

BOROUGH OF RAMSEY
MAYOR AND COUNCIL
REGULAR SESSION MINUTES
Wednesday, April 26, 2023
7:00pm

Budget
Public
Hearing

This meeting is also being conducted telephonically. The Dial-In Number (425)436-6365 Access Code 213563#. The meeting may also be viewed on Ramsey YouTube Channel https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeBnVXBwSn_ILMuAGkSin9w

Mayor Dillon called the meeting to order at 7:03pm, asked Mr. Emmet to lead the flag salute. Mayor Dillon read the Open Public Meetings Act notice.

I. ROLL CALL:

Present: Mayor Dillon, Councilpersons Cusick, Kilman, Gutwetter, Popolo, Poppe and Woods

Also Present: Borough Clerk Bendian, Borough Administrator Vozeh and Borough Attorney Scandariato

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 04-12-23

Motion to approve and file by Councilwoman Woods, seconded by Councilwoman Cusick. Councilwoman Poppe abstained. All in favor. Carried.

III. COMMUNICATIONS -

Motion to receive and file by Councilwoman Poppe, seconded by Councilman Kilman. Carried.

1. Anne DuHaime
letter dated April 12, 2023, thanking the governing body for the use of the senior center to host the YMCA table tennis event
2. John Danubio, Assistant Executive Director, Northwest Bergen County Utilities Authority, 30 Wyckoff Avenue, Waldwick, NJ
e-mail dated Monday, April 17, 2023 enclosing the agendas for NBCUA's meetings on April 19, 2023

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Anyone wishing to address the governing body please give your name (spelling the last name). Please speak in an audible tone and address your comments to the Chair. There will be a five-minute time limit per speaker, unless reduced because of the volume of business on the agenda. Please note, public comment is your time. Out of respect and fairness to all, there will be no interruptions or questions answered during your time. No time shall be ceded to anyone else and no time shall be saved for later use. Any responses may be given during the governing body's comments later in the meeting, or as directed by the Chair. The Borough Clerk is the official time keeper.

Mayor Dillon opened the meeting to the public. With no one in the audience or on the telephone wishing to be heard, Mayor Dillon closed public comment.

Mayor Dillon asked for a motion to go out of order of regular business for Administrator Vozech to give his report. Motion by Councilwoman Woods, seconded by Councilman Popolo.

Roll Call:

YAY: Cusick, Gutwetter, Kilman, Popolo, Poppe, Woods

Borough Administrator Vozech

Resolution 110 – Awards a contract for professional services for Architectural and Design Services for the Ramsey Fire Department, Ramsey Rescue Squad and Office of Emergency Management new Station Project. Over the last year the borough has been reviewing options for a renovation or replacement of the existing Fire Dept and Rescue Squad buildings on South Island Ave. The Borough engaged Colliers Engineering and Design as an independent engineer to perform a review of current conditions, from a structural, mechanical, ADA and overall perspective of the current building. Colliers' report recommended against a renovation or retro fit of the existing structure. In order to meet current standards, building codes and operational issues the most long-term cost-effective way to put in place the necessary infrastructure for supporting the operations of these emergency services was to construct a new shared station house. The Borough sent a Request For Proposals ("RFP") out on December 13, 2022 for professional services for Design Consulting Services on a new complex. The RFP was sent to four firms with experience in emergency service building design. Proposals were due on January 27, 2023 and 3 firms submitted proposals. Each of the firms were interviewed by the Building Committee. After review, it was the recommendation by all involved that the Borough retain Netta Architects, LLC and award a contract for Design Services. The proposal is four main phases of services from project initiation to construction documents as well as construction observation and administration through completion. There are lump sum payments for the various phases of the project with a cumulative total of the services to completion of \$1,152,000. At the March 22nd meeting the Governing Body passed Resolution 81-2023, awarding the first phases 1A & 1B which constitute \$230,400 of the total cost of services. This resolution awards the contract for phases 1C through 4 for services from concept and design development through construction documentation, administration and project completion. Total cost for services under this scope of work in contract is \$921,600.

