

Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Verona Township Council on Tuesday, August 31, 2021, beginning at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom video conferencing platform (Meeting ID: 952 6266 2770).

Call to Order:

Municipal Clerk reads notice of Open Public Meetings law. The notice requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act have been satisfied with respect to this meeting of the Township Council which is being held via Zoom video conferencing due to restrictions on indoor public gatherings resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the time and date were included in the public meeting notice. This information, along with the public internet link and telephone call-in information was posted in the Municipal Building, and sent the official newspapers of the Township, the Verona-Cedar Grove Times and the Star Ledger and MyVeronaNJ.com, TAPinto and the Patch, the official online news source(s) of the Township, at least 48 hours preceding the start time of this meeting. The agenda and public handouts for this meeting can be viewed online at [www.veronanj.org/councilmeetings](http://www.veronanj.org/councilmeetings). A public comment period will be held in the order it is listed on the meeting agenda and instructions on how to comment will be provided at the appropriate time. This meeting is being recorded, both audibly and visually for retention purposes and for rebroadcast on the Township's YouTube.

Roll Call:

Mayor Alex Roman, Deputy Mayor Christine McGrath, Councilman Jack McEvoy, Councilwoman Cynthia Holland and Councilman Chris Tamburro. Township Manager Matthew Cavallo, Township Attorney Brian Aloia and Municipal Clerk Jennifer Kiernan are also present.

Township Manager Matthew Cavallo provides an update on the state of the Township.

COVID is spreading quickly in nearly all of NJ. – Unfortunately, since our last meeting on August 16, Verona has an additional 37 reported COVID cases. The CDC recommends that everyone – vaccinated and unvaccinated – should wear masks in public spaces indoors, based on new guidelines the CDC announced last week. All Verona employees, volunteers and contractors are again wearing masks indoors. Visitors to municipal offices are also asked to don a mask prior to entering the building. If anyone doesn't have a mask, one will be provided to you prior to service. The County is gearing up for vaccine booster shots at the former Kmart in West Orange, Essex County College in Newark and the former Sears in Livingston. We are working with the County and their Transportation Office to make sure our vulnerable populations can get vaccinated as soon as possible. Anyone who needs a ride to a vaccination site, please call the Community Center at (973) 857-4832 or the Manager's Office and we will help you.

PFOA Remediation Update: NJDEP approved our Public Notice on August 18. Original deadline to mail the public notice was August 22 but since the NJDEP did not provide approval until August 18, we were provided an extension until September 1. The Public Notice was sent to the printer/mailer on August 20. It was delivered to the Post Office on August 30. It is expected to be delivered to our water customers on either September 1 or September 2. The Public Notice is being mailed to all customers who receive a bill plus individual condos and apartments who do not receive water bills. We have 4,180 water customers that normally receive invoices and we mailed 5,970 notices. The notice is being published in the Verona-Cedar Grove Times in their weekly publication on Thursday, September 2, 2021. It will be posted to the Township's website tomorrow morning. It will be distributed on all Social Media including the Township's Official Facebook Page on Wednesday, September 1, 2021. It will be distributed via the Township's online newsletter and the Verona Public Library's online newsletter on Wednesday, September 1, 2021. It will be distributed via the Verona Public Schools to all parents/guardians of students and all staff members of the District on Wednesday, September 1, 2021. A notice via the Township's Reverse 911 via text message and email will be sent on Wednesday, September 1, 2021. The notice reads as follows:

“The Township blends water purchased from Passaic Valley Water Commission with water supplied by our Fairview Avenue Well and Linn Drive Well. Even though the New Jersey Safe Drinking Water Act allows water systems up to a year after receipt of the results that demonstrate an exceedance of the MCL that constitutes a violation to take any action necessary to bring the water into compliance with the MCL, as of July 28, 2021, out of an abundance of caution the Township has removed the Fairview Avenue Well from service. The Linn Drive Well was out of service for repair during the first half of 2021 so sampling did not occur. However, based on the results of preliminary samples taken in 2020, we expect water from the Linn Drive Well will also exceed the MCL for PFOA. Following suit, we will keep the Linn Drive Well out of service. The Township is now solely utilizing water purchased from the Passaic Valley Water Commission (NJ1605002) until such time as we remediate this issue. The Township Engineer is working with

the water system's consulting engineer to design and engineer a proper remediation system for both wells. We anticipate being able to resolve this problem within a year."

