

Minutes of the 1905th Regular Meeting of March 6, 2024 – Youth Government Night

CALLED TO ORDER:

Mayor Michael Marchitelli called the Borough of Wood-Ridge Council meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Will everyone please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance

ROLL CALL:

Mayor:	Paul Sarlo / Michael Marchitelli – present
Council President:	Ezio Altamura / Alison Gardella – present
Councilperson	Dominick Azzolini / Alana Ambrosio – present
Councilperson	Edward Marino / Ava Rizo – present
Councilperson	Philip Romero / Jessica Schmidt – present
Councilperson	Michele Mabel / Mary Grace Milne – present
Councilperson	Michael Donato / Mia Scarvaglion – present
Borough Attorney:	Paul Barbire / Anthony Huang – present
Borough Clerk:	Gina Affuso / Hannah MacDonald – present
Borough Administrator:	Chris Eilert / Dante Fabi – present

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 town bulletin board and the town website and was forwarded to The Record and the Star Ledger.

CEREMONIAL PRESENTATION:

None

ADVERTISED PUBLIC HEARING:

None

ORDINANCES ON SECOND READING AND FINAL PASSAGE:

None

ORDINANCES ON FIRST READING:

None

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 Michael Marchitelli

I am very proud to be hosting Youth Government Night for the 24th time as Mayor. Tonight, should be my 25th time hosting Youth Government Night, but unfortunately, we could not hold this program in 2021 due to the COVID pandemic. This is an important civic program that helps our High School Seniors learn about how local government operates. I want to congratulate all our Seniors who are here tonight. Please give them a round of applause! I also want to congratulate all the parents who are here to support our students.

I ask all the students to please give your parents a round of applause! Lastly, I want to thank our school officials and faculty for the work they do every day to educate our students and I want to thank Borough Clerk Gina Affuso and her staff for planning and organizing this event.

Council Buildings & Grounds Committee Chair – Councilperson Mia Scarvaglione

I am Chairperson of the Borough Council Buildings and Grounds Committee. The Buildings & Grounds Committee has oversight over all Borough buildings, grounds, parks, playgrounds, athletic facilities, open space and right-of-ways. The Borough has been very aggressive in applying for grants to fund renovations to our buildings, parks and athletic fields. We have received millions of dollars in grants to renovate parks, playgrounds, athletic fields, and public buildings. In recent years, all of our athletic fields and playgrounds have been fully renovated. We have also built many brand-new facilities such as the Marshall Lane Playground, Kennedy Lane Playground, Kennedy Lane Dog Run, and the Wood-Ridge Athletic Complex.

Council Finance Committee Chair – Councilperson Ava Rizos

I am Chairperson of the Borough Council Finance Committee. The Finance Committee has oversight over all financial, budgetary, and administrative matters of the Borough. The Finance Committee works with the Borough Administrator to prepare the annual budget. Last year, the Mayor and Council produced a budget without any local tax increase. The Borough is in excellent financial shape with a AA Bond Rating and a very strong balance sheet with relatively low debt. Major cost savings have come from entering into shared services agreements with the Board of Education and other towns.

Council Fire Committee Chair – Councilperson Jessica Schmidt

I am Chairperson of the Borough Council Fire Committee. The Fire Committee has oversight of the Wood-Ridge Fire Department, the Fire Prevention Bureau, and the Office of Emergency Management. The Fire Department is comprised of highly trained volunteers who answer the calls of their fellow Wood-Ridge residents. Their service saves the Borough taxpayers literally millions of dollars each year. The Fire Department has 1 ladder truck, 3 engines, and 1 rescue truck.

Council Public Information & Events Committee Chair – Councilperson Mary Grace Milne

I am Chairperson of the Borough Council Public Information and Events Committee. The Public Information and Events Committee has oversight over the Borough's website, social media, and emergency communications system. The Committee assists in coordinating the scheduling of different programs, activities, and events throughout the Borough so that there are no scheduling conflicts. The Committee also has oversight over all the town's public events and the sub-committees that plan and conduct them. Our public events include the Memorial Day Service, the Keep Wood-Ridge Beautiful Clean-Up Day, the Town Day Street Festival, the 9-11 Service, the Senior Citizens Halloween Party, the Rag-a-Muffin Halloween Parade, Trunk-or-Treat, the Veterans Day Service, the Senior Citizens Christmas Party, the Christmas Tree Lighting, and the Christmas Toy Drive.

