

**Borough of Garwood Workshop Meeting of
The Mayor and Council
WORKSHOP
MINUTES
June 26, 2018**

Start Time: 7:00 p.m.

Adequate notice of this meeting was provided to the Westfield Leader, advertised on January 4, 2018, 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 Lombardo	P	Councilman McCormack	P
Councilwoman Cuccaro	P	Councilwoman Todisco	P
Councilman Lazarow	P	Council President Blumenstock	P

Also, present: Borough Administrator/Clerk Christina M Ariemma and Borough Attorney Robert Renaud

Mayor Lombardo acknowledged Glenn Lewis' retirement.

Carol Kearney, Greater Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce report:

There are so many people to thank for #GarwoodRocks 2018, which turned out to be the biggest one yet! I would like to start by extending thanks to all of my fellow residents who accommodate street closures and a bit of inconvenience to help create and celebrate a great day for Garwood! Thank you to Mayor Charles Lombardo and the Borough Council for their continued support of this event. Special thanks to Deanna & Donna from [This Is It! Productions](#), Borough Administrator Christina Ariemma & Kathleen Wierzbinski, Chief Wright and the Garwood Police Department, Chief Allan Tweedle and Len Spina and Fire Department and the Garwood First Aid Squad, Clint Dickson and Lenny and the Garwood DPW.

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO CHIEF DEBBIE OF UNION COUNTY POLICE FOR HIS ASSISTANCE WITH BOMB SQUAD AND ROBOTS AND CHRISTINE MARCANTONIO FROM THE UNION COUNTY POLICE. CHRISTINE GAVE OUT 150 HELMETS AND INSTRUCTED EACH RECIPIENT HOW TO PROPERLY SECURE THE HELMET.

Sheriff Peter Corvelli for the use of the SLAP Unit to help with cleanup the IDENTIFICATION UNIT, HUNDRED OF CHILDREN WERE GIVEN id AGAIN THANK YOU UNION COUNTY.

JOHN MALCOLM WAS THE WINNER OF THE 50/50 IN THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$512.50. IT IS GREAT TO HAVE GARWOOD RESIDENTS WIN 50/50 TWO YEARS IN A ROW.

My son Vincent Kearney for being the face of Garwood Rocks on Facebook again this year (check out all the videos on the [Garwood Rocks](#) page), the awesome support staff, Board and Executive Director Gene Janotti from the [Greater Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce](#).

A final thank you to all our sponsors and to Lee Frankel from Crossroads, who's continued coordination of the bands and support of the stage makes the ROCKING part of this event possible every year. The chamber is 500 strong and growing daily. Garwood has 40 members.

COMING UP WE ARE HAPPY TO BE SPONSORS AGAIN FOR MOVIE UNDER THE STARS IN SEPTEMBER.

PLEASE JOIN THE CHAMBER AT FAN JAM ON JULY 8TH IN LE GRANDE PARK ,WHICH IS BEING COORDINATED BY THE CHAMBER WITH ASSISTANCE OF GENE JANNOTTI, AIMEE NUZZO, CAROL KEARNEY, VINCENT KEARNEY (MEDIA PERSON) AND THIS IS IT PRODUCTIONS. PLEASE CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE. 20 FOOD TRUCKS, BEER AND WINE GARDEN, CHILDREN ZONE, CAR SHOW AND THE ENTERTAINMENT EVENT STARTS AT 12 AND GOES TO 7. WE HAVE THE U2 TRIBUTE BAND.

Borough Attorney Robert Renaud – **NO REPORT**

Administrator/Clerk Christina M Ariemma – **NO REPORT**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - **NONE**

NEW BUSINESS Mayor Lombardo

As I reported at our last Council meeting, I spoke to Mr. Perez of Waste Management, our recycling hauler. He responded that the only new change in our current recycling pickup is that we cannot use black plastic bags which are now prohibited. This information has been posted on our Town Website, Town Bulletin Board, Mayor's FaceBook Page, Nexle and others. If any other further requirements are handed down from our recycling hauler it will be posted immediately, so we will be in compliance with current regulations.

