

**Mayor and Council of the Borough of Allendale
Work Session Meeting Minutes – 7:30 p.m.
March 23, 2023**

A Work Session Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Allendale was held in the Municipal Building at 500 West Crescent Avenue, Allendale, New Jersey on March 23, 2023. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm by Mayor Wilczynski who welcomed everyone who is joining the meeting in the audience and on Zoom Webinar.

Mayor Wilczynski asked that the Municipal Clerk read the open public meetings statement: “In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, the notice requirements have been satisfied. The meeting dates for the year are confirmed at the Annual Meeting, are posted on the public bulletin board in the Municipal Building and on the Borough Website, published in The Record within the first 10 days of the New Year, and copies are sent to The Ridgewood News and Star-Ledger. Notice of this meeting by the March 14, 2023 Sunshine Notice was sent to The Record, The Ridgewood News and Star Ledger and has been posted on the public bulletin board in the Municipal Building and Borough website.”

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Councilmembers Liz Homan, Susanne Lovisolo, Ed O’Connell, Matthew O’Toole, Tyler Yaccarino, Joseph Daloisio and Mayor Amy Wilczynski.

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Raymond Wiss, Borough Attorney
Ron Kistner, Director of Operations/Borough Administrator
Linda Louise Cervino, Municipal Clerk
John Gil, Director of Communications

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Walter Widmer, 38 Hamilton, Allendale asked what they are doing at 220 West Crescent Avenue because he was under the impression that they were going to build the municipal building first. He would like some kind of plot plan as it takes place. Mayor Wilczynski explained to Mr. Widmer that she’s been posting things on Facebook and there’s updates every month in the newsletter, but perhaps we can add some pictures to the newsletter. They are building the 70 units first, not the municipal building. We still have to go bid. Our building is going to be touching theirs directly because some of the foundation that they’re building is going to be partly our foundation. We have a picture of the community center and the layout has been in the newsletter as well. We send it out once a month. It’s one story. When you walk in, there is a lobby. To the right, there’s a gym and a kitchen. To the left there is a community center.

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ADMINISTRATION:

Agenda Review:

Mayor Wilczynski reviewed the Regular Session Agenda and asked Attorney Ray Wiss to explain Ordinance #23-05. Mr. Wiss explained that #23-05, the salary ordinance, was the introduction at the last meeting. There have been some amendments that are substantive to that. The order will be to introduce a motion to approve on second reading, #23-05, in anticipation that the governing body will then disapprove of that. Once #23-05 is voted down, later on the agenda you will see Ordinance #23-07, which is the current and amended salary ordinance. Since it is now, in essence, a stale ordinance, you'll vote down on second reading of Ordinance #23-05 and then approve Ordinance #23-07.

Mayor Wilczynski stated that in reviewing the Consent Agenda, Z+ Architect is on the agenda. They are working with us very closely and building our community center. We are also purchasing some equipment for our DPW. We are hiring an Administrative Assistant who will be working for the DPW and in the clerk's office. Payments for our streetscape, which is coming together and looking very pretty. We also have the approval of the bill list.

Council Reports:

Councilman O'Connell – Department of Public Works

Councilman O'Connell stated that the second phase of the DPW raised another \$40,000. The total accumulated to date since the borough started is about \$150,000. The multipurpose field preparation will be completed tomorrow. The three ball fields are done. By Friday of next week, four other practice fields will be ready. Rich McDowell is doing a great job getting the lake ready for Memorial Day. I spoke to the mayor earlier before the meeting and we're going to get April 15th from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. free top soil to Allendale residents at the DPW on New Street. They have to bring their own supplies, shovels and haul it away themselves. We are not loading.

Councilman Joseph Daloisio – Land Use Board

Councilman Daloisio stated that the Land Use Committee meeting was held on the 9th. There is not much new. The committee proposed a couple minor changes to the code which was sent to Mr. Wiss, who hasn't had a chance to review those yet. Some minor word changes to the code section for the Allendale Volunteer Goose Patrol which was suggested by former Councilman Strauch. There are also a couple minor changes in reference to the general scope where it referenced planning board and the zoning board of adjustment, which was combined into the Land Use Board. We are just cleaning up the code language. We did have a site meeting earlier today with some residents to give them an update on a resolution to address an issue that's been at the end of their street for a very long time with water and its turnaround. In speaking with Councilwoman Lovisolo some money is being put into our budget to alleviate that section.

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We had a courtesy meeting today to let the residents know that we're listening and the council is trying to do what they can do to help.

Councilwoman Lovisolo – Finance, Human Resources and Administration

Councilwoman Lovisolo stated the Finance, Administration and Human Resources committee met this past Monday as we do weekly until we reach our final version of the budget. Our Finance Advisory Committee is going to be meeting a week from today. Our next Finance committee meeting is on Thursday evening 7 p.m. We will be reviewing Version 10 of our budget. In addition, with Green Team, we're still moving ahead with our Spring-Cleaning Environmental Day on April 22nd. Electronic recycling will be taking place in the back corner of borough hall. The clothing recycling will be collected at the John Fell House. There will be more in-depth details on the website.

