

Minutes of the 1852nd Regular Meeting of May 6, 2020

CALLED TO ORDER:

Mayor Sarlo called the Borough of Wood-Ridge Council meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL:

Mayor:	Paul Sarlo – present in council chambers
Council:	Philip Romero – present by telephone
	Catherine Cassidy – present by telephone
	Ezio Altamura – present by telephone
	Dominick Azzolini – present by telephone
	Edward Marino – present by telephone
	Joseph DiMarco – present by telephone
Borough Attorney:	Paul Barbire – present by telephone
Borough Engineer:	Brian Intindola – excused
Borough Clerk:	Gina Affuso – present in council chambers
Borough Administrator:	Chris Eilert – present in council chambers

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT STATEMENT:

This meeting is being held in accordance with Public Law 1975 Chapter 231, the Open Public Meetings Act, also known as the “Sunshine Law”. The public meeting notice stating the date, time and place of this meeting was posted on the municipal bulletin board and the municipal website and was forwarded to The Record and the Star Ledger.

Mayor Sarlo recognized Faith and George Amornities of TapInTo.

CEREMONIAL PRESENTATION: None

ADVERTISED PUBLIC HEARING: None

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ORDINANCES ON SECOND READING AND FINAL PASSAGE:

BOND ORDINANCE 2020-4 (New Ambulance)

BOND ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE ACQUISITION OF NEW ADDITIONAL OR REPLACEMENT EQUIPMENT AND MACHINERY AND NEW AUTOMOTIVE VEHICLES, INCLUDING ORIGINAL APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT, FOR THE USE OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT IN, BY AND FOR THE BOROUGH OF WOOD-RIDGE, IN THE COUNTY OF BERGEN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF \$325,000 TO PAY THE COST THEREOF, TO MAKE A DOWN PAYMENT, TO AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF SUCH BONDS.

Advertisement of the above Ordinance has been made according to law and a copy of the Ordinance was posted on the bulletin board.

Mayor Sarlo called for a Hearing of Citizens on Ordinance #2020-4

Mayor Sarlo closed Hearing of Citizens on Ordinance #2020-4

Motion: Councilperson Azzolini, seconded by DiMarco moved to the adoption of Ordinance #2020-4

Roll Call: Romero yes, Cassidy yes, Altamura yes, Azzolini yes, Marino yes, DiMarco yes

BOND ORDINANCE 2020-5 (Press box and bleachers)

BOND ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE REPLACEMENT OF THE SYNTHETIC ATHLETIC FIELDS AND TRACK AT DONNA RICKER MEMORIAL FIELD (PHASE II) IN, BY AND FOR THE BOROUGH OF WOOD-RIDGE, IN THE COUNTY OF BERGEN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF \$825,000 TO PAY THE COST THEREOF, TO MAKE A DOWN PAYMENT, TO AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF SUCH BONDS.

Advertisement of the above Ordinance has been made according to law and a copy of the Ordinance was posted on the bulletin board.

Mayor Sarlo called for a Hearing of Citizens on Ordinance #2020-5

Mayor Sarlo closed Hearing of Citizens on Ordinance #2020-5

Motion: Councilperson Cassidy, seconded by Altamura moved to the adoption of Ordinance #2020-5

Roll Call: Romero yes, Cassidy yes, Altamura yes, Azzolini yes, Marino yes, DiMarco yes

ORDINANCES ON FIRST READING: None

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PETITIONS: None

BIDS: None

COMMUNICATIONS:

Communications and correspondence received are identified on this evening's agenda has been distributed to all Council for appropriate action.

REPORTS OF GOVERNING BODY:

Mayor Sarlo:

Mayor Sarlo stated he had the displeasure of announcing the following events that are being cancelled due to the COVID-19 Pandemic:

- May 17th Blue Mass – this will be live via Facebook
- May 25th Memorial Parade
- June 7th Keep Wood-Ridge Beautiful – However, the shredding truck will still be at the Civic Center from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm for those who are in need of shredding.
- June 14th Town Day

Mayor Sarlo further stated they have been in discussion with Board of Ed regarding a plan for the 2020 graduating class and a joint statement should be released within the next 2 weeks.

