

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Verona Township Council on Monday, August 24, 2020, beginning at 7:04 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 which is being held via Zoom video conferencing; specifically, the time, date and public internet link and telephone call-in information, was posted in the Municipal Building, on the Township's website, and sent to the official newspapers of the Township, the Verona-Cedar Grove Times and the Star Ledger and MyVeronaNJ.com and TAPinto, the official online news source(s), 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 channel and VTV.

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 reminds the public to complete their Census filing as representatives are now beginning to go door-to-door to complete the count. He reports that Steve Neale is co-conducting a fundraiser for Backpacks for Life. On October 4, 2020, Backpacks for Life will host a veteran's Ride/Run event that will be livestreamed. Anyone interested can visit www.Secure.GiveLively.org. Mr. McEvoy states that residents need to separate trash as the garbage men will not take bulk waste or recycling. He urges all residents to check the Township calendar for their collection days.

Manager's Report:

Mr. Cavallo states that bids will be available on Tuesday, August 25 for the rebid of the Pool Renovations Project. Bids are scheduled to be accepted on Wednesday, September 16. Bids will be currently being prepared for the Recycling Hauler Contract that expires on December 31. Bids should be available the second week in September. As was mentioned at the last meeting of the Township Council, if the Township is going to solicit RFPs for our 2021 Professional Service Contracts, specifically the Township Attorney, Township Engineer and Township Auditor, those RFPs should go out no later than mid-September. It is the Township Manager's recommendation that the Township sends out to RFP for these contracts as the last time this was done was 2018.

The only information that is available right now about the November General Election is the information that has been released by the Governor and the State Department. The County Clerk and Superintendent of Elections are currently working with the State on specifics and Mrs. Kiernan will update the Council in September about those developments and during Monday's meeting at the request of the Council. At this time, the Township is working with the County to attempt to obtain secure Ballot Drop Box here at Town Hall.

Hearings of the Site Plan Application of the PIRHL Development began on Tuesday of this week. The Planning Board will meet next Tuesday, August 25 at beginning at 6:30 p.m. to continue the hearings. This application is being heard via Zoom. Recordings of the meeting is available on the Township's YouTube Channel and all application documents and exhibits are available on the Township's website.

As was mentioned previously, the Township has maxed out our initial allotment of CARES Act Funds which were allocated to us by the County of Essex. Mr. Cavallo personally thanks the County Executive, the Board of Chosen Freeholders and the staff of the County for working with us to quickly get this money disbursed. At the request of the County the Township is submitting additional eligible expenses in the hopes that additional funding may become available. The Verona Office of Emergency Management is currently working with the NJOEM to submit

for reimbursement for FEMA-reimbursable expenses that were not covered by the CARES Act. It is unknown at this time what those expenses total. The Township has submitted a Preliminary Damage Assessment to Essex County OEM for the Tropical Storm that tore through Verona two weeks ago. An estimate of \$185,000 in damages was submitted.

The County of Essex testing sites are still open and appointments can be made at www.EssexCovid.org. Tentatively the County of Essex is planning a second mobile testing site here in Verona on September 22. The Township is looking at holding this site at the Verona Community Pool.

The Township assisted getting the Board of Education up and running with having meetings via Zoom using the Township's Account. Until the COVID crisis is over, it is expected that meetings will continue on Zoom.

Essex Vicinage Special Civil Part judges and staff will explain current landlord/tenant court processes. State, county and community providers will discuss a variety of available services, with a focus on resources for landlords and tenants. Thursday August 27, 2020 from 1:00 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. via Zoom.

Essex County will hold three (3) Hazardous Waste Drop Off days on October 1, 2 and 3. Verona will hold an E-waste drop off at the DPW garage on October 10.

Councilmember's Reports:

Deputy Mayor Roman states there is an extensive amount of documents on the Planning Board's webpage.

Councilman Ryan wonders who is responsible to ensure the status of compliance with regard to COVID-19 regulations in Verona Park. He states he witnesses non-wearing of masks, use of the walking path by bike riders and questions why a County Sheriff's Officer, sitting in a car cannot address the situations. He states that in Cedar Grove there are a number of No Bike Riding signs, more social distancing and people wearing masks.

Councilman Giblin reports that a resident from Park Avenue sent an email regarding landscaper noise and asks the Township Attorney about the Noise ordinance. Mr. Aloia explains the specifics of the noise ordinance. The Township Manager states he will respond to the resident. Mr. Giblin also states he has received positive feedback about the pool and asks if there is a possibility to extend the pool season if the students are not going back to school until the 14th. The Township Manager states the adequate staffing is not available, therefore it is not possible. Mr. Giblin states that a neighbor's house was burglarized last Friday and reminds residents to lock their cars and doors.

