

Borough of Garwood
REORGANIZATION MEETING
OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL
MINUTES
January 6, 2022

Start time: 7:00 p.m.

Moment of Silence

Salute to the Flag

Adequate notice of this meeting was provided to the Union County Hawk advertised on December 2, 2021. Notification was sent to the Star Ledger, and is posted on the Municipal website, 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).

This meeting is called pursuant to the State Statutes for the purpose of organizing the Governing Body for the year 2022, to make appointments and to transact any business pertinent thereto.

ROLL CALL:

Mayor Todisco	P		
Councilwoman Blumenstock	P	Councilman Kearney	P
Councilman Graham	P	Councilman Lazarow	P

Mayor Todisco welcomed Senator Jon Bramnick.

Mayor Todisco announced:

The first order of business is to administer the Oath of Office to:

Councilwoman Elect Heather Loffredo for a three year term

Councilwoman Elect Kimberly Salmon for a three year term

Senator Jon Bramnick administered the Oath of Office to Councilwoman Elect Heather Loffredo. Councilwoman Loffredo's family held the bible. Councilwoman Loffredo took her seat on the dais.

Senator Jon Bramnick administered the Oath of Office to Councilwoman Elect Kimberly Salmon. Councilwoman Salmon's family held the bible. Councilwoman Salmon took her seat on the dais.

ROLL CALL:

Mayor Todisco	AYE		
Councilwoman Blumenstock	AYE	Councilman Lazarow	AYE
Councilman Graham	AYE	Councilwoman Loffredo	AYE
Councilman Kearney	AYE	Councilwoman Salmon	AYE

Mayor Todisco announced that anyone in the audience wishing to make a presentation may do so now.
NONE

Mayor Todisco asked the Borough Council to nominate and elect a Council President.

A motion was made by Councilman Kearney, second by Councilman Lazarow, to elect Councilwoman Blumenstock for Council President.

Discussion:

Councilman Kearney stated the following: I want to speak for a moment about why I am nominating Councilwoman Blumenstock for Council President this evening. I was able to work directly with Councilwoman Blumenstock on several committees and projects last year. I saw firsthand her dedication to serving on this Council along with the knowledge, skills and experience gained from her many years of service. She has freely shared this knowledge and the benefit of her experience with me, and I sit here today going into my second year on Council much more effectively because of her. Secondly, even though I have only been on the governing body for one year, I spent many years before my election observing the work through Garwood Live. The role of the Council President has changed in the last few years from a person who runs the meeting in the event the Mayor takes a night off to a more visible and dynamic position. I think it's valuable to have someone serving as Council President who has the ability to be in Garwood and available during the week, both to represent the town in the event the Mayor is not available and to keep on top of the hundreds of little details which go into the bigger assignments of our respective committees. Finally, as someone who had differences of opinion at times with Councilwoman Blumenstock, I am proud to make this nomination tonight precisely because of the professional and cordial working relationship we've established while still being able to disagree. Because of this, I am certain Councilwoman Blumenstock is the right person to lead **this** Council, in **this particular** year, as we welcome two new members who are joining me in my

second year right at a time that many important decisions which have the potential for long term impacts on Garwood's face us all. Thank you.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Blumenstock	AYE	Councilman Lazarow	AYE
Councilman Graham	AYE	Councilwoman Loffredo	NAY
Councilman Kearney	AYE	Councilwoman Salmon	NAY

4 -AYE, 2 - NAY

A motion was made by Councilwoman Salmon, second by Councilwoman Loffredo, to elect Councilman Graham for Council President.

Discussion:

Councilman Graham thanked Council Members Salmon and Loffredo for the nomination.

Councilman Graham stated his support for electing Councilwoman Blumenstock as Council President.

Councilman Lazarow stated his support for electing Councilwoman Blumenstock as Council President.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Blumenstock	NAY	Councilman Lazarow	NAY
Councilman Graham	NAY	Councilwoman Loffredo	AYE
Councilman Kearney	NAY	Councilwoman Salmon	AYE

2-AYE, 4-NAY

Discussion:

Councilwoman Blumenstock thanked the Council for their support and accepted the nomination as Council President.

