

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Verona Township Council on Monday, February 5, 2024, 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:

The Municipal Clerk reads the notice of Open Public Meetings Act.

Roll Call:

Mayor Christopher Tamburro, Deputy Mayor Jack McEvoy, Councilwoman Christine McGrath, Councilman Alex Roman and Councilwoman Cynthia Holland are present. Township Attorney Brian Aloia, Township Manager Joseph D'Arco, Municipal Clerk Jennifer Kiernan and Deputy Township Manager Kevin O'Sullivan are also present.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Tamburro begins by thanking Legislative District 40 members, all staff and Council members for joining on Friday for a tour of Verona's Public Safety Infrastructure. He attended the Lunar New Year Celebration and thanks the school system's Mandarin teachers for their active participation as well as all of the students, faculty and the Board of Ed for hosting. The County has put out to bid upgrading the Tennis Courts at the County Park to include Pickle Ball which the Mayor was very excited about. Next Monday, there will be a Special Meeting for the Department Heads to discuss their operating budgets and capital needs. Finally, Mayor Tamburro introduces Verona resident Bill Brown to speak in honor of February's Black History Month.

Manager's Report:

Mr. D'Arco discusses a meeting in Everett Field with the Shade Tree Commission. There is continued progress with the agreements and discussions regarding fire prevention with Cedar Grove and there was a meeting with the Chamber of Commerce relative to parking. The traffic light project on Pompton and Claremont is moving and CDBG projects are in process, as well as the permits for the Peckman. Mr D'Arco lastly directs the next topics of discussion regarding town projects towards Deputy Township Manager Kevin O'Sullivan.

Mr. O'Sullivan reports on residential escrow fees, the Linn Drive project, the advancing Fairview Avenue well project and Green Acres. He announces that updates on water, sewer and drinking well projects are in progress, and that the storm water control Ordinance is scheduled for introduction this evening. Information from Blue Acres is expanded upon, discussions are continuing with the Office of Climate Resiliency, and increased parking meter rates are also discussed. Discussions are continuing for a number of Energy Efficiency types of projects, an application for the Community Energy Grant Program is being worked on and a grant was received regarding the Community Center playground and ADA restroom. A number of road projects are continuing to be worked through, a number of grant applications are still pending and a full list will be discussed at the next meeting.

Council Discussion.

Colonel Peter Lupo, Hoplite Communications, municipal 5G expert consultant for the Township discusses the opportunity for the Council to negotiate not just the public government channel, but request support of operations, be provided with certain equipment and if not, can the Township recoup subh expenses on its bill, in the contract renewal with Comcast Television

Public Comment for Cable Television Franchise Renewal:

None.

Eric Callocchia of NewGen Strategies and Solutions presents the water rate study to the Council. It is recommended that the Council take action to raise water consumption and sewer

fees in order to sustain the water/sewer utility. Their recommendation is to raise the 2024 rates 34% and implement a fixed quarterly surcharge as well.

Councilmember's Reports:

Deputy Mayor McEvoy reminds the public that the County Deer Management Program is still going on through the month of February. He lastly concludes by mentioning the upcoming Restaurant Week and extends an invitation to the opening party at Jimmy's Family Kitchen for all who would like to attend.

Councilman Roman thanks the LD40 representatives for visiting Verona and discussing a variety of things about safety facilities. He is very appreciative of the service that our volunteer agencies provided.

Councilwoman McGrath states that the Multicultural Inclusion and Accessibility Advisory Committee met. Nominations for the women of impact event are due by February 11th. She attended the Lunar New Year event. She raised concerns on the Legislative visits that the Township is conducting, and is disappointed that there isn't a chance to discuss flooding issues as well.

Councilwoman Holland also compliments both the Administration and the Verona Public Schools for the Lunar New Year event. She thanks Mr. D'Arco and Mr. O'Sullivan for tackling some hard issues, and increasing transparency and communications to our residents. She also thanks Verona's various committed residents that serve on all the different Boards and Committees and concludes announcing that the Recreation Advisory Committee will be meeting next week.

Public Comment:

Michelle Gruet, Verona, New Jersey
Judy Reynolds, Verona, New Jersey

Hearing, Adoption or Amendment of Ordinances

ORDINANCE No. 2024-01

BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING A SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION OF \$510,000 FOR THE ACCESSIBLE/SENSORY PLAYGROUND AND ADULT EXERCISE AREA PROJECT AT THE COMMUNITY CENTER IN AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF VERONA, IN THE COUNTY OF ESSEX, NEW JERSEY, INCLUDING A \$200,000 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT EXPECTED TO BE RECEIVED, AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$510,000 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE TOWNSHIP TO FINANCE THE COST THEREOF

The Municipal Clerk reads Ordinance 2024-01 by title into record.

Motion to move Ordinance No. 2024-01 is moved by Councilwoman McGrath; seconded by Councilwoman Holland.

