

**Borough of Garwood Workshop Meeting of  
The Mayor and Council  
WORKSHOP  
MINUTES  
January 10, 2019**

Adequate notice of this meeting was provided to the Westfield Leader, advertised on January 3, 2019, 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).

|                                 |          |                                  |          |
|---------------------------------|----------|----------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Mayor Todisco</b>            | <b>P</b> | <b>Councilman Ince</b>           | <b>P</b> |
| <b>Councilman Benoit</b>        | <b>P</b> | <b>Councilman McCormack</b>      | <b>P</b> |
| <b>Councilwoman Blumenstock</b> | <b>P</b> | <b>Council President Lazarow</b> | <b>P</b> |

Also present Borough Administrator/Municipal Clerk Christina M. Ariemma and Borough Attorney Thomas C. Jardim, Esq. and Borough Engineer Michael Disko

Borough Engineer Michael Disko commented on his recommendations concerning the building cracks in the Municipal Building and Fire House Building. Discussion followed concerning water ponding on the roof of the Municipal Building and the space in the bathroom in the Police Department. Mayor Todisco referred that matter to Finance Committee. The 2019 Infrastructure Grant was discussed including items that may be considered in the application such as building repairs, modifications to New Street and continued paving on Center Street was discussed. The outfall mapping was discussed and Ms. Ariemma mentioned that for now the 8,000 has been placed in the budget for consideration. The cracked handicapped ramp matter was discussed.

Borough Attorney Thomas C. Jardim commented on the resolution for the spending plan. Mr. Jardim explained the resolution and plan at length.

Administrator/Clerk Christina M Ariemma - **No Report**

Mayor Todisco's Report:

1. Property Revaluation Town Hall Meeting - Wednesday, February 20th at 7pm at Lincoln School - thank you to the school for providing the space; all residents are welcome to come hear the presentation by Realty Appraisal and to ask any questions they may have
2. Redevelopment Update (Paperboard) - In response to my request, I received an update from the owner of the Paperboard site regarding their demolition progress. I have been informed that the last remaining section is too close to North Avenue and electrical lines. It has been determined that it would be prudent to close part of North Avenue for safety. The contractor has filed the needed paperwork with the Department of Transportation and should hear back within two weeks. I encourage all residents to sign up for Nixle alerts and to follow our Police Department on Facebook and Twitter for updates about road closures. Besides this anticipated closure, it's very good for residents to follow for updates, especially as certain streets on the north side will need to be closed for the water company project.
3. NJ Transit (1 seat ride and assessment for Garwood stops) - First, I am proud to announce that I have been in contact with representatives from NJ Transit about a few issues, but at the top among them a request I made for additional train stops here in town. I am excited to share that they are going to do an assessment of the Garwood Station to see if our ridership warrants additional stops. Also, I am happy to be working actively with the Raritan Valley Line Mayor's Alliance, which has the main mission of getting more one-seat rides along our corridor. I will be at their next meeting on March 7th, but in the meantime, I personally contacted NJ Transit to advocate the restoration of the few one-seat rides we have now after the positive train control safety measures were completed. I'm proud of the Alliance for recently being welcomed into the Build Gateway Now Coalition, which name explains it. The problem of over 100 year old infrastructure, which was damaged as a result of Superstorm Sandy that 200,000 people depend on each day cannot keep being ignored. Once built, the train capacity would double between Newark and New York. I will continue to keep you informed on this matter.
4. The first in a series of quarterly breakfasts with the Mayor was held on February 2nd and it was a huge success with more than 25 residents in attendance. Thank you again to Chief Wright for joining me and to Officer Erikson for providing tours of headquarters to the kids. I'm looking forward to organizing another breakfast in the springtime.
5. I have officially set up a snow emergency parking committee, which consists of 5 residents (3 without driveways and 2 with) as well as the Police Chief and DPW Superintendent. They will be meeting soon and I look forward to seeing what they are able to come up with as a possible solution.
6. Meeting with DEP Representative - Yesterday, I met with Kerry Kirk Pflugh, the Director of the Local Government Services for the DEP, and we discussed all the resources available to Garwood, including grants. I appreciate her taking the time to meet with me. Interestingly, she has been to every one of the 565 towns in NJ.

7. Local Government Week - This year I'd like to see Garwood join other towns in the League of Municipalities by participating in its inaugural Local Government Week, which aims to engage citizens and celebrate the work of local government. It will be April 7th to 13th and I'm asking the Council to adopt this by resolution tonight on the Consent Agenda. I encourage all the Council members to speak with the department heads and committees they work with to plan activities that week. I commend Councilwoman Blumenstock for getting started with this by working on a Touch-a-Truck initiative with the DPW.

