

BOROUGH OF BERNARDSVILLE
Mayor & Borough Council Meeting Minutes
December 28, 2020

Mayor Canose called this meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. remotely via Zoom. Present were Council Members Jeff Hammond, Jena McCredie, Thomas O’Dea, Jr., and Christine Zamarra. Also present were John Pidgeon, Borough Attorney, Ralph A. Maresca, Jr., Administrator/CMFO, and Anthony Suriano, Borough Clerk. Council Members John Donahue and Chad McQueen were absent.

STATEMENT OF PRESIDING OFFICER

Notice of this meeting was provided to the Bernardsville News, Courier News and the Star Ledger, filed with the Municipal Clerk and posted on the Municipal Bulletin Board on January 3, 2020 and revised on October 10, 2020.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRESENTATIONS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Hammond moved approval of minutes from November 23, 2020; December 7, 2020; December 10, 2020; December 14, 2020; December 15, 2020; and December 17, 2020. Ms. Zamarra seconded and the motion was approved with four yes votes.

OPEN SESSION

Hearing no comments, Mayor Canose closed the open session.

ORDINANCES (Public Hearing)

Mayor Canose opened the public hearing on Ordinance #2020-1868, **CREATING ONE NEW CAPTAIN POSITION AND ELIMINATING ONE LIEUTENANT POSITION IN THE POLICE DEPARTMENT AND AMENDING CHAPTER 2 OF THE BOROUGH CODE ENTITLED "ADMINISTRATION"**. Hearing no comments from the public, Mayor Canose closed the public hearing. Mr. Hammond moved to pass this ordinance on final reading and adopt as published. Ms. Zamarra seconded and the motion was approved by the following roll call vote. Mr. Hammond, Ms. McCredie, Mr. O’Dea, and Ms. Zamarra voted yes.

Mayor Canose opened the public hearing on Ordinance #2020-1869, **CONCERNING FIRE PREVENTION FEES AND AMENDING CHAPTER 15 OF THE BOROUGH CODE ENTITLED "FIRE PREVENTION"**. Hearing no comments from the public, Mayor Canose closed the public hearing. Ms. McCredie moved to pass this ordinance on final reading and adopt as published. Ms. Zamarra seconded and the motion was approved by the following roll call vote. Mr. Hammond, Ms. McCredie, Mr. O’Dea, and Ms. Zamarra voted yes.

Mayor Canose opened the public hearing on Ordinance #2020-1870, **ESTABLISHING A ONE-YEAR TERM FOR ALL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS COMMENCING JANUARY 1, 2021 AND SUPPLEMENTING AND AMENDING CHAPTER 2 OF THE BOROUGH CODE ENTITLED “ADMINISTRATION”**. Hearing no comments from the public, Mayor Canose closed the public hearing. Mr. Pidgeon said this ordinance does not apply to statutory boards and only applies to advisory committees. Mr. O’Dea moved to pass this ordinance on final reading and adopt as published. Mr. Hammond seconded and the motion was approved by the following roll call vote. Mr. Hammond, Ms. McCredie, Mr. O’Dea, and Ms. Zamarra voted yes.

ORDINANCES (Introduction) - None

RESOLUTIONS

- #20-308 AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF BILLS**
- #20-309 ACCEPTING MONTHLY REPORTS**
- #20-310 AUTHORIZING REVISED CONTRACT WITH BURGIS ASSOCIATES IN CONNECTION WITH NEW JERSEY PLAN ENDORSEMENT PROCESS**
- #20-311 AUTHORIZING THE BOROUGH OF BERNARDSVILLE TO GIVE A JUNK VEHICLE TO BERNARDS TOWNSHIP TO BE USED FOR PARTS**
- #20-312 AUTHORIZING TRANSFER OF FUNDS**
- #20-313 APPOINTING POLICE CHAPLAINS**
- #20-314 AMENDING RESOLUTION #20-96 WHICH AUTHORIZED A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT WITH MARAZITI FALCON, LLP**

Resolution #20-311 was pulled off the consent resolution list and tabled to a future meeting pending review by the Public Safety Committee.

