

Borough of Garwood
MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL
MINUTES
MARCH 21, 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	ABSENT	Councilwoman Salmon	P
Councilman Lazarow	P	Council President Kearney	P

Also Present:

Sandy Bruns, Assistant Administrator/CFO

Adam Abramson, Borough Attorney

Doug Stoffer, Chief of Police

Mike Disko, Borough Engineer

Cathy Cameron, Borough Clerk

Report of Borough Engineer

DESIGN WORK COMPLETED ON NJDOT MA23 PROJECT. WORK INCLUDES REPLACEMENT OF CURBS, MILLING AND RESURFACING OF THE FOLLOWING STREETS: BEECH AVENUE (CENTER TO RANKIN); HEMLOCK AVENUE (EAST TO LEXINGTON) MYRTLE AVENUE (MAPLE TO DEAD END). GRANT AMOUNT \$ 463,370. PRELIMINARY CONSTRUCTION ESTIMATE \$617,020. PROJECT DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED TO NJDOT ON FEBRUARY 29, 2024. AWAITING REVIEW PRIOR TO BID ADVERTISEMENT.

HANDICAPPED RAMPS AND CURB RAMP DELINEATIONS REQUIRE ATTENTION NEAR THE LINCOLN SCHOOL. WE CAN ADDRESS THE RAMPS AT LOCUST AND EAST THROUGH THE MA22 PROJECT AND AT BEECH AND EAST THROUGH THE MA 23 PROJECT. THE RAMPS ON EAST STREET (FRONT OF BUILDING) COULD BE ADDED TO EITHER CONTRACT.

UNION COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT APPLICATION PERIOD IS OPEN. GRANTS ARE DUE MARCH 28, 2024. THE ADMINISTRATOR GENERALLY APPLIES FOR THIS GRANT. IT IS A SIMPLE APPLICATION.

CONTRACTS 2023-1, 2023-2 & 2023-3 WILL REMOBILIZE SOON WHEN WEATHER CONDITIONS PERMIT. DLS CONTRACTING WAS SCHEDULING SURVEYING LAYOUT WORK ON LOCUST AND FIFTH AVENUES.

ELIZABETHTOWN GAS IS PERFORMING MAIN REPLACEMENT WORK ON HICKORY AVENUE. OTHER LOCATIONS INCLUDE BEECH AVENUE AND CENTER STREET (NEAR PARK). RESTORATION TO BE SCHEDULED THEREAFTER.

WEST STREET DRAINAGE UPDATE. STREETS COMMITTEE COMMUNICATED WITH ME ABOUT SOLUTIONS. I COMMUNICATED TO HOMEOWNER. THEY RESPONDED AFFIRMATIVELY.

Discussion ensued regarding items to be submitted in the infrastructure grant.

Report of Borough Attorney NO REPORT

Report of Assistant Administrator

There is one ordinance on tonight's agenda that I would like to provide information on for additional clarity. Ordinance #24-10 Sewers – Industrial Waste and Fees: The Borough Engineer calculates the industrial sewer rate based upon overall sewer costs per the RVSA billing. The 2024 RVSA charges increased 16% over 2023 and that is reflected in the new rate in this ordinance.

Report of Mayor Blumenstock

It looks like I spoke too soon at our last meeting. I want to start off by thanking Dispatcher John Drone and the PD for getting our electronic sign back up and running! I still don't know how they did it, given what Lifeline told us, but they seem to be able to pull off miracles around here. So thank you very much for your perseverance. I wanted to provide the public with an update on affordable housing. Bill S50, which was written to overhaul the way affordable housing in NJ is created and calculated, was signed by Governor Murphy yesterday. In my opinion, as well as that of the League of Municipalities, while well-intentioned and obviously needed, and while some of the changes it makes do push affordable housing in the right direction, this bill did have amendments added to it that could cause concerns for land-poor municipalities such as ours. In section 23 for those that one to take a look, there is a requirement that a municipality that receives a vacant land adjustment shall address 25% of the adjusted obligation. This is a new requirement and could be an issue for municipalities like ours with little land to develop. Also of concern in the bill is some language that could possibly reduce protections from builder remedy lawsuits. The language is very broad and open to misinterpretation from what I believe is the real legislative intent. The League had asked this Bill to be held to address some of these changes, and over my many discussions with other Mayors, I would say the concern was warranted. However, it has been signed into law and so I want the public to be aware that this is something the Council will have to deal with very shortly. According to the bill, numbers for municipalities will come out in the fall, and we will have a very small period of time to come up with an affordable housing agreement with the DCA. Switching gears, as you can see on the agenda, Local Government Week is coming to NJ once again. From April 7-13th, we will celebrate the different people and departments that keep this town running smoothly. For this year's Local Government Week, we're going to do things a bit differently. Each day our social media channels will feature a video where residents can meet the people behind the scenes here in Garwood in our various departments. From Police to our Finance department and beyond, we'll give residents a quick peek at the employees and volunteers who serve our community. So keep an eye out online for our Local Government Week series.

