

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Verona Township Council on Monday, December 21, 2020, 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 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.

Mayor's Report:

Essex County Liaison Julius Coltre reports that the County food distribution will continue tomorrow, where the County will be giving out 1,500 turkeys and food. COVID testing continues throughout the County. Mr. Coltre reports that K-Mart on Prospect Avenue in West Orange, the Sears in Livingston Mall, Essex County College and West Caldwell Vocational School will all be designated as COVID vaccination sites. The County is looking for volunteer doctors, nurses and greeters.

Mayor McEvoy thanks the DPW for removing snow so quickly after the recent snow storm. He reports that Dr. Elizabeth Giblin, president of the Library Board has decided not to seek reappointment. He thanks her for her services. He urges the public to wear a masks and be safe over the Christmas holiday as the COVID numbers have skyrocketed.

Manager's Report:

Mr. Cavallo reports COVID-19 Cases Are Continuing to Soar in Verona. The number of Verona residents diagnosed with COVID-19 has continued to increase. Since our last Council Meeting on November 23, Verona has seen an additional 82 new confirmed positive test results. Continue to wear a face covering over your nose and mouth and stay 6 feet apart from others. If you receive a call from contact tracers, please cooperate. The State is reporting that 78% of those people contacted are not being cooperative.

The County will continue their expanded COVID-19 testing six days per week (Monday through Saturday). Testing information and times are available on the County of Essex website homepage. Registration for these test sites is open 24/7 at www.EssexCovid.org. Residents are encouraged to get retested if they have been tested 14 days ago or more and have received negative test results or are asymptomatic. The County will be offering free COVID-19 vaccinations as soon as they become available. We are expecting that the sites will be open the first week in January. Verona residents have been assigned to the West Orange location located at the former K-Mart on Prospect Avenue. Residents will need to register at www.EssexCovid.org. The County of Essex is continuing their Emergency Food Distribution Events every Thursday into the first quarter of 2021.

Curbside contactless pickup will continue for the foreseeable future. Contact the Library directly for more information. Mr. Cavallo thanks Dr. Liz Giblin for her dedication to the Verona Library. Dr. Giblin has served on the Library Board since 2011 and has been the President of the Board since 2013. Dr. Giblin has decided not to seek reappointment this year. Anyone interested in serving on the Board are asked to contact the Township Clerk.

The Township has received a lot of amazing submissions for the Holiday House Decorating Contest! There is still time left to enter if you haven't already. The deadline to send your submissions is this Wednesday, December 23. Please email your submissions to veronanjchamber@gmail.com or tag the

Chamber of Commerce on Facebook and Instagram using @veronanjchamber. Three winners will be chosen and each winner will be able to choose which local nonprofit will receive the prize money. 1st place is \$500, 2nd place is \$300 and 3rd place is \$200. Thanks to Chamber of Commerce member Aloia Law Firm for sponsoring this event, which is sure to become a new tradition.

The Verona Fire Department, Rescue Squad and Police Department went out with Santa Sunday. I want to thank our residents who donated non-perishables for the Holy Spirit Food Pantry.

If residents forgot to apply for the Senior Freeze property tax reimbursement, don't worry. The deadline has been extended to Dec. 31, 2020. For more information please call the Tax Office.

The next election is the Municipal Election on Tuesday, May 11, 2021. It has yet to be determined if the election will be in-person or all Vote by Mail. Verona residents interested in running for Township Council in this Municipal Election must be a registered voter in the Township of Verona and have been a resident of the Township for at least 1 year. Three seats will be open for a four-year term. Interested residents can request a packet via the link on the Township website homepage starting on Monday, January 4. Packets will then be sent to the requestors via email and regular mail. Hard copies are not available at Town Hall as the building is closed to the public. The deadline for submitting a complete candidate packet to be on the ballot is March 8, 2021. Contact the Township Clerk for more information.

The Office of Emergency Management has issued two (2) directives: one for Rent Control, waiving inspection requirements with rental increases and another for towing operator applications. Fingerprint applications have been given to drivers, but scheduling has been difficult with COVID, therefore the Township is suspending the requirements to be received prior to being placed on the rotation.

The Municipal Building will be closed December 24, 25, 31 and January 1 for the holiday. The Trump Administration has officially declared a Federal Disaster for Tropical Storm Isaias.

There was a report that Fire Company #2 held a gathering in the firehouse against COVID guidelines. The matter is under investigation administratively by the Township.

2021 Community Development Block Grant Application

Mr. Cavallo states he will give an overview and then hold a public hearing. He reports Township will once again submit a qualifying project to the 2021 Community Development Block Grant program (CDBG). The Township has identified 30 individual curb ramps and a dozen intersections that are in need of either repair or full reconstruction. A detailed presentation was given at the December 7, 2020 meeting.

