

BOROUGH OF ELMWOOD PARK
WORK MEETING
June 7, 2018
7:00 p.m.

The Work Meeting of the Elmwood Park Mayor and Council for June 7, 2018 was called to order by Municipal Clerk Keith Kazmark at 7:05 p.m. The Statement of compliance was read.

Council Members Balistrieri, Chirido, Dombrowski, Giandomenico, Pellegrine and Golabek were present. Also present was Mayor Caramagna, Municipal Clerk Keith Kazmark and Borough Attorney Giuseppe Randazzo.

Whereas, Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of the State of New Jersey requires at the commencement of every meeting a Statement of Compliance be read by the presiding officer.

Now, therefore be advised, that the meeting requirements for this meeting have been met by the publishing an annual notice in The Record and Herald News of Woodland Park and by posting such notice in the office of the Borough Clerk as well as in a public place within the Municipal Building and by notifying interested citizens. Notice was posted on January 4, 2018.

Work Meeting Agenda Items:

PUBLIC HEARING:

Don Ingrasselino, Florence Place, discussed his opinion regarding the disciplinary actions that are currently being acted upon in the Police Department. He asked that the Prosecutor's Office be brought in temporarily to avoid what he perceives as officer's rights being violated. He further presented documentation pertaining to a disciplinary action during his term as Police Chief.

Darlene Juskin, Martha Avenue, publicly rejected the offer presented to her regarding her disciplinary charges. She discussed she would not accept punishment for something she did not do. She further discussed being told there was video evidence regarding the charges. She discussed the disgrace she has felt in public and it is not deserved. She stated she will not rest until her name is cleared.

Blanca Velez, Belleville, NJ, came to speak on behalf of her fiancé Emmanuel Pena. She stated that small incidences have been exaggerated and have caused hardships on everyone.

Mr. Penia, Perth Amboy, NJ, came to speak on behalf of his son and stated he raised his son to be an honest person and he is proud of him. He does not believe his son would steal or lie.

Lauren Sandy, Esq., Neptune, NJ, she stated that she represents, Darlene Juskin, Michael Ingrasselino and Michael Johnson. She stated that she believes that the Council will be voting tonight as to the termination of Mrs. Juskin and stated the Hearing Officer determined she did not punch an item of evidence in which is a small infraction. Ms. Sandy stated that regarding the two officers the Council decided to hire an outside investigator and if the Council decides to pursue the actions against the officers she will move forward to have all charges dismissed. She further discussed that she feels the officers were unjustly suspended without pay.

Micheal Johnson, Haledon, NJ, discussed the charges that were brought against him in 2017 and that he will do everything he has to do to clear his name. He discussed his attempt to go to another department, but that is no longer an option because of the incident in the Police Department parking lot with Capt. D'Amore. Police Officer Johnson discussed some of the incidences that resulted in Administrative charges. He discussed occurrences which involved racial slurs. He further discussed the hardship of being suspended without pay.

Donald Ingrasselino, Florence Place, stated he sees a common thread of harassment and intimidation. He reiterated his suggestion of calling in the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office.

Anthony Churitin, Teaneck, NAACP, he stated that his organization will stay on top of the accusations that have been made regarding racial slurs because that is not acceptable in

government or anywhere else. He asked that we move forward and give the jobs back to these officers.

Nelia Pania, Hillman Drive, stated that she has had times where she felt she was disrespected by Police Officers and she has never felt disrespected from Officer Michael Johnson. She stated that if the officers are doing their jobs and making us feel safe they should get their jobs back.

Mrs. Pania, Hillman Drive, stated that she felt safer when Officer Michael Johnson was on duty. She further stated that Police Officer Johnson should get his job back.

1 – CORRESPONDENCE:

- a. **Quotes regarding the replacement of the spray park flooring** – A resolution will be placed on the June 21, 2018 Regular Meeting agenda.
- b. **Email from Mario Zamora regarding concerns with traffic safety by Kinder Kastle** – After some discussion it was decided to reach out to Boswell Engineering regarding the traffic issue as they were the engineer for the project.
- c. **Letter from NJ Transit regarding a proposed bus stop at Mola Boulevard & Veterans Place** – The proposed bus stop will be forwarded to the Police Department for their review and recommendation.
- d. **Block Party Request for Orange Avenue** – After some discussion the Council is following the recommendation of the Police Department to deny the request. The Borough Clerk's office will send out the letter of denial.
- e. **Discussion with Rich Bolan regarding office staffing** – Mr. Bolan discussed the staffing issue within his department. He discussed being unable to find someone with the credentials of a Technical Assistant that would accept the salary being offered. He further discussed the loss of inspectors. Councilman Dombrowski asked for a salary breakdown for the Council to review.
- f. **Email from Chief Foligno regarding a traffic analysis for Molnar Drive near Garden State Parkway** – After some discussion to the responsible party it was requested that Chief Foligno to draft a letter to the NJ Department of Transportation to address the overgrowth.

2 – RESOLUTIONS:

- a. **Requests for Vacation Buybacks** – A resolution will be placed on the June 21, 2018 Regular Meeting agenda.
- b. **Request for Summer Camp After Care & Extended Care employees** – A resolution will be placed on the June 21, 2018 Regular Meeting agenda.

3 – SHARED SERVICE AGREEMENTS:

- a. **CARE Program** – A resolution will be placed on the June 21, 2018 Regular Meeting agenda to execute said agreement.
- b. **School Security Officers** – A resolution will be placed on the June 21, 2018 Regular Meeting agenda to execute said agreement.

4 – Discussion of videotaping of Council Meetings – Discussion ensued and the decision was made to have the June 21, 2018 Regular Meeting the final meeting that Wayne Robbins will be videotaping.

5 – ORDINANCES:

- a. **Commercial Parking Restrictions** – Councilwoman Giandomenico asked the