

**BOROUGH OF RAMSEY**  
**MAYOR AND COUNCIL**  
**WORK SESSION MINUTES**  
Wednesday, June 14, 2023  
6:00pm

This meeting is being conducted telephonically. The Dial-In Number (425)436-6365 Access Code 213563# and may also be viewed on the Ramsey YouTube Channel [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeBnVXBwSn\\_ILMuAGkSin9w](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeBnVXBwSn_ILMuAGkSin9w)

Councilman Gutwetter called the meeting to order at 6:03pm and asked Mr. Knauss to lead the flag salute. Councilman Gutwetter read the Open Public Meetings Act notice.

I. ROLL CALL:

Present: Councilpersons Cusick, Kilman (6:06pm), Gutwetter, Popolo, Poppe, Woods

Also Present: Deputy Borough Clerk Richards, Borough Administrator Vozech and Borough Attorney Scandariato

Absent: Mayor Dillon

Councilman Kilman joined the meeting at 6:06pm.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 05-24-23

Motion to receive and file the minutes by Councilwoman Poppe, seconded by Councilwoman Woods. Councilwoman Poppe abstained. All in favor. Carried.

III. COMMUNICATIONS -

Motion by Councilwoman Woods, seconded by Councilwoman Cusick. All in favor. Carried.

1. John Danubio, Executive Director, Northwest Bergen County Utilities Authorities, 30 Wyckoff Ave, Waldwick, NJ  
e-mail dated June 13, 2023, regarding the connection fee hearing on June 21, 2023 at 7:00pm
2. Senator Holly Schepisi, 287 Kinderkamack Road, Westwood, NJ 07675  
letter received June, 2023 regarding recently introduced legislation S-3906 that would provide \$4.32 billion of “Give it Back” property tax relief to every town and county in New Jersey

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Anyone wishing to address the governing body please give your name (spelling the last name) and address. 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.

Councilman Gutwetter opened public comment. With no one wishing to be heard in council chambers or on the telephone, Councilman Gutwetter closed public comment.

V. ADVERTISED PUBLIC HEARING FOR FINAL CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCES - None

VI. APPOINTMENTS

Councilwoman Gutwetter confirmed that Mayor Dillon made the following appointment:

JM Nunziata, Recreation Commission, Regular Member  
(filling unexpired term of G. Siraki)

## VII. CONSENT RESOLUTION

Motion by Councilman Gutwetter, seconded by Councilwoman Poppe

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:

- |          |             |   |
|----------|-------------|---|
| 133-2023 | Resolution: | payment of vouchers   |
| 134-2023 | Resolution: | ratifying the actions of the governing body for payroll number eleven   |
| 135-2023 | Resolution: | ratifying the actions of the governing body for payroll number twelve   |
| 136-2023 | Resolution: | awarding a contract for improvements to Island Road (Section 6) and Williams Drive to 4 Clean-Up Inc., P.O. Box 5098, North Bergen, New Jersey in the amount of \$309,695.70      |
| 137-2023 | Resolution: | authorizing that Capital Alternatives prepare, assemble, and submit the necessary documentation on behalf of the Borough of Ramsey for the Grove Street Project grant application |
| 138-2023 | Resolution: | approving the submission and execution of a grant application and agreement with the New Jersey Department of Transportation for Grove Street Project                             |
| 139-2023 | Resolution: | confirming the appointment of Ryan Latkowski to the Ramsey DPW as a full-time employee, effective June 10, 2023   |
| 140-2023 | Resolution: | authorizing the issuance of third quarter estimated tax bills   |
| 141-2023 | Resolution: | confirming the appointment of Lauren Kertesz to the Ramsey Rescue Squad   |
| 142-2023 | Resolution: | authorizing the disposition of obsolete equipment consisting of a washer and extractor located at the Ramsey Fire Department identified as tag number #446                        |

VII. CONSENT RESOLUTION (cont'd)

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

## IX. COMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS

- A. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION – Councilman Michael Gutwetter  
Ramsey Library – Recent events included, Ramsey Trivia Night with fifty plus attendees, the Wildlife Photography Event with the Environmental Commission and the restart of the Ramsey Cook Book Club and Library Com. The Summer Reading kick off is June 28<sup>th</sup>, summer concert series and an author visit in July.

