

Mayor and Council of the Borough of Allendale
Work Session Meeting Minutes
February 14, 2019

PRESENT: Mayor Ari Bernstein and Councilmembers Liz Homan, Edward O’Connell, Matthew O’Toole, Steve Sasso, Jim Strauch and Amy Wilczynski

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Borough Attorney Raymond Wiss
Municipal Clerk Anne Dodd

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 February 14, 2019. The meeting was called to order at 7:31 p.m. by Mayor Ari Bernstein who 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, 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:

Walter Widmer, 38 Hamilton Street, wished everyone a happy Valentine’s Day.

Administration:

A. Agenda Review

Mayor Bernstein reviewed the Regular Session agenda. He provided a brief summary of each resolution on the Consent Agenda, highlighting Resolution #19-85. He explained that this resolution approves a revised proposal for the installation of the band shell, noting that a metal roof will be installed in place of asphalt.

Councilwoman Wilczynski explained that, after much thought, it was decided that a metal roof would fare better in the elements and would be more aesthetically pleasing than an asphalt roof.

B. Council Reports

Councilman O’Connell – Land Use and Construction Code

Councilman O’Connell reported that the Land Use and Construction Code Committee met on February 11th. There was discussion regarding sump pumps that are causing icing in the roadways. He advised that, for now, salt will be applied as needed to address this issue. The Building Department module is up and running in GovPilot. Issues with the system are being addressed as they occur. The committee also discussed neon signs that are appearing in store fronts as well as the need to maintain the 4-foot right-of-way when a restaurant has outdoor seating.

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Councilwoman Homan – Water, Sewer and Public Utilities

Councilwoman Homan advised that the next Water, Sewer and Public Utilities Committee meeting is scheduled on Tuesday. She thanked Anthony Bruno of Suez for his service to Allendale and requested that Ron Kistner, Administrative Officer/Director of Operations, provide some background information on Jeff Piccinich who will be taking over as Water Operator.

Mr. Kistner commented that Mr. Bruno did a great job for the Borough and noted that Mr. Piccinich was the Borough's Water Operator as an employee when the system was owned and operated by the Borough. He advised that Mr. Piccinich lives close by, has stayed involved with the system, and is also a volunteer firefighter with the Allendale Fire Department.

Councilwoman Homan reminded residents to continue to monitor their water bill to ensure that it is not estimated. A meeting was held with the meter manufacturer, distributor, and representatives from Suez who both take meter readings and repair water meters to discuss the reason for Allendale having so many estimated readings. The representative from the meter manufacturer will be riding along with the Suez meter readers in order to determine ways to help minimize estimated readings.

Mr. Kistner added that 48 meters in need of repair were picked up yesterday and 50 replacement meters were received at no charge. He advised that a leak on W. Maple Field was addressed.

Councilman Sasso – Administration, Finance & Human Resources

Councilman Sasso reported that the Administration, Finance and Human Resources Committee met last night and there was discussion regarding the potential impact of the NJ Paid Sick Leave Law and minimum wage increases. There was also discussion on OPRA requests.

Mayor Bernstein added that there will be a meeting of this committee on February 20th solely focused on the 2019 budget.

Councilwoman Wilczynski – Facilities, Parks and Recreation

Councilwoman Wilczynski advised that the Facilities, Parks and Recreation Committee is looking into installing additional aerators at Crestwood Lake. There has been a lot of interest by bands looking to perform at the lake over the summer. Councilwoman Wilczynski noted that she and Mr. Kistner will be meeting soon to discuss the budget.

With respect to the Administration, Finance and Human Resources Committee, she advised that they met with an agency to discuss rolling tax assessments versus conducting a revaluation. She explained the process for rolling assessments, noting that municipalities engaging in this program have seen a significant reduction in tax appeals. She further noted that the Tax Assessor is recommending that this program be implemented.

Mayor Bernstein commented that the statistics are impressive, and as assessments remain at 100%, it would potentially be a benefit to both the Borough as well as the taxpayers. He stated that this topic will be discussed further in committee, and if it is decided to proceed, this agency will be asked to attend a Work Session to present to the entire governing body.

Councilwoman Wilczynski thanked the DPW for the amazing job that they did on Tuesday with the storm. She advised that there will be an update on 220 and 230 West Crescent Avenue in the near

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future, commenting that, as they are currently engaged in the due diligence period with certain items still under negotiation, there is limited information that can be provided at this time.

