

BOROUGH OF HIGH BRIDGE – COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Date: June 27, 2019 – 7:30 p.m. – Location: 7 Maryland Ave., High Bridge, NJ 08829

Please note: This meeting may contain discussion of items not mentioned on the agenda and, alternatively, any items specifically listed may be omitted.

CALL TO ORDER: CALLED TO ORDER BY THE MAYOR

FLAG SALUTE: LED BY MAYOR

COUNCIL ROLL CALL:

| | | | | | |
|---------------------|---------|--------------------|---------|-----------|---------|
| Councilman Columbus | present | Councilwoman Moore | present | Mayor Lee | present |
| Councilwoman Ferry | present | Councilman Strange | present | | |
| Councilwoman Hughes | present | Councilman Zappa | present | | |

Also present were Attorney Steve Firkser, Administrator Mike Pappas, Department of Public Works Director Rick Roll, Clerk Adam Young and thirty eight members of the public and press were also present.

READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion to dispense with the reading of the regular June 13, 2019 minutes: Hughes / Strange
Roll call vote: Columbus, yes ; Ferry, yes ; Hughes, yes ; Moore, yes ; Strange, yes ; Zappa, yes ;
Motion passes: 6 yes

Motion to approve June 13, 2019 regular minutes: Hughes / Moore
Roll call vote: Columbus, yes ; Ferry, yes ; Hughes, yes ; Moore, yes ; Strange, yes ; Zappa, yes ;
Motion passes: 6 yes

AWARD:

A. Ambassador's Award - The Mayor presented the award to Mr. Jared Crampton. Councilman Christopher Zappa spoke about Mr. Crampton's accomplishments and thanked him for his service.

VISITORS:

A. Food Stock - Mayor Lee spoke about the Foodstock 2019 challenge and urged everyone to donate to this cause.
B. High Bridge and North Hunterdon School Districts speaking on impact to tax bills

Representatives from the North Hunterdon School Districts spoke about the tax levy per municipality, how the levy is calculated, about the tuition revenue generated, about a new education program beginning for the district, spoke about maintaining a capital reserve account to fund capital projects, that there are no budgeted capital projects anticipated, increases in cost in special aid, that spending is anticipated be offset by tuition in the following year, hiring of a new library aid which has cost, I.T. project costs, aging buildings with costs, spoke to the changing demographics and needs of the school with restructuring, a list of projects are in the long range facilities plan from the capital reserve account, a facility inspection for long term planning was done, spoke about state aid have an effect on future efficiencies, large fixed costs to run the facilities, and spoke about the fiscal year ending June 30th. CFO Bonnie Fleming asked what the 3.8 million dollars is budgeted for. Mr. Kirchberger spoke about giving a copy of the the line items to Mrs. Fleming. Administrator Pappas asked about how class size effects the budget. Discussion of this ensued. The Mayor asked for the budget document, asked about the enrollment and other items with decreases, asked about the time range of the long rage plan. Representatives invited Borough Council and professional members to reach out to the Business Administrator.

High Bridge School District presented the 2019-2020 budget. Cindy Sharkey, Dr. Gregory Hobaugh, and Christopher Jones spoke about having a fiscal year starting July 1, spoke about new shared services and efficiencies with the schools, presented on the revenue anticipated, and explained the budgeting process. Discussion ensued with Council pertaining to raising taxes, costs to residents, appropriations, the process of increases going to referendum or not, and state aid decreasing. Cindy Sharkey invited residents to attend the

School Board meetings to be involved in the process of understanding the budgeting. Bob Imhoff from the High Bridge School Board spoke to referring people to the School Board when questions about the budget are raised, that the schools are doing well here, spoke about working with North Hunterdon and Voorhees to pay for programs and save funds, the different community involvement activities that are offered by the school, and engagement with the families with education. Mayor Lee asked about the 2% cap and going to referendum with budget items for schools. Dr. Hobaugh spoke about budgeting for capital reserve and saving of funds for projects works. Council discussed how the cap works. Mayor Lee and Administrator Pappas asked the School Board to draft a letter to address their portion of the budget increases in anticipation of increased communication from the residents. Dr. Hobaugh asked that the Borough also put a letter in the newsletter on this. Discussion ensued about having communication to ensure residents are aware of funding issues.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: 5 MINUTES PER PERSON

Rob Fernandes spoke about the proposed Ordinance for water meters, and spoke about his issue with connecting multiple connections and meters.

Alan Art reiterated support for requesting the full budget document from the school systems.

Cindy Sharkey spoke to having the budget available, and getting approval from the Board to have a letter composed for Council to go out in the newsletter.

Ann Willard spoke to the concern of having two schools rather than one school, not being a resident with a child going through the schools and the cost for this, having an efficient school, being one of the five highest taxed districts in the State, spoke about the past referendum to have the schools combined which failed. Discussion ensued of the past referendum to combine schools.