Councilwoman McGrath reports that the Recreation Advisory Committee met and discussed the pool and summer programs. The Committee also brainstormed on fall programs, although the winter program season looks bleak. Ms. McGrath congratulates the Junior Woman's Club for their Backpacks with Purpose event where donations for school supplies for Verona families who need assistance.

ORDINANCE No. 2020-18

**WATER AND SEWER UTILITY CAPITAL ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING
\$115,000 FROM WATER/SEWER UTILITY CAPITAL SURPLUS FOR
ENGINEERING AND PLANNING COSTS RELATING TO THE
REHABILITATION OF THE PRIMARY CLARIFIER PUMP STATION BY
THE TOWNSHIP OF VERONA, IN THE COUNTY OF ESSEX, NEW JERSEY**

The Municipal Clerk reads Ordinance No. 2020-18 by title into record.

Motion to adopt Ordinance No. 2020-18 is moved by Councilwoman McGrath; seconded by Councilman Giblin.

Public Hearing:
None.

Council discussion on Ordinance No. 2020-18.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

ORDINANCE No. 2020-19

**REPEALING CHAPTER 112 "RENT CONTROL" IN ITS ENTIRETY AND
ESTABLISHING A NEW CHAPTER 112**

The Municipal Clerk reads Ordinance No. 2020-19 by title into record.

Councilwoman McGrath raises a point of order and asks Mayor McEvoy if he owns rent controlled buildings in town. Mayor McEvoy responds that he is partial owner of rent control units in town and states his participation on this ordinance is not a conflict at all. He states he contacted the Township Attorney who had opined that there was no conflict in the Mayor voting on this ordinance.

The ordinance is not moved and during council discussion the Mayor states the ordinance is not right and needs to be fixed. Councilman Ryan questions if apartments under any PILOT agreements are subject to Rent Control. The Township Manager states that units under PILOT agreements are exempt from rent control for the first 30 years after being built.

Mayor McEvoy motions to remove the ordinance from the agenda; seconded by Councilman Ryan.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS: Giblin

Ordinance No. 2020-19 is pulled from the agenda and no action is taken. The Council will submit questions and concerns to the Township Manager who will speak with the Rent Board Attorney.

Public Comment on Consent Agenda Items:

None.

Before the Consent Agenda is voted on, Councilman Ryan asks the Township Attorney about resolution K-4 on tonight's agenda and if it is legal to make a municipal lien. Mr. Aloia responds affirmatively.

Minutes of the August 10, 2020 regular meeting are approved unanimously.

RESOLUTION No. 2020-146

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

**APPROVING THE CERTIFICATION LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE
TOWNSHIP OF VERONA FIRE DEPARTMENT QUALIFYING FOR CREDIT
UNDER THE LENGTH OF SERVICE AWARDS PROGRAM (LOSAP) FOR
2019**

WHEREAS, The Township adopted Ordinance No. 10-99 which created the Length of Service- Awards Program (LOSAP) which was subsequently amended by Ordinance No. 2018-33; and

WHEREAS, *N.J.S.A. 40A:14-191* requires that the Fire Chief furnish the Township Council with an annual certification list of all volunteer members who have qualified for credit under the award program for the previous year.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Verona that the list of the volunteer members of the Township of Verona Fire Department certified by the Fire Chief for the year 2019, a copy of which list is attached here as Exhibit A is approved.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this list has been posted for at least thirty (30) days in the respective fire companies.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2020-147

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

**CANCELING TAXES AND AUTHORIZING REFUND OF TAXES
PREVIOUSLY PAID FOR 8 OSTEGO ROAD (BLOCK 802, LOT 66)**

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector was notified from the Tax Assessor's Office that Block 802 Lot 66, property known as 8 Otsego Road, was sold and purchased by Mr. Lorenzo Urbano on June 25, 2020; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Urbano is qualified as a 100% disabled veteran and as such is exempt from property taxes; and

WHEREAS, this property was originally billed for 3rd and 4th quarter 2020 in the amount of \$2,637.51 each quarter; and

WHEREAS, this property should no longer be billed as of June 25, 2020.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Tax Collector be authorized to cancel the 3rd and 4th quarter 2020 billing on Block 802, Lot 66.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Tax Collector is hereby directed to cancel tax billings for Block 802, Lot 66 effective June 25, 2020 and issue a refund to the owner of the property in the amount of \$2,774.66, which represents \$137.15 from the 2nd quarter of 2020 and the \$2,637.51, represents the entire amount paid for 3rd quarter of 2020.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2020-148

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

**AUTHORIZING THE REFUND OF TAX PAYMENTS DUE TO DUPLICATE
PAYMENT - BLOCK 11712/LOT 1/QUAL. C0129**

WHEREAS, the Township of Verona has received payment on July 27, 2020 in the amount of \$1,231.28 for 3rd quarter taxes by Associated Title Agency for block 1712 lot 1 Qualifier C0129, property known as 46 Wedgewood Drive #129, and

WHEREAS, the Township of Verona received a duplicate payment from Corelogic on the same account, and

