

BOROUGH OF RAMSEY
MAYOR AND COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, February 24, 2021

BUDGET
INTRO

Due to COVID19 this meeting was conducted telephonically.
Dial-In Number (425)436-6365 Access Code 213563#

View Meeting on Ramsey Youtube Channel
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeBnVXBwSn_ILMuAGkSin9w

Council President Kilman called the meeting to order at 7:30pm, led the flag salute and read the Open Public Meetings Act notice.

I. ROLL CALL:

Present: Councilpersons Cusick (via phone), Gutwetter (via phone), Jones (via phone), Kilman, Weber (via phone) and Woods (via phone)

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

Absent: Mayor Dillon

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - Reorg 01-05-21, 01-27-21, WS 02-10-21

Motion to approve and file by Councilman Weber, seconded by Councilman Jones. All in favor. Carried.

III. COMMUNICATIONS -

Motion to receive and file by Councilwoman Woods, seconded by Councilwoman Cusick. All in favor. Carried.

1. Alison Gordon, Northwest Bergen County Utilities Authority, 30 Wyckoff Ave, Waldwick, NJ
enclosing agendas for the Authority's upcoming Tuesday, February 16, 2021 meetings
2. David Torchin, Ramsey Court Alternate Prosecutor
emailed dated February 22, 2021, resigning as alternate prosecutor effective immediately due to professional circumstances

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Anyone wishing to address the governing body please press *6 to be heard and 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.

Nicholas Haas, Grove Street, Ramsey, NJ

Discussed the incident at the US Capital on January 6 as well as the marches of RASE on January 10 and January 24 and the interaction with the Ramsey Police. Mr. Haas called on the Mayor and Council to hold Ramsey PD accountable for their "misconduct".

Council President Kilman asked several more times for those wishing to speak and with no one else wishing to be heard, Council President Kilman closed public comment.

V. ADVERTISED PUBLIC HEARING FOR FINAL CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCES

ORDINANCE 06-2021 - AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 20 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF RAMSEY, BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY AND MORE SPECIFICALLY SECTION 20-1.4 THEREOF ENTITLED DEPOSIT REQUIREMENTS

Motion by Councilman Kilman, seconded by Councilman Gutwetter

BE IT RESOLVED THAT AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED: An Ordinance Amending Chapter 20 of the Code of the Borough of Ramsey, County of Bergen, State of New Jersey and more Specifically Section 20-1.4 thereof entitled Deposit Requirements, first reading by title and that said ordinance be adopted by as an ordinance of the Borough of Ramsey and;

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.

Councilman Kilman explained that this ordinance amends the code updating the cost per tree for owners performing new construction for installation of shade trees to \$550 per tree.

Council President Kilman opened the public hearing on Ordinance 06-2021. With no one wishing to be heard, Council President Kilman closed the public hearing.

ROLL CALL:

YAY: Cusick, Gutwetter, Jones, Kilman, Weber, Woods

V. ADVERTISED PUBLIC HEARING FOR FINAL CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCES (cont'd)

ORDINANCE 07-2021 -AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 34 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF RAMSEY, BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY AND MORE SPECIFICALLY SUBSECTION 34-4.5 THEREOF ACCESSORY BUILDING

Motion by Councilwoman Cusick, seconded by Councilwoman Woods

BE IT RESOLVED THAT AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED: An Ordinance Amending Chapter 34 of the Code of the Borough of Ramsey, County of Bergen, State of New Jersey and more Specifically Subsection 34-4.5 thereof entitled Accessory Building, first reading by title and that said ordinance be adopted by as an ordinance of the Borough of Ramsey and;

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.

Councilwoman Cusick explained that this amendment was recommended by the Planning Board which makes the code consistent with the NJ Building Code regarding accessory structures.

Council President Kilman opened the public hearing for Ordinance 07-2021. With no one wishing to be heard, Council President Kilman closed the public hearing on 07-2021.

ROLL CALL:

YAY: Cusick, Gutwetter, Jones, Kilman, Weber, Woods

VI. APPOINTMENTS

Council President Kilman made the following appointment

Addison Emr, Ramsey Fire Department

VII. CONSENT RESOLUTION

Motion by Councilman Gutwetter, seconded by Councilwoman Woods

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:

