

**BOROUGH OF DUMONT
BERGEN COUNTY, N.J.
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 26, 2021
6:30 PM**

Mayor LaBruno called the meeting to order.

Flag Salute, Moment of Silence

Sunshine Law: The notice requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act of the State of New Jersey have been satisfied by the inclusion of the date, time and place of this regular meeting in the annual schedule and notice of regular meetings of this Governing Body. Such annual schedule and notice of regular meetings are posted at Borough Hall, was sent to *The Record* and the *Ridgewood News*, posted on the Borough website and filed with the Borough of Dumont.

Roll Call:

Council members: Chae, Englese, Harvilla, Rossillo, Stewart – present

Gorman - absent

Mayor Andrew LaBruno – present

Also present: Borough Administrator Chris Tully, Borough Clerk Jeanine Siek, Borough Attorney Marc Leibman, CFO Issa Abbasi

Motion to Accept the Agenda as presented: Councilman Chae

Second: Councilwoman Stewart

All in favor.

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the September 14, 2021 Executive Meeting minutes: Councilwoman Stewart

Second: Councilman Chae

Roll call vote: Council members Chae, Harvilla, Rossillo, Stewart – yes

Englese - abstain, Gorman – absent

Motion to approve the September 28, 2021 Public Meeting minutes: Councilwoman Stewart

Second: Councilman Chae

Roll call vote: Council members Chae, Englese, Harvilla, Stewart – yes

Rossillo – abstain, Gorman - absent

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor LaBruno thanked all of the residents and volunteers, members of the CAIDC Committee, Borough Administrator, Recreation Director, DPW Superintendent and Council members who helped out at the Spooktoberfest. There were over 300 children that participated. The Dumont High School football team is 7-0 and have a playoff game on Friday against Snyder High School. It would be great for our community to come out and support our football team, and we wish them luck.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilwoman Stewart

- No reports

Councilman Chae

- He reported that the Halloween festivities over the weekend were very successful, and there were many cute costumes. He thanked the police, fire, ambulance, DPW and all of the volunteers who made this event so wonderful.

- *Cultural Affairs*

He also congratulated Carl Manna who was recognized at the Italian Heritage Month. He is very proud that the committee is including many different cultures and celebrating them.

Councilman Englese

- *Police*

There were 1,720 telephone calls for service, 91 telephone calls for medical reasons, 39 calls for fire and 4 calls for commitments in July. Patrol issued 99 traffic summonses. There was 2 DWI arrests. They investigated 30 motor vehicle crashes, responded to 18 burglar alarms, travelled 7,940 miles, 1 warrant served, 10 street lights and 2 decorative lights not functioning, no car seats installed, no dark house slips issued and no notifications to the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office.

Councilwoman Rossillo

- No reports

Councilman Harvilla

- *Library*

The last meeting was on October 20th and they met with the new director, Kate Gorman, and reviewed the year-to-date 2021 budget. The next meeting will be on November 17th.

- *Economic Development*

The committee met on October 29th, and discussed reaching out to local restaurants to establish potential for a restaurant week and some restaurant related events in 2022. The next meeting will be on November 4th.

- *Beautification Committee*

Discussed establishing a long-term five-year plan for beautifying the street scape in Dumont. Once it is done, it will be presented to the Mayor and Council.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Mr. Leibman started following up with shared services with respect to trash pick-up. He is waiting for them to get back to him. Councilman Chae is working with him on this.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Overnight parking was extended until December 1st. There will be a discussion at the next meeting about extending it for the remainder of the season. At Twin Boro Field, new sprinklers have been installed. We had a meeting with members of Girls Softball and the Recreation Commission, as well the Recreation Director, and as soon as we get a date the field that is currently marked up will be cut and we will have a start date to get the field in shape for next season. The back stop will come in next, then the dugouts and the score board will be installed in the spring. Gina's Field is being demolished now and the irrigation is being modified. Quackenbush and Lafayette Road Projects are complete. The PD remediation is progressing well, and flooring should be installed next week. The Memorial Park basketball court project is expected to start tomorrow. Mr. Tully thanked the Cultural Affairs Committee, Tony Como,

