

BOROUGH OF RAMSEY
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 11, 2008

Mayor Botta called the regular meeting of the Mayor and Council to order. Mayor asked Joe Palmer (former member of the Recreation Commission) to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor read the Open Public Meetings law notice.

I. ROLL CALL

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

Absent: None

Motion by Nalbandian, seconded by Vozech, to go out of the normal order of business. Carried. Council President Vozech joined the Mayor to present a clock/plaque to Joe Palmer for his work on the Recreation Commission since 1991. John Solarino also presented Joe with a plaque. Joe expressed his appreciation for being recognized.

Councilman Jones joined the Mayor for a presentation to Ashley Gardenier for her volunteer work with the DARE. Councilman Jones presented Ashley with a scholarship check from the Drug Alliance.

BUDGET HEARING

Mayor introduced Borough Auditor, Paul Garbarini, and opened the hearing to the public. Jack Fitzsimmons, 908 Washington Drive, spoke about an article in the Record newspaper pertaining to a new position at the Board of Education for \$150,000. I think it is great that you voted that down. People say the taxes in Mahwah are a lot cheaper and the taxes in Ramsey seem high. The Public Pension benefits have increased \$94,000 for the public employees and the Police & Fire have increased \$254,000. Do we have firemen on the payroll who receive benefits? Mayor stated that it is called the Police and Firemen Retirement System but we do not have a paid Fire Department and no Fire personnel receives a pension. It was published that a policeman's salary is \$101,000. If a police officer received a 4% raise for 10 years, he would get over \$150,000 in ten years. A lot of the people that I speak to have the same sentiments. Mayor stated that our state mandated pension cost did increase \$347,000 this year; 49% for one year. Unfortunately this is a state mandated cost, and the state says we must contribute that amount. That is why we have discretionary spending over some portions of our budget. Borough Administrator stated that about 10 years ago contributions from communities were frozen and it was thought that through investments the liability of the state pension system could be funded. There was a time when no municipality was contributing the proper amount. Now, it is basically a catch-up. The State decided that they

did not fund the proper amount of liabilities to pay the pensions and therefore you see the increases in the last several years. That will continue for another year or two. In the past, they actually took money out of the pension system to try to balance the state budget. IRS got involved and they had to put the money back into the pension system. This is something that we do not have any control over.

Mr. Fitzsimmons stated that one of his neighbors is paying \$17,000 per year in taxes. Mayor stated that we all live here too and we understand the financial pressures that are on us. When you look at our budget this year, our appropriations for our budget have decreased this year. However, due to the decrease in state aid, and the increased costs mandated by the State, our tax rate is going up. Mr. Fitzsimmons thanked the Mayor and Council for voting down the one salary for one new position that did not exist in the school.

Doug Rennie, 30 Rose Avenue, stated that we spent a lot of time putting a senior budget together and it seems to have been cut in half. There has not been any feedback to us. The capital plan has dropped some more. I do not know how you can have a capital plan if you do not identify projects and where the money is going to come from to do those projects. There is nothing to identify what is going to be done or anything else.

Borough Administrator stated that our Borough Engineer does put together all the projects from year to year that goes forward. What you see in this budget is the appropriation side of which the governing body has done very well in providing a pay-as-you-go capital budgeting, using cash to offset a lot of our projects. We are in an enviable position since we are basically debt free with some small short term notes. We have set aside funds for road resurfacing, for sidewalks, and for miscellaneous equipment that we do on an ongoing basis. Mayor added that we have 3-year plans for roads, 3-year plans for sidewalks and curbs, and 3-year plans for drainage improvements and engineering projects. Mr. Rennie asked if the public ever gets to see those plans? Mayor stated that when we bring forth an ordinance to be enacted, those plans are seen. Councilwoman Dillon added that we are developing the short term and long term plans for all the buildings in town, and we are putting a lot of time into it and we are meeting with the consultant next week to go over the study again.

