

**Mayor and Council of the Borough of Allendale
Work Session Meeting Minutes – 7:30 p.m.
February 9, 2023**

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, New Jersey on February 9, 2023. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm by Mayor Wilczynski who welcomed everyone who is joining the meeting in the audience and on Zoom Webinar.

Mayor Wilczynski asked that the 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 and on the Borough Website, published in The Record within the first 10 days of the New Year, and copies are sent to The Ridgewood News and Star-Ledger. Notice of this meeting by the February 2, 2023 Sunshine Notice was sent to The Record, The Ridgewood News and Star Ledger and has been posted on the public bulletin board in the Municipal Building and Borough website.”

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Councilmembers Susanne Lovisolo, Ed O’Connell, Matthew O’Toole, Tyler Yaccarino, Joseph Daloisio and Mayor Amy Wilczynski.

ABSENT: Councilwoman Homan.

ALSO PRESENT: Raymond Wiss, Borough Attorney
Ron Kistner, Director of Operations/Administrative Officer
Linda Louise Cervino, Municipal Clerk
John Gil, Director of Communications

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mark Savastano, 22 Vreeland Place, Allendale stated that he’s been conversing with Sean at the DPW and he has shared with him a shared services agreement with regard to EPS collections. Something I hope you will consider. It, essentially, allows the Borough of Allendale to bring any collection material to Ridgewood. They’re going to be opening up their densifier just for styrofoam. They are going to be sharing the facility with other boroughs that are willing to participate. It comes to \$5 per 25-gallon bag. You can bring it as often and frequently as you like. It would allow us to have a place to bring it. Mayor Wilczynski said we will take a look at it and see what we think.

Linda Louise Cervino, Municipal Clerk, stated that Mr. Thomas, 30 Arlton Avenue, Allendale, who is not present in person, but perhaps on Via Zoom, sent an email to her on January 17th, asking if his questions could be read on record at the next Mayor and Council meeting. Mr. Thomas states, “I commend and congratulate Councilperson Homan and the entire Council on completing the sale of the Borough’s water system to Veolia.” The following three questions relate to that transaction.

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Ray Wiss, Esq., responded to Mr. Thomas's questions.

Question #1:

What interest was conveyed to Veolia:

- in relation to the wells and reservoirs, does Veolia own defined property in fee simple for each?
- In relation to the water tower which is on Ramsey property?
- In relation to the pipes, ducts, valves, etc., which are beneath the surface?

Answer #1:

Mr. Wiss summarized the answer to this question as, to be simple, it's really a real estate concept. The transaction with Veolia is a combination of transferring certain property in fee simple, but most of the conveyances are easements that is right to have their utilities under property that is either owned by the borough or owned privately or owned by the school systems. It is a combination to Mr. Thomas's question of fee simple transactions as well as predominantly easements. With respect to the infrastructure that is located beneath the property whether it's being conveyed in fee simple or whether it's an easement, that is being conveyed in full to Veolia. They will own, in essence, the entire operating system whether it is pipes, valves, water towers. That will all be in the ownership of Veolia. There's a master list of properties, which more specifically specifies what I'm talking about in terms of that which is being conveyed in fees simple, and that which is an easement.

Question #2:

Is Veolia committed to the 10-year rate plan that was contemplated in the negotiations with Suez before their merger? If so, has the rate plan been submitted to the NJ Board of Public Utilities? Do the provisions of that rate plan apply to commercial, industrial and government customers of Veolia as well as residential customers?

Answer #2:

Mr. Wiss summarized the answer to this question by saying, yes, Veolia is committed to exactly the same rate plan as was negotiated between the borough and Suez before their merger. The provisions do not have any special rate or exemptions for commercial industrial customers. There is a rate provision where the borough gets a preferred customer rate with respect to our fire hydrants for a specified period of time.