Recreation Commission – Summer Camp registration ends June 16<sup>th</sup>.  
Home Run Derby is Saturday, June 17<sup>th</sup> at Finch Park.

Pool Commission – Opened Memorial Day weekend and will open weekdays starting June 26<sup>th</sup>.

- B. PUBLIC SAFETY – Councilman Peter Kilman  
VFW Post # 12148 –

After speaking with Borough Administrator, Mr. Vozeh, and with Mayor Dillon, we felt that it would be a good idea in my Public Safety role to provide a brief recap and ongoing updates in tandem with Mr. Vozeh's reports, as it pertains to the New Ramsey Emergency Services building project that would replace the existing structure on South Island Road. The resulting structure would accommodate the Ramsey Fire Department, Heavy Rescue Squad and move the O.E.M. Department to this facility, where it belongs, instead of in the basement of Borough Hall.

At various Mayor and Council meetings over the past year, Mr. Vozeh has provided cogent explanations on the various steps we have taken along the way to address this project, so my reports will be brief so as to distil the volume of information coming at us. And we will provide you with the key information as we move forward. In addition, we are setting up a special folder on the Borough Website in which we will place pertinent information about this project as it becomes known and approved.

The existing building was originally constructed as a firehouse in the 1950s. Since the original construction, multiple additions have been added to this building. As a result, from the ongoing wear and tear from constant use - various structural problems, ongoing repairs, and limitations to accommodate the Emergency Services requirements have arisen. To that end, the Ramsey Borough has been considering options for either extensive renovations or for replacement of the existing Fire Dept and Rescue Squad buildings on South Island Ave.

After consultation with various professionals within the Ramsey Borough, we engaged Colliers Engineering and Design as an independent engineering firm to perform a review of the current conditions, from a structural and ADA POV and provide their overall evaluation of the current building.

In its 2022 report, Colliers provided a detailed analysis on its findings, conclusions, and recommendations. We will post that report on our website.

This is a very brief summary of their findings:

#### Regarding Architectural (Interior Safety & ADA Compliance)

Colliers stated that the building does not comply with current ADA standards, and has operational and code deficiencies that would require major reconstruction and/or partial demolition of the structure to accommodate.

There is inadequate clearance in the truck bay and substandard height of the overhead bay doors.

The stairs need to be completely rebuilt. An elevator needs to be added and the restrooms are in disrepair and need to be completely renovated.

#### Regarding the Exterior as to Site Safety & ADA Compliance

The site does not meet several of the 2010 ADA Design Standards. This includes: restriping the parking lot to include additional ADA spaces, restriping the eight (8) parking spaces on the north side of the building to relocate the ADA space closer to a door, adding a curb ramp along the curb bordering those eight (8) parking spaces, and adding proper turning space and a curb ramp to the main entrance to the fire house facing east towards the intersection of South Island Ave and East Main Street.

There are multiple structural concerns throughout both the main building and Rescue building.

The chimney of the main building is an immediate safety concern as pieces of the chimney could fall and impact pedestrians below.

Additionally, the main building has a large foundation crack, likely due to settlement, and there is cracking throughout the parge coating which is in the Ramsey Emergency Services Building.

There are possible issues below the coating, and deficiencies with the truck bay slab. Based on experience, it is likely that the truck bay slab exceeds allowable chloride levels.

The Rescue Building and truck bay both shows signs of significant settlement throughout. Ground improvements would be required to prevent further settlement but performing ground improvements on existing structures is very costly, and does not always completely solve the issue. Ground improvements are better completed prior to the construction of various structures.

It is important to note Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing systems of the subject building were not in the scope of this study. However, Colliers did note that it expects given what they had seen thus far – if inspected, these areas would not meet the current codes, and would require upgrades. Again, based on experience, MEP upgrades and retrofits carry significant design and construction costs.

The costs to make the necessary safety and ADA compliance upgrades (some which may not even be feasible to the existing structure), the necessary building repairs, and ongoing future costs to this complex, would be cost prohibitive when compared to the construction of a new emergency services building.

