

BOROUGH OF RAMSEY
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
May 9, 2007

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

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Botta, Councilmembers Dillon, Heller, Jones, Nalbandian, Siemsen, Vozeh

Borough Administrator Nicholas Saros, Borough Attorney Peter Scandariato, and Borough Clerk Meredith Bendian. Absent: None

PUBLIC HEARING FOR 2007 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Motion by Heller, seconded by Nalbandian, to go out of the normal order to business for the public hearing on the 2007 budget. Motion carried.

Not seeing anyone who wished to speak, Mayor closed the public hearing for the budget. Motion by Vozeh, seconded by Heller, to amend the 2007 budget. Motion carried.

Auditor Paul Garbarini stated that the reason for the amendment is that the State has two new regulations where they are trying to give some cap relief and they are allowing to take a small portion of the employees' group insurance out of cap; we had to move \$28,000. A portion of the pension fund of \$54,326.00 covering past employees had to be moved into cap and there was a new grant that we just received for Clean Communities for \$17,373.44.

After making the changes, the amount to be raised by taxation is exactly the same. The only difference in the appropriation is once they give us a grant, we have to appropriate it. That is the only difference in the appropriations. Basically, you can adopt the budget tonight.

Councilman Vozeh expressed his thanks to the Finance & Administration Committee members: Council President Nalbandian, and Councilman Heller. It was a total team effort.

The work of Borough Administrator Nick Saros, Finance Officer Rich Mathieson and all the other department heads cannot be understated. In addition, our auditors, Garbarini & Co., also play a critical role in this process and have been quite helpful in their first year working for Ramsey. The budget was introduced on April 11, 2007, and the budget summary message was mailed out to the public. This year's budget reflects a 2.9% increase over 2006.

That is about \$6.00 per month to an average taxpayer or \$77 annually. The general rate of inflation was 3.78% so this budget has come with an increase that is basically in line

and slightly below the regional inflation rate. State aid has increased and we have received an additional \$40,000. To put that in perspective, that increase is only 2/10's of 1% of the budget for property tax savings of about \$3 to \$4 for the entire year to the average taxpayer.

The flip side is that our state mandated pension costs have increased by \$312,000.00 in 2007 or 70% above 2006 levels. While we got more aid, we also got a pension bill with an increase close to 8 times the increase in aid. This increase alone represented over 1/2 of the total municipal budget increase for 2007. We also saw an 11.1% increase in state mandated contribution to the Library. On the positive side, we are starting to see progress from the efforts of the Council, Mayor and our employees who collectively work to control costs.

The Borough has made changes to employee health insurance plans and employee contributions. This budget has a line item for capital projects. This year's figure is \$1.18 million which will be set aside from general funds, not bonding. Those items are approved in separate resolutions, subsequent to this budget process. This moderate level of budget increase is no accident. The Mayor and Council worked over a long period of time to develop prudent budgets, maintain low levels of short or long-term debt and continue to be prudent for now and future years. This budget was a collective effort of all the employees and governing body to work toward balancing the level of service, programs, and basic operations.

Council President Nalbandian added that Councilman Vozeh deserves a lot of credit and our thanks for working so hard. I can tell you that it is not an easy task in a very difficult environment, given escalating costs. Bruce has taken that position to heights that would be very difficult for anybody to repeat or surpass. He deserves a lot of credit. It is a very financially prudent budget with a relatively modest tax rate increase and it is worthy of passage.

Councilman Heller stated that this is a very tight budget. I certainly congratulate Councilman Vozeh on piloting what the public will see as a very prudent budget. Spending is going up \$589,000 and \$312,000 is for a state mandated pension increase. 2.9% tax increase...obviously taxes had to go up a little. Nobody likes to raise taxes but it was necessary. If you look at the municipal expense comparison that was sent out to the public, what you see is where spending goes up and where it goes down and where it stays flat. There are 13 lines from year to year where spending is flat. This is not a Mayor and Council who simply decides to spend money. All the budget lines are important. Every line is important and every line was given attention. This was a very disciplined approach. We continue our "pay-as-you-go" on capital items. We will not burden the public with more debt in the future. I would congratulate all of my colleagues on a very successful budget cycle and look forward to the budget's approval.

