

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Verona Township Council on Monday, October 4, 2021, beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building, 600 Bloomfield Avenue, Verona, New Jersey and 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 and in person due to 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 Alex Roman, Deputy Mayor Christine McGrath, Councilman Jack McEvoy, Councilwoman Cynthia Holland and Councilman Chris Tamburro. Township Attorney Brian Aloia and Municipal Clerk Jennifer Kiernan are also present. Steve Neale, Director of Administration and Economic Development is Acting Township Manager as Mr. Cavallo is out of town.

Mayor's Report:

Essex County Liaison Julius Coltre reports that testing is still available at both Kmart and Essex County College. FEMA is assisting with applications for grant funds at Kmart from 8am - 5pm, Monday through Saturday. The County will hold Electronic Recycling at 99 Bradford Avenue in Cedar Grove on October 16 from 8am-Noon. Strut Your Mutt is being held in Brookdale Park and Grover Cleveland Park on October 23 and Gardens Aglow is at 6pm on October 29. The Highlawn Pavilion in Eagle Rock Reservation is under new management. Mr. Coltre also reports that the fencing near the waterfall in Verona Park is being repaired.

Mayor Roman reports that Verona Fights Hunger week is October 17 through the 23rd. It is a worthwhile cause. He appreciates Councilwoman Holland's work on issues relating to flooding and advocating for us. The Mayor comments on congestion pricing, which is on the verge of implementation. New York City announced that there will be double tolling at both the Lincoln and Holland tunnels bringing a total charge of \$27 to travel in and out of New York City from New Jersey.

Manager's Report:

Mr. Neale asks the Municipal Clerk to give an update on the upcoming General Election.

Mr. Neale reports that unfortunately, since September 20, Verona has an additional 19 reported COVID cases. 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.

For the PFOA Remediation Update, Mr. Neale reports that On Thursday the Township received 5 proposals from engineering firms to design the required PFOA remediation for both the Fairview and Linn Drive Wells. We will be meeting later this week and next week to review and make our recommendations for award. Please reiterate to those you speak to that the water we are currently purchasing from PVWC is safe to drink and not exceeding the MCL for PFOA per the NJDEP guidelines.

As was already mentioned by our County Liaison, FEMA representatives are available at Kmart

in West Orange. Anyone looking to apply for FEMA Disaster Relief, you should visit [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://www.DisasterAssistance.gov). There is a link on our homepage which provides a list of items you will need and who to expect when you are filing for assistance.

Both projects for repairs on Claremont Avenue and Afterglow Avenue have been substantially completed. We are reviewing the invoices now in order to close the Contract out.

The Town wide Block Party was a very successful event. Mr. Neale thanks The Dad Band, Hearth Realty, Eight Hills Caterers, the township staff, council and all the residents for making it a fun-filled day for the whole family. We look forward to expanding the event next year

Halloween House Decorating Contest is being sponsored by Hearth Realty Group. A \$1,000 donation will be made to the charity of the overall winner's choice. To enter, text a picture of your house to 973-913-5055 or tag @heartherealtygroup on Instagram. Deadline to enter is 10/28.

International Walk to School Day, hosted by the Verona Environmental Commission is this Wednesday, October 6. We encourage everyone to meet up with neighbors and friends and plan to walk to and from school that day.

There is a free rabies clinic this Wednesday, October 6 at the Town Garage, 5 Ozone Ave. Dogs will be vaccinated between 6:00pm and 6:45pm and cats will be vaccinated from 6:45pm to 7:30pm. The rabies vaccine is recommended every two years, mandated every three years and necessary for animal licensure.

This Wednesday, October 6th is also Family Night, brought to you by the Verona Municipal Alliance Committee. The purpose of Family Night is to provide Verona families a cleared schedule to enjoy quality time with each other. Family mealtime is an effective tool in fostering family unity and helping children and adolescents remain substance free. Local restaurants will once again be offering discounts for Verona families who don't want to cook at home. You can view the deals and download a coupon sheet at vmacnj.org. VMAC would like to remind you that Dinner Does Make a Difference!