In order to meet current standards, building codes and operational issues, Colliers Engineering and Design wrote that 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.

As a result of their findings, the Borough sent a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) 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 ES Building Committee (i.e., Ex-Ramsey Fire Chiefs Greg Hewitt and Jonathan Krehel, an Ex-Ramsey Rescue Chief Joe Manfredonia, Ramsey Rescue Chief Chris Keosayian) along with OEM representatives and our Borough Administrator.

After review by the Borough, it was the consensus and recommendation of all involved that the Borough retain Netta Architects, LLC as the firm to be awarded the Design Services contract. The proposal is for four main phases of services from project initiation to construction documents, as well as construction observation and administration through completion. There are specific sum payments for the various phases of the project with a cumulative total of the services to completion of \$1,152,000.

In March 2023, Ramsey Resolution 80 set in place funding for such services and Resolution 81 awarded the contract for only the first phases 1A & 1B (to be specific) which constitute \$230,400 of the total cost of services. The remainder of the contract for services of \$921,600 was on the agenda at the April 26th M&C meeting and approved.

My overview brings us up to date, if you have not been following our meetings over the past year. As the Ramsey Fire, Rescue and OEM, Complex concepts from Netta Architects take shape and become finalized to our satisfaction, we will share them with you, keeping you informed on future progress.

C. BUILDING, PLANNING & ZONING – Councilwoman Jane Woods  
Congratulated and thanked Lauren and Ryan on their appointments.

Ramsey Senior Trustee Board – The meeting began with the Health Planner from the Mid Bergen Regional Health offered support for numerous senior classes highlighting balance and falls, exercise, healthy aging, loneliness and dementia. Alane O’Hagan started as the new Senior Coordinator and we are very pleased.

D. UTILITIES, BUILDINGS & GROUNDS – Councilwoman Judy Cusick  
Congratulated Jay Nunziata on his appointment to the Ramsey Recreation Department.

Thanked the third graders from Tisdale Elementary School for their profile project lemonade stand efforts with the proceeds to help purchase new trash containers for Main Street.

Planning Board – at the June 6<sup>th</sup> meeting there were 2 public hearings: Evergreen Properties and Chick-fil-A – both as continuations from prior hearings. Evergreen Properties (which is a daycare facility) was approved. The Chick-fil-A hearing is being continued to July 18<sup>th</sup>. The next Planning Board Meeting is June 20<sup>th</sup> in the Council Chambers.

Shade Tree Commission – The commission will be contacting some Ramsey residents by mail to notify them that they have trees on their property which are infested with the Emerald Ash Borer and should be removed by a professional. There are two new ordinances pertaining to the Shade Tree Commission being introduced this evening. There is information on the borough website regarding our Shade Tree Commission.

Board of Public Works - 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.

H2M has begun to review and tabulate the water quality data for the Borough of Ramsey's 2022 Consumer Confidence Report (CCR). A draft report will be available to the Board in June and a postcard will be mailed to all customers directing them to the report that will be posted on our Borough's website.

Discussed the Ramsey Police Department's page which is listed on the Borough's website under departments and noted that it includes information regarding the RPD.

E. PUBLIC & GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS – Councilwoman Sara Poppe  
Ramsey Municipal Alliance – Thanked Officer Gilli for helping with the Drug Take Back Event. On October 10<sup>th</sup> Municipal Alliance is hosting the Parent Academy which will be Black Poster Project.

June 20<sup>th</sup> is the new resident mixer at the municipal pool, with many organizations participating. There will be entertainment and refreshments, supplied by ShopRite and pizza from Sal's.

As a part of "New Resident Outreach" the governing body has been personally reaching out to new residents in the community, going door to door. Thanked Mayor Dillon and Councilmembers Cusick, Popolo and Kilman for so generously donating their time to this initiative. Thanked Kelly Sylvester for stuffing the new resident folders and adding a link to the website that includes all of the documents included in the folder, including the new mixer flyer and the Independence Day celebration on July 1<sup>st</sup>.



- F. HEALTH, EDUCATION & SOCIAL SERVICES – Councilman Glen Popolo Congratulated JM, Ryan and Lauren on their appointments.