Last Tuesday, Chief Wright and I meet with Mayor Brindle of Westfield and the Town Administrator, regarding the Ice Rink project. First we spoke about the Green Acres approval of the Ice Rink. Westfield has received preliminary approval for the project and an indication they would sign off on the final approval. We were also told that the chillers will now be relocated near the North Avenue Side of the project, because that is where the water supply is located. Proper buffer screening will be used to help with noise control. There will no public address system used on the project, and only light mood music will be played during Open Skate time. All lighting will be properly installed with proper foot candle intensity and appropriate shielding. Parking issues were also discussed. All handicap parking will be addressed in the parking lot adjacent to the rink. Large vehicles will be parked across the street in the baseball field parking area with a no idling policy. Westfield will be posting signage for no Ice Rink Parking in Garwood parking lots, adjacent to the area. There will be the proper number of trash cans and recycle bins in the area with a designated pick up schedule. On the issue of safety and traffic, Mayor Brindle explained to Chief Wright that he has an open communication policy with the Westfield Chief of Police to assist when the need arises. The term "temporary" was also discussed in two phases: first, the temporary Ice Rink is to reinforce the need of such a facility and secondly, they are currently looking to level and grade another area in a different Westfield park.

Comments or matters for discussion from members of Council:

Council President Blumenstock - Just something I wanted to bring up on behalf of our senior club. Right now we have some members who make use of our bus to bring them back and forth to our meetings. We have some great drivers who our seniors really enjoy and I know how much they all appreciate that service. Unfortunately, because of conflicting schedules, the members who take the bus home aren't able to stay until the end of the meeting and enjoy the bingo time with the rest of the members. I will be meeting with our Senior Director later this week to discuss this and brainstorm some ideas so that we can work to fix that situation. Thank you, Mayor, that's all for my report.

Councilwoman Cuccaro – Mentioned Bruce Paterson's letter. She also mentioned the fence ordinance.

Councilman Lazarow – As you know, the Hartman Park revitalization project is well underway. I know some residents have asked about the plan for the basketball court and our original intent was to reseal and paint the remaining one full length court. However, upon further research and consideration, Council President Blumenstock and I, as members of the Buildings and Grounds Committee, feel we have a great opportunity in front of us to fully repave that court within the existing bond ordinance. It will be more cost efficient in the long-run. So I wanted to bring this idea up tonight and ask the full council to support getting the remaining basketball court at Hartman Park repaved, then repainted.

As you know from the last meeting, we had our engineer solicit quotes to reseal and paint the remaining court, but he only received one quote and we have learned that the company feels that the court currently is more damaged with cracks and weeds to be able to effectively seal the court. The cost of repaving and painting exceeded the bid threshold of 17,500, coming in at about 21,000 to repave it and line the stripes with just white paint directly on the asphalt, additional if we would like color paint. Thus, we would have to have our Borough Clerk go out to bid on resurfacing and painting to complete this project. The money to complete this repaving would come out of the bond ordinance we passed for Hartman Park, so no additional money would be spent and still the overall bond is costing taxpayers less than 3 dollars per household. Under this plan, Hartman Park will still be able to re-open in the next couple of weeks. Then, once we receive bids and decide on a contractor, we can have that contractor come in to resurface and paint the basketball court, which would only cause a very short-term, a week or less, closure for that work to get done. This is a real opportunity to create a completed feel to the Hartman Park revitalization project, which residents have shown an interest in since the project was announced. Since we are eliminating one of the courts, it seems prudent to make sure the remaining court we do have be in the best condition. Rather than just putting a short-term fix on the problem, it will ultimately be more cost efficient to do this the right way. Also, considering the fact that a new playground is likely to result in more residents using and becoming aware of the park, it makes sense for us to show that we are fully committed to a high quality park experience and there is no reason to complete the park in a piecemeal fashion

I want to also ask the council about applying for the Kids Recreation Trust Grant again. There are two items that I think we should try to get a matching grant. The first item is a request by the Recreation Commission. They are asking that the council approve us applying for netting at the back of the field to prevent sports equipment such as soccer balls and baseballs from flying onto resident properties. We have had one initial quote of \$20,000 to buy and install, so ideally they would use \$10,000 from collected fees and a matching grant from the county to purchase this. The second item I would like to apply for is to add additional shading to Hartman Park. While we were able to get one area of shading on the bigger playground area in response to resident's requests, we'd like to see about getting additional shading for the smaller playground and bench area as that may prove popular where it is on existing plans. The cost of

the shading would be around \$10,000, so with a matching grant we could probably budget \$5,000 in buildings and grounds to accommodate this purchase

Councilwoman Todisco responded that she supports the idea of resurfacing the basketball court. Discussion followed regarding bidding the project and also the other costs involved including mulch, sealing vs resurfacing and other project ideas.