Resolutions 111 & 112 Awarding Contracts to J.A. Alexander Inc. – Ramsey is the lead agent in the Northwest Bergen Shared Service Group and annually coordinates a shared service bid for road resurfacing. This year five municipalities were included in the bid allowing us to have additional paving quantities and achieve a more attractive bid package. The public bid was advertised and bids opened on April 18th. It was very competitive with 13 firms bidding on the contract. J.A. Alexander Inc. was the low bid. J.A. Alexander has successfully performed under contracts for similar scope of work in the past and is a responsible bidder. After both technical and legal review of the bids by the Borough Engineer/QPA and Borough Attorney respectively, both have recommended the award to J.A. Alexander, Inc. Resolution 111-2023 awards the contract as lead agent collectively for all five towns with a total amount of \$1,545,363.06. Resolution 112 awards a subsidiary contract for only Ramsey’s portion of the work totaling \$516,445.

Ordinance 04-2023 – Bond Ordinance for various public improvements, vehicle, apparatus and equipment: The Borough is holding a public hearing and vote on adoption of a Bond Ordinance for a total of \$2,721,600. The ordinance has a number of different components with infrastructure projects, specialized equipment and vehicles.

- Preliminary Expenses for Fire/Rescue/OEM New Station - \$921,600: At the March 22nd meeting a contract to Netta Architects was approved for preliminary Phases 1A & 1B of design contract for a new Fire Department/Rescue Squad/Office of Emergency Management Station House. The Borough has received proposals for future professional services beyond preliminary design including construction documents, bid management through construction management and close out. This portion of the ordinance would fund the future costs and phases of that professional services contract which are incorporated in Resolution 110 on tonight’s agenda.
- 2023 Annual Road Resurfacing Program - \$625,000: Milling and paving of various streets in Borough. Criteria is based on engineer rating of the poorest roads in conjunction with the Board of Public Works State mandated lead service line replacement program.
- NJDOT Municipal Aid Resurfacing Project – \$425,000: Remaining portion of Island Road from Addison Place to the NJDOT overpass area and a portion of Williams Drive from Airmount to the MacFarran Field Complex. Upon completion the Borough will receive \$206,000 from a grant it had obtained. Other portion of Island Road had been resurfaced recently and the other portion of Williams is in the Borough 2023 resurfacing program
- Concrete sidewalks replacing asphalt sidewalks in poor condition - \$250,000: Borough has asphalt sidewalks in poor condition along certain portions of Darlington Avenue from Elbert to Dogwood and N. Central south of the Park Street intersection. Both roads are predominately concrete sidewalks except for these areas. Darlington does have asphalt sidewalks past Dogwood by Union Cemetery and then to Lost Tree Lane but that will be held for a potential future project.

- DPW – Purchase of New Hoist Truck replacing 1995 vehicle - \$500,000: Borough DPW will be replacing a 1995 truck which is past its useful life and no longer viable. This puts in place funding for a new hoist truck will be equipped for multiple functions and more operationally efficient. This funding includes the truck, body, plow, salter, 20-yard container and a dump truck body.

Mayor Dillon asked for a motion to go back into the regular order of business. Motion by Councilwoman Woods, seconded by Councilwoman Cusick.

Roll Call:

YAY: Cusick, Gutwetter, Kilman, Popolo, Poppe, Woods

V. ADVERTISED PUBLIC HEARING FOR FINAL CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCES

ORDINANCE 04-2023 - BOND ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE MAKING OF VARIOUS PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS AND THE ACQUISITION OF A NEW AUTOMOTIVE VEHICLE, INCLUDING ORIGINAL APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT, IN, BY AND FOR THE BOROUGH OF RAMSEY, IN THE COUNTY OF BERGEN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF \$2,721,600 TO PAY THE COST THEREOF, TO MAKE A DOWN PAYMENT, TO AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF SUCH BONDS.

Motion by Councilman Gutwetter, seconded by Councilman Popolo.

