

BOROUGH OF RAMSEY
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

April 23, 2008

Mayor Botta called the regular meeting of the Mayor and Council to order. Council President led the Pledge. Mayor read the Open Public Meetings Law notice.

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Botta, Councilmembers Dillon, Jachzel, Siemsen, Vozeh, Borough Administrator Nicholas Saros, and Borough Clerk Meredith Bendian.

Absent: Councilmembers Jones and Nalbandian, Borough Attorney Peter Scandariato

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Jachzel, seconded by Dillon, to approve the minutes of 3/26/08 as submitted. Carried.

III. COMMUNICATIONS -

Motion by Vozeh, seconded by Dillon, to receive and file the following Communications. Carried.

1. [Diane Ferrolito, AARP Local Tax Coordinator](#)
letter dated April 14, 2008, thanking the Borough for their hosting the tax preparation program.
2. Andrea Chambers, President, Junior Women's Club of Ramsey, P. O. Box 105,
letter dated April 23, 2008, requesting permission to hold a used book sale on Monday, May 26, 2008, during the Memorial Day activities.

Mayor stated that letter no. 2 would be reviewed; it seems like a worthy cause.

IV. APPOINTMENTS

Mayor Botta made the following appointments:

Nicholas Attardo, Office of Emergency Management

Connor Jewett, Office of Emergency Management

Nicholas Mangieri, Office of Emergency Management

Richard Van Der Wall, Office of Emergency Management

V. CONSENT RESOLUTION Introduced by Siemsen, seconded by Dillon

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:

- 093-2008 Resolution: Payment of Vouchers
- 094-2008 Resolution: [Authorizing the execution and delivery of](#) the loan agreements to be executed by the Borough of Ramsey and each of the New Jersey environmental infrastructure trust and the State of New Jersey, acting by and through the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Direct Loan Financing Program
- 095-2008 Resolution: [Authorizing the award of a contract to](#) Garden State Fireworks, Inc. for an exhibition of fireworks at Ramsey's Centennial Independence Day Celebration on July 4, 2008.
- 096-2008 Resolution: [Determining the form and other details of not exceeding](#) \$300,000.00 water-sewer utility bonds, series 2008, providing for their sale to the NJ Environmental Infrastructure Trust
- 097-2008 Resolution: [Awarding the contract to Solicito and Son Contracting](#) for Shade Trees throughout the Borough
- 098-2008 Resolution: [Awarding the contract to Greenleaf Landscape Systems and](#) Services Inc., for the Maintenance of Borough Lands
- 099-2008 Resolution: [Approving the personnel policies and procedures manual](#) which is required by PIA as part of Ramsey's membership in the Joint Insurance Fund.
- 100-2008 Resolution: [Authorizing the "opt out" option for Borough Employees](#) if they do not wish to be covered through the Borough Health insurance plan.
- 101-2008 Resolution: Appointing Nicholas Attardo to the Office of Emergency Management
- 102-2008 Resolution: Appointing Connor Jewett to the Office of Emergency Management

V. CONSENT RESOLUTION (cont'd)

103-2008 Resolution: Appointing Nicholas Mangieri to the Office of Emergency Management

104-2008 Resolution: Appointing Richard Van Der Wall to the Office of Emergency Management

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the following applications and/or recommendations hereby be approved:

SPECIAL PERMITS:

[Woman's Club of Ramsey is requesting permission to have an heirloom tomato sale](#) on Saturday, May 17, 2008 at the Masonic Temple. They would also like to hang signs advertising sale at Lake Street and Franklin Turnpike.

[Knights of Columbus is requesting permission to collect funds for children's charities](#) at various locations in the borough between June 13th and June 15, 2008.

AYES: Dillon, Jachzel, Siemsen, Vozeh

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Jones and Nalbandian

Councilwoman Jachzel joined the Mayor to administer the oaths of office to the newly appointed members of the Office of Emergency Management.

VI. COMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS

A. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION -Councilman Andrew Siemsen

The Finance Committee has been working on the municipal budget and we are anticipating introduction of the budget at the next meeting and subsequently passing the budget at the second meeting after that. Based on the results of the Board of Education election, we will have to review that budget and recommend cuts to that budget. I would like to congratulate and thank the new appointees to the O.E.M. Our Borough could not run as smoothly as it does without our volunteers.

B. PUBLIC SAFETY – Councilman William Jones Not at this meeting.

Councilwoman Jachzel congratulated the new appointees.

C. BUILDING PLANNING & ZONING – Councilman Arthur M. Nalbandian

Not at this meeting.

D. UTILITIES, BUILDINGS & GROUNDS – Councilwoman Deirdre A. Dillon

I too would like to congratulate the new appointees to O.E.M. They are a very valuable group. The Safe Routes to School application deadline was extended to May 2 and we will be putting in an application for Madison and part of Island Avenue to repair the sidewalks in the vicinity of Tisdale School. We are working on the street paving list for 2008.

