

Mayor and Council of the Borough of Allendale
Work Session Meeting Minutes
January 21, 2021

PRESENT: Mayor Ari Bernstein
(in person)

PRESENT: Councilmembers Liz Homan, Edward O'Connell, Matthew O'Toole,
Steve Sasso, Jim Strauch, and Amy Wilczynski
(via teleconference)

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Borough Attorney Raymond Wiss
Acting Municipal Clerk Michelle Ryan

A Work Session Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Allendale was held in the Municipal Building at 500 West Crescent Avenue, Allendale, NJ on January 21, 2021. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, access to the public was provided via GoToMeeting video and teleconferencing only, with adequate notice of same posted for public viewing. The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm by Mayor Bernstein who reminded the public to mute their devices so as not to distract from the business of the meeting. Mayor Bernstein advised the public that they would have an opportunity at an appropriate time during the meeting to be heard.

Mayor Bernstein asked that the Acting Municipal Clerk read the open public meetings statement: "In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, the notice requirements have been satisfied. The meeting dates for the year are confirmed at the Annual Meeting, are posted on the public bulletin board in the Municipal Building, published in The Record within the first 10 days of the New Year, and copies are sent to The Ridgewood News and Star-Ledger."

Public Comment:

No member of the public came forward.

Administration:

A. Agenda Review

Mayor Bernstein reviewed the Regular Session agenda stating that the consideration of the 2020 Sine Die and 2021 Reorganization Meetings would be at the next meeting on February 11th. Mayor Bernstein then thoroughly reviewed the Consent Agenda consisting of Resolutions 21-65 to 21-70. Of particular note was Resolution 21-69 to appoint Margaret Ann Darmiento as a crossing guard at Mr. Frankel's post. He thanked both Mr. Frankel and Ms. Darmiento for their service to the Borough. Mayor Bernstein also advised that the Governing Body will be going into Closed Session via Resolution 21-71 to discuss 220/230 West Crescent Ave contract negotiation updates. No formal action will be taken once they return to the open session other than to adjourn the meeting.

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B. Council Reports

Councilman O'Connell – Public Safety Committee

Councilman O'Connell informed everyone that the COVID-19 cases are rising and encouraged residents to continue to practice social distancing, washing of hands, and wearing a mask. He reported that the Public Safety Committee discussed street signs that will be going up and reviewed 2021 budgets with the Police and Fire Departments. He reported 968 calls to dispatch, 103 "911", 6 fire, and 25 ambulance calls to date.

Councilman Sasso – Land Use and Construction Code

Councilman Sasso stated that he attended the Land Use Committee meeting held yesterday morning and the Land Use Board meeting held last night. He then thanked Mayor Bernstein for reappointing him to the Committee explaining how important the committee is to the Borough. He stated that the Committee set the priorities for the year, discussed construction code updates and property maintenance.

Mayor Bernstein thanked Councilman Sasso for his exceptional job on the Committee.

Councilwoman Homan – Water, Sewer and Public Utilities

Councilwoman Homan thanked the Mayor for her reappointment to the Water Committee, which met yesterday. She reported that the system is in good shape but unfortunately, there have been some water main breaks likely due to recent temperature fluctuation. She thanked Layne Simon and Jeff Picinich for managing the Borough's water use and advised that meetings are underway with SUEZ to review PFAS treatment options being undertaken in other SUEZ-owned facilities with groundwater wells. The Committee has continued with the legwork to produce the RFP to explore the opportunity to sell the Allendale system and another public water meeting will be scheduled in mid-February.

Mayor Bernstein thanked Councilwoman Homan for all of the work she does.

Councilwoman Wilczynski – Facilities, Parks and Recreation

Councilwoman Wilczynski shared updates on the 220/230 project including working with the insurance company with regards to the remediation, budgeting on the building, and the hiring of a construction manager, Chuck Totosian, to provide oversight on the municipal building. The Councilwoman reported that the Land Use Board approved a resolution in support of the project and thanked the members for their due diligence. The financial agreement and associated approvals will hopefully be next on the agenda. She spoke of the grant-funded improvements at Crestwood and expressed her hope of bands returning to play at the new bandshell this year. She had a meeting with the Lake Director and ALEOOP in anticipation of the summer season. She concluded with an update on the status of the new playground and streetscape project this spring.

Councilman O'Toole – Administration, Finance and Human Resources

Councilman O'Toole stated that the Committee is busy working on the budget worksheets that the departments have submitted. Conversations to understand departmental needs and determine what can be done without this upcoming year have

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been productive. He spoke of seeking grants to defray some of the costs. He reported on a cost-saving, new phone system that the Borough will be implementing.

