

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Verona Township Council on Monday, February 8, 2021, beginning at 7:01 p.m. via Zoom video conferencing platform.

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 Verona/Cedar Grove 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. 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 Jack McEvoy, Deputy Mayor Alex Roman, Councilman Kevin Ryan, Councilman Ted Giblin and Councilwoman Christine McGrath. Township Manager Matthew Cavallo, Brian Aloia, Township Attorney and Municipal Clerk Jennifer Kiernan are also present.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor McEvoy reads a proclamation for Black History Month.

Mayor McEvoy thanks the town workers for their efforts in cleaning up last week's storm as well as yesterday's storm. DPW and Building and Grounds did an excellent job in enabling us to drive safely through town. He also congratulates Captain Stephen DePoe who retires tomorrow. He thanks Captain DePoe for his years of service and wishes him well.

Manager's Report:

DPW is still working to remove large piles of snow where possible. There is an issue with spot accessibility in Lot 1 during school hours right now and DPW is working to address it.

The next election is the Municipal Election on Tuesday, May 11, 2021. Verona residents interested in running for Township Council in this Municipal Election must be a registered voter in the Township of Verona and have been a resident of the Township for at least 1 year. Three seats will be open for a four-year term.

Interested residents can request a packet via the link on the Township website homepage starting today. Packets will then be sent to the requestors via email and regular mail. Hard copies are not available at Town Hall as the building is closed to the public. The deadline for submitting a complete candidate packet to be on the ballot is March 8, 2021. Contact the Township Clerk for more information.

Final preparations are being put on the ordinance. We will be meeting next week to have a special presentation by our Township's engineering professionals on this ordinance prior to its introduction.

Should be presented to the Township Council by the end of the week.

Dog licenses expired on January 31. Call the Community Center for inquiries.

The owners of The Guac Spot, the innovative burrito and taco eatery on Grove, had a fire in their Little Falls home on Thursday. The family is safe but the home is damaged, the Chamber of Commerce has organized a GoFundMe to help them through this difficult time. Mr. Cavallo invites Steven Neale to explain the Sustainable Essex Alliance.

Councilmember's Reports:

Deputy Mayor Roman reiterates his appreciation with the storm clean-up and the Town services pulling together and get the town cleaned up quickly. He reports that the Planning Board discussed the Spectrum project at their last meeting. He thanks all the people who sent him correspondence regarding the project. He has read all their suggestions and opinions and thanks all who get involved.

Councilman Ryan reports the Green Team met on February 3, 2021. Team Coordinator Steven Neale announced additional funds were received for the Community Garden from the Landsberger Foundation. Mr. Ryan states the Green Team hopes to get the garden going in mid-March. The Environmental Commission has posted videos on their website on what can and cannot be recycled. He congratulates Captain DePoe on his retirement.

Councilman Giblin commends the municipal employees in their response to the storm. He states the DPW crew really came through for the Town. He reports the relationship the Township has with the Board of Education in regards to snow removal is a great shared service. He congratulates Captain DePoe who was Acting Chief for 1 year after the sudden departure of Mitchell Stern.

Councilwoman McGrath applauds DPW for their heroic effort in managing the storm that had a large amount of snow. She asks the Township Manager if, at the next staff meeting, he will hold a debriefing of lessons learned and identify opportunities. Mr. Cavallo states that key Department Heads involved already speak daily. Ms. McGrath asks if expenses due to the storm can be discussed at the next meeting. Mr. Cavallo responds that rough numbers of overtime and salt expense will be brought before the Council at the February 22nd meeting.

The Councilwoman thanks the Mayor for the proclamation for Black History Month. The library is offering a seminar on "How to talk to Kids About Racism" on February 17. Those interested can pre-register at VeronaLibrary.org. There is also a scheduled seminar entitled, "Let's Talk About Racism" for children in grades 3-5 on February 23 at 4pm. Tomorrow, the Board of Education has invited the members of the Council to attend their presentation on micro-aggressions. She congratulates Captain DePoe and wishes him well.

ORDINANCE No. 2021-02

AMENDING CHAPTER A565 "FEES" OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF VERONA BY AMENDING CERTAIN SECTIONS THEREOF

The Municipal Clerk reads Ordinance No. 2021-02 by title into record.

Motion to adopt Ordinance No. 2021-02 is moved by Councilman Ryan; seconded by Councilwoman McGrath.

Public Hearing:

Carol Thomas, [REDACTED]

Council Discussion.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

Ordinance No. 2021-02 is adopted 5-0 and will be published according to law.

ORDINANCE No. 2021-03

ESTABLISHING CHAPTER 180 ENTITLED "CHILDREN'S FUND" OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF VERONA

The Municipal Clerk reads Ordinance No. 2021-03 by title into record.

Motion to adopt Ordinance No. 2021-03 is moved by Mayor McEvoy; seconded by Councilman Ryan.

Public Hearing:
None.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

Ordinance No. 2021-03 is adopted 5-0 and will be published according to law.

RESOLUTION No. 2021-031

A motion was made by Councilwoman McGrath; seconded by Councilman Ryan that the following resolution be adopted:

**REFUNDING ESCROW PAYMENT
54 OAKRIDGE ROAD**

WHEREAS, Escrow fees, for the Board of Adjustment, were received from Harry Sun and Sonia Gray, for property located at [REDACTED] and the fees have been held in Trust; and

WHEREAS, certification has been received from the Engineer to release these funds, from Trust, as follows:

ESCROW AMOUNT	EXPENSES	AMOUNT TO BE REFUNDED
\$500.00	\$104.00	\$396.00

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex New Jersey that the Chief Financial Officer and Tax Collector be authorized to refund, from the Trust Account, \$396.00 to Harry Sun and Sonia Gray, [REDACTED]

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2021-032

A motion was made by Councilwoman McGrath; seconded by Councilman Ryan that the following resolution be adopted:

PERMITTING ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED IN EXECUTIVE SESSION

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975, permits the exclusion of the Public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exists.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township of the Township of Verona, County of Essex, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The public shall be excluded from discussion of an action upon the hereinafter specified subject matter.
2. The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows:
 - a. Contract Negotiations pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 (7)*
 - Spectrum360

- b. Pending, Ongoing, or Anticipated Litigation pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 (7)*
 - Essex Fells Water
- c. It is anticipated at this time that the above stated subject matter will be made public when said subject has been fully discussed by the Council, and the attorney rules this matter may be brought before the public without jeopardizing any pending litigation.
- d. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

New Business:

Council discusses a new draft of a Rent Control ordinance prepared by the Township Manager and Municipal Clerk.

Public Comment:

Jason Hyndman, [REDACTED]
Kathleen Laterza, [REDACTED]

Adjournment:

Council enters into Executive Session at 8:49 pm. Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:29 pm is motioned by Councilman Ryan; seconded by Deputy Mayor Roman.

The next regular scheduled meeting is February 22, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Kiernan
Jennifer Kiernan, Municipal Clerk

Jack McEvoy
Jack McEvoy, Mayor

APPROVED: February 22, 2021