Anthony Schiraldi, Acting Chief Joyce, Rebecca in Building Dept., PBA, fire and ambulance and Borough Council for making the Halloween festivities over the weekend such a successful day. He also thanked the Cultural Affairs Committee and all of the participants who helped make the Hispanic Heritage Celebration and Italian Heritage Celebration such a success. The personnel policy and procedures are expected to be completed for the next meeting.

CFO Issa Abbasi explained the audit deadline was extended to September 30th due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Traditionally, an audit would be reviewed and corrective action submitted in mid to late summer, affording a municipality four to five months to correct recommendations made. Five of the eight of the recommendations made in the 2019 audit have been addressed and resolved despite the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and our workforce working remotely for half of the year, relocating Borough Hall, securing \$264,000 in Cares Funds, and all while maintaining the Borough's day to day operations. Mr. Abbasi reviewed some of the findings which were corrected based on last year's audit. Also, while the 2020 corrective action plan is set to be voted on this evening, the Administration has already begun working on corrective measures. Additionally, there are several recommendations in the 2020 audit that will not reoccur as they are infrequent in nature. One recommendation, the use of a pretax Flexible Spending Plan, goes back to several prior administrations, and is currently being remedied by himself and Mr. Tully. In addition, the submission of the Construction Code report should now be filed in a timely manner with the transition to a new Construction Official this year.

Council President Stewart requested that there be a meeting in one month with the Auditor to review our progress on these items.

Mr. Abbasi further addressed a discrepancy brought up at the September 28th meeting from two OPRA responses. The difference in both reports can be found in the parameters of the date range included in the OPRA request. The Borough can only fulfill a request based on the parameters provided by the requestor. Both reports are correct based on their parameters. What is causing confusion is both reports are different in the time span of the encumbrances and the payments made to the vendor. Regarding the Best Practices checklist, the Division of Community Affairs established the best practices inventory in 2010. It's designed to make enable officials to do a better job reviewing their existing services, programs and setting budget priorities. The score on a municipality's inventory coincides with the amount of withheld state aid, if any. For 2020, the minimum score to retain 100 percent of state aid payment was fifteen points. The Borough of Dumont scored a 20.5.

Review of Consent Agenda Items: All items with an asterisk are considered to be non-controversial by the Council and will be approved by one motion. There may be further discussion prior to the vote upon request of a member of the public or a Council member. Also, any item may be removed for further discussion or for roll call vote in which case the item will be removed and considered in its normal sequence as part of the general order of business.

RESOLUTIONS

#21-240 – Authorization of Emergency Contract with Maco Office for Municipal Complex Repairs * (*previously tabled*)

#21-243 – Approval of Knights of Columbus On-Premise Casino Raffle License *

#21-244 – Accept Resignation from Jon Buchak – Electrical Sub-code Inspector *

#21-245 – Authorization of Contract Award for Grant Avenue Improvement Project & Grant Avenue Phase II *

- #21-246 – Bills List *
- #21-247 – Approval of St. Mary’s Church Off-Premise 50/50 Raffle License *
- #21-248 – Authorization of Cancellation of October Mayor & Council Meeting *
- #21-249 – Approval of Acceptance of Donation of Tulip Bulbs *
- #21-250 – Authorization to Adopt Provisions of Chapter 48 - SHBP Coverage of Certain Retirees *
- #21-251 – Certification of 2020 Audit *
- #21-252 – Approval of 2020 Corrective Action Plan *
- #21-253 – Accept Letter of Resignation from Recreation Commissioner Michael Prulello *

Mayor LaBruno thanked Recreation Commissioner Michael Prulello for his years of service to the community, recreation, sports and our children here in the Borough. We wish him luck in his next endeavor.