Mr. Cavallo clarifies that the water we are currently purchasing from PVWC is not exceeding the MCL for PFOA per the NJDEP guidelines.

On the agenda this evening is the scheduled public hearing and the scheduled adoption of a Bond Ordinance appropriating \$500,000 to fund the necessary design and engineering necessary to implement the necessary remediation. We are currently in the process of soliciting proposals from engineering firms to complete the design and engineering work required. The proposals are due back to the Township on September 24. Once designed and NJDEP approval is granted, we will immediately go out to bid for the construction of the remediation.

As was mentioned at our previous meeting, we believe that we will need to install a carbon filtration system but this will be need to be reviewed by whatever engineer is selected to design the system for us. Once the final decision is made, the engineer will come to the Council and make a public presentation as to the type of system and any technical questions that the Council or the public might have.

It is too early to give an accurate timeline but after speaking with several companies that manufacture PFOA remediation systems, construction may take between 3-4 months due to time necessary to manufacture the holding cylinders for the medium.

The Township has investigated the issue with the Linn Drive Water Tank overflowing at times and washing out part of the Hilltop Reservation walking trails. We believe the transducer on the control system may have taken a lightning strike and is now not operative. A new transducer has been ordered and we are awaiting delivery of it. We have adjusted the level in the tank to prevent overflows as much as possible but until it is replaced, the tank might overflow if water levels are high. I do not have an ETA as this point for the new transducer.

The Roadway Reconstruction project on Lynwood Road continues. Paving was completed last Friday. Line striping, core sampling, right-of-way cleanup and tree replacement still are yet to occur.

The Township is seeking community volunteers (including current High School students) for a working group to help develop a mission statement about Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the community. This mission statement would be presented to the Council for consideration at a meeting before the end of the year and, if adopted, inform further action in the near future. If anyone is interested, please see the form on the Township website. Filling out this form does not commit you to anything beyond that initial goal of creating the statement. REQUIREMENTS: \*Must be a Verona Resident \*Must be ready to work collaboratively towards a set goal \*Must be able to attend the two meetings on Tuesday, September 28th from 6:00pm - 7:00pm (ending before the Board of Ed. Meeting) and Tuesday, October 5th at 7:00pm. Subsequent meetings may be planned if necessary.

The September 11<sup>th</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Remembrance Program will be held September 11, 2021 beginning at 8:45 a.m.

Verona Restaurant Week runs from Wednesday, September 15 through Sunday September 19. NJ Motor Vehicle Commission Mobile Unit to visit Verona Community Center on September 27. Essex County Household Hazardous Waste Collection is on Saturday, October 2 and the Essex County Computer & Electronics Recycling Day is Saturday, October 16.

#### **ORDINANCE No. 2021-24**

### **BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR PRELIMINARY PLANNING EXPENSES FOR IMPROVEMENTS AT THE FAIRVIEW AVENUE AND LINN DRIVE WELLS IN AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF VERONA, IN THE COUNTY OF ESSEX, NEW JERSEY, APPROPRIATING \$500,000 THEREFOR AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$500,000 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE TOWNSHIP TO FINANCE THE COST THEREOF**

The Municipal Clerk reads Ordinance No. 2021-24 by title into record.

Motion to adopt Ordinance No. 2021-24 is moved by Councilman Tamburro; seconded by Councilwoman Holland.

Public Hearing:  
None.

**ROLL CALL:**  
**AYES: Holland, Tamburro, McEvoy, McGrath, Roman**  
**NAYS:**

Ordinance No. 2021-24 is adopted 5-0 and will be published according to law.