Not seeing anyone else who wished to speak, Mayor closed the public hearing for the budget.

Resolution by Siemsen, seconded by Vozeh

BE IT RESOLVED that the following statements of revenue and appropriations shall constitute the municipal budget for the year 2008:

Current Fund General Appropriations	\$16,561,199.00
Appropriations excluded from CAPS	\$ 3,052,694.29
Reserve for Uncollected Taxes	\$ 1,299,767.00
Total General Appropriations	\$20,913,660.29
Less anticipated revenues	\$ 6,435,221.56
Amount to be raised by taxes	\$14,478,438.73

2008 Dedicated Water/Sewer Utility Fund	\$6,255,264.00
Utility Revenue	\$6,255,264.00
2008 Dedicated Swimming Pool Utility Fund	\$267,500.00
Utility Revenue	\$267,500.00

Councilman Siemsen stated that this budget has a local tax rate equal to .518 or 51.8 cents. The percentage increase from last year is 3.81% and that is below the state limit of 4%. As the Mayor mentioned, appropriations for 2008 are down and they are approximately \$185,000 less than last year. Of the percentage increase, \$524,000.00 was made up of the pension fund contribution increase which was \$347, 803.00 and a state aid decrease to Ramsey of \$176,711.00.

ROLL CALL

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

Mayor thanked the Municipal Auditor Paul Garbarini.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Jones, seconded by Vozech, to approve the minutes of 5/14/08 as submitted.
Carried.

III. COMMUNICATIONS -

Motion by Jachzel, seconded by Nalbandian, to receive and file the following Communications:

1. [Ernest Larrat, Eagle Scout Coordinator, Troop 31](#)
letter dated May 27, 2008, inviting the Mayor and Council to Vasilios Ikonomidis Eagle Scout Ceremony.
2. [Dennis Mc Nerney, County of Bergen, County Executive, One Bergen County Plaza, Hackensack, NJ 07601](#)
letter dated May 27, 2008 informing the Governing Body of the approval of their Bergen County Community Development Project for \$10,000.00 for Renovations to the Senior Center.
3. [Ellen Elias Rocca, Executive Director, The Center for Alcohol and Drug Resources, Main Street, Hackensack, NJ 07601](#)
letter dated June 2, 2008, inviting the Mayor and Council to their open house on Thursday, June 26, 2008.
4. [Lucy Voorhoeve, Executive Director, State of New Jersey, Council on Affordable Housing, Trenton, NJ 08625](#)
letter dated May 28, 2008, regarding COAH's third round rules.

5. [Joseph R. Bianco, 82 Brookfield Lane, Ramsey, NJ 07446](#)
letter dated June 1, 2008, thanking the Mayor and Council for their efforts on the completion of the Brookfield Lane Drainage Improvement Project.
6. [Madeline Thumudo, Secretary, Northwest Bergen County Utilities Authority, 30 Wyckoff Avenue, Waldwick, NJ 07463](#) letter dated May 14, 2008, enclosing the Report of audit for year ended December 31, 2007.
7. [Madeline Thumudo, Secretary, Northwest Bergen County Utilities Authority, 30 Wyckoff Avenue, Waldwick, NJ 07463](#) letter dated June 4, 2008, enclosing minutes.
8. [Madeline Thumudo, Secretary, Northwest Bergen County Utilities Authority, 30 Wyckoff Avenue, Waldwick, NJ 07463](#) letter dated May 7, 2008, enclosing minutes.
9. [Bridget Kelly, St. Paul's Church, Wyckoff Avenue, Ramsey, NJ](#)
e-mail dated June 9, 2008 informing of the movie night on June 14, 2008 on the field behind the school beginning with a DJ at 6pm and movie to follow at dusk.