Comments from the Council:

Councilwoman Boto NO REPORT

Councilman Foley NO REPORT

Councilman Lazarow NO REPORT

Councilwoman Nolde

Good evening, Mayor, I would like to thank GPAC volunteer Gabby Blevins for her program "Discover Art in Nature" this past weekend. She led participants on a beautiful spring morning walk around the recreation

center park with their nature sketchbooks to draw the nature they found which was plentiful. Kids drew trees, flowers, birds, insects, twigs, and stones in their journals. They really enjoyed their experience. Also this past weekend the Garwood Town Wide Skate night at Warinanco was enjoyed by all who attended. Thank you to Katya Lysak for organizing. For photos of both of these events, please follow Garwood Borough on Facebook and Instagram.

Councilwoman Salmon NO REPORT

Council President Kearney NO REPORT

MINUTES:

Minutes of the Meeting of the Mayor and Council held on March 7, 2024.

Minutes of the Executive Session Meeting of the Mayor and Council held on March 7, 2024.

A motion was made by Councilman Lazarow, second by Councilwoman Nolde, to accept the Regular Meeting and Executive Session Meeting minutes as presented. All in favor.

COMMUNICATIONS:

1) NEW JERSEY STATE LEAGUE OF MUNICIPALITIES

a) 03/15/2024, RE: Affordable Housing Update, OPRA Reform Bill Delayed, TTF Moves in Assembly
<https://www.njlm.org/CivicSend/ViewMessage/Message/225847>

2) TOWNSHIP OF CRANFORD

a) 03/08/2024, RE: Ordinance
https://garwood.org/vertical/sites/%7B7F1088A0-CEC9-4505-80EE-1DF1BF7DFFBD%7D/uploads/Township_of_Cranford_-_Amended_Ordinance_No._2024--05.pdf

3) BRUCE PATERSON, CITIZEN

- a) 03/13/2024, RE: Letter to Mayor, Council and Borough Professionals: (Questions to start any committee discussion on ordinances)
- b) 2/19/2024 RE: Letter to Mayor and Council: (Questions on Safety Concerns of the Garwood Fire Department)
- c) 2/25/2024 RE: Letter to Mayor and Council: (Fair equity distribution of PILOT Monies)
- d) 03/15/2024, RE: Letter to Mayor and Council: (GFD Matrix)

ALL RECEIVED AND FILED

ORDINANCES:

ADOPTION:

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://garwood.org/vertical/sites/%7B7F1088A0-CEC9-4505-80EE-1DF1BF7DFFBD%7D/uploads/Ord._24-09-Non_Reusable_Food_Accessories\(1\).pdf](https://garwood.org/vertical/sites/%7B7F1088A0-CEC9-4505-80EE-1DF1BF7DFFBD%7D/uploads/Ord._24-09-Non_Reusable_Food_Accessories(1).pdf)

List correspondence concerning Ordinance No. 24-09. NONE

Does anyone present wish to be heard concerning Ordinance No. 24-09.

Russ Graham, 12 Liberty Court, stated his support for the Ordinance.

Jill Pall, 54 Third Avenue stated her support for the Ordinance.

Marta Young of Clean Water Action thanked the Council for their support.

Amy Goldstein, Director of the NJ Clean Water Council stated her support for the Ordinance.