CONSENT AGENDA PARTS A, B, C, D

(Adoption upon Roll Call)

Mayor nominations followed by roll call vote

"Consent agenda items are considered to be routine and will be enacted with a single motion; any items requiring expenditure are supported by a Certification of Availability of funds; any item requiring discussion will be removed from the Consent Agenda; all Consent Agenda items will be reflected in the full minutes."

CONSENT AGENDA PART A

22-001 Awarding professional services for Municipal Attorney to Adam S. Abramson-Schneider, Esq., of Cleary, Giacobbe, Alfieri, Jacobs, LLC.

A motion was made by Councilman Lazarow, second by Councilman Kearney to adopt Consent Agenda Part A.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Blumenstock	AYE	Councilman Lazarow	AYE
Councilman Graham	AYE	Councilwoman Loffredo	AYE
Councilman Kearney	AYE	Councilwoman Salmon	AYE

6-AYE

CONSENT AGENDA PART B

22-002 Awarding professional services for Municipal Tax Appeal Attorney to Robert F. Renaud, Esq., of Renaud DeAppolonio LLC

22-003 Awarding professional services for Municipal Labor Attorney to Matthew J. Giacobbe, Esq., of Cleary, Giacobbe, Alfieri, Jacobs, LLC

22-004 Awarding professional services for Municipal Engineering to Michael Disko of M. Disko Associates Consulting Engineering

22-005 Awarding professional services for Municipal Prosecutor to Russell J. Huegel, Esq.

22-006 Awarding professional services for Municipal Public Defender to Jill LaZare, Esq.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Blumenstock, second by Councilman Lazarow, to adopt Consent Agenda Part B.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Blumenstock	AYE	Councilman Lazarow	AYE
Councilman Graham	AYE	Councilwoman Loffredo	AYE
Councilman Kearney	AYE	Councilwoman Salmon	AYE

6-AYE

CONSENT AGENDA PART C

22-007 Appointing Planning Board Council Member Liaison, Class III, for 2022

Mayor Todisco nominated Councilwoman Salmon as Planning Board Council Member Liaison, Class III, for 2022.

A motion was made by Councilman Kearney, second by Councilwoman Blumenstock, to adopt Consent Agenda Part C.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Blumenstock	AYE	Councilman Lazarow	AYE
Councilman Graham	AYE	Councilwoman Loffredo	AYE
Councilman Kearney	AYE	Councilwoman Salmon	AYE

6-AYE

CONSENT AGENDA PART D

- 22-008 Council Meeting Schedule for 2022
- 22-009 Official Newspapers for 2022
- 22-010 Depositories for all Funds
- 22-011 Depository for Developers Escrow Account for 2022
- 22-012 Depositories for 2022 Municipal Court Funds
- 22-013 Depository for Savings & Investment Accounts for 2022
- 22-014 Authorizing mileage reimbursement
- 22-015 Authorizing the tax collector to conduct a tax sale
- 22-016 Interest charges on delinquent taxes and assessments
- 22-017 Delinquent tax penalty rate for 2022
- 22-018 Rate for duplicate tax sale certificates
- 22-019 Authorizing cancellation of delinquencies less than \$10.00
- 22-020 Authorizing ADP Payroll Services as payroll service
- 22-021 Appointing Bond Counsel Steven L. Rogut, Esq.
- 22-022 Appointing Linwood Navarro as DPW Foreman
- 22-023 Appointing Sandra Bruns as Tax Search Officer
- 22-024 Appointing Cathy Cameron as Assessment Search Officer
- 22-025 Appointing Cathy Cameron as Public Agency Compliance Officer
- 22-026 Appointing Kathleen J. Wierzbinski as Clean Communities Coordinator
- 22-027 Appointing John Scalzadonna as Fire Chief
- 22-028 Appointing Brent Gregory as Assistant Fire Chief
- 22-029 Appointing Leonard Spina as Superintendent of Fire Apparatus
- 22-030 Appointing Leonard Spina as Fire Official
- 22-032 Appointing Special Police Officers "Class B" Alternate School Crossing Guards
- 22-033 Appointing Special Police Officers "Class C" Matrons for 2022
- 22-034 Adopting Certificate of Compliance Employment Practices
- 22-035 Authorizing Execution of Contract with Phoenix Advisors
- 22-036 Adopting the 2022 Temporary Budget
- 22-037 Appointing Community Grants, Planning & Housing as Administrative Agent for Affordable Housing