IV. APPOINTMENTS –

Mayor Botta made the following appointments:
 Margaret Breslin, Centennial Committee
 David Torchin, Planning Board, Regular Member
 Carl Weber, Planning Board, First Alternate
 Jeremy S. Senanayake, Volunteer Fire Dept.
 John Houston, Office of Emergency Management

V. CONSENT RESOLUTION

Introduced by Siemsen, seconded by Vozeh

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:

- | | | |
|----------|-------------|---|
| 118-2008 | Resolution: | Payment of vouchers |
| 119-2008 | Resolution: | Appointing Jeremy S. Senanayake to the Ramsey Volunteer Fire Department |
| 120-2008 | Resolution: | Authorizing the issuance of estimated tax bills for the third quarter |

- 121-2008 Resolution: [Authorizing Capital Alternatives to assemble and submit the application for Woodland Avenue Section II Rehab to NJ Trust Fund Authority Act Municipal Aid Program](#)
- 122-2008 Resolution: [Authorizing the electronic submission of grant application for the expansion of the existing bikeway system to the Department of Transportation.](#)
- 123-2008 Resolution: [Awarding the bid for water valve and service replacement within the Borough of Ramsey to John Garcia Construction Company in the amount of \\$36,000.00](#)
- 124-2008 Resolution: [Authorizing the 60 day extension for the Aggregated Electricity Supply and Audit Savings for the Northwest Bergen Cooperative Pricing System](#)
- 125-2008 Resolution: [Appointing John Houston to the Office of the Emergency Management](#)
- 126-2008 Resolution: [Authorizing the borough administrator to enter into a contract for capital items for a July 4th Celebration at a cost not to exceed \\$10,000.00.](#)
- 127-2008 Resolution: [Authorizing the rejection of the bids for the maintenance of Irrigation Systems](#)

AYES: Dillon,. Jachzel, Jones, Nalbandian, Siemsen, Vozeh NAYS: None

VI. COMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS

- A. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION -Councilman Andrew Siemsen
I would like to thank Deirdre and Bruce for their help with the budget. I would also thank Nick Saros and Paul Garbarini, as well as the remaining members of the Council for their input and support. My thanks to Dave Torchin and Carl Weber for remaining on the Planning Board; they are both valuable members of the Planning Board and I look forward to their continued future service. I would also like to thank Margaret Breslin for joining the Centennial Committee and to the new members of the Fire Department and OEM. Congratulations to Joe Palmer and also to Ashley Gardenier.
- B. PUBLIC SAFETY – Councilman William Jones
I would like to add my thanks to the volunteers who stepped forward as Councilman Siemsen said. Congratulations to Joe Palmer for his many years of dedicated service to the community. Ashley does an incredible job. I attended the DARE graduation last night and we have the premier DARE program in the State.

DARE Officer Shoemaker is incredible; he knows every child's name. I can only hope that the DARE program makes a substantial difference in the lives of our children.

- C. BUILDING PLANNING & ZONING – Councilman Arthur M. Nalbandian
I too would like to congratulate and thank Joe Palmer on his award tonight. I would also like to thank Ashley Gardenier for her efforts. The members of the Drug Alliance are very hardworking. My thanks to the members of the Recreation Commission also for the job that they do. I would like to thank all of the appointees here tonight and my congratulations to the DARE graduates and their parents also deserve to be congratulated. Yesterday, we had a storm go through Bergen County and Ramsey was spared from a lot of damage and problems. Director of OEM Mike Adams is constantly getting updates when storms are approaching and we are prepared. Other communities have had trees down and it is 24 hours and some of them are not even removed.
- D. UTILITIES, BUILDINGS & GROUNDS – Councilwoman Deirdre A. Dillon
Congratulations to the new appointees tonight. Special congratulations to Joe Palmer for his service to the Recreation Commission and to Ashley Gardenier who truly deserves recognition as the Ramsey DARE Volunteer of the Year. There are two resolutions tonight; one for the second section of Woodland Avenue and one to expand the bike path. This is part of our continuing effort to get more money back from the State. Every grant dollar that we get is less money that we have to spend of our own municipal budget. Thank you to Councilman Siemsen and Councilman Vozeh for working on the budget. We had a lot of productive meetings on Sundays this year and I think we did a good job on the budget.
- E. PUBLIC & GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS – Council President Bruce Vozeh
I would like to echo my colleagues' comments to Ashley Gardenier. She is an extremely impressive young woman and her work is very much appreciated. Also, I would echo the comments about Joe Palmer. I served on the Recreation Commission with Joe for 5 years and I actually was involved with Ramsey Baseball when Joe was a coach. I know he put in a lot of time and effort. The basketball project at Finch Park has been completed and the project looks extremely well. The Home Run Derby is Saturday, June 14. Registration is at 9:30 a.m. at Finch Park. This competition has been going on for about 35 years. Last year, we had P.J.Scandariato go to Philadelphia. I would also like to thank our appointees tonight for their service and also echo the comments on the budget. My thanks to Councilman Siemsen for his work on the budget process. I think he did an outstanding job. The appropriations are going down and we made cuts where we could. It is a prudent budget, given the constraints that we have.