Question #3:

Without ownership of a water producing and distribution infrastructure, Allendale no longer has or is a "Water Utility". Accounts and debt associated with its former water utility are closed and retired. Will the water department be re-organized? What role will its staff have?

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Answer #3:

Mr. Wiss summarized the answer to this question by saying, all of the debt will be paid off to an escrow account. Some of the bonds are not yet callable. The only employee was the CFO, who will no longer have any function for the water utility and all aspects of the utility should be closed out by the end of the current calendar year.

No one else came forward.

ADMINISTRATION:

Agenda Review:

Mayor Wilczynski reviewed the Regular Session Agenda which consisted of an introduction of Ordinance 23-02 to amend, supplement and revise Chapter 26. Councilman O'Toole said this ordinance will bring our officers more in line with what other departments are making for outside overtime details, for instance, when they work a detail for a utility company. There is also a provision in there for the borough to charge an administrative fee for coordinating the use of the officer. It does not apply, however, to borough jobs or nonprofits. Mayor Wilczynski also stated that we have our consent agenda. These are things that are considered routine but there are some that I would like to read through because they are noteworthy of all the great work that we're doing in this borough. We will be appointing our Qualified Purchasing Agent as well as an alternate prosecutor. Our QPA, we've had for many, many years; Joe Citro. We're also going to be authorizing another SLEO officer for our schools. That has been a wonderful program that is going to be continued. We can formally appoint Joe Daloisio to the Land Use Board. He's head of the Land Use board. He's also second on Facilities with Councilman Yaccarino. It is Crestwood season so we're starting to get some of our Crestwood fees and Red Barn fees. We're looking forward to a great year. We are filling a Land Use Board vacancy with Jason Warzola, so it will be great to have him on our Land Use Board. Our senior housing, the borough is going to convey its interest as Urban Renewal entity of senior housing to AHI. AHI oversees our low- and moderate-income housing as well as our special needs housing, so this is going to be streamlined and we're very grateful for that. Thank you for all the work that you've all done with that.

Council Reports:

Councilman O'Connell – Department of Public Works

Councilman O'Connell stated the second phase of the DPW auction is being scheduled for the near future. We're expecting another \$35,000 plus. We're taking advantage of the seasonal weather by getting some prepping done at Crestwood Lake. Ron Kistner has been very busy dealing with the Veolia staff members in picking up materials, and with the possession of the sale of the water system and the downtown clock renovations still in place and we'll be starting sometime in the middle of next month. The third and fourth phase of the downtown streetscape project are near completion.

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Councilman Joseph Daloisio – Land Use Board

This is my first report. We had one Land Use committee meeting on the 25th. I will admit, it was my first meeting so I'm just trying to understand where we left off and where we were. I will say that I am very impressed with the people this borough has; Ron Kistner, Anthony Hackett, Mike Limatola. These people are very dedicated and they do a lot for the residents and the community. Some of the topics we discussed was taking a look at our code, so we started to go through that to see if there is any upgrades or changes to some of our code to make things a little easier for residents, plus bring us back to where we should be in the timewise. If there's anything new or any changes; specifically, to tree removal and signs. We discussed a few resident issues, a couple of vacant property issues, property maintenance issues; nothing major as everything is being handled and looked at. We also discussed the possibility of making some changes to our application packet for residents when they come before the construction code official and they have to get a variance and come before the Land Use Board. We have a very extensive and professional packet. I want to look at adding some help sections for our residents so it's a little easier when they come before the board, like a cheat sheet, so they know what the board is going to ask and what they should be really focusing on in their presentations and just make things a little easier for the residents when they come before the board. That's where we left off. We did have our second meeting this morning. I don't have my notes prepared for that for tonight, so I can talk about that at our next council meeting. I'm very happy and very excited to continue on the Land Use Board. Mayor Wilczynski thanked Councilman Daloisio and said she loves that he's already trying to help residents and look at something that could be better for residents because we're here to serve the residents, not to complicate things. It can very intimidating coming before a board.

