

**Borough of Garwood Workshop Meeting of
The Mayor and Council
WORKSHOP
MINUTES
February 28, 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).

Mayor Todisco	P		
Councilman Benoit	P	Councilman Ince	P
Councilwoman Blumenstock	P	Councilman McCormack	P
Councilman Graham	P	Council President Lazarow	P

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

Presentation: Victoria Coglianesse, Retail Registered Dietitian of ShopRite of Garwood

Borough Attorney Thomas C. Jardim **No Report**

Administrator/Clerk Christina M Ariemma mentioned she would be passing out 2019 Budget Sheets for preparation for the March 12th budget meeting.

Mayor Todisco's Report:

Property Revaluation Town Hall Meeting - This past Monday at Lincoln School, Realty Appraisal, the firm who was retained last year by the Borough to conduct the townwide revaluation, made a presentation and took many excellent questions from the audience. I want to thank the 40 or so residents who attended that meeting and to all those who have watched it on Facebook Live on Garwood Live. It remains on Garwood Live and is a worthwhile 1 hour to spend in order to be more informed about the revaluation process. Home inspections will begin in about a month when the weather warms up a bit. If you are not home when the inspector first arrives, they will leave a door hanger with information for you to schedule an appointment online or by phone. The inside inspection is quick at 3-5 minutes. Inspectors will have on a yellow vest and carry two forms of ID, so if anyone is unsure about letting someone in their house, please contact the Garwood Police. To be clear, this revaluation process is being held from soup to nuts by Realty Appraisal, not the town. Joint Committee of the Council/Board of Education/Planning Board - The first meeting between two representatives from each of our three entities will take place on Tuesday, March 19th before the Board of Education meeting. I will be joined with Councilman Graham who has experience as a past BOE member to represent the municipal end, BOE President Christine Guerriero will be joined with an interested BOE member of her choosing, and the Planning Board's Chairman, Steve Greet, and Vice Chair, Kathy Villaggio, will attend. I am excited at this prospect of having our respective entities working more collaboratively with one another to tackle challenges as well as create new initiatives. While redevelopment will be one topic for discussion, it will be far from the only one. These meetings will occur on a quarterly basis. NJ Transit - I would like to encourage any Garwood resident who is interested and available to attend the "Listening Session" with NJ Transit officials and the DOT Commissioner next Wednesday, March 6th at 5pm at the Westfield Train Station. Together, we must continue to fight for more equitable service along the Raritan Valley Line. For Garwood, these means more stops and more one seat rides. I will be attending the meeting of the Raritan Valley Line Mayors' Alliance meeting the following evening, which was scheduled before the Listening Tour was announced. From the Engineer - Our engineer has looked into the retaining wall damage near the underpass that a resident brought up at the last meeting. It is Conrail's property and not the Borough's. We will be following up on this matter and I want to thank the resident for bringing this to our attention. Also, the Borough will be re-bidding the project, which includes curbing, paving, and adding drainage basins to the 200 block of Spruce, next week. That's the block where the gas company is responsible for paving as a result of negotiations between our professionals and their representatives. We are continuing to work on getting in touch with the contractor that did the Center Street project, which is now showing some cracking on some of the corners. Community Spirit Award - As the beginning of March is right in front of us, I wanted to take a minute tonight to remind everyone that I am still gathering nominations for our inaugural Community Spirit Award winner. The short, easy to fill out nomination form can be found on www.garwood.org. It can be found by clicking on the "From the Mayor's Desk" tab on the left side of the website and you may email me a copy of the completed form. Also, paper copies can be found in the hallway display at Borough Hall and completed and returned to the Clerk's Office. I plan to announce our first recipient at a Council meeting in March. Website - I hope everyone on Council has had the opportunity to review the proposal by our current website provider, GovOffice, and sample websites by now so that we can discuss whether or not we want to move forward with an upgrade to our website. Personally, I support a revamp because our last one was in 2013 and I have heard from numerous residents who think our website could use a facelift, namely so that it will be easier to navigate. However, I do not believe we need the most expensive, premium package, but if we are going to make a change, we should make it worthwhile. That's why I am leaning towards the second best option called "progressive." If we sign an agreement by March 31st, we will be able to take advantage of a discount. For the progressive option, the discount would be \$750. How does everyone else feel?

Comments or matters for discussion from members of Council:

Councilman Benoit: commented on draft agreement between the Baseball League and the Borough for use of the field. Discussion followed concerning the Special Agreement.

Councilwoman Blumenstock: I'm happy to confirm the date for our opening event Local Government Week. "Touch-A-Truck" will take place April 7th at 2:00pm at the parking lot on Second Avenue across from the school. We're hoping to have all of our great town services participating: Police, Fire, First Aid and DPW. It will be a fun event for everyone and we'll be working to have some other activities and refreshments available. We'll update everyone with more information as we get closer.

Also, as I've spoken about previously, the DPW will be doing a demo with a street sweeper and councilmembers are invited to participate. It is scheduled for next Wednesday, March 6th at 9:30. Please just let me know if you are able to attend.

That's all for me, Mayor.

Councilman Graham commented on Hartman Park. Discussion regarding the shading for Hartman Park took place. The water fountain was mentioned.

Councilman Ince - No Report

Councilman McCormack read a Berkeley Heights resolution concerning the government shut down and the impact it has on tax payers

Council President Lazarow:

Along with the mayor, I met again with the Citizens' Advisory Council to discuss the departments major capital requests. We focused on DPW, Police, and Fire. The major discussion that took up a lot of our time was the purchase of a ladder truck for our volunteer fire department. The group has been invited to come to the Fire house on Saturday March 9th to get a chance to look at a demo of a ladder truck that the fire department has expressed a need for over the last several years. While the Advisory Panel expressed the desire to bond for some of the department requests, there was also a desire to balance income from the redevelopment fees to offset taxes as well.

Board of Chosen Freeholders Liaison Report:

Last Thursday, Councilman Rich McCormack and I attended the double meeting of the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders. It was both an agenda setting and a regular meeting. They had a first ever flag raising earlier this month in honor of Black History Month. During public comment, I thanked the Freeholders for continuing the Infrastructure Grant opportunity, which Garwood has taken advantage of each year it has been available. Freeholder Hudak mentioned how it was one of his Chairman's initiatives after the sale of Runnell's Hospital and how the County will be realizing significant savings from closing its juvenile detention center, which took place this month, and entering into a shared service agreement with Essex County. I also made them aware of our continued practice of attending Freeholder meetings when possible. Councilman Benoit and Councilwoman Blumenstock are on the rotating schedule for March and April.

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.

High Sinclair, 228 Second Avenue commented if the Recreation schedule could be posted on the Borough Web-site. He also commented on the DPW response to a complaint he made.

Bruce Paterson, 325 Willow Avenue, commented on the shading at Hartman Park. He also commented on the purchase of a fire truck and the idea of putting it as a question on the ballot.

Motion was made by Councilman McCormack, second by Councilman Benoit to close public comments session.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 7:58 p.m., a motion was made by Councilwoman Blumenstock, and seconded by Councilman Ince to adjourn the workshop session. All agreed.

Respectfully submitted:



CHRISTINA M. ARIEMMA, Municipal Clerk
Borough of Garwood