

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Verona Township Council on Monday, April 27, 2020, beginning at 7:00 p.m. via teleconference.

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; specifically, the time, date and location were included in the annual notice of meetings adopted by the governing body, posted in the Municipal Building, and sent to the official newspapers of the Township, the Verona Cedar Grove Times and the Star Ledger. Additionally, the agenda for this meeting was posted in the Municipal Building and sent to the two newspapers before 4:30 p.m. on the Friday preceding this meeting.

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, Municipal Clerk Jennifer Kiernan, Director of Economic Development and Administration Steven Neale, Chief Financial Officer Matt Laracy and Police Chief Chris Kiernan are also present.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor McEvoy opens the public meeting then allows a moment to pause for the nightly 7pm public clap-out for the first responders. He then calls for the pledge of allegiance.

Julius Coltre, Essex County Liaison is on the call and reports the County's OEM office is fully staffed. They can be reached from 7pm – 11pm at 973-324-9750. After those hours the public can call 973-621-4411. The testing center in Weequahic Park will continue on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Appointments can be scheduled on the County's OEM website or by phone at 973-621-4411. The flag pole in Verona Park will be relocated. Meanwhile, flags remain at half-mast pursuant to Governor Murphy's order. Tomorrow the County will have a food bank at 10am in Branch Brook Park at the Cherry Blossom Center. All recipients must be in vehicles and cannot enter the park on foot.

Mayor McEvoy urges the public to adhere to social distancing guidelines. Although the Township numbers are up, it could be worse. He commends residents for being smart and sends his condolences to families who have lost friends and loved ones during this pandemic.

Manager's Report:

Mr. Cavallo reports that the Township has 98 confirmed cases and 11 deaths from COVID-19 as of 9am today. Emergency services is continue to operate without any major issues. All members of the police department are working. Two officers ended quarantine and have returned to work. Emergency services thanks everyone for the overwhelming support and donations. The Verona Lions Club donated \$3,000 in ShopRite gift cards and \$1,500 in restaurant gift cards to the Township. The Community Center has begun to distribute them to needy families in town. Anyone in need please reach out to the Community Services Department at 973-857-4800.

At this time the Township is uncertain if the community pool and summer playgrounds will operate. That decision is up to our Governor. Hopefully, the Governor's office will have guidance regarding summer recreation by the weekend.

To date the State of New Jersey's overall response rate to the 2020 U.S. Census is a 53.9%. Essex County is below that number, however, Verona is at 68.4% response rate. The Municipal Clerk has been working tirelessly to ensure Verona has a complete count, and will continue to do so. Meanwhile, the Township will continue with social media posting.

Hopefully Linn Drive will be paved on Wednesday. Residents have been notified to remove their cars from the street. The Township is allowing residents of Linn Drive to use the Community Center parking lot if needed.

The Blue Angel Thunderbirds will flyover NYC in honor of first responders tomorrow. Their

path will take them past the GWB around noon, then south over Newark to Staten Island and over to Long Island.

Mr. Cavallo wishes all Muslims a blessed and generous Ramadan.

The Public Hearing on the 2020 Municipal Budget is scheduled for this evening. The Public Hearing has been properly noticed in the March 27, 2020 edition of the Star Ledger.

ORDINANCE No. 2020-10

**AN ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET
APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK
(N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.14)**

The Municipal Clerk reads Ordinance No. 2020-10 by title into record.

Public Hearing: None

Motion to adopt Ordinance No. 2020-10 is moved by Deputy Mayor Roman; seconded by Councilman Ryan.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

Ordinance No. 2020-10 is adopted 5-0 and will be published according to law.

RESOLUTION No. 2020-088

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

PERMITTING 2020 MUNICIPAL BUDGET TO BE READ BY TITLE

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Township of Verona in the County of Essex did in accordance with the provisions of *N.J.S.A. 40A:4-5* introduced and approved the annual budget for the Township at a Regular Meeting of the Township Council on March 23, 2020; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the provisions of *N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-6*, the annual budget as introduced and approved was published by summary in the Star Ledger, a newspaper circulated within the Township of Verona at least 10 days prior to April 27, 2020 the date set forth in the advertisement for public hearing to be held via a teleconference meeting of the Township Council at 7:00 p.m.; and

WHEREAS, the provisions of Sections 1(a) and 1(b) of *N.J.S.A.40A:4-8* have been met by making for available for public inspection a complete copy of the approved budget at least one week prior to the date of the hearing and by making copies of said approved budget available to each person requesting the same during the said week and during the public hearing.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey that pursuant with the provisions of *N.J.S.A. 40A:4-8*, the Township Council hereby determines that the Municipal Budget for the year 2020 shall be read by its title and it is further declared that the conditions as set forth in Sections 1(a) and 1(b) of *N.J.S.A. 40A:4-8* have been met.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

Public Hearing for 2020 Municipal Budget: None.

