

MINUTES

BOROUGH OF RARITAN SPECIAL MEETING

MONDY, JUNE 9, 2025
6:00 P.M. – EXECUTIVE SESSION
7 P.M. – REGULAR SESSION

This Special Meeting of the Governing Body of the Borough of Raritan was called to order by Council President Tozzi in the Meeting Room of the Raritan Municipal Building, 22 First Street, Raritan, NJ 08869 at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, June 9, 2025

Council President Tozzi 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 May 21, 2025.

ROLL CALL

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

INVOCATION AND FLAG SALUTE

Councilman Fritzingler

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution No. 2025-06-082

Entering Executive Session

1. Attorney Client
Habitat for Humanity, Basilone Parade
2. Personnel
Administration, PD, DPW

On motion by Councilman Fritzingler, seconded by Councilman DiGraziano, Council moved to Approve Resolution No. 2025-06-082.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Armahizer, DiGraziano, Fritzingler

Nay: x

Absent: Patente, Mayor Carra

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 5-0

Council convened in Executive Session at 6:01 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION ADJOURNMENT

Council moved to reconvene in Regular Session unanimously.

On motion by Councilman Fritzingler, seconded by Councilman DiGraziano, 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)

Council President Tozzi opened the Public Comment portion of the meeting for members of the public wishing to speak.

Michael Basilone (Active Chair for Basilone Parade Committee)- Mr. Basilone stated that he wanted to address the claims made by Councilman Armahizer during the previous Council meeting. He stated that in early 2024 the committee identified irregularities involving privately raised funds in 2023 financial statements, not municipal or taxpayers' dollars. The Chairman at the time questioned the treasurer, who later resigned. The Police Department was involved as well and it was determined that there was nothing that rose to a criminal act. Since then, the committee has implemented enhanced financial controls that remain in place today. He also stated that the committee has already begun the process of becoming a 501(C)3 nonprofit. Lastly Mr. Basilone stated that the John Basilone Parade is about service, sacrifice, and community and that if anyone on Council wishes to continue the discussion they are prepared with documentation, transparency and the full support of the community.

Patrick Mullaney (Attorney for Basilone Parade Committee)- Mr. Mullaney stated that he has been retained for the purpose of transparency and compliance. He reiterated what Mr. Basilone stated about the investigation and whatever was uncovered has been dealt with. He added that he is available for any questions or concerns anyone from Council may have.

Jim Foohey, 710 Rhine Boulevard- Mr. Foohey stated that he re-read Councilman Aramhizer's letter before attending the meeting this evening and feels it was a mistake to release something like that publicly, adding that there could be consequences and people get hurt. Mr. Foohey continued to express his frustration with the Basilone Committee for how they treated Bruce Doorly after he worked hard for five years as the chairman. Mr. Foohey then stated that he did agree with one thing in the letter, he feels it would be beneficial if the Parade Committee was a Borough Committee. If the Borough does that, they would then have complete oversight.

Councilman Agrawal- Councilman Agrawal asked if he could make a statement before closing Public Comment. He stated that he feels the parade must go on; it is a global parade honoring one of our own. He added that in his opinion he does not agree that the committee should be a Borough entity. If it becomes a Borough Committee, politics could interfere with the Mayor changing or members of Council changing. He does believe there need to be better checks and balances in place, more transparency and it could benefit working with the Borough in tandem to make sure things are running right.

Patrick Mullaney (Attorney for Basilone Parade Committee)- Mr. Mullaney wanted to add that he agrees with the Councilman, the parade that honors the memory of Gunner Sergeant Basilone must go on. Yes, there was a need for more financial controls in place, which there are now and will be in the future.

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

MINUTES

None

COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

Councilman Armahizer – No report

Councilman Agrawal – Councilman Agrawal reported that the Library is extending their hours; Fridays they will be open until 6:00 p.m. and the Saturday they will be open until 4:00 p.m. He added that they also have an arrangement with the Somerset County Library System meaning any of our Borough residents can use any of the libraries within the County System. Moving onto the Board of Health reported 3 marriage licenses, 13 marriage certificates, and 65 death certificate copies; total collected was \$757.00. The School Board reported that the High School Graduation will be held on June 19th and the Councilman expressed his congratulations to all the graduates. Also the schools will be hosting numerous one-week camps over the summer, for more information he advised residents to contact the school or check out their website.

