

DRAFT MINUTES

*These are the Draft Minutes of the Agenda Conference
of the North Plainfield Borough Council held on Monday, March 22, 2021.*

*Every attempt has been made to make these as comprehensive
and conclusive as possible. However, as it is a draft document, it is
not to be construed as a formal depiction of the official conduct of business and is
subject to revision up to and following the Council's actual approval of same. If
changes are necessary, revised minutes will be posted to the website.*

MINUTES of the Agenda Conference (virtual) of the Council of the Borough of North Plainfield held on Monday, **March 22, 2021** at 7:32 p.m. at the North Plainfield Council Chambers, 263 Somerset Street, North Plainfield, New Jersey.

PRESENT:

Council Members: Aimee Corzo
Suzette Given
Steven McIntyre
Everett Merrill
Keiona R. Miller (7:33 p.m.)
Wendy Schaefer
Frank "Skip" Stabile, Council President

Also Present: Lawrence La Ronde, Mayor
David Hollod, Business Administrator
Phillip La Porta, Esq., Associate Borough Attorney
Patrick DeBlasio, Chief Financial Officer
Kathleen Intravartolo, Treasurer, CTC, QPA
David Testa, Borough Engineer
Richard K. Phoenix, RMC, Borough Clerk
Stephanie Sherwood, RMC, CMR, Deputy Clerk

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was led by Ms. Schaefer.

A moment of silence was observed for the men and women serving in our Armed Forces.

The Council President read the following Notice of Compliance:

"This virtual meeting is being held in compliance with N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq. Adequate notice of this meeting was provided by transmitting notice to the official newspapers of the Borough, The Courier News, WKMB Radio, WJLP-TV, the Alternative Press and also to the Star Ledger on December 28, 2020 and by posting a copy of this notice on the bulletin boards in the Municipal Building and the Memorial Library reserved for such purpose."

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Cynthia Dawkins, 477 Mountainview Drive, North Plainfield, inquired after the status of her original request about a possible Black Lives Matter mural. Mayor La Ronde indicated that the matter would be looked into with administration.

PUBLIC HEARING:

2021 Community Development Block Grant Project sponsored by Alternatives, Inc.
Handicapped Ramp Replacement – 76 Summit Avenue

Mr. Hollod introduced Keith Hook, the Director of Housing for Alternatives Inc., a social services provider which helps adults with disabilities. Mr. Hook requested Borough certification of their Community Development Block Grant project. The money would be used to update the handicapped accessible ramp at the back door of the house they own at 76 Summit Avenue, he concluded.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Discussion of Budget** – D.E.H. (Patrick DeBlasio, CFO and Kathleen Intravartolo, Treasurer, CTC, QPA, to be present) Mr. DeBlasio explained that 2020 had been a most challenging year. As the Budget stands, the municipal tax rate would increase to 1.437 which would amount to an approximate increase of \$174.62 per homeowner. A significant amount of the 2020 surplus would be used to offset even higher tax increases. The Borough continues to see a 97% tax collection rate which is great. Although salary, pension, insurance and debt service costs have increased, we anticipate State aid will remain stable.

Ms. Corzo suggested utilizing at least a portion of the stimulus money to further offset the tax rate. Confirming that the Borough received \$353,000 in stimulus funding, Ms. Intravartolo advised of their intent to replenish the depleted storm trust fund with same. Ms. Schaefer shared her concerns with the decrease in EMS monies. Responding to Ms. Schaefer's inquiry, Mr. Hollod confirmed that Green Brook residents are billed for use of our EMS services. Council President Stabile assured that all financial difficulties had been taken into account while preparing the budget. Concurring with the Council President, Mayor La Ronde voiced his concerns with the financial difficulties ahead. The Council members requested new Budget numbers for examination at the next meeting.

2. **Discussion of Proposed Stormwater Ordinance** – D.E.H. Mr. Hollod introduced Dave Testa, Borough Engineer. He explained that this ordinance would modify the previously adopted stormwater ordinance by incorporating comments from the Somerset County Planning Board.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

REPORTS OF BOARDS, COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS:

Ms. Schaefer shared an update on the library's look into discontinuing late fees.

Mr. Merrill reported that Michelle Robertson would serve as President Pro Tempore for the Board of Education.

Motion to adjourn by Ms. Miller, seconded by Mr. Merrill and carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Borough Clerk

Council President