- | | | |
|----------|-------------|--|
| 054-2021 | Resolution: | payment of vouchers |
| 055-2021 | Resolution: | ratifying the actions of the governing body for payroll number four |
| 056-2021 | Resolution: | authorizing the person to person and place to place liquor license transfer for 726 Route 17 Corp d/b/a Horizon Diner (pocket license) 0248-33-014-006 to Kalea Wines LLC, 110 E. Main Street with a new license number of 0248-33-014-007 |
| 057-2021 | Resolution: | enter into a grant agreement with Bergen County Community Development for a Block Grant in the amount of \$60,398.00 for ADA Handicapped Bathrooms second floor of Borough Hall |
| 058-2021 | Resolution: | authorizing the approval of a one-year labor agreement extension, with modified terms, between the Borough of Ramsey and United Public Service Employees Union (“UPSEU”) White Collar extending the contract maturity to December 31, 2021 |
| 059-2021 | Resolution: | self-exam for 2021 Municipal Budget |
| 060-2021 | Resolution: | authorizing the borough to anticipate miscellaneous revenues in the 2021 Swimming Pool Utility Budget using the three-year average of realized revenues from the prior three years |
| 061-2021 | Resolution: | authorizing the Ramsey Rescue By-Law changes |
| 062-2021 | Resolution: | exempting the borough’s recent purchase of Block 2308 Lot 1, 13 N. Central Avenue from property taxes in the amount of \$5,940.56 |
| 063-2021 | Resolution: | confirming the appointment of Addison Emr to the Ramsey Fire Department |

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

VII. CONSENT RESOLUTION (cont'd)

A. SPECIAL PERMITS:

Minetti Dennis Group is requesting permission to hold a town wide garage sale on Saturday, May 1st from 9am-4pm, following all of the guidelines for social distancing

B. BLOCK PARTY REQUESTS:

Council President Kilman asked if anyone wanted to be heard on Resolution 056-2021 for the liquor license transfer. With no one wishing to be heard Council President Kilman asked for a roll call.

ROLL CALL:

YAY: Cusick, Gutwetter, Jones, Kilman, Weber, Woods

VIII. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS - None

IX. COMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS

- A. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION – Councilman Michael Gutwetter
Mentioned that the 2021 budget will be introduced later this evening.

Ordinance 08-2021 will be introduced tonight to establish a CAP bank which is a standard ordinance adopted by municipalities in advance of adopting the budget.

Library Board – The library is currently exploring options regarding a building assessment of the library facility to identify items that need to be addressed and develop a five-year capital improvement plan. The summer reading program being discussed for an outdoor event.

Recreation Commission – Easter Egg Hunt looks like it will happen with details to follow. Pickleball and Bocce in the spring are also being planned. Homerun Derby is scheduled for June 19th and is the 50th anniversary of this event. Summer Camp is under consideration.

- B. PUBLIC SAFETY – Councilman Harry Weber
Thanked Dave Torchin for his years of service and thanked and congratulated Addison Emr for joining the Fire Department.

Municipal Alliance – there is a presentation tonight on the legalization of marijuana.

Thanked the DPW for their great job with the snow removal.

Congratulated and thanked the Budget committee for their hard work on the budget that is being introduced tonight.

- C. BUILDING, PLANNING & ZONING – Councilwoman Jane Woods
Board of Health – Rabies Clinic had a great turn out. Ramsey's COVID testing event today was steady but slower than previous testing events. Ramsey residents may also attend the Oakland testing site. There were twenty health inspections this month with nineteen satisfactory and one conditional. Outdoor dining resumes March 1st. Members of the Board of Health continue to take training classes on line.

COVID Vaccine Updates – It is currently Phase 1B: Frontline Healthcare Workers, Police and Fire Professionals. Residents of Long-term Healthcare Facilities, 65 years and older and residents 16 and older with high-risk medical conditions are eligible to receive the vaccine.

A Vulnerable Population Task Force has been created with the Mayor, Borough Administrator, Board of Health, Board of Education, Office of Emergency Management, Police, Emergency Services and RIFE to identify Ramsey's vulnerable population. Mid Bergen Regional Health Commission has created a vulnerable population outreach coordinator position to compile data and assist with support.

Bergen County is working on an inbound call center for people who don't have the ability to register on line. Hopefully this will be operational soon.

The Ramsey Seniors continue to be active on Zoom classes.

Design Review Board – Approved three sign applications.

Thanked Mr. Torchin for his professional service and congratulated Addison Emr for joining the Fire Department.

D. UTILITIES, BUILDINGS & GROUNDS – Councilman Peter Kilman
Will have an update at the next meeting as his committees meet later in the month.

E. PUBLIC & GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS – Councilman William Jones
Welcomed Addison to the Ramsey Fire Department.

Pool Commission adopted their budget and set the fees for the upcoming season. Pricing stays the same for the early bird portion with rate increases coming thereafter. There is more certainty that we will open on time and be able to attain certain revenues this season.