BE IT RESOLVED that an Ordinance entitled A Bond Ordinance to authorize the Making of Various Public Improvements and the acquisition of a new Automotive Vehicle, including Original Apparatus and Equipment, in by and for the Borough of Ramsey, in the County of Bergen, State of New Jersey, to appropriate the sum of \$2,721,600 to pay the cost thereof, to make a down payment, to authorize the issuance of bonds to finance such appropriations and to provide for the Issuance of Bond Anticipation Notes in Anticipation of the Issuance of Such Bonds, final reading by title and that said ordinance be adopted as an ordinance of the Borough of Ramsey and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Borough Clerk be and she hereby is, directed to cause a copy of the title of said ordinance to be published in an official newspaper of the Borough in the manner provided by law together with notice of the date of introduction and adoption of said ordinance.

Mayor Dillon opened up the public hearing on Ordinance 04-2023.

With no one wishing to be heard in council chambers or on the telephone, Mayor Dillon closed the public hearing on Ordinance 04-2023.

Roll Call:

YAY: Cusick, Gutwetter, Kilman, Popolo, Poppe, Woods

VI. APPOINTMENTS

Mayor Dillon made the following appointment

Connor Fullam, Ramsey Rescue, Explorer Member

VII. CONSENT RESOLUTION

Motion by Councilman Gutwetter, seconded by Councilman Popolo

BE IT RESOLVED that the following resolutions herewith listed having been considered by the governing body of the Borough of Ramsey be and are hereby passed and approved:

- | | | |
|----------|-------------|---|
| 099-2023 | Resolution: | payment of vouchers |
| 100-2023 | Resolution: | ratifying the action of the governing body for payroll number eight |
| 101-2023 | Resolution: | authorizing the refund of overpayment of taxes due to a tax appeal for year 2019 in the amount of \$1,236.37 |
| 102-2023 | Resolution: | authorizing the refund of overpayment of taxes due to redemption received on tax sale certificate #21-00007 on April 26, 2023 for Block 3508 Lot 12, in the amount of \$3,278.84 |
| 103-2023 | Resolution: | proclaiming May as Mental Health Awareness Month in the Borough of Ramsey |
| 104-2023 | Resolution: | confirming the appointment of Connor Fullam to Ramsey Rescue Squad, as an explorer member |
| 105-2023 | Resolution: | Municipal Alliance grant in the amount of \$4,620.00 for DMHAS |
| 106-2023 | Resolution: | authorizing a refund of taxes for a tax appeal for Block 1102, Lot 23.06 in the amount of \$18,993.83 |
| 107-2023 | Resolution: | authorizing the tax redemption for Block 2304 Lot 3, in the amount \$1,920.33 |
| 108-2023 | Resolution: | authorizing the tax redemption for Block 1902 Lot 26.02 in the amount of \$3,414.48 |
| 109-2023 | Resolution: | authorizing the disposition of obsolete equipment |
| 110-2023 | Resolution: | awarding contract to Netta Architects LLC, 1084 Route 22 West, Mountainside to provide professional services for the design consulting services for a new complex for the Ramsey Fire Department, Rescue Squad and Office of Emergency Management for Phases 1C through Phase 4 in the amount of \$921,600.00 |

VII. CONSENT RESOLUTION (cont'd)

- 111-2023 Resolution: awarding contract to J. A. Alexander, Inc., 130 John F. Kennedy Drive North, Bloomfield, NJ for the resurfacing of various streets as the lead agency in the Northwest Bergen County Co-op in the amount of \$1,545,363.06
- 112-2023 Resolution: awarding contract to J. A. Alexander for resurfacing of various streets in the Borough of Ramsey in the amount of \$516,445

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the following applications and/or recommendations hereby be approved:

A. SPECIAL PERMITS:

B. BLOCK PARTY REQUESTS:

Roll Call:

YAY: Cusick, Gutwetter, Kilman, Popolo, Poppe, Woods

VIII. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Mayor Dillon signed a proclamation declaring May as Mental Health Awareness Month in the Borough of Ramsey as well as a proclamation in honor of Arbor Day.

IX. COMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS

- A. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION – Councilman Michael Gutwetter
Ramsey Library – The Friends of the Ramsey Library’s used book and jewelry spring sale produced funds to support the summer reading, museum pass and Sunday concert series, raising about \$6,500.