F. HEALTH, EDUCATION & SOCIAL SERVICES – Councilwoman Vanessa Jachzel
I would echo the comments of my colleagues on the Council regarding the many, many volunteers that we have recognized and appointed tonight from Joe Palmer to Ashley Gardenier. I want to mention the Relay for Life which took place last Friday and Saturday at the High School. The community came together, over 600 people took part and we raised over \$125,000 for the American Cancer Society. I want to thank Principal Rich Lio for organizing the event and thank you to the community for coming out and giving so much. It was really a beautiful event. The Centennial Committee had the Garden Tour on June 7 and that was also a wonderful success, despite the hot weather.

G. MAYOR CHRISTOPHER C. BOTTA

I would like to congratulate the Garden Club and the Centennial Committee for the garden tour. They did a great job. In the past week, I attended 3 events which continue to set a great example of what our community is all about; the Relay for Life; the Girl Scouts Gold Awards; and the DARE Awards. Each event was very special and I wish to thank all of those involved. One comment on the budget.. we are burdened with the state mandates and our appropriations went down but our tax rate did go up. This is an example of how things are broken in Trenton and how municipalities have had to cut health care costs, as well as the number of personnel that we have working for us, and cutting expenses. I would commend the Council especially Councilman Siemsen and the entire Finance and Administration Committee, for putting together a very prudent budget and moving us forward. The basketball courts at Finch Park and the batting cages were opened this past week and in the past three years, we have transformed Finch Park from an aging recreation center to a state-of-the-art and very accessible meeting place. We have redone the playground which includes equipment for handicapped children, as well as the hockey rink, basketball courts, and batting cages. We have made it safer to be in Finch Park by eliminating some of the traffic issues. There will always be traffic issues because of the volume of people visiting Finch Park but we have eliminated the obvious safety issues of people backing up by making the traffic flow better and increasing the parking there. We have also increased the capacity for our senior citizens at Finch Park. We have replaced the fencing on the fields. We have transformed the park into a park that everyone can be proud of and I think it is an excellent accomplishment for this Council and for this administration and prior administrations who participated in those projects.

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

Jack Fitzsimmons, 908 Washington Drive, stated that his grandchildren love to go to Finch Park. I want to thank Councilman Jones for his assistance in getting some trimming done in the area of Finch Park on Church Street, which was a safety issue.