**ORDINANCE No. 2021-25**

**AMENDING CHAPTER 402 "RENTAL REGULATIONS", ARTICLE I "RENT CONTROL, SECTION 21 "PERMITTED INCREASES"**

Motion to introduce Ordinance No. 2021-25 is moved by Councilwoman Holland; seconded by Councilman Tamburro.

**ROLL CALL:**  
**AYES: Holland, Tamburro, McEvoy, McGrath, Roman**  
**NAYS:**

Ordinance No. 2021-25 is introduced 5-0 and will be published according to law and a public hearing will be held on September 20, 2021.

Public Comment on Proposed Resolutions:

None.

**RESOLUTION No. 2021-115**

A motion was made by Councilman McEvoy; seconded by Councilman Tamburro that the following resolution be adopted:

**AWARDING RFP 2021-01 -  
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES - MASTER PLAN  
TO H2M ASSOCIATES, INC.**

**WHEREAS**, *N.J.S.A. 40:55D-89* requires that the governing body shall, at least every 10 years, provide for a general reexamination of its master plan and development regulations by the planning board; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 40A:11-4.3*, on April 19, 2021 by Resolution No. 2021-058 the Township Council authorized competitive contracting for the solicitation of proposals for the examination and revision of the municipal Master Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township received eleven (11) proposals for RFP 2021-01 - PROFESSIONAL SERVICES - MASTER PLAN on May 11, 2021; and

**WHEREAS**, an evaluation committee made up of Planning Board Chairman Lonergan, Ms. Pearson, Mr. Camuti, Mr. DeOld and Board Attorney Mascera was convened to evaluate the proposal received; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 5:34-4.3(f)*, before reviewing any proposals, each person evaluating the proposals assessed their own affiliations and financial interest and those of their families that relate to their duties as someone evaluating a proposal to ensure they do not have a conflict of interest; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 5:34-4.3(g)*, prior to evaluating the proposals, each individual participating in the evaluation of a proposal executed a statement in accordance with *N.J.A.C. 5:34-4.3(f)* certifying they do not have a conflict of interest and said statements were filed with the Township Manager, prior to the beginning of the evaluation process; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposers have consented that the proposals be held for consideration up to 120 days after the receipt of the proposals pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 40A:11-4.5(e)*; and

**WHEREAS**, the evaluation committee met on July 13, 2021, July 22, 2021 and August 17, 2021 to evaluate and rank the proposals; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township Manager/Qualified Purchasing Agent on behalf of the RFP Evaluation Committee in a report/memorandum dated August 18, 2021 has determined that the proposal made by H2M Associates, Inc., 119 Cherry Hill Road, Suite 110, Parsippany, New Jersey 07054 is the is the most advantageous, price and other factors considered and recommends the award of the contract to H2M Associates, Inc.; and

**WHEREAS**, on August 26, 2021 by Resolution No. 2021-05, the Planning Board recommended the contract for RFP 2021-01 - PROFESSIONAL SERVICES - MASTER PLAN be awarded by the Township Council to H2M Associates, Inc., 119 Cherry Hill Road, Suite 110, Parsippany, New Jersey 07054 in an amount not to exceed \$83,868 (\$69,890 for tasks 1-11 plus a 20% contingency for additional tasks that might be necessary for the examination and revision of the municipal Master Plan) without further consent of the governing body.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Township Council of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey concurring with the recommendation of the Planning Board hereby authorizes the award of the contract for RFP 2021-01 - PROFESSIONAL SERVICES - MASTER PLAN to H2M Associates, Inc., 119 Cherry Hill Road, Suite 110, Parsippany, New Jersey 07054 in an amount not to exceed \$83,868 (\$69,890 for tasks 1-11 plus a 20% contingency for additional tasks that might be necessary for the examination and revision of the municipal Master Plan) without further consent of the governing body.