Library Con is on May 13th. Please visit Library website for more information.

The library is partnering with the Environmental Commission to celebrate Earth Day and can register on line.

They are also partnering with the Historical Society in the month of May for an exhibit.

Pool Commission – Early bird registration ends on May 1st.
The snack stand vendor is the same as last year.

Recreation Commission – Summer camp registration continues and the Home Run Derby is scheduled for June 17th.

- B. PUBLIC SAFETY – Councilman Peter Kilman
Congratulated Connor Fullam on his appointment.

VFW Post 12148 – The annual poppy donations continue to June 30th.
In mid-May VFW members will be replacing American Flags at fallen veterans’ graves.

Board of Health – Discussed the deer population issue. At dawn and dusk please be extra careful when driving.

- C. BUILDING, PLANNING & ZONING – Councilwoman Jane Woods

Congratulated and thanked Connor Fullam on his appointment to Ramsey Rescue.

Reported on the many events this weekend in Ramsey. The baseball parade, Environmental Clean-up Day, Knights of Columbus collections, UNICO's food drive for Ramsey Responds and Challenger baseball.

Thanked the Ramsey Chamber of Commerce for hosting a mixer at Houlihan's.

Design Review Board – At the last meeting two signs were approved for Graze Craze and a replacement sign that was destroyed in the storm. “Welcome to Ramsey” signs were discussed as a donation from the Ramsey Farmers' Market.

Detailed discussion of the declutter downtown initiative implementation plan was beneficial and next steps were laid out.

Senior Trustees – Met April 13th and Ramsey Responds presented what the organization is currently doing and how the seniors can help with the over two hundred families in Ramsey. The seniors participated in Ramsey Clean-up Day. The Book club is active and the iPhone and Android phone classes continue to be popular and senior classes are well attended.

UNICO held a food drive for Ramsey Responds at the Community Center. There is currently a big demand for food donations.

Zoning Board of Adjustment – At the April 19th meeting they memorialized prior meeting activity. No applicants were heard.

Thanked everyone who was involved in the budget process as it is a tremendous amount of thoughtful and careful work and this was difficult given the current economic environment.

D. UTILITIES, BUILDINGS & GROUNDS – Councilwoman Judy Cusick
Congratulated Connor Fullam on his appointment to Ramsey Rescue.

Expressed her pleasure that the borough has proclaimed May as Mental Health Awareness Month.

Congratulated the Ramsey Softball and Baseball Association on a successful Opening Day Ceremony on April 22nd as well as the Environmental Commission for a productive Ramsey Cleanup Day!

Planning Board - The April 18th meeting was cancelled. The next Planning Board Meeting May 2nd and will be in person in the Council Chambers.

Shade Tree Commission - There will be a tree dedication to Jim Rogers at Finch Park in conjunction with Arbor Day celebrations on April 29th at 1pm. Jim was the past president of our Ramsey Board of Health and longest Board of Health member in Bergen County's history. The next meeting is on May 18th. There is information on the borough's website regarding our Shade Tree Commission.

Board of Public Works - Crew Engineers Inc., has been acquired by H2M architects + engineers. Going forward in BPW correspondence and communications will be from H2M architects + engineers.

Reported on the Lead Service Line Replacement - The Board of Public Works continues planning regarding the NJDEP's Lead Service Line replacement legislation. This project requires that all lead service lines served by the water system be replaced by the year 2031. The project is currently in phase 1B which includes work on test pits to identify locations of service lines throughout the Borough to identify the type of material for the water service line, and the replacement of any discovered LSLs for the Ramsey-owned portions in the street. The bid was awarded to Shauger Property Services, Inc. at the March 20th meeting.

Contracts bonds have been submitted and approved and the contracts are being executed. Construction work is expected to commence by the beginning of May. As Mr. Vozeh noted, our Borough paving projects are being coordinated with this work.

