

Mayor and Council Conference Meeting – September 13, 2022

The Conference Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of North Caldwell was held on Tuesday, September 13, 2022. The meeting began at 6:34pm at Borough Hall and was held simultaneously via tele/video-conference.

Mayor Alessi called the meeting to order announcing that notice was provided in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 231, P.L. 1975. He provided a statement regarding the conduct of the teleconference which would allow members of the public to participate and be heard during public comment.

Roll Call indicated the following:

Present: Mayor Joseph H. Alessi, Council President Francis Astorino, Councilman Matthew Atlas, Councilman Anthony Floria-Callori, Councilman Robert Kessler, Councilman Arthur Rees, Councilman Kenneth Tilton.

Also present were: Kevin O'Sullivan, Borough Administrator; Mark Semeraro, Borough Counsel; Mark Deuer, Police Chief; and Tami Michelotti, Borough Clerk.

Mayor Alessi asked Chief Deuer to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Alessi announced the upcoming Soccerfest event and the 100th Anniversary celebration of the North Caldwell Fire Department.

Citizens to be Heard

Latha Javed - 75 Evergreen Drive

Ms. Javed proposed the establishment of a multi-cultural organization to raise awareness of cultural diversity through events. She suggested that scheduled meetings could be held at the Firemen's Community Center and establish committee officers. Mr. Semeraro would research the establishment of similar organizations in other towns.

Items for Discussion

Borough Website Contact Information – Councilman Rees suggested that Council members' cell phone numbers be posted on the website to allow for residents to contact them expeditiously. Mr. Semeraro cautioned the Council on using cell phones for text messages that could be subject to legislation regarding public documents. Mr. O'Sullivan recommended that the Ring Central app be downloaded on personal cell phones for phone calls and text messages which allows for indefinite retention while using the Borough assigned phone numbers for each Council member.

2021 Annual Audit – Mr. O'Sullivan reviewed the 2021 audit results and noted the corrective action plan to rectify inconsistency in UCC fees. He stated that two resolutions were prepared to certify the audit and approve the corrective action plan. Councilman Rees asked that the LOSAP financials be audited.

Retail Plenary License Bid – Mr. O'Sullivan announced that no bids were received for the retail plenary license. A subsequent bid process was tabled at this time.

NJDCA Low Income Household Water Assistance Program – Mr. O'Sullivan presented details of the LIHWAP established by the Department of Community Affairs through which low income households can receive payment assistance for utility bills. He noted that a resolution would follow at the next meeting to authorize an agreement between the DCA and the Borough to allow for restitution to the Borough for authorized recipients.

Bid for Leasing of Ground Space – Mr. O'Sullivan presented a request to lease additional ground space at the Gould Avenue cell tower. He noted the need to publicly bid the option for the 50 square feet of space.

Outreach to Mobile Carriers – Councilman Floria-Callori requested that the governing body issue a joint letter to cellular service vendors to encourage action regarding improvement of cellular service coverage. He announced an anticipated website feature that would allow residents to log the frequency and location of dropped calls. Recent social media posts regarding poor cellular service were discussed.

NCFD Gong Dedication – Chief Peterson requested the Council's presence for the gong dedication prior to the NCFD 100th Anniversary celebration.

NCFD Command Vehicle – Mr. O'Sullivan reviewed the capital budget process and approval authorizing a command vehicle for the NCFD. He stated that there were issues resulting in significant delays in the delivery of the vehicle. Chief Peterson located an alternative vehicle which costs approximately \$8,500 more for accessories. The overage could be covered by the NCFD operating budget. The Council approved funding the vehicle from both the capital and operating budgets to supplement the additional cost.

Road Safety: White Rock Road, Smull Avenue, East Greenbrook Road, Hilltop Drive, Gould Avenue/Mountain Avenue Intersection – Mr. O’Sullivan provided an update on safety measures implemented at each location. On White Rock Road, the sidewalk was extended and a crosswalk would be implemented by Verona. On Hilltop Drive, additional signage was implemented and solar speed signs would be installed. The Borough Engineer was researching warrants for a multi-way stop sign at the Hilltop and Sagamore intersection. On Smull Avenue, speed tables would be installed and the speed radar signs would then be moved to Hilltop Drive. Mr. O’Sullivan reviewed resident concerns regarding the speed tables. The Council agreed that the need for safety justified the installation of the speed tables. Notices would be issued to the residents prior to installation which was anticipated in the next few weeks. Additional speed hump installation would be considered for other qualifying locations if they aid in calming speed and increasing safety.

Councilman Rees suggested installing “no parking” signs on Elm Road and pursuing a one-way eastbound traffic pattern. He provided results of an informal survey among North Caldwell and Caldwell residents of Elm Road which showed favor for the proposed one-way pattern. Mayor Alessi stated that he requested that Caldwell consider “no parking” signs on Mountain Avenue and trimming of trees that cause visibility limitations.

NJDOT Paving Bid Award – Mr. O’Sullivan reviewed the bids received for the paving of Tanglewood Road, Glenview Road and Park Avenue to include some drainage improvements on Park Avenue. He stated that a resolution awarding the contract was anticipated for the next meeting.