Councilman McCormack – commented on Hartman Park project and how much it is costing. He expressed his disappointment on the increasing cost. He commented on the generator for the ice rink vs having a hard wired electrical source.

Councilwoman Todisco commented on the Hartman Park Project costs and that the project is not exceeding the bond amount. Councilman McCormack commented further on the matter. Councilman Lazarow responded and commented.

Councilwoman Todisco – 1. I want to thank Mayor Lombardo for being supportive of the idea I brought up at the last Council meeting of holding an informal town hall meeting to be scheduled with Garden Communities, the new owner of the Paperboard site. After the last Council meeting, I've been working with the representative of Garden Communities, the Mayor, and our Administrator on setting up a meeting at Lincoln School. I also asked their representative about doing a direct mailing to inform all residents of the date, time, and place of the meeting once it is set. Be sure to keep an eye out in your mailbox or on the Garwood.org website for further information.

2. I would like to ask my fellow Council members to support resolution 18-137 which is very similar to a resolution sent to our state and federal representatives by Cranford back in May to urge the funding and completion of studies that will lead to the engineering and construction work to ultimate help mitigate the flooding issue. While flooding has had a greater impact on Cranford and Rahway than Garwood, we are still affected in some areas of town and Garwood is unable to take any action, like deepening the brook, until Cranford is able to handle more water flowing through it.

3. Questions and concerns were expressed at our last Council meeting about the large tax increase Garwood is facing from Union County this year, to the tune of \$141 on the average home, while Westfield and Summit will see decreases this year. I have some information to share with the Council and public on that matter this evening after the CFO spoke with the County Tax Administrator and I followed up with a call on my own. We've learned that even though our "net valuation taxable" was reduced by about \$2 million by our tax assessor, that decrease does not translate into a reduction in "equalized valuations," which is what determines our portion of county taxes. The State determines each town's ratio that effects equalized valuations. Garwood's ratio dropped from 28.02 in 2017 to 25.54 for 2018 and this means Garwood's equalized valuations increased this year. The ratio is calculated by the State after monitoring property sales for a one year period from July 1 to June 30th. We will get our ratio for 2019 in October of this year. Essentially, this means that because Garwood's sale prices are increasing and doing better than 17 other Union County towns on a percentage, comparative basis, we are facing a large County tax increase. Garwood's ratio decreased by 2.48% from 2017 to 2018, placing it 4th when comparing it across the County. Springfield was 1st, Cranford was 2nd, and Linden was 3rd. The reason Westfield and Summit saw decreases this year was because they placed at both #17 and #21 out of 21 towns. Westfield's ratio only went down by .14% and Summit's went up by .64%. In speaking with the Administrator of the Tax Board, I also asked follow up questions about the Board itself. The board has 6 members, which are from both political parties and members are appointed by the Governor. The term length of members is 5 years. The members appoint the Administrator. They follow the guidelines set by the State Division of Taxation. The State reviews their charts, rates, and records to ensure accuracy.

Councilwoman Cuccaro commented on the flood resolution matter. She also commented on the county tax matter.

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 three minutes.

Bruce Paterson, 325 Willow Avenue passed out information concerning the ice rink in Westfield. He commented on the additional costs to Hartman Park project. He passed out information concerning county taxes.

Al Del Conte, 545 Locust Avenue thanked Glenn Lewis for his service. He asked about staffing at the DPW. He asked if council is considering hiring more employees. He commented on the water company work and he stated this work should be supervised.

Councilman McCormack asked if Mr. DelConte had a better suggestion. Mr. DelConte stated the problem is the lack of supervision.

Council President Blumenstock said she would look into the matter.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Councilwoman Cuccaro, Second by Councilwoman Todisco to adjourn
Time: 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



CHRISTINA M. ARIEMMA, Municipal Clerk
Borough of Garwood