The Springtime Fire Hydrant flushing is wrapping up tonight. Our Assistant Superintendent of the Water and Sewer Division Mike Skorupa thanks the residents for their patience and understanding. The next flushing event will be at the end of September.

- E. PUBLIC & GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS – Councilwoman Sara Poppe
Congratulated Connor Fullam on his appointment to Ramsey Rescue.

Chamber of Commerce – the networking event at Houlihan’s was very successful.

Congratulated Ramsey Lead Officer Sean Beamon on receiving a statewide award being honored with the LEAD NJ Instructor Award for his teaching at St. Paul’s and Dater Schools. Conveying the anti-drug and anti-violence message. LEAD’s Got Talent will be on May 20th.

Ramsey Municipal Alliance – At the last meeting they discussed doing a mock car crash in conjunction with Ramsey emergency services. However, they are having trouble getting cars in order to do these presentations. Please contact Officer Beamon for anyone who would like to donate a vehicle. The Torch Run for Special Olympics is on June 2nd.

Extended her gratitude for proclaiming May as Mental Health Awareness Month, as it is a very important topic and is a good reminder of the Stigma Free message in Ramsey.

- F. HEALTH, EDUCATION & SOCIAL SERVICES – Councilman Glen Popolo
Congratulated Connor Fullam on his appointment.

RIFE – April 28th is the Spring Dance at the Ramsey High School cafeteria.
Challenger softball started up last week and was well attended. Thanks to all of the volunteers.

Environmental Commission – Completed a very successful Clean-up Day with a record number of volunteers as well as the events on Sunday, April 23rd.

Board of Education – At the last meeting they discussed the Ramsey Board of Education and Ramsey Education Association addressing school start time, dates and hours. The 2023/2024 budget was approved with an increase of 2.09%. Increases included school safety, armed security at each school, counseling programs with two additional counselors, two additional teachers for gifted education, additional extracurricular activities for unified sports at the high school and facility improvements at the Ramsey High School auditorium. Two other topics were the pause of the auto shop program along with the issue of the recruitment of teachers.

G. MAYOR DEIRDRE DILLON

Congratulated Connor Fullam on joining the Rescue Squad.

Thanked Borough Administrator Vozeh, Councilman Gutwetter and all of those who worked so hard on the budget, it was a monumental task with the challenges that we are facing this year.

Tuesday, May 23rd the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission mobile unit will be in Ramsey in the Municipal Pool parking lot from 10am-2pm.

As mentioned earlier in the meeting, May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Ramsey is Stigma Free and the Municipal Alliance has taken over the Stigma Free Program.

Recognized the RBSA for the opening day parade last week as well as the ceremony. Thanked John Dugan for recognizing Police Chief Lyman and the Ramsey Police Department at the ceremony.

Thanked all who participated in Ramsey Clean-Up Day as well as the Environmental Commission for organizing it.

Arbor Day is April 28th. There will be a tree planting at Finch Park in honor of Arbor Day and in memory of former Board of Health member Jim Rogers on April 29th, Weather permitting.

H. BOROUGH ADMINISTRATOR – Bruce Vozeh

2023 Municipal Budget – The 2023 municipal budget was introduced at the March 22nd meeting. The full budget document has been posted on the Borough website along with a Municipal Budget Presentation and the 2023 User Friendly Budget. In addition, a Municipal Budget Brochure was mailed out to residents last week and is also on the Borough website. As previously discussed and advertised, the Public Hearing and vote on adoption of the 2023 Municipal Budget will be held later in this meeting. I know Councilman Gutwetter will have some comments regarding the budget later in the meeting. I would just like to take a couple minutes to go over comments I have made at a number of previous meetings regarding the publicly bid new garbage and recycling collection contracts as these represent the largest cost drivers in the 2023 budget.