Public Hearing:

None.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro

NAYS:

Ordinance No. 2024-01 is adopted by a vote of 5-0 and it will be published according to law.

ORDINANCE No. 2024-02

BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE ACQUISITION AND INSTALLATION OF COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT FOR POLICE VEHICLES IN AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF VERONA, IN THE COUNTY

**OF ESSEX, NEW JERSEY, APPROPRIATING \$125,000 THEREFOR AND
AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$119,000 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE
TOWNSHIP TO FINANCE PART OF THE COST THEREOF**

The Municipal Clerk reads Ordinance 2024-02 by title into record.

Motion to move Ordinance No. 2024-02 is moved by Mayor Tamburro; seconded by Deputy Mayor McEvoy.

Public Hearing:
None.

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

Ordinance No. 2024-02 is adopted by a vote of 5-0 and it will be published according to law.

ORDINANCE No. 2024-03

**AMENDING THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF VERONA, CHAPTER 390,
PROPERTY MAINTENANCE, BY THE CREATION OF ARTICLE II,
ENTITLED LEAD-BASED PAINT HAZARD INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS
FOR RENTAL DWELLINGS**

The Municipal Clerk reads Ordinance 2024-03 by title into record.

Motion to move Ordinance No. 2024-03 is moved by Councilman Roman; seconded by Deputy Mayor McEvoy.

Public Hearing:
None.

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

Ordinance No. 2024-03 is adopted by a vote of 5-0 and it will be published according to law.

ORDINANCE No. 2024-04

**REPEALING CHAPTER 455 "STORMWATER MANAGEMENT" OF THE
CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP IN ITS ENTIRETY AND REPLACING WITH A
NEW ARTICLE XXV "STORMWATER MANAGEMENT CONTROLS AND
REQUIREMENTS" WITHIN CHAPTER 150 OF THE ZONING CODE OF
THE TOWNSHIP**

The Municipal Clerk reads Ordinance No. H-1 by title into record.

Motion to move Ordinance No. H-1 is moved by Councilman Roman; seconded by Councilwoman McGrath.

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

Ordinance No. H-1 will be numbered 2024-04 and will be published according to law. It will be sent to the Planning Board to determine if it is consistent with the Master Plan.

ORDINANCE No. 2024-05

**REPEALING CHAPTER 455 "STORMWATER MANAGEMENT" OF THE
CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP IN ITS ENTIRETY AND CREATE ARTICLE I IN**

**CHAPTER 455 ENTITLED "STORMWATER QUALITY" OF THE CODE OF
THE TOWNSHIP**

The Municipal Clerk reads Ordinance No. H-2 by title into record.

Motion to move Ordinance No. H-2 is moved by Deputy Mayor McEvoy; seconded by Councilwoman Holland.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro

NAYS:

Ordinance No. H-2 will be numbered 2024-05 and will be published according to law. A public hearing will be held on March 11th.

ORDINANCE No. 2024-06

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER A565-1 SCHEDULE OF FEES OF
THE TOWNSHIP CODE**

The Municipal Clerk reads Ordinance No. H-2 by title into record.

Motion to move Ordinance No. H-3 is moved by Councilwoman McGrath; seconded by Councilwoman Holland.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro

NAYS:

Ordinance No. H-3 will be numbered 2024-06 and will be published according to law. A public hearing will be held on March 11th.

Consent Agenda:

A motion to pull resolution K-2, "Recognizing Township Manager's 2024 Appointments for Professional Services" from the consent agenda is made by Deputy Mayor McEvoy; seconded by Councilman Roman. Vote: 5 ayes.

After Council discussion Mayor Tamburro moves to table the resolution until there can be a more substantive discussion as he has concerns about some of the appointments. Vote: 5 ayes.

RESOLUTION No. 2024-037

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

**CANCELLING UNFUNDED APPROPRIATION BALANCES UNDER
CERTAIN BOND ORDINANCES PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED BY THE
TOWNSHIP OF VERONA FOR VARIOUS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
PROJECTS IN THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$452,442.46**

WHEREAS, the Township of Verona, Essex County, New Jersey previously adopted Bond Ordinances for the purpose of funding various capital projects and improvements of the Township as more fully specified in the Bond Ordinances; and

WHEREAS, as of the date hereof, the projects have been completed.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Township now desires to cancel such appropriations and transfer the funded balances to their respective fund surplus.

