

**Borough of Garwood Workshop Meeting of
The Mayor and Council
WORKSHOP
MINUTES
July 24, 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		
Councilwoman Bianco	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 Attorney Catherine DeAppolonio.

Catherine DeAppolonio, Esq. – NO REPORT

Administrator/Clerk Christina M Ariemma – Ms. Ariemma mentioned the recycling contract expires 12/31/2018 and the borough has exhausted the extension provision. Ms. Ariemma stated she would prepare a resolution for the next agenda authoring her to prepare specifications and bid for 2019. Ms. Ariemma also mentioned that the bulk contract ends 12/31/18 however it can be extended for two additional years. Brief discussion followed. Ms. Ariemma was directed to contact the vendor for an extension.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – NONE

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Lombardo - As promised, I reached out to JoAnn Gemenden, the Bureau Chief of Union County Recycling and Planning. As stated, six municipalities have established a pilot program for styrofoam recycling with Foam Pack Industries in Springfield. All six towns that participate were able to provide their own covered collection container (roll off or dumpster) as well. They were to transport the material to their facility in Springfield. Please be aware that Foam Pack of Springfield, at 72 Fadem Road provides a container at their facility for all businesses and residents to drop off "covered" styrofoam at any time. On the table, I have a DEP news Release dated 7/18/18, reminding residents to eliminate standing water around their properties to reduce the mosquito population. Please take one, as it is very informative. Just a reminder - Union County has its own Mosquito Control Department if further information is needed.

Comments or matters for discussion from members of Council:

Councilwoman Bianco – NO REPORT

Council President Blumenstock - Just a couple of things, Mayor. We all received an email about James Duffey, a young man from Garwood who has become an accomplished equestrian. Coincidentally, a few days before receiving that email, I had actually read an article about James and his participation in the Mustang Makeover. If it's ok with the Council, I'd like to ask the Mayor if it were possible to do a special commendation for him at an upcoming meeting. It's always nice to see a Garwood resident accomplish so much, especially at such a young age.

Also, we had a buildings and Grounds meeting last night, and I know Councilman Lazarow has some items he will sharing from that meeting, but I just wanted to touch upon something I'd like to bring to the Council's attention. As we now currently have Fanwood doing the street sweeping for Garwood, something that the public works department is trying to figure out is how to now best notify the residents that sweeping will be happening so that we can get the most cars off the streets as possible. Something I'd like the Buildings and Grounds to look into is a text alert notification system, similar to the nixle alert, but for routine notifications for Garwood's residents, rather than just emergencies. Announcements such as street sweeping or special town halls or meeting notifications or cancellations could be made on this type of service. The committee agreed that this is something we would like to continue to look into with the hopes of bringing something concrete to the whole Council in the next few months to hopefully implement in the next year.

And my last item, I'd first just like to say that I am pleased that the council fully supported the recent addition of the property maintenance officer position and the hiring of that officer, as I have seen some positive results of that decision already as the officer has recently started his work. Some residents who

have brought specific issues to me, I was able to pass them along to the new property maintenance officer and they have either been resolved or are in the process of being resolved. I can already see the great value and benefit to the residents that this is going to bring. Along those lines, while investigating a recent issue, the officer came along some language in our ordinance on bulky waste that he feels could be open to interpretation and could perhaps be revised to make enforcement easier. I've sent along to Councilwoman Cuccaro a copy of Roselle Park's ordinance that could help make the language in ordinance more specific and I'd like to ask if Laws and Licenses could take a look. That's all for my report, Mayor.

Councilwoman Cuccaro – We as the council have heard of this valid issue where Union County government has violated their own county laws and procedures and hired a new county manager, Edward Oatman. We found the union county govt procedure has issues as follows: 1) No experience for the position: Mr Oatman has no experience for the county manager position. He was a legislative aide to a Senator and did not oversee any employees where the county has 2500 and does not have financial experience where the county budget is approximately \$500,000,000. 2) Resident requirements: Per the county law, the county manager must be a resident of Union County. Edward Oatman lives in Woodbridge which is outside Union County. 3) Promote from within: Normal county procedure is to promote someone from within since the inside employee would already have experience of the county. Our County has a #2 person behind the county manager. She is deputy county manager, Amy Wagner, which they passed over. The discrimination question arises that: was this due to the county wanting a male in charge instead of a female 4) Interview process: Per county statute, the county is to have an interview process, advertising and then interviewing 3 candidates before hiring. The interview process was skipped over. 5) Politically connected: The above ignorance of county statute, laws and procedures just may have been done since Edward Oatman works for the Union County democratic chair, who is now considered the "political boss" of the area.

6) Illegal freeholder vote: In the freeholders voting approval for Edward Oatman to be our next Union County manager, it is found that freeholder Hudak is in conflict with his vote yet he voted. Freeholder Hudak has a job at Kean University and Edward Oatman is his superior since Mr Oatman is a trustee of Kean University that made decisions and policy on the university employees.