WHEREAS, this payment has resulted in an overpayment on the account, and

WHEREAS, Associated Title Agency has requested the refund.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, State of New Jersey that the Chief Financial Officer and Tax Collector are hereby authorized to issue a refund to Associated Title Agency, in the amount of \$1,231.28.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-149

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

MUNICIPAL LIEN

WHEREAS, the Police Department performed traffic control at the request of the Islamic Center of Verona on August 21, 2018; and

WHEREAS, the total of this work performed was \$650.00; and

WHEREAS, the Police Department has attempted to collect on this outstanding invoice and has been unsuccessful.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey, that the Tax Collector be and is hereby authorized and directed to take all appropriate actions to impose on the property commonly known as 56 Grove Avenue, Verona, New Jersey (Block 1605, Lot 20) a municipal lien in the amount of the tax lien certificate (\$650.00), where upon the Tax Collector shall, within ten (10) days of encumbering of the property, send official notice of said encumbrance via certified mail, return receipt requested and regular mail to any and all other lien holders or creditors with a secured interest in the property.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2020-150

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

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE LIEN

WHEREAS, the Construction Code Official determined that the owner of the Block 902, Lot 10 on the Tax Maps of the Township of Verona, commonly known as 111 Linden Avenue, has failed to comply with the Township's property maintenance code, specifically lawn maintenance of the property; and

WHEREAS, clean up was performed by Green Valley Landscape Design on behalf of the Township in the month of July totaling the amount of \$100.00; and

WHEREAS, these charges shall be imposed on the property in the form of a municipal lien for above services pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 54:5-8* and to any other applicable State of Federal regulation.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey, that the Tax Collector be and is hereby authorized and directed to take all appropriate actions to impose on the property commonly known as 111 Linden Avenue, Verona, New Jersey (Block 902, Lot 10) a municipal lien in the amount of the tax lien certificate (\$100.00), where upon the Tax Collector shall, within ten (10) days of encumbering of the property, send official notice of said encumbrance via certified mail, return receipt requested and regular mail to any and all other lien holders or creditors with a secured interest

in the property.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2020-151

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

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION AND RECOVERY WEEK

WHEREAS, the week of September 6-12, 2020 is National Suicide Prevention Week, when millions of people around the world join their voices to share a message of hope and healing; and

WHEREAS, these observances are united in raising awareness that prevention is possible; treatment is effective; and people do recover; and

WHEREAS, in these challenging times messages of hope and healing are more needed than ever; and

WHEREAS, residents of the Township of Verona should be able to access high quality prevention, support, rehabilitation, and treatment services that lead to recovery and a healthy lifestyle; and

WHEREAS, every day in the Township of Verona people enter treatment into behavioral health services and community supports and begin the road to wellness and recovery; and

WHEREAS, resiliency begins early in life within families, day cares, and schools, and can be strengthened and reinforced throughout the life span; and

WHEREAS, recovery and wellness encompass the whole individual, including mind, body, spirit, and community; and

WHEREAS, the benefits of preventing and overcoming mental health challenges, suicide attempts and loss, and substance abuse are significant and valuable to individuals, families, and our community at large; and

WHEREAS, it is essential that we educate residents about suicide, mental health and substance abuse problems and the ways they affect all people in the community; and

WHEREAS, we must encourage relatives, friends, co-workers, and providers to recognize the signs of a problem, and guide those in need to appropriate services and supports; and

WHEREAS, Suicide Prevention Week and Recovery Month inspire millions of Americans to raise awareness, build resiliency, and find hope.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Council of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New, Jersey does hereby resolve September 6 through September 12, 2020 as Suicide Prevention and Recovery Week: "Finding Hope, Building Resiliency, Supporting Recovery".

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

New Business:

The Council makes the following appointments by a unanimous vote motioned by Mayor McEvoy; seconded by Councilman Giblin. Vote: 5-0
Boards/Committees/Commission Appointments

- a. Neighborhood Traffic & Safety Advisory Committee
 - i. Alissa Randall Public Member Term Ending 6/30/2022

Councilman Ryan commends Mary Wilkes and her service on the Neighborhood Traffic and Safety Advisory Committee. Council discusses the DeCamp Bus line suspension and the Open Public Meetings Act.

The Township Manager reports that the September 11 Ceremony will be held in the Civic Center, with social distancing.

Public Comment:

Kathleen Laterza, 810 Bloomfield Avenue, Verona, New Jersey
Madrid Rodner, 33 Morningside Road, Verona, New Jersey
George Manousos, 37 Morningside Road, Verona, New Jersey

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 pm is motioned by Mayor McEvoy; seconded by Councilman Ryan.

The next regular scheduled meeting is September 21, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Kiernan
Jennifer Kiernan, Municipal Clerk

Jack McEvoy
Jack McEvoy, Mayor

APPROVED: September 21, 2020