

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Verona Township Council on Monday, October 5, 2020, beginning at 7:03 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 due to restrictions on indoor public gatherings resulting from 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 and TAPinto, 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 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. Bob Benecke and Chelsea Gleis of Benecke Economics.

Mayor's Report:

Julius Coltre, Essex County Liaison states tomorrow's Mayor's Call is at 10:30. The ribbon ceremony for the updated 900 Bloomfield Avenue DPW building will be held on 10/14. Electronic Waste drop off will be on 10/17 at 99 Bradford Avenue, Cedar Grove. COVID testing dates are 1/6 at 141 Gould Avenue in North Caldwell, 10/7 at Calvary Evangelical Church in Essex Fells, 10/8 at South Mountain Recreational Field on Cherry Lane and 10/9 at Weequahic Park. Food distribution services will be held on Saturday at Charles H. Bullock School in Montclair.

Mayor McEvoy reports that Verona Fights Hunger week is 10/11-10/17. He reads a proclamation for the Junior Women's Club's annual fundraising/food collection event. Newman Cares held a virtual block-fest last weekend and raised monies to donate to progeria. He attended the Verona Office Suites grand opening.

Mayor McEvoy states the two (2) resolutions at last meeting dealt with two (2) employees. The Council gave permission to the JIIF to move forward and sign the agreement with the employees, and has not been signed yet and therefore the Council is bound to secrecy and told by the attorneys not to say anything. He addresses a Face Book post from a councilperson and states decorum should be put forth in social media.

Manager's Report:

Mr. Cavallo plays a 30 second video of a message regarding the 2020 Election from the County Clerk's Office as well as a 90 second video showing how to complete your mail in ballot. Mr. Cavallo then states the County Executive is executing an Essex County Rental Assistance Program, which will receive applications from 10/2 through 10/23, funded by the Community Development Block Grant.

The rebid of the Pool Renovations Project opened last week. Bid still came in above budget with the lowest bid of \$1,014,223. The Architect is currently reviewing the proposals and discussing the scope of work. The Township is currently out to bid on BidNet for the Collection, Removal and Disposal of Recyclable Materials tomorrow. The bid date on this bid is October 14. RFPs are being accepted for 2021 Professional Service Contracts, specifically attorney (including the Township Attorney, Tax Counsel, Labor/Employment Counsel and Bond Counsel) and engineering services (including the Township Engineer, Water/Sewer Utility Engineer, and Traffic Engineer). The due date on these RFPs is October 20.

The County of Essex has been able to release additional funds to municipalities from the County's share of CARES Act Funds. The County is making an additional \$176,898.95 available to Verona which we have already started to prepare the reimbursement request for and will submit it this week.

Overnight parking enforcement will remain suspended through December 31, 2020 in Verona. All other parking rules throughout town remain in effect. The Police Department asks that if you have the space in your driveway, to park your vehicles there, as overnight street parking is intended for special circumstances, i.e. driveway paving, visitors, etc. In the event of any snow fall later in the year, vehicles will still have to be removed from the roadway for storm clean up as required.

The County of Essex is continuing their Emergency Food Distribution Events every Thursday through the end of the year. More information is available on the Essex County website.

The Verona Community Garden is in its birth stages and would appreciate any gardening equipment you are no longer using. If you don't have any tools, but wish to donate new purchased tools for the garden, this would also be appreciated.

Electronic Waste Disposal will be held Friday, October 9 and Saturday October 10, in the Verona DPW Garage on Ozone Avenue and Friday, October 16 and Saturday, October 17 at the Essex County Fleet Yard on West Bradford Avenue in Cedar Grove. Cat licenses expired on September 30. Forms are available on the Verona website.

The 2020 Pool Survey was released on last week to the public via a link emailed to all registered recipients. A follow up email will be sent later this week. As of this morning, there have been over 362 responses to the survey.

The Municipal Clerk, Jennifer Kiernan gives an update on the November 3 General Election.

The Township Manager goes over the Best Practices Survey in length.

Councilmember's Reports:

Deputy Mayor Roman has no report tonight.