Councilwoman Homan – Water, Sewer and Public Utilities

Councilwoman Homan stated we had another mid-month meeting on Monday regarding water and sewer. And while there's a lot going on, I think the message for the council and the public is just that we're moving forward with the survey and everybody is on the same page trying to get things wrapped up as far as the easements go. We'll continue to make positive progress. Ron and Mike are working on having some of the sewers looked at with cameras so we will identify where we need to spend money to possibly do repairs to the sewer system as well as I'm working with Ray on updating the new agreements with our neighboring towns.

Councilman O'Toole – Law & Public Safety

Councilman O'Toole stated there is a lot going on with Public Safety. Most of it is moving in a positive direction. We have a lot of things on a lot of burners and we're coming on fruition on many of them. Similar to Councilman Daloisio, meeting with residents. I reported at the last meeting that at our public safety meeting at beginning of this month, we met with a couple residents on MacIntyre regarding speed and things we can do to mitigate the problems there. We're presently working on coordinating a date that we can get together with the residents who we met with as well as some of their neighbors and discuss how we can make things a little better. There are a lot of ideas thrown out so we just need to come to a consensus on that. Applications for new police officers are due to Chief Dillon by the 21st. Applicants must have graduated from either a PTC academy and be eligible for police training certificate. Waiver eligible SLEO II who are enrolled in a PTC alternate route course and graduating before June 30, 2023. A promotional exam process for the position of sergeant has been announced. The process will include a written exam and two oral interviews. The first portion of the process, the written test, is scheduled for the middle of June. Finally, a new police car, Dodge Charger, is due to be delivered on Monday. The next meeting is scheduled for the first Tuesday of next month.

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Councilman Yaccarino – Facilities, Parks and Recreation

Councilman Yaccarino stated that the Facilities, Parks and Recreation met last Thursday. With regard to the concession stand, we talked about it at our last council meeting, but in the committee meeting, we went through the options in terms of what we can do with the structure for this year. We, ultimately, decided that it's going to be best to demolish the current concession stand; it's beyond repair. It just didn't make much financial sense. We're going to have portable restrooms and food trucks come in. We're going to be finalizing some of the details, so I'm going to reach out to the vendor. We'll get a final rendering of that. Ron and I have been working great together on that.

John and I have chatted before about the Crestwood newsletter. Amy and I had discussed that, so we'll have that coming out relatively soon. We're talking to Tierney. We're going to be finalizing the band schedule, hopefully, by the end of next week. DPW has been doing a great job. In looking at the fields, a lot of positive comments from around the community. Our next committee meeting will be April 20th. This Saturday, I'm going to be attending the inaugural Northwest Bergen Councilmembers Association in Mahwah.

Staff Reports:

Linda Louise Cervino, Municipal Clerk, stated she's looking forward to the appointment of Administrative Assistant, Kim Olivieri, tonight. Kim will be working with Ron Kistner at the DPW as well as the clerk's office. Kim will be starting April 3, 2023. The clerk also stated she just returned today from the New Jersey Municipal Clerk's Association Education Conference that was held from March 20th through March 23, 2023. Classes were held every day, all day and she met with some new vendors and clerks.

John Gil, Director of Communications, stated he wants to be a little stricter on the deadlines because he wants to get the newsletter out the first week.

Ron Kistner, Director of Operations/Borough Administrator stated he would like to thank Linda clerk's office. I also want to thank Alison, our new CFO in the finance office and construction department. All three departments are working well together. We have Anthony back. I also want to thank the finance committee. The reason the salary ordinance is changing is that I had made some suggestions. We're doing a nice job for our employees and it shows through their work. The Holiday Observers hosts the Easter Egg Hunt and the DPW helps out with that a little bit.

Mike Dillon, Police Chief, stated he would like to thank John Gil for website management. We're required to post many things on our website. The state attorney general requires us posting things and I've gotten many compliments about how our format and how we keep up to date with that and comply with all sorts of laws and regulations regarding that. As fire department administrator, the grant application has been submitted for LOSAP. LOSAP is a language service award program. We value our volunteers in Allendale and we want to reward them.

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LOSAP is a pension program. So, basically, the State has a requirement of a maximum contribution, only about \$1,100 approximately, but if you're a volunteer for 20/30 years, at the end of your time when you're no longer an active member, you get a little bit of a benefit. For this grant application, it's five years paid for by the federal government. It's to get the program off the ground.