ORDINANCE	ORDINANCE DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT TO BE CANCELLED
General Capital		
2021-26A	Reconstruction	\$200,000.00

	Ann/Cypress/Willow	
2021-26B	Cook Lane	\$ 93,942.46
2021-26D	Replace Light at Grove	\$ 8,500.00
2022-10A	Reconstruction of ADA ramps various locations	\$100,000.00
Total General Capital		\$402,442.46
Water/Sewer Capital		
2019-15	Mechanical Bar Screen	\$ 50,000.00
		\$ 50,000.00

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2024-038

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

REAFFIRMING THE CURRENT PLANT SELECTION LIST IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF VERONA, ARTICLE XI, § 150-11.7

WHEREAS, the Code of Township of Verona Article XI entitled “Buffer and General Landscaping Requirements, § 150-11.7 “Plant selection and placement,” requires the Township Council to adopt the recommended plant selection list at least once every February after the Verona Environmental Commission, in coordination with the Planning Board, and with input from other groups and professionals as the Verona Environmental Commission finds necessary, recommends updates to the plant selection list; and

WHEREAS, this year the Verona Environmental Commission recommended that the Council make no changes to the plant selection and placement list and readopt the list attached hereto.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Council of the Township of Verona that the plant selection list attached hereto is reaffirmed by the Township Council, the list shall be considered part of the Code of the Township of Verona by reference therein and the list shall be posted online.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2024-039

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

AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF SLUDGE DISPOSAL INTERLOCAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH THE PASSAIC VALLEY SEWAGE COMMISSION

WHEREAS, the Township of Verona is authorized pursuant to the Interlocal Services Act, *N.J.S.A. 40:8A-1 et. seq.*, to enter into a contract with any other local unit for the provision of any service which that local unit is empowered to render within its own jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission, hereinafter “PVSC”, is a local unit operating a sludge incineration facility and is empowered to render sludge disposal services and has the capacity for additional sludge treatment and disposal on site; and

WHEREAS, the Township desires to have the sludge from the aforesaid plant treated and disposed of by PVSC; and

WHEREAS, PVSC is willing to accept, treat and dispose of the Township's sludge; and

WHEREAS, the Township wishes to execute a sludge disposal interlocal services agreement with PVSC pursuant to the terms set forth in the attached Interlocal agreement.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey that the Township Manager, Township Clerk and any other officers who may be appropriate are authorized and directed to execute an Agreement substantially in the form annexed hereto subject to such modifications as may be negotiated between the parties which do not modify the terms thereof in any significant respect.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2024-040

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

**AUTHORIZING THE APPLICATION TO THE
NEW JERSEY BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMUNITY ENERGY
PLAN GRANT PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, the Township of Verona strives to assure clean land, air and water for current and future generations; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey's Energy Master Plan: Pathway to 2050 ("EMP") established that community-level action is necessary to achieve the state's goal of 100% clean energy by 2050; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities has created a Community Energy Plan Grant program for municipalities to develop a community energy plan to meet the goals of the state's Energy Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Verona is invested in developing a community energy plan to help the state achieve the goal of 100% clean energy by 2050; and

WHEREAS, the Community Energy Plan Grant program will help the Township of Verona to plan for and invest in renewable energy and to work towards a better environment for all residents by using the state's Energy Master Plan (EMP) as a guide to develop sustainable strategies that increase clean energy production, reduce energy use, and cut emissions.

THEREFORE, the Township Council of the Township of Verona has determined that the Township of Verona should apply for the aforementioned Community Energy Planning Grant program; and

THEREFORE, the Township of Verona will commit to providing staff support for the duration of the Community Energy Planning process, including for gathering of relevant data and for convening at least one public meeting.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Township Council of the Township of Verona, State of New Jersey, authorizes the submission of the aforementioned application to the NJBPU Community Energy Planning Grant program.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2024-041

A motion was made by Deputy Mayor McEvoy; seconded by Councilman Roman 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:

The public shall be excluded from discussion of an action upon the hereinafter specified subject matter.

1. Purchase, Lease or Acquisition of Real Property pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 (5)*
2. Pending, Ongoing, or Anticipated Litigation and Contract Negotiations pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 (7)*

ROLL CALL:

AYES: Holland, McGrath, Roman, McEvoy, Tamburro

NAYS:

New Business:

Council discusses the proposed pool membership fees for 2024. They also discuss revenue generating options including offering a non-resident membership. The Council also deliberates the Senior membership fee. Prior to the discussion of the volunteer fire department and rescue squad membership fee, Mayor Tamburro recuses himself from the discussion as he is a member of the Rescue Squad and relinquishes the Chair to Deputy Mayor McEvoy. Council discusses the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee's recommendation to adjust the volunteer FD and VRS exempt membership and implement at \$25 registration fee. After discussion, Mayor Tamburro reclaims the Chair for the remainder of the meeting. Township Manager Joe D'Arco reminds the governing body that pool registration for the 2024 season begins April 1st. In order for a fee ordinance to be in effect by 4/1, a first reading would have to be on the 2/26 meeting agenda, adopted 3/11, and effective 3/31.


Public Hearing:


None.

There is no Executive Session this evening.

A motion to adjourn is made by Councilman Roman at 10:22 p.m.; seconded by Councilwoman McGrath. Vote: 5 ayes. The next meeting is February 26, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,


Jennifer Kiernan
Municipal Clerk


Dr. Christopher Tamburro
Mayor

APPROVED: March 11, 2024