

Borough of Garwood
MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL
MINUTES
MARCH 7, 2024

Time: 7:00 PM

Moment of Silence

Salute to the Flag

Adequate notice of this meeting was provided to the Union County Hawk advertised on January 4, 2024. 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).

ROLL CALL:

Mayor Blumenstock	P		
Councilwoman Boto	P	Councilwoman Nolde	P
Councilman Foley	P	Councilwoman Salmon	P
Councilman Lazarow	P	Council President Kearney	P

Roll call staff and professionals:

Sandy Bruns, Assistant Administrator/CFO

Adam Abramson, Borough Attorney

Doug Stoffer, Chief of Police

Adam Colicchio, Tax Attorney

Cathy Cameron, Borough Clerk

Report of Borough Attorney NO REPORT

Report of Assistant Administrator

There are two resolutions on tonight's agenda that I would like to provide information on for additional clarity. Resolution #24-060 Mott MacDonald proposal. The Borough of Garwood was issued a Soil Remedial Action Permit for the Athletic Field Complex when the soil remediation was completed. The effective date of the permit was April 20, 2016. In accordance with NJDEP requirements the Borough must prepare and submit a Certification every two years thereafter to document the maintenance and integrity of the one-foot clean soil cap. Mott MacDonald is the licensed site remediation professional on record and submitted this for us in 2022. The next certification is due to the NJDEP on April 20, 2024. Resolution #24-064 Borough Administrator appointment. This is a minor amendment to Resolution#24-049 which appointed John Arthur as the new Borough Administrator and set the salary for the position but did not include the vacation days as negotiated with the prior administrator.

Report of Mayor Blumenstock

As you'll see on the agenda tonight the ordinance 24-09, which we discussed at the last meeting, otherwise known as Skip the Stuff, is up for introduction tonight. This is the ordinance that would require food and beverage establishments to give accessory condiments, such as ketchup packets or plastic utensils, to customers upon request only. We heard from Marta Young from Clean Water Action at our last meeting about the many benefits this new measure will have. Many municipalities have taken it on already like Maplewood and Cranford, with more signing on in the near future. I certainly hope the Council will support this measure for both sustainability as well as for the cost savings it will provide in the end for our businesses. In the discussion that came about at the last meeting, the words government overreach were used to describe this ordinance. For these that feel that way, I would like to re-frame it a bit. We have laws in place that regulate what our businesses, especially what food service establishments can do. For instance, we have laws that

regulate the way food at these places can be stored, and the way it can be prepared and the way it can be disposed of. We have laws that govern the signage a restaurant can use, laws that regulate outdoor dining and of course, the laws about plastic straws and plastic take-out bags. All of these laws are designed to promote the health or well-being, or both, of the greater public. This new ordinance is similar in that vein. These are not laws designed to unduly burden our businesses, and I would argue that this particular one actually unburdens them. Now, I understand that environmental concerns may not be taking a top seat for everyone up here, but our environmental health does affect each resident's personal health. We can also look at the issue of government overreach in a different way, because it was said up here that the businesses should have a choice. Obviously, having our own choices is important, but each of us every day make choices so that we can better the greater good. It's part of living in a community. We can decide not to move our car off the street when it snows three inches, but we would be breaking the law and there are consequences in the form of a fine. That law is in place because the good of it for the community as a whole outweighs the personal. On top of that, this specific "skip the stuff" law doesn't take away personal freedom from the customer who might want those ketchup packets, they simply can make the choice to request them and the restaurant can comply. I understand the hesitance of anyone up here to commit to an act that can possibly be labeled government overreach. But truly, most of the laws we create up here can be argued as that for one reason or another. You can label it to any of the different ones I've already described. I believe the job of a Borough Council is to weigh the outcomes of each law and legislate accordingly to the benefit of the greater good or to the benefit of the most residents in entirety. The outcomes that will be achieved through this ordinance do just that. Switching gears, I wanted to ask the Publics Work committee to look into another matter. Obviously, you may have noticed our electronic signboard out in front of Borough Hall is not quite functioning properly. That is because the software it uses is an extremely old version of Windows that cannot be supported anymore. We have been attempting to work on a fix, we've had Lifeline, our IT company, out here; we've tried to find the oldest laptop with the oldest software on it we could, but nothing has worked. Lifeline has concluded that the software in the sign itself just cannot be replaced or updated, there is nothing out there that can be done or purchased to make the fix, they just don't make it anymore. So it's time to look at other options. I'd like the public works committee along with our new Borough Administrator who's coming in April to begin exploring those options. I do know that electronic signs are much more costly these days; Mr. Harris had done an initial exploration and seen numbers like \$40,000. It may be time to think of doing something else out front, some other type of signage other than an electronic sign. So Councilwoman Boto, if you could put this topic on your agenda for next month and have the committee report back some recommendations after that, I'd appreciate it. I was holding out hope for a fix, but I have to accept defeat on this one.

