/Wrecker Licenses |
| Resolution No. 2025-01-024 | Approving Budget Transfer |
| Resolution No. 2025-01-025 | Authorizing Disposal of Surplus Computer Equipment – Administration and Finance |
| Resolution No. 2025-01-026 | Authorizing Grant Application Submission – Basilone Basketball Courts |
| Resolution No. 2025-01-027 | Establishing the Borough’s Fair Share Obligations for Affordable Housing – Fourth Round |
| Resolution No. 2025-01-028 | Renewing Shared Services Agreement – Chief Financial Officer |
| Resolution No. 2025-01-29 | Consenting to the Transfer of Rights, Title and Interest – 59 Second Avenue |

Councilman Patente stated that he had two questions regarding the resolutions in the Consent Agenda. First he asked if Council had to approve every grant application submission. Administrator Colvin confirmed that Council must authorize every grant application for submission. Secondly, Councilman Patente asked if Resolution No. 2025-01-027 - Establishing the Borough’s Fair Share Obligations for Affordable Housing – Fourth Round could be pulled and voted on separately.

On a motion by Councilman Fritzing, seconded by Council President Tozzi, Council moved to Approve Resolution No. 2025-01-021 through Resolution No. 2025-01-029 Consent Agenda, excluding Resolution No. 2025-01-027.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, DiGraziano, Fritzing, Patente
Nay: x
Absent: Agrawal, Armahizer
Abstain: x
Motion Carried: 4-0

Councilman Patente stated that he asked for Resolution No. 2025-01-027 to be pulled due to the absence of two Council members. Mayor Carra responded stating that this resolution is due prior to the next Council meeting. He continued explaining that this is what Jim Kyle had presented regarding the 99 verse 100 unit mandated by the State for the Borough’s Fourth Round Obligation. Borough Attorney Wenner responded that what the DCA has assigned to the Borough is not a bad number; 99 or 100 units in a ten-year period. Mr. Wenner continued by

going into further detail regarding the calculations by the DCA and the options the Borough has. Mayor Carra added that Council can have Mr. Kyle come back and have a discussion with the whole Council.

On a motion by Councilman Patente, seconded by Councilman Fritzing, Council moved to Approve Resolution No. 2025-01-027- Establishing the Borough's Fair Share Obligations for Affordable Housing – Fourth Round.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, DiGraziano, Fritzing, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: Agrawal, Armahizer

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 4-0

BILL LIST

Resolution No. 2025-01-030

Approving Bill List

On a motion by Councilman DiGraziano, seconded by Council President Tozzi, Council moved to Approve Resolution No. 2025-01-030-Approving Bills List.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, DiGraziano, Fritzing, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: Agrawal, Armahizer

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 4-0

CERTIFICATION OF FUNDS

1. Michels & Waldron Associates – 9 W. Somerset St. Architectural Services - \$37,561.14
2. Pharos Enterprises LLC – 9 W. Somerset St. Renovations - \$252,224.17

On a motion by Councilman Fritzing, seconded by Councilman Patente, Council moved to Approve the Certification of Funds– 9 W. Somerset St. Architectural Services and 9 W. Somerset St. Renovations.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, DiGraziano, Fritzing, Patente

Nay: x

Absent: Agrawal, Armahizer

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 4-0

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

Dave Marder, 830 Old York Road: Mr. Marder brought up a request for more positivity and wanted to commend Mr. Tozzi for the Holiday décor around town. It helped brighten things up for the residents. He added that the rehabilitation project is something that the town needs. Mr. Marder then asked about signs that had been posted on his street restricting parking from 6:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mayor Carra stated he believed it was New Jersey American Water doing work on certain roads in town but added that the contractors are supposed to notice the residents. Mr. Marder added that his last point is about restricting left-hand turns from Fifth Street onto First Avenue. He stressed how much of a public safety issue this has become. Discussion ensued about what options the Borough as First Avenue is a County Road. Joyce Melitsky of 43 Gaston Avenue reiterated the dangers of the intersection of Fifth Street and First Avenue. She added the numerous accidents that have happened there. Mayor Carra suggested having two Council members look into this further. The Mayor suggested having Councilman Fritzingler and Council President Tozzi head the 'One Way Street Committee.' Mr. Marder continued adding that his last point was about the speed limit on Old York Road. He stated that the speed limit is 25MPH by First Avenue and then it goes up to 35MPH after you have passed the Basilone Statute. Mr. Marder asked if Council could look into lowering the speed to 25MH. He continued to stress the importance of this as many drivers don't abide by the posted speed limit signs once they pass First Avenue. Discussion ensued between Council and Engineer Brosnan about options to lowering the speed limit on Old York Road.

Mayor Carra announced that late last evening Buddy Delucia passed away and he wanted to extend his thoughts and prayers to his family.

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

ADJOURNMENT

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

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

Recorded Vote:

All in favor

Motion passed: 4-0

The Regular Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Kimberly Mathewson
Acting Municipal Clerk

Approved:

Eric M. Colvin
Borough Administrator

Date: _____