

**BOROUGH OF BERNARDSVILLE**  
**Mayor & Borough Council Meeting Minutes**  
**March 14, 2022**

Mayor Canose called this meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. remotely via Zoom. Present were Council Members Jay Ambelang, Diane Greenfield, Jena McCredie, Chad McQueen, and Christine Zamarra. Also present were Tom Czerniecki, Administrator, Anthony Suriano, Borough Clerk, and John Pidgeon, Borough Attorney. Council Member Al Ribeiro was absent.

**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 27, 2021.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**PRESENTATIONS**

**Somerset County Business Partnership (SCBP)**, Chris Edwards was present from SCBP and spoke about the organization and what they provide to businesses. Their mission is to lead the business community to a prosperous and sustainable future. The effectiveness of the SCBP is the result of a partnership among Somerset County's major employers, small and medium-sized business, nonprofit organizations, Somerset County Board of County Commissioners, and the 21 local municipalities. The SCBP believes that through the vibrant connections between the private, public, and nonprofit sectors, we make Somerset County a better place to live, work, play and learn. Mr. Ambelang asked in terms of benefits of being a member of SCBP, do our local businesses or the town itself get any services or support through membership. He asked if there is a difference between a municipality that's a member or non-member in terms of the services and support that is offered. He asked if SCBP has memberships for businesses as well as municipalities. Mr. Edwards said there is a flat rate for the municipalities in Somerset County. He said 19 of the 21 municipalities in Somerset County are a member of SCBP. He said he wouldn't directly say that there's additional benefits for the businesses in Bernardsville because of the Borough of Bernardsville's membership. He said if Bernardsville wasn't a member of SCBP, he would still refer someone to a business in Bernardsville. He said they are bringing back the Meet The Mayors series. This was done in 2015 and 2016 where SCBP did a four part series where they split the county into four quadrants and had five to six mayors at each event talk about what they're doing. He said they had about 200 businesses at each event. He said this is something that he views as a benefit of membership. He said there is also the opportunity to attend events for anyone who works for Bernardsville. Mr. Edwards said those are the two main benefits, but they would not punish another member of the partnership if their town wasn't a member. Mr. Ambelang asked if SCBP also charges businesses as well as municipalities to join their organization. Mr. Edwards said yes. Mayor Canose thanked Mr. Edwards for his presentation.

**OPEN SESSION**

Mayor Canose opened the meeting to the public.

Olivia Manning, Downtown Bernardsville, asked Chris Edwards to share his social media information with council so that they know where to find all of his information for Somerset County. Mr. Edwards said they have four different divisions and he will get the information out to them.

Jeff Hammond, on behalf of the Environmental Commission (EC), said that he recalls that when the EC wants to apply for a grant, they need to get the approval of the council or at least inform them. He said there is an Association of New Jersey Environment Commission (ANJEC) grant opportunity for \$1,500 and the deadline is May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Mr. Hammond said he is working with EC member Greg deGrandpre on a concept for signage. They've also been working with Bob Markowick to come up with a concept and apply for the grant that would provide for a sign to identify where the Old Army trail is at the Evankow property. He said at the other side of the trail where it meets the Audubon at Hardscrabble Road, they would like to have another sign just to inform people that from that point forward there are no dogs allowed. Council consent was given to apply for the grant.

Johanna Wissinger, Environmental Commission, said that progress has started on the green infrastructure implementation assessment for our roadways.

Mr. Czerniecki informed Mr. Hammond that this past Friday we went out with our new Recreation Engineer and looked at the four projects that council identified. One of them is connecting the path that gets built around the Polo Grounds into that trail head. He said there's a number of options where we might make an improved entrance, and suggested getting together with Mr. Hammond before we decide where the sign goes. Mr. Hammond said they don't have to give details about the exact location of the sign nor exactly what it looks like for the grant application. He said they are working with Bob Markowick to get the grant money and then they will figure out exactly what to do with it and where the sign would be.

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

#### **ORDINANCES (Public Hearing) - None**

#### **ORDINANCES (Introduction)**

Ms. McCredie moved that Ordinance #2022-1911, **APPROPRIATING THE SUM OF \$60,000 FOR THE BERNARDSVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY BUILDING - PUBLIC RESTROOM RENOVATIONS**, be introduced by title, passed on first reading, published according to law, and that a public hearing be scheduled for a meeting beginning at 7:00 p.m., Monday, March 28, 2022. Ms. Greenfield seconded and the motion was approved with five yes votes.