Public Comment - Consent Agenda Only

Motion to open to the public for Comments on the Consent Agenda Only: Councilman Englese
 Second: Councilman Chae

All in favor.

1. Bruce DeLyon, Beacon Street, read over the audit report and commented on the number of recommendations in this year’s report compared to previous years. He also reviewed certain items on this year’s audit and the audit report published in the newspaper. He questioned the CFO only being in Dumont twenty hours a week.
2. Maryann Normoyle, Randolph Avenue, questioned the Sustainable Communities payment on the bills list, and the payment to the Dixon Homestead Library. She asked about the resignation of the Electrical Sub-code Inspector, the Building Department lawsuit and the Maco resolution. Ms. Normoyle asked about the total amount for the PD flooding and if it will be reimbursed by insurance.
3. Lynn Vietri, Wilkens Drive, asked about a charge to East West Electric and if a cause of the flood has been determined. She commented about the dental insurance recommendation on the audit.
4. John Sansone, Beacon Street, questioned the bids for Grant Avenue and items on the bills list.

Motion to close to the public: Councilman Englese

Second: Councilman Chae

All in favor.

Motion to adopt the Consent Agenda: Councilman Englese

Second: Councilman Chae

Roll call vote: Council members: Chae, Englese, Harvilla, Rossillo, Stewart – yes

CFO Abbasi commented that he respects any comment about his full-time municipality which he’s been employed for eleven years. They’ve only in the past two years had an audit with no findings. The Borough of Dumont can have zero recommendations one day, but it will take time and energy regardless of how many hours the CFO is there because the staff does the work and he guides them accordingly. The Cares Act required a lot of extra work last year, on nights and weekends. No one takes our jobs more seriously than the people on this Administration and this Council. Again, five out of the eight of last year’s recommendations are taken care of, and a lot of these are already in play to be done by the end of this year. Sustainable Communities

primarily assists the Finance Department with reconciliation of monthly bank accounts. Mr. Abbasi commented on the issue with the dental insurance by stating that it is separate from the SHBP health insurance, and the dental plan does provide us with credit when we notify them that someone has ceased employment. As the Mayor stated, the Borough is looking to change the policy so that when an employee retires there is one uniform “cookie-cutter” clause that states the package they will receive. The CFO will look into the bills that were questioned. Regarding the accrued absences liability, we are looking into a vendor to have one uniform program for all departments to better track absences.

The Borough Administrator followed by saying the audit will be certified by the Council tonight and then it will be on the website. The Borough will not comment on any personnel or legal issues. The recommendation from our architect was to go with Maco because they had performed the original work. The progress downstairs in the PD is going well, the sheet rock and walls have been addressed and the flooring should begin next week. The contract for Grant Avenue was awarded to the lowest bidder, who performed work previously on Columbia Avenue. The question regarding the transportation of the generator which was the generator previously at our PD trailers and had to be moved to our DPW.

Public Comment - General Comments

Motion to open to the public for general comments: Councilman Englese

Second: Councilman Chae

All in favor.

