

BOROUGH OF RAMSEY
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 28, 2007

Mayor Botta called the regular meeting of the Mayor and Council to order. Mayor asked former Councilwoman Nancy Hall to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor read the Open Public Meetings Law notice.

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Botta, Councilmembers Dillon, Heller, Jones, Nalbandian, Siemsen, Vozech, Borough Administrator Nicholas Saros, Borough Attorney Peter Scandariato, and Borough Clerk Meredith Bendian.

Absent: None

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – None

III. COMMUNICATIONS -

Motion by Heller, seconded by Vozech, to receive and file the following:

1. Bryan J. Christiansen, Chairman, Bergen County Utilities Authority, Box 9, Mehrhof Road, Little Ferry, NJ 07643
letter dated March 13, 2007, enclosing the 2007 Municipal Recycling Assistance Program grant check.
2. Richard Wierer, Director of Solid Waste and Information Systems Bergen County Utilities Authority, Box 9, Mehrhof Road, Little Ferry, NJ 07643
letter dated March 14, 2007, confirming the amount of the 2007 Municipal Recycling Assistance Program grant check.
3. Ella F. Filippone, Executive Director, Passaic River Coalition, 94 Mt. Bethel Road, Warren, NJ 07059
letter dated March 19, 2007, requesting a contribution to the Passaic River Coalition.
4. Joanne Reisser, Director of Development, Interreligious Fellowship for the Homeless of Bergen County, 479 Maitland Avenue, Teaneck, NJ 07666
letter dated March 20, 2007, requesting permission to ride through the Borough for their annual bike tour on Sunday, May 6, 2007.

5. Susan K. Dolan, Deputy Attorney General, State of New Jersey, Department of Law and Public Safety, PO Box 187, Trenton, NJ letter dated March 21, 2007, enclosing a reimbursement check for \$800.00 for the Cops in Shops College Fall 2005-2006 Initiative.
6. Nancy Hall, 458 Elbert Street, Ramsey, NJ e-mail March 26, 2007, resigning from the Board of Adjustment (Councilman Heller stated that Mrs. Hall's letter was being accepted with regret).
7. Eugene J. Murphy, Jr., Engineer, County of Bergen, Department Of Public Works, One Bergen County Plaza, Hackensack, NJ Letter dated March 23, 2007, advising of the detour plan during Resurfacing and improvements of Fairmont Avenue and Hilltop Road

IV. APPOINTMENTS - None

V. CONSENT RESOLUTION

Introduced by Vozeh, seconded by Siemsen

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:

- a. Resolution: Payment of vouchers
- b. Resolution: Escrow release for AT&T Wireless now Cingular Wireless Block 5101, Lot 12 in the amount of \$4,000.00.
- c. Resolution: Authorizing the Borough Administrator to execute the WQM-003 Application to the State Department of Environmental Protection for St. Paul's Church and School work.
- d. Resolution: Opposing Senate Bill S-457 the time of decision rule
- e. Resolution: Opposing Assembly Bill A3959 extending polling hours to 9:00 PM

AYES: Dillon, Jones, Heller, Nalbandian, Siemsen, Vozeh NAYS: None

VI. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Council President Nalbandian joined the Mayor to present certificates to the following recipients:

Re'Anne Kleinbard - Home Run Derby Winner

Mrs. Kleinbard explained that Re'Anne competed against 5,000 other children, and thanked the Recreation Commission for running this event.

Nancy Hall – Councilwoman and Board of Adjustment Member

Mayor explained that Nancy Hall has been a long-time resident and friend who served two terms as Councilwoman, ran for Mayor, served on the Northwest Bergen Utilities Authority, served on the West Bergen Mental Health Center, and served many years on the Board of Adjustment. She will be missed. Mrs. Hall stated that she is moving back to Louisiana and expressed her appreciation for the certificate. Mayor acknowledged Mr. Hall also. Borough Administrator Saros expressed his appreciation to Nancy Hall for the many years of service to the Borough.

Mayor stated that the High School had a very successful Fall and Winter season and introduced Lou Molino, Athletic Director.