Linda Demarzo spoke about the need to look at other solutions to raise funds for schools and spoke to the value of communication with these topics.

Robin Ulmer spoke to the State's intent to bring more funding into the school district for pre-school expansion.

Bob Burd spoke about his time on the school board when the proposal to combine schools did not happen, spoke to not having high density residential homes be encouraged in High Bridge, the State controlling the school budget which makes budgeting difficult, having a tax specifically for those who use the schools, the effect of a school use tax over time decreasing the student enrollment which will increase taxes, and the created need for seniors to move out due to this.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

A. Ordinance 2019-021: Amend Borough Code Chapter 407 and 194 re water meters

Motion to open the public hearing for Ordinance 2019-021: Strange / Columbus

Roll call vote: Columbus, yes ; Ferry, yes ; Hughes, yes ; Moore, yes ; Strange, yes ; Zappa, yes ;

Motion passes: 6 yes

Mr. Rob Fernandes and Council spoke about the history of installing water meters in his buildings and spoke about having some buildings billed at one rate and other buildings being billed at another rate based on connections and meters. Discussion with Council ensued about physical connections compared to how physical connections are charged, how to charge moving forward according to the Ordinance, the possible hinderances to physically retrofitting old houses, a definition of terms perhaps being needed to redo the Ordinance, and how the water base fee is handled in other Boroughs compared to High Bridge. Council agreed that the Ordinance needs some changes before being passed.

Motion to close the public hearing for Ordinance 2019-021: Zappa / Strange

Roll call vote: Columbus, yes ; Ferry, yes ; Hughes, yes ; Moore, yes ; Strange, yes ; Zappa, yes ;

Motion passes: 6 yes

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2019-021: Zappa / Strange

Roll call vote: Columbus, no ; Ferry, no ; Hughes, no ; Moore, no ; Strange, no ; Zappa, no ;

Motion fails: 6 no

B. Ordinance 2019-022: Historical Committee

Motion to open the public hearing for Ordinance 2019-022: Zappa / Columbus

Roll call vote: Columbus, yes ; Ferry, yes ; Hughes, yes ; Moore, yes ; Strange, yes ; Zappa, yes ;
Motion passes: 6 yes

Councilwoman Natalie Ferry spoke about the reorganization of the Historical Ordinance to reorganize the Committee positively. Councilman Strange spoke positively about the ability of the Ordinance to target people for participation in certain duties.

Motion to close the public hearing for Ordinance 2019-022: Columbus / Zappa

Roll call vote: Columbus, yes ; Ferry, yes ; Hughes, yes ; Moore, yes ; Strange, yes ; Zappa, yes ;
Motion passes: 6 yes

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2019-022: Zappa / Moore

Roll call vote: Columbus, yes ; Ferry, yes ; Hughes, yes ; Moore, yes ; Strange, yes ; Zappa, yes ;
Motion passes: 6 yes

C. **Ordinance 2019-023**: McDonald Water Main Additional Funding

Motion to open the public hearing for Ordinance 2019-023: Zappa / Moore

Roll call vote: Columbus, yes ; Ferry, yes ; Hughes, yes ; Moore, yes ; Strange, yes ; Zappa, yes ;
Motion passes: 6 yes

Motion to close the public hearing for Ordinance 2019-023: Zappa / Strange

Roll call vote: Columbus, yes ; Ferry, yes ; Hughes, yes ; Moore, yes ; Strange, yes ; Zappa, yes ;
Motion passes: 6 yes

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2019-023: Columbus / Strange

Roll call vote: Columbus, yes ; Ferry, yes ; Hughes, yes ; Moore, yes ; Strange, yes ; Zappa, yes ;
Motion passes: 6 yes

D. **Ordinance 2019-024**: Ordinance amending Fire Prevention Code Ch. 180

Motion to open the public hearing for Ordinance 2019-024: Strange / Zappa

Roll call vote: Columbus, yes ; Ferry, yes ; Hughes, yes ; Moore, yes ; Strange, yes ; Zappa, yes ;
Motion passes: 6 yes

Motion to close the public hearing for Ordinance 2019-024: Columbus / Strange

Roll call vote: Columbus, yes ; Ferry, yes ; Hughes, yes ; Moore, yes ; Strange, yes ; Zappa, yes ;
Motion passes: 6 yes

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2019-024: Strange / Columbus

Roll call vote: Columbus, yes ; Ferry, yes ; Hughes, yes ; Moore, yes ; Strange, yes ; Zappa, yes ;
Motion passes: 6 yes

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- A.** Master Plan Reexamination - Councilman Zappa spoke about the master plan reexamination proposal which will be funded by the Highlands Council.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES:

A. **Ordinance 2019-025**: Golf Committee

Motion to introduce **Ordinance 2019-025**: Columbus / Zappa

Roll call vote: Columbus, yes ; Ferry, yes ; Hughes, yes ; Moore, yes ; Strange, yes ; Zappa, yes ;
Motion passes: 6 yes

Mayor Lee states that the **Ordinance 2019-025** shall be published in its entirety in the Express Times and/or the Hunterdon County Democrat along with the public hearing date of July 18, 2019.