Councilman Kearney requested separating Resolution # 22-031 from Consent Agenda Part D.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Blumenstock, second by Councilman Lazarow, to adopt Consent Agenda Part D as amended.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Blumenstock	AYE	Councilman Lazarow	AYE
Councilman Graham	AYE	Councilwoman Loffredo	AYE
Councilman Kearney	AYE	Councilwoman Salmon	AYE

6-AYE

Resolution 22-031 Appointing Special Police Officers "Class B" School Crossing Guards

A motion was made by Councilwoman Blumenstock, second by Councilman Lazarow, to adopt Resolution #22-031.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Blumenstock	AYE	Councilman Lazarow	AYE
Councilman Graham	AYE	Councilwoman Loffredo	AYE
Councilman Kearney	ABSTAIN	Councilwoman Salmon	AYE

5-AYE 1-ABSTAIN

The following are Mayors Appointments, no CONFIRMATION required:

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>TERM</u>
CLASS I – 1 YEAR	Sara Todisco, Mayor	1/1/2022 – 12/31/2022
CLASS II – 1 YEAR	Ken Capobianco	1/1/2022 – 12/31/2022
CLASS IV – 4 YEAR	William Nierstedt	1/1/2022 – 12/31/2025
ALTERNATE II – 2 YR	Rich McCormack	1/1/2022 – 12/31/2023

LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES FIVE YEAR TERM 1/1/2022 - 12/31/2026

James Hart

GARWOOD BOARD OF HEALTH THREE YEAR TERM 1/1/2022 – 12/31/2024

Michael Ince Jane Tenore

GREEN TEAM COMMITTEE **THREE YEAR TERM** **1/1/2022 – 12/31/2024**

Kim Brown	Julie Graham	Jeff Jotz
Shari Cohen	Russ Graham	Andrew Wiecek
Rich Faustino	Brittani Johnson	

RECREATION COMMITTEE **ONE YEAR TERM** **1/1/2022 – 12/31/2022**

Debbie Delise	Kyle LeFever	Jose Sardinias
Jenny Goodell	Amanda Murray	Jennifer Uva
Vincent Gorski	John Salmon	
Matt Howard	Vanessa Schubring	

GARWOOD MUNICIPAL ALLIANCE **ONE YEAR TERM** **1/1/2022 – 12/31/2022**

Barbara Tweedle, Coordinator	Carla Gilbride	Amy Lewis
Ralph Bernardo	Ameika Gray	MaryAnn Mule
Jen Blumenstock	Jennyfer Guerrero	Denise Ridente
Jenn D'Elia	Stacie Hoffman	Sam Rocco
Mary Emmons	Darlene Lipsett	

CELEBRATIONS COMMITTEE **ONE YEAR TERM** **1/1/2022 – 12/31/2022**

Jen Battiloro	Colleen Hay	Hugh Sinclair
Thomas Englese	Rich McCormack	Krystal Zawoysky
Jennyfer Guerrero	Monica Shvetz	Krystine Zuena

CITIZENS' ADVISORY PANEL **ONE YEAR TERM** **1/1/2022 – 12/31/2022**

Karina Boto	Pat DiFabio	Jennifer Kalis
Jeff Battiloro	Mark Gernett	Keith Kargus
Michele Capobianco	Craig Gibson	Joe Ragonese

HISTORICAL COMMITTEE **ONE YEAR TERM** **1/1/2022 – 12/31/2022**

Jennie Brown	Sarah Hull	Carol Lombardo
Pat DiFabio	Helen Laucius	Bruce Paterson
Kim Ficarra	Adele Lewis	