The Verona Food Truck Festival will be held on Sunday, October 10th from 3:00pm-7:00pm. This year the festival is being held in the Civic Center. There will be food trucks, a touch-a-truck area, and inflatables for kids, a beer garden for adults and local vendors. You can buy tickets online ahead of time by visiting their page on Facebook: Verona Food Truck Festival.

Eric Mortenson Scholarship Fund Committee proudly announces that the Fall Golf Outing will once again be played at Montclair Golf Club and will be the primary fundraiser for the Annual Eric Mortenson Memorial Scholarship which is presented each year at Verona High School. Registration is now open and you can download the form at VeronaNJ.org/Events. Please return registrations to the Verona Recreation Department, 880 Bloomfield Ave. along with full payment. The Town Wide Garage Sale, sponsored by the Verona Women's Club is Saturday, October 16.

Conservancy Fall Cleanup Day - The Verona Park Conservancy is hosting a cleanup day on Saturday October 16 from 9:00am - 11:00am. All are welcome and all they ask is for you to bring gloves and a big smile. Please meet near the boathouse.

Join the Sustainable Verona team with a cleanup along the Verona portion of the West Essex Trail on Sunday, October 17th at 9:30am. Please meet in the Verona High School Parking lot. Bring your own water. Disposable Gloves, garbage bags and grabbers will be available. All are welcome.

A Landlord Tenant Informational and Resources Webinar is being held online on Thursday, October 21. This webinar will focus on current landlord tenant court processes. Essex Vicinage Special Civil Part judges and staff will discuss a variety of available services, with a focus on resources for landlords and tenants. This webinar is free and open to the public but registration is required. You can register by clicking the link for the flyer on our website at www.VeronaNJ.org/Events.

The Minette's Angels Foundation Walk is being held on Thursday, October 21, The First Presbyterian Church of Verona is holding a Trunk or Treat Event on Sunday, October 24, They are also holding a Fish Fry on Friday, October 29 and on Saturday, October 30 the Verona Public

Library, Junior Woman's Club of Verona and the Township are hosting Fall-O-Ween, which will be directly followed by the Downtown Trick or Treating Event. All of these events are currently posted on our website on veronanj.org/events, on our calendar and all social media channels if you want to find out more. More information to come on those events at the next meeting.

There are a litany of meetings of our various Boards and Committees coming up. Residents are urged to check the Township's website calendar for those important dates.

The Township is in desperate need of Crossing Guards. Anyone interested in serving as crossing guard please contact the Police Department Records Bureau.

As the Council is already aware, Matt Laracy accepted appointment as a CFO in another municipality. Resumes have been received for the position and will be reviewed this month. In the interim, Jennifer Muscara has been appointed Temporary Chief Financial Officer.

With the expected retirements of Rick Neale as the Fire Official, a posting for replacement part-time Fire Official has been posted. Resumes are still being sought.

The Township is also in desperate need of another part-time senior bus driver. We have recently needed to cut back on some of our senior routes due to the bus driver's unavailability to work more than 25 hours per week. Anyone who is interested please contact the Township Manager's office.

Municipal Offices will be closed on Monday, October 11 in observance of Columbus Day.

Deputy Mayor McGrath thanks the VMAC team for the great list of coupons for Family Night. She attended the Valerie Run/Walk in Verona Park. She thanks Steve Neale for holding the Town Wide Block Party. She stopped at the Community Center when FEMA was there last week. She states that FEMA is encouraging all residents who incurred damage from Ida to apply for a Small Business loan as even if you are rejected, the application opens you up for more aid. The Deputy Mayor also stopped at the MVC Mobile Unit in Verona. She also attended the Bamboo Village opening.