Thanked everyone on the Finance Committee and everyone who helped prepare the budget, knowing all the hard work that goes into it.

Reminded everyone about the outdoor Farmers' Market on Sundays and to please shop locally and support local businesses. Please visit the Chamber of Commerce online.

F. HEALTH, EDUCATION & SOCIAL SERVICES – Councilwoman Judith Cusick
Planning Board - There were 6 waiver applications at this meeting: Zina International LLC, Joyle Dage Research Corporation, Prompt Packaging LLC, Nexus Assets, LLC, Lather Lounge Salon LLC and Wythe Windows, Inc. The waiver applications were approved. There was a public hearing for Brian Gutterman- soil movement permit. Mr. Gutterman is proposing to build a new home at 160 Forest Avenue. The soil movement application was approved.

Board of Education: Town Members are encouraged to keep current with the Board of Education activities because 69% of Ramsey Residents' property taxes are for the Board of Education.

At the February 23rd Meeting there was a presentation provided by the NJ School Boards Association Training titled, "Special Education - A Primer" for the Ramsey Board of Education. John J. Burns, Esq.

Superintendent's report:

On March 4th at 8pm – there will be a presentation, "Let's Talk Mental Health" with Dr. Frank Sileo, award-winning author and national speaker to discuss how best we can help our students and families during the pandemic. Pre-registration is required for this Zoom class.

National Eating Disorder Awareness Week is Feb. 22-28. There was a video presentation from a Ramsey High School 10th grade student who put together a presentation about eating disorders. Her goal is to educate and reduce the stigma of eating disorders.

Regarding Wellness - There was a video presentation from the Ramsey High School System teachers, coaches and counselors describing their wellness efforts within the school system.

Ramsey Responds - The Church of Saint Paul will conduct a Fish Fry starting this Friday February 12th through March 26th. Each week, Saint Paul's will be donating 100 meals to Ramsey Responds. Donations are always welcome. Food collection occurs every Tuesday from 4-5:30pm at St. Paul's – and the Ramsey Responds Team delivers and distributes on Fridays. They are also accepting fresh fruits and vegetables, butter, cheese, and Shoprite Gift Cards. They are also looking to get paper bags and Fresh Direct bags for packing and delivering.

G. MAYOR DEIRDRE DILLON

Absent

H. BOROUGH ADMINISTRATOR – Bruce Vozeh

Mentioned that he had discussed details on the municipal budget at the last meeting with all of the backup available on the website under the transparency section.

Addressed a couple of things that led to the budget that took place last year preparing for this zero percent municipal increase.

The pandemic impacted residents and the borough. There were shortfalls in revenue last year of almost \$400,000 so the borough had to mitigate the impact of that. Ultimately achieve a zero percent municipal tax increase in 2021. The borough froze all discretionary non covid spending, implemented a fifteen percent reduction for one year in the department operating budgets, cancelled a number of unspent appropriation line items in order to have surplus into this year's budget to help get to a zero percent increase. We also worked with union employees who had expiring contracts in 2020, negotiated a one-year extension with a freeze in salaries. These actions allowed the borough to be in a position to achieve the 2021 budget with no municipal increase, marking the eleventh consecutive year under two percent increase with a zero percent increase this year.

Discussed various resolutions

Resolution 057 – Resolution authorizes the Borough to enter into a grant agreement with Bergen County Community Development for a Block Grant in the amount of \$60,398 for ADA Handicapped Bathrooms on the second floor of Borough Hall. We have discussed this project at recent meetings when we were notified by County Executive Tedesco of our award.

Resolution 058 – Resolution approves a one-year labor agreement extension between the

Borough and United Public Service Employees Union (“UPSEU”) White Collar employees extending the maturity to 2021. This follows similar extensions negotiated between the Borough and its labor unions with expiring contracts at year-end 2020, to extend for one year the contract with salary guides frozen at 2020 levels with no increase in 2021.

Resolution 059 – This resolution allows the Borough to assume the responsibility to perform a self-examination of its 2021 municipal budget which is normally granted to the States Director of the Division of Local Government Services. This responsibility is granted by the State to permit municipalities who they determine are in sound financial condition.

Resolution 060 – Resolution allows the 2021 Swimming Pool Utility Budget to anticipate certain revenue items in its 2021 budget to utilize three-year averages for 2021. Typically, in municipal budgeting a town may only budget revenue line items equal or less than what was received as actual revenue in the prior year. Due to the pandemic impacting 2020 revenues, the State has allowed municipalities the option of utilizing three-year averages of 2018, 2019 and 2020 to determine maximum revenue for its 2021 budget line items assuming the Governing Body adopts such resolution. Borough is not utilizing the three-year average for Municipal or Water Sewer Utility budgets but is using the averaging for the Municipal Pool budget.