Brain Thompson of Monmouth Beach Environmental Commission stated his support for the Ordinance.

Debbie Ledger, 66 Second Ave. stated her support for the Ordinance.

Bill Nierstedt, 320 Hickory Ave., stated his support for the Ordinance.

Bruce Paterson, 325 Willow Ave., commented on the Ordinance.

Michele Capobianco commented on the Ordinance.

Coleen Hay commented on the Ordinance.

A motion was made by Council President Kearney, second by Councilman Lazarow to close Public Hearing on Ordinance No. 24-09.

Discussion:

Mayor Blumenstock and Council President Kearney addressed the public comments.

A motion was made by Councilman Lazarow, second by Council President Kearney, to adopt Ordinance No. 24-09.

Roll Call:

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

4-AYES, 1-NAY, 1-ABSENT Ordinance #24-09 was adopted.

INTRODUCTION:

Municipal Clerk to read Ordinance No. 24-10 by title only:

ORDINANCE NO. 24-10

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BOROUGH CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF GARWOOD BY AMENDING CHAPTER 134, ENTITLED "SEWERS", ARTICLE V, "INDUSTRIAL WASTE AND FEES", SUBSECTION 134-16, "RATE SCHEDULE".

<https://garwood.org/vertical/sites/%7B7F1088A0-CEC9-4505-80EE-1DF1BF7DFFBD%7D/uploads/Ord. 24-10-Sewer Rate Amenment.pdf>

A motion was made by Councilwoman Nolde, second by Councilman Lazarow, to introduce Ordinance No. 24-10.

Roll Call:

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

5-AYES, 1-ABSENT Ordinance #24-10 was introduced.

COUNCIL STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS AND OTHER REPORTS:

FINANCE AND PERSONNEL: Councilman Foley, Chair

Councilman Lazarow read the following report: The finance committee met on three separate occasions to iron out details of the 2024 budget. Here are some highlights of that meeting. As you can see, RESOLUTION NO. 24-074, is indicating that the finance committee has made a recommendation to move away from hybrid meetings. While this was initially put into place due to COVID, there are a number of factors that have made our committee unanimously agree to move forward with this change in policy. The most significant reason is the legal liabilities associated with moderating an online forum. A few months ago, our former borough administrator was erroneously accused by a resident for purposely sharing the phone number of a resident on the zoom forum when that individual called in to participate in the meeting. This led to a series of legal correspondence including a threat to sue and money expended on legal fees that ultimately led the finance committee to determine that Garwood does not have the financial resources or ability to sustain the costs of any litigation associated with this feature. The money saved from eliminating the moderation of call-in public comments can be used to eventually upgrade sound quality for the recording of public meetings. Therefore, council meetings will still be accessible via zoom for live streaming and on YouTube for later viewing, but members of the public will need to attend the meeting in person if they desire to speak during public comment. In addition residents are always welcome to send emails, letters, or call council members or the mayor to share their concerns and they can also send an email with questions to our Clerk to be read out at a Council meeting. A second major update has to do with the Sewer Fee. This has been discussed at length, and while the committee is in agreement with the idea, the timeline of the implementation will be slowed down. We are looking to introduce a sewer ordinance sometime in late May or June so we can iron out the language and details with our new borough administrator and attorney. Again, we will continue to update as we move along that path. Finally, I want to remind the mayor, council and public that our special budget meeting will be on April 9th @ 7pm in council chambers.

FIRE AND OEM: Councilman Lazarow, Chair

First I want to report on the fire incident that occurred on Saturday 3/9 on the 500 block of Spruce. Thank you to our fire department for responding to this kitchen fire within 6 minutes of it being reported. The fire was put out and while there is some smoke damage to the property, no residents were injured. Thank you to the Garwood Fire department for the incredibly quick response and to the community for quickly reaching out via social media to see if they can help the family affected. Also, we received correspondence from the New Jersey Division of Fire Safety. In this letter, it was noted that Chief Scalzadonna and Deputy Chief Gregory took a proactive approach and made contact with the Division of Fire Safety to ensure their department was up to state standards prior to the NJDFS receiving any complaint from the public. This letter, which is coming from the highest accreditation agency for fire safety, also stated that officers in the Garwood Fire Department were in compliance and are qualified to perform at a fire related incident. We are also in full compliance regarding Hazardous Materials incidents. All Garwood firefighters are trained to handle the most common of these incidents, and three officers have the "incident commander" certification to operate at the highest level calls as well. DFS did a full inspection and also gave the Department some recommendations for the future. But they have been deemed fully qualified to continue to provide the services our town has come to expect and I am grateful to the Fire Department for being pro-active and working to put any concerns the public might have to rest. Finally, I want to make it clear that while disgruntled former firefighters will likely continue to poke holes or disparage the Garwood Fire Department, Mayor, and council, the state has made it abundantly clear that the department is properly trained and

