

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Verona Township Council on Monday, October 5, 2015 beginning at 6:30 P.M. in the Council Chambers, 600 Bloomfield Avenue, Verona, New Jersey.

Call to Order:

Municipal Clerk reads notice of Open Public Meetings law.

Roll Call:

Mayor Kevin Ryan, Deputy Mayor Michael Nochimson, Councilman Jay Sniatkowski, Councilman Bob Manley and Councilman Alex Roman. Also present are Interim Township Manager Mitchell Stern, Township Attorney Michael Gannaio and Jennifer Kiernan, Municipal Clerk.

Mayor Ryan leads the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes from the September 21, 2015 meeting are moved for approval by Councilman Sniatkowski; seconded by Councilman Roman. Vote: 5 ayes. The Minutes from the September 28, 2015 Special Meeting are moved for approval by Deputy Mayor Nochimson; seconded by Councilman Roman. Councilman Sniatkowski abstains as he was not present for the meeting. Vote: 4 ayes.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Ryan invites Christine McGrath and Amanda Weylin from the Junior Woman's Club to the lectern to announce the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Verona Fights Hunger Week. The Junior Woman's Club has partnered with community schools, religious organizations, the Verona Boys and Girls Scouts and the Montclair Human Needs Pantry. The Pantry serves over 1,000 clients in the community. The food drive is sponsored by Kings Supermarket and Casella & Sons Moving Company. Last year the drive collected over 800 bags of food for the Pantry. This year's collection ceremony will again take place on the steps of Town Hall on Saturday, October 17<sup>th</sup> from 9-10:30 a.m. Ms. McGrath also discusses the work the Junior Woman's Club is doing to promote Mental Illness Awareness. One in five (5) families in New Jersey is affected by mental illness. The Junior Woman's Club will hold a program entitled, "Mental Illness and Our Families" at the Community Center on Monday, November 2, 2015 at 7:30 p.m. to help families struggling with mental illness.

Rosanne Bornstein and Colin Boyle from the Verona Municipal Alliance Commission approach the lectern. They explain the program's mission and how it has evolved over time. Ms. Bornstein explains the Commission's needs assessment to create the current grant which involved working with the Recreation, Health and Police Departments as well as local schools. Mr. Boyle explains the 2015/2016 programs and categories. He states October 15<sup>th</sup> is Family Night. November is Safe Homes Month where parents pledge to not allow drinking in the home, to secure firearms and monitor computer use. Ms. Bornstein announces that 13 year committee member, Suzanne Broullon was the Essex County recipient of the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (GCADA) Volunteer of the Year.

Essex County Liaison Julius N. Coltre approaches the lectern and addresses some of the questions asked by Council at the previous meeting. He states that one aerator in Verona Lake has been repaired. Essex County will hold a seminar titled, "Growing Your Business in the Digital Age" at McLoone's Boathouse in West Orange from 10:00 a.m. until Noon on October 22, 2015.

Mr. Stern announces that October is Breast Cancer Awareness month. In support of the Susan G. Komen Fund, the local affiliate requested to place pink ribbons around poles and trees in the downtown district. Mr. Stern granted that request.

The Verona Police Department has initiated a volunteer program for camera surveillance information. Residents and businesses in the community are asked to participate and register with the Department where, in the event of an incident, the Department can view the captured video. This program is strictly voluntary.

Mr. Stern announces that the Office of Emergency Management Team has met in anticipation of the threat of Hurricane Joaquin. He also announces the retirement of Police Chief Douglas Huber effective December 1, 2015.

Mr. Stern explains that the survey regarding extending Town Hall hours showed little interest from the community. There was input to extend hours in Town Hall for badge pick up during pool season; however,

Mr. Stern explained that the hours are currently extended to weekends and evenings, but will be looked into for the 2016 pool season. The survey for the jitney received about 300 responses. The Township is still compiling that data and is looking into a shared service agreement with the Borough of Caldwell.

A letter has been sent to residents in the Oakridge Road section of town regarding the possible placement of speed bumps in that area. Although placement of the bumps is limited due to DOT restrictions, the Township is waiting until the rebuilding of the road and also investigating the possibility of strategically placed stop signs in the area.

Councilmember's Reports:

Deputy Mayor Nochimson announces that VMAC's Family Night will take place on Thursday, October 15, 2015. He thanks VMAC for their presentation and compliments the committee on their accomplishments.

Councilman Sniatkowski has no report this evening.