Councilman Ryan shares that the Environmental Commission will hold a Peckman River clean-up on October 10- from 9:30 - 11:30 am. The Verona Park Conservancy will have their clean-up on October 17. Mr. Ryan states he received an email from a resident who strongly urges the Council to not enforce mask wearing regulations. Apparently, the email is a form-type email from One Click Politics.com. He goes on to explain that the Township cannot override the policy and must enforce regulations handed down from the State. He comments on the Mayor's comment on the posting on Face Book. He states he was one of the officials named in the post and found it ironic that he was criticized for the vote he made, yet the post also said the Council was told not to comment on anything. He comments that the post seemed disingenuous to him.

Councilman Giblin reports that the resolution passed at the last meeting that recommended a traffic light at Claremont and Pompton Avenues was passed by the County Commissioners at a recent meeting. Next, the proposal goes to DOT for further review. The Neighborhood Traffic and Safety Advisory Committee met and expressed concerns about developments and traffic. He states the Chairman, Santi Condorelli commented at the meeting that traffic is like a stream of water - you divert it and it ends up elsewhere. Mr. Giblin reiterates that the role of the committee is to get public input and bring items to the Council's attention. Mr. Giblin inquires about any update on a proposed traffic light at Personette and Fairview Avenues as well as a report from a Summit Road resident that making a left turn onto Mount Prospect is difficult. Mr. Cavallo states that he has not heard back in regards either inquiry, but will reach out to the County Engineer. Mr. Giblin then asks the Township Attorney about the ordinances on tonight's agenda and what the total amounts are and what is the full cost to the Township. He requests the Township Attorney give an overview before introduction.

Councilwoman McGrath responds to the Mayor's report and states that no one like conflict, however, the Council was elected for a specific reason: to uphold the law and their oaths. She

states this is an important vote and look forward to commenting as the appropriate time, when the agreement is available to the public.

Verona Fights Hunger week is coming. The Juniors are ready to collect food to support local food pantries. Details are still to come at the next Council meeting. She urges the community to be generous during this difficult time. She also states that the Church of the Holy Spirit is also receiving donated food from this drive, as they have in previous years.

ORDINANCE No. 2020-20

AMENDING CHAPTER 36 (PERSONNEL BENEFITS, COMPENSATION AND REGULATIONS), ARTICLE I (BENEFITS AND COMPENSATION), SECTION 36-25 (DONATED LEAVE PROGRAM) OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF VERONA

The Municipal Clerk reads Ordinance No. 2020-20 by title into record.

Motion to introduce Ordinance No. 2020-20 is moved by Councilwoman McGrath; seconded by Deputy Mayor Roman.

Public Hearing: None

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

Ordinance No. 2020-20 is adopted 5-0 and will be published according to law.

ORDINANCE No. 2020-21

AMENDING AND SUPPLEMENTING CHAPTER 140 (VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC) AND CHAPTER A175-1 (SCHEDULE OF FEES) OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF VERONA TO AMEND REGULATIONS FOR PUBLIC PARKING SPACES FOR CHARGING OF ELECTRIC VEHICLES

The Municipal Clerk reads Ordinance No. 2020-21 by title into record.

Motion to introduce Ordinance No. 2020-21 is moved by Deputy Mayor Roman; seconded by Councilman Giblin.

Public Hearing: None

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

Ordinance No. 2020-21 is adopted 5-0 and will be published according to law.

Township Attorney Brian Aloia comments on the two (2) upcoming salary ordinances and states that the resolutions passed at the last meeting authorize execution of the agreements. Once the agreements are signed by all parties they will become public record. However, he cautions the Council to limit their discussion because both these ordinance deal with personnel matters. Both are adjustment salaries of employees in accord with the terms of their settlement agreements.

ORDINANCE No. 2020-22

AN ORDINANCE FIXING THE SALARIES, COMPENSATION OF CERTAIN PAID EMPLOYEES OF THE TOWNSHIP

The Municipal Clerk reads Ordinance No. 2020-22 by title into record.

Motion to introduce Ordinance No. 2020-22 is moved by Councilman Giblin; seconded by Councilman Ryan.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

Introduction of Ordinance No. 2020-22 is approved 5-0 and will be published according to law.
A public hearing will be held on October 19, 2020.