certified, and I will not give voice to concerns that have disingenuous intentions to settle a score with members of our Fire Department. As an aside, the Division of Fire Safety made some recommendations to our Borough Attorney to better align the wording in our Fire Code with the State's requirements by amending some technical language. Mr. Abramson is working on these changes and will most likely have that for the Council for our next meeting. Even though our code can never supersede the state's anyway, it is certainly better to ensure for the future that it is cohesive with the State's language.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: Councilwoman Salmon, Chair NO REPORT

PUBLIC WORKS: Councilwoman Boto, Chair

Thank you, Mayor. In addition to their recurring activities, Public Works employees performed pothole repairs on the North and South side of the Borough including but not limited to the following areas: Intersection of Cedar Street and North Avenue; Walnut Street; Gallows Hill Road; New Street; Kennedy Plaza. They installed new playground mulch at Hartman Park. Changed the seasonal decorative banners in various locations. Performed street sweeping due to warm weather conditions and my favorite activity of this report, prepared the Sports Complex for the Easter Egg hunt on Saturday, I am really hoping the rain spares us. There were a few items referred to the Committee for review. One of those items was the clock outside Borough Hall. As you mentioned, it is now working. Thanks to Council President Kearney for the time he spent making that happen. With regards to the T-Mobile Hometown Grant, we are meeting on March 26 to discuss the application process. I will provide further details at our next meeting. Lastly, I was able to speak with Superintendent Dickson in connection to the street opening ordinance and will have an update once we meet with him next week. That is all for my report. Thank you.

POLICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY: Council President Kearney, Chair

Calling everyone's attention to Resolution 24-070 on tonight's Consent Agenda, I want to congratulate Sergeant Suggs and Sergeant Priddy on their promotion. Sergeants are the backbone of any law enforcement agency, and I know these two gentlemen will do the title and the Garwood Police Department proud! I also want to echo the Mayor's earlier thanks to Dispatcher John Drone, who reached back into a personal museum of laptops using versions of Windows from the turn of the century to be able to tap into our electronic sign out front. Dispatchers are well known for their ingenuity and perseverance in the face of cranky technology, so again, well done sir.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Councilwoman Nolde, Chair

Garwood Partnership for Arts and Culture

GPAC celebrates National Poetry Month in April with the first annual Garwood Poetry Festival the weekend of April 20-21. Local poets, please submit your poems to be considered to my borough email (cnolde@garwood.org). This event is co-sponsored by the Crossroads and the Garwood Public Library. Poetry readings will take place at the Garwood Public Library on Saturday, April 20 at 11:30. The Crossroads event will be 12:00 on Sunday April 21. Due date for all poetry submissions is April 5. The next regular meeting of GPAC will take place on April 8 at 6:30. Recreation: The recreation committee met for its regularly scheduled meeting on March 11 at 7:30. The committee worked out the details for the upcoming town-wide Easter celebrations as well as discussed upcoming recreation offerings. Events: **Garwood Easter Egg Hunt:** Saturday, March 23rd at 11 am at the Garwood Sports and Recreation Complex. The rain date is Saturday, March 30th at 3 pm. Children aged 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 10 AM. Recreation

