

# **BOROUGH of GARWOOD**

## ***Workshop Session MINUTES of the COUNCIL MEETING*** **June 23, 2015**

Workshop session was opened by Mayor Lombardo at: 7:00 p.m.

Adequate notice of this meeting was provided to the Cranford Chronicle, advertised on January 16, 2015, notification was sent to the Star Ledger and prominently posted on the municipal public bulletin board and filed in the office of the municipal clerk informing the Public of the time and place according to the Provisions of the Open Public Meeting Law (Chapter 231, P.L. 1975).

**Present:** Mayor Lombardo, Councilman Martin, Councilman Mathieu, Councilman Petruzzelli, Councilwoman Tarantino, Councilwoman Todisco and Council President Nierstedt.

**Also Present:** Borough Administrator/Clerk Christina M Ariemma, Borough Attorney Robert Renaud and Borough Engineer Donald R. Guarriello.

Borough Attorney Robert Renaud mentioned the commuter parking ordinance is being introduced this evening. Mr. Renaud mentioned the COAH matter and the resolutions on tonight's agenda. He explained the resolutions thoroughly.

Borough Engineer Donald Guarriello had no report. Councilwoman Todisco asked about a pending bill and possible consideration. Mr. Guarriello said he would review the bill.

Borough Administrator/Clerk Christina M Ariemma mentioned the memo for DOT and Sidewalk Replacement/Repair Bond. Brief discussion followed. Ms. Ariemma mentioned that the project will cause the removal of many trees borough wide. She asked if council wants to consider including purchases trees through the open space grant and to include the match in the bond. She suggested \$2,500 for \$5,000 for tree planting in the project. The planting would take place this fall. Councilwoman Todisco asked if the estimate is based on a list. Ms. Ariemma said yes, it is primarily from a data base of complaints received. Councilwoman Todisco said she feels money should be spent on infrastructure vs. recreation at this time. Council President Nierstedt asked why so many trees need to be removed. Mr. Guarriello explained the trees have to be removed because of the grade. Discussion regarding planting and what should be planted. Ms. Ariemma was directed to prepare a bond ordinance for both projects and to include the tree planting.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS –

UC Open Space Grants were discussed and it was decided not to apply for recreation in 2015.

### NEW BUSINESS –

Mayor Lombardo:

As you will hear tonight, Garwood has received \$30,000 in Grant money from the Union County Infrastructure and Municipal Aid grant Program. Our thanks go to Councilwoman Sara Todisco and Councilman Mike Martin for picking up the check. This now is a total of \$60,000 that has been extended to Garwood by the County.

On Monday June 15, 2015, I attended the Union County Transportation Master Plan Steering Advisory Committee meeting. The purpose and goals are:

- (1) To update the 2002 Transportation Master Plan
- (2) Focus on Integration of current transportation data
- (3) Address new and emerging trends in the County.

There will be three steering committee meetings and two public meetings. When the gathering all the information is completed, it will be put together and the new plan will be written.

I have received calls from Congressman Leonard Lance and Senator Corey Booker's aides after our second letter was written on behalf of the Garwood Post Office. I discussed the current issues that developed since our mail started being delivered from the Cranford Office etc. They assured me they would look into the matter and return with more information in the future. Senator Booker's offices assured me that the Garwood Post Office is not going to be relocated and will not be shut down.

This past Saturday was Mayor's Saturday with Councilman Todisco and we had some residents come out and talk to us about senior programming, snow preparation removal and the state of postal delivery service in town. I will continue Mayor's Saturday thru the summer months.

On a personal note, as the Mayor, I performed my first wedding ceremony this past Saturday at Boro Hall, looking forward to many more.

On a serious note, we'd like the public to know about the Niagara bottled water recall forwarded to us by the NJ Department of Health. You can access the latest and more complete information at the Niagara Water website.

Comments or matters for discussion from members of Council:

Councilman Martin no report.

Councilman Mathieu asked if the OEM plan is moving along. Mayor Lombardo said it is however the director had an accident and is about a week behind.

Councilman Petruzzelli mentioned the decorative lighting has been upgraded to LED.

Councilwoman Tarantino read the following statement:

As mentioned at our last meeting, the Administrative Review Committee has been formed to explore and implement procedures that either produce or improve the efficiency of Borough operations and departments. Discussions have included shared services arrangements with the Borough of Fanwood for certain management functions and other related matters in the Department of Public Works.

The Shared Service arrangement includes use of each municipality's equipment, cooperative purchasing and contracting, management and administrative duties. The cost of the shared service is for Garwood to pay Fanwood \$40,000 per year for the use equipment, for management and cooperative purchasing.

To elaborate, the Boroughs would share equipment including sewer jet, bucket truck, recycling center, portable compressor for sewer and street repair, and crack seal machine. As was mentioned during the budget meetings, a capital item request has been made for a sewer jet, which costs about \$55,000. Capital items are eliminated through sharing services, including the bucket truck, and other equipment. Fanwood would benefit from the ability to use our trucks, sidewalk grinder, and asphalt hot box.

Our boroughs plan is to cooperatively bid for recycling, bulk and other related materials and services. Bidding together gives us more buying power for better results.

Our Municipalities under the agreement will share management in which the Director of Public Works for the Borough of Fanwood will serve as Superintendent of Public Works for the Borough of Garwood as defined in the Code of the Borough of Garwood, also serve as Recycling Coordinator. The first month the agreement calls for 15 hours per week and 10 hours per week thereafter for the Superintendent. However, the Superintendent is not restricted from working more than the minimum. The agreement also includes use of Fanwood's vehicle for the Superintendent traveling between our municipalities.