Public Hearing:

None.

Councilmember's Reports:

Deputy Mayor Roman has no report this evening. He wishes the public a safe and happy New Year.

Councilman Ryan attended the Environmental Commission meeting where they discussed the annual report submission. He thanks all the dedicated members of the Commission. He attended the opening of the COVID vaccination site at Kmart along with Councilwoman McGrath, Matt Cavallo, Chief Chris Kiernan and Joel Martin. He commends the County Executive for his handling of the pandemic with food distributions and testing sites. He wishes everyone a Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and Happy Kwanza.

Councilman Giblin thanks DPW, the police department and rescue squad, who did a great job during the storm. He received many complaints about snow being thrown in the street. He talked with some members of the state assembly about the proposed changes to the liquor laws and states that many local residents and licensees approached him with things to watch out for with the new law. He congratulates his wife, Dr. Elizabeth Giblin for her years of service to the Library Board of Trustees, and reports that she took pride in serving and with the outcome of the renovations to the library.

Councilwoman McGrath echoes Dr. Giblin's service. She states she was a quiet but effective leader who did so much for the library without ego or fanfare. The Councilwoman appreciates her service and advocacy. Councilwoman McGrath attended the County press conference at Kmart, which she found impressive. The County will approach vaccination like a campaign and encourage everyone to get vaccinated. She also reports that the holidays may be a difficult time for people. Those having difficulty

can reach out to the mental helpline of Morris and Essex at 1-866-202-HELP and at mhaessexmorris.org. She wishes everyone a wonderful Christmas and New Year.

ORDINANCE NO. 2020-26

AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING A REVISION AND CODIFICATION OF THE ORDINANCES OF THE TOWNSHIP OF VERONA, COUNTY OF ESSEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY

The Municipal Clerk reads Ordinance No. 2020-26 by title into record.

Motion to adopt Ordinance No. 2020-26 is moved by Mayor McEvoy; seconded by Deputy Mayor Roman.

Public Hearing:
None.

Council Discussion.

ROLL CALL:
AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy
NAYS:

Ordinance No. 2020-26 is adopted 5-0 and will be published according to law.

Public Comment on Consent Agenda:

None.

Mayor McEvoy and Councilman Ryan request to pull K-6, 7, and 8 from the Consent Agenda to be voted on individually so there can be a separate discussion prior to their vote.

RESOLUTION No. 2020-207

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

CANCELLATION - CURRENT FUND, WATER UTILITY & RECREATION UTILITY OPERATING BALANCES

WHEREAS, it has been determined that proper fiscal budgetary practice requires cancellation of appropriation contained in the 2020 Current Fund & Swimming Pool Utility.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey that the following appropriation 2020 Current Fund & Swimming Pool Utility Budgets be cancelled to Fund Balance and the Chief Financial Officer is directed to make the appropriate Journal Entries:

CURRENT FUND

Finance Office Salary and Wages	25,000.00
Police Salaries and Wages	100,000.00
Street and Road Salaries and Wages	50,000.00
Recreation Salaries and Wages	<u>100,000.00</u>
Total Current Fund	\$ 275,000.00

SWIMMING POOL UTILITY

Swimming Pool Salaries and Wages	75,000.00
Swimming Pool Other Expenses	<u>50,000.00</u>
Total Swimming Pool Utility	\$ 125,000.00

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy
NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2020-208

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

APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE'S TO THE ESSEX COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT COMMITTEE

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey, that Municipal Officials Michael DeCarlo, Engineering Manager and Matthew Cavallo, Township Manager are hereby appointed to serve as the Township's representatives to the Community Development Block Grant Committee for the year 2021.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy
NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2020-209

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

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANTS FOR THE 2021 YEAR

WHEREAS, The Township of Verona will participate in the Community Development Block Grant Program for the 2021 Program Period, and;

WHEREAS, The Township must designate and prioritize its project application for the 2021 Program year.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Township Manager and the Engineering Manager are hereby authorized and directed to submit an application for the Community Development Block Grant in accordance with the priority indicated below:

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Amount</u>
1	Township ADA Curb Ramp Improvements	\$91,125.00

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy
NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2020-210

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

AUTHORIZING A CONTRACT WITH UNITED SOCCER ACADEMY, INC.

WHEREAS, there exists a need for soccer clinic services for the Department of Community Services; and

WHEREAS, the Director of Community Services has recommended and the Township Manager concurs that United Soccer Academy, Inc., 4 Somerset Street, Whitehouse Station, New Jersey 08889 shall be awarded a contract to provide said services.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey that United Soccer Academy, Inc., 4 Somerset Street, Whitehouse Station, New Jersey 08889 is hereby awarded a contract for soccer clinic services for the Department of Community Services not to exceed \$20,500.00 without further authorization of the Governing Body.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Business Entity Disclosure Certification and

Determination of Value are to be placed on file with this Resolution.