Comments from the Council:

Councilwoman Boto NO REPORT

Councilman Foley NO REPORT

Councilman Lazarow NO REPORT

Councilwoman Nolde NO REPORT

Councilwoman Salmon

I would like to propose council look into a resolution similar to surrounding municipality's, such as summit, to oppose the new legislation and request a delay on the Bill regarding Fair share housing. This will allow for

meaningful municipal input and consideration of the concerns this is raising in small communities such as our own. I would like to have Sandy circulate this to council and hopefully Garwood can pass this as well.

Council President Kearney

Congratulations to Captain Sam Rocco! I'm very happy to see his name on the Consent Agenda tonight and I'm looking forward to the future promotion ceremony! I'm also looking forward to passing the Bond Ordinance that's on our agenda tonight. As I spoke about in our last meeting: This bond represents our community upholding the commitment we make with our first responders to provide everything they need to get their jobs done, and to have the best chance of coming home safely. With that being said, I am happy to entertain questions during the public hearing regarding the backstory, along with how it came to be such an urgent need in this particular year, and the work and decisions made over the past few years for anyone who hasn't been binge watching Council meetings since 2020, all of which resulted in bonding for this equipment early this year becoming the only responsible option.

MINUTES:

Minutes of the Meeting of the Mayor and Council held on February 22, 2024.

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Mayor and Council held on February 26, 2024.

A motion was made by Councilman Lazarow, second by Councilman Foley, to accept the Regular Meeting and Special Meeting minutes as presented. All in favor

COMMUNICATIONS:

1) NEW JERSEY STATE LEAGUE OF MUNICIPALITIES

- a) 02/23/2024, RE: Affordable Housing Update; Local Finance Notices
<https://www.njlm.org/CivicSend/ViewMessage/Message/224141>
- b) 02/27/2024, RE: Governor Delivers State Fiscal Year 2025 Budget
<https://njlm.org/CivicSend/ViewMessage/Message/224341>

2) TOWNSHIP OF WESTFIELD

- a) 03/04/2024, RE: Ordinance
https://garwoodnj.govoffice3.com/vertical/Sites/%7B7F1088A0-CEC9-4505-80EE-1DF1BF7DFFBD%7D/uploads/Westfield_Ord_Intro.pdf

GARWOOD PLANNING BOARD

- a) 03/05/2024, RE: Meeting Minutes
[https://garwoodnj.govoffice3.com/vertical/Sites/%7B7F1088A0-CEC9-4505-80EE-1DF1BF7DFFBD%7D/uploads/1_10_2024_PB_MINUTES\(1\).pdf](https://garwoodnj.govoffice3.com/vertical/Sites/%7B7F1088A0-CEC9-4505-80EE-1DF1BF7DFFBD%7D/uploads/1_10_2024_PB_MINUTES(1).pdf)

ALL RECEIVED AND FILED

ORDINANCES:

ADOPTION:

Municipal Clerk to read Bond Ordinance No. 24-08 by title only:

BOND ORDINANCE NO. 24-08

BOND ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE ACQUISITION OF NEW RADIO EQUIPMENT FOR THE USE OF THE POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENTS IN, BY AND FOR THE BOROUGH OF GARWOOD, IN THE COUNTY OF UNION, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF \$400,000 TO PAY THE COST THEREOF, TO MAKE A DOWN PAYMENT, TO AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF SUCH BONDS.

https://garwood.org/vertical/sites/%7B7F1088A0-CEC9-4505-80EE-1DF1BF7DFFBD%7D/uploads/BO_24-08.pdf

List correspondence concerning Bond Ordinance No. 24-08. NONE

Does anyone present wish to be heard concerning Bond Ordinance No. 24-08.