Louis Molino, Athletic Director, stated that we had very outstanding seasons and won 7 league championships, 4 county championship and one state championship.

The following captains would be accepting the certificates for each team.

Timothy Arscott, Boys Cross Country, accepted the certificates for his team.

Anastasia Bond , Girls Cross Country, accepted for the girls.

Michael Iozzia, Winter Track

Kristopher Knief, Football

Mark Lyle, Boys Soccer

Samantha Wallner, Field Hockey

Mayor congratulated everyone and wished them good luck; recognizing our athletes and all the participants of an organization is one of the best parts of being Mayor.

Mayor announced a two-minute recess, after which the meeting resumed.

VII. COMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS

A. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION -Councilman Bruce Vozech

I would like to recognize former Councilwoman Nancy Hall for her years of contributions to the community. I happen to know her son and I am sad to see them leave Ramsey. I wish them well. Congratulations to Re'Anne for her tremendous success. I also want to thank the high school teams for attending tonight and congratulate them on their success. We will be introducing the budget on April 11.

B. PUBLIC SAFETY – Council President Arthur M. Nalbandian

I too would like to recognize and thank Nancy Hall for her dedication and service to the Borough. She has given so much and she will be missed. I wish Nancy and her husband, John, well in Louisiana. I would like to recognize all the recipients of the sports awards, especially Re'Anne Kleinbard. Lou Molino does an excellent job with the sports programs. We have excellent athletes, and students. There is a 2nd annual Higher Education program, sponsored by the Ramsey Municipal Alliance Against Drug and Alcohol Abuse. It is going to be on April 9th from 7 to 9:00 p.m. at the high school. It is given by DARE Officer Tim Shoemaker and other members of the Ramsey Police Department. It is an excellent presentation for parents. There will be a lot of interesting information.

C. BUILDING & ZONING – Councilman Andrew Siemsen

I would like to also recognize Nancy Hall for her contributions and ways she has served her community through her volunteerism and wish her well in her future endeavors. My congratulations to Re'Anne; she did a fine job in getting to that level. My congratulations to all the high school teams; Lou Molino is a great leader and I wish them continued success.

D. UTILITIES, BUILDINGS & GROUNDS – Councilman Jeffrey C. Heller

One of the prime reasons why I was elected to the Council and subsequently re-elected 4 times is due to Nancy Hall. I learned a lot working with Nancy as well as Cynthia Porter and it made a big difference in my life. Nancy and John Hall are wonderful people who successfully raised 4 children; that is their most important accomplishment. Congratulations to all the athletes from the high school. They are fortunate to have all those different sports. The Council did see a presentation from our architect on re-facing the front of Borough Hall, which is a very worthy project. We are looking at what the possibility of a bikepath around the circumference of Ramsey might constitute.

E. PUBLIC & GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS – Councilman William Jones

I would like to thank Nancy Hall for her long service and people like her made this town a wonderful place to raise a family. I wish her and her husband well.

The High School athletes deserve to be congratulated on their winning seasons and congratulations to Re'Anne; that is a tremendous trophy. My son attended the events sponsored by the DARE Officers and they are valuable lessons and exposure to have available. Officer Shoemaker does an outstanding job. Also, the Fine Arts Council has a very aggressive agenda planned for this year and I will continue to fill everyone in on them.

F. HEALTH, EDUCATION & SOCIAL SERVICES – Councilwoman Deirdre A. Dillon

I want to recognize the DPW, the Board of Education, and all the Borough employees who did a great job on the snow clearing during the March 15/17 storm, which was very difficult with the ice and sleet. They did a great job. I would like to thank Nancy Hall for her years of dedicated service to the Borough and congratulations to Re'Anne for an outstanding accomplishment. Bocce for seniors will be starting this week and the School Board election is April 17 and District 3 will be voting at Dater at that election.

