

**BOROUGH OF BERNARDSVILLE**  
**Mayor & Borough Council Meeting Minutes**  
**October 25, 2021**

Mayor Mary Jane Canose called this meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. remotely via Zoom. Present were Council Members John Donahue, Jeff Hammond, Matthew Marino, Jena McCredie, Chad McQueen, and Christine Zamarra. Also present were John Pidgeon, Borough Attorney, Tom Czerniecki, Administrator, and Anthony Suriano, Borough Clerk.

**STATEMENT OF PRESIDING OFFICER**

Notice of this meeting was provided to the Bernardsville News, Courier News and the Star Ledger, filed with the Municipal Clerk and posted on the Municipal Bulletin Board on December 24, 2020.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**PRESENTATIONS** - None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Ms. Zamarra moved approval of minutes from September 27, 2021 and October 12, 2021. Mr. McQueen seconded and the motion was approved with six yes votes.

**OPEN SESSION**

Mayor Canose opened the meeting to the public. Hearing no comments, Mayor Canose closed the open session.

**ORDINANCES (Public Hearing)**

Mayor Canose opened the public hearing on Ordinance #2021-1898, **AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$250,000 FROM THE BOROUGH OPEN SPACE TRUST FUND FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO MUNICIPAL OPEN SPACE PROPERTIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OPEN SPACE & RECREATION MASTER PLAN.** Hearing no comments or questions, Mayor Canose closed the public hearing. Mr. Marino moved to pass this ordinance on final reading and adopt as published. Mr. Hammond seconded and the motion was approved by the following roll call vote. Mr. Donahue, Mr. Hammond, Mr. Marino, Ms. McCredie, Mr. McQueen, and Ms. Zamarra voted yes.

Mayor Canose opened the public hearing on Ordinance #2021-1899, **SALARY ORDINANCE FOR BOROUGH DISPATCHERS WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE IBEW, LOCAL 1158.** Hearing no comments or questions, Mayor Canose closed the public hearing. Mr. Hammond moved to pass this ordinance on final reading and adopt as published. Ms. McCredie seconded and the motion was approved by the following roll call vote. Mr. Donahue, Mr. Hammond, Mr. Marino, Ms. McCredie, Mr. McQueen, and Ms. Zamarra voted yes.

**ORDINANCES (Introduction) – None**

**RESOLUTIONS**

- #21-221 AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF BILLS**
- #21-222 AWARDING A CONTRACT FOR 2021-2022 MUNICIPAL PARKING LOT SNOW PLOWING AND SIDEWALK CLEARING**
- #21-223 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND CLERK TO SIGN A TRANSPORTATION SERVICE CONTRACT WITH SOMERSET COUNTY**
- #21-224 AMENDING THE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT WITH PARKER MCCAY FOR LEGAL SERVICES**
- #21-225 AUTHORIZATION OF SEWER REFUND**
- #21-226 EXTENDING ANIMAL CONTROL SERVICES CONTRACT WITH ANIMAL CONTROL SOLUTIONS, LLC THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2023**
- #21-227 AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF AN APPLICATION TO BECOME A TRANSIT VILLAGE**
- #21-228 AWARDING A CONTRACT FOR EXCAVATION OF TEST PITS**
- #21-229 AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF AN AGREEMENT WITH MUNICIPAL NATIONWIDE PAYMENT SOLUTIONS FOR THE RECEIPT OF CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OFFICE**
- #21-230 ESTABLISHING DECAL FEES AND OTHER REGULATIONS FOR MUNICIPAL PARKING LOTS DURING 2022**
- #21-231 AUTHORIZING TRANSFER OF FUNDS**
- #21-232 AUTHORIZING A REFUND FOR A CONSTRUCTION PERMIT**

Regarding Resolution #21-222, Ms. Zamarra said the Public Works Committee is reviewing changing the process for this bid for next year to possibly lower the cost.