**ROLL CALL:**

**AYES:** Holland, Tamburro, McEvoy, McGrath, Roman

**NAYS:**

**RESOLUTION No. 2021-116**

A motion was made by Councilwoman Holland; seconded by Deputy Mayor McGrath that the following resolution be adopted:

**URGING FEDERAL FUNDING BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE CITIZENS OF VERONA, AS WELL AS OTHER NEW JERSEY COMMUNITIES, THAT ARE ALREADY TAKING ACTION TO PROVIDE CLEANER WATER**

**WHEREAS**, Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), consisting of perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA), and perfluorohexane sulfonate (PFHxS), are a group of manmade chemicals with many commercial and industrial uses that have been associated with a variety of adverse health effects in humans; and

**WHEREAS**, PFAS can dissolve in water, human exposure to PFAS in drinking water is primarily from ingestion; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the National Resource Defense Council, due to their widespread use and the fact that they don't break down and can spread quickly through our environment, PFAS are now detected in the bodies of 99 percent of Americans; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has issued a lifetime drinking water Health Advisory for PFOA and PFOS of 70 parts per trillion (ppt) individually or when concentrations of PFOA and PFOS are combined; and

**WHEREAS**, New Jersey is especially hard-hit by PFAS contamination, with 1.6 million of the 6 million people exposed to levels of PFOA and PFOS that exceed the USEPA's lifetime health advisory of 70 parts per trillion (ppt) live in New Jersey – the most of any single state; and

**WHEREAS**, New Jersey became the first state to establish a drinking water standard for a PFAS chemical based on current scientific information when it set a Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for PFNA, at 13 parts per trillion (ppt); and

**WHEREAS**, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), by recent rule adoption in June 2020, has also established enforceable MCLs for PFOA at 14 ppt and PFOS at 13 ppt; and

**WHEREAS**, actions necessary to remediate the contamination of PFAS in water systems, is very costly to municipalities; and

**WHEREAS**, Verona, like many communities in New Jersey, has aging municipal utility infrastructure and related drinking water concerns, including but not limited to PFAS that may be helped by federal assistance; and

**WHEREAS**, multiple bills proposed in Congress, including H.R. 3684, the “Infrastructure Bill,” with amendments pending before the House of Representatives, have provisions that may provide funding for remediation and infrastructure upgrades to address PFAS; and

**WHEREAS**, through New Jersey’s leadership and early action, these contaminants were already identified in Verona’s municipal wells and the remediation and abatement effort is currently in progress; and

**WHEREAS**, Verona wishes to ensure that the remediation actions taken now, for the protection of our citizens, can qualify for funding that may later become available through this Infrastructure Bill or other federal funding; and

**WHEREAS**, it is critical that the Infrastructure Bill, or other federal legislation, ensure that federal assistance for the remediation of these contaminants be available to communities, like Verona, that are already addressing drinking water quality for our citizens, and any accompanying State legislation or regulations do the same.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Township Council of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, State of New Jersey, that representatives of the citizens of Verona are urged to ensure that federal funding be made available to the citizens of Verona, as well as other New Jersey communities, that are already taking action to provide cleaner water; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that copies of this Resolution shall be forwarded to the entire Congressional Delegation representing the State of New Jersey including Senators Robert Menendez and Cory Booker and Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill, Governor Philip D. Murphy, State Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney, Speaker of the New Jersey General Assembly Craig Coughlin, Senator Joseph Pennacchio, Assemblyman Jay Webber, Assemblywoman Betty Lou DeCroce, NJDEP Commissioner Shawn M. LaTourette and the New Jersey League of Municipalities.

**ROLL CALL:**

**AYES: Holland, Tamburro, McEvoy, McGrath, Roman**

**NAYS:**

Public Comment:

None.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 p.m. is motioned by Deputy Mayor McGrath; seconded by Councilman Tamburro. Vote: 5-0

The next regular scheduled meeting is September 20, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Jennifer Kiernan, Municipal Clerk

  
Alex Roman, Mayor

APPROVED: September 20, 2021