Councilman McEvoy attended the Valerie Fund Run/Walk and met the founding couple and thanks them for their involvement. He states it's an honor to have this event in Verona Park. He reports that the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Walk in October 10 in Verona Park. He also reports that Ariane Kitchen & Bar has closed. He thanks Ariane and Mike Duarte for all their volunteering efforts and giving back to the community. He wishes them good luck in their future endeavors.

Councilman Tamburro also attended the Valerie Fund Run/Walk. He thanks the Verona merchants for the service and being at these events. He wishes Bamboo Village all the best. He attended the Celebration of Pets that was held yesterday in the Civic Center. The Verona Festival of Bands is October 23. There will be sixteen bands present and he encourages all to attend.

Councilwoman Holland submitted her report in writing: Good Evening. Since our last meeting, I have the following updates - First, I'd like to acknowledge that today is my 13th wedding anniversary. So I want to thank my husband for his patience (although I clearly have learned a lot of patience from our marriage as well), but also recognize his support for my being up here for the residents of Verona while he's home reviewing the homework, doing the test review, feeding the kids, and walking the dogs. We've made it through 2 floods, one endless global pandemic, and countless other crazy adventures; so here's to lucky number 13!! Moving on from there:

Mr. Neale mentioned VEC's Walk to School Day initiative. I am co-chair of the event at Forest Avenue School, where my youngest is in second grade. It's a lot of fun. I want to thank the VPD assisting the students walking (and cycling - it's actually Walk/Bike day). Regarding the celebration of pets, Councilman Tamburro, you're welcome to adopt one of my dogs.

The Rec Advisory Committee held their monthly meeting; a variety of topics were discussed, including the disability inclusion initiative. I am grateful those that have reached out have received accommodation, but I do think more needs to be done to ensure we are inclusive of the disabled community.

October is Disability Awareness Month, which focuses this year on ensuring that people with disabilities have full access to employment and community involvement. With that in mind, the DEI subcommittee had our first meeting, which we'll hopefully discuss later this evening in New Business.

I want to thank the Township Wastewater system operator and our engineering staff, as well as Manager Cavallo for spending a lot of time with me at the Wastewater Treatment Plan, reviewing the maps, the SCADA, the facility, and - most notably - showing me where the river came over the retaining wall into the "old plant" - not the "new plant." We will also discuss stormwater in New Business, but for my part, I just want to say that it's been very gratifying to connect our Township Administration with relevant parties at the DEP, in particular the Project Navigation team, who will hopefully assist Verona. In addition, Rutgers responded to my request for researchers to include Verona (the Peckman River and its Tributaries) in their mapping of Ida damage. You may have seen their white van around. Rutgers is also going to take drone footage of the Peckman and tributaries, which is something our engineering staff was seeking. I'm very glad I can support our staff as they gather this necessary information.

As to flooding, I understand that Cedar Grove is likely addressing the Peckman in their meeting this evening as well. Perhaps we can collaborate positively with neighbors in the future on matters that concern the Peckman. Finally, I want to note the continuing consternation of anyone watching the progress of the federal infrastructure bill (or anyone that watched Saturday Night Live)... I cannot underscore enough how critical it is for funding from the federal government to support the states and local governments that must address water quality and climate resilience issues. As a Council, we issued a resolution and the Township Administration sent a letter urging federal action, but I encourage residents to act as well. Please have your voice heard. Thank you. That concludes my report.

ORDINANCE No. 2021-26

BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR VARIOUS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS IN AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF VERONA, IN THE COUNTY OF ESSEX, NEW JERSEY, APPROPRIATING \$3,365,000 THEREFOR, INCLUDING \$505,000 EXPECTED TO BE RECEIVED AS A NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION GRANT, AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$3,346,500 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE TOWNSHIP TO FINANCE PART OF THE COST THEREOF

The Municipal Clerk reads Ordinance No. 2021-26 by title into record.

Motion to adopt Ordinance No. 2021-26 is moved by Councilman Tamburro; seconded by Councilwoman Holland.