Regarding Resolution #20-313, Chief Valentine explained the role of Police Chaplain pursuant to Chapter 2, Section 24-10 of the Borough Code.

Ms. Zamarra moved to adopt Resolutions #20-308 to #20-314, except #311. Mr. Hammond seconded and the motion was approved by the following roll call vote. Mr. Hammond, Ms. McCredie, Mr. O'Dea, and Ms. Zamarra voted yes.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mayor's Update, Mayor Canose said she attended the Somerset County Business Partnership's annual meeting. A Cultural Arts Committee meeting was held and will be reported on later in the meeting. Mayor Canose attended a drive by birthday party for Loretta Steinkopf's 90th birthday. She said the Steinkopf family has been a long term family in Bernardsville and contributes a lot to the town including the Fire Department. The call with the EDA on the new economic recovery package has a lot of good programs and she will share the summary with the council. She said she attended the public auction of a portion of the property at 271 Mine Brook Road. There was a good response to it and we got a good result. Mr. Pidgeon said we had 13 bidders, all of whom submitted a \$25,000 deposit to participate and we retained the bid deposits for the top three bidders in case the high bid falls apart. The high bidder has given a 10% deposit and now has to give us financial information to complete the transaction. Mr. Pidgeon said if everything is completed by the Reorganization meeting, we will have a resolution on the agenda to accept the high bid of \$1,031,000. Mr. Pidgeon said he will follow up with Aaron Cela of the NJ Land Conservancy regarding Green Acres as it applies to the property. Mr. O'Dea suggested investigating what all of our options are regarding the property, its funding and open space dollars. He said there was discussion about other open space properties, the Rossi encroachment and a small strip by the parking lot area at the Library. He said we need to work this into whatever the plan is for the other 22 acres. Mr. Pidgeon said that will be worked out with Green Acres. Mayor Canose said she was one of three judges for the holiday lights contest. She said it was very well received and popular and hopefully will be expanded next year. The county has provided Covid vaccination rollout information in their weekly call. The county also gave \$500,000 to the school districts from their portion of the CARES Act. The county will roll out the online marketplace in January which will be a way for all municipalities in Somerset County to share services. Municipalities will be able to list pieces of equipment they are willing to share or need on the online marketplace. Covid testing at Raritan Valley Community College will be expanded. A mobile Covid testing van will start in Bound Brook. The county is working to have ShopRite of Hillsborough and Bernardsville as Covid vaccination sites, but only for medical workers in the first phase. Mr. Hammond asked if the county or Health Department has a plan for the second and third phases of non-health care workers and non-high risk individuals. Mayor Canose said the state developed their own registration system, but the county has their own system that will interface with the state's so people can register. They will have three zones: north, central, and south, with satellite sites. The college will be a drive-thru vaccination site and three other sites that won't be drive-thru.

Public Safety Committee, Mr. Hammond said the committee met on December 9th and had two items. They are investigating a police accreditation program. They have reached out and got positive responses from towns that have an accreditation program. They are waiting to find out what the out-of-pocket cost for the borough would be before making a recommendation. The committee discussed Smart 911, Smart Prepare Program, and Register Ready Program. Mr.

Hammond said Chief Valentine made arrangements to continue the Smart Prepare Program into 2021 at no additional cost. There will be a push in early 2021 to get people to register and utilize the Smart Prepare Program as it helps with our disaster preparedness planning.

Finance Committee, Mr. O’Dea said the committee met twice and focused on the 2021 budget. They reviewed end of year statements line by line and went over spending for 2020 and projected what the needs will be for next year. The committee has some ideas and will reach out to some council members not on the committee individually for their feedback.

Personnel Committee, Mayor Canose said we are in the middle of interviewing for the position of Administrator.