Councilman O'Toole – Public Works

Councilman O'Toole reported that he met with Mr. Kistner who gave him a thorough walkthrough of the DPW facility. Mr. Kistner is currently working on awarding contracts for the landscaping of Borough facilities, lawn chemical treatments, and monthly street sweeping. It is hoped that recommendations will be made to the Public Works Committee in time to award these contracts at the March 14th Mayor and Council meeting. The DPW was out in force Tuesday into Wednesday and Councilman O'Toole commented that they did a fantastic job in clearing the roadways of snow and ice. The first Public Works Committee meeting will be held on February 27th.

Mayor Bernstein reviewed §233-27 of the Borough Code pertaining to the duties of owners and tenants with respect to snow and ice removal. He noted that the owner is responsible for adhering to the regulations despite the property being rented.

Councilman Strauch – Public Safety

Councilman Strauch advised that the next Public Safety Committee meeting will be scheduled on February 28th at 7:30 a.m.

C. Staff Reports

Ray Wiss, Municipal Attorney, reported that, with respect to 220 and 230 West Crescent Avenue, he was involved in meetings with the counsel for the prospective purchaser, the consultant for the redevelopment designation, the Borough's COAH Planner, and vacating tenants. He noted that this transaction has multiple, complex facets and it has been a collective effort to handle all aspects involved. He recommended that an update to the residents be provided after the completion of the due diligence period.

Anne Dodd, Municipal Clerk, advised that there have been 12 OPRA requests received since the last Mayor and Council meeting and 53 requests have been received to date this year. She expressed that the implementation of GovPilot is going well overall. She advised that almost 400 dog licenses have been processed through this program to date and reminders have been sent to those who have not yet renewed their license.

Ron Kistner, Administrative Officer/Director of Operations, stated that concerns raised by the Technical Assistant in the Building Department regarding GovPilot have been resolved. He advised that the Risk Manager has made recommendations with respect to outdoor seating licenses, and as such, proposed revisions to the current ordinance will be provided to the Borough Attorney.

D. Mayor's Report

Mayor Bernstein reported that he attended a Northwest Bergen Mayors meeting this past Saturday. There was discussion regarding cyber security issues and he advised that there will be a cyber security program held on March 9th which he plans to attend.

Mr. Kistner advised that this topic was discussed at the JIF Safety meeting today and it was emphasized that Borough computers should be used strictly for Borough business.

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Mayor Bernstein announced that the Northwest Bergen Mayors will also be meeting with Orange and Rockland to discuss how storms will be handled prospectively.

With respect to GovPilot, the Borough has gone live with the Construction module as well as the No Knock Registry. It is anticipated that Compost Permits, Red Barn/West Beach/Field Use Permits, and Garage Sale Permits will be available through the system in the near future. It is also hoped that online payments will be set up in the near future to make obtaining a license more convenient for residents.

In terms of Accuscan, the Borough has received the scanned documents for the 30 boxes of Building Department records that were picked up in November. These documents can now be uploaded into GovPilot and attached to the corresponding block and lot.

As Councilman O'Toole has resigned from his position on the Land Use Board, Mayor Bernstein announced that Susanne Lovisolo is being appointed to fill his unexpired term. He commented Ms. Lovisolo has served the board wonderfully as an alternate and noted that he will be looking to fill her now vacant position.

Mayor Bernstein expressed that it is with deep sadness that he notes the passing of Nancy Donnelly who served as the Borough's Tax Clerk for 17 years. He commented that she was a wonderful person with a great warmth and sense of humor, and for many residents who visited Borough Hall, she was the first face that was seen.

Based upon the nice comments made on social media, Councilman Sasso pointed out that everyone loved her. He thanked the Allendale Police Department for providing an escort from the funeral home to the cemetery.

Mayor Bernstein commented that the town came out in droves, not out of obligation, but out of love which he expressed speaks volumes about Nancy. Administratively, he noted that, as Nancy had been planning to retire later this year, it was anticipated that Tatiana Marquis would be filling this position. Ms. Marquis has graciously agreed to come back early from maternity leave on a part-time basis and will be returning full-time in May.

E. Correspondence

There were no correspondence items.

Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted

Anne Dodd, RMC
Municipal Clerk