Bruce Paterson, 325 Willow Avenue requested clarification on the lifespan of the radios and cost to taxpayers and Vermella residents.

Jill Pall, 54 Third Avenue, thanked the Council for the Ordinance.

Michelle Capobianco, 404 Myrtle Avenue, requested clarification regarding charging the cost to the capital budget and grant funding.

A motion was made by Councilman Lazarow, second by Council President Kearney, to close Public Hearing on Bond Ordinance No. 24-08.

Discussion:

Mrs. Bruns clarified the useful life concern.

Council President Kearney clarified the capital budget and grant funding concerns.

A motion was made by Council President Kearney, second by Councilwoman Nolde, to adopt Bond Ordinance No. 24-08.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Boto	AYE	Councilwoman Nolde	AYE
Councilman Foley	AYE	Councilwoman Salmon	AYE
Councilman Lazarow	AYE	Council President Kearney	AYE

6-AYS Bond Ordinance #24-08 was adopted.

INTRODUCTION:

Municipal Clerk to read Ordinance No. 24-09 by title only:

ORDINANCE NO. 24-09

AN ORDINANCE TO CREATE PART II, GENERAL LEGISLATION, CHAPTER 99 (HEALTH AND SANITATION), NEW ARTICLE IX, SECTION 42 (NON-REUSABLE FOOD AND BEVERAGE ACCESSORIES) IN THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF GARWOOD.

https://garwoodnj.govoffice3.com/vertical/Sites/%7B7F1088A0-CEC9-4505-80EE-1DF1BF7DFFBD%7D/uploads/Ord._24-09-Non_Reusable_Food_Accessories.pdf

A motion was made by Councilwoman Boto, second by Councilman Lazarow, to introduce Ordinance No. 24-09.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Boto	AYE	Councilwoman Nolde	AYE
Councilman Foley	AYE	Councilwoman Salmon	NAY
Councilman Lazarow	AYE	Council President Kearney	AYE

5-AYES, 1-NAY Ordinance #24-09 was introduced.

COUNCIL STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS AND OTHER REPORTS:

FINANCE AND PERSONNEL: Councilman Foley, Chair

The Committee continues to focus on reducing the initially proposed fee for sewer maintenance and related administrative costs. Our objective remains to alleviate the financial burden on our citizens from the intermittent costly repairs while ensuring adequate funding for our regular essential sewer services. We must address the growing financial pressures from the increased costs associated with the Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority (RVSA). The RVSA costs are in some part are due to our antiquated sewer system. RVSA rates over the next few years may not be quite bad as this year but they are not ever going to be what

they were and our I & I is the highest in the group. These rising expenses highlight the importance of efficient, local sewer management to prevent undue financial strain on our town's budget and its residents. We need to start putting money aside to take care of issues that arise from such an old sewer system. Our timeworn sewer system is costing us significantly in frequent repairs and lost efficiency. The need for comprehensive repairs is vital to the health and future of our town. Neglecting this need can lead to escalating costs as fixes become more frequent. We have been able to avoid what other towns have been doing for many years, but kicking the can so that we as councilmembers don't take the heat is not doing our job. Bonding for emergency repairs is a markedly less favorable option than proactive investment due to the associated interest costs and the potential for escalated problems leading to even greater expenses. Interest rates are up and to bond for those fixes is, we believe, irresponsible. We need to use these fees to plan more efficiently and to upgrade when necessary. Being small doesn't insulate us from the forces that affect surrounding larger municipalities, as we have seen time and time again. In fact, being small means these changes are even more necessary as our resources are limited. It's time to take the step the Borough has been putting off for years. We need to stop looking at simply the here and now and look years ahead. The small investments here will pay off dividends in the future.