8. Shade tree bill - The legislature is current considering Bill S2505/A2558 Vegetation Management Response, which would allow utility companies to not only cut shade trees in the public right away, but also within 100 feet of utility lines. This would cut down trees on private property in town without due process or compensation to the homeowner. Our town should be involved in the process to ensure these trees are truly dangerous before they are cut. Councilman Vartan in Summit passed along a letter in opposition that their Council authorized their Council President to sign on their behalf. I had that letter circulated by Ms. Ariemma. If this Council agrees, I will modify their letter to fit Garwood and write to our State legislators on the town's behalf. What does everyone think?

9. Website revamp - Some residents have mentioned to me and I'm sure have mentioned to you that they think the website could use an upgrade. As someone who pushed for the most recent upgrade when it was done 5 years ago, which launched a first-ever easy to use mobile version, I must say that in response to the ever-changing technology, our website has vastly improved from the previous version. As with anything, the technology continues to advance and users expect even more in terms of user-friendliness. I have contacted the company who we've used over the past 5 years, GovOffice, and they provided me with a thorough proposal about what a variety of upgrade options would entail and of course, how much they would cost. This company is used by our neighbor, Mountainside, which has implemented the top-tier or premium package. They also provided sample pages for the other three options under premium. This week GovOffice is announcing a promotion that involves a discount of up to \$1000 with purchase of any custom package or 3-year agreement with a signature obtained by March 31. I hope the Council has reviewed the proposal, but if not, we can discuss the options more at our next meeting, so that we may advise the Finance Committee as they move through the budget process. Would the Finance Committee (and Council) be okay with that?

Discussion concerning the website upgrade took place. Mayor Todisco outlined the proposal presented by GOVOFFICE. Mayor Todisco referred the matter to the Finance Committee.

Comments or matters for discussion from members of Council:

**Councilman Benoit: No Report**

**Councilwoman Blumenstock:** Just some news from the Green Team. As you see on the consent agenda, resolution 19-159 pertains to the Green Team applying for a grant from Sustainable Jersey. At our recent re-org meeting, the Team decided to apply for a \$2000 grant to fully fund a rain garden at the Rec Complex. A rain garden is a garden of native shrubs and flowers planted in a small depression. It is designed to hold and soak-in rain water runoff. It works as a natural filter to the water heading into our sewer system. There is an area toward the entrance of the park outside the right field of the baseball field that would greatly benefit from this, absorbing the water and keeping the mulch and dirt from flowing along with the runoff. The Green Team will be working alongside the Rahway River Watershed Association which has graciously volunteered both their planning knowledge and labor and a big thanks goes to Jeff Jotz for overseeing this project and the grant application. I hope you'll join me in supporting this resolution as the rain garden will not only be aesthetically pleasing but continue Garwood's sustainability endeavors. Should this resolution pass, I will keep the Council up to date. The grant recipients would be announced in late March, early April. That's all for me, Mayor.

**Councilman Graham** commented on the report of the financing for Hartman Park project. He commented on the 208 Union County Kids Recreation Trust Fund Grant applied for in 2018 for \$40,000.00. He mentioned that he will be reviewing the park for location for water fountain and shading. Brief discussion followed.

**Councilman Ince - No Report**

**Councilman McCormack** commented on the Fire Department Drill on February 2<sup>nd</sup>. He commented on the Fire Department and how great they are. He commented on the March 17<sup>th</sup> St. Patrick's Day at the Knights of Columbus.

**Council President Lazarow:** \*In meeting with our police chief during finance department, Chief Wright brought up the idea of raising the cost of our vehicle fees for any road closure service for water, electric or other utility work. Currently, we charge 50 dollars per day, and the chief made it clear that most other towns charge 100 dollars per day. I am asking if perhaps the License and Laws committee would look into this to determine if it is worthy to change.

I also wanted to remind everyone that today is the one year anniversary of the mass shooting of 14 students and 3 teachers at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida. On this Valentine's Day, I hope we can have a moment of a silence for the victims of this gun violence. I do hope on this day associated with love, that we can use this tragedy to have our country continue conversations on sensible

gun control legislation all while reminding us that life can be fleeting. Expressing our love openly to our friends and family is important to do as much as possible.

Ms. Ariemma was directed to prepare an amending resolution to adjust the cost of vehicles.

Board of Chosen Freeholders Liaison Report: NONE

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Is there anyone in the audience that wishes to address the mayor and council please step to the microphone, state your full name and address. Please limit your comments to five minutes.

Bruce Paterson, 325 Willow Avenue commented on the infrastructure grant, the underpass condition, spending plan, rain garden and RVSA.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Blumenstock, second by Councilman Ince to close public comments session.

Mayor Todisco responded to each of Mr. Paterson's concerns. Councilwoman Blumenstock commented on the rain garden matter.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

At 8:49 p.m., a motion was made by Councilman Graham, and seconded by Councilwoman Blumenstock to adjourn the workshop session. All agreed.

Respectfully submitted:



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