G. MAYOR CHRISTOPHER BOTTA

Nancy Hall will be missed and I wish her well in Louisiana. I received a lot of positive feedback about Ramsey Family Night, March 26. Hopefully, we can do it again next year. I attended the luncheon for senior citizens for St. Patrick's Day. Everyone was able to attend despite the inclement weather and that shows the vibrancy of our senior organization. Thanks to Doug Rennie, Meredith, and Nick Saros for their assistance with that event.

H. BOROUGH ATTORNEY – Peter A. Scandariato, Esq. No comments.

I. BOROUGH ADMINISTRATOR – Nicholas C. Saros

I would like to express my thanks and congratulate Nancy Hall for her years of service to the Borough. I met her back in 1982 and I will certainly miss her friendship and her kindness.

J. BOROUGH CLERK – Meredith Bendian No comments.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

James Dolan, 463 Island Road, spoke about traffic on Island Road going back to Police Chief Gary Banta and two former Mayors. April 11th will be the 4th anniversary of Project Public Spaces. I was advised that you voted to eliminate the turn where Island Road turns onto Church Street and that was going to become a normal corner. I have since been told that you changed your mind about that. Mayor Botta stated that it could be that the State changed our mind on that. I have reported the 80,000 lb. dump truck that goes by my house every morning to the police on several occasions and there is no

reason for that. A tractor trailer truck went north on Island Road just today, which again is illegal.

Kyle Cook, 62 Prospect Street, I am here tonight and I never thought I would be here to discuss this issue but there is a sale of drugs going on in Ramsey and it has been going on for a while. It is happening in front of my house. My neighbors and I have called the Police Department probably over 200 times in the last few years. Finally, I don't know where else to go. It seems like arrests are made and yet nothing happens. It is reported on the front page of the paper and the next night no one comes by. I know for a fact that a heroin deal went down across from my house in the last couple weeks and yet tonight a pick-up truck with 10 people in it sat there for over 3 ½ hours before I finally called the police to say, "How long are you going to wait?". Ten cars came in and sped away; obviously deals were going on and nothing is being done.

Mayor Botta...Is that in the parking lot, Kyle?

Kyle Cook....Absolutely. There is a woman with a pink car and Barbie on the side of her car. It could not be more blatant. She is there every single night. I have been waiting to see what would happen. There is an Audi there every night for hours.

Borough Administrator Saros....When you called the Police Department tonight, did they respond?

Mr. Cook. ...They respond.

Borough Administrator...Do they go to the car that was in question?

Mr. Cook...They drive by. They speak to the children and 5 minutes later, the children drive away. That does not eradicate the problem. Tomorrow night, if I don't call again, they will be there tomorrow night. My neighbors and I have called repeatedly time after time again. All it takes is for someone to drive through this parking lot as a presence..something.

Borough Administrator... You are saying they were dealing with drugs and the police went by and spoke to these individuals and they just.....

Mr. Cook....They were there for about 30 to 45 seconds. They asked them to move on and they move on. That is basically what happens. I have been there for 12 years.

Borough Administrator..Are they moving on because they are just talking or they moving on...You say they are dealing with drugs.

Mr. Cook. It is very obvious. There is marijuana smoking. I work out of my house. From my office, I look right out. There are 20 high school children behind the school and older children behind the school every single day. How many businesses does it

take to move out of that strip mall for the same reason? Successful businesses...I know some were not always doing business but a couple of them have been successful; moved out because of the issues over there. How many businesses have to move out of that strip mall for the same reason? The one business that did speak up, had their window broken and they moved out of that mall. I know that for a fact. I know a gentleman who had his cash register smashed. It is embarrassing. We live in Ramsey. I know a store owner who cannot leave his 24 year old sister to close his store at night, because he is afraid for her safety. He has to show up every night to close his store. These people are not doing business there. The police told me, "It is private property". That has been their answer to me, 50% of the time. So I said, "You mean to tell me if I sat in my home which is private property and blasted my music until midnight or 2:00 in the morning, you are not going to come by and bother me?" These children are skateboarding and blasting their music with the windows open and my plates are vibrating across the street. I am not exaggerating. You can come to my house and feel the base. I had to change my daughter's bedroom in my house because she could not sleep at night because she was in front of the house. I have been there for 12 years. This has been years. When I heard the heroin thing two weeks ago, and I know it happened, I have had it.

