

**Borough of Garwood Workshop Meeting of
The Mayor and Council
WORKSHOP
MINUTES
May 9, 2019**

Start time: 7:00 p.m.

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. and Borough Engineer Michael Disko.

Borough Engineer Michael Disko mentioned that he held a pre-construction meeting for Spruce Avenue project. He commented that the 2017 DOT project is well underway. He commented on a paving project taking place on South Avenue.

Robert Zajac of Elizabethtown Gas made a brief presentation concerning a project for Second and Third Avenues. He explained the project is to replace cast iron piping that has strong leak tendencies.

Borough Attorney Thomas C. Jardim mentioned the request from the Pointe at Garwood's reimbursement for LED lighting.

Mayor Todisco commented that they seek reimbursement for the maintenance on six decorative lights the right of way.

Discussion followed regarding the borough paying for ½ the cost of the \$1,350.00.

All agreed to pay half the cost of \$675.00 and Ms. Ariemma was directed to contact The Pointe.

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

Mayor Todisco's Report:

Important Upcoming Dates:

- **May 11th** - The next Mayor's Wellness Campaign Walk will begin at 10 at the East Street entrance to Unami Park and our guest this time will be Lincoln School Principal Mary Emmons.

- **May 14th** - Representatives of Redeveloper, South Avenue Urban Renewal LLC, will conduct an informal town hall public information session at Lincoln School at 7pm to provide interested parties with an update of the redevelopment of Phase I of the South Avenue Transit Oriented Redevelopment Area (former Casale and Petro sites), providing a status of the site's remediation and anticipated construction of the project.

- **May 18th** - The next Breakfast with the Mayor event where I will be joined by our school Superintendent Dr. Quigley and Board of Education President Christine Guerriero, which we will be held at Lincoln School from 9:30am to 11:30am, so that young families will be able to take a tour of the school, if they are interested. Residents of all ages are welcome to attend this breakfast.

- **May 22nd** - Planning Board meeting at 7:15pm at Borough Hall

Mental Health Awareness Month - In case you were not aware, May is Mental Health Awareness Month. I know many schools and workplaces acknowledge this month, so I wanted to take this opportunity to do the same. Also, I wanted to encourage everyone to do something they might not usually do as a way of remembering the importance of our mental health, not just physical health. Perhaps talk to someone new, give someone a compliment, take some time for yourself maybe by going for a walk or reading that book you wished you had time to get to. You can join us for the Mayor's Wellness Campaign walk this Saturday perhaps.

Additional Mayor's Wellness Campaign Initiatives - Sticking to the theme of wellness, additional Mayor's Wellness Campaign initiatives include a workshop on nutrition for Garwood employees tomorrow and a 3rd Grade Nutrition Walk/Program at Garwood ShopRite on May 14th.

This past Tuesday night, we had the second of two informational sessions with the Garwood Fire Department about their request for a rescue platform ladder truck. Again, I want to thank our volunteer Chief Allan Tweedle for his very thorough presentation, which took much time and preparation. I'd also like to thank our Assistant Chief and all the members of the Fire Department for their efforts educating the public on this important topic as well as for what they do day in and day out to serve our community.

I want to thank and commend all the residents who took the time to attend one or both of these meetings or who viewed it on Garwood Live. The full 75-slide PowerPoint was posted on www.garwood.org and on the Garwood Borough - Government Facebook page. Great questions were asked at these town hall meetings

and the feedback from residents was important to hear. I believe all of our eyes were opened as a result of this presentation as to what our department does with the existing apparatus they have, the changing nature of fires (like how homes today burn four times faster than homes from your parents or grandparents), the benefits of a platform ladder truck, and more. Acknowledging this potential purchase comes with its price tag, I've asked our auditor to attend our next Council meeting on May 23rd to speak about how the financing would work, tax impact, and anticipating revenue ahead given the financial agreements for the redevelopment sites. This will provide an opportunity for the Council and the public to ask him finance related questions directly.

For those who are wondering why this is getting so much attention now, I'd like to address that. The "newest" truck in our Fire Department is now 14 years old and before it was a span of 12 years between that purchase and the prior purchase of a 1993 truck. Our 1974 truck is no longer certified to be operated in the United States. It is clear we are very much at or about the time to equip our Fire Department with a new truck. The type of truck being requested is a rescue platform 100 foot ladder, which is unlike our other pumper trucks. This is not a result of redevelopment as we currently have over 50 buildings the existing 40 foot bangor ladder cannot reach or are questionable in their ability to reach in town, including the school and buildings with dozens of units, like The Pointe, The Lofts, and The Village. However, with added revenue coming in the near future from redevelopment on North and South Avenues, this money can be used to offset the cost of a ladder truck. Also, it is important to note that we have a Fire Chief who has been a real leader in this request for a ladder truck and has gone above and beyond in time and effort to research equipment and inform not just this governing body, but also the public directly. Additionally, we have a Fire Commissioner who has taken his job seriously and to heart since he was first appointed to this position when he was sworn into office last year. Councilman McCormack has been proactive in his approach and I am proud to say I have joined together with him to continue to advance this conversation and to follow it all the way through until a final determination is made. I look forward to continuing to hear from the public on this very important matter.