Hilltop/Pulte Detention Basin Access – Mr. O’Sullivan reviewed a resident complaint of a truck accessing the Pulte development from the access point at the end of Glenview Road. He noted the obstacles to installing a fence or gate in the area where several utilities run underground. He suggested that posts and a chain may be a solution.

Bulk Metal Recycling Day – Councilman Kessler reviewed the proposed a free bulk metal recycling day for Borough residents on October 1, 2022 at the Municipal Pool parking lot. The Council approved the event.

Water/Sewer After-Hours Service Calls – Councilman Rees presented the occurrence of after-hours service calls to DPW for emergency water and sewer service. Mr. O’Sullivan noted that in most cases the issues are related to household plumbing and not DPW services. The overtime charges could be charged as fees for after-hours service calls for private plumbing problem detection. Councilman Rees suggested monitoring the occurrences for six months before instituting fees.

Municipal Pool Improvements – Councilman Kessler stated that no bids were received in response to the municipal pool improvements bid specifications. The project would not be rebid at this time due to the tight timeline for receiving bids and awarding a contract in order to complete make improvements for the following pool season.

Walker’s Pond Improvements – Mr. O’Sullivan updated the Council on the revised permit applications submitted to the NJDEP for walking trails, benches and parking at Walker’s Park. He stated that the Borough Engineer was working on bid documents to go out to bid and award contracts in the spring of 2023 for use next summer.

Firemen’s Field Improvements - Councilman Kessler provided an update on the design specs, permits and turf order. Mr. O’Sullivan noted the preliminary work done by the DPW including fence and tree removal for contractor mobilization in early October. He anticipated the turf installation at the end of November with completion of the project in the spring. Councilman Kessler noted that the field dimensions would remain the same due to the exorbitant expense associated with moving the lights. A taller fence would be installed to compensate for the field size. Supplemental improvements were discussed including expanding the number of parking spaces and extending the pavilion for Summer Fun Camp.

Recreation Part-Time Staffing: Administrative Assistant, Umpires – Councilman Kessler stated that Eileen Capstraw withdrew her resignation and Recreation Director Bill Maranz requested that she work two (2) full days per week. Additional staff would be sought for a long-term solution. Councilman Kessler reviewed the additional umpire hired for softball games for which a resolution was prepared for later in the meeting.

Mr. Semeraro provided additional guidance on the retail plenary liquor license bid process. He confirmed that the bid process is not regulated by Local Public Contract Law. Discussions with interested parties could be conducted to solicit input on fair pricing.

Action to be Taken

The following resolutions were read by and moved by Council President Astorino as a Consent Agenda:

- Resolution R-157-2022 A Resolution Approving the Payment of Bills
- Resolution R-143-2022 A Resolution Authorizing the Renewal of Membership in the Morris County Municipal Joint Insurance Fund
- Resolution R-158-2022 A Resolution Accepting Bid and Awarding Contract for Tanglewood and Glenview Roads and Park Avenue Road Improvements
- Resolution R-159-2022 A Resolution of the Governing Body Certifying the 2021 Annual Audit
- Resolution R-160-2022 A Resolution Approving the 2021 Annual Municipal Audit Corrective Action Plan
- Resolution R-161-2022 A Resolution Authorizing Employment of Police Department Dispatcher
- Resolution R-162-2022 A Resolution of the Council of the Borough of North Caldwell Approving a Leave of Absence
- Resolution R-163-2022 A Resolution Authorizing the Hiring of Additional Part-Time Seasonal Employees – Umpires
- Raffle License Application RA-6-2022 West Essex Cheerleading Booster Club Purse Bingo at West Essex High School
- Raffle License Application RA-7-2022 North Caldwell Fire Association 50/50 at 100th Anniversary Celebration

Said motion was seconded by Councilman Atlas. Councilman Rees abstained from voting on Resolution R-158-2022 A Resolution Accepting Bid and Awarding Contract for Tanglewood and Glenview Roads and Park Avenue Road Improvements. Said motion was carried unanimously with six (6) affirmative votes with the exception of Resolution R-158-2022 which was carried with five (5) affirmative votes and one abstention.

Executive Session

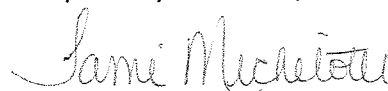
Resolution R-164-2022 A Resolution Authorizing the Mayor and Council of the Borough of North Caldwell to Hold a Closed Session Meeting for Certain Specified Purposes:

- A. Attorney-Client Privilege: (1) Fair Share Housing;
- B. Personnel: (1) DPW Director, (2) NCPD Staffing;
- C. Contract Negotiations: (1) Essex Fells Water, (2) Cellular Service Improvements;
- D. Potential Litigation: (1) Caldwell Sewer Utility, (2) Hidden Ridge, (3) Pulte Homes

was read. Motion was made by Council President and seconded by Councilman Tilton. Said motion was carried unanimously with six (6) affirmative votes.

There being no other matters to be addressed by the Governing Body at this time, a motion was made by Councilman Kessler, seconded by Council President Astorino, that this meeting be adjourned at 9:46pm. Said motion was carried unanimously with six (6) affirmative votes.

Respectfully submitted,



Tami Michelotti, RMC
Borough Clerk