programs: STEM Beginner Youth Python Coding Program: This program is run by Zaremba Data Analytics and takes place during spring break 2024 (Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday; April 3rd - April 5th from 9 am to 12 pm). Open to 3rd through 8th graders. Analyze Pokemon cards using Python; create a Morse code translator in Python and encrypt and decrypt messages in Morse Code; venture into data analysis with the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, an intro into recommendation algorithms, exploring pizza preferences of the turtles and visualization techniques leveraging Python. Laptops are provided. Parent Assist Soccer: This program, for ages 2 ½ to 3 ½, is run by US Sports Institute/USA Sport Group and runs on Saturday mornings from 9 am to 9:45 am. Starts April 13th and goes until May 18th. This program is a fun and positive introduction to soccer for young children with a helping hand from Mom or Dad! Children will have fun learning the fundamental skills of soccer through fun-based games and activities. Soccer Squirts: This program, for ages 3 to 4 ½, is also run by US Sports Institute/USA Sport Group and runs on Saturday mornings from 9:50 am to 10:35 am. Starts April 13th and goes until May 18th. This program provides the fundamental skills of soccer including dribbling, passing, shooting, and defending. Classes will include a series of fun challenges, structured activities, and scrimmages adapted to ensure everyone achieves success. Soccer Squirts: This program, for ages 4 to 5 ½, is also run by US Sports Institute/USA Sport Group and runs on Saturday mornings from 10:40 am to 11:25 am. Starts on April 13th and goes until May 18th. This program provides the fundamental skills of soccer including dribbling, passing, shooting, and defending. Classes will include a series of fun challenges, structured activities, and scrimmages adapted to ensure everyone achieves success. 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 April 8 at 7:30 PM. Historical: No report. The next meeting of the Historical Committee is Monday, March 25.

LIBRARY, MAYOR'S REPRESENTATIVE: Councilman Lazarow

March 25 and Mondays in April at 10:30 am - Join our Knitting Club. Open to all levels. April 11 at 3 pm Build It - Bean Bag Toss -Swing a hammer and go home with a bean Bag Toss Game. For kids in 3rd grade and older. Limit 10. April 9 @ 3pm for kids & April 16 at 3 pm for adults- - Pick up your craft supplies for a virtual craft tutorial and follow the instructions Registration is required for craft kits and is limited to 10 participants for adults and 15 for kids. Sign up on the Library website's events calendar or by phone. April 17 at 10 am to Noon - Ask Kiosk-Aging Services Kiosk – Union County Division of Aging Staff will be on hand to assist seniors (age 60+) or their caregivers with information on services, such as meal delivery, respite care, adult day care and support services for caregivers. April 20 at 11:30 am – Poetry Reading - In honor of National Poetry month, the Garwood Council for Arts and Culture will hold a Poetry reading at the Library featuring local poets.

SCHOOL BOARD LIAISON: Council President Kearney

The Garwood Board of Education held their regular March meeting this past Tuesday, the 19th. The Business Administrator, Mrs. Pinto, provided a preliminary overview of the district's upcoming budget. The presentation was fairly comprehensive, and I'd urge anyone looking for a full accounting of it to call up the video recording of the Board meeting on the Garwood Public Schools Facebook page. Items of note in the budget; the school district is dealing with many of the same challenges which affect local government budgeting, including increased costs due to rising salaries and health benefit costs (which the district projects a \$1.17 million dollar cost for the upcoming fiscal year), the need for technology and facility upgrades, and the loss of Covid-era federal funding sources. One bright spot is an increase of 10.62% in state aid, and increased funding from the state for the district's preschool expansion. The district is estimating this year's tax impact at \$168 per year, using the most recent average assessed home value. This number is likely to change by a few dollars between now and the formal adoption of the budget. The Board will be holding a

Special Meeting to adopt this year's budget on Tuesday, April 30th. In his monthly report, Superintendent Kinney reported on numerous school activities, and reminded us all about a construction project which begins on or about March 29th. The project will include the replacement of sidewalks alongside the school building, so there may be a need to plan an alternative walking route while the project is in progress. This will most likely last until a week after spring break. There is an overhead map of the project area shown in the full Superintendent's Report, which is posted on the Garwood Schools website, just click on "Administration" from the main page and follow the link under Mr. Kinney's name for the current report. I again encourage everyone in Garwood, not just current parents with children in our schools, to check these excellent and detailed reports about our school district. Also, Mayor Blumenstock and I continued our monthly meetings with Superintendent Kinney and the Board President. We were joined this month by two additional members, and discussed revisions to the facility usage policy, the use of the school building for inclement weather days by the Summer Recreation Program, and concepts regarding the possibility of continued PILOT program revenue sharing. I've relayed some information on that over to the Finance Committee for follow up, and I'm looking forward to our April meeting as I feel we are making a lot of positive progress between our two governing bodies. The Board's next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 16th and that's all for this report.