Regarding Resolution #21-227, Mayor Canose thanked Chris Colley of Topology and Mr. Czerniecki for their work on an application to become a Transit Village. Mr. Donahue moved to adopt Resolutions #21-221 to #21-232. Ms. Zamarra seconded and the motion was approved by the following roll call vote. Mr. Donahue, Mr. Hammond, Mr. Marino, Ms. McCredie, Mr. McQueen, and Ms. Zamarra voted yes.

### COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Mayor's Update,** Mayor Canose said she attended the Somerset County Governing Officials meeting on October 13<sup>th</sup>, which was an in person meeting and Mr. Hammond also attended. The presenters were members of the Chief Voter Staff who reviewed the response to Hurricane Ida and they are putting measures in place to be prepared for the next storm. Also presenting was Brian Auger, Administrator of the Somerset County Library System, and they are looking to have more sharing between all libraries including ones that are not in the system. On October 14<sup>th</sup>, on the Somerset County call, it was reported that of the ages 12+ population in the county, 83.1% have been vaccinated. Mayor Canose said we're having a vaccination clinic tomorrow at the train station from 2:00pm to 6:00pm. Dr. Reddy of Somerset County reported that the cases are trending down and while they do have some breakthrough cases 82.4% percent of the cases are unvaccinated people. They have seen an increased number in the schools so they are offering a testing program that's sponsored by the state. They also expect Pfizer to have a vaccination for 7 to 12 year olds available in early November. On October 14<sup>th</sup>, Mayor Canose attended the Housing and Zoning Committee meeting and Downtown Bernardsville's Board meeting. Downtown Bernardsville's Promotions Committee is working on a holiday gift guide. On October 30<sup>th</sup>, there will be a costume party from 3:00pm to 5:00pm at the Bernardsville Train Station lot. The Scarecrow Stroll is underway and people can vote on the various scarecrows throughout the downtown area. The Design Committee is working on a Let's Talk Trash Campaign to come up with ideas for keeping downtown cleaned up and they'll be collaborating with Public Works. The Economic Vitality Committee is planning a networking event for January. Mayor Canose attended the Somerset County Stigma Free Committee on October 15<sup>th</sup> and they have current initiatives to get businesses on board to use their toolkit and sign the pledge. They will also be sponsoring a Mental Health Matters Conference approximately in May of 2022. Bridgewater has a pilot program to have a social worker working with the police force to handle mental health issues that come up when they're on calls. In July there's going to be a new suicide hotline that will be 9-8-8 instead of 9-1-1. On October 17<sup>th</sup>, Mayor Canose attended a fundraiser by Game Changer at the Polo Grounds which was a workout for breast cancer awareness month. So far they have raised over \$3,000 that they will be donating to the Carol Simon Integrative Oncology Program. Their goal is \$5,000 so they're still accepting donations. On October 20<sup>th</sup>, Mayor Canose attended a four-hour webinar given by the NJ League of Municipalities about the powers and duties of elected officials. Mayor Canose said it's an excellent program given by the Administrator in Branchburg and she will share the materials she received with council. On October 20<sup>th</sup>, the Cultural Arts Committee met and they are working with the school district to have an art show downtown in April that will be called The Faces Of Bernardsville. Mayor Canose and Mr. Hammond attended the school district's Strategic

Planning Meeting on October 21<sup>st</sup> which was their first session. She said it was a very productive first step and there are two more meetings, one in November and one in December, that people can sign up for. On October 22<sup>nd</sup> Mayor Canose attended the Complete Street Summit and they are updating their training curriculum, policy, and design guide. She said at some point we will need to update our policy as well. They went over different grants that are available for projects. On October 22<sup>nd</sup>, Leah Horowitz and Mayor Canose participated in the Bar Method's fundraising class for Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Mayor Canose said there is a Stigma Free Planning Subcommittee working on a Mental Health Matters Conference. They will have a program for governing officials, police, and health care workers as to really work on making people aware of mental health issues. Today, Mayor Canose attended the memorial service for Ed Zimmerman's daughter. Mr. Zimmerman is the Executive Director for the Somerset County Governing Officials Association. Ms. McCredie encouraged people to attend the School Board's Strategic Plan meetings. She said the next one is on November 11<sup>th</sup> and attending gives us a chance to give input to the school district for their plans for the next three to five years.