Garbage & Recycling Contract Factors & Options Review
Public Contract Bid

- Ramsey's last collection contract was bid in 2018 and was a 5-year contract with fixed 3% annual increases. This year we again advertised and went out to public bid for new curbside collection contracts for garbage and recycling replacing the ones expiring. Due to the significant change in economic factors from pre-pandemic to now, in fuel prices, cost of equipment, insurance and labor impacting the contractors bidding, all municipalities with expiring long-term contracts are seeing very significant increases.
- In the last three contracts (2013, 2018 & 2023) Borough has requested and contracted for a bid option for use of natural gas-powered trucks for collection instead of diesel fuel powered providing a cleaner fueled vehicle at no additional cost.
- In the last three contracts (2013, 2018 & 2023) Borough has requested bid option for once weekly garbage pickup in the winter months and returning to a twice weekly garbage pickup for the rest of the year. This option has not provided any tangible savings. With the overall volume of trash remaining the same just condensed to one pickup, the contractor does not feel there is enough variable cost savings in the eliminated pickup day to offset the increased time, additional trips to landfill, and heavier loads for their workers on the single pickup day.
- In the 2023 bid, Borough in addition to the base bid using our traditional pick-up also added an option to price garbage pickup by "one arm bandit" automated trucks. Borough would under this scenario provide each resident with a new larger container compatible with the automated collection truck. We chose to include this option for pricing consideration, as it is starting to be seen in a few municipalities. We wanted to fully review and evaluate the viability of any potential avenues to keep contract costs as low as we could, without impacting service. We received no bid for this option.

BOROUGH ADMINISTRATOR – Bruce Vozeh (cont'd)

Other Northwest Bergen Towns Collection Costs

- We reviewed and analyzed the 13 Northwest Bergen Municipalities' garbage collection costs. Utilizing the municipal budgets of each town for garbage collection cost and dividing that by the total number of residences in each town provides an annual cost per residence for garbage collection. For Ramsey in 2022 that number was about \$125 annually per house for garbage to be collected and hauled away to a landfill 104 times per year or \$1.20 per pickup. That value was the third lowest of the 13 towns. Using Ramsey's updated numbers for 2023, the annual cost will increase to \$236 or \$2.27 per pickup. This per residence cost would still rank 5th lowest of the 13 towns using Ramsey's 2023 costs and other town's 2022 costs.
- Another option we did some preliminary analysis on, is reviewing the economics of the municipality adding staff and infrastructure to do its own garbage collection. In doing this we reviewed the budget requirements of the 2 towns in Northwest Bergen that perform this service (Glen Rock and Ridgewood). In both cases in 2022 in employee salary and wages alone, these towns spent more on a per residence basis than Ramsey did for its collection by Suburban. That does not include those towns other additional costs for, purchase of garbage trucks (3 or 4), health care and other employee costs as well as increased insurance for worker's compensation. Even with Ramsey's increased cost in 2023, the Suburban contract cost is still lower.
- An additional note, some towns offer residents an option to contract directly with a third party for garbage pickup. Teaneck is one of the towns, that private pickup service option currently costs \$25 a month or \$300 per house. Again, this pricing exceeds both Ramsey's 2022 cost of \$125 and 2023 cost of \$236 under the Suburban contract.

Future Options

- While our costs may be in line with or less than other communities for this service. The fact is, this cost increase under the 2023 contract is significant and has a large impact on the municipal tax rate. We fully understand this and we will continue to look at options and work collectively with neighboring towns. This is a frequent topic for both our Northwest Bergen Mayors and Administrators. To date, we have not found value or savings in collectively pursuing a multiple municipality self-pickup arrangement but we will continue to evaluate options and potential for any viable alternatives.

BOROUGH ADMINISTRATOR – Bruce Vozeh (cont'd)

Recycling Market

- In past years there was a robust market for many of the recyclable materials the Borough collected curbside and brought to an approved regional recycling facility for processing. Many of these materials were actually being shipped to China and other countries and municipalities were being paid for the tonnage of material. Over the last few years that has dramatically changed. Currently, there is a very limited recycling market for any of the materials collected curbside and for most of the materials Ramsey is charged by the recycling center and is paying the center for taking the material and processing. Ramsey still collects material similarly and its contractor brings to the recycling facility but as noted it is now an additional cost rather than a mitigant to the collection cost as it was in years past.

