

Mayor and Council of the Borough of Allendale
Work Session Meeting Minutes
June 10, 2021

PRESENT: Mayor Ari Bernstein

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

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 June 10, 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 7:30 pm 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 one came forward.

Presentations:

Mayor Bernstein announced that Paul Lerch of the firm Lerch, Vinci and Higgins, the Borough's Auditor, will also be making a presentation of the budget tonight at 7:45pm.

Administration:

A. Agenda Review

Mayor Bernstein thoroughly reviewed the Regular Session's agenda starting with ordinances and resolutions related to the adoption of the 2021 Municipal Budget (the public hearing of Ordinance 21-09 as well as Resolutions 21-158 and 21-159). There are six resolutions on the Consent Agenda, which appoint a new Tax Appeal Attorney (21-160), endorse BCUW/Madeline Housing Partner's grant application for generators at the Borough's special needs housing (21-161), approve the Holiday Observers 4th of July Celebration (21-162), appoint Judith Collins as a summer assistant in the Clerk's

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Office (21-163), authorize estimated tax bills to be prepared and mailed out (21-164) and pay the bills (21-165).

Councilmen O'Toole and O'Connell thanked everyone, on behalf of the Holiday Observers, for helping to make the July 4th celebration happen this year.

B. Council Reports

Councilman O'Connell – Public Safety Committee

Councilman O'Connell reported that there have been 6,249 calls to dispatch, 694 “911”, 61 fire, and 164 ambulance calls to date. Officer Bartoloma recently completed hand gun training. Congratulations to Nicole DiPasquale who will be graduating from the Police Academy on June 17th. Everyone should have received an update from Mr. Kistner regarding Sergeant interview rankings. The committee is still working on state-mandated body worn cameras. The Chief's test, for which there are eight eligible officers, will take place in August.

Councilman Sasso – Land Use and Construction Code

Councilman Sasso is working on scheduling the next committee meeting, however he and Councilman Strauch have been in contact regarding poison bait traps, which have become an issue. Councilman Sasso invited Councilman Strauch to give a report from the Board of Health's discussions on this topic. Councilman Strauch shared that they were very receptive to the presentation made by Jim Wright and himself and will work with food establishments that they inspect to make sure their trash receptacles are properly sealed, thereby cutting off rodents' food supply. Councilman Sasso added that while poison bait traps are very effective in killing rats, an unintended consequence is that other animals, such as an endangered raptor recently, foxes and minks, eat the poisoned rat and then they die too.

Councilwoman Wilczynski – Facilities, Parks and Recreation

220/230 is relatively quiet while the developer is waiting for their application to be heard by Bergen County. Hopefully, this will be heard in July followed by a 45-day waiting period and then the closing can commence, probably around September. Crestwood registration is strong and approaching full revenue. Thanks to Rich McDowel and Ray Frazier for all their hard work. Band nights, which are open to the public, are back with the first one, Blend, playing next Saturday. Phase 1 of the playground was opened on Memorial Day and thank you to the kids and parents for their input. Today, there was another meeting with a different group of parents who gave great ideas to try to incorporate into Phase 2 of the project. The 9/11 Paver Program is open, the search continues for a speaker for the 9/11 Ceremony, but the park will be beautifully decorated with flags in honor of the 20th anniversary.

Councilman O'Toole – Finance, Human Resources and Administration

Budget is being adopted tonight. It was a difficult process, and came a long way from where it started to where it ended up tonight. A huge debt of gratitude to the Finance Committee, Alissa Mayer, Ron Kistner and Paul Lerch for all their hard work. The committee also met tonight on required expenditures such as the body worn cameras, some personnel matters, and the re-opening of Borough Hall, likely next month.

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Councilman Strauch – Public Works

DPW is still dealing with storm-related cleanup from a tree that fell recently on West Crescent by Park Ave, which knocked out power. They continue to attend to the compost and recycling facilities and street sweeping duties. Ron Kistner and Mike Vreeland, Borough Engineer, are working to finalize the 2021 paving program. Mr. Kistner also is working on setting up an auction of borough equipment and vehicles that are no longer of use as well as working with Dan Richards on snow removal plans for 2021/2022 season, which are very much appreciated.

Due to time constraints, Councilwoman Homan's report was given during the Regular Session.

Presentations:

Mayor Bernstein announced that tonight during the Regular Session the public hearing and adoption of the 2021 Municipal Budget will occur. Borough Auditor Paul Lerch of Lerch, Vinci and Higgins is here to make a presentation. Mayor thanked the Governing Body, especially Councilman O'Toole and Councilwoman Wilczynski, and all those who worked tirelessly on the budget process. While it was not an easy year, he is proud that a fiscally prudent budget is being delivered. He invited Mr. Lerch to speak.

Mr. Lerch stated that while it was a difficult year overall due to COVID, the Borough continues to be fiscally strong and doing well. Allendale's ratables increased by an extremely large amount of 6.8% from \$1,684,000,000 to \$1,800,000,000. This is what auditors like to see and is a great indicator for future financial stability. Tonight, he will be comparing 2020 figures with 2021's proposed budget.

Mr. Lerch first provided a breakdown of revenues. Revenues are up \$703,545 mostly through general taxation. Anticipated surplus has decreased from previous years, but this is due to decreased municipal revenue from fees, permits, and interest collected due to COVID. Interest is down \$88,000, construction fees are down \$88,000, but there was some good news that the 230 West Crescent Project's PILOT agreement generated \$108,000. State Aid has remained flat at \$1,068,869. General taxation, which includes the library, is up \$876,020. General taxation is the biggest source of revenue at 71%, which is typical for municipalities such as Allendale that consistently need to rely heavily on taxation every year. State Aid only amounts to 7%.

Mr. Lerch informed the public that the Tax Levy CAP is limited to a 2% increase over the previous year's budget, but noted that there are some exceptions and CAP banks can be established. The 2021 amount to be raised by general taxation is \$10,319,605 with the maximum at \$10,632,754. Allendale is under the CAP by \$313,149.

A spending analysis shows that the total budget increase is \$703,545, which matches revenues. "General government" spending is relatively flat as well as fire/emergency services, parks and recreation, library contributions, and utility costs. DPW spending decreased by 3.3%. Insurance costs rose 2.4 %, but the biggest increases are for

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police services at 7.7%, which is typical for municipalities, as well as sewer and solid waste charges at 5.2%, and pension contributions at 5.3%.

Due to time constraints, Mr. Lerch continued his presentation in the Regular Session.

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