Council President Nalbandian asked Mr. Cook who he had spoken to in the Police Department.

Mr. Cook...Over the years? My mother-in-law, my wife, and myself and every neighbor have called 50 times a year. It was a lot of different people over the years. They call me back the next day and speak to me and they have come to my house.

Council President Nalbandian...Have you indicated that you would be willing to sign a complaint?

Mr. Cook...I am not signing a complaint so they can bash my house and know who I am. None of us are going to sign a complaint. The store owner signed a complaint and they bashed his window twice. We are afraid to do that.

Mayor. This is what I think we can do. We will look into it on the police end. We will also make contact with the landowner to discuss these issues with them because they need to know about it too. They need to be part of the process. The police presence as well, but it has to be a combined effort.

Mr. Cook..... Mayor Botta, last summer, there was an arrest made there where there were swords taken out of kids' cars and knives. The next night people were driving up and dropping off their kids. There were drugs involved in that arrest also. I spoke to a few of those parents and not one of them was from this town. Now, I am seeing New York plates sitting in that parking lot. It is very obvious, what's going on there. It just takes a little bit of presence for a little while to get rid of this issue. Mayor stated that that is what he is suggesting; that we will enforce and improve police presence but also try to get the landowner involved as well. If the two presences are there, it is an even better solution.

Mr. Cook ..I don't know what he is going to do.

Mayor...I don't know either; I haven't talked to him. That's what I will do.

Mr. Cook. What baffles me is this just happened; 3 ½ hours tonight, not one person drove through. The town isn't that large. I know we don't have a huge police department but someone should be driving through that parking lot and looking around. It is a very dangerous and very frustrating situation right now. That landlord did not make an honest commitment to this township when he decided to expand years ago. Once from Main Street to the first half and then the second one where Boston Chicken moved in years ago. He has let people move out of there and I know for a fact, that he let spaces sit vacant for a while when people were trying to rent them. He won't even answer their phone calls or call back.

He was using that property as a loss because he needed it for his other properties. I know that for a fact. That is not being honest to the community. You don't expand and then let one third of it sit idle and empty on us. It doesn't look good for the township; it doesn't look good for the businesses that are already in there. It is an issue that has to be taken care of. It has been going on a long time.

Council President Nalbandian....This is the first time I am hearing about allegations as serious in nature as those which you described here tonight.

Mr. Cook...It's on the front page of the paper last year.

Council President Nalbandian...They made some arrests there. I understand that. Believe me, we appreciate that. Give us the opportunity now to work with the police and the landlord of the property, as Mayor Botta mentioned, and see what can and should be done. I think Chris is on the right track. It has to be a joint effort. I have been to that shopping center for ice cream and pizza, and to patronize other businesses there. I have seen police go through there frequently, so it is not like they are not aware that there are kids there and various activities going on. But, obviously, they cannot be there 24/7. As Mayor Botta said, it needs to be a joint effort and there needs to be communication to come up with a joint effort to try and resolve these matters that you are raising here tonight.

Mr. Cook. I apologize for you receiving my wrath tonight. It is just that the neighbors all seem to look to me to be the voice of whatever. They knock on my door, they call my house, they all come to me and ask me to please speak up. I said I would do so but a lot of us have held back because we are afraid of things happening to our homes. I travel on business a lot so I don't want to do that and leave my 82 year old mother-in-law, my wife and my daughter there when I am not there. It scares the heck out of me and I am a little bit ashamed to be in a town like this to be saying this. I really am. It took a lot for me to come here tonight and I have been here for 12 years and it has been a problem for at least 7 or 8 years. When the nice weather comes, the skateboarding is not occasional, it is every night. There have been times when I have called 25 nights in a row. Seriously, at 10:00 p.m. there is not one store open in that parking lot. There is no reason for anyone

to be there. When I call, they tell me it is not late enough yet, it's private property, what do you want us to do? I don't know what to say anymore.