RIFE – Grant progress reports for 2021-2022 were submitted. RIFE awarded two Ramsey High School scholarships to Emma Collin and Mario Spagnialetti. The Challenger final softball game is June 16<sup>th</sup> at MacFarren Field from 7pm-9pm. The RIFE gala will be June 24<sup>th</sup> from 6pm-9pm in the high school gymnasium. There will be an upcoming trip to a Boulder's Baseball game in July and a pool party in August.

Environmental Commission – Discussed the restoration of Van Gelder Pond with a possible grant opportunity. Jen Dipolato presented the community compost program, highlighting Paramus' program and will refine the presentation. The commission also discussed Styrofoam and will come up with options for the borough.

- G. MAYOR DEIRDRE DILLON

Absent

- H. BOROUGH ADMINISTRATOR – Bruce Vozeh

Resolution 136 – Award of contract to 4 Clean-Up Inc. for the Improvements to Island Road and Williams Drive: Borough went out to public bid in May for this project and bids were opened on June 7th. Six contractors submitted bids. 4 Clean-Up was the low bid at \$309,695.70. It was a very competitive bid process with all bids within about 3% from lowest to highest and all below the Independent Engineers Estimate for the work. C.P. Statile, P.A. is the Borough's independent engineer on the project and has recommended award of the contract to 4 Clean-Up and Borough Engineer and Qualified Purchasing Agent, Jack D'Agostaro, concurs with the recommendation. Borough Attorney Scandariato has also reviewed bids for legal compliance and all is satisfactory. Project encompasses the 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. The other portions of Island Road had been resurfaced recently and the other portion of Williams Drive is in the Borough 2023 resurfacing program. Funding for this project was previously put in place earlier this spring. The Borough also had previously obtained a grant for \$206,000 of this work which significantly mitigates the taxpayer impact of the improvements.

Resolutions 137 & 138 – Municipal Aid Grant Application for Road Resurfacing of Grove Street: These two resolutions pertain to preparation and submission of a Municipal Aid Grant Application for the resurfacing of Grove Street. Resolution 137 authorizes Capital Alternatives to prepare the application and Resolution 138 approves the execution and submission of the grant application and agreement. Borough along with Capital Alternatives' help has been very successful in obtaining Municipal Aid grants. For example, the project I just discussed for Island Road and Williams Drive, where Ramsey obtained a Municipal Aid Grant of \$206,000 and therefore offset more than half the project cost to the taxpayer. The Borough should receive notification from the State on this grant application award toward the end of 2023.

H. BOROUGH ADMINISTRATOR – Bruce Vozeh (cont'd)

Resolution 139 – Confirming appointment of Ryan Latkowski as full-time employee of the Ramsey DPW: With retirement of Norm Andersen earlier this year, the Borough has a DPW full-time opening. After receiving applications and interviewing candidates, the recommendation from the DPW Superintendent and Asst. Superintendent was to offer the position to Ryan Latkowski. Ryan has been a part-time employee in the DPW for a few years which should make for a seamless transition.

Resolution 140 - Authorizing preparation and issuance of 2023 estimated property tax bills due August 1st: Each year we do a resolution authorizing the preparation of estimated property tax bills in advance of the 3rd quarter billing due August 1st. This is necessitated by the fact that the County of Bergen must certify all four components of the property tax rate (Board of Education 69%, Municipal 19%, County 10% and Library 1%) prior to the final 2023 property tax rates being set. Since that County certification has not occurred yet and bills need to be issued a minimum of thirty days before they are due, we will be sending them out later this month. Once the County certification process is complete the final 2023 rate will be implemented and reflected in the fourth quarter property tax billing. The Board of Education, Municipal and Library portion of the 2023 property tax rate have all been set pending certification and along with an estimate for the County component these are reflected in the total estimated 2023 property tax rate of \$2.726 which overall is a 3.93% increase from 2022.

Resolution 142 – Disposal of Obsolete Equipment no longer needed for public use: Borough owns equipment including a washer and extractor located at and utilized by the Ramsey Fire Department. The equipment is well past its lifecycle and has no value. Fire Department through the Borough grant writer has obtained a grant for new equipment to replace this obsolete equipment.

