

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Verona Township Council on Monday, May 23, 2022, beginning at 7:00 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. 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 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.

Roll Call:

Mayor Alex Roman, Deputy Mayor Christine McGrath, Councilman Jack McEvoy and Councilwoman Cynthia Holland are present. Township Manager Joe D'Arco, Township Attorney Brian Aloia and Municipal Clerk Jennifer Kiernan are also present. Councilman Chris Tamburro is late.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Roman invites Essex County liaison Julius Coltre to the lectern. Mr. Coltre reports that vaccinations and testing will be held at the Sears in Livingston, 112 Eisenhower Parkway on Thursdays and Fridays from 2-7pm and Saturdays from 8am - 2pm. Essex County's Recycling day this past Saturday was successful. On June 4th the County will hold their Shredding Day at 99 West Bradford Avenue from 9am - noon.

Mayor Roman attended the Verona Interfaith Service and thanks the clergy council for their Day of Prayer. He attended the UNICO dinner honoring Pat Filoso, Sr. and John Alatti. Jerry Racciopi was honored for his contributions to the organization. Mayor Roman then reads a proclamation for Gun Violence Awareness. Peg Zitko, the Essex County lead for Moms Demand Action was present to accept the proclamation.

Manager's Report:

Township Manager Joe D'Arco reports that tonight students from Rutgers University have performed a study of the Peckman River and water flow from rain storms. Present are Associate Professor Jie Gong and David Bazzett, who is in his 3rd year of Rutgers Doctorate program. They discuss the resiliency of the Township, the Peckman River erosion issue and possible remedies to lessen the flow of storm water into the River.

Councilman Chris Tamburro enters the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Mr. D'Arco discusses the option to erect jersey barriers with landfill cloth covering that is impermeable and berming the water/sewer treatment plant side. He is also considering underground retention basins. Steve Neale and Kris Gould have sent letters to all veterans living in Verona inviting them to the Memorial Day Parade. The Chrysler car dealership will provide cars so they do not have to walk. The Municipal Clerk is working on an instructional presentation for the boards/committees and commissions in regards to the Open Public Meetings Act to ensure compliance with conducting public meetings.

Councilmember's Reports:

Deputy Mayor McGrath attended the County's press conference announcing the creation of a LGBTQ department lead by Reginald Bledsoe. She reports that the LGBTQ community faces higher rates of violence and unemployment. This office ensures all resources of the County are utilized to solve these issues. She applauds the County for creating this office. VMAC will hold a seminar on Mental Health 1st Aid on June 9 from 9am-4pm. The Deputy Mayor recognizes Toral Patel who was honored by the Essex County Board of Commissioners at their 1st AAIP Heritage Month Celebration for her promoting of Asian American policies over the past 2 decades.

Councilman McEvoy met with Congressman Donald Payne Jr. and thanks him for this time. The Chamber of Commerce will hold the 2nd session of the Verona Community Market on June 5 from 10am - 2pm. He thanks UNICO for the invitation to attend their 52nd annual dinner and congratulates Tom Malanga, their new president. The Hilltop Conservancy will be planting trees this Saturday and encourages all to lend a hand.

Councilman Tamburro congratulates UNICO who, over 50 years has donated \$500,000 to Verona for improvements to the community and in scholarship funds. He reports that the Neighborhood Traffic and Safety Advisory Committee met last week and appointed George Manousos as the Chairperson. The Councilman thanks Santi Condorelli for his service over the past few years as Chair of the committee.

Councilwoman Holland wishes UNICO the best. She attended the VEC meeting. They will be holding a West Essex trail clean-up on June 4, which is National Trails Day. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee was joined by C.H.I.L.D. representatives to discuss disability programs at the pool. The Township will be hiring a part-time employee to address some of the different ideas that could help make our community programming more inclusive. The Pool will be opening this weekend which is a good time to mention that the Recreation Department is exploring various swim programming and hopefully that will get started this summer. Councilwoman Holland implores all residents struggling with paying their utility bills to contact PSE&G as they are offering payment plans until mid-June.

Proposed Ordinances:

ORDINANCE No. 2022-16

**AMENDMENT TO ZONING ORDINANCE, SPECIFICALLY
CHAPTER 150 SECTION 11.7 ENTITLED PLANT SELECTION AND PLACEMENT**

Motion to introduce Ordinance No. 2022-16 is moved by Councilman McEvoy; seconded by Councilman Tamburro.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, Tamburro, McEvoy, McGrath, Roman

Ordinance No. 2022-16 is introduced by a vote of 5-0. It will be published according to law and a public hearing will be held on June 13, 2022.