Motion by Vozeh, seconded by Heller, to amend the budget:

WHEREAS, the local municipal budget for the year 2007 was introduced on the 11th day of April, 2007, and

WHEREAS, the public hearing on said budget was to be held as advertised and

WHEREAS, it is desired to amend said approved budget;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Ramsey , County of Bergen, the following amendments to the approved budget of 2007

be made;

Total General Revenue and Appropriations \$21,098,016.80

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

Motion to approve the budget as amended by Vozeh, seconded by Heller,

BE IT RESOLVED that the following statements of revenue and appropriations shall constitute the adopted municipal budget for the year 2007

Current Fund General Appropriation	\$16,905,525.00
Appropriations within the municipal purposes of the cap	\$16,905,525.00
Appropriations excluded from the caps	\$2,931,042.88
Reserve fund collected taxes	\$1,261,449.00
Total General Appropriations	\$21,098,016.88
less anticipated revenue	\$7,405,431.88

Amount to be raised by taxes	\$13,692,585.00
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2007 dedicated water and sewer utility fund	\$ 5,900,762.32
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Dedicated swimming pool utility fund	\$ 267,500.00
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The governing body of the Borough of Ramsey does hereby adopt the foregoing as the budget for the year 2007.

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

Council President Nalbandian and Councilwoman Dillon joined the Mayor in presenting a certificate to Brooke Garlick, Female Athlete of the Week. Brooke is a freshman at Ramsey High School, who pitches for softball.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Jones, seconded by Dillon, to approve the minutes of April 11, 2007, with the following change: to add "Higher Education" in Council President Nalbandian's report, (referring to Officer Shoemaker's seminar). Motion carried.

III. COMMUNICATIONS -

Motion by Jones, seconded by Heller, to receive and file the following Communications. Carried.

1. Madeline Thumudo, Admin. Asst., Northwest Bergen County Utilities Authority, 30 Wyckoff Avenue, Waldwick, NJ 07463
letter dated April 9, 2007, enclosing the minutes of NBCUA meeting of March 7, 2007.
2. Ella F. Filippone, Executive Director, Passaic River Coalition, 94 Mt. Bethel Road, Warren, NJ 07059

letter dated April 24, 2007, regarding the concern of the preservation of vacant land.

3. Eric Froman, Director, Camp Ramsey, New York Sports Club
1150 Rt. 17 North, Ramsey
letter dated May 2, 2007, requesting permission to erect (3) 20x20 tents for their summer program from June 1-September 9, 2007.
4. Helen Bergren, 607 Fairfax Drive, Ramsey
letter dated May 4, 2007, thanking the Mayor and Council and Joe Palmer for planning the senior trip to Hunterdon Playhouse.
5. Kim Single, Bergen County Walk Chair, The Amyotrophic
Lateral Sclerosis Association
letter dated May 8, 2007, requesting permission to hang banners at Brady's at the Station and on the fence at Ramsey High School advertising the ALS Walk on Saturday, June 3, 2007.
6. Madeline Thumudo, Secretary, Northwest Bergen County Utilities
Authority, 30 Wyckoff Avenue, Waldwick, NJ 07463
letter dated May 3, 2007, enclosing the minutes of the NBCUA meeting of April 4 and April 20, 2007.

IV. APPOINTMENTS

Mayor Botta made the following appointments:

Vanessa Jachzel, Citizens Budget Task Force
Collin DeWitt, Ramsey Fire Department, Jr. Fire Brigade

V. CONSENT RESOLUTION

Introduced by Vozeh, seconded by Nalbandian

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: Awarding the contract for the Brook Stream Improvements for DeBaun Avenue and vicinity to D.R. Mullen Construction, Inc.

- c. Resolution: Appointing Collin M. DeWitt to the Ramsey Volunteer Fire Department as a Jr. Fire Brigade Member.

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

A. SPECIAL PERMITS:

New York Sports Club is requesting permission to erect three 20x20 tents on their premises for their summer camp program. The tents will be up from June 1- September 9, 2007.

Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Association is requesting permission to hang banners from May 21, 2007 through June 2, 2007, advertising their walk on Saturday, June 2, 2007.

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

Mayor Botta administered the oath of office to Vanessa Jachzel for the Citizens' Budget Task Force.