**Administrator's Report**, Mr. Czerniecki said leaf collection season has begun. He said we are gearing up to deploy body-worn cameras in the Police Department, which requires some substantial integration with our IT Department. He said regarding the budget, revenues are looking good and our tax collection rate is as strong as it was last year. Department heads have been working on their 2022 budgets and we're developing a reader-friendly guide to the budget. Mr. Czerniecki said we have initiated some of the preliminary work to start the Captain's promotion and look forward to advancing over the coming months. He said there is one item for executive session related to contract negotiations.

Mr. McQueen moved to accept the monthly reports as listed on the agenda. Mr. Marino seconded and the motion was approved with six yes votes.

**Public Safety Committee**, Mr. Czerniecki said the committee had an extensive discussion on how to approach the Captain's role. He said they also had a discussion on the crosswalk from the train station lot to Bistro 73 and escalated that matter to state offices to see if we can get more action.

**Finance Committee**, Mr. McQueen said the committee met last week about contractual negotiations which will be discussed in executive session later in this meeting. He said they are continuing the initiation discussions on the budget. He said the biggest changes will be the way the budget is delivered and the budget package will be providing more details to the council than in previous years. Mr. McQueen said the committee is in the process of getting the zero-based budgeting wish list from various departments and will use it to start building the budget very soon.

**Organization Development and Personnel Committee**, Mr. Hammond said the committee spent a good amount of time discussing the upcoming DPW contract. He said they also

discussed the rolling out of the Police Captain process. Mr. Hammond said the Dispatcher's salary ordinance was passed earlier in the meeting. He said we are recruiting a Clerical Assistant to the Tax Assessor and interviews will start next week.

**Engineering, Technology, and Public Works Committee**, Ms. McCredie said Doug Walker just returned from vacation and the committee is meeting tomorrow.

**Municipal Attorney Report**, there were no questions or comments from council on Mr. Pidgeon's report.

**Land Use Committee**, Mayor Canose said the committee is reviewing the contract with the developer and tweaking dates and expectations. She said they hope to have something very soon.

**Planning Board**, Mr. McQueen said they did not meet last week as their meeting was canceled.

**Recreation Committee**, Mr. Marino said Mr. Czerniecki attended their last meeting and discussed Ordinance #2021-1898 which was adopted earlier in this meeting. The committee also talked about the upcoming Halloween Costume Contest this Saturday and had preliminary discussion on rolling out the Master Plan. He said Bob Markowick is looking at partnering with other Somerset Hills communities who may be having difficulties fielding teams and combine teams with kids from Bedminster and Far Hills.

**Environmental Commission**, Mr. Hammond said there was discussion about green infrastructure. The rain gardens at the Library and Nervine Pond are doing very well and there's a plan for an additional rain garden on Meeker Road. Mr. Hammond said the Commission has had ongoing discussion about a composting project and are trying to work out some logistical issues related to collection and transport. He said the Commission plans to have an exhibit at the Farmers Market and they are working with Ed English to have an exhibit of electric vehicles including information on the incentives that the state provides for purchasing an e-vehicle. He said that date hasn't been fixed but it may likely be sometime in November. The Commission reviewed the energy aggregator proposal that was discussed at the last council meeting and it got positive feedback. The Commission discussed possible plans for a Sustainable Jersey grant related to a solar concept and Mr. Hammond has been working with Mr. Czerniecki on this project. Mr. Hammond said there's an exciting project with students creating a video of examples of green infrastructure that people have done. The Commission discussed and will be vigilant about what they perceive to be an increase in applications for impervious services.

