

Mayor and Council of the Borough of Allendale  
Work Session Meeting Minutes  
September 24, 2020

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  
(*in person*) 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 September 24, 2020. 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 public came forward for comment.

**Presentations:**

Alissa Mayer, CFO, came forward to speak about the Corrective Action Plan for the Report of Audit for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2019. Mayor Bernstein thanked her, along with Debra and Paul Lerch of Lerch, Vinci, and Higgins for all their efforts on the audit and Ms. Mayer for putting together the Corrective Action Plan.

CFO Mayer reported that she worked with the new auditors, who familiarized themselves with the Borough's books, accounts, funds, policies, and procedures. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic extended the process and the State set a new completion deadline of September 30<sup>th</sup>, which the Borough will meet. Overall, Ms. Mayer was quite pleased with the process and noted that nothing substantive was to be reported. The exit interview consisted of clarifications and explanations and there were a few procedural changes recommended for the Borough to make, which have already been instituted. The first item in the Corrective Action Plan pertains to not encumbering certain 2019 monthly operating expenses prior to year-end in both the

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Current and the Water Utility Operating Funds. In the future, a review of all anticipated expenses in both funds will be performed and encumbrances made accordingly prior to year-end. The second item pertains to not requiring three signatures on borough-issued checks in compliance with state statutes. Ordinance 20-14, which is on tonight's agenda for adoption corrects this. Mr. Wiss added that the main takeaway that should be stressed is that these are ledger or accounting functions being addressed, not monetary issues in any fashion. Councilwoman Wilczynski commented that she viewed the transition as going well with the new firm and inquired if Mrs. Mayer felt the same. Mrs. Mayer responded in the affirmative.

**Administration:**

A. Agenda Review

Mayor Bernstein advised that the minutes of the August 13<sup>th</sup>, August 27<sup>th</sup>, and September 10<sup>th</sup> Work and Regular Sessions would be voted on as amended. He advised of everyone's attendance and eligibility to vote. Mayor Bernstein then spoke about Ordinance 20-14, which amends the Borough's Bylaws to require three signatures on borough-issued checks in compliance with N.J. State Statutes, and Ordinance 20-15, which adds the title of "Director of Communications" and fixes the salary range for this position for the year 2020. Both of these are on for tonight's agenda for adoption. Mayor Bernstein also thoroughly reviewed the Consent Agenda consisting of Resolutions 20-210 to 20-224. Of particular note, he highlighted 20-214 approving the SLEO contract with Northern Highlands, 20-218 authorizing the CARES Act Municipality Reimbursement Agreement with Bergen County, and 20-220 awarding a contract to ONQUE Technologies to address long-standing drainage issues in the vicinity of Meadow Lane. Regarding 20-223 both Councilwoman Homan and Wilczynski indicated their desire to work with Mr. Wiss to finalize the Solid Waste Collection and Disposal bid specs.

B. Council Reports

**Councilman O'Connell** – Public Safety Committee

Councilman O'Connell advised that at the last Public Safety meeting they tabled discussions on Halloween until the October meeting to see what guidelines from the State were given. He reported 12,006 calls to dispatch, 1,150 "911" calls, 133 fire calls, and 293 ambulance calls to date.

**Councilman Sasso** – Land Use and Construction Code

Councilman Sasso reported the Land Use Committee hadn't met since the last Council meeting. An email was sent seeking the Committee's input on the Borough's Short-Term Rental Ordinance. He asked for background on Resolution 20-215 to which Mr. Wiss informed him of the scenario that led to the need for the temporary waiver.

**Councilwoman Homan** – Water, Sewer and Public Utilities

Councilwoman Homan announced that the Borough has gone back to regular, Phase 1 Water Restrictions. She thanked the members of the community who attended the Virtual Water Community Meeting and invited those who missed it to view the video

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available on the website. A second meeting is being planned. She informed the Council that she and Councilman Sasso have a meeting with NJDEP to discuss water testing and she will be attending a virtual program with the NJ Drinking Water Quality Institute on September 30<sup>th</sup>. The Councilwoman continued with discussion of implementing a plastic bag ban in Allendale. She provided details about what has transpired over the last few months on this topic. The NJ Legislature has now passed legislation that will be going to Governor Murphy to enact several restrictions on everyday products to curb plastic pollution. The legislation also bans paper bags in supermarkets over 2,500 square feet in an effort to have shoppers bring their own reusable bags. She recommended that the Borough wait to see what the State decides to do before taking any further action. If none is taken by the State, then the Borough should move forward with the single-use plastic bag ban as was prescribed in the tabled ordinance. Councilwoman Homan concluded by encouraging residents to compost and giving important tips on recycling residential garbage.

Mr. Wiss, referring back to Councilman Sasso's question on Resolution 20-215, stated that the Land Use Committee would be the appropriate committee to review the ordinance on garage sales.

Due to time constraints, the committee reports of Councilmembers O'Toole, Strauch, and Wilczynski were given during the Regular Session meeting.

C. Staff Reports

Due to time constraints, this Agenda item was addressed during the Regular Session meeting.

***Adjournment:***

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Councilman O'Toole, second by Councilman O'Connell, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Michelle Ryan  
Acting Municipal Clerk