ORDINANCE No. 2022-17

**FIXING THE SALARIES AND COMPENSATION OF CERTAIN PART TIME PAID
EMPLOYEES OF THE TOWNSHIP OF VERONA**

Motion to introduce Ordinance No. 2022-17 is moved by Deputy Mayor McGrath; seconded by Councilman Tamburro.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, Tamburro, McEvoy, McGrath, Roman

Ordinance No. 2022-17 is introduced by a vote of 5-0. It will be published according to law and a public hearing will be held on June 13, 2022.

Minutes from the May 9, 2022 Meeting are approved unanimously.

Public Comment on Consent Agenda Items:

None.

RESOLUTION No. 2022-106

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

AUTHORIZING A CONTRACT WITH JDV EQUIPMENT CORPORATION

WHEREAS, the Waste Water Treatment Plant requires repair and replacement of certain instruments within the grit removal process; and

WHEREAS, grit removal process removes all small sediment such as stones and/or bits of plastic from the sewer influent into the Waste Water Treatment Plant; and

WHEREAS, the Qualified Purchasing Agent has determined that the value of said services has exceeded \$17,500.00 which is annexed this Resolution as Exhibit A; and

WHEREAS, funds are available to award contracts for the services listed shall be charged to the budget accounts or capital ordinances listed on the availability of funds, a copy of said Certification is annexed to this Resolution as Exhibit B; and

WHEREAS, the award of the contract to JDV Equipment Corporation is being made pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.5* and the Business Entity Disclosure Certification and Political Contribution Disclosure Form completed by JDV Equipment Corporation have been filed with the Township and are annexed to this Resolution as Exhibit C; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey that JDV Equipment Corporation, 104 Fulton Street, Boonton, New Jersey 07005 is hereby awarded a contract for repair and replacement of certain instruments within the mechanism not to exceed \$28,559; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this contract is being awarded pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.5*.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a notice of this action shall be published once in the Verona-Cedar Grove Times; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Township Manager and the Municipal Clerk are hereby authorized to enter into any agreement necessary for the aforementioned services a copy of which shall be available for public inspection in the Office of the Municipal Clerk.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, Tamburro, McEvoy, McGrath, Roman

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2022-102

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

AUTHORIZING THE INSERTION INTO THE CY2022 MUNICIPAL BUDGET PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 40A:4-87 (CHAPTER 159, P.L. 1948) OF A SPECIAL ITEM OF REVENUE IN THE FORM OF THE 2021-2022 MUNICIPAL ALLIANCE GRANT

WHEREAS, *N.J.S.A. 40A:4-87* provides that the Director of the Division of Local Government Services (the "Director") may approve the insertion of any special item of revenue in the budget of any county or municipality when such items shall have been made available by law and the amount thereof was not determined at the time of the adoption of the budget; and,

WHEREAS, said Director may also approve the insertion of an item of appropriation for an equal amount; and,

WHEREAS, the Township of Verona has received \$4,112.24 from the County of Essex in the form of the 2021-2022 Municipal Alliance Grant and wishes to amend its CY2022 Municipal Budget to include this amount as a revenue.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Council of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, State of New Jersey hereby requests the Director to approve the insertion of an item of revenue in the CY2022 Municipal Budget in the sum of \$4,075.00 which is now available as revenue from:

Miscellaneous Revenues - Section F:
Special Items of General Revenue Anticipated with Prior Written Consent of
Director of Local Government Services -
Public and Private Revenues Offset with Appropriations:
2021-2022 Municipal Alliance Grant.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Director to approve the insertion of an item of revenue in the CY2022 Municipal Budget in the like sum of \$4,075.00 appropriated under the caption of:

General Appropriations:
(A) Operations - Excluded from "CAPS"
Public and Private Revenues Offset with Appropriations:
2021-2022 Municipal Alliance Grant

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution will be electronically filed with the Director for approval as required by law.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, Tamburro, McEvoy, McGrath, Roman

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2022-103

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

**AUTHORIZING A CONTRACT WITH PRECISION ELECTRIC
MOTOR WORKS, INC.**

WHEREAS, the Ozone Avenue pump station is an essential processing station that pumps sewage to the wastewater treatment plant; and