Raymond Wiss, Borough Attorney, stated working with Linda and her office on ordinances and resolutions, some of which are on this evening's agenda. Tom Bouregy was involved with the mayor and her committee on some developments on the 220 project. Working with Mr. Kistner on some personnel and property maintenance issues. Working with Chief Dillon on some departmental matters. TJ was involved in a couple of OPRA matters with the clerk's office. Tom was involved in the matter that's on for second reading this evening with respect to Allendale Senior Housing, Inc. The water utility continued to work even while I was abroad. I did have the privilege of being a speaker at a program on May 3rd by the Institute for Professional Development. The people in the audience will be clerk, cfo's and other municipal employees.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Wilczynski stated that regarding 220 West Crescent Avenue project, we are moving along. We had a three-hour page turn of the bid specs last Friday so we are getting closer and closer to bid. Initially, I announced that we were going to bid March 31, 2023, but that is not realistic. We still have a lot of details to do. The fact that both buildings are attached just provides a bunch of different issues with foundations. We really want to make sure we get that piece right before we go on.

I want to do a quick background of the history of this project going back five years when we did buy it. This is something the borough always planned to buy. We had our eye on this property for a very long time. In fact, we met with the prior owners on more than one occasion and they said they were going to sell us the property. We wanted this property for the borough and it's in our masterplan. It turned out they had a non-arms-length transaction and sold the property without it ever going to market. We were devastated but we were very determined to buy it no matter what. We started eminent domain proceedings. One of the reasons we wanted it is because it's such a hot piece of property. People throughout the years have come to us and asked the prior owners and wanted to put up to 300 units on that property and that property was very vulnerable for massive units. It's about 12 or 13 acres. It's a lot bigger than it looks. When we decided at the time, we thought about moving our borough hall there since our borough hall was getting crowded. We were going to do a two-story building and we had full plans to do that. Then we had an environmental issue. That environmental issue set us back over a year. We did our due diligence. In fact, we were in a lawsuit with the person who did do the due diligence because we thought that there were some very obvious things we should have noted. That's still ongoing and that will probably take a year or so. It was a lot of money and a long time and then it brought us right into covid.

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We had covid and then that changed the world; the prices that we initially had bucketed for that just skyrocketed. It changed also how we did work in the borough. We decided that we could do some things remotely. We automated a lot of stuff and we thought that because of the cost the best thing to do was to make it just a community center and keep borough hall here. After we regrouped and made that decision, we decided that was the best thing. It's going to be a great community center. This room that we're sitting in now is literally the only space that our community has to use. It's not a great space to meet. There's not really tables, so this is going to be a wonderful meeting space. The community center section of it is going to be about the size of our chambers, maybe a little bigger. We're going to have a divider in the middle. The gym is going to be on the other side.

Initially when we were going to have borough hall there, it wasn't going to be a gym. It was just going to be a community center. So, the gym is a new thing. Some people asked why we didn't do a full-size court, and if we could we would, but there was never intention to have a gym there. It's a mid-size full size or like a Brookside School court. It's going to be for pickleball, volleyball, fitness and a kitchen. It's going to be a great space for the community. It has been a very long time, but I'm happy to say that we're at the point where we're going to start seeing a lot of the rewards of our work. Councilwoman Homan was with me on it for years as well as we got through meeting and meetings to get to where we are today. There were a lot of ups and downs. We knew we had to do whatever we had to do to resurrect it because we knew that the alternate was that it would go out to bid again and that, again, we would have the threat of hundreds of units. When we did go to bid, the other two bids were hundreds of units. This was the only one that said they would put the warehouse in the back and just do the 70 units and allow us to do a deal that we can have a municipal center. We have a great partner in Hampshire. We'll see as we progress forward, but I'm doing my best to try and keep everybody up to speed. I have been posting on Facebook. I will post in the newsletter still.

This month is developmental disabilities awareness month. In 1987, president Reagan declared March to be developmental disabilities awareness month urging all Americans to join together with citizens of disabilities and offer both encouragement and the opportunities they need to lead productive lives and achieve their full potential. Allendale is the poster child for just that. There was a breakfast meeting that Councilman Yaccarino and Councilwoman Lovisolo and I attended on March 22nd and it was quite nice. It was Hope Christian, which used to be Eastern Christian. We have two of those homes in our municipality and they knew Allendale really well. It was really nice to hear a woman speak about her loved ones, so we're just really happy to be part of that. Going forward, I think we're going to do a proclamation in March to honor that. I would like to thank this council because, as a new mayor, this council has really stepped up. It has a lot of great energy and vision. I love the fresh eyes and bringing new things to the table and just really being here for Allendale and doing it for the right reasons and wanting to make Allendale a better place.

No new business.

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No old business.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Councilwoman Homan, second by Councilman Yaccarino and unanimously carried, the work meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Louise Cervino

Linda Louise Cervino, RMC
Municipal Clerk

04/13/2023

Date Approved