The shared service agreement will promote efficiency and economy and will satisfy the requirements of N.J.S.A 40A:9-154.6g, and cause the elimination of the need to employ a full time Superintendent of Public Works in the Borough of Garwood. The Garwood Code provides that the Superintendent of Public Works shall serve at the pleasure of the Council.

I know talk of change can be challenging, but this agreement does not result in a decline in DPW services to Garwood residents. In fact it will enhance them without increasing cost. Residents are concerned with costs rising and the Committee wants to make the Borough more efficient in order to provide residents the services they have come to expect at the best possible price.

Governing Bodies are elected by the citizens to manage the affairs of local government in their respective towns. This is not an easy or simple responsibility and it is especially difficult when there is a great opportunity for the borough but includes the elimination of a position. However difficult, it is our job to find ways to reduce the burden on our citizens. This arrangement will save in equipment and other related costs and also approximately \$70,000 in wages and benefits. Therefore it is with a heavy heart I announce that the employment of Frederick W. Corbitt, Superintendent of Public Works will be terminated upon passage of Resolution No. 15-218 on tonight's consent agenda.

Councilwoman Todisco read the following report.

Freeholder Meeting

I attended the last meeting of the Freeholders, which took place this past Thursday, as June was my month on the rotating calendar. Councilman Mike Martin joined me as well. The big highlight of the meeting was the presentation of checks for the Infrastructure Matching grant. We received \$30,000 for sidewalks, which requires a match using municipal dollars. It appeared the grants were awarded based on population of the municipalities. In addition to Garwood receiving \$30,000, Clark and Fanwood did as well. Berkeley Heights received \$45,000, Cranford \$55,000, Kenilworth \$35,000, Mountainside \$45,000. Larger towns, such as Summit, Linden, Plainfield, and Union, received \$115,000. Elizabeth received the most at \$150,000. The vast majority of the projects were awarded to repair roads and sidewalks. There was some talk on Thursday night that made it appear very likely that the Freeholders will do another Infrastructure Grant Program in the future. I certainly hope they do.

The only other item on the agenda pertaining specifically to Garwood was a resolution to acknowledge the retirement of Library Director, Carol Lombardo.

Council President Nierstedt read the following report:

Planning Board - Tomorrow night the PB will memorialize a resolution recommending to Borough Council the designation of the Casale/Petro properties on South Avenue as an Area In Need of Redevelopment. We should discuss the next step in terms of hiring a firm to prepare the redevelopment plan for our next meeting. He asked council if they wish to consider directing the clerk to prepare and RFP. Ms. Ariemma was directed to prepare the RFP.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Rod Van Natta, 31 Third Avenue said he has been here for 82 years and asked council to reject the proposal for shared services.

Rich Bonfanti, 340 Second Avenue said he has been here for 38 years and seen services drop for lack of funds. He said budget is not always best. He asked council to reject the resolution for shared services.

Jean McComb, 119 Willow Avenue asked about her tree. Mayor Lombardo said it will be trimmed next week. She mentioned a dumpster that has been in street for some time. Chief Underhill said a summons has been issued. Brief discussion followed. Mayor Lombardo referred the matter to Laws and License.

Joe Sarno III, 658 Willow Avenue he said the DPW does a great job and suggested council to reconsider the idea.

Claudia Briggs, 427 Willow Avenue asked about emergency planning and Mayor Lombardo responded.

Fred Corbitt, Borough Employee read a prepared speech.

I was informed verbally on May 26 that my position is likely to be eliminated July 1st due to a shared service agreement between Garwood and Fanwood.

My job of 10 years would be eliminated with 36 days' notice. I left my job of 21 years at the Township of Parsippany to join this workforce in Garwood. I've been a hardworking and loyal employee who planned on retiring from this Town.

I work 40 hours a week and am always busy, taking all calls that come in to the office and responding immediately to any complaints. I issue all road opening permits which include inspections and follow ups. I issue and inspect all sidewalks and curb permits as well. I inspect trees, potholes, street signs, you name it, and I probably inspect it. My cell phone rings 24/7 and I always answer and assist the police or whoever is on the other end. Sometimes it's a sewer back up that needs immediate action, or icing conditions in the winter, or a downed tree, I never know what to expect. I respond to every snow storm. I plow the streets alongside the men of my department. I have stayed for untold hours at a time with no additional monetary compensation.

Paying Fanwood \$40,000 a year for their superintendent to work in Garwood for 10 hours a week is cutting taxpayer services in my opinion. If this is voted on tonight and I am terminated, and I must ad that 36 days' notice was unfair and unjust; I ask that you consider compensating me for a period of 3 months to give me adequate time to find other employment. Thank you.

Bruce Paterson, 325 Willow Avenue mentioned the Open Space Trust Fund grant and the matching element. He suggested council prepare a resolution concerning matching grants. Councilwoman Todisco mentioned most counties are matching in these grants. He mentioned trees and \$5,000 from the Village project. He mentioned trees and a tree bank idea. He asked sewer questions and Mr. Guarriello responded.

Sal Piarulli, 55 Fourth Avenue mentioned we are in debt and it's a problem. He said we went after the police contract and now the DPW. He mentioned the Complex cost and parking at the Village housing. He said we have a wonderful town and it is because of the DPW. He asked council not to mess with the DPW.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Motion:** 8:03 p.m. Workshop, **Action:** Adjourn, **Moved by** Council President Nierstedt, **Seconded by** Councilwoman Tarantino.

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**CHRISTINA M. ARIEMMA, Municipal Clerk**  
Borough of Garwood