**RESOLUTIONS**

- #22-59        AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF BILLS**
- #22-60        AUTHORIZING REFUND OF STORMWATER ESCROW  
ACCOUNT 04-280-7015-0100 FOR MR. & MRS. CRAIG  
HARRISON FOR 161 PEACHCROFT DRIVE**
- #22-61        AUTHORIZING REFUND OF STORMWATER ESCROW  
ACCOUNT 04-280-7040-0100 FOR MR & MRS. GERALD LEE  
FOR 335 MENDHAM RD.**
- #22-62        AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF A HIGHLANDS INITIAL  
ASSESSMENT GRANT APPLICATION**
- #22-63        AWARDING A CONTRACT FOR GRASS CUTTING AND LAWN  
MAINTENANCE**
- #21-64        AUTHORIZING A TRANSFER OF APPROPRIATION RESERVES**
- #21-65        AUTHORIZING THE CHIEF OF POLICE TO EXECUTE SAID  
AGREEMENT WITH SOMERSET COUNTY RELATIVE TO THE  
USE OF BOROUGH POLICE OFFICERS FOR VARIOUS  
COUNTY POLICE INITIATIVES**
- #22-66        SETTING RECREATION FEES**
- #22-67        RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE ABILITY OF  
MUNICIPALITIES TO ADOPT REGULATIONS TO PROTECT  
PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE FROM THREATS  
OF FLOODING**
- #22-68        AUTHORIZING CGP&H TO PROVIDE ADMINISTRATIVE  
AGENT GENERAL SERVICES IN CONNECTION WITH THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF 207 NORTH FINLEY AVENUE AS AN  
AFFORDABLE TWO-FAMILY DWELLING**
- #22-69        AUTHORIZING NEW JERSEY AMERICAN WATER COMPANY  
EASEMENT ACROSS AMERMAN PARKING LOT**
- #22-70        AWARDING A CONTRACT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF  
THREE (3) PICKLEBALL COURTS WITHIN THE BOROUGH**

Ms. Greenfield moved to adopt Resolutions #22-59 to #22-70. Ms. Zamarra seconded and the motion was approved by the following roll call vote. Mr. Ambelang, Ms. Greenfield, Ms. McCredie, Mr. McQueen, and Ms. Zamarra voted yes.

## **ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

### **Summer Hours**

Council consent was given to authorize summer hours for borough staff, where the staff is split into two teams. Instead of working hours of 8:30am to 4:30pm with a one hour lunch, working hours are 8:00am to 4:30pm Monday through Thursday with a 40 minute lunch. Teams alternate being off every other Friday with the team working on Friday having a schedule of 8:30am to 4:30pm with a 40 minute lunch.

### **HPAC Appointments**

Mayor Canose said Dan Lincoln has stepped down as HPAC Chair. Ms. Greenfield moved to appoint Gerry Jo Cranmer as HPAC Chair. Ms. Zamarra seconded and the motion was approved with five yes votes.

Mayor Canose appointed Michael Gunderson as a regular member of HPAC to fill a vacancy.

### **Remote Attendance at Meetings**

Mr. Pidgeon said there was a discussion at the last meeting of expanding the circumstances in which council members can attend live meetings remotely. Mr. Ambelang asked how that would be changed. Mr. Pidgeon said it would be done by ordinance. He said the current system is set up by ordinance and now there's some confusion because the Open Public Meetings Act has always defined meetings as something happening in person or by means of communication technology, so it was generally the view of most municipal attorneys and other people that you could have remote meetings. He said when Covid hit, the NJDCA came out with rules which only applied during a period of emergency. He said last week he participated in a discussion of the Institute of Local Government Attorneys and they are looking for clarification. He said he feels the council could expand the conditions under which individual council members could attend remotely if they wish to look into that. Mr. McQueen said that is something he would be interested in. Ms. Greenfield questioned the incentive of attending in person if there was an option to attend remotely. Mayor Canose said she thinks it would be very hard to conduct business with three people on the screen and three people on the dais. She said she feels it could be used in emergency situations but not as a regular means. Mr. McQueen said that would be the case to have it for emergency situations but the expectation is if you could be there you should be there. Ms. Greenfield asked if all of our meetings are now going to be in person or if we're going to split it so that each month one meeting is remote and the other is in person. Mayor Canose said we're going to allow the public to be remote but we will be in person starting in April if we

get the meeting room set up for that. Mr. Czerniecki is working with Chris D'Amato on setting up the meeting room to allow for a hybrid so the public has the choice of being in person or remote. Mr. Ambelang asked for clarification for when we say "emergency" meaning a council member has an emergency and wants to take the meeting from home or meaning a state of emergency for the government. Mr. Pidgeon said it's the latter. He said if we get more guidance on this topic he will circulate it.