GARWOOD SENIOR CITIZEN LIAISON: Mayor Blumenstock

At our club meeting today, though he wasn't able to attend, I let the club know I would be honoring Pat DiFabio with a Mayor's proclamation for his 16 years of service as the Senior Club President. Pat has volunteered in Garwood in many ways over his 96 years and his work with the Senior Club is just one of the many ways he has given back to our community. I'd like to quickly read his proclamation into the record. So Pat, thank you for time as President and here's to many more years at the bingo table with us. Our next meeting is April 4th at 12pm at the Knights of Columbus, and we will have the Union County Surrogate, Chris Hudak, attending to talk about their services and what they can provide for the Garwood community.

SMALL BUSINESS ADVISORY LIAISON: Council President Kearney NO REPORT

BOARD OF HEALTH LIAISON: Councilman Foley

Council President Kearney attended the Board of Health meeting in place of Councilman Foley. The following report was provided: The Garwood Board of Health met yesterday, March 20th, and welcomed our Borough Clerk, Ms. Cameron, who is replacing Kathleen Wierzbinski there after her retirement last month. The Board discussed the current rates of respiratory infections, Flu and Covid activity, all of which are at a moderate level. Another topic of discussion was the report of a confirmed case of measles reported in Camden County during the month of January, along with a CDC advisory nationwide to health care providers, warning that cases of measles are on the rise. There have been 58 confirmed cases through March 14th of this year, which is equal to the total confirmed reports nationwide for all of 2023. Discussion continued on the impact of vaccine resistance, which is now showing up in one way with this steady increase of measles cases. The Board also continued discussion on the topics of youth mental health and community engagement through participation in town/school events which I'm sure Councilman Foley will have more on in his next report. The next Board of Health meeting will be held on May 15th, and that's all for this report!

PLANNING BOARD LIAISON: Councilwoman Salmon NO REPORT

OFFICER'S REPORTS:

Chief of Police Monthly Reports for February, 2024.

A motion was made by Council President Kearney, second by Councilman Lazarow, 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, provided an update on the status of membership for her foundation.

Bruce Paterson, 325 Willow Avenue, commented on the cessation of hybrid meetings and Fire Department certifications.

Rachel Herz, 61 Fourth Avenue requested clarification/ status of her OPRA request; Hazmat certification extension; an SOP for the GFD; summer recreation program/staffing.

Michelle Capobianco, 404 Myrtle Avenue, commented on commented on the cessation of hybrid meetings.

Ed Augustyn, 114 Willow Ave, requested clarification/ status of his OPRA request and commented on the GFD certifications.

Coleen Hay, 516 Fourth Avenue, commented on the cessation of hybrid meetings.

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

Mayor Blumenstock clarified the GFD concerns.

Councilwoman Nolde clarified the summer recreation concerns.

Mayor Blumenstock and Mr. Abramson clarified the OPRA concerns.

Mayor Blumenstock clarified the cessation of hybrid meetings concern.

Discussion ensued.

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 NO. 24-069

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Borough of Garwood, County of Union, State of New Jersey, hereby appoint Katya Lysak as Clean Communities Coordinator for the Borough effective March 7, 2024 to December 31, 2024 at an annual salary of \$ 750.

RESOLUTION NO. 24-070

WHEREAS, there are two (2) promotional vacancies in the title of Sergeant 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 Sergeants with the advice and consent of Borough Council; and
WHEREAS, Mayor Jen Blumenstock has nominated Police Officer George Suggs and Police Officer Jonathan Pridy for the positions of Sergeant.
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Garwood that George Suggs and Jonathan Pridy are hereby appointed to the title of Sergeant of the Garwood Police Department, effective March 21, 2024.