Councilman DiGraziano – Councilman DiGraziano stated that he had no update for recreation as their meeting tomorrow evening.

Councilman Fritzinger – Councilman Fritzinger announced that bulk pick-up will be this Thursday and reminded everyone to wrap any mattresses or upholstered furniture. He added that recycling is also open at Public Works, Monday through Friday and a half day Saturdays for residents to drop off their grass clippings. He then stated that the Historical and Cultural Committee met on May 21st however, there is nothing to report as the recording secretary and treasurer were not in attendance. The Councilman then added that they did commission the artist to star the mural on Mangia Buono as soon as the weather cooperates. He then stated he wanted to respond to Mr. Fidacara's letter that was read at the last Council meeting. He wanted to offer his apologies for the benches along the main street that were moved and added that in the future, communication will be better.

Council President Tozzi – Council President stated that the dedication of the benches on the Nevius Bridge was done by lottery. He is hoping to get a few more benches out there as there is potentially room for more with all the activity, he has been seeing with people enjoying the walking paths to Duke Farms. He then added that DPW had a couple of bulk pick-up fines at the end of last month which had been handled. Council President advised that if any of the residents see anything they feel needs to be taken care of, just give him a call and he will look into it.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Raritan Day (DT)

Council President stated that he wanted to clarify the intentions with Raritan Day. This event would sponsor 1,000 tickets to Patriots Stadium; students from JFK School would be there singing God Bless America and the T-ball team will be able to throw the ball around with some of the players. He added that this great event is at no cost to the tax payers; three people are donating the money and any 50/50 ticket that's sold by the Patriots 40% will go to Recreation. Discussion ensued about who the donations were received by, and some Council members didn't want to have any conflict of interest with a contractor who may potentially submit plans for approval before Council or the Planning Board.

On motion by Council President Tozzi, Seconded by Councilman Fritzingler, Council approved the Somerset Patriots Day to be added to the next meetings Bills List.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, DiGraziano, Fritzingler

Nay: Agrawal, Armahizer

Absent: Patente

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 5-0

NEW BUSINESS

2. Columbus Avenue Guardrail (DF)

Councilman Fritzingler stated that Columbus Avenue has been closed off and the Director of Public Works feels a guard rail installed there would be beneficial for everyone.

On motion by Councilman Fritzingler, Seconded by Councilman DiGraziano, Council approved the installation of a guard rail at the end of Columbus Avenue.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Armahizer, DiGraziano, Fritzingler

Nay: x

Absent: Patente

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 5-0

3. DPW Hire and Promotion (DF)

Councilman Fritzingler stated that one of the Borough's foremen are retiring at the end of the summer and that DPW is looking to promote form within, which will leave an opening within DPW. He also added that it is also time to hire seasonal workers for the summer months, working through September.

On motion by Councilman Fritzingler, Seconded by Council President Tozzi, Council approved the promotion to Foreman, hiring a replacement as well as hiring a seasonal worker for the Public Works Department.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Armahizer, DiGraziano, Fritzingler

Nay: x

Absent: Patente

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 5-0

4. Engineering Proposals (JB)

This matter will be moved to the June 24th Council meeting.

5. Fire Department Request (NC)

Administrator Colvin stated that he does not have the details as the Mayor was going to be requesting the Police presence at the annual Food Truck Festival that will be at Washington School as well as DPW. Mr. Colvin stated that the Fire Department is looking for the same

approval as last year.

On motion by Councilman DiGraziano, seconded by Councilman Fritzing, Council moved to approve covering the cost of Police Officers and DPW employees for the Fire Department's event.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Armahizer, DiGraziano, Fritzing

Nay: x

Absent: Patente

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 5-0

6. Fifth Street Traffic (DT)

Council President Tozzi stated that he and Councilman Fritzing have been going back and fourth about how to make the intersection of Fifth Street and First Avenue and Tillman Street and First Avenue safer. He stated they would like to make it so there is no left turn off of Fifth Street onto First Avenue and no left turns off of Tillman Street onto First Avenue.