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.

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

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2020-211

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

AUTHORIZING A CONTRACT WITH SHORELINE WELDING, LLC

WHEREAS, there exists a need for various welding services for the Department of Public Works; and

WHEREAS, the Superintendent of Public Works has recommended and the Township Manager concurs that Shoreline Welding, LLC, 279 Perrinville Road, Jackson, New Jersey 08527 shall be awarded a contract to provide said services.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey that Shoreline Welding, LLC, 279 Perrinville Road, Jackson, New Jersey 08527 is hereby awarded a contract for various welding services for the Department of Public Works not to exceed \$20,000.00 without further authorization of the Governing Body.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Business Entity Disclosure Certification and Determination of Value are to be placed on file with this Resolution; 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 Township Clerk are hereby authorized to enter into an agreement for the aforementioned services a copy of which shall be available for public inspection in the Office of the Township Clerk.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2020-212

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

REFUNDING TAX LIEN REDEMPTION

WHEREAS, property located at 1 Claridge Drive #1028, Block 101 Lot 1 Qualifier C1028, owned by Steven Winograd, has been held in tax lien since December 6, 2018; and

WHEREAS, payment was received, in the amount of \$43,103.67 from Steven Winograd, clearing the lien as follows:

Certificate	#18-00001
Certificate	\$ 6,554.34
4% Redemption Penalty	\$ 262.17
Recording Fee	\$ 53.00
Search Fee	\$ 12.00
6% Year End Penalty	\$ 610.48
2018 Taxes plus Interest	\$13,077.63
2019 Taxes plus Interest	\$12,062.06
2020 Taxes plus Interest	\$10,471.99
Total	\$43,103.67
Premium	\$33,700.00

WHEREAS, this certificate has been held by D1 Softball Clinic LLC and the certificate has been received and properly signed for cancellation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Chief Financial Officer and Tax Collector be authorized to refund, from Trust, \$76,803.67 to:

D1 Softball Clinic LLC
20 Glenside Terrace
Montclair, NJ 07043

Trust Check - D1 Softball - \$76,803.67 Certificate #18-00001

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2020-213

A motion was made by Mayor McEvoy; seconded by Councilman Ryan; 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 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.
2. The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows:
 - a. Contract Negotiations pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(7)*
 - 2021 Professional Services
 - b. Pending, Ongoing, or Anticipated Litigation pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 (7)*
 - Essex Fells Water
 - c. Personnel Matters pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 (8)*
 - Fire Department
3. It is anticipated at this time that the above stated subject matter will be made public when said subject has been fully discussed by the Council, and the attorney rules this matter may be brought before the public without jeopardizing any pending litigation.
4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2020-214

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

REQUESTING THE TOWNSHIP MANAGER PROVIDE THE COUNCIL WITH A POLICY OUTLINING ALL VOLUNTEER BOARD AND COMMISSION MEMBERS TRAINING FOR IMPLICIT BIAS AND HARASSMENT, SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND REPORTING POLICIES

WHEREAS, the Township of Verona has many outstanding residents that volunteer their time to participate on the many Boards and Commissions established and required to run the Township; and

WHEREAS, the volunteers make many binding and important decisions impacting the Township; and

WHEREAS, when performing their volunteer duties and responsibilities to the Township, the volunteers interact with Township residents, employees, contractors and other Board and Commission members and professionals; and

WHEREAS, to help maintain a safe and productive workplace for the volunteers, the Township must adequately train all of the volunteers of the Township Boards and Commissions on their obligations both under the law and to the Township; and

WHEREAS, effective training designed specifically for the Board and Commission members that recognize the value of the volunteer time in areas including, but not limited to, implicit bias; diversity/inclusion and sensitivity; and harassment/sexual harassment can protect the Township from litigation, improve the volunteer morale and experience on the Board or Commission, and increase efficiency and productivity; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, New Jersey that to ensure that Township volunteers are receiving the necessary training, the Council requests the Township Manager review the training received by all Township Board and Commission members and develop a training policy and schedule that includes the above referenced topics and all other necessary training for each Board and Commission, and a summary of that plan will be delivered to the Council within 90 days.