### **Mayor's Update**

Mayor Canose said she attended Community In Crisis' coffee and conversation session on March 1<sup>st</sup> along with Leah Horowitz. There was a Mayor's Wellness Campaign Committee and the borough applied to become a Healthy Town and we achieved bronze status, which means we're an "Up And Coming Healthy Town". Mayor Canose said it's a point system and next year hopefully we'll achieve silver status which is a "Healthy Town To Watch" and then gold status is a "Healthy Town". The Memorial Day Parade will take place this year and the first meeting was recently held. Mayor Canose, Mr. Czerniecki, and Joe DeMarco met for updates on redevelopment projects which will be shared in executive session. Mayor Canose said she attended the Little Shop of Horrors musical at Bernards High School. She said it was really well done and recommended going to any of their shows. Mayor Canose met with Jerry Rizzo who does the [visitbernardsville.com](http://visitbernardsville.com) website. Mr. Rizzo offered to help us with our branding and any other kind of promotional things we need to do. Mayor Canose said there was a Governor's call where the Mayors got a briefing on the Governor's budget, which she shared with the council. Jake Perry of the Bernardsville News is doing an article about how the pandemic affected our businesses, where he spoke to Olivia Manning and Harvey Goldberg. Mayor Canose attended a Downtown Bernardsville networking session at Osteria Morini which was well attended and successful. She thanked Olivia Manning for organizing this event. Mayor Canose attended the Somerset County Governing Officials Association meeting. The speaker was Pablo Orozco who is the new Shared Services Coordinator for Somerset County. We are working with him on ways that we can get together with other towns and share services. Mayor Canose attended the Somerset County Complete Count Committee meeting where they reviewed all the census data and how to access their website. She said if we need any of that information we can download it. The County Commissioners call reported that Covid cases are dropping; training/certificate programs for CDL Licenses are being offered; county buildings are now mask optional; and the moratorium on utility payments is ending March 15<sup>th</sup>. Mayor Canose said both PSE&G and JCP&L are offering deferred payment plans but residents need to contact them in order to get that in place. Mayor Canose and Mr. Czerniecki attended a meeting of the Shared Municipal Court where they discussed their budget. Mayor Canose attended Downtown Bernardsville's Board meeting and they've got a lot of good activities coming up which are listed on their website. There was a meeting with Downtown Bernardsville and Leah Horowitz from Recreation to talk about joint projects. Mayor Canose is going to be creating a Mayor's Ad Hoc Committee to work on community branding which will be facilitated by Olivia Manning. Mayor Canose and Mr. Czerniecki met with Chris Vitiello, who is the brother of Michael Vitiello from

Ristorante MV, and his business partner who have purchased 106 Mine Brook Road. They are looking at a way to rehab that property and will be taking that to the Planning Board.

### **Administrator's Report**

Mr. Czerniecki said the Finance Committee has wrapped up its review of the preliminary budget. He said he will be meeting with each of the council members to walk them through where we are now. He said it's shaped up nicely and feels council members will be pleasantly surprised when they get through it. Mr. Czerniecki said pool registration opened today and is going well. Summer Camp registration opens on March 21<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Czerniecki said we had a good meeting with Suburban Engineering to start looking at the pavilion lighting projects, trail projects, and connectors. He said we look forward to having estimates and concepts ready to go in early May for council to start looking at those projects. Mr. Czerniecki thanked the work that Doug Walker and Bob Markowick did on the grant for the pickleball courts. He said the timing was important as they wanted to get it done before the pool season starts so it can complement the pool. Mr. Czerniecki said the Public Works Department handled their twelfth snowstorm of the season and have done a great job keeping our roads safe.

### **Correspondence**

Mayor Canose said we received a letter from Comcast acknowledging that they received our contract.

Mayor Canose said she received an email earlier today and shared it with council. It was from a resident who was very grateful for the pickleball courts.

### **Unfinished Business** - None

### **New Business** - None

Mayor Canose said Ms. Zamarra and Ms. McCredie are working on Smart Streets and walking audits. They are going to add a few more neighborhoods because RideWise doesn't have a limit on how many of the audits can be done. The maps they provide are very well done. Mayor Canose said we wanted to add a couple of neighborhoods where people have asked for sidewalks. We're looking for them to do a walking audit and see if there is something we can do for now, since we don't have the budget to do those sidewalks. This would help us if we could find some simple ways we can improve the road.

Ms. Zamarra said there's a telephone town hall meeting on the March 16<sup>th</sup> from 6:00pm to 7:00pm with Congressman Malinowski hosting. The topic is on the crisis in Ukraine and Ms. Zamarra said to contact her for more information if anybody's interested.

Mayor Canose said Congressman Malinowski got our request for the walking path from Boylan Terrace to the train station and it made it through on the appropriations bill, so we will be getting federal funding for this project. She said she believes it was one million dollars to do the path. She said we're very excited to be able to get that done and it will also really help with downtown.

**CLOSED SESSION**

Ms. Greenfield moved to adjourn to an executive session to consider Property Acquisition and that the time when and circumstances under which the matter can be disclosed to the public is when it (they) are finally resolved. Mr. McQueen seconded and the motion was passed with five yes votes.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

---