Engineering, Technology, and Public Works Committee, Ms. Zamarra said we have completed road projects in 2020 for Hull Road, Lindabury Avenue, Lloyd Road, Meeker Road, Old Army Road, Pickle Brook Road, and Whitenack Road. For 2021, bids will be received for Washington Corner Road, Carriage House Road, Crestview Road, and Chestnut Avenue. The committee reviewed grants that were applied for through NJDOT which were Crestview for \$350,000 and Chestnut for \$200,000. The committee revisited discussion on dam remediation and Mr. Walker has written an extension request to the NJDEP as NJ Transit is part owner and we have to clarify some items before submitting a plan. Work on the Library roof has been completed. Mold remediation at the Library was completed. We are in the process of reviewing bids for the Library lower level generator. Mr. Walker is working on renewing the lease of the lower level of the Library. We sent a request to NJDOT regarding the Route 202 detour and we asked to have the road open as much as possible. The Polo Grounds walking path is continuing and we requested a meeting with NJDEP which will most likely take place the week of January 18th. Mr. Macdowall and Mr. Walker handled an issue promptly regarding stormwater runoff on Lloyd Road. They are working with the property owner to resolve the issue. The preliminary budget has been submitted to the Finance Committee for 2021. The train station RFP has been issued.

Land Use Committee, Mayor Canose said the RFP has been issued for both Quimby Village and the Audi dealership.

Recreation Committee, Ms. McCredie said the committee discussed the Brandstetter Carroll Recreation Master Plan. The recreation staff is looking into what to focus on in 2021.

Library Board, Mr. Hammond said the Library’s preliminary budget was submitted to the Finance Committee. The Board outlined expansion of programs. The Library is going through the transition to be part of the Morris County Consortium and it should be completed by the end of January.

Open Space Committee, Ms. Zamarra said the committee met with Brandstetter Carroll on December 17th. The committee also talked about trail signage. Mr. Markowick said he met with Mr. Macdowall and they have to create an inventory of all our trails. Mr. Hammond suggested having a brochure of trail maps even before we get signs.

Library Board (continued), Ms. McCredie asked for clarification on the Library's transition to the Morris County Consortium. Mr. Hammond said the Library Board reviewed partnering with a variety of different library consortiums. There are a lot of benefits to a consortium such as books, electronic sharing, and complimentary libraries that someone could use if ours was closed. He said after looking through a lot of options, the Morris County Consortium was the best one, as Somerset County would have cost more money to join and Morris County gave more books and materials at our disposal that we would be able to share.

Cultural Arts Committee, Ms. Zamarra said the committee was joined by Pat Hoagland of Brandstetter Carroll at their last meeting. Painting of the mural started taking place at the train station on December 11th and was very well received. There will be another painting session in early or mid-January. Mayor Canose said it will be on January 9th.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

Senior Transportation Van

Council consent was given to continue the contract with Somerset County Transportation for Friday transportation to local supermarkets for Bernardsville seniors in 2021.

Correspondence - None

Unfinished Business - None

New Business - None

Holidays, Mr. Hammond thanked Brenda Curnin, Manager of Bernardsville Center, for hosting the menorah lighting ceremony. It was very well received and got a lot of positive feedback. Mr. Hammond noted that Kwanza was celebrated on December 26th.

Green Team Grant, Mr. Hammond said the Green Team would like to pursue an Energy Efficient Technical Assistance Grant from Sustainable Jersey. He said Public Works looked at some buildings in 2010 and 2011 and they have been made energy efficient, but those that were not looked at could benefit from this grant. He said the grant is free should we obtain it and we would need a resolution from council showing support of the grant. A resolution will be done at a future meeting. Mr. Hammond said no money changes hands with this grant but we would receive technical expertise of what we can do and we would then decide whether to do it or not.

OPEN SESSION

Mayor Canose opened the meeting to the public.

Terry Thompson, Mine Mount Road, thanked Mr. Hammond for the discussion about the Morris County Consortium earlier in the meeting. She said the Library received a construction grant to replace the doors and they need to send confirmation to the state library that the borough will match the grant funding. Mr. O'Dea said the Finance Committee discussed this with members of

the Library's finance team. He said Mr. Maresca was going to provide the resolution which showed the money was set aside for that purpose. Mr. O'Dea said if there is another round of grant funding we would like to consider roof work on the slanted roof portion of the Library building.

Hearing no further comments, Mayor Canose closed the open session.

CLOSED SESSION - None

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05pm