ROLL CALL

AYES: McGrath, Giblin

NAYS: Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

RESOLUTION No. 2020-215

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

REQUESTING THE TOWNSHIP MANAGER PROVIDE THE COUNCIL WITH A WRITTEN POLICY OUTLINING EMPLOYEE TRAINING

WHEREAS, the Township of Verona employees are the Township's biggest asset since they perform all of the work required for the Township and serve the residents well; and

WHEREAS, to help maintain a safe and productive workplace, the Township must adequately train employees on their obligations both under the law and to the Township; and

WHEREAS, effective training designed specifically for the Township in areas including, but not limited to, implicit bias; diversity/inclusion and sensitivity; harassment/sexual harassment; customer service; leadership; and employee handbook training can protect the Township from litigation, improve employee morale, and increase employees' efficiency and productivity; and

WHEREAS, Township employees currently receive all required training under statutory and case law; and

WHEREAS, to ensure that Township employees continue to receive the necessary training in the future, the Council requests the Township Manager review the current employee training for all non-uniformed employees and develop a written training policy and schedule that includes the above referenced topics and all other necessary training; and

WHEREAS, the Township's uniformed employees currently receive all required training under statutory, case law and as required by the Attorney General, the Police Training Commission and the Essex County Prosecutor's Office; and

WHEREAS, to ensure that all uniformed employees continue to receive the appropriate training, the Township Manager is requested to obtain a report from the Police Chief outlining the training received by uniformed employees of Police Department on an annual or semi-annual basis and outline the actions that will be taken to ensure the required training continues to be received.

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 Township Manager is hereby directed to review the current employee training for all non-uniformed Township employees and develop a training policy and schedule that includes the above referenced topics and all other necessary employee training and the frequency each subject will be taught; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Township Manager is hereby directed to prepare a report, or obtain a report from the Police Chief, outlining the training received by uniformed employees of Police Department on an annual or semi-annual basis and outline the actions that will be taken to ensure the required training continues to be received.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

RESOLUTION No. 2020-216

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

REQUESTING THE TOWNSHIP MANAGER PERFORM A SALARY ANALYSIS OF ALL EMPLOYEE TITLES/POSITIONS TO ENSURE CONFORMITY WITH THE DIANE B. ALLEN EQUAL PAY ACT

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Legislature created the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights (DCR) to enforce the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD) and to "prevent and eliminate discrimination" in the State of New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the LAD's protections, pay gaps still exist in New Jersey and across the country; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, women in New Jersey earned only 81.3% as much as their male counterparts; and

WHEREAS, black women nationwide earned only 80% as much as white women, and only 65% as much as white men; and

WHEREAS, Hispanic women earned only 76% as much as white women nationwide, and only 62% as much as white men; and

WHEREAS, on April 24, 2018, Governor Phil Murphy signed into law the Diane B. Allen Equal Pay Act (Equal Pay Act); and

WHEREAS, the Equal Pay Act made numerous changes to the LAD, with the goal of further reducing and eliminating pay disparities based on protected characteristics; and

WHEREAS, the Equal Pay Act expanded upon the equal pay protections that already existed in the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), and has been called "the most sweeping equal pay legislation in the nation"; and

WHEREAS, the Act generally prohibits an employer from paying an employee who is a member of an LAD-protected class less than what it pays an employee who is not a member of that LAD-protected class for substantially similar work; and

WHEREAS, by contrast, the federal Equal Pay Act, 29 U.S.C. § 206, covers only gender-based pay disparities and only requires equal pay for “equal” work, not “substantially similar” work; and

WHEREAS, the new law took effect on July 1, 2018; and

WHEREAS, the Township Council desires to have a salary analysis performed to ensure that all Township employee positions contained in the Township’s organizational chart are appropriately compensated and all employees receive equal pay for performing substantially similar work as compared to their fellow Township employees, notwithstanding the possibility that they made hold different titles.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Verona, in the County of Essex, State of New Jersey, that Township Manager is hereby directed to perform, or have performed, within the next 90 days, a salary analysis to confirm that all Township employee positions contained in the Township’s organizational chart that perform substantially similar work, notwithstanding the possibility that they made hold different titles, receive equal pay; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the analysis should include salary comparisons of similar municipalities for each position.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the analysis shall include any salary adjustments that are recommended based upon the findings of the analysis to ensure compliance with the Act.

ROLL CALL:

AYES: McGrath, Giblin, Ryan, Roman, McEvoy

NAYS:

Public Comment:

Kathleen Laterza, 810 Bloomfield Avenue, Verona, New Jersey
George Manousos, 37 Forest Avenue, Verona, New Jersey
Danit Brahver, 6 Cliff Street, Verona, New Jersey
Maria Squilante, 6 Belleclaire Place, Verona, New Jersey
Christine Ford, 50 East Reid Place, Verona, New Jersey

Adjournment:

Council enters into Executive Session at 9:18 pm. Motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:26 pm is motioned by Mayor McEvoy; seconded by Deputy Mayor Roman.

The next regular scheduled meeting is January 4, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Kiernan
Jennifer Kiernan, Municipal Clerk

Jack McEvoy
Jack McEvoy, Mayor

APPROVED: January 4, 2021