Council Police Committee Chair - Councilperson Alison Gardella

I am the Chairperson of the Borough Council Police Committee. The Police Committee has jurisdiction over the Police Department, drug and alcohol abuse education programs, the Municipal Court, and the Violations Bureau. Police officers are hired based on their test scores on the New Jersey Civil Service Exam. Before becoming a Police Officer, recruits must attend and graduate from the Bergen County Police Academy. At the Academy, recruits are trained and tested in subject areas such as physical fitness, use of weapons, criminal law, psychology, community relations, and patrol and investigative tactics. The Borough of Wood-Ridge recently entered into a shared service agreement to locate our Municipal Court and Violations Bureau in the City of Garfield. Under this arrangement, we still appoint our own Municipal Court Judge, Prosecutor and Public Defender and keep all court fines and fees generated by Wood-Ridge.

Council Public Works Committee Chair - Councilperson Alana Ambrosio

I am Chairperson of the Borough Council Public Works Committee. The Public Works Committee has oversight over the Department of Public Works and the Borough's sanitary sewer system, streets, sidewalks, and municipal parking lots. It also has jurisdiction over all contracts for garbage and recycling collection and all matters concerning public utility services such as natural gas, electric, street lighting, water, telephone, cable television and internet provided by third party vendors. During the winter months, DPW responds to snow storms and does interior cleaning, painting and repairs in borough buildings. In early Spring, the DPW will begin the spring clean ups of all Borough parks and playgrounds. Throughout the spring and summer months, they will clean all storm sewer catch basins and all sanitary sewer lines. During the summer and fall months, the DPW will prune and elevate shade trees and will replace all damaged and faded street and traffic signs throughout the Borough.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS:

Borough Administrator Dante Fabi:

The Borough Administrator is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the Borough of Wood-Ridge. The Administrator reports to the Mayor and all department heads report to the Administrator. The Borough administrative staff provides valuable services to our residents and perform state mandated tasks in the areas such as Finance, Tax, Purchasing, Recreation, Health & Vital Statistics, Construction & Code Enforcement and the Municipal Court. All administrative staff members have been cross-trained in multiple departments and duties. By improving efficiency, utilizing technology and participating in shared services and joint purchasing programs we have been able to implement significant cost savings over the years.

Borough Attorney Anthony Huang:

The Borough Attorney must be a lawyer admitted to practice in the State of New Jersey. The Borough Attorney should have knowledge and experience in municipal law relating to public meetings, public records, fiscal affairs, bonding, insurance, employment, and land use. The Borough Attorney is responsible for providing legal advice to the Mayor and Council and other Borough Officials. The Borough Attorney prepares all contracts and ordinances that the Mayor and Council adopt and also works with the Borough's insurance carrier to defend any lawsuits filed against the town.

Borough Auditor Gabriella Annese:

The Borough Auditor is responsible for conducting the annual audit of the financial operations of the town, which is mandated by state law. The audit reviews the financial and managerial practices of Borough employees to ensure compliance with state laws and regulations. Areas that the audit reviews include accounting policies and procedures, purchasing policies and procedures, contract administration, cash management practices, payroll procedures, records management and fixed asset inventory. The Auditor assists the Borough Administrator and the Chief Financial Officer in preparing the annual budget and the annual financial statements. To be a municipal auditor in New Jersey, you must be an accountant who holds the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) license and the Registered Municipal Accountant (RMA) license.

Borough Clerk Hannah MacDonald:

The Borough Clerk has many responsibilities that are mandated by state law. The Borough Clerk serves as the Secretary to the Mayor and Council, the Secretary of the Municipal Corporation, the Custodian of all Borough Records, the Elections Official for local elected offices, and issues Borough permits and licenses, including liquor licenses. To be certified as a Borough Clerk, a person must pass a series of courses at Rutgers University and pass the State Registered Municipal Clerk Exam.

Borough Planner Salvatore Catanzaro:

The Borough Planner must be a Licensed Professional Planner in the State of New Jersey. The Planner prepares the town's Master Plan which establishes the permitted land use patterns and development standards for all property within the town. The Planner also reviews all applications submitted to the Planning Board to make sure they comply with all land use and zoning regulations.