On motion by Council President Tozzi, seconded by Councilman Fritzing, Council authorized the Borough Attorney to draft an ordinance restricting turns off of Fifth Street and Tillman Street.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Armahizer, DiGraziano, Fritzing

Nay: x

Absent: Patente

Abstain: Agrawal

Motion Carried: 4-0-1

ORDINANCES – SECOND READING & PUBLIC HEARING

Ordinance No. 2025-13

An Ordinance amending Chapter 40, Officers and Employees, of the Code of the Borough of Raritan to clarify that no Officer

or Employee is required to be a resident of the Borough

The purpose of this Ordinance is to clarify that no Officer or Employee is required to be a resident of the Borough

Council President Tozzi opened the Public Hearing portion of the meeting for members of the public wishing to speak on Ordinance No. 2025-13

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

On a motion by Councilman Fritzing, seconded by Councilman DiGraziano, Council moved to Adopt Ordinance No. 2025-13.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Armahizer, DiGraziano, Fritzing

Nay: x

Absent: Patente

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 5-0

ORDINANCES – INTRODUCTION

None

CONSENT AGENDA

(Resolution No. 2025-06-083 through No. 2025-06-090)

Resolution No. 2025-06-083	Adopting the 2025 Somerset County Hazard Mitigation Plan
Resolution No. 2025-06-084	Acknowledging Automatic Renewal of 2023-2025 Cooperation Agreements Regarding Community Development Block Grant and Home Investment Partnership Programs Activities
Resolution No. 2025-06-085	Approving Chapter 159 – 2025 Clean Communities
Resolution No. 2025-06-086	Authorizing Settlement of Tax Appeal – Raritan Valley Professional Center LLC
Resolution No. 2025-06-087	Authorizing the Execution of MOU – Street Sweeper
Resolution No. 2025-06-088	Authorizing Person-to-Person Transfer of Plenary Retail Consumption Liquor License No. 1816-33-006-003 to Spain 92 Culinary Group, LLP from Spain 92, INC
Resolution No. 2025-06-089	Reappointing Acting Municipal Clerk – Mathewson
Resolution No. 2025-06-090	Awarding Contract – National Watermain Cleaning Company – Storm and Sewer Inspection (Cornell Blvd)

On a motion by Councilman DiGraziano, seconded by Councilman Fritzing, Council moved to Approve Resolution No. 2025-06-083 through Resolution No. 2025-06-090-Consent Agenda.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Armahizer, DiGraziano, Fritzing

Nay: x

Absent: Patente

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 5-0

BILL LIST

Resolution No. 2025-06-091 Approving Bill List

Councilman Agrawal commented that at the last meeting he stated the CGP&H did not have an updated contract however, he announced that they do have a current contract. He then added that the Borough should review the contract before agreeing.

On a motion by Councilman Fritzingler, seconded by Council President Tozzi, Council moved to Approve Resolution No. 2025-03-058-Approving Bills List.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Armahizer, DiGraziano, Fritzingler

Nay: x

Absent: Patente

Abstain: x

Motion Carried: 5-0

CERTIFICATION OF FUNDS

7. Borough of Somerville – 2nd Quarter CFO Shared Services - \$20,000.00
8. Pharos Enterprises, LLC – Renovations at 9 W Somerset St - \$149,371.37
9. Statewide Insurance Fund – Raritan Mall Lawsuit Deductible - \$16,019.97

Councilman Armahizer asked about the benefit of having a shared CFO and if the Borough would benefit from just hiring a CFO at what we currently pay Somerville. Administrator Colvin stated that it is very difficult to find a CFO who would be willing to work for that amount.

On motion by Councilman Fritzingler, seconded by Councilman Armahizer, Council moved to Approve the Certification of Funds – 2nd Quarter CFO Shared Services, Renovations at 9 W Somerset St, and Raritan Mall Lawsuit Deductible.

Recorded Vote

Yea: Tozzi, Agrawal, Armahizer, DiGraziano, Fritzingler

Nay: x

Absent: Patente

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)

Council President Tozzi opened the Public Comment portion of the meeting for members of the public wishing to speak.

Roger Copt, 1120 Rt 202: Mr. Copt wanted to comment regarding the Raritan Day donation from the Raritan Mall and expressed his frustration with the Borough. He mentioned how it would be inappropriate to accept money from him especially with the money that is being paid due to the lawsuit that was filed against the Borough. Mr. Copt then expressed his frustration with the letter Councilman Armahizer posted regarding the mis-use of funds for the Basilone Parade. He feels that the truth needs to be given to the public.