Councilwoman Lovisolo – Finance, Human Resources and Administration

Councilwoman Lovisolo stated Finance, Human Resources and Administration has been very busy. We're on Version four of the budget. I'm still waiting on few of our capital numbers from certain departments to come in. I just want to thank, again, our outgoing CFO, Alissa Mayer. She has done an amazing job for the borough all these years and we were able to welcome our new CFO on Monday and she was able to join us at our finance committee meeting, Alison Altano. Alissa truly gave Alison a little taste of Allendale quite literally by taking her to Allendale Bar & Grill on Monday and showing her around town. We're excited to start work with Alison. We are setting a date for our finance advisory committee meeting as well. For those of you who are on it, look for that because it's coming soon.

Councilman O'Toole – Law & Public Safety

Councilman O'Toole stated that the Public Safety Committee had our first meeting of the new year this past Tuesday. Some of the things we discussed were the difficulties that the ambulance corp is having manning the ambulance during the day. One of the problems is that volunteerism is down so we would really like to appeal to the residents if anyone is interested in volunteering that they should come out. Both the ambulance corp and fire department is always looking for members. It's a good thing to help out in the community. We discussed some issues within the fire department, including some of the apparatus and the future of those pieces of equipment. We discussed some police department issues and some personnel. We had a very productive meeting.

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As you mentioned in your report, Mayor, on our consent agenda this evening we are appointing another Class III Special Law Enforcement Officer to be placed in the lower schools; Hillside and Brookside. This is a program which places recently retired officers in the schools, similar to a resource officer. It has been wildly successful. The schools love having them there. The kids love having them there and the officers love being around the kids. This is a program where the school district is reimbursing the borough 100 percent of their salary.

Councilman Yaccarino – Facilities, Parks and Recreation

Councilman Yaccarino stated the Facilities, Parks and Recreation committee had our first meeting of the year on January 26th. We covered a degree of topics. For Crestwood Lake we're looking at the cleanup of the phragmites. Beginning stages of a new concession stand through the capital budget. Maintenance to our band shell. We talked about ongoing discussions regarding our badges and making things easier for our residents and streamlining some processes there. I also started working with Tierney to look at some of our 2023 lake activities, so we have a really good idea of where we're going. We have a lot of fun things planned there and a couple more things that are in the works. At borough hall we're looking at some minor interior renovations down in the clerk's office. Maybe some new flooring. Some improvements to this room, which will be ongoing over the next couple of months. Maybe some more informational pieces around the borough to help inform our residents. With regard to recreation, Director Kistner, provided some ideas from our coaches to help assist with field maintenance. Trying to really involve not so much the DPW, but also where the coaches can help step in as well for when the time we don't have folks on staff. Other than that, our next meeting will be held next Thursday and we already have a few matters on the agenda, which I'll update at the next meeting.

Staff Reports:

John Gil, Director of Communications, stated that he's currently working on the February edition of the newsletter. If you have anything you want to add in, I would like to get it out by the middle of next week. We're going over some equipment for Crestwood Lake to make sure we're up and running and no last-minute surprises.

Linda Louise Cervino, Municipal Clerk, stated she has nothing to report.

Raymond Wiss, Borough Attorney, stated he had a busy couple of weeks. With respect to the resolutions and ordinances that are on the agenda, working with different committee members and also with the clerk's office to get the things in place for this evening. Mr. Kistner working on personnel matters and some Land Use matters. This evening with Councilman Daloisio and Mr. Kistner, we did a little field trip. If you remember there was a resident who was here last week talking about a possible conveyance of a portion of a borough property to him, so we looked at the property today and I actually communicated this morning a couple of times with that resident. Working with Chief Dillon on several departmental matters. Some man power matters, some staffing matters and personnel issues in his office. The vestiges with respect to 220 are still ongoing. We had a meeting this morning at nine and tomorrow it's at eight, regarding the water utility.

