

Minutes of the Conference Meeting of the Borough Council held September 3, 2024, at 7:30 P.M. in the Council Chambers, Borough Hall, 531 Speedwell Avenue, Morris Plains, New Jersey.

“NOTICE OF THIS MEETING WAS PROVIDED BY THE CLERK OF THIS BOROUGH BY PREPARING A NOTICE DATED August 19th 2024 SPECIFYING THE TIME, DATE AND PLACE OF THIS MEETING; POSTING SUCH NOTICE ON THE BULLETIN BOARD IN THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING AND FORWARDING THE NOTICE TO MORRIS COUNTY’S DAILY RECORD AND THE MORRIS NEWS BEE; AND I HEREBY HAND A COPY OF SUCH NOTICE TO THE CLERK OF THE BOROUGH OF MORRIS PLAINS FOR INCLUSION IN THE MINUTES OF THIS MEETING, ALL OF THE ABOVE ACTIONS BEING IN ACCORDANCE WITH N.J.S.A. 10:4-6, ET SEQ.”

Present on Roll Call:

Mayor Jason C. Karr

Councilmembers: Nancy Verga
Art Bruhn
Salvatore Cortese
Joan Goddard
Cathie Kelly
Dennis Wagner

Absent: None

Present: John E. Horan, Esq., Borough Attorney

PRESENTATION

Armaan Joshi presented his Eagle Scout project to the Council for approval. The project will consist of 4 raised garden beds at the Community Garden on Central Avenue which will be ADA compliant to help seniors or people with disabilities have a garden. There will be a fence constructed around this area and the beds will be 26” tall.

Cross discussion with the Mayor and Council.

This project was approved.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Mayor Karr stated he will not be available for soccer opening day and asked if Council President Verga could go in his place? Mayor Karr also asked for one Councilmember to volunteer as a judge for the *Downtown Morris Plains* bike rack contest.

Council President Verga said she is available for opening day and will also volunteer to be a judge for the Downtown Morris Plains bike rack contest.

Mayor Karr discussed restoring the cannon in the center of town. Mr. Ryan Dawson recently restored the Morris Avenue cannon in Morristown in which he raised money to cover the expenses. He offered to do the same in Morris Plains when he noticed the Speedwell Ave canon is also in need of major repair. All were in agreement as long as funds are to be raised, Mr. Dawson has permission to refurbish the cannon.

Councilmember Verga stated the Morris Plains Basketball Association would like to donate a pole and hoop to the Teen Center and asked if the DPW can install the Pole. She would also like to repost the position for Teen Center supervisor since there is still an opening.

All were in agreement on both issues.

Councilmember Bruhn asked about the status of the Police Department motorcycle program and if the Borough is purchasing one.

Councilmember Cortese stated the Public Safety Committee decided there currently isn’t a need for a police motorcycle program in Morris Plains.

Councilmember Bruhn asked about the status of Cleaning Maintenance for Borough the Borough buildings.

Cross discussion

Councilmember Bruhn discussed a meeting with the Mayor and Engineer regarding upgrades to Idlewild Pool. The pool would require major upgrades including electrical, concrete replacement and becoming compliant with environmental regulations as well as becoming ADA compliant. This would cost approximately 2 to 3 million dollars. The alternative option would be to make it a park for approximately \$300,000.00 which is a better option for taxpayers.

Councilmember Goddard stated that a path would have to be constructed around the entire pool to meet ADA compliance which would take away from the area patrons could use.

Mayor Karr stated electric and bathrooms are already established, therefore, they will look at other ideas for this space due to many obstacles to keep as a pool.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Moved by Councilmember Verga at 8:10 P. M.:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Resolution 2024-132 entitled “Executive Session” be adopted.

Seconded by Councilmember Goddard.

Voice Vote. All in favor.

At 8:31 P.M. Councilmember Kelly moved that the Executive Session be adjourned.

Seconded by Councilmember Cortese.

Voice Vote. All in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Goddard moved that the Conference Meeting be adjourned at 8:31 P.M.

Seconded by Councilmember Cortese.

Voice Vote. All in favor.

Jason C. Karr, Mayor

Rosanne Denman, Borough Clerk

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Borough Council held September 3, 2024 at 8:33 P.M. in the Council Chambers, Borough Hall, 531 Speedwell Avenue, Morris Plains, New Jersey.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND PRAYER

Notice to members of the Governing Body and Borough Staff: Any use of electronic devices during this meeting shall be used solely for the purposes of Borough business.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilmember Verga moved:

THAT the minutes of the Conference, Executive and Regular Meetings of August 15, 2024 be approved.

Seconded by Councilmember Bruhn.

Yeas: Councilmembers Verga, Bruhn, Cortese, Goddard, Kelly
Nays: None
Absent: None
Abstain: Councilmember Wagner

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Councilmember Verga moved:

REPORTS-NONE

Resolution 2024-133 entitled, “RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A SHARED SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH THE SOUTHEAST MORRIS COUNTY MUNICIPAL UTILITIES AUTHORITY FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO STILES AVENUE.”