Councilman Manley attended the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Octoberfest. Over 1,600 tickets were sold. He comments that he visited Firehouse #1 and found it in disrepair. He states he noticed a collapsed stairway, the façade of the building is fading and the front of the building is sinking.

Councilman Roman reports he has visited the radio tower site and that building is also in need of repair. He acknowledges that the Finance Department is migrating to a new software system but would like to set an organizational goal for 2016 to implement a software system accounting for records such as leases, agreements and contacts.

Ordinances on Second Reading including Public Hearing & Final Passage:

Ordinance #9-15 - An Ordinance Fixing the Salaries, Compensation and Retainers of the Paid Employees of the Township of Verona for the year 2015.

The Municipal Clerk reads Ordinance #9-15 by title into record.

Mayor Ryan explains that this ordinance covers positions and salary negotiations by contract with OPEIU.

Council Discussion

Councilman Roman expresses his concerns with items that are beyond the labor contract. A couple of employees' salaries are beyond the step scale and grade that are paid beyond the rate. He states there are good and dedicated employees and nothing is intended to diminish that; however the reality now is changing how the Council manages the salaries and the contract scale.

Deputy Mayor Nochimson requests updating titles that represent the positions on the ordinance so they are relevant in this modern age. He states employees should work an eight (8) hour work week.

Councilman Sniatkowski wants to remind the public that the Council approved the contracts.

Mayor Ryan states he had a conversation with the Mr. Stern as to why some salaries are outside the guidelines. He comments that he is satisfied with the explanation being that employees took on more responsibilities or obtained additional certifications.

Councilman Roman expresses to the public that longevity pay, a bonus compensation of 8-10%, adds to this ordinance. The Township has phased out longevity pay to the newer employees but some employees still receive the bump in longevity plus the contractual increase until they reach retirement.

Motion to open public participation on Ordinance #9-15 is moved by Councilman Sniatkowski; seconded by Councilman Roman. Vote: 5 ayes.

Public Participation of Ordinance #9-15

Martin Rybak, 37 Hillside Avenue, Verona, New Jersey  
Anita DeOld, 15 Howard Street, Verona, New Jersey

Motion to close Public Participation for Ordinance #9-15 is moved by Councilman Sniatkowski; seconded by Councilman Roman. Vote: 5 ayes.

Motion for final passage of Ordinance #9-15 is moved by Councilman Sniatkowski; seconded by Councilman Roman. Roll Call Vote: Councilman Manley, aye; Councilman Roman, no; Councilman Sniatkowski, aye; Deputy Mayor Nochimson, aye; Mayor Ryan, aye.

Ordinance #9-15 is adopted.

Ordinance #10-15 - An Ordinance Fixing the Salaries, Compensation and Retainers of the Paid Police Officers of the Township of Verona for the year 2015.

The Municipal Clerk reads Ordinance #10-15 by title into record.

Mayor Ryan explains that this ordinance covers the position of the Certified Financial Officer.

Council Discussion

None.

Public Participation of Ordinance #10-15

None.

Motion to close Public Participation for Ordinance #10-15 is moved by Deputy Mayor Nochimson; seconded by Councilman Roman. Vote: 5 ayes.

Motion for final passage of Ordinance #10-15 is moved by Deputy Mayor Nochimson; seconded by Councilman Roman. Roll Call Vote: Councilman Manley, aye; Councilman Roman, aye; Councilman Sniatkowski, aye; Deputy Mayor Nochimson, aye; Mayor Ryan, aye.

Ordinance #10-15 is adopted.

Ordinance #11-15 - An Ordinance Fixing the Salaries, Compensation and Retainers of Certain Officers and Employees of the Township of Verona for the year 2015.

The Municipal Clerk reads Ordinance #11-15 by title into record.

Mayor Ryan explains that this ordinance covers the CFO salary for the 2015 year.

Council Discussion

Councilman Manley asks if there is a plan to include non-union employees in an ordinance in the future. Mayor Ryan responds that there is no plan as the Council is leaving those employees at the current rate and therefore there is no need to introduce an additional ordinance. Councilman Sniatkowski comments that he believes that Mayor Ryan's statement is inaccurate and an ordinance fixing the salaries of the non-union employees is necessary. Township Attorney Michael Gannaio states it is his belief that no action is required if the salaries in question are to remain the same although at some point in the future it would be appropriate to introduce an ordinance. If not, those people will stay where they are. He will review the statute and report back to Council. Councilman Manley requests a discussion on the salaries of the non-union employees in the interest of transparency. Councilman Sniatkowski asks if that discussion were to take place would a Rice notice be required. Township Attorney Michael Gannaio will look into that and respond.