**Shade Tree Committee**, Mr. Donahue was unable to attend the last meeting. Johanna Wissinger said Johanna Wissinger said the committee had a phone conference on the October 20<sup>th</sup> and they are excited about a site that was designated for tree planting in the spring. Renee Apuzzo, Tree Conservation Officer, submitted her quarterly report and for September there were 17 permits at \$25 per permit, which amounts to \$425. She said they are very good about

responding quickly to residents' applications and make a good effort to go out to inspect. Ms. Wissinger said we are about 90% compliance for the last three years with replacement of trees so they are going to work on composing a letter to the 10% that have not complied.

**Library Board of Trustees**, Ms. Zamarra said the Library Board Of Trustees met on October 19<sup>th</sup>. There are some maintenance issues at the library building that Mr. Macdowall is assisting with. She said they had a leak at one of the doors to the community room. The Library has a grant to replace the main door. Ms. Zamarra said all residents can participate in the Library's survey which can be found at [bernardsvillelibrary.org](http://bernardsvillelibrary.org). They are hopeful to get as many responses as possible to make it a viable survey for their strategic planning.

**Other (Complete Streets)**, Ms. Zamarra said she attended the Complete Streets seminar on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. She said one of her goals for the next few years is to put more focus and organization on Complete Streets and walkability in order to make streets accessible to all. Mayor Canose said we have an opportunity next year as we work on Bernards Avenue because we did a walkability study and had some really good ideas for that area. She said we should revisit the walkability study for Bernards Avenue with Doug Walker before we get into paving. She said we should look at how we can redesign that area to make it more pedestrian friendly.

**Other (Ridewise)** On October 20<sup>th</sup>, Ms. Zamarra participated in a meeting with the downtown committee's subcommittee and they wanted to learn more about Ridewise and some of the services that they provide to us or have provided in the past. We conducted two street smart campaigns with Ridewise, so we're considering partnering with them again in the spring.

Ms. Zamarra said she visited a food pantry in Morristown as she is working with her son on a project where they deliver items needed by the food pantry. It's an ongoing volunteer project and their website is [nourishnj.org](http://nourishnj.org).

## **ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

**Correspondence** - None

**Unfinished Business** - None

**New Business**

**Halloween Costume Contest**, Mr. Marino said there is a Halloween event at the train station lot on October 30<sup>th</sup> that Olivia Manning of Downtown Bernardsville has worked hard to organize.

**Finance Committee- Funding the Master Plan**, Mr. McQueen asked for this topic to be on next meeting agenda on November 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Mobile MVC**, Ms. Zamarra said a few residents have asked if the Mobile MVC is coming back since it was here in the summer. Mr. Czerniecki said he will contact the Department of Motor Vehicles to find out if we can host another Mobile MVC.

### **OPEN SESSION**

Mayor Canose opened the meeting to the public.

Johanna Wissinger said the Shade Tree Committee addressed the topic of dead trees from the recently adopted tree protection ordinance. She said there was some concern from council about it being an imposition on residents, but she hopes the new wording is okay. She said it definitely is a problem for the Zoning Department, Tree Conservation Officer, and the Forester. Ms. Wissinger said they are seeing difficulty when trees go down and it's very good for the residents and the borough to get these individuals out at these properties because they make good decisions and suggestions for what they can do, which trees have high roots, and which trees don't have good longevity. She said there is input when they go out and look at the dead trees which can be difficult to determine. She said she wanted to make sure that was clear because it was an issue that she didn't think she answered adequately at the last meeting.

Hearing no further comments from the public, Mayor Canose closed the open session.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

It was moved to adjourn to an executive session to consider Collective Bargaining and that the time when and circumstances under which the matter can be disclosed to the public is when it is finally resolved. The motion was seconded and approved with six yes votes.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20pm.

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