FIRE AND OEM: Councilman Lazarow, Chair

The Garwood Fire Department responded to a total of 14 incidents that consisted of 4 alarm activations, 1 CO alarm, 1 motor vehicle alarm, 1 motor vehicle fire, 1 medical assist, 1 assistance of the Garwood First Aid Squad, and 2 elevator assists. The squad also assisted Plainfield for 10 hours on a mutual aid call. Staffing of fire headquarters, small group drills, reports, cleaning, meetings and administrative work consisted of a total of 1099.75 firefighter hours. Some of the training consisted of Search and Rescue training, Right to Know, and Blood Borne Pathogen training. I have some very exciting news to report. First, I want to provide some background before sharing the details. Firefighting turnout gear is to be retired after reaching a 10- year lifespan beginning from the manufacture date. At the end of 2023, 14 of our fire department members, or 44% of our roster will be outfitted with turnout gear that has surpassed its lifespan and are in violation of NFPA 1851. Five of these members are outfitted with turnout gear that expired in 2015. In 2020, the Garwood Fire Department implemented a plan to have our members safely outfitted with in date turnout gear by the end of 2026. This plan has been successful thus far, however, due to financial constraints, we are limited on how many sets of turnout gear we can purchase annually. Assistant Fire Chief Brent Gregory spearheaded a grant application to the American Rescue Plan Firefighter Grant that will allow 11 of our members to be provided with safe, effective and compliant turnout gear which will afford the department with the opportunity to outfit our members with safer, more serviceable and compliant turnout gear quicker than anticipated. This not only ensures the safety of our members and their abilities to serve the public, but also grants the citizens of Garwood with dependable fire protection service. Last November, the governing body passed a resolution to cover half of the cost in order to purchase 11 complete sets of structural firefighting PPE, aka "turnout gear" which include pants, jacket, helmet, hood, gloves and boots. The purchase of this turnout gear will greatly assist the department in our long-term plan of no longer having worn, damaged or expired turnout gear. Just yesterday, it was published on the grant application website that our department will be awarded \$37,000 which will match the Borough's commitment passed in November. It is no easy task to successfully win a grant, but I want to thank Assistant Fire Chief Gregory for his incredible efforts to secure this money. I also want to congratulate Sean Donnelly for passing the physical and background check to be accepted as a member of the Garwood Fire Department. A big welcome to Sean and we wish you success in this new role.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: Councilwoman Salmon, Chair

Just and update on Vermella retail. Vermella is in the final lease negotiations with Sweathouz which is an infrared sauna and cold plunge studio, they have also sent out a proposal to an Italian restaurant for the

corner of South and Center. Not much of an update on the paperboard at this time, Victor Vinegra is currently working on the new proposed plans for the paperboard site.

PUBLIC WORKS: Councilwoman Boto, Chair

In addition to their recurring duties, the Department of Public Works employees assisted the Recreation Director with the bi-monthly inspections of Hartman Park and the Sports Complex; Performed preventative maintenance on miscellaneous public works trucks and equipment; Setup and take down tables and chairs at the Sports Complex for numerous Recreation activities/events; Cleaned up the common areas around the Municipal Complex; Assembled and continued to install the permit parking signs in various locations of the Borough; Painted the common hallway in the municipal building; Began painting the Court offices; Performed pothole repairs on the 100 block of 3rd Avenue near Stephanie Gardens; Performed repairs to the drainage inlet at the intersection of West Street and Beech Avenue; Performed shade tree removal/pruning/elevating in various locations of the Borough. The Public Works Committee met on February 28. In continuation of the curb extension project discussions and thanks to Council President Kearney's initiative we have scheduled a zoom call for April 11 with Lisa Lee, Director of Sustainability Programs who will share her knowledge and provide further guidance. Once that call takes place, I will provide an update. I have also been working with Superintendent Dickson and Foreman Navarro to gather information on the most affected catch basins in order to begin our Adopt-A-Drain Program. They have identified: Locust/East; Beech/East; Myrtle/Oak; Willow/Maple 600 block side; Pine/Center; Center/Willow; Hazel/Center; Second/Oak; Fourth/Georgina Memorial. We will provide more information as the project progresses, but I am excited to be involved in a community driven project.

POLICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY: Council President Kearney, Chair

The Police Committee met in person this past Monday with Chief Stoffer. We held preliminary discussions on the parking and compliance issues during the recent snow events, enforcement options for violation of the snow parking rules, and follow up discussion on resident concerns regarding some of the new areas for permit parking which we believe. The Chief has recommended further discussion in Committee regarding snow parking and possible updates to the Borough Code. The Committee agrees with this, and will cover the topic in future meetings with an eye towards reporting back any resulting suggestions to the full Council in the summer so any changes could be put into effect before winter. Specific to the towing of vehicles parked in violation, the Chief reported over 100 summonses were issued across both snow events; there is no feasible way to tow that many vehicles. Additionally, the Garwood Police Department normally only tows vehicles for snow parking violations which are impeding emergency traffic or the DPW's ability to safely clear enough of a street to allow vehicle passage. We will continue to discuss all of this in committee. I also have an activity report for the Garwood Police Department. The Garwood Police Department has recorded **1679** CAD entries during the month of February, 2024. These calls include: 101 motor vehicle stops; 25 parking complaints; 67 fixed traffic posts (Radar, Stop Sign, Distracted Driving); 17 motor vehicle crash investigations; 185 building/property checks; 37 medical assists; 75 community policing posts; 40 walking posts; 21 criminal investigations. The Garwood Police Department would like to remind everyone that as spring approaches, people are ready to get outside and enjoy the warmer temperatures. Make sure to slow down and share the road with walkers and cyclists. Also, please keep an eye out for motorcycles when merging, passing, turning and approaching intersections. Now is the perfect time to check your first aid kit and/or emergency preparedness kits. Check batteries, expiration dates, supply levels of the items that you keep in your kits. For ideas on how to build your kit visit:

www.ready.gov/build-a-kit

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Councilwoman Nolde, Chair

GPAC is presenting "Discover Art in Nature", an event to be held on March 16. Ages 6-13. All supplies will be provided. Join Gabby Blevins for a walk around the recreation center park with your nature sketchbook and colored pencils and notice interesting natural elements to draw and record in your journal. This event is free. Registration required on www.garwoodrec.com. GPAC is celebrating National Poetry Month in April with the first annual Garwood Poetry Festival. Local poets, please submit your poems in order to be invited to read your poetry at the poetry event co-sponsored by the Crossroads and the Garwood Public Library. Poetry readings will take place at the Crossroads at 12:00 on Sunday April 21 and at the Garwood Library, date TBA. Poems should be submitted to my borough email (cnolde@garwood.org). Due date for all poetry submissions is April 5. The next regular meeting of GPAC will take place on March 11 at 6:30.

Recreation: Special Events: Garwood Family Skate Night: Saturday, March 16th from 6 pm to 8 pm at Warinanco Sports Center. This event is free and open to Garwood residents of all ages. Pre-registration is required. To sign up for this free event, visit www.garwoodrec.com Skates are available for rent on-site for \$4/pair

Garwood Easter Egg Hunt: Saturday, March 23rd at 11 am at the Garwood Sports and Recreation Complex. Rain date is Saturday, March 30th at 3 pm. For toddlers through 3rd grade. Bring your own basket. There will be a raffle, DJ and pictures with the Easter Bunny. **Easter Bunny Drive-Around**: The Garwood Recreation Committee and the Garwood Fire Department are excited to announce the Easter Bunny Drive-Around scheduled for Saturday, March 30th. The Easter Bunny will make his way around town starting at 10AM.

Garwood Summer Camp: June 24th – August 9th, 9 am to 12 pm, Rising 1st through 8th graders may attend. Registration is open now. The early bird registration rate is \$110 per child until May 24th.

The next meeting of the Recreation Committee is March 11 at 7:30 PM.

Historical: The Historical Committee met for their regular meeting on Feb.26.

They planned for their use of the Grant money from Union County Historical Projects. They are also planning to apply for the Union County Heart Grant for their project entitled "Marching Towards the Future" presentation which they hope to present in the Fall of 2024. There are plans to create materials by April to be included in the Time Capsule being prepared at the Garwood Public Library. They also discussed celebrating the 60th anniversary of JFK Plaza at a small ceremony near the monument which was installed in 1964. Fall of 2024. There are plans to create materials by April to be included in the Time Capsule being prepared at the Garwood Public Library. They also discussed celebrating the 60th anniversary of JFK Plaza at a small ceremony near the monument which was installed in 1964.

LIBRARY, MAYOR'S REPRESENTATIVE: Councilman Lazarow

March 12, at 3 p.m. Virtual Adult Craft - Pick up your craft supplies and instructions from the Library. Registration is required for craft kits and is limited to 10 participants. Sign up on the Library website's events calendar or by phone. March 13 and 27 at 3 pm LEGO CLUB - Be inspired by this month's theme or build whatever comes to mind. Some will be displayed in our showcase. Registration required Limit 12

SCHOOL BOARD LIAISON: Council President Kearney

The Board's next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 19th.