Borough Engineer Nashla Burgos:

The Borough Engineer is responsible for designing plans and bid specifications for capital purchases such as fire trucks and dump trucks and for infrastructure projects such as road paving, drainage improvements, building renovations, and upgrades to parks, playgrounds and athletic fields. The Borough Engineer also prepares and submits grant applications to the state and county on behalf of the Borough. We also inspect all public construction projects and review all applications submitted to the Planning Board.

REPORTS OF DEPARTMENTS:

Chief Financial Officer Brandon DiMase

To be a Chief Financial Officer you must have a bachelor's degree in accounting or business administration, attend and pass municipal finance courses at Rutgers University, and must pass the NJ Certified Municipal Finance Officer exam. The CFO must work with other town officials to perform their duties. The CFO works with the Borough Administrator to develop and administer the municipal budget. The CFO works with the Borough Auditor to prepare the annual financial statements. CFO works with the Bond Counsel to issue bonds which fund capital projects such as road paving and building renovations.

Fire Chief John Johansen

The Wood-Ridge Fire Department is an all-volunteer group of approximately 50 men and women who provide fire protection to our residents and their property. The Department also assists neighboring towns through mutual aid agreements. All fire fighters undergo training at the Bergen County Police and Fire Academy. We respond to approximately 350 calls per year, ranging from fire alarms, downed utility wires, vehicle accidents, and structural fires. Additionally, the members of the department spend many hours each month performing cleaning, maintenance, and training to ensure that we are ready to respond to emergencies.

Fire Prevention Official Joseph Johansen

The Fire Prevention Official must hold a Fire Official Certificate issued by the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. The Fire Official is responsible for enforcing the state fire code in all public and commercial buildings and in multi-family residential buildings. The purpose of the state fire code is to provide for the safety of all people occupying a building and of all fire fighters entering a building if a fire occurs.

Health Officer Ryan George

The Health Officer is the head of the Bureau of Public Health which is part of the Board of Health. The Bureau of Public Health is responsible for pest and animal control, infectious disease control, and performing sanitary inspections and issuing licenses to all businesses and public facilities that handle or prepare food. The Health Officer is assisted by health inspectors, public health nurses, and animal control officers. Like many small towns, Wood-Ridge utilizes a shared services agreement with the Bergen County Health Department to provide these personnel.

Municipal Court Administrator Jazlynn Mercado

The Municipal Court Administrator is responsible for scheduling court appearances, sending out court notices, keeping records of all court proceedings, and collecting all court fines and fees. To be a Municipal Court Administrator you must obtain a Certification which involves taking courses and passing an exam administered by the New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts. Municipal Court Administrators are appointed by the Mayor and Council but report to the County Superior Court Administrator and work under the direction of the Municipal Court Judge.

Municipal Court Prosecutor Rebecca Paar

The Municipal Court Prosecutor is appointed by the Mayor and Council but reports to the County Prosecutor and represents the State of New Jersey on all criminal cases in the municipal court. I prosecute individuals accused of offenses such as vehicular moving violations, disorderly persons offenses, petty disorderly persons offenses, and violations of municipal ordinances. A Municipal Court Prosecutor must be an attorney licensed to practice law in the State of New Jersey but may not practice criminal defense in the County in which they are a Prosecutor.

Police Chief Samantha Stasion

As Police Chief, I am responsible for managing the Wood-Ridge Police Department and all of its personnel which include sworn police officers, class 3 special officers, communications dispatchers, crossing guards, and administrative clerks. The Department is organized into 4 Bureaus which are Patrol, Detective, Administration, and Internal Affairs. I am very proud that our department is accredited by the New Jersey Association of Chiefs of Police, which means that the Wood-Ridge Police Department ranks as being among the top 25% of departments in the state. Each year, our officers undergo hundreds of hours of advanced academic and professional training. The Department strives to be engaged and involved with residents in our community which is a major reason why our community has a low crime rate and is considered a safe place to live.

Public Works Superintendent Nicholas Tveletidis

The employees of the Department of Public Works DPW are organized into 4 different divisions: Operations, Buildings, Shade Tree, and Vehicle & Equipment Maintenance. The DPW performs a multitude of tasks including snow plowing, filling potholes, painting curbs, replacing street signs and pruning trees. They are responsible for the maintenance and repair of all public buildings and grounds including landscaping, painting and cleaning. They also maintain the Borough's storm and sanitary sewer systems by cleaning catch basins, servicing the pump stations and jetting sewer lines. Perhaps their most important function is responding to emergencies such as hurricanes, blizzards and sewer back-ups.