1. Lynn Vietri, Wilkens Drive, asked if we know what caused the flooding in the Police Department and has it been fixed?
2. Cary Stopsky, East Quackenbush Avenue, commented on the buildup of soot that is slowing down the water flow in the brook and floods the road. He asked for an update on the mice issue from the food given out at Senior Center. Did Green Acres approve tree removal at Gina’s Field? Quackenbush is a cut through street, and cars speed.
3. John Sansone, Beacon Street, asked if there was a credit for landscaping from the builder. Will meetings be livestreamed and is Borough getting money back from CSX? He commented on flooding throughout town, and also on the differences between the amounts encumbered versus what was paid to Cummings.
4. Bruce DeLyon, Beacon Street, commented on his taxes going up over the past 2 years. He asked about resolution 20-105 on 4/7/20, and what the interest payments over the years. Can he find out where to find the accounting for each of the bonds he is concerned about. Mr. DeLyon also asked about the final cost of the municipal building and the Administrator receiving certification, and discussed streets within the Borough that need repaving.
5. Mary Normoyle, Randolph Avenue, questioned whether there would be a report for the Ambulance Corps. She asked about a payment to Dart Computer and what they do for us, She commented about her taxes going up over the past three years.
6. Maryann Russini, Roosevelt Avenue, asked if the police department detention area issues resolved and did Department of Corrections sign off yet. Was the handicap button installed on the door, and does each job function have a procedure?
7. Tom Kelly, Beacon Street, commented on the discrepancies on the Cummings vendors list and asked if it reflects payments and/or encumbrances, and if it shows credits? He commented that his tax increase was very similar to what Acacia had predicted for the

Borough Hall bond. He feels similar projections to the average household would be helpful in the future when bonding.

8. Michael Sullivan, Andover Avenue, commented that he would like to know what the elected officials stand for regardless of political affiliation. He also stated cars speed on his street and he would like a sign to slow cars down. Mr. Sullivan also commented on the Borough Administrator helping him with issues he is having with his Optimum service.

Borough Attorney Leibman replied to the comment regarding the Building Department case that a summary judgment motion was filed, and its pending decision in the court. It may take the Judge a little time to decide, but hopefully we will have something in the next few weeks. Ms. Lustig will send it to the Clerk as soon as she receives it.

Motion to close to the public: Councilman Englese

Second: Councilman Chae

All in favor.

The Borough Administrator replied that the cause of the flooding in the PD cannot be answered at the moment due to potential litigation. He stated the DEP is looking into the brook on East Quackenbush, and an exterminator looked into the mice situation but did not find anything. However, he put traps out just in case. As stated previously, the final plan for Gina's Field was approved by Green Acres which included the trees that were going to be removed. He made note of the speeding issues at East Quackenbush and will address it with the police. A trial run for streaming the meetings was done, and the camera would not connect. There is a call into our IT vendor. Dart is the IT vendor with the Borough, who is in charge of our computers and software, any virus issues. They also host our servers and they were instrumental in setting up the IT infrastructure here at Borough Hall. The police department walls are corrected and flooring will be done next week. The DOC has not signed off yet, as we are waiting for renovations to be completed before inviting them back in. Once he receives a second quote for the ADA doors, he can move forward. He has been working diligently to get the required second quote. However, it's been very difficult to get a response from vendors.

CFO Abbasi commented that he always encourages residents to ask questions, and he is not one to shy away from answers. He believes a more educated public is better public.

Councilman Harvilla addressed a member of the public who stated that all members of the Governing Body vote yes to everything. The Councilman respectfully disagreed with the blanket statement made that the entire Mayor and Council does not engage in dialogue. He stated that he does not always agree, and he does make commentary. Regarding the audit, there is significant frustration on the part of many of us about issues that reoccur in the audits from year to year. Many of them have been resolved, some of them are partially resolved. We are getting the audit report officially in October. We have discussed some of the challenges as far back as April and May, and are already in the process of putting into place resolutions. One thing that should be noted is we're in the process of reviewing our Policies and Procedures, SOP's, job descriptions, etc., many of which have not been updated for decades. It is a herculean task that we are undertaking and it will not happen overnight, but we are engaged in it. Many of the challenges we do have in audit finding that reoccur year after year will be rectifiable when the language and

the policies and the SOP's are updated to actually come in to line with current operating procedures.

Mayor LaBruno stated that in reference to Mr. Tully receiving his CPM, it's not a part of our qualifications as per Chapter 52-8 for our Borough Administrator. He works immensely, as well as works day and night, and on weekends.

Motion to adjourn: Councilman Englese

Second: Councilman Chae

All in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 7:48 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

Jeanine E. Siek, RMC
Municipal Clerk