WHEREAS, the Ozone Avenue pump station was damaged during Hurricane Ida; and

WHEREAS, the Township received two quotes to perform this work; and

WHEREAS, Longo Electrical-Mechanical, Inc. bid \$16,490 and Precision Electric Motor Works, Inc. bid \$11,085; and

WHEREAS, Precision Electric Motor Works Inc., will pull the pump motor, rebuild the dry pit submersible pump, replace the bar rack motor and motor bearings and seals, install and test the facility; and

WHEREAS, the Township Engineer recommends that a contract be awarded to the lowest responsive and responsive bidder, Precision Electric Motor Works, Inc., in the amount of \$11,085; and

WHEREAS, the Qualified Purchasing Agent has determined that the value of said services has not exceeded \$17,500.00; and

WHEREAS, funds are available to award contracts for the services listed shall be charged to the budget accounts or capital ordinances listed on the availability of funds, a copy of said Certification is annexed to this Resolution as Exhibit B; and

WHEREAS, the award of the contract to Precision Electric Motor Works, Inc. is being made pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.5* and the Business Entity Disclosure Certification and Political Contribution Disclosure Form completed by Precision Electric Motor Works, Inc. have been filed with the Township and are annexed to this Resolution as Exhibit C; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey that Precision Electric Motor Works, Inc., 18 Sebago Street, Clifton, NJ 07013 is hereby awarded a contract for repairs at the Ozone Avenue pump station for a total amount of \$11,085, not to exceed \$12,000.00.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this contract is being awarded pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.5*.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a notice of this action shall be published once in the Verona-Cedar Grove Times; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Township Manager and the Municipal Clerk are hereby authorized to enter into any agreement necessary for the aforementioned services a copy of which shall be available for public inspection in the Office of the Municipal Clerk.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, Tamburro, McEvoy, McGrath, Roman

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2022-104

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

RECOGNIZING PRIDE MONTH

WHEREAS, the Township of Verona is an inclusive community whose residents believe in safety, prosperity, equality and hope for all; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Verona recognizes the human rights of all citizens and actively supports an end to all forms of prejudice and discrimination; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Verona is committed to promoting LGBTQ2+ equality and fostering welcoming and affirming LGBTQ2+ spaces; and

WHEREAS, more recent advances in LGBTQ2+ equality, including marriage, bans against LGBTQ conversion, the advancement of some federal protections with respect to access to federal services and open military service, LGBTQ2+ inclusive and protective anti-discrimination public access state laws, positive LGBTQ2+ public opinion, widespread LGBTQ2+ visibility and representation in media, education, public office, LGBTQ2+ anti-bullying laws and welcoming and affirming school climate policies – including actions to create LGBTQ2+ inclusive curriculum- and corporate America’s LGBTQ2+ inclusion and promotion, are all directly linked back to the victories of earlier LGBTQ2+ rights advocates; and

WHEREAS, the community recognizes the efforts of the many advocates and allies who have enabled this progress and opened society’s eyes to the idea that love is love and no one should be forced to hide part of their identity; and

WHEREAS, without comprehensive federal civil rights protections, and because of legislative and executive attempts at rolling back LGBTQ2+ advances or cultural and political climate shifts that empower LGBTQ2+ hate crimes, LGBTQ2+ individuals and families continue to face significant uncertainty, oppression and discrimination.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Council of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey does hereby acknowledge June as LGBTQ2+ Pride Month in the Township of Verona. We urge all people of the Township of Verona to join LGBTQ2+ advocacy and actions, promote diversity and inclusion, create welcoming and affirming spaces for LGBTQ2+ youth, trans and non-binary folks be visible, outspoken allies and up standers as any injustice against one is an injustice against all. Furthermore, the Township of Verona recognizes LGBTQ2+ Month by flying the rainbow flag in the Verona Civic Center during the month of June.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, Tamburro, McEvoy, McGrath, Roman

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2022-105

A motion was made by Councilwoman Holland; seconded by Councilman McEvoy 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 Council 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)*
 - i. 885 Bloomfield Avenue
 - ii. PBA & OPEIU Contract Negotiations
 - iii. Ajaco Towing
 - iv. 251 ½ Grove Avenue
 - b. Purchase, lease, or acquisition of real property with public funds pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 (5)*
 - i. 4 Arnold Way

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, Tamburro, McEvoy, McGrath, Roman