Purchasing Agent Lily Sebastian

The Purchasing Agent is responsible for drafting policies regulating the purchasing of goods and services for all Borough Departments and for supervising all public bids and capital purchases. To be a Qualified Purchasing Agent you must pass 4 courses at Rutgers and pass the state exam. Under New Jersey Law, a Qualified Purchasing Agent is authorized to enter into purchase agreements for goods and services that either cost less than \$44,000 or are covered under a state contract.

Recreation Director Mia Sebastian

The Recreation Director has many responsibilities including performing the administrative functions for youth recreation programs, scheduling all Borough and Board of Education athletic and recreation facilities, and planning and organizing activities for the senior citizen groups. Some of the administrative functions include accepting registration forms and fees, enforcing rules and policies, arranging for training, certification and background checks for coaches. Senior citizen activities include shopping trips on the senior bus, exercise classes, and holiday social functions. The Recreation Director is also responsible for planning and running the summer recreation program which has over 400 children enrolled each year and employs over 30 counsellors.

Safety Coordinator James Mascucci

The Safety Coordinator schedules and supervises safety training for all Borough employees. The Safety Coordinator also conducts safety inspections of all Borough facilities, including parks and playgrounds, and files reports with the South Bergen Joint Insurance Fund to make sure the Borough is compliant with all safety, training, and insurance requirements.

Tax Collector Lia Crandall

The Tax Collector is responsible for billing and collecting real estate taxes on behalf of the School District, the Library, the County, and the Town. Property taxes are paid on a quarterly basis to fund our local public schools, the library, county government operations such as health and human services and county road maintenance, and local government operations such as garbage collection and police and fire protection. To be a Certified Tax Collector you must attend and pass required courses at Rutgers University and pass a state exam.

FIRST HEARING OF CITIZENS:

Mayor Michael Marchitelli declared the Hearing of Citizens to be open. With no citizens wishing to speak, the hearing of citizens was closed.

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 February 21, 2024 Meeting.

RESOLUTIONS:

RESOLUTION NO.: 055-2024

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE WOOD-RIDGE SQUARE PARK AS SUBMITTED BY NEGLIA ENGINEERING AND AUTHORIZE THE BOROUGH CLERK TO ADVERTISE FOR BIDS

BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Wood-Ridge, Bergen County, New Jersey that the Plans and Specifications for the Wood-Ridge Square Park as prepared by the Borough Engineer are hereby approved and accepted and the Borough Clerk is hereby directed to advertise for bids.

The Mayor and Council confirm and ratify any and all prior actions taken by the appropriate officials of the Borough of Wood-Ridge with respect to the subject agreement.

RESOLUTION NO.: 056-2024

RESOLUTION EXTENDING TOWING LICENSES UNTIL MAY 31, 2024

WHEREAS, the Borough of Wood-Ridge approved applications for towing licenses to David's Towing, Nick's Towing and Nutchies Towing at its meeting of December 20, 2022; and

WHEREAS, said issued licenses were scheduled to expire on December 31, 2023; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 490 of the Borough Code entitled Towing, the Mayor and Council adopted Resolution 109-2023 which extended the expiration date of all licenses to March 30, 2024; and

WHEREAS, amendments to the Borough's Towing Ordinance became effective on February 26, 2024 and the procedures for soliciting applications and issuing licenses are presently underway and cannot be completed prior to the March 30, 2024 expiration date; and

WHEREAS, in light of the above recited circumstances, it is the recommendation of the Borough Administrator and Police Chief that an extension of all active towing licenses be granted through May 31, 2024.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Wood-Ridge, County of Bergen, State of New Jersey that, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 490 of the Borough Code entitled Towing, the licenses issued to David's Towing, Nick's Towing and Nutchies Towing are hereby extended to May 31, 2024.

RESOLUTION NO.: 057-2024
RESOLUTION APPROVING WOOD-RIDGE TOWN FESTIVAL DAY
ON JUNE 9, 2024

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Wood-Ridge, hereby acknowledges the benefits to the community to be afforded through a Wood-Ridge Town Festival; a day of fun and entertainment to celebrate the community of Wood-Ridge; and

WHEREAS, the Borough, in conjunction with other organizations and business in Wood-Ridge to provide food, games and entertainment for the purpose of sponsoring the Wood-Ridge Town Festival.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Wood-Ridge that June 9, 2024 shall be designated as Wood-Ridge Town Festival Day; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, a certified copy of this Resolution shall be forwarded to the South Bergen Joint Insurance Fund and the Risk Management Consultants for the Borough of Wood-Ridge.