VI. COMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS

A. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION -Councilman Bruce Vozeh

Congratulations to Vanessa on her appointment to the Citizens' Budget Task Force. Congratulations to Collin DeWitt. I had the pleasure of coaching Brooke Garlick and she puts in a lot of hard work. My thanks to everyone again for their work on the budget.

B. PUBLIC SAFETY – Council President Arthur M. Nalbandian

I too would like to congratulate Vanessa and Collin on their appointments. I wish them well and thank them for their service. Congratulations to Brooke Garlick and her family. I would like to commend Councilman Vozeh on shepherding the budget again this year. It is an excellent job. I would like to remind everyone of a few dates: May 18 is the Knights of Columbus Shield Awards; May 19 is the DARE fishing derby from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Don Bosco High School; June 2 is the DARE pool party from 11:00 to 2:00 at the Ramsey Pool; June 9 is the second annual Ramsey DARE Idol competition at Ramsey High School at 7:00 p.m.; and June 12 is the DARE graduation for the 5th grade students at 7:30 p.m. at the Ramsey High School. Also, Memorial Day is coming up and I ask everyone to be safe and careful with the start of summer.

C. BUILDING & ZONING – Councilman Andrew Siemsen

Congratulations to the new appointees and thank them for their service to the community. I would also like to congratulate Brooke on her achievement.

D. UTILITIES, BUILDINGS & GROUNDS – Councilman Jeffrey C. Heller
An engineering firm will be conducting an analysis of all Borough buildings to see what improvements might be necessary in those buildings over the next 5 years. We also discussed improvements to the basketball courts at Finch Park. We discussed filling in the circle in front of the gas station on Main Street. We are looking into some possibilities. Additionally, we reviewed a number of small capital projects in terms of improvements to streets and sidewalks around the Borough, as well as a few larger programs.

E. PUBLIC & GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS – Councilman William Jones
Congratulations to Brooke Garlick and my thanks to Vanessa and Collin for their commitment to serve the community. I would like to also mention Angela Strollo who chaired the Clean-Up day for Earth Day on April 28. It was a huge success. The Environmental Commission and the Rescue Squad organized a great event. The overall involvement that we get from the community is something that is very encouraging and I would like to thank everyone who participated.

The Fine Arts Council hosted its first Open Mic night at Border's and it was deemed a successful evening. They will continue to host Open Mic night on the last Saturday of every month at 7:30 p.m. July 20 is the Sgt. Pepper Anniversary concert which will be held on the lawn at the High School. October 14 is the date for the Harvest Festival. They are looking for volunteers to help with that.

F. HEALTH, EDUCATION & SOCIAL SERVICES – Councilwoman Deirdre A. Dillon
My thanks to Councilman Vozeh for leading the charge on the municipal budget.

Congratulations to Vanessa Jachzel and Collin DeWitt and my thanks for serving your community. Congratulations to Brooke on her wonderful accomplishment.

Ramsey Walk at Work Day, cosponsored by the Board of Health, will take place on Tuesday, June 5. We are in the process of finalizing the brochure for that event. Play for Pink is a breast cancer awareness fund raiser will be Thursday, June 7, at the Ramsey Golf & Country Club. It is open to the public. The grand reopening of the Senior Citizens Center is scheduled for Sunday, June 10, from 12 to 4:00 P.M. at Finch Park.

G. MAYOR CHRISTOPHER C. BOTTA – No comments.

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

I. BOROUGH ADMINISTRATOR – Nicholas C. Saros No comments.

J. BOROUGH CLERK – Meredith Bendian No comments.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Joe Carey, 498 Island Road, spoke on behalf of the Island Road/Finch Park Traffic Committee about the traffic calming project at the intersection of Church Street and Island Road. There are two major problems: Island Road is the more heavily traveled non-county road in the Borough and cars are driving too fast. The speed limit is 25 mph but measured speed is close to 36 mph. When the NJ Transit station went in, vehicles were going over 35 mph. This is a local road next to the biggest recreation facility in the Borough.