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It's pretty much ongoing and a lot of it has to do with what the substance of the questions tonight were about. It's really dealing with the easements that we need to convey. I may have expressed this before, but since the borough owned much of the property and was also the utility in the historic past, a lot of times easements weren't of record. What has to happen is that Veolia has to send out their utility marker, locate where their equipment is, subterranean, then they have to go out based on that and do a metes and bounds description in order to be able to prepare a deed that shows the easement for the utility that's already there. It's a moving situation with Veolia being involved, their surveyor being involved, their utility locator being involved, their attorneys being involved and us being involved on the borough side. As the mayor mentioned, working on the Allendale Senior Housing, Allendale Housing, Inc. transaction in getting the resolutions on the agenda this evening. Chris Botta and I, and Tom Bouregy from my office had a conference call this morning and the gist of that is that we think that all of the elements of the transaction should be concluded by the end of this month. If all goes well, that should all be done. We do have an outstanding litigation against PK with respect to environmental cost that the borough incurred in acquiring 220/230, so we're at a very formative stage in the discovery there. This Monday, the attorney for PK conducted a site inspection. We have our next case management conference with the Court in April.

Mayor's Report:

I want to thank to the council, especially the new people; Tyler and Joe, for really hitting the ground. The committee meetings have been really great. Thank you especially to the councilmembers who are starting to use Box, our filing system, so we can stay organized and everybody has access to all of the information. I've been working with the administrative officers since last year on streamlining our Red Barn process. The Red Barn has become wildly popular since Covid and it was taking up a lot of our time. I just want to thank Linda and her team, especially, John and Amanda, for really helping streamline the process and making it easy for residents, but having a packet for the residents to put together before they actually get to our office.

There is a New Jersey Anchor program that was brought to our attention. The homeowners can potentially get tax rebate checks. We put some information on our website today. There's an application deadline on February 28th, so check that out. I'll also remind you that the grace period for your first quarter property taxes ends tomorrow, February 10th. 220 is completely demolition. It started last week. The building is gone. We really look forward to the next stage. There will be 70 rental units that will be built in the back. We will be talking to the developer. We are looking forward to getting our community center and our gym built which is going to be in front of that. We had a resolution authorized to go to bid for that today. Once we get those specs buttoned up, we are going to start going out for bid. We will be working in tandem with Hampshire as they're building their 70 units. It's going to be exciting times for Allendale. It's going to be a great space for our residents. The space that we're sitting in now is all we have, so we look forward to getting that going.

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Ron Kistner, Director of Operations/Administrative Officer, stated I want to personally welcome Councilman Daloisio. I thought he was going to be a great addition due to my dealings with him as a member of the Holiday Observers; now he's the president. He's always been very helpful and very knowledgeable. We had our meeting this morning. We talked about visiting this resident and Joe came and met us. He's on the Land Use board and he brings something to the table. He was very helpful. I scheduled a lunch meeting with two members of the ARC, Allendale Recreation Committee, at AB&G for next Tuesday to start thinking about some spring season. Projects for one of the fields. We talked about what we did last year, because we don't have the staff and the skills we can make capital funds and we put it out for bid and we get the base pad ready and do the sand, the clay to the fields, prep the pitching mounds and it makes the maintenance of the season so much easier. The two gentlemen I'm meeting are a pleasure to work with. Again, a team effort. They understand our limitations and they work very well.

We also had some employee issues to deal with. I want to thank Linda Cervino, the Municipal Clerk, because it was her first go-around and she's a very sweet individual, if I can say, and a nice person. Unfortunately and fortunately I had years of dealing with employee issues and working together I thought we really work very well as a team. Linda, you did a great job. I know it was tough for you, but you were very professional and you're a pleasure to work with. Mrs. Cervino thanked Mr. Kistner.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Councilman O'Toole, second by Councilman Yaccarino and unanimously carried, the work meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Linda Louise Cervino, RMC
Municipal Clerk

02/23/2023
Date Approved