Resolution 2024-134 entitled, “A RESOLUTION CONSENTING TO THE APPLICATION OF DAVID HARNOIS FOR WATER SERVICE OUTSIDE THE DISTRICT OF THE SOUTHEAST MORRIS COUNTY MUNICIPAL UTILITIES AUTHORITY.”

Resolution 2024-135 entitled, “BOROUGH OF MORRIS PLAINS TEEN CENTER COORDINATOR RICHARD MEJIA.”

Resolution 2024-136 entitled, “RESOLUTION APPOINTING KEVIN RONGO AS ACTING ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT TO THE MORRIS PLAINS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS.”

Resolution 2024-137 entitled, “RESOLUTION APPOINTING JAKE CAHILL TEEN CENTER SUPERVISOR.”

The Borough Council approve the excused absence of Kevin Rongo, Chief Delegate for the Morris Plains Volunteer Fire Department, to attend the New Jersey State Firemen’s Association annual convention in Wildwood on September 12 & 13, 2024, as per the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual.

Joseph Cecala Jr. be granted permission to serve alcoholic beverages at a Picnic to be held Saturday, October 12, 2024, from 11:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., at the Community Park Pavilion.

The resignation of Brandi Rolph, Full Time Crossing Guard, be accepted, effective September 4, 2024.

Brandi Rolph be hired as a Substitute Crossing Guard for the Police Department at a daily rate of \$89.30, effective September 5, 2024.

The (DPW) Department of Public Works be authorized to advertise for 2 or 3 Laborer positions.

Having received quotes for goats to graze the invasive species at Community Park from the following:

NeighborHood Farm, LLC	\$1,650.00
Green Goats Rhinebeck	\$9,000.00
Crescent Nar Farm	\$4,500.00

That a purchase order be issued to NeighborHood Farm, LLC, 167 Buttermilk Bridge Road, Asbury, NJ in the amount of \$1,650.00.

Morris Plains Seniors, be granted permission to park approximately thirty-two (32) cars at Community Park Pool parking lot beginning Tuesday, October 15 2024 through Friday, October 18, 2024, while on a bus trip to the Finger Lakes.

The Mayor and Borough Clerk are hereby authorized to execute the Labor Agreement between the Borough of Morris Plains and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Local 469 for the period January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2026.

Having received public bids for Contract 2023.01, for Improvements to Glenbrook Road, that a contract be awarded to Cifelli & Son General Contracting, Inc. for their low bid of \$394,852.75, subject to the Borough Attorney's review of the bid documents.

The residents of Dogwood Road be granted permission to hold a block party on Saturday, September 28, 2024 from 4:00 P.M. to 11:00 P.M. Further permission to serve alcoholic beverages be granted. The DPW will provide the necessary barricades.

That the Mayor is hereby authorized to sign and execute the Developer's Agreement for 1625 Route 10 as required by Planning Board Resolution No. 24-06 and approved by the Borough Attorney.

Lauren Koch, 39 Sun Valley Way, Morris Plains, be hired as Fulltime Crossing Guard at a daily rate of \$69.62 effective September 9, 2024.

Seconded by Councilmember Kelly.

Yeas: Councilmembers Verga, Bruhn, Cortese, Goddard, Kelly, Wagner
Nays: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

PUBLIC INVITATION FOR DISCUSSION

Bill Houston, 80 Glenbrook Road, congratulated the Fire Department for their awards at the Boonton Fireman's Parade and thanked everyone involved for a successful Block Dance. Mr. Houston inquired as to how the decision was made not to purchase a motorcycle for the police department since motorcycles can go where cars cannot.

Councilmember Cortese stated we have bikes that can be used to go places vehicles cannot and the funds can be used for new cars or equipment which would better suit the police department.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND/OR DEPARTMENT HEADS

Finance

Councilmember Wagner reported on replacement software for the Building Department and that our Webmaster, Melissa Gibson has upgraded the background check policy making it more streamlined and easier to use. Municipipay has been updated to include Fire Prevention payments.

Public Safety

Councilmember Cortese reported the Police Department is preparing for back to school. This included a meeting with the crossing guards and the L.E.A.D. program which will be returning to school this year. He also reported on the zero tolerance initiative that the Police are conducting.

Police Department's Report

Chief Koroski reported back to school is September 5th. A pre-empted pedestrian crossing detail was conducted; 38 cars were stopped and 14 summons were issued. He also reported *Coffee With A Cop* will be held at The Venue and The American on September 14th.

Mayor Karr stated blinking pedestrian crosswalks at Mountain Way and Franklin Place have been delivered and will be installed by the DPW.

Chief Koroski reported he is waiting for a response from the NJDOT on the blinking pedestrian crosswalk for Hillview Avenue and Speedwell Avenue.