Ordinance 5-2023 - Amends Chapter 10 Section 2 for Hours of Employment and Establishing “Summer Hours”. Borough Hall’s hours of operation for the public are 8:30 to 4:30 Monday through Friday, for a total of 40 hours. In 2021 and 2022 the Borough successfully implemented a change in operating hours for the summer. Borough Hall opened at 8:00am every day, Monday through Friday, starting a half hour earlier than normal. Monday through Thursday we extended the normal day and closed at 5:00 and on Friday closed at 12:00 noon. This provided the same forty hours a week that Borough Hall was open. This ordinance codifies those changes for the summer period this year and moving forward. These would be in place from the last Monday in June through Labor Day Weekend, essentially coinciding the school calendar. For 2023 only, with the ordinance introduced tonight and vote on adoption on June 28, we will start the summer hours on Monday July 3rd.

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

J. BOROUGH CLERK – Meredith Bendian - No report

X. INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

ORDINANCE 05-2023 - AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 10 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF RAMSEY, BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY AND MORE SPECIFICALLY SECTION 10-2 ENTITLED HOURS OF EMPLOYMENT

Motion by Councilman Gutwetter, seconded by Councilman Popolo

BE IT RESOLVED that an Ordinance entitled An Ordinance Amending Chapter 10 of the Borough of Ramsey, Bergen County, New Jersey and more specifically Section 10-2 Entitled Hours of Employment, 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 28<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2023 at 6:00pm 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.

There was no further discussion after Administrator Vozeh's explanation during his report.

Roll Call:

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

X. INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES (cont'd)

ORDINANCE 06-2023 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 20 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF RAMSEY, BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY AND MORE SPECIFICALLY SECTION 20-3.12 THEREOF ENTITLED SUBSTITUTIONS

Motion by Councilwoman Cusick, seconded by Councilwoman Woods

BE IT RESOLVED that an Ordinance Amending Chapter 20 of the Code of the Borough of Ramsey, Bergen County, New Jersey and more specifically Section 20-3.12 thereof entitled Substitutions, 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 28th day of June, 2023 at 6:00pm 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.

Councilwoman Cusick explained that this ordinance adds in the ability for the use of stone as ground cover in commercial landscaping applications with approval of the Shade Tree Commission, to be reviewed on a project-by-project basis. The ordinance also provides guidance on types of stone and the types of applications where stone may be an acceptable substitution subject to Shade Tree review and approval. Previously, there had been no allowance for stone as ground cover in commercial applications.

Roll Call:

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

X. INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES (cont'd)

ORDINANCE 07-2023 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 20 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF RAMSEY, BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY AND MORE SPECIFICALLY, SECTION 20-5.13 THEREOF ENTITLED REPLACEMENT AND TREATMENT OF TREES WHICH ARE REMOVED OR DAMAGED IN VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION; TREE RESTORATION FUND; STOP-WORK ORDER

Motion by Councilwoman Cusick, seconded by Councilwoman Woods

BE IT RESOLVED that an Ordinance Amending Chapter 20 of the Code of the Borough of Ramsey, Bergen County, New Jersey and more specifically Section 20-5.13 thereof entitled Replacement and Treatment of Trees Which are Removed or Damaged in Violation of this Section; Tree Restoration Fund; Stop Work Order, 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 28th day of June, 2023 at 6:00pm 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.

Councilwoman Cusick explained that this ordinance amends the current language in the ordinance on the obligation for replacement of trees removed in violation of the code. Previously, the language was that the owner was to replace the trees, the new language in addition to owner, adds the contractor, landscaper and tree removal service to the code. This will facilitate replacement of trees taken down in violation but also aid property owners who may have hired a contractor who violated the tree removal process but then attempted to push replacement on the property owner as responsible under the old language.

Roll Call:

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

XI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

XII. NEW BUSINESS

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Councilwoman Woods, seconded by Councilwoman Poppe. All in favor. Carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:43pm.

Meredith Bendian, RMC  
Borough Clerk