Council President Nalbandian...That's why I would like to know if you know the names of the people you spoke to.

Mr. Cook...It is the dispatcher on the phone with me or someone tells me the next day they don't have any jurisdiction. This is not once. It has happened 25 times to me. I am not exaggerating. You can go on record and see that it is 100's of times that someone has called.

It is shameful. I am embarrassed to be here to tell you about this really. The last week's severity reached the breaking point to me. When I sit there and watched tonight, I was shaking my head and I am a bit appalled.

Mayor...Let us take a look at it and let us try to get the other interested party involved and we have control over our police department. Obviously, we can get them involved on a higher level and let us try to get the other party involved as well.

Mr. Cook. Is there anything I can do or my neighbors?

Mayor...I got your number.

Council President...You know, we are listed in the book so you can call. I can understand your concern you have over being visible or public with this. Feel free to call too; you can always do that.

Mr. Cook.. Thank you for your time.

Not seeing anyone else who wished to speak, Mayor closed the public comment.

IX. ADVERTISED PUBLIC HEARING FOR FINAL CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCES

Ord.10-2007 Ordinance to authorize curb replacements to Wyckoff Avenue
Resolution by Heller, seconded by Vozech

BE IT RESOLVED that an ordinance entitled: AN ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE CURB REPLACEMENTS TO WYCKOFF AVENUE IN THE BOROUGH OF RAMSEY, COUNTY OF BERGEN AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY AND TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF \$15,000.00 TO PAY THE COST THEREOF having been brought up for public hearing and all persons interested having been given to be heard, pass final reading by title, and that said ordinance be adopted as an ordinance of the Borough of Ramsey; 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 a notice of the date of introduction and adoption of said ordinance.

Not seeing anyone who wished to speak, Mayor closed the public hearing for ord. 10-2007.

AYES: Dillon, Heller, Jones, Nalbandian, Siemsen, Vozeh NAYS: None

X. INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

11-2007 Ordinance entitled Municipal Improvements; Curbs
Introduced by Siemsen, seconded by Jones

BE IT RESOLVED that an ordinance entitled: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER XVII OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF RAMSEY, BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY AND MORE SPECIFICALLY SECTION 17-5 SUBSECTION 17-5.3 ENTITLED MUNICIPAL IMPROVEMENTS; CURBS pass 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 11th day of April, 2007, at 8:45 p.m. prevailing time or as soon after as the matter can be reached at 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 Siemsen stated that this was recommended by the Planning Board and it was recognized by our Borough Engineer that there is an inconsistency about what type of curbing can be used for new streets. Belgian block has been the standard for quite some time and this ordinance corrects that inconsistency in the existing ordinance.

AYES; Dillon, Heller, Jones, Nalbandian, Siemsen, Vozeh NAYS: None

12-2007 Ordinance to repeal Ord. 29-2006, and amend and supplement the
Chapter X, Personnel Policies, sections related to Compensation

Introduced by Vozeh,, seconded by Heller

BE IT RESOLVED that an ordinance entitled AN ORDINANCE TO REPEAL ORDINANCE 29-2006 AND TO AMEND AND SUPPLEMENT CHAPTER X PERSONNEL POLICIES OF THE REVISED GENERAL ORDINANCES OF THE BOROUGH OF RAMSEY, 1997, BY ADDING THERETO SECTIONS RELATING

TO COMPENSATION IN THE BOROUGH OF RAMSEY, COUNTY OF BERGEN AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY pass 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 11th day of April, 2007, at 8:45 p.m. prevailing time or as soon after as the matter can be reached, at 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 Vozech stated that this ordinance amends the salary ranges for specific positions in the Borough. It does not adopt new salaries, but to have increments we need to amend the ranges. The Mayor and Council's salaries will not change.

AYES: Dillon, Heller, Jones, Nalbandian, Siemsen, Vozech NAYS: None

XI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS None

XII. NEW BUSINESS None

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Heller, seconded by Nalbandian, to adjourn the meeting and return to executive work session. Carried.

Meredith Bendian
Borough Clerk