Comments or matters for discussion from members of Council:

Councilman Benoit: Announced the birth of his daughter. He commented on the fire truck matter.

Councilwoman Blumenstock: This past Tuesday, I was able to attend a ceremony held by Sustainable Jersey at TCNJ on behalf of the Green Team. There, Garwood was named the recipient of a \$2000 grant from Sustainable Jersey and PSE&G. This grant will allow the Green Team to create a rain garden at the Recreation Complex. The rain garden will keep infield dirt and pet waste from flowing into the Garwood Brook and the Rahway River. It will also help mitigate flooding on parts of the baseball field. I would like to thank Jeff Jotz, who joined me at the ceremony, and who was the force behind this grant. He is a fountain of knowledge on all things ecological and I know his skills and planning will be invaluable to us as we move forward with this project. The Green Team is excited to get to work and to continue to be a part of Garwood's sustainability efforts.

And as an aside, weather permitting, the Green Team will be doing some planting this weekend at JFK Plaza and Georgiana Memorial Park. If anyone would like to join us we'll be starting at JFK Plaza at 10 am on Saturday and we welcome anyone in the community who wants to make use of their green thumb. That's all for me Mayor.

Councilman Graham: Thanked the Fire Chief for his presentation. The TAB met on May 1. While I was not able to attend our Mayor did and she forwarded this report for me to present: The highlight of the meeting was a presentation by the owner of Boxcar, which is a parking management system, specializing in helping commuters find parking spots near public transportation. This comes at no charge to a municipality because they work directly with property owners in town who may have parking spaces available and connect them with interested customers who used the Mobile App to purchase a parking spot for the day. If an owner needs to turn off the availability of a space, they can. They've connected customers with owners of larger properties along with smaller ones with only one driveway. Right now, they operate in our two neighboring towns. I've spoken with our Mayor who has been in contact with this company already to see if they could be helpful for our snow emergency parking situation for residents without driveways as well as for commuter parking in general. Boxcar also offers a coach bus service to pick up commuters and drive them to certain set locations in the city, but they do not provide evening transportation at this time. He commented and read a resolution concerning Senior and Veterans deductions.

Councilman Ince: No Report

Councilman McCormack: No Report

Council President Lazarow: Along with Councilwoman Blumenstock, Councilman McCormack, and Mayor Todisco, I attended the Westfield Recreation Commission Meeting this past Monday. The Westfield Ice Rink at Gumbert Park was discussed and the owner of the rink discussed his desired plans for next

year which included increased lighting, music playing during ice time, a potential concession stand, and even a proposal to increase hours. This also came after the owner took a \$200,000 loss on the operations. While it was clear through multiple public comments made from hockey players and their families that the rink has served a pent up demand for more accessible ice time, there was a large contingency from The Pointe in Garwood as well as Westfield residents that spoke about the great damage the rink has imposed on their quality of life. From parents who had their young children constantly being woken up from the puck hitting the boards or the constant whistles being blown to the complaints about the overall aesthetics, I felt compelled to speak. I urged the commission to think about how if the rink is to break even it will require far more traffic which will result in additional parking challenges that have negatively impacted Garwood businesses on the border of Gumbert Park. Also, it was clear that there are far more permanent locations in Westfield such as Tamaques Park that offers far more parking and impacts far fewer residents. Fortunately the commission did decide to delay their vote until they had more time to review the report and proposals prepared by the owner of the rink. However, I will continue to advocate for Garwood residents and businesses on this issue.

Board of Chosen Freeholders Liaison Report: **No Report**

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.

Resident DePollo, 246 Hazel Avenue asked for an updated on the PSE&G project.

Ileen Cuccaro, 348 Third Avenue asked questions concerning the revaluation. She commented on the purchase of the fire truck and said it should be a referendum.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Blumenstock, seconded by Councilman Ince to close public comments session. All in favor.

Mayor Todisco answered the resident concerning PSE&G. She explained that she has met with PSE&G to request they re-route the wiring in Garwood. PSE&G has brought the matter back to its engineers and Garwood is waiting to hear back from the representative from PSE&G. Mayor Todisco assured the resident that she is paying close attention to the matter.

Mayor Todisco commented on the revaluation status, explaining that inspections are almost complete. She commented on the purchase of a fire truck being placed on a referendum ballot. She said that she supports referendums for social matters but not for public safety. She said she will not put public safety on the ballot. She stated that the auditor will be present at the next meeting to provide information on bonding cost for a fire truck.

Members of council commented on the purchase of a fire truck. Councilman McCormack made a statement regarding the fire truck matter. Councilwoman Blumenstock commented on the fire truck matter.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 8:27 p.m., a motion was made by Councilman McCormack and seconded by Councilman Graham to adjourn the workshop session. All agreed.

Respectfully submitted:



CHRISTINA M. ARIEMMA, Municipal Clerk
Borough of Garwood