GARWOOD SENIOR CITIZEN LIAISON: Mayor Blumenstock

Nothing to report as our March 7th meeting was cancelled. Our next meeting is on March 21st.

SMALL BUSINESS ADVISORY LIAISON: Council President Kearney

The SBA Executive Board met virtually on Tuesday, February 27th. We reviewed the Wellness Month Promotion, and will be sending a survey and follow up out to all of the businesses that participated. I'm

happy to report preparations are now underway for the 2024 "Taste of Garwood"! The SBA will begin promotions for this event in the month of April, with the dates of the event being May 17th through May 24th. And finally, Board members are continuing to work up suggestions on a proposal to update the Borough Code regarding signage. That's all for this report!

BOARD OF HEALTH LIAISON: Councilman Foley NO REPORT

PLANNING BOARD LIAISON: Councilwoman Salmon NO REPORT

The report for the Feb. 28th Planning Board meeting will be provided at the next Council meeting.

OFFICER'S REPORTS:

Zoning Enforcement Officer's Report for February, 2024.

https://garwood.org/vertical/sites/%7B7F1088A0-CEC9-4505-80EE-1DF1BF7DFFBD%7D/uploads/Code_Enforcement_Feb_Rpt.pdf

Property Maintenance Officer's Report for February, 2024

https://garwoodnj.govoffice3.com/vertical/Sites/%7B7F1088A0-CEC9-4505-80EE-1DF1BF7DFFBD%7D/uploads/Property_Maint_Rpt_Feb.pdf

A motion was made by Councilman Foley, second by Councilwoman Boto, to accept Officer's reports.
All in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

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

Mr. Pritchard sang a song regarding veterans.

Jill Pall, 54 Third Avenue, thanked the DPW for repairing the driveway apron at her residence. Ms. Pall provided an update on the status of fund raising for her foundation.

Bruce Paterson, 325 Willow Avenue, requested clarification regarding the Fire Department appointments.

Mrs. Pritchard commented on NJ Transit, commended Captain Rocco on his promotion and commented on public health awareness programs.

John Bartolick, 231 Hemlock Avenue commented on Ordinance #24-09.

Bill Nierstedt, 320 Hickory Avenue, commented on Ordinance #24-09.

Michelle Capobianco, 404 Myrtle Avenue, commented on Ordinance #24-09 and requested clarification regarding the street opening Ordinance.

Coleen Hay, 516 Fourth Avenue, commented on Ordinance #24-09.

Resident of 33 Second Avenue, stated safety concerns regarding the Fire Department.

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

Mayor Blumenstock clarified the Fire Department concerns
Discussion ensued.

Discussion ensued regarding Ordinance #24-09.

Mayor Blumenstock referred the street opening Ordinance concern to the Public Works Committee.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

CONSENT AGENDA

(Adoption upon Roll Call) 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.

RESOLUTION #24-059

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF CONVERTING EXISTING BUT UNDERUTILIZED RAIL TRACK WITHIN THE CENTRAL RAILROAD (CRR)/NEW JERSEY TRANSIT (NJT) RIGHT OF WAY (ROW) INTO PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE TRAILS AND CONNECTING ALL PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE TRAILS IN UNION COUNTY

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Garwood wishes to show continued support for the use and expansion of alternate modes of transportation in order to reduce vehicular traffic on our roads, provide safe means of off-road travel, increase usable greenways and open space, and provide connectivity of communities of place via off road trails throughout Union County; and

WHEREAS, on June 24, 2021, the Mayor and Council adopted Resolution No. 21-119 supporting the 'Rails to Trails Union County' advocacy group as a means to transform unutilized railroad lines into usable pedestrian and bicycle trails; and

WHEREAS, the 'Rails to Trails' group has transformed into 'Union County Connects', a group with the larger vision of creating and connecting all pedestrian and bicycle trails in Union County, and

WHEREAS, Union County Connects (UCC) has the support of the Union County Board of County Commissioners, and