Councilman Manley has concerns, which, he states, have no reflection on the individual in this ordinance. Based on a document received by Council on June 1<sup>st</sup> all non-union employees were set at 2.5% on the Town Manager's recommendation. Mr. Stern states there is a Personnel Action Plan solely for this individual precluding the others from any increase.

Councilman Manley asks the Interim Town Manager how long evaluations of the non-union employees would take. Mr. Stern replies it would take approximately 30 days.

Councilman Roman states that absent of a performance management system, it is very difficult to give an entire set of employees, whose compensation is discretionary, the exact same raise every year.

No motion was called for before opening Public Participation for Ordinance #11-15.

Public Participation of Ordinance #11-15

Richard Aloia, 37 Malvern Place, Verona, New Jersey  
Arthur Kleinberg, 34 Mountain Road, Verona, New Jersey

Motion to close Public Participation for Ordinance #11-15 is moved by Deputy Mayor Nochimson; seconded by Councilman Roman. Vote: 5 ayes.

No motion was called to move for a vote on Ordinance #11-15. The Township Attorney advises that the motion is implicit in the roll call vote but should be followed by protocol in the future. Roll Call Vote: Councilman Manley, no; Councilman Roman, aye; Councilman Sniatkowski, no; Deputy Mayor Nochimson, aye; Mayor Ryan, aye.

Ordinance #11-15 is adopted.

Resolutions:

Resolution #116 Designates October 4, 2015 – October 10, 2015 as Mental Illness Awareness Week. Moved by Deputy Mayor Nochimson; seconded by Councilman Sniatkowski. Vote: 5 ayes.

Resolution #117 Designates November 2015 as Safe Homes Month. Moved by Deputy Mayor Nochimson; seconded by Councilman Manley. Vote: 5 ayes.

Resolution #118 Extends the Recycling Collection Contract with Waste Industries. Moved by Councilman Roman; seconded by Councilman Manley. Vote: 5 ayes.

Resolution #119 Requests Approval from Essex County for Lakeside Avenue Median Imprint. Moved by Deputy Mayor Nochimson; seconded by Councilman Sniatkowski. Vote: 5 ayes.

Resolution #120 Refunds a Tax Overpayment for #21.18 for \$3,549.00. Moved by Councilman Roman; seconded by Councilman Manley. Vote: 5 ayes.

Resolution #121 Establishes the Township Towing Fees. Moved by Deputy Mayor Nochimson; seconded by Councilman Sniatkowski. Vote: 5 ayes.

Resolution #122 Authorizes the Township to Enter into Local Government Energy Audit Program. Moved by Councilman Roman; seconded by Councilman Manley. Vote: 5 ayes.

Resolution #123 Awards a Contract for Municipal Buildings Cleaning Services. Moved by Councilman Roman; seconded by Councilman Manley. Vote: 5 ayes.

Resolution #124 Awards a Contract for Construction of the Police Dispatch Desk. Moved by Councilman Roman; seconded by Councilman Manley. Vote: 5 ayes.

Resolution #125 Authorizes the Town Manager to Enter in an Agreement with Bahr Oil LLC to Provide Access to Township Owned Property. Moved by Councilman Roman; seconded by Councilman Manley. Vote: 5 ayes.

Resolution #126 – Allows for Council to Enter into Closed Session. Moved by Councilman Roman; seconded by Councilman Manley. Vote: 5 ayes.

Public Participation: Motion to open public participation is moved by Councilman Sniatkowski; seconded by Councilman Roman. Vote: 5 ayes

Jack McEvoy – 20 Montclair Avenue, Verona, New Jersey  
Al De Old – 15 Howard Street, Verona, New Jersey  
Richard Aloia – 37 Malvern Place, Verona, New Jersey

Motion to close public participation is moved by Deputy Mayor Nochimson; seconded by Councilman Roman. Vote: 5 ayes.

New Business:

Raffle #828 – Forest Avenue SCA – On Premise Tricky Tray is approved by consensus.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn meeting is moved by Councilman Roman; seconded by Councilman Manley. Vote: 5 ayes.

The meeting is adjourned at 9:39 p.m.

The next regular scheduled meeting is Monday, October 19, 2015 at 6:30 p.m.

*Jennifer Kiernan*  
Jennifer Kiernan, Municipal Clerk

*Kevin Ryan*  
Kevin Ryan, Mayor