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

VIII. ADVERTISED PUBLIC HEARING FOR FINAL CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCES

[Ordinance 05-2008 Authorizing the repaving of Briggs Avenue, Lost Tree Lane, Snyder Avenue, Vaughn Drive, Column Court and sections of Prince Street, Peach Hill, Church Street, and Gertzen Plaza in the Borough of Ramsey, County of Bergen and State of New Jersey and to appropriate the sum of \\$100,000.00 to pay the cost thereof.](#)

Resolution by Dillon, seconded by Nalbandian

BE IT RESOLVED that an ordinance entitled: BOND ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE ROAD RECONSTRUCTION AND REPAVING OF LOST TREE LAND, SNYDER AVENUE, VAUGHN DRIVE, COLUMN COURT AND SECTIONS OF PRINCE STREET, PEACH HILL, CHURCH STREET AND GERTZEN PLAZA IN THE BOROUGH OF RAMSEY, COUNTY OF BERGEN, AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF \$100,000.00 TO PAY THE COST THEREOF, TO MAKE A DOWN PAYMENT, TO AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE IN PART SUCH APPROPRIATIONS AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES IN ANTICIPATION 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,

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.

ROLL CALL

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

[Ordinance 06-2008 Amending Chapter III of the code of the Borough of Ramsey,](#)
Bergen County, New Jersey, and more specifically 3-7 thereof entitled loitering

Resolution by Jones, seconded by Jachzel

BE IT RESOLVED that an ordinance entitled: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER III OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF RAMSEY, BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY AND MORE SPECIFICALLY SECTION 3-7 THEREOF ENTITLED LOITERING having been brought up for public hearing and all persons interested having been given the 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.

Jack Fitzsimmons, 908 Washington Drive, asked what this ordinance does? Councilman Jones stated that it is repealing a definition of loitering that has been deemed no longer pertinent by the Supreme Court. We had to change wording, based on a court decision. Borough Attorney stated that there is a State Statute that deals with loitering. It is a disorderly persons offense. Ramsey's ordinance was superseded by the Criminal Code. Mr. Fitzsimmons asked what is loitering? Borough Attorney stated that there are a number of different definitions. Mayor stated that our definition of loitering was superseded by the State definition of loitering and we have not used that definition in 15 years. We are doing a housekeeping measure to take this definition off our books. We will use the state statute for a violation, not our local ordinance.

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

IX. INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

[Ordinance 07-2008 An ordinance amending chapter II of the Code of the Borough of Ramsey,](#) Bergen County, New Jersey, and more specifically the Code of Ramsey, and more specifically article VIII Fees for Municipal Services; Section 2-90 Fees and Charges for Municipal Services; Subsection 2-90.1 fee established for services by the office of the Borough Clerk

Resolution by Siemsen, seconded by Vozech

BE IT RESOLVED that an ordinance entitled: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING

CHAPTER II OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF RAMSEY, BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY AND MORE SPECIFICALLY ARTICLE VIII FEES FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES; SECTION 2-90 FEES AND CHARGES FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES; SUBSECTION 2-90.1 FEE ESTABLISHED FOR SERVICES BY THE OFFICE OF THE BOROUGH CLERK 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 25th day of June, 2008, 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 ordinance is repealing some of the fees when people come in for an OPRA request.

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

Ordinance 08-2008 An ordinance to authorize the reconstruction of the basketball courts and hockey rink improvements at the Borough of Ramsey Finch Park and to appropriate the sum of \$133,525.00 to pay the cost thereof, in the Borough of Ramsey, County of Bergen, State of New Jersey

Resolution by Vozeh, seconded by Nalbandian

BE IT RESOLVED that an ordinance entitled: AN ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE BASKETBALL COURTS AND HOCKEY RINK IMPROVEMENTS AT THE BOROUGH OF RAMSEY FINCH PARK AND TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF \$133,525.00 TO PAY THE COST THEREOF, 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 25th day of June, 2008, at 8:45 p.m. prevailing time or as soon after as the matter can be reached, at the Municipal Building in said Borough,

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 Vozeh stated that this ordinance will authorize us to get the grant money from Bergen County Open Space. We have received two grants in the past for this project totaling \$133,525.00 which will offset 50% of the cost of the overall project.

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

X. UNFINISHED BUSINESS None

XI. NEW BUSINESS None

XII. ADJOURNMENT

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

Meredith Bendian
Borough Clerk