WHEREAS, in February 2023, Union County was awarded a \$700,000 federal Safe Streets and Roads for all grant portions of what will be used in association with Union County Connects, and

WHEREAS, in June 2023, Union County was awarded \$1.5million in NJDOT funding for the conversion of the Rahway Valley Line from an abandoned railway line to a bicycle/pedestrian trail, and

WHEREAS, in September 2023, Union County received a \$1,000,000 award for the design and construction of a new pedestrian/bicycle way through the Borough of Roselle, connecting with the East Coast Greenway in Cranford which then connects with the Goethals Bridge, and the CRR/NJT line, and

WHEREAS, all Union County municipalities along the former CRR New Jersey ROW from Elizabeth, through Roselle/Roselle Park, Cranford, Garwood, Westfield, Fanwood, Scotch Plains and Plainfield are experiencing exponential growth of mixed use residential/commercial development with the potential for increased vehicular traffic on North and South Avenues, (aka SR 28 and UC 610) which parallel the CRR line as main east-west routes of travel, and

WHEREAS, it is apparent that the joint conversion of the 3.8-mile defunct section of CRR ROW (Elizabeth -Cranford), and a shared usage of the 8 mile section of operating NJT ROW (Cranford- Plainfield) could be converted via Rail-to-Trails and Trails within Rails (Massachusetts Central Rail Trail) into a 12 mile off-road bicycle/pedestrian trail that would provide a new travel way potentially reducing traffic on our roadways, changing modal travel to unite our municipalities for pleasure, social and business travel and potential economic benefits, with the provision of a new Union County destination connecting all municipalities via bicycle and pedestrian travel.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Garwood, County of Union, State of New Jersey, hereby expresses support for "Union County Connects" in its pursuit of connecting all underutilized railroad ROWs, bicycle and walking trails, and parks in the County of Union.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Union County Board of County Commissioners and New Jersey Transit.

RESOLUTION NO. 24-060

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Borough of Garwood, County of Union State of New Jersey hereby approve the proposal from: MOTT MACDONALD, 111 Wood Avenue South, Iselin, NJ 08830 For the preparation and filing of the NJDEP Soil Remedial Action Permit #RAP150001 Remedial Action Protectiveness/Biennial Certification Report for submission by April 20, 2024 for a cost not to exceed \$3,500.00.

RESOLUTION NO. 24-061

WHEREAS, Doug Stoffer was promoted from Captain to Chief of Police on March 1, 2023; and
WHEREAS, due to the promotion, there is a vacancy in the title of Captain of the Borough of Garwood Police Department; and
WHEREAS, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:60-5 and Chapter 34, Section 4 of the Borough Code, the Mayor shall nominate the Captain with the advice and consent of Borough Council; and
WHEREAS, Mayor Jen Blumenstock has nominated Samuel Rocco for the position of Captain.
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Garwood that Samuel Rocco is hereby appointed to the title of Captain of the Garwood Police Department, effective March 7, 2024.

RESOLUTION NO. 24-062

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Borough of Garwood, County of Union, State of New Jersey, hereby appoint Sean Kessock and Sean Donnelly as Fire Fighters for the Garwood Fire Department effective March 7, 2024.

RESOLUTION NO. 24-063

WHEREAS, on September 22, 2009, Victor Vinegra was appointed as the Zoning Code Officer by the Borough of Garwood; and
WHEREAS, in some cases, Mr. Vinegra has a conflict and may not serve as Zoning Code Officer; and
WHEREAS, Mr. Vinegra has recommended to the Mayor and Borough Council to appoint a conflict Zoning Code Officer and specifically has recommended Richard Belluscio who currently serves as Zoning Officer to the Borough of Roselle Park and Michael Disko who currently serves as Zoning Officer to the Borough of Mountainside; and
WHEREAS, the Mayor nominates Richard Belluscio and Michael Disko for appointments as Conflict Zoning Code Officers; and
WHEREAS, in cases whereby Richard Belluscio or Michael Disko serves as Conflict Zoning Code Officer, they shall be compensated at the hourly rates currently established for the Borough of Garwood Zoning Code Officer and charge such fees to the escrow accounts.
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Borough Council of the Borough of Garwood hereby appoints Richard Belluscio and Michael Disko as Conflict Zoning Code Officers and be compensated at the hourly rates currently established for the Borough of Garwood Zoning Officer and charge such fees to the escrow accounts.