Ordinance 08-2021- Councilman Gutwetter discussed this ordinance. This is a “pro-forma” or standard ordinance municipalities across New Jersey adopt each year ahead of adopting the Municipal Budget. The State allows a municipality, if they adopt this ordinance, to potentially increase their budget appropriations by up to 3.5% from the prior year’s budgeted appropriations. This does not impact the tax levy cap of 2% it deals with appropriation line items under the State Municipal Cap and allow flexibility if in a given year certain line items need to be increased above the appropriation cap. While Ramsey is not utilizing this flexibility (budget has under a 0.4% increase in capped appropriations for 2021) there is no harm in adopting the ordinance and any amount under the revised allowable level a town is under the cap is banked for future years.

I. BOROUGH ATTORNEY – Peter A. Scandariato, Esq. - no comment

J. BOROUGH CLERK – Meredith Bendian - no comment

X. INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

ORDINANCE 08-2021 – AN ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK (N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14)

Motion by Councilman Gutwetter, seconded by Councilman Kilman.

BE IT RESOLVED that an ordinance entitled An Ordinance to Exceed the Municipal Budget Appropriation Limits and to Establish a CAP Bank (N.J.S.A.40A:4-45.14, passed the first reading by title, and that said ordinance be further considered for final passage and adoption at a regular meeting of the Mayor and Council to be held on the 10th day of March, 2021 at 7:30pm prevailing time or as soon after as the matter can be reached in the Municipal Building in said Borough and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Borough Clerk be and she hereby is, instructed to publish in an official newspaper of the Borough in the manner provided by law, a copy of said ordinance together with notice of introduction thereof and notice when the same will be considered for final passage and adoption.

Councilman Gutwetter explained that this ordinance establishes a CAP Bank which is standard in each municipality ahead of adopting its budget.

ROLL CALL:

YAY: Cusick, Gutwetter, Jones, Kilman, Weber, Woods

XI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

XII. NEW BUSINESS

Councilman Gutwetter listed some bullet points on the 2021 Municipal Budget:

Meets the objective of adopting a prudent and responsible budget while continuing to provide a high level of service to taxpayers

No municipal tax rate increase in 2021, also is the 11th consecutive year with increases below 2%

Number of revenue line items will be below 2020 pre-pandemic levels reflecting the continued economic impact of COVID-19

2020 budget reduction measures taken are providing funds which are being utilized as surplus in the 2021 budget to help keep tax rate flat

Borough has implemented and negotiated further appropriation line-item reductions for 2021 to offset contractual and statutory appropriation increases to other line items

Ramsey ranks in the lowest tier of municipal tax rates in Bergen County with the 7th lowest of 70 municipalities share of tax dollars going to municipal services at 19.5%. This is 54% below the county wide average of 30.1% of taxes to municipal services

Ramsey maintains favorable ranking for municipal tax rates, debt and surplus levels with other NW Bergen municipalities

2021 budget continues to reduce municipal debt levels while addressing necessary capital infrastructure investments

Thanked everyone involved in the budget process for their help in the development of the 2021 Budget, especially Administrator Vozeh, CFO Bartalotta and the Department Heads. The Governing Body understands the pandemic's impact on our community and has worked with our team to provide a 2021 budget with no municipal tax rate increase. The Board of Education and County of Bergen will finalize their components of the 2021 tax rate later in the year, as the municipal portion only represents 20% of overall property taxes.

Motion by Councilman Gutwetter, seconded by Councilwoman Woods

064-2021 Resolution: 2021 Municipal Budget Introduction

Councilman Gutwetter said this budget meets the objective of adopting a prudent and responsible budget while continuing to provide a high level of service to tax payers. There is no municipal tax increase in 2021 which is the 11th consecutive year with increases below two percent.

ROLL CALL:

YAY: Cusick, Gutwetter, Jones, Kilman, Weber, Woods

Council President Kilman commented on how difficult it is to have a 0% municipal budget increase. Even in challenging times it is a tremendous accomplishment and thanked Borough Administrator Bruce Vozeh, CFO Denise Bartalotta and Councilman Gutwetter.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn to executive session for the discussion of a personnel matter by Councilman Weber, seconded by Councilman Jones at 8:10pm. No action will be taken and the governing body will not return to public session.

Borough Attorney Scandariato read the executive session resolution.

ROLL CALL:

YAY: Cusick, Gutwetter, Jones, Kilman, Weber, Woods

Meredith Bendian, RMC

Borough Clerk