ORDINANCE No. 2020-23

**AN ORDINANCE FIXING THE SALARIES, COMPENSATION OF CERTAIN
PAID EMPLOYEES OF THE TOWNSHIP**

The Municipal Clerk reads Ordinance No. 2020-23 by title into record.

Motion to introduce Ordinance No. 2020-23 is moved by Mayor McEvoy; seconded by Councilwoman McGrath.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

Introduction of Ordinance No. 2020-23 is approved 5-0 and will be published according to law.
A public hearing will be held on October 19, 2020.

Public Comment on the proposed resolution:

None

RESOLUTION No. 2020-170

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

**AUTHORIZING CARES ACT REIMBURSEMENT
AGREEMENT WITH THE COUNTY OF ESSEX**

WHEREAS, the United States Congress has enacted the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security Act (the "CARES Act") for, among other reasons, providing relief for economic damage caused to states, counties and municipalities by the COVID-19 health crisis; and

WHEREAS, the County of Essex has received CARES Act funds from the United States Treasury (the Stimulus Funds") to be used to reimburse the County and municipalities and agencies within the County, including the Township of Verona, due to economic damage caused by COVID-19 health crisis; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Verona wishes to enter into a supplemental agreement with the County of Essex to receive additional reimbursement from the Stimulus Funds of COVID-19 related costs and damages, to the extent available and applicable.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey that Township Manager is hereby authorized to execute a supplemental Reimbursement Agreement with the County of Essex according to the terms and conditions and in substantially the form attached hereto.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2020-171

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

**AUTHORIZING SIDEWALK
AGREEMENT WITH THE COUNTY OF ESSEX**

WHEREAS, the Township constructed a sidewalk located on the eastern side of Lakeside Avenue (CR-636) adjacent to Verona Park between Bloomfield Avenue and the West Orange Township line in or about 2006; and

WHEREAS, the Township and the County acknowledge that there has been a longstanding verbal agreement by and between the Township and the County that the Township would Maintain the Sidewalk, however, the Township and the County both desire to memorialize their verbal agreement in writing; and

WHEREAS, The Township and the County have negotiated the terms and conditions of this Agreement with respect to the Township's acceptance of responsibility for the Maintenance of the Sidewalk and to further indemnify the County against any and all claims in connection therewith arising out of the Township's Maintenance of the Sidewalk.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey that Township Manager is hereby authorized to execute a Sidewalk Maintenance Agreement with the County of Essex according to the terms and conditions and in substantially the form attached hereto.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2020-172

A motion was made by Councilman Giblin; seconded by Councilman Ryan 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, to comply with the Township 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 August 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, 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. 2020-173

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

**AUTHORIZING THE REFUND OF WATER/SEWER PAYMENTS DUE
TO DUPLICATE PAYMENT (BLOCK 1503/LOT 14)**

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector has received monthly payments from owner Karen Teitelbaum which has resulted in an overpayment on her water/ sewer account in the amount of \$793.21, and

WHEREAS, the residence, located at 131 Franklin Street has been sold and Karen Teitelbaum has requested a 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 Karen Teitelbaum in the amount of \$793.21.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

The Municipal Clerk submits the quarterly Vacancy Increase report.

New Business:

There is discussion on a zoning ordinance for the Town Center. Mayor McEvoy recuses himself from the discussion as he is a property owner within the zoning district. Bob Benecke of Benecke Economics reports on the mid use zoning district permitting residential uses with an affordable housing element.

There is discussion on the tabled Rent Control ordinance. There is also discussion on Halloween. There is no official prohibition for Halloween, but the Township will not allow trunk or treats, but will hold a pumpkin decorating contest and a house decorating contest.

Public Comment:

Kathleen Laterza, 810 Bloomfield Avenue, Verona, New Jersey
Jessica Pearson, 20 Montclair Avenue, Verona, New Jersey
Jeremy Katzeff, 8 Forest Avenue, Verona, New Jersey
Maria Squilanti, 6 Belleclair Avenue, Verona, New Jersey

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:23 pm is motioned by Mayor McEvoy; seconded by Councilman Giblin.

The next regular scheduled meeting is October 19, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Kiernan
Jennifer Kiernan, Municipal Clerk

Jack McEvoy
Jack McEvoy, Mayor

APPROVED: October 19, 2020