Fire Department's Report

Chief Rongo reported on the purchase of a mini pumper truck which will be similar to the utility truck and can get in tight areas, it is a 4-wheel drive, can hold 4 passengers and 300 gallons of water at a price of \$464,994.32. Chief Rongo reported on calls, Boonton Parade awards, the new app for calls, air packs and that hoses were tested and turnout gear was ordered. Chief Rongo reported 2 members and 2 junior volunteers have completed Fire Fighter 1 at the training academy. Lastly, Chief Rongo reported the software will need to be replaced at the end of the year and they are currently researching vendors.

Public Works

Councilmember Bruhn reported the DPW completed vehicle maintenance, watered flowers, trimmed bushes, spread woodchips, flushed basins, painted crosswalks, repaired curbs and performed block dance setup and cleanup. The Beautification Committee reported the goats ate 75-80% of invasive species and they will come back in the Fall. Mr. Bruhn reported on the spotted lantern fly grant and receiving a list of possible vendors.

Public Buildings & Grounds

Councilmember Goddard reported on the Community Park trail grant. A new grant application is being processed and the County of Morris is working with us on the budget, plan and completing the application. Ms. Goddard reported Community Park playground is undergoing construction and Watnong Park will be receiving new playground equipment. She also reported the Soccer Association would like to update the mural at the Simon’s Park building. DPW will power wash and paint the first coat; all the paint is donated.

Ms. Goddard reported on the *Downtown Morris Plains* bike rack contest and the business roundtable which is scheduled for September 17th. She also reported on the Centennial Committee meetings and the Farmers Market.

Lastly, Ms. Goddard thanked Kellie Doucette, aide to Congresswoman Sherrill for all of her help over the years as an advocate for Morris Plains.

Public Health, Sanitation & Sewers

Councilmember Verga reported the next Board of Health meeting will be September 11th. A letter was mailed to residents on Hillview and Rosedale Avenues regarding property checks that will be conducted and nuisances that will be addressed regarding the recent rodent sightings. Ms. Verga reported national smoking rates have hit a historic low.

Ms. Verga reported on an upcoming meeting with Morris County Department of Human Services, Interfaith Food Pantry and Family Promise resource fair for community leaders to discuss services for housing, healthcare, food and legal services. She also report3d the next Municipal Alliance meeting will be held September 9th and that a Teen Center meeting took place with the new coordinator and Jake Cahill has moved to a supervisor position. Teen Center registration has begun and the first event will be soon. Morris Plains Basketball Association donated a new pole and hoop to the Teen Center.

Ms. Verga reported we were not approved for the Green Team grant for EV charging stations, trash collection bids will be accepted on October 2nd and Clean Communities cleanup information will be coming soon.

Mayor Karr thanked the Basketball Association for always giving back.

Ordinance & Public Utilities

Councilmember Kelly thanked the Police Department and DPW for their help at the Block Dance. She also reported on the VFW picnic and Veteran Appreciation Day held for all Veterans at Morris Plains VFW. Ms. Kelly reported the annual 9/11 ceremony will be 10:00 am, Soccer Opening Day is September 7th, business roundtable is September 17th and the Mental Health Symposium will be September 17th. Ms. Kelly reported the Girl Scouts are selling bracelets to support their project.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

None.

ORDINANCES ON SECOND READING

Councilmember Kelly read by title the ordinance entitled:

ORDINANCE NO. 6-2024

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF MORRIS PLAINS, COUNTY OF MORRIS, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, ESTABLISHING A NEW ARTICLE VII, TO BE ENTITLED "STORAGE OF PRIVATELY OWNED SALT" UNDER CHAPTER 18C OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF MORRIS PLAINS

which ordinance was introduced and passed on First Reading at a meeting held on August 15, 2024.

The Mayor announced that the meeting was open for a public hearing on the ordinance.

Seeing no one else, Mayor Karr closed the public hearing.

Councilmember Kelly stated that the above ordinance as read by title on Second Reading at this meeting be adopted and finally passed.

Seconded by Councilmember Verga.

Yeas: Councilmembers Verga, Bruhn, Cortese, Goddard, Kelly, Wagner

Nays: None
Absent: None
Abstain: None

Mayor Karr declared the ordinance adopted and finally passed.

RESOLUTIONS

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

VOUCHERS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Moved by Councilmember Verga at 9:18 P. M.:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Resolution 2024-138 entitled “Executive Session” be adopted.

Seconded by Councilmember Wagner.

Voice Vote. All in favor.

At 9:30 P.M. Councilmember Cortese moved that the Executive Session be adjourned.

Seconded by Councilmember Kelly.

Voice Vote. All in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Goddard moved that the Regular Meeting be adjourned at 9:30 P.M.

Seconded by Councilmember Cortese.

Voice Vote. All in favor.

Jason C. Karr, Mayor

Rosanne Denman, Borough Clerk