- E. PUBLIC & GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS – Council President Bruce Vozeh
I would echo my colleagues’ comments about the new volunteers. The basketball project at Finch Park seems to be moving along on schedule and it should be completed before the end of school.
- F. HEALTH, EDUCATION & SOCIAL SERVICES – Councilwoman Vanessa Jachzel
The Board of Education did not pass and the Finance Committee will be handling coming up with a new budget. On May 9, the United States Air Force Band will be performing at Smith School. There will be a reception at 6:00 P.M. with coffee and dessert and the concert will be at 7:00 p.m. The Garden Club will have their plant sale on Saturday, May 10, at the Train Station. On May 12, there will be Centennial Bingo at the Senior Center.
- G. MAYOR CHRISTOPHER C. BOTTA
The Board of Education budget defeat puts that budget into the hands of the Mayor and Council. I have appointed our Finance and Administration to be our lead agent working with the Board of Education. We have requested the Board of Ed to send their budget documentation, their justification for their line items and the information has been received and will be reviewed with our own Borough auditors. We will be making our recommendations for cuts in the Board of Education budget. The process involves the passing of our resolution by May 19th which sets the tax levy for the Board of Education. At that point, the Board of Education can accept or repeal that determination. We have a lot of work ahead of us. Having sat through the prior defeat in 2002, when I was a Councilman, I think the Board of Education members are very professional and we have a very good working relationship with them and a lot of credit goes to our Council liaisons. I am confident that we will be able to work out a solution to this situation to everyone’s benefit. With regard to our water system, the State lowered the limit on arsenic which is a naturally recurring product in water systems. Due to the State’s mandate, we had to expend significant monies to remove arsenic from our water system. That project is moving forward very quickly and our wells will be remediated before the peak summer season. Four of the five affected wells are back on line and being treated for the arsenic. The remaining well, the North Central well, will be completed within the next 3 weeks. There is one other well to be treated and we will be going out for bids within the next within the next 60 days. We anticipate that well to be done before the end of the year.
- H. BOROUGH ATTORNEY – Peter A. Scandariato, Esq. Not at this meeting.
- I. BOROUGH ADMINISTRATOR – Nicholas C. Saros No comments.
- J. BOROUGH CLERK – Meredith Bendian No comments.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

James Keeney, 655 Richmond Court, stated that the Civic Association has come up with a proposal regarding the Board of Education budget. We are proposing that you take last year’s budget, adjust it for energy costs and make that the budget that the Mayor and Council proposes to operate the school system. This problem has been created by the State legislature and you know what a short

sighted group they are. As long as we allow this to go on with the State Legislature, we are going to have these problems with the budget, etc. It is incumbent upon you, the governing body, to get on their case. Everybody seems to have the same opinion. On a personal note, I looked at the amounts \$240.63 would be the increase in the municipal levy. The citizens of Ramsey are getting to the tipping point.

Mary Valls, 95 Elbert Street, stated that she would echo Mr, Keeney's comments and we have reached a tipping point. A 6.8 year to year increase on an operational budget is unconscionable. I work for IBM and I have been lucky to sometimes see a 3% increase. Some years, there has been no increase at all. I contribute to my health benefits; I don't have a pension. There are people who are struggling far more. It was very difficult for me to obtain information, beyond this little flyer, which is ridiculous. About 1/3 of the budget is really salaries. On average, it is about 5% yearly increase on salaries. In addition to that, there is also an increase in benefits (pensions). You cannot have both today. You can't have a guaranteed pension and a 5% increase. Principals are in the 8 to 9% percent per year category. Essentially, one thing is compromise, another is capitulation. We really need to look at this line by line. I know some things are state-mandated and there are a lot of things that discretionary. There are people being hired and all kinds of salary increases. We need to take a look at each one. Where I work, the mantra is "Do more with less" and you have to be creative with problem solving. I think it important to support our children and their education. You can have good schools and a balanced budget. A boy in Bayonne did Science in a closet. He had a teacher who encouraged him and he is a Westinghouse scholar. Sometimes it just takes people being a little creative and I know that your heart is in the right place to do the right thing. I also wanted to ask if any of the process is open to the public. Mayor Botta stated that there will be a Council Meeting but the recommendations will be made by Committee. We just received the packet of information from the School Board today. We will be reviewing it as we go along in the process. Certainly, you are welcome to correspond. Councilman Siemsen added that our e-mails are all on the website. Ms.Valls indicated that this has been a black box and wished the Council good luck. Councilwoman Dillon added that we have heard loud and clear what the residents said last week and we take it very seriously. We don't have anything to do with the negotiations with the teachers' union; that stays with the Board of Education.

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

VIII. ADVERTISED PUBLIC HEARING FOR FINAL CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCES

Ordinance 04-2008- [An ordinance amending and supplementing the code of the](#) Borough of Ramsey, Bergen County New Jersey to create chapter XXVII, entitled Temporary Storage Containers

Mayor announced that this ordinance would be postponed until May 14, 2008, as a courtesy to send the ordinance to the Planning Board for their review and/or recommendations.

IX. INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES None

X. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

XI. NEW BUSINESS - None

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Dillon, seconded by Jachzel, to adjourn the meeting. Carried.

Meredith Bendian
Borough Clerk

/ad