RESOLUTION NO. 24-071

NJ LOCAL GOVERNMENT WEEK

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH OF GARWOOD, RECOGNIZING NJ LOCAL GOVERNMENT WEEK, APRIL 7 - APRIL 13, 2024 AND ENCOURAGING ALL CITIZENS TO SUPPORT THE CELEBRATION AND CORRESPONDING ACTIVITIES.

WHEREAS, local government is the government closest to most citizens, and the one with the most direct daily impact upon its residents; and

WHEREAS, local government provides services and programs that enhance the quality of life for residents, making their municipality their home; and

WHEREAS, local government is administered for and by its citizens, and is dependent upon public commitment to and understanding of its many responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, local government officials and employees share the responsibility to pass along the understanding of public services and their benefits; and

WHEREAS, NJ Local Government Week offers an important opportunity for elected officials and local government staff to spread the word to all citizens of New Jersey that they can shape and influence this branch of government; and

WHEREAS, the NJ State League of Municipalities and its member municipalities have joined together to teach citizens about municipal government through a variety of activities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY GOVERNING BODY AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. That the Mayor and Council encourage all citizens, local government officials, and employees to participate in events that recognize and celebrate NJ Local Government Week.

Section 2. That Garwood encourages educational partnerships between local government and schools, as well as civic groups and other organizations.

Section 3. That Garwood supports and encourages all New Jersey local governments to actively promote and sponsor NJ Local Government Week.

RESOLUTION NO. 24-072

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TAX ASSESSOR AND THE TAX APPEAL ATTORNEY TO FILE COUNTERCLAIMS AND/OR DIRECT CLAIMS AND PETITIONS OF APPEAL FOR 4C CLASS PROPERTIES

WHEREAS, it is anticipated that certain taxpayers of 4C class properties in the Borough of Garwood will file tax appeals disputing their assessed valuation for the year 2024; and

WHEREAS, the Tax Assessor is of the opinion that certain 4C class properties, in some cases, are under assessed and that the assessed value of said properties should be increased; and

WHEREAS, the law permits a Municipality to counterclaim against a property owner to seek an increase in assessed value and also to file direct appeals (Petitions and Complaints) with the County Board of Taxation and the Tax Court of New Jersey, respectively, to seek an increase in assessed value; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Garwood that the Tax Assessor, Jennifer Sherman, and Tax Appeal Attorneys, Renaud Colicchio LLC, be and are hereby authorized and directed to file such counterclaims, appeals, and/or petitions and/or take such other actions as are appropriate to increase the assessed value of said 4C class properties to the value which the Tax Assessor deems to more properly reflects the value of said property for the year 2024.

RESOLUTION NO. 24-073

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council that John Arthur, Borough Administrator, be and is hereby appointed as Deputy Municipal Clerk for the Borough of Garwood, County of Union, State of New Jersey, at an annual salary of \$ -0- , effective April 1, 2024.

RESOLUTION NO. 24-074

CESSATION OF HYBRID BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETINGS

WHEREAS, on June 24, 2021 the Borough Council voted to return to in person meetings effective July 22, 2021; and

WHEREAS, on or about September 9, 2021, the Borough commenced hybrid Council meetings whereby the public comment virtually or by phone via Zoom; and

WHEREAS, the Finance Committee has made a recommendation to end hybrid Borough Council and Borough Planning Board meetings.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Borough Council of the Borough of Garwood hereby terminates hybrid Borough

Council and Borough Planning Board meetings and the utilization of Zoom for attendance by the public or council shall cease effective March 22, 2024.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Borough Clerk is instructed to update the Borough website and the public meeting guide regarding the cessation of hybrid Borough Council and Borough Planning Board meetings.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Nolde, second by Council President Kearney to adopt Consent Agenda.

Roll Call:

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

RESOLUTIONS DELETED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA:

NONE

NEW BUSINESS

NONE

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 Councilwoman Nolde, to adopt Payment of Claims Resolution.

Roll Call:

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

ADJOURNMENT:

The Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Council will be held on **Thursday, April 11, 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 Councilwoman Boto, second by Councilwoman Nolde, to adjourn. Time: 8:50 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine D. Cameron, R.M.C.