Council President Romero:

Council President Romero stated the Little League has been postponed for another month and may be further postponed depending on the pandemic. The Little League is hoping to have some sort of season toward the late summer.

Councilwoman Cassidy:

Councilwoman Cassidy stated she is a member of the Bergen County Census Count Committee headed by Freeholder Germaine Ortiz. The committee's goal is to make sure the Bergen County count is as accurate as possible. In order for this to happen it is important to make sure all households fill out their census forms either online or on paper. Census takers will go door to door most likely in the summer following safety protocols to visit the houses which have not filed at the time. Due to COVID-19 there is a short extension for the count. All information is confidential and census takers swear to uphold a lifetime oath not to reveal any answers or to identify any household. It is punishable up to 5 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. There is 800 billion dollars is allocated each year based on census results as well as the number of representatives in the House of Representatives, among other things. New Jersey lost a representative in the last census and it is important not to lose another one. As of data from May 5, 2020 Wood-Ridge's return rate is 69.9% which means 30% of the population need to fill out the form otherwise Wood-Ridge will be undercounted. We would like to remind our residents to go online and fill the census out at www.2020census.gov

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Councilman Altamura:

Councilman Altamura stated all track and field has been cancelled for the season. The Our Lady of Assumption Parish's Annual Blue Mass has been cancelled in person and will be held live via Facebook. To join the mass please visit: <https://www.facebook.com/ASSUMPTIONCHURCHWOODRIDGE.NJ>. Assumption has been holding their weekly mass at 11:00 am on Facebook as well. The annual Memorial Parade has also been cancelled. Councilman Altamura further explained that with Keep Wood-Ridge Beautiful being cancelled, the T-Shirt contest winner from this year will be sent a \$50.00 check and their design will be used at next year's KWRB. The shred truck will be at the civic center on June 7th from 9am-1pm as planned for those who have the need to bring their shredding. The determination on whether or not to cancel or postpone the summer recreation program within the next week or so.

Councilman Azzolini:

Councilman Azzolini stated the Wood-Ridge EMS have been fully staffed and operating at full capacity providing all services to the community.

During the month of April 2020, the WRFD responded to 22 alarms of fire in the Borough of Wood Ridge and 1 mutual aid alarms for a total of 193 hours of service. The WRFD also expended an additional 100 hours of service including department training, equipment maintenance and other miscellaneous duties for a grand total of 293 hours of service. An incident list by alarm type is on file with the borough clerk. There were 4 fire incident responses to Wesmont Station. During the month of April 2020, the Wood Ridge Emergency Squad was dispatched to 43 calls in the following categories: 39 Emergency responses with 2 to Wesmont Station, and 4 Fire calls. Between 4 members volunteering an average of 71 hours per week and 4 more members picking up the remaining 200 hours for the month the squad was able to respond to all calls in April. Members have been staying in the firehouse to provide continued and expedited service to the citizens of Wood-Ridge and an emergency shower has been built to ensure the safety of our members health.

Mayor Sarlo stated he asked the Borough Administrator to pull some numbers for the calls to EMS to check the increase in volume to the department.

Administrator Eilert stated the following numbers were pulled from the Police Dispatch system and the good news is that we look to be stable in the number of calls. Three years of data was compared from 2018, 2019 and 2020 from month to month for February, March and April. In February of 2020, which was the month before the emergency was declared, we had 90 ambulance calls verses 71 calls in previous Februarys, which was an increase of 26%. Then when you compare the month of March, which is the month the emergency was declared, we had 124 calls in 2020 verses 100 calls from years past. Interestingly enough, April of 2020, had only 67 calls as compared to 98 from the past years, which was almost a 50% drop. The point being, there really is no pattern here and there has not been a significant increase in the number of calls.