Public Hearing:

Kevin Ryan, [REDACTED]

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, Tamburro, McEvoy, McGrath, Roman

NAYS:

Ordinance No. 2021-26 is adopted 5-0 and will be published according to law.

ORDINANCE No. 2021-27

BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR VARIOUS WATER AND SEWER UTILITY IMPROVEMENTS IN AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF VERONA, IN THE COUNTY OF ESSEX, NEW JERSEY, APPROPRIATING \$1,405,000 THEREFOR AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$1,405,000 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE TOWNSHIP TO FINANCE THE COST THEREOF

The Municipal Clerk reads Ordinance No. 2021-27 by title into record.

Motion to adopt Ordinance No. 2021-27 is moved by Councilman McEvoy; seconded by Deputy Mayor McGrath.

Public Hearing:
None.

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

Ordinance No. 2021-27 is adopted 5-0 and will be published according to law.

ORDINANCE No. 2021-28

SWIMMING POOL UTILITY CAPITAL ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$65,000 FROM THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND FOR WATER SLIDES REFURBISHMENT AND GENERAL POOL IMPROVEMENTS IN AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF VERONA, IN THE COUNTY OF ESSEX, NEW JERSEY

The Municipal Clerk reads Ordinance No. 2021-28 by title into record.

Motion to adopt Ordinance No. 2021-28 is moved by Councilwoman Holland; seconded by Councilman Tamburro.

Public Hearing:
None.

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

Ordinance No. 2021-28 is adopted 5-0 and will be published according to law.

The meeting minutes from September 20, 2021 are unanimously approved by a vote of 5-0.

Public Comment on Consent Agenda:

None.

RESOLUTION No. 2021-129

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

AUTHORIZING MEMBERSHIP IN THE HUNTERDON COUNTY EDUCATION SERVICES COMMISSION COOPERATIVE PRICING SYSTEM

WHEREAS, *N.J.S.A. 40A:11-11(5)* permits the governing bodies of two or more contracting units to establish a cooperative pricing system whereby one participating contracting unit in the cooperative pricing system shall be empowered to advertise and receive bids to provide prices for all other participating contracting units in such system for the provision or performance of goods or services; and

WHEREAS, the Hunterdon County Education Services Commission Cooperative Pricing System (“HCESC Cooperative”) has offered voluntary participation in a Cooperative Pricing System for the purchase of goods and services; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Verona desires to enter into an Agreement with the HCESC Cooperative, which is administered by the Board of Directors of the Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission as Lead Agency for the period five-years.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Council of the Township of Verona, County of Essex, State of New Jersey hereby authorizes the Township Manger and the Township Clerk to execute of a five-year membership agreement with the HCESC Cooperative

pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 40A:11-11(5)*.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, Tamburro, McEvoy, McGrath, Roman

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2021-130

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

RECOGNIZING BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

WHEREAS, the citizens of the Township of Verona value the benefits of good health as a vital component of a long productive, and fulfilling life and proudly support observances that focus public attention on crucial health issues, such as breast cancer awareness; and

WHEREAS, breast cancer is the most prevalent cancer and the second most common cause of cancer related death among women; and

WHEREAS, breast cancer does not only affect 1 in 8 women, about one in 1,000 men will also be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetimes; and

WHEREAS, while there are factors known to increase the risk of developing breast cancer, nearly 80 percent of women diagnosed do not exhibit any of the determinant factors; and

WHEREAS, early detection of signs and symptoms of breast cancer can increase the survival rate by nearly 95 percent; and

WHEREAS, a mammogram can help find breast cancer early, when it is easier to treat; and

WHEREAS, this month, as we honor those whose lives were tragically cut short by breast cancer, let us arm ourselves with the best knowledge, tools and resources available to fight this devastating disease.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Council of the Township of Verona do acknowledge October 2021 as Breast Cancer Awareness Month and with “Hope, Strength and Love”, encourage all citizens, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and all other interested groups to increase awareness about the impact of breast cancer and continue to support the medical profession’s commitment to the promise of finding a cure. Furthermore, the Township of Verona recognizes Breast Cancer Awareness Month by flying the Pink Ribbon flag in the Verona Civic Center during the month of October.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, Tamburro, McEvoy, McGrath, Roman