I. BOROUGH ATTORNEY – Peter A. Scandariato, Esq. – no report

J. BOROUGH CLERK – Meredith Bendian - No report

X. INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES - None

XI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Public Hearing on the 2023 Municipal Budget

Mayor Dillon opened the public hearing for the 2023 Municipal Budget.

With no one on the telephone or in council chambers wishing to be heard, Mayor Dillon closed the public hearing.

Borough Auditor Paul Garbarini thanked Administrator Vozeh, CFO Bartalotta, the Finance Committee and the Mayor and Council for their support through the process and stated that the 2023 budget meets all the statutory regulatory guidelines set by the state and this particular year the borough is eligible for self-exam.

Councilman Gutwetter, Finance Chairman

The 2023 municipal budget has similar economic challenges to those all households and businesses are facing. The inflationary and in some cases skyrocketing costs in our economy. These economic challenges in 2023 are not unique to Ramsey. Due to these inflationary cost increases the State of New Jersey has taken unprecedented action in granting one-year exceptions in budget year 2023 only for expenditures of garbage removal and disposal, recycling, health insurance and employer pension contributions. These also are the largest cost drivers in Ramsey's 2023 budget.

Regarding Borough debt levels, the 2023 budget includes principal paydown on debt of \$1.3 million, just under 50% of it from grants the borough sought and received, for these needed improvements, mitigating the cost to residents. Ramsey's municipal debt level remains one

of the lowest among the 13 Northwest Bergen municipalities. This strong low leveraged financial standing, leaves Ramsey in a position to utilize the long-term debt markets for large capital infrastructure projects.

For the last twelve years Ramsey has kept municipal tax rate increases below 2% including a 0% increase in 2021 as the community dealt with the impact of COVID and economic loss. Unfortunately, 2023 will be different. As mentioned earlier the four expense line items discussed account for an 8.55% rate increase with the rest of the budget representing a 0.25% increase for an 8.80% increase. Including 2023, the seven-year average municipal annual rate increase is 2.52%.

The impact of the proposed budget on municipal portion of property taxes for 2023 would be a total increase of \$3.75 monthly, or about \$45 for the year for every \$100,000 of a property's assessed value. For the borough's average home assessed at \$533,096 in 2023, the impact would be \$19.99 monthly or approximately \$240 annually.

Ramsey ranks in the lowest tier of municipal tax rates in Bergen County with the 11th lowest of 70 municipalities municipal tax rate and the 6th lowest of 70 towns in terms of the share of tax dollars going to municipal services for 2022. Both of these figures are at least 29% below County wide average.

Ramsey maintains favorable ranking for municipal tax rates, debt and surplus levels with other Northwest Bergen municipalities. For example, Ramsey is 3rd lowest of 13 towns in total amount of municipal debt as % of equalized valuation basis. The State allows up to 3.5% net debt as a % of equalized valuation, Ramsey at Year End 2022 is at 0.29% or less than one tenth of the State limit.

While it is obvious, it does bear mentioning, all of the Governing Body as well as the Borough Administrator and Borough Attorney up here are Ramsey residents and taxpayers, no one takes raising taxes lightly. We all feel the same impact as residents in our household budgets. Unfortunately, in today's inflationary economy, the Borough is not immune to the impact of rising costs. We look forward to continuing to work toward providing a high level of service to our residents and taxpayers in 2023.

The full budget document is posted on the borough website along with the municipal budget presentation from the March 8th Council Meeting updated for the final budget being adopted tonight. A Municipal Budget Brochure was sent to residents prior to tonight's meeting for the public hearing of the municipal budget.

Motion by Councilman Gutwetter, seconded by Councilman Popolo.

113-2023 Resolution: adopting the 2023 municipal budget

Roll Call:

YAY: Cusick, Gutwetter, Kilman, Popolo, Poppe, Woods

Mayor Dillon thanked everyone for their help and input for a smooth process. Thanked Mr.

Vozech for the work he did on the various options for the garbage and recycling collection.

XII. NEW BUSINESS - None

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Councilman Gutwetter, seconded by Councilwoman Cusick. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:50pm.

Meredith Bendian, RMC
Borough Clerk