There are two crosswalks at this location. The traffic consultant recommended traffic calming. It means much more than speed bumps. Our committee recommended retrofitting the intersection for a reduced curve radius. As a result, measured speed was 26.89 miles per hour. This was the only place where the speed limit was even close to 25 mph. An even more telling number was the fastest vehicles going around the corner at 21 mph when the ballards were in place. Another interesting statistic is that people are using their turn signals now. During a recent baseball game, 5 overthrown balls went through the fence and into the blocked off lane. That is an additional safety aspect. Adding another lane or making the road wider just doesn't work. We must take a new look at speeding and find a balance between cars, pedestrians, and bicycles in the Borough. The Borough has taken additional steps in the Master Plan and the Planning Board has set a goal to use more calming tools as part of the 2006 Master Plan. Using something like this in combination with the changes and the updates in the Master Plan will enable us to find funding sources that we are discussing in the Buildings & Grounds Committee and making it safer to walk to school.

There is a tremendous amount of money at the State and Federal level for dealing with situations like this and improving our sidewalk and right of way infrastructure.

Not seeing anyone else who wished to speak, Mayor closed the Public Comment.

VIII. ADVERTISED PUBLIC HEARING FOR FINAL CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCES

15-2007 Bond Ordinance- Construction of Arsenic Treatment System
Introduced by Heller, seconded by Vozech

BE IT RESOLVED that an ordinance entitled: BOND ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE CONSTRUCTION OF ARSENIC TREATMENT SYSTEMS AT VARIOUS PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY FACILITIES IN, BY AND FOR THE WATER-SEWER UTILITY OF THE BOROUGH OF RAMSEY IN THE COUNTY OF BERGEN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF \$1,923,000.00 TO PAY THE COST THEREOF, TO AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF SUCH BONDS having been brought up for public hearing and all

persons interested having been given an opportunity 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.

Councilman Heller stated that this provides money to remediate the arsenic challenges now faced by the Ramsey water system. I think we mentioned previously that this situation arose as a result of changing regulation standards. The federal government permits 10 parts of arsenic per billion. New Jersey decided that they wanted even cleaner water and they decided to permit only 5 arsenic parts per billion. That created a challenge to the Ramsey water system. In order to keep much of our water assets in continued utilization, the Borough is confronted with a fairly costly and unfortunate remediation effort necessary, but to the extent that we want to maintain the integrity of the overall value of the Ramsey water system, this is a very necessary project. While the ordinance talks about bonds, there is a program of low interest, below interest, rate loans available to entities and municipalities engaging in this activity. We do believe that we will be able to secure a 20 year loan at a very favorable interest rate to pay for this project. In terms of the overall amount, this is the maximum amount that would be necessary. New York Twist Drill has a well that we included in this amount. They may or may not participate in this, to the extent that if they don't, the amount would go done by a substantial portion. One of the Borough wells, I believe it is on East Oak Street, may or may not have to be remediated. The \$1.9 million is a maximum amount necessary to get these various remediation projects done. It could be a smaller amount and we will do everything we can to make this as economical an effort for Ramsey rate payers as possible. It is an unfortunate but necessary effort to maintain the integrity of the overall water system.

Not seeing anyone else who wished to speak, Mayor closed the public hearing for ord. 15-2007.

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

16-2007 Ordinance authorizing the Borough Engineer to review all applications for site approvals and sub subdivision approvals
Introduced by Siemsen, seconded by Jones

BE IT RESOLVED that an ordinance entitled: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING AND SUPPLEMENTING CHATER XXXI OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF RAMSEY AND MORE PARTICULARLY SUBSECTION G OF SECTION 31-1.9 THEREOF ENTITLED APPLICATIONS; PROCEDURE FOR FILING; FEES FOR VARIANCES WITHIN JURISDICTION OF PLANNING BOARD; BOROUGH ENGINEER REVIEW OF ALL APPLICATIONS having been brought up for public hearing and all persons interested having been given an opportunity 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.

Councilman Siemsen stated that this ordinance was recommended to us by Harold Reed, the Borough Engineer. When a plan comes in for review, Mr. Reed has a checklist for the application before it can be heard by the Planning Board or Board of Adjustment. This ordinance adds another requirement to that list and that is the certification by the Zoning Officer that there are no violations of the Ramsey Zoning Code on the property to be considered in the application.

Not seeing anyone else who wished to speak, Mayor closed the public hearing for ord. 16-2007.

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

IX. INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES None

X. UNFINISHED BUSINESS None

XI. NEW BUSINESS None

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Nalbandian, seconded by Heller, to adjourn the meeting. Carried.

Meredith Bendian
Borough Clerk

/ad