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2021-131

A motion was made by Councilman McEvoy; seconded Councilman Tamburro 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.
 - a. Pending, Ongoing, or Anticipated Litigation and Contract Negotiations pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 (7)*
- Essex Fells Water

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, Tamburro, McEvoy, McGrath, Roman

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2021-132

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

CONSENT FOR MUNICIPAL CLERK TO ISSUE OFF PREMISE CATERING PERMIT TO 470 BLOOMFIELD AVENUE, LLC, DBA AVENUE BISTRO FOR THE VERONA CONFERENCE OF SCAs FOOD TRUCK FESTIVAL

WHEREAS, 470 Bloomfield Avenue, LLC dba Avenue Bistro has submitted an Off Premise Catering Permit to have a beer garden during the Verona Conference of SCAs' Food Truck Festival to be held on October 10, 2021 (rain date of 10/17/2021) in the Township of Verona's Civic Center; and

WHEREAS, the Municipal Clerk and Chief of Police mandated conditions to be adhered to and included in the application and the submitted application included the directives; and

WHEREAS, the Verona Conference of SCAs has obtained and submitted a Certificate of Liability waiver naming the Township of Verona as the Certificate Holder to be attached to the Permit application; and

WHEREAS, upon review, the Municipal Clerk and Chief of Police have no objection to the granting of an Off Premise Catering permit to be issued to the applicant to sell solely malt alcoholic beverages during the event to be held on the date and premises stated above, by agreeing to the following conditions:

1. The consumption of alcoholic beverages shall be restricted to the area as outlined in the site plan supplied with the application. No alcoholic beverages shall be possessed or consumed in any area not designated on this site plan.
2. No person under the age of 21 shall be served alcoholic beverages. Avenue Bistro or its designee shall be responsible for verifying the ages of those patrons who wish to consume malt alcoholic beverages, issue wristbands, and monitor the area to prevent "hand offs."
3. No person assumed to be under the influence of alcohol shall be served, permitted to walk, or allowed to drive from the Civic Center.
4. Limit of two (2) beverages per transaction.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Council of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey approves the special conditions set forth and hereby consents to the Municipal Clerk, the State approved issuing authority of the Township, to the grant the Off Premise Catering permit for the Verona Conference of SCAs' Food Truck Festival on October 10, 2021 (rain date of 10/17/2021).

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, Tamburro, McEvoy, McGrath, Roman

NAYS:

The Municipal Clerk's Quarterly Raffle Report is submitted to the Council.

Limousine License for Non-Stop Limo, 46 Park Avenue, Verona is in order.

New/Unfinished Business:

There is Council discussion on stormwater management. The DEP Project Navigation Team will meet with Township officials either this or next week and will provide drone footage and 3D mapping of the Peckman River and its tributaries. Council also discusses PIRHL's submission of the revised elevation of the prospective building. The Council is happy with the look of the specifications stating that it looks like it belongs in Verona and the landscaping plan is outstanding. A resolution approving the submission will be on the next meeting agenda. Council also discusses their 2021-2023 Goals for resident engagement, emergency facilities, downtown revitalization, health and wellness, shared services and diversity, equity and inclusion. Councilman Tamburro concludes the discussion by expressing his appreciation to the administration for taking on extra responsibilities and tasks with the subcommittees.

Public Comment:

Kevin Ryan, [REDACTED]

Adjournment:

Council enters into Executive Session at 8:41. Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m. is made by Deputy Mayor McGrath; seconded by Councilman Tamburro.

The next regular scheduled meeting of the Township Council is October 18, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Jennifer Kiernan, Municipal Clerk


Alex Roman, Mayor

APPROVED: November 8, 2021