There is Council discussion on the 2020 Municipal Budget.

RESOLUTION No. 2020-089

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

ADOPTION OF THE 2020 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey that the following statements of revenues and appropriations shall constitute the Municipal Budget of the Township of Verona for the 2020 calendar year;

General Appropriations:	<u>Year 2020</u>
1. Appropriations within "CAPS" (H-1 Sheet 19)	\$ 18,253,430.00
2. Appropriations excluded from "CAPS" (H-2 Sheet 28)	\$ 5,164,705.76
3. Reserve for Uncollected Taxes (M-Sheet 29)	<u>\$ 1,720,000.00</u>
4. Total General Appropriations (Item 9, Sheet 29)	\$ 25,138,135.76
5. Less: Anticipated Revenues Other than Current Property Tax (Item 5, Sheet 11)	<u>\$ (7,849,446.72)</u>
6. Less: Minimum Library Tax (Item 6(c), Sheet 11)	
7. Difference: Amount to be raised by Taxes for support of the Municipal Budget (as follows) (a) Local Tax for Municipal Purposes including Reserve for Uncollected Taxes (Item 6(a), Sheet 11)	\$ 17,288,689.04

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that said Budget was published in the March 27, 2020 edition of the Star Ledger.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED a hearing on the Budget and Tax Resolution was held via conference call on April 27, 2020 at 7 o'clock p.m. at which time and place discussions to said Budget and Tax Resolution for 2020 may be presented by taxpayers or other interested persons.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of the budget were available in the office of the Municipal Clerk, Township of Verona, at the Municipal Building, 600 Bloomfield Avenue, Verona, New Jersey 07044 during the hours of 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The budget was also posted on the Township's webpage at www.veronanj.org. All persons interested in the proposed budget had an opportunity to address the Township Council during the aforementioned public hearing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Township Council of the Township of Verona does hereby adopt the preceding as the Budget for the 2020 year.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

The 2020 Municipal Budget is approved by a vote of 5-0.

Councilmember's Reports:

Deputy Mayor Roman asks the Township Manager is there is any update on the paving of Route 23. Mr. Cavallo responds that the part of Route 23 in Verona is complete, but will follow up.

Councilman Ryan reports that he had an opportunity to call into Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill's Town Hall Meeting. Residents received an update on the stimulus bill, which is focusing on small businesses. She urged people having problem with SBA Association to call her local office. He

reminds the public that Verona Park is a County park and is closed.

Councilman Giblin thanks Kim Nachbauer and Kate Curren for raising over \$12,000 from the First Responder lawn signs. The funds will be donated to many causes. Mr. Giblin thanks the Board of Education and teachers who have stepped up to continue education the children of Verona as best they can. He also commends them for keeping kids positive in this uncertain time.

Councilwoman McGrath states the Congresswoman Sherrill’s call was a very thoughtful conversation. She encourages residents to participate in future calls as they are a great help for the community. Anyone experiencing anxiety should visit the Mental Health Association of Essex-Morris at www.mhaessexmorris.org/covid-19. Ms. McGrath also reports that the Board of Education’s budget presentation in on the agenda for their meeting tomorrow night at 7pm. The public can find the call in information on the Verona schools website.

Public Comment on Consent Agenda Items:

None.

Minutes of the March 23, 2020 regular meeting, April 13, 2020 regular meeting and April 21, 2020 special meeting are approved unanimously.

RESOLUTION No. 2020-090

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

REFUNDING ESCROW PAYMENT

WHEREAS, Escrow fees, for the Board of Adjustment, were received Michael Holland, for property located at 71 Afterglow Avenue 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	\$169.00	\$331.00

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, \$331.00 to Michael Holland, 71 Afterglow Avenue, Verona, NJ 07044

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2020-091

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

REFUNDING ESCROW PAYMENT

WHEREAS, Escrow fees, for the Board of Adjustment, were received 776 Bloomfield Ave. LLC, for property located at 776 Bloomfield Avenue 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
\$1,000.00	\$364.00	\$636.00

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, \$636.00 to 776 Bloomfield Ave LLC, PO Box 4, Jersey City, NJ 07303.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2020-092

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

REFUNDING ESCROW PAYMENT

WHEREAS, Escrow fees, for the Board of Adjustment, were received from Rebecca and Scott McClain, for property located at 106 Park Avenue 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	\$304.30	\$195.70

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, \$195.70 to Rebecca and Scott McClain, 106 Park Avenue, Verona, NJ 07044.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

Public Comment:

Kathleen Laterza, 810 Bloomfield Avenue, Verona, New Jersey

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 pm is motioned by Mayor McEvoy; seconded by Councilman Giblin.

The next regular scheduled meeting is May 6, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Kiernan
Jennifer Kiernan, Municipal Clerk

Jack McEvoy
Jack McEvoy, Mayor

APPROVED: May 4, 2020