SMALL BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Lee Frankel	Josh Rosenberg	Erick Weiss
Carol Kearney	Stefanie Savino	Andrew Wiecek
Jim Marano	Vince Spera	

SHADE TREE COMMITTEE

Kim Ficarra	Jeff Jotz	William Nierstedt
-------------	-----------	-------------------

UNION COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REVENUE SHARING COMMITTEE

Jeff Jotz	William Nierstedt	Alternate: Jen Blumenstock
-----------	-------------------	----------------------------

UNION COUNTY SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

Clint Dickson

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

OEM Director:	Ken Capobianco
Deputy Coordinator:	Doug Stoffer, Police Captain
Police Chief:	James H. Wright
Fire Chief:	John Scalzadonna
Superintendent DPW:	Clint Dickson
First Aid:	Jim Stewart
Engineer:	Michael Disko
Public Information Officer:	Andrew Wiecek
Ex-Officio:	Sara Todisco, Mayor Council President Kyle Harris, Borough Administrator

Mayor Todisco announced the 2022 committee assignments listed below:

STANDING COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE	2022
Finance and Personnel	Councilman Marc Lazarow, Chair
	Councilman Vincent Kearney
	Councilwoman Heather Loffredo
COMMITTEE	
Fire and OEM	Councilman Vincent Kearney, Chair
	Councilman Russ Graham
	Councilwoman Kim Salmon
COMMITTEE	
Facilities, Grounds & Shade Trees	Councilwoman Heather Loffredo, Chair
	Councilwoman Jen Blumenstock
	Councilman Vincent Kearney
COMMITTEE	
Streets, Ecology and Sustainability	Councilwoman Jen Blumenstock, Chair
	Councilman Marc Lazarow
	Councilwoman Heather Loffredo
COMMITTEE	
Police & Public Safety	Councilman Russ Graham, Chair
	Councilwoman Jen Blumenstock
COMMITTEE	
Community Engagement: Recreation, Historical & Celebrations Committees	Councilwoman Kim Salmon, Chair
	Councilwoman Jen Blumenstock
	Councilman Vincent Kearney
OTHER or SPECIAL Committees of the Mayor	
Senior Citizen Liaison	Councilwoman Jen Blumenstock
Board of Health Liaison	Councilman Russ Graham
Library, Mayor's Representative	Councilman Marc Lazarow
School Board Liaison	Councilman Vincent Kearney
UC Air Traffic Noise Advisory Board Representative	Councilwoman Heather Loffredo
UC Transportation Advisory Board Representative	Councilman Russ Graham
Business and Industry/Chamber of Commerce	Carol Kearney
Citizen's Advisory Panel Liaison	Councilman Marc Lazarow
Green Team Liaison	Councilwoman Jen Blumenstock
Small Business Advisory Board Liaison	Councilman Vincent Kearney
Communications Committee	Mayor Todisco Councilman Vincent Kearney Councilwoman Kim Salmon

COUNCIL MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE GOVERNING BODY AND GUESTS

Council President Blumenstock congratulated the newly elected Council Members.

Councilman Graham welcomed the newly elected Council Members.

Councilman Kearney stated the following:

Good evening to everyone. Welcome to our new Council Members, Heather Loffredo and Kimberly Salmon. As I said after my own swearing in last year, I am here to do the work and represent the best interest of Garwood; so, I am looking forward to doing just that while working together with both of you and the rest of the governing body over the next year.

I also want to congratulate our new State Senator, Jon Bramnick. It was very nice of him to come swear you both in and honor Garwood with his presence.

I'm certain 2022 will be a productive year for all of us, as we have many decisions to make and several large projects either starting up or in progress. Finally, I do want to point out that it's great to have all working microphones in this room to kick off the new year and thank Mr. Harris for his support and the late night phone calls to make that happen!

Councilman Lazarow welcomed the newly elected Council Members.