All the above points to an alleged significant malfeasance act to the public's interest by the Union County government and could be deemed a corrupt act. This is beyond any politics of democrat and republican councilors. We must act in concert with the other towns on this outrage. Any councilors of any towns who are evasive to this issue would be for all intent and purposes considered either afraid to tend to the public's interests or complicit in this alleged malfeasance.

This council now has had enough time going back to March of this year when this issue first arose to consider the above and therefore must act by the very least, by putting forth a resolution condemning the county's illicit action and demanding this be overturned and possibly reach out to the attorney general to investigate these actionable offenses

Discussed the sale of Block 401, Lot 3. Catherine DeAppolonio commented.

Councilman Lazarow – Two items of note, I am going to ask that we direct the Tina to apply for a recreation trust grant to pay for the purchase and installation of a canopy shading over the smaller playground area at Hartman Park, the purchase and installation of 2 umbrella shading areas for the picnic tables, and the purchase of equipment to repair and install a functioning water fountain to replace the currently unusable water fountain at Hartman Park. Since the Buildings and Grounds Committee met, we came to a mutual agreement to apply for all three of these items since we can get up to 50% of the money funded by the county. The total estimated cost for all projects would be somewhere in the range of 40-50,000\$ depending on the final quote we are waiting on for installation of the water fountain parts. If we were to get a matching grant, the Borough would be responsible for covering half of those costs (20-25,000\$) Every year, every other Union County town applies for these grants to improve, repair and update their recreational facilities. This grant application does not commit us to spending the money, but gives us the financial freedom to make informed choices that would have less financial impact on our tax payers.

Also, we discussed at our committee meeting about asking our engineer to solicit quotes for getting an idea of how much money it might cost to scrape and paint the Center Street underpass that has been in dismal shape. With a quote, we thought we could potentially apply the cost of the development fees of 50,000 dollars given to the Borough for the financial agreement we voted to approve at last meeting for Russo 2, or we can consider asking other developers such as Garden Homes to kick in money to help make this project a reality without cutting into any capital reserve funds. Discussion followed on all the subject matters in Councilman Lazarow's report. Ms. Ariemma was directed to prepare a resolution authorizing her to apply for the Union County Kids Recreation Trust Grant.

Councilman McCormack – Read written report

Mayor Lombardo commented. Councilman Lazarow also commented.

Councilwoman Todisco – At the last Council meeting, I suggested we as a Council pass a resolution voicing strong opposition to forced mergers of small towns in this state as suggested by a panel working on behalf of the State Senate. I drafted such a resolution following a model from PA that was provided to me from the NJ League of Municipalities. It turns out that the League did not have any examples from within our State, so Garwood is really a pioneer on this issue. The resolution I drafted will be brought up later as a resolution deleted from the consent agenda and I hope it will be passed unanimously. On a related note, the representative I spoke with from the League said that at their fall conference, towns may provide resolutions that they think would be beneficial statewide to a League committee, which decides whether or not it would be a suitable resolution for the League to push out to all 565 member municipalities in the State. He thought this would be a good one for that. When I asked how many they usually receive, the number was around 25 and most of them end up being accepted by the League. If this resolution passes tonight, I would like us to forward this to the League for consideration in the fall. This is a prime example of how even though we are a small town, Garwood's voice deserves to be heard and we can even be a leader for the State on issues that matter to our residents like this one.

The July 25th meeting of the Planning Board was canceled and rescheduled for August 8th. The tentative agenda includes a review of a redevelopment plan for the Paperboard site and an amendment to the Master Plan. Currently, the redevelopment plan is being drafted and is expected to be distributed to the members of the Planning Board as well as the Mayor and Council on August 3rd. After the Planning Board reviews and comments on the plan, it will be sent to the Council.

I thought the town hall meeting held on July 12th by Garden Homes, the owner and developer of the Paperboard site on South Avenue went well and was beneficial to our residents. As a result of that meeting and in response to one resident's question, the owner had letters hand delivered on Friday to properties within about 350 feet of their site to notify them about the demolition work that will be starting immediately. First, the aluminum part of the building will be taken down, followed by the brick building floor by floor. As mentioned at the town hall meeting, the Aeolian facade will be preserved, which is really important to the history of our town and I know many residents were happy to hear it will remain intact. Garden Homes expects the demolition process to take about 90 to 120 days.

Councilwoman Cuccaro commented.

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.

Al DelConte, 545 Locust Avenue thanked Councilwoman Todisco for putting forth a resolution opposing forced municipal consolidations. Mr. DelConte commented on the improvements to Hartman Park. Commented and discussion followed concerning staffing in the borough.

Justin O'Hea, 429 Willow Avenue asked about development and demolition of South Avenue I.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Council President Blumenstock, Second by Councilwoman Todisco to adjourn
Time: 7:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



CHRISTINA M. ARIEMMA, Municipal Clerk
Borough of Garwood