Ana Bongiovi, Bongiovi Funeral Home: Ms. Bongiovi stated that in regard to the \$8,000 dinner at the Raritan Valley Country Club, she paid that herself. Adding that she pays for that dinner whether there is a parade or not, which happened in 2023 when the parade was cancelled last minute due to weather. Adding that she will continue to donate to the parade as a resident of the town and as a business owner, she is happy to give to this committee.

Kim Van Note- Ms. Van Note wanted to address that the parade did not happen in 2023 however, they still had 80 Navy Sailors come the day it was scheduled for, and they needed to be fed. They also had marines from California that were there as guests and they were treated with respect and honor because it's the right thing to do.

Jeff King, 47 Vones Ln- Mr. King asked about the Statewide Insurance payment for the Raritan Mall Lawsuit deductible and if that is a quarterly or twice a year payment. Administrator Colvin responded, stating that the \$16,019.97 payment was the total due with no more payments after that. Mr. King expressed his feelings of a potential conflict of interest with this property owner and cautioned the Borough of dealings that may happen in the future.

Michael Basilone- Mr. Basilone stated that the Parade Committee tries very hard to fundraise for private funding; that is what they use for the dinners and other events they host but there are things that get mixed in. He explained that when they ask for a general to be in attendance, the general is not paid by the government. Their presence is a part of the parade and they need to be fed and have a place to stay. He admitted that before he got involved with the parade committee he did not know the ins and outs of what makes the parade such a success. He added that the committee takes this very seriously and they try hard to do what is best for the town, the marines, veterans, and all those involved in the parade.

Don Tozzi- Council President Tozzi wanted to add that the group that runs the parade are all volunteers and that the Borough should be proud that a hero lived in our town. He also wanted to thank the volunteers and all the members who help make the parade a success year after year.

Joyce Fritchie, 445 Vanderveer – Ms. Fritchie asked about an update on the Food Pantry and if it will be coming back to Raritan. Council President Tozzi allowed Colleen Kempe to respond to that as she was the secretary and treasurer. She stated that it was handed over to the Somerset County Food Bank Network and they are supposed to be finding a location for us to use. She added that June 14th will be the official last day in Raritan. Ms. Fritchie then asked for clarification of the \$5,000.00 donation as she is still confused about the vote. Borough Attorney Wenner stated that the vote was to place that particular bill on the next meeting's agenda. Discussion ensued about if the Borough received the money and if the money can be refunded. Ms. Fritchie then continued by asking about the parade and suggested that the committee write down the expenses and they what's in question and at the next meeting it can be discussed so everyone is fully understanding. She added that she loves the Basilone parade and she has family that has served and she is thankful every day for all those that have served but wants to really understand what is being questioned.

Jeff King, 47 Vones Ln- Mr. King added that the money has already been received by the Borough and at a previous meeting Mr. King suggested putting that donation in the Recreation Trust and holding it until the developer's project is complete. That could help avoid any potential conflicts. He then continued to state that he is still trying to help look for other locations for the Food Pantry and there may be a potential location donated to the Food Pantry however

there is some work that would need to get done. He wanted everyone to know he is still looking into possible resolutions and it's not totally dead yet.

Colleen Kempe, 114 Sherman Ave: Ms. Kempe asked about the restricted turns from Tillman and Fifth Street. She also asked what is going to happen with all the traffic that will now be backed up into other neighborhoods in that area. Discussion ensued with possible solutions and concerns amongst Council. Her second comment was about recreation and that there was no report since the last meeting. Councilman DiGraziano clarified that the lack of report is not because nothing is going on, he has been out of the country for the last two weeks and the next recreation meeting is tomorrow evening. Ms. Kempe stated that she feels someone should be making sure jobs are being done if they are getting paid and continued to express her frustration with how recreation in this town is being run.

Joan McKelvey, Basilone Committee Volunteer- Ms. McKelvey stated that she has been on the parade committee for over 20 years and she is honored to be a part of the event. It is the only parade in the country that honors a war hero. She went on to express her frustrations with the claims in Councilman Armahizer's letter. She felt the accusations are insulting, unprofessional, and have no factual evidence. She asked the Councilman to stop slandering the committee on social media and stated that if there are questions or concerns to just reach out to them.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Council President Tozzi asked for a motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting.

On a motion by Councilman Fritzing, seconded by Councilman Armahizer, Council moved to Adjourn the Regular Meeting.

Recorded Vote:

All in favor

Motion passed: 5-0

The Regular Meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Kimberly Mathewson
Acting Municipal Clerk

Date: _____