Councilman Strauch – Public Works

Councilman Strauch complimented the Councilmembers on the fabulous jobs they are doing. He then congratulated Mike Dillion on his appointment as the OEM Director, taking over for Scott Zieber who passed away and is missed. He updated the Council on work of the DPW, filling potholes, picking up Christmas Trees, manning the recycling center on the weekend, all while keeping up with the behind-the-scenes daily functions that keep the town running. He thanked Mayor Bernstein for his reappointment to the Public Work Committee and concluded by stating he reached out to Carlton Frost, Mark Savastano, and Ed O'Connell who are all interested in being part of the reactivated Green Team.

Mayor Bernstein thanked Councilman Strauch for his wealth of information and inspiration.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Bernstein gave the following address to the public:

COVID-19 remains as much a focus in the early days of 2021 as it was in 2020. The Borough continues to monitor this ever-changing situation. We continue to hold our weekly meetings with OEM, APD, AVAC, CERT, AFD, the Board of Health and the Public Safety Committee including Councilmen O'Connell, O'Toole, and Ron Kistner to ensure we stay on top of this pandemic. We discuss numbers in the Borough, County and State as well as PPE and vaccine distributions. We are now led by Police Officer Matt Dillion, who has been a wonderful job.

The numbers in the State are holding steady. We would like them to be going down. I cannot stress enough the importance of remaining vigilant with our social distancing, mask-wearing, hand washing, and other precautionary practices that we have been harping about since March.

Borough Hall has been receiving inquiries regarding the COVID vaccine and I want to take this opportunity to provide some information to hopefully answer questions and clear up some confusion. We understand the eagerness of wanting to receive the vaccine, but ask you to please exercise patience as our State and County officials work to roll it out. We discuss this issue at our Tuesday meeting and we try to get the information out.

The State of New Jersey is in charge of the vaccine rollout and currently they are collaborating with each of New Jersey's 21 counties and certain hospitals to administer the vaccine. New Jersey has a phased plan with prioritized groups first to receive. Right now, those who are healthcare personnel, long-term care residents and staff, first responders, and individuals at high risk including individuals aged 65 and older, and individuals ages 16-64 with medical conditions as defined by the CDC are eligible to receive the shot. We are waiting on the timing of 1B, we have not yet been advised.

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In order to receive the vaccine, you currently must register online. We have put the links to all the sites on our COVID-19 page on our website www.AllendaleNJ.gov. There have been many reports of these sites not working properly, appointments not being available, confusion about eligibility, and frustration that registration is only available online. Unfortunately, that's the way it is. In speaking to people, for those that are trying to find a spot keep refreshing your page. Sometimes after refreshing a spot opens up.

We understand the frustrations and the staff of the Board of Health is reaching out to our State agencies to help get answers and guidance to questions and issues that have come in. As we receive confirmed updates from the State and County, we will relay the information.

The 2021 Garbage & Recycling newsletter was recently delivered to every home. We have received positive feedback on the new style. It has been posted online and all the dates have been loaded onto our website's calendar as well as in the Recycle Coach app. If you do not have the Recycle Coach App, I recommend it. I get an email each week notifying you of pickups.

This is a reminder that all dogs and cats must be licensed for the year 2021. The deadline to register is Friday, January 29th to avoid the \$5 late fee, which goes into effect on February 1st. The Clerk's Office will be open this Saturday, January 23rd from 9am to 12noon to process and issue pet licenses. Applications can be completed online at www.allendalenj.gov.

A reminder that property taxes are due by February 1st. You can drop in the secure mail slot at Borough Hall, postal mail or pay online on our website.

The last part of my report is to the Councilmembers. We have been working on the budget since before the January meeting with department heads to discuss their budgets. Ron and I, in Public Safety met with the Police Department, Fire Department, and the Fire Inspector. All Councilmembers should be obtaining the budget requests from Department Heads. Please schedule a time to meet to review the department heads you're in charge of to go over their budget requests so we can get those numbers back to Lissa.

C. Staff Reports

Mr. Wiss, Borough Attorney, reported that it has been a very busy period. He worked with Chief Scherb and the Public Safety Committee on certain departmental matters. He also reported that he has worked with Councilwoman Homan on water utility matters and Mr. Kistner on some personnel matters. He has also worked on contracts in regards to 220/230 as well as negotiations with the PBA and White Collar Union and OPRA requests for the Clerk's Office.

Ms. Ryan, Acting Municipal Clerk, stated that it has been busy in the Clerk's Office with the beginning of the year, especially processing pet licenses.

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Mr. Kistner, the Administrative Officer/Director of Operations, stated that the last of the Christmas Tree pickups is next week. He thanked the residents for their cooperation. He then gave an update on the work at Crestwood Lake to prepare in anticipation of an upcoming season.

Adjournment:

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Councilwoman Homan, second by Councilman Strauch, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted



Michelle Ryan
Acting Municipal Clerk