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2022-107

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

**AUTHORIZING A CONTRACT WITH
SHERWOOD-LOGAN & ASSOCIATES, INC.**

WHEREAS, the Waste Water Treatment Plant requires specific parts for the repair of certain instruments within the grit removal process; and

WHEREAS, grit removal process removes all small sediment such as stones and/or bits of plastic from the sewer influent into the Waste Water Treatment Plant; and

WHEREAS, the Qualified Purchasing Agent has determined that the value of parts for repair and replacement of certain instruments within the grit removal process exceeds \$17,500.00 which is annexed this Resolution as Exhibit A; and

WHEREAS, funds are available to award contracts for the services listed shall be charged to the budget accounts or capital ordinances listed on the availability of funds, a copy of said Certification is annexed to this Resolution as Exhibit B; and

WHEREAS, the award of the contract to Sherwood Logan & Associates, Inc. is being made pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.5* and the Political Contribution Disclosure Form completed by Sherwood Logan & Associates, Inc. have been filed with the Township and are annexed to this Resolution as Exhibit C; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey that Sherwood Logan & Associates, Inc., 188 Bayview Avenue, South Amboy, NJ 08879 is hereby awarded a contract for providing the necessary parts to repair the mechanism not to exceed \$38,741; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this contract is being awarded pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.5*.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a notice of this action shall be published once in the Verona-Cedar Grove Times; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Township Manager and the Municipal Clerk are hereby authorized to enter into any agreement necessary for the aforementioned services a copy of which shall be available for public inspection in the Office of the Municipal Clerk.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, Tamburro, McEvoy, McGrath, Roman

NAYS:

New Business:

The Township Manager explains that based on comments from staff and the council, the road opening ordinance sets the standard for how roads are opened and how they are repaired. He acknowledges that Councilwoman Holland pointed out some new state legislation that came out that requires utility companies to report to the townships that they're opening the roads or doing road openings. He states that this ordinance mandates the utility companies coordinate with the Township, submit applications for permits to open the roads and repair the roads in accordance with our standards. Council discussion takes place with some concern about the fees listed. Councilman Tamburro states that he will not vote for this ordinance if it has unnecessary permit costs. Mr. D'Arco will address those concerns at the June 13 meeting. Mr. D'Arco presents the double pole replacement ordinance that requires that the utility company remove the second pole in a specific time frame and that they repair the ground that that they've disturbed.

Mr. D'Arco brings Steve Neale into the meeting. Mr. Neale confirms that the Municipal Building will be lit up on June 3, 4 and 5th in honor of Wear Orange Day. Councilman Tamburro states that he believes there are a lot of residents in town who find the proclamation for Gun Violence Awareness Day and the inclusion of lighting up the Municipal Building in orange to be very ideological. He does not think we should be lighting up a township facility for something ideological. He states that the same organizations that support this proclamation are also trying to limit gun rights and a good portion of Verona residents have gun permits and the Council should not support anything that will alienate a proportion of our municipality. Deputy Mayor McGrath replies that she is deeply disappointed to hear that from the Councilman and the research in the public opinion and polls shows that a majority of responsible gun owners are very supportive of gun violence prevention. She adds that six or seven years ago she and Councilwoman Holland, along with other residents went to a public meeting of the Council to support the proclamation and this has been a long standing tradition. Councilwoman Holland adds that the building was lit in yellow and blue in support of Ukraine. She also states that our police department has clearly indicated that it is about safe gun ownership and there was also a table promoting safe gun retention at National Night Out. She also states that lighting the building is simply a show of support for those who have suffered from gun violence and encourages responsible gun ownership.

Township Attorney Brian Aloia announces that the Ajaco hearing will be adjourned tonight and the hearing will be held on June 13, 2022. He also requests to add discussion of 251 ½ Grove Avenue and Ajaco Towing to Executive Session.

Public Comment:

Howard Conkling, 247 Grove Avenue, Verona, New Jersey
George Kozachuk, 100 Morningside Road, Verona, New Jersey

Council enters into Executive Session at 9:28 p.m. and Mayor Roman states no official action will be taken when coming back to Public Session and adjourning the meeting.

Adjournment:

A motion to adjourn the meeting is made by Deputy Mayor McGrath; seconded by Councilwoman Holland at 10:02 p.m. The next regular scheduled meeting of the Township Council is June 13, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Jennifer Kiernan, Municipal Clerk


Alex Roman, Mayor

APPROVED: June 13, 2022