Councilman Marino:

No Report

Councilman DiMarco:

Councilman DiMarco complimented the council on their decision to extend the property tax deadline to residents to June 1st.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS:

Administrator Eilert:

Borough Administrator Chris Eilert outlined the financial considerations that were taken into consideration when determining that the Borough could approve the extension. He explained it is a great decision, but it is one that no municipality should take lightly because of the financial ramifications it has on the municipality. He reminded the public that regardless of a financial, health crisis or a natural disaster, government operations must continue. In perspective, when you delay the collection of taxes, it cannot be done for it for individual taxpayers, individual types of properties, or individual valuation of properties and must be done across the board for everyone. Therefore, the following facts that were considered when making the decision:

- Over 80% of the tax revenues collected by Wood-Ridge are collected from residential taxpayers, most of which are paid through mortgage escrow.
- Three mortgage service companies are responsible for over 50% of those escrow payments.
- Corelogic is responsible for 1265 residential mortgages and over \$3 million in taxes.
- Wells Fargo is responsible for 220 residential mortgages and over \$500,000 in taxes.
- Lereta Mortgage Services is responsible for 98 mortgages and over \$250,000 in taxes.
- Over \$3.8 million comes in from just those three companies. If those three companies were to delay paying, it would cost Wood-Ridge over 42% of its revenue for the quarter.
- The top 20 commercial companies (as commercial taxes make up the rest of the revenues) are responsible for \$1.2 million in taxes each quarter.

He further stated that 80% of our residential taxpayers have already made their payments, as did the three mortgage services, and 20 commercial real estate tax payers had made theirs.

Administrator Eilert further explained, that between the 20 commercial and three residential tax services, over \$5 million, or 60% of tax revenues could be delayed if they decided to take advantage of the extended grace period. Based on all the above factors, the decision had been made.

Borough Clerk Affuso: no report

Attorney Barbire: progress

Engineer Neglia: on file with Borough Clerk

REPORTS OF DEPARTMENTS: On file in clerk's office

Administration	Fire Department
CFO/Finance	Department of Public Works
Construction Code Official	Police Department
Municipal Court	Tax Collector
Emergency Management	Welfare Director

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REPORTS OF BOARDS OR COMMISSIONS: On file in clerk's office

Planning Board	Shade Tree Commission
Board of Education	Senior Citizens
Recreation Commission	Veterans
Library Board	Local Assistance Board
Board of Health	Other

FIRST HEARING OF CITIZENS:

Mayor Sarlo declared the Hearing of Citizens to be open. With no other citizens wishing to be heard, the hearing of citizens was closed.

RESOLUTIONS VOTED SEPARATELY:

RESOLUTION NO.: 079-2020

RESOLUTION APPROVING AMENDMENT TO THE BY-LAWS OF THE SOUTH BERGEN MUNICIPAL JOINT INSURANCE FUND

WHEREAS, The Borough of Wood-Ridge is a member of the South Bergen Joint Insurance Fund, hereinafter the "FUND" and;

WHEREAS, Recent changes in within the ownership of the Fund's TPA require the "FUND'S" bylaws to be revised; and

WHEREAS, after a public hearing conducted on April 15, 2020 the Executive Committee of the "FUND" adopted revised bylaws; and

WHEREAS, these revised bylaws must be ratified by at least three fourths of the twenty-three-member towns before they can become effective.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the governing body of (municipal name) that the revised bylaws are hereby ratified.

Councilman Altamura requested a separate on Resolution No. 079-2020.

Motion: Councilperson Marino, seconded by Azzolini moved to the adoption of Resolution No. 079-2020 with abstentions.

Roll Call: Romero yes, Cassidy yes, Altamura abstain, Azzolini yes, Marino yes, DiMarco yes

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CONSENT AGENDA:

All matters listed below are considered to be routine in nature and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items. If any discussion is desired by Council, that particular item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and will be considered separately.

MINUTES:

Minutes of the April 8, 2020 Regular Meeting.

