

DRAFT MINUTES

These are the Draft Minutes of the Agenda Conference of the North Plainfield Borough Council held on Monday, 23 May 2022.

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 of the Council of the Borough of North Plainfield held on Monday, **May 23, 2022** at 7:40 p.m. at the North Plainfield Community Center, 614 Greenbrook Road, North Plainfield, New Jersey.

PRESENT:

Council Members: Aimee Corzo
Suzette Given (absent-excused)
Steven McIntyre
Everett Merrill, Council Vice President
Keiona R. Miller
Wendy Schaefer
Frank "Skip" Stabile, Council President

Also Present: David Hollod, Business Administrator
Phil George, Esq., Associate Borough Attorney
Richard K. Phoenix, RMC, Borough Clerk

Council President Stabile read the following Notice of Compliance:

"This 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 15, 2021 and by posting a copy of this notice on the bulletin boards in the Municipal Building and the Memorial Library reserved for such purpose."

The Council President led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Moment of Silence for the Men and Women Serving in Our Armed Forces

BOROUGH COUNCIL PROCLAMATION:

Ms. Miller read the Proclamation as follows:

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH 2022

WHEREAS, Mental Health is an essential part of overall health; and

WHEREAS, mental health is defined by the World Health Organization as a state of wellbeing in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community; and

WHEREAS, mental illness is a leading cause of suffering and disability exacerbated by stigma and discrimination; and

WHEREAS, death by suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in the United States; and

WHEREAS, one in six youths, aged six to seventeen years and one in five individuals aged 18 and over, will experience a diagnosable mental health disorder each year; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic led to increases in anxiety and depression, substance abuse, trauma, grief and loneliness; and

WHEREAS, while suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in the United States, there are opportunities to intervene, since half of individuals who die by suicide had seen a primary care provider within a month of their deaths; and

WHEREAS, wellness and recovery are possible for all who live with mental illness. No person who struggles with mental health, substance abuse disorders or both is without hope to live work and to thrive in North Plainfield; and

WHEREAS, the State of New Jersey is committed to providing children and adults with a robust array of in-patient and community-based treatment and compassionately-delivered, affordable and effective peer support services; and

WHEREAS, every North Plainfielder can make a difference in helping end the silence and stigma that for too long surrounded mental illness and discouraged individuals from accessing help;

NOW, THEREFORE, we, the Borough Council of North Plainfield Borough do hereby proclaim:

MAY 2022 AS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Eric Sevilla, Park Place, North Plainfield, remarked that this was his first time attending a meeting of the Borough Council and was pleased to be present.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. 2022 Capital Budget - (D.E.H.)** Mr. Hollod discussed details of the 2022 Capital

Budget, and items that would be included in both the Capital Bond and Sewer Bond, both of which would be considered at the same meeting. The Capital Bond reflects requests made by department heads. These bonds will only apply to the 2022 calendar year for materials, repairs, new equipment and no soft costs. The Capital Bond will be for approximately \$2-million while the Sewer Bond will be approximately \$1-million.

The Capital Bond will support new license plate readers and other Police Department needs as well as replacement equipment for the Fire Department. It is anticipated that some of the equipment may be shared with Green Brook and Watchung. Mr. McIntyre asked about possible sharing with the City of Plainfield, inquiring if their being in Union County would impede any sharing. Mr. Hollod explained that North Plainfield helps to back up Plainfield on a mutual aid basis. North Plainfield also does Emergency Medical Services for Green Brook; while Watchung has difficulty in staffing their all-volunteer fire department, North Plainfield with its paid force is able to assist them. North Plainfield EMT's are a revenue-positive facet of shared services.

Mr. Merrill recalled a house fire in Watchung that was extinguished by North Plainfield when Watchung had inadequate personnel to deal with the blaze.

Ms. Miller asked about what sort of equipment would be funded through the bond, and Mr. Hollod advised that a new ariel truck would be bought for next year. Questioned by Ms. Corzo, the Administrator explained that limiting the bond ordinance to this year only would take advantage of more favorable interest rates. He added that bond anticipation notes associated with the bond would be advantageous at the current interest rate and could be good for several years.

Mr. Stabile expressed his admiration for the Borough's paid fire department, then said that he had faith in Mr. Hollod's assurance that Watchung or Green Brook will pay their fair share for access to the new equipment. Ms. Schaefer asked how recently a bond had been floated, and Mr. Hollod confirmed that it had been last year. These bond ordinances are being drawn up by the same bond counsel. Responding to Ms. Corzo, he advised that the new bond ordinances would be helpful in debt retirement. Storm sewer repairs will be funded by the general bond while the sewer bond covers sanitary sewers and is self-liquidating. The town's overall debt position is now pretty good; on a straw vote, Council approved its being sent to the bond counsel.

2. CTS Architects Budget Amendment – (D.E.H.) Mr. Hollod turned to the anticipated contract modification with CTS Architects in reference to the Covid Prevention Project funded in part by federal support. The four-part project will involve the Vermeule Mansion, the Community Center and Memorial Library. In an initial invitation to bid, sets of plans were purchased by potential bidders but ultimately, no one responded. The original project will be split-out, and it will take additional time and effort along with \$10,800.00 to prepare it and get it out to potential bidders. The enabling resolution will appear on the Council's June 13, 2022 Regular Meeting agenda.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

REPORTS OF BOARDS, COMMITTEES & COMMISSIONS:

Ms. Corzo reported on the Planning Board’s memorialization of improvements to the Asian Market which will be expanding, adding an office and bigger lobby.

The Mayor advised that North Plainfield High School and Somerset School have now been declared National Schools of Character, a highly respected honor for a handful of U.S. schools, saying “kudos to our schools.”

ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Borough Clerk

Council President