RESOLUTION NO. 24-064

WHEREAS on February 22, 2024 the Mayor and Council approved Resolution No. 24-049 appointing John Arthur as Borough Administrator effective April 1, 2024 at an annual salary of \$125,000; and
WHEREAS Borough Administrator Arthur be and is hereby entitled to five (5) additional vacation days annually in his first (10) ten years of hire.
THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Resolution No. 24-049 is hereby amended that Borough Administrator John Arthur be and is hereby entitled to five (5) additional vacation days annually in his first (10) ten years of hire.
THEREFORE, BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Borough Administrator shall serve at the pleasure of the Mayor and Council.

RESOLUTION NO. 24-065

WHEREAS, on February 28, 2024, Steve Greet submitted correspondence dated February 28, 2024 to Mayor Blumenstock advising that he is resigning from his position as Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority Representative for the Borough of Garwood.
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Borough Council of the Borough of Garwood as follows:

- 1) The Borough of Garwood hereby accepts and relies upon the February 28, 2024 correspondence informing of resignation from Steve Greet.
- 2) Effective March 7, 2024, Steve Greet shall have resigned from his position as Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority Representative for the Borough of Garwood with the Borough of Garwood.
- 3) This resolution puts the Mayor on notice to immediately process this resignation
- 4) This resolution shall take effect immediately.

RESOLUTION NO. 24-066

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Borough of Garwood, County of Union, State of New Jersey, that Craig McCarrick be and is hereby appointed Commissioner of the Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority from the Borough of Garwood for a five (5) year term commencing March 7, 2024 to February 1, 2029.

RESOLUTION NO. 24-067

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the Borough of Garwood, County of Union, State of New Jersey hereby authorizes the Mayor of the Borough of Garwood to sign the agreement with ParkMobile LLC, a Delaware limited liability company located at 1100 Spring St. NW, Ste. 200, Atlanta, Ga. 30309, for providing parking services to the Borough of Garwood effective March 7, 2024.

A motion was made by Councilman Foley, second by Councilwoman Nolde, to adopt Consent Agenda.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Boto **AYE**
Councilman Foley **AYE**
Councilman Lazarow **AYE**

Councilwoman Nolde **AYE**
Councilwoman Salmon **AYE**
Council President Kearney **AYE**

RESOLUTIONS DELETED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA:

NONE

NEW BUSINESS

Councilman Kearney requested a review of the T-Mobile Home Town Grant. Mayor Blumenstock referred the request to the Public Works Committee.

Councilwoman Salmon requested dedicated parking for veterans. Mayor Blumenstock referred the request to Public Works Committee.

PAYMENT OF CLAIMS AND REFUNDS AS LISTED ON FILE:

BE IT RESOLVED that the following claims as approved be and the same are hereby ordered paid when properly signed and verified; and the payment of payrolls as listed is hereby confirmed and ratified.

A motion was made by Councilman Lazarow, second by Councilman Foley, to adopt Payment of Claims Resolution.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Boto AYE

Councilwoman Nolde AYE

Councilman Foley AYE

Councilwoman Salmon AYE

Councilman Lazarow AYE

Council President Kearney AYE

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Municipal Clerk read the following:

RESOLUTION NO. 24-068

CLOSED SESSION RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING LITIGATION AND MATTERS OF ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGE RELATING TO THE ABOVE AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH N.J.S.A., 10:4-12, Closed session, Meetings open to public; exclusion of public; subject of matter.

WHEREAS, it is necessary for the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Garwood to conduct an executive session closed to the public in order to discuss the above listed matter.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the Borough of Garwood hereby move to go into executive session in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et. seq., for the purpose of discussing the subject stated above; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the matters discussed in and minutes of the closed session shall be disclosed to the public when the reason for confidentiality no longer exists.

No action will be taken.

A motion was made by Council President Kearney, second by to Councilwoman Nolde, adopt Resolution 24-068. All in favor.

At 8:49 PM a motion was made by Councilwoman Boto, second by Councilman Foley, to resume the regular session. All in favor.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Council will be held on **Thursday, March 21, 2024** 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 Kearney, second by Councilman Foley, to adjourn. Time: 8:50 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Catherine D. Cameron, R.M.C.