CONSENT AGENDA:

| RESOLUTION # | TITLE |
|-------------------------|---|
| Resolution – 211 – 2019 | Award of contract – tub grinding |
| Resolution – 212 – 2019 | Award of contract – generator |
| Resolution – 213 – 2019 | Amend professional services contract - Maser |
| Resolution – 214 – 2019 | Submission of Proposal to the New Jersey Highlands Council for a Master Plan Reexamination Report |
| Resolution – 215 – 2019 | Approval of raffle permits – High Bridge Fire Department |
| Resolution – 216 – 2019 | Award of contract – Washington Phase 2 |
| Resolution – 217 – 2019 | Award of contract – Washington Phase 2 - paving |
| Resolution – 218 – 2019 | Rejection of Bid – McDonald St. Improvement Project |
| Resolution – 219 – 2019 | Appointment of Fire Official |
| Resolution – 220 – 2019 | Chapter 159 – Distracted driving |
| Resolution – 221 – 2019 | Grant for Department of Transportation Municipal Aid - River Road |
| Resolution – 222 – 2019 | Summer Recreation Fees Updated - 06/27/2019 |
| Resolution – 223 – 2019 | Award of contract – generator installation |
| Resolution – 224 – 2019 | Plenary license approval – Riverside Liquors |
| Resolution – 225 – 2019 | Plenary license approval – Circa |

Motion to approve the consent agenda items: Strange / Zappa

Roll call vote: Columbus, yes ; Ferry, yes ; Hughes, yes ; Moore, yes ; Strange, yes ; Zappa, yes ;

Motion passes: 6 yes

COUNCIL COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS/GOALS:

| Official | Department |
|---------------------|---|
| Councilman Zappa | Engineering, Department of Public Works Washington ave is under construction, DPW is doing road repairs, |
| Councilwoman Hughes | Environmental, Solid Waste / Recycling, Public Health & Open Space Reminded the public of document shredding and other events in the Borough, and a thank you to Bonnie for the Cleen Communities report |
| Councilwoman Moore | Special Events / Finance Had a successful Pooch Parade and next year's theme is toys and games, the first movie of the year went well |
| Councilman Strange | Emergency Services / Recreation Tickets are available for the Fire Department |
| Councilwoman Ferry | Historical / Education Spoke about the events held, spoke about the Speaker Series going well, repairs at Solitude House, and a new member for the Historical Committee |
| Councilman Columbus | Golf / Economic Development Committee Golf Committee Ordinance has been introduced, Golf stats were read, E.D.C. did not meet but Tourism Grant was submitted |
| Michael Pappas | Administrator The D.P.W. cleared the entrance to the Commons from Van Syckle |
| Mayor Michele Lee | Executive Services Good news from New Jersey Transit to allow the fence around the dog park. |

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

- A.** Certificate of Determination and Award
- B.** Monthly Tax and Finance Reports
- C.** Master Plan re-examination letter

PUBLIC COMMENTS: 5 MINUTES PER PERSON

Ann Willard spoke about the suspension of brush pickup in the fall and how to get brush down to the commons without a truck as well as taking services from the residents. Council spoke about having a fire pit with a permit to get rid of brush, and to call them if you have an issue, the need to focus on other services at this point which are more important and for safety. Nancy Hunt asked about trucks picking up wood after storms. Council spoke to the point that they will still do this.

LEGAL ISSUES:

The sale of Old Borough Hall, 71 Main Street, has concluded as of last Friday.

BILL LIST:

Approval of Bills as signed and listed on the Bill Payment List. **Total Amount: \$524,368.50**

Motion to approve bill list: Strange / Moore

Roll call vote: Columbus, yes ; Ferry, yes ; Hughes, yes ; Moore, yes ; Strange, yes ; Zappa, yes ;

Motion passes: 6 yes

ADJOURNMENT: PRESIDING OFFICER ASKS IF THERE IS ANY FURTHER BUSINESS

Motion to adjourn: Columbus / Zappa

Roll call vote: Columbus, yes ; Ferry, yes ; Hughes, yes ; Moore, yes ; Strange, yes ; Zappa, yes ;

Motion passes: 6 yes

Next Council Meeting: July 18, 2019 - 7:30 pm – Fire House, 7 Maryland Ave., High Bridge, NJ