RESOLUTIONS:

**RESOLUTION NO.: 080-2020
RESOLUTION APPROVING CHANGE ORDER No. 1 and FINAL PAYMENT FOR 2019
DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT (UNION AND JOCELYN AVENUE)**

Be it resolved by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Wood Ridge of Bergen County, New Jersey upon the recommendation of the Borough Engineer that the Change Order for the Contract listed below be and is hereby approved.

TITLE OF JOB: 2019 Drainage Improvements Project (Union Avenue and Jocelyn Avenue)

CONTRACTOR: Zuccaro, Inc., 284 Alberta Drive, Saddle Brook, NJ 07663

CHANGE ORDER No.: 1 & Final

AMOUNT OF CHANGE THIS RESOLUTION: -\$24,278.25 -10.56% Decrease

This Resolution to take effect upon certification by the Borough Treasurer that sufficient funds are available.

**RESOLUTION NO.: 081-2020
RESOLUTION APPROVING CLOSE OF CONTRACT FOR 2019 DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS
PROJECT**

Be it resolved by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Wood-Ridge, Bergen County, New Jersey that the contract for 2019 Road Drainage Improvements Project was constructed by Zuccaro, Inc., 284 Alberta Drive, Saddle Brook, NJ 07663, in accordance with the Plans and Specifications and any approved Change Orders, as directed by the Borough Engineer.

The said construction is hereby accepted and final payments in the amount of Forty-Eight Thousand Five Hundred Eighty Dollars and Ninety-Three Cents (\$48,580.93) is hereby approved.

The said construction is hereby accepted and final payment has been remitted to contractor.

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**RESOLUTION NO.: 082-2020
RESOLUTION EXTENDING GRACE PERIOD FOR 2nd QUARTER OF 2020 TAXES**

WHEREAS, the Governor of the State of New Jersey has issued Executive Order number 130 (see copy of order attached hereto and made a part hereof) which allows a municipality to adopt a resolution instituting a grace period concluding on a date no later than June 1, 2020 for the payment of second-quarter property taxes.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by Mayor and Council of the Borough of Wood-Ridge, County of Bergen, State of New Jersey that the grace period for payment of all property taxes for the second (2nd) quarter of 2020 be extended to June 1, 2020, in accordance with the authorization of the Division of Local Government Services in response to the devastation resulting from Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-2019).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Borough Clerk shall notify the Director of the Division of Local Government Services in the Department of Community Affairs of any resolution instituting an extended grace period adopted under authority of the Governor's Order not later than the third business day next following the municipal governing body's adoption of the resolution.

APPLICATIONS: None

SEMINAR APPROVALS: None

APPOINTMENTS: None

HIRINGS:

- a. Charlie Trentacosti as Seasonal Recreation Counsellor effective May 1, 2020.

Motion: Councilperson Cassidy, seconded by DiMarco moved to the adoption of all matters on the above **CONSENT AGENDA.**

Roll Call: Romero yes, Cassidy yes, Altamura yes, Azzolini yes, Marino yes, DiMarco yes

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: None

Mayor Sarlo commended the governing body. They have been very active in town and checking in on all of our committees and groups. He thanked all the staff who have been working in rotating shifts. Our DPW has not missed a beat as our town looks amazing. He is proud of all of them.

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SECOND HEARING OF CITIZENS:

Mayor Sarlo declares the Hearing of Citizens to be open.

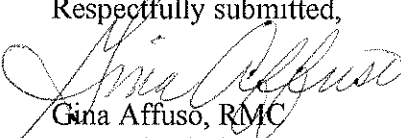
Faith Armonaitis of TapInTo asked to explain the census deadline that Councilwoman Cassidy mentioned. Councilwoman Cassidy stated the deadline is October 31st but they would like it completed by August 1st so that door knockers would not be sent out.

With no other citizens wishing to be heard, the hearing of citizens was closed.

ADJOURNMENT:

Since there was no further business to come before the Council, Councilperson Marino, seconded by Councilperson Romero moved for adjournment. By unanimous vote of the members of the Council present, the Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Wood-Ridge held on May 6, 2020 was duly adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Gina Affuso, RMC
Borough Clerk