RESOLUTION NO. 058-2024
RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING MAYOR TO EXECUTE CONTRACTS WITH 107 PRODUCTIONS FOR SOUND, LIGHTING, BACKLINE AND ENTERTAINERS FOR WOOD-RIDGE TOWN DAY

WHEREAS, the Borough of Wood-Ridge and 107 Productions desire to enter into three agreements in order to provide sound, lighting, backline and entertainers for Wood-Ridge Town Day on June 9, 2024; and

WHEREAS, the agreements to be executed by the Borough of Wood-Ridge and 107 Productions for the purposes hereinabove described is annexed hereto and is made a part of this resolution.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor & Council of the Borough of Wood-Ridge as follows:

1. The Mayor and Borough Clerk of the Borough of Wood-Ridge are hereby authorized and directed to execute the attached Agreements. Said agreements shall not exceed \$8,500.00.
2. This contract is awarded pursuant to appropriate Law of the State of New Jersey specifically but not by way of limitation, N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1, et seq. as well as any other pertinent statutes appertaining thereto.

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3. If applicable a Certificate of Availability of Funds pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:4-57 has been certified to by the Chief Finance Officer and is attached hereto and made a part hereof.

4. If applicable funds are subject to an appropriation by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Wood-Ridge and will be provided by the local finance office when appropriated.

APPLICATIONS:

- a. Tricky Tray and On-Premise 50/50 for Hackensack HS PTSA on April 17, 2024 at the Fiesta.
- b. On Premise 50/50 for Friends of the Hasbrouck Heights Library on April 24, 2024 at the Fiesta.
- c. Handicap Parking Space located at 328 Sussex Road.

All applications listed above have been approved by the Wood-Ridge Police Department.

APPOINTMENTS:

None

HIRINGS:

- a. Resignation of Al Rottini as Full Time Crossing Guard from the Wood-Ridge Police Department effective March 8, 2024.

Youth Motion: Councilperson Gardella, seconded by Rizos moved to the adoption of all matters on the above **CONSENT AGENDA.**

Youth Roll Call: Gardella yes, Ambrosio yes, Rizos yes, Schmidt yes, Milne yes, Scarvaglionone yes

Council Motion: Councilperson Azzolini, seconded by Altamura moved to the adoption of all matters on the above **CONSENT AGENDA.**

Council Roll Call: Altamura yes, Azzolini yes, Marino yes, Romero yes, Mabel yes, Donato yes

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

None

SECOND HEARING OF CITIZENS:

Mayor Michael Marchitelli declared the Hearing of Citizens to be open. With no citizens wishing to speak, the hearing of citizens was closed.

Mayor Sarlo about how this evening was an education to the students about how the day to day government works and all the different positions that make the town run.

Mayor Sarlo acknowledged our Board of Ed President Albie Nieves, Superintendent of Schools Tony Albro, and Principal Silvia Raguseo.

Silvia Raguseo thanked the Mayor and Council as well as Gina and Alyssa for putting this evening together for the students. Ms. Raguseo also thanked the Mayor and Council for everything they do for the school district and always providing for their needs. She congratulated the seniors on the great job they did and stated how proud she and Mr. Sinclair are of all of them. She gave a special mention to Rebecca Paar who is our 2024 Unsung Hero for Bergen County. Senior year is the most important year of your life, so take advantage, have fun and make the best memories.

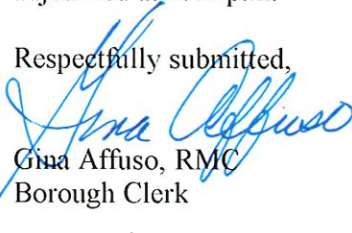
YOUTH ADJOURNMENT:

Since there was no further business to come before the Council, Councilperson Gardella, seconded by Councilperson Milne, 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 March 6, 2024 was duly adjourned at 6:13 p.m.

COUNCIL ADJOURNMENT:

Since there was no further business to come before the Council, Councilperson Altamura, seconded by Councilperson Mabel 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 March 6, 2024 was duly adjourned at 6:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Gina Affuso, RMC
Borough Clerk