Councilwoman Loffredo stated the following:

Thank you to everyone joining us tonight and Happy New Year. It's an honor to have Senator Bramnick here to swear us in. Thank you for being here with us.

I would first like to say, thank you to the people of Garwood who graciously voted us into office. We are overwhelmed with gratitude for the support behind us. We look forward to working with the current sitting council, mayor and all the local offices and employees. The transition process has been smooth and we have received many updates and also a tour of all the local buildings and facilities. I look forward to seeing what committees I will be placed on and how I can better serve the community.

I want to reiterate that I am not, by any means, a politician. I am here to listen to the people of Garwood and I work solely for you. With every future decision I make, I hope to include you in my decision making process to provide clarity and transparency and most importantly the WHY behind decisions. I'm looking forward to learning and growing in this role and can't wait to dive in.

Finally, I want to thank to my husband for being my rock thru the very hectic and sometimes stressful campaign and to my babies for being my biggest cheerleaders at every event and while door knocking. I want to thank my running mate for all of her hard work, experience and knowledge that she provided last year. Also to the Republican Club and all of the people that helped us during the campaign between the fellow residents, local vendors and businesses.

Again, thank you for the opportunity and I look forward to serving you.

Councilwoman Salmon thanked Mayor Todisco for the 2022 committee assignments, and stated she is looking forward to working with the Mayor and Council in 2022.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

NONE

A motion was made by Councilman Kearney, second by Councilman Lazarow, to close public comment.

MAYOR'S ADDRESS:

Good evening, Garwood. A new year is always a cause of celebration as well as reflection of the past year and most importantly, a vision for the year ahead. I always like to take tonight as an opportunity to look back on what we did well in the previous year and set out the course for this year in which we look to improve. We as a Borough have experienced much change along with significant challenges since I became Mayor three years ago, but we have all come together, from elected officials to Borough employees to volunteers and to our community as a whole, to make the best of it all.

For one, two years ago, we held a typical reorganization meeting the way we always had without even thinking how much it could change in such a short amount of time to last year where it was all virtual to tonight where we have a hybrid of in person and live streaming. Not just simply live streaming, but one in which we have a Councilman participating and members of the public are able to speak through during public comment. Thanks to the knowledge and efforts of Councilman Vincent Kearney and Administrator Kyle Harris, this hybrid system has been in place for months now, which does the important job of increasing the public's ability to access its local government in real time. Garwood has been a pioneer on this front and I am proud of that.

This COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to be more flexible than ever and we've risen to the challenge. As a Borough, we've made it a priority to put out frequent updates and resources to residents since this all started on March 14, 2020 with our first positive case. In coordination with our Health Department, we've held testing and vaccine clinics here in town. Since day one, we've been able to provide all municipal services to our residents without disruption and it is our goal to continue to be able to do so. The minor renovation to Borough Hall funded with federal funding for the pandemic relief has enabled us to have two service windows and allow the public to feel safer when coming to do business at Borough Hall.

If the pandemic wasn't enough, Hurricane Ida in September of 2021 was yet another reminder of the extreme weather emergencies that have only become more frequent in the last decade. Our Police, DPW, First Aid, and Fire Department went above and beyond to mitigate the impact of that storm. We've also held meetings to debrief that storm to identify what went right and what needs improvement in the future. We've identified a variety of specific ways we can improve moving forward. I will give more detail on this at our first regular Council meeting next week.

Last year, we closed a chapter on a challenge from years past with the Recreation Complex. We successfully held the architect and contractor who were responsible for its construction defect accountable by settling the litigation we brought forward to the tune of \$103,000 to the Borough.

Additionally, we experienced a major transition last year with the retirement of our longtime Borough Administrator/Clerk Christina Ariemma and the appointment of Kyle Harris as Borough Administrator and Cathy Cameron as Borough Clerk. I can tell you from speaking with her from time to time that Ms. Ariemma is thoroughly enjoying her retirement and the additional time it gives her to spend with family, especially her grandson. Mr. Harris and Ms. Cameron have really hit the ground running. I appreciate their endless dedication to learning the job and to making improvements.

The top priority I outlined in my Reorganization speech last year was public safety and it still is the top priority this year. In fact, I believe this should always be the top priority of any governing body and any elected official. I really do commend last year's Council for approving the funding for pedestrian safety improvements last year. As a result, we had pedestrian flashing beacons installed at 6 intersections and ordered a total of 7 LED stop signs, which I hope will arrive and be installed as soon as possible. Now that the massive amount of paving has been done on the north side of town, I hope to see rumble striping used at key locations as another way of slowing down drivers and improving safety.

One of the most important decisions we must make as elected officials is what projects or pieces of equipment to fund and how to fund them. One way is the municipal budget and like every year, this endeavor is led by our Finance Committee. I have full faith in this committee's ability to produce a strong budget that properly funds our municipal services. Councilman Marc Lazarow continues to lead that charge with a steady hand and the experience to help guide that decision making process. Additionally, I trust the new members to the committee, Councilman Vincent Kearney and Councilwoman Heather Loffredo, will bring their fresh perspectives to the table. The larger capital items will need to be reviewed carefully like they are every year. I truly believe public safety should be number one in guiding such decisions. I want to take this opportunity to commend the Fire Department for being awarded a grant to fully fund a washer and dryer to clean their turnout gear. This offset the need for Garwood taxpayers to fund it. As we know, they need oxygen bottles to replace expiring ones this year and this must be a top priority.

On a related note about capital projects, at the end of last year, we put out a request for proposals for architectural services to examine the existing DPW building and help us outline our options for what to do with it in the future, such as building new or renovating the existing building. I appointed a committee of Councilwomen Blumenstock and Loffredo and Councilman Lazarow to review the proposals in collaboration with our Borough Administrator. I look forward to hearing what this committee's recommendation is at some point this month.

Another ongoing priority I have is improving communication in Garwood--from the Borough out to the public, internally/within the Borough, and from the public to the Borough. It is so important and that is why I established a specific committee for this last year of myself, Councilman Kearney, and Councilwoman Blumenstock. That committee is continued this year with myself, Councilman Kearney, and Councilwoman Salmon. I look forward to working together to strengthen our communication systems and methods.

A new committee this year is the Shade Tree Advisory Board. This will consist of volunteers and I appreciate all three of them for stepping up to help us with educating property owners about the benefits of shade trees, the planting of new trees, as well as working with property owners to ensure we get their input before any action is taken.

As I've repeated numerous times, our business community is such an integral part of our community being a vibrant, well-rounded one. We have so many small businesses in town and I hope you will join me in continuing to support them throughout the year. Last year, I established a Small Business Advisory Board with Councilman Kearney as their liaison and I know they have many exciting plans in the works for this year. One of them is ensuring the return of Restaurant Week, a program that was very well participated in during 2020. Also, we can expect to welcome new retail businesses at Vermella across the street, which is very exciting.

Last, but not least, I want to take a moment to thank all of our volunteers in Garwood from our Celebrations Committee to our Library Board to our Fire Department and all the other groups in town. Without you, our community would not be the same and would not have the big heart that we have.

To close, I want to welcome Councilwoman Heather Loffredo and Councilwoman Kimberly Salmon to the Council. Leading up to tonight, I had several conversations with both of them in an effort to ensure we can all hit the ground running tonight. I appreciate the open dialogue and my hope is the entire governing body works together to best serve the residents of Garwood. I truly view the Council as a team and in order for a team to be successful, we need to work together. Our success is the town's success. It is not about us as individuals and it is certainly not about political parties. What we do on this dais matters for all the residents of this wonderful town we all call home. I am fully confident that we can make a positive difference by working together.

ADJOURNMENT:


The Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Council will be held on **THURSDAY, JANUARY 13, 2022**, at 7:00 P.M. in Council Chambers.

Information for meetings is posted on the Borough website: https://garwood.org/gb_notices

A motion was made by Councilman Graham, second by Councilman Lazarow, to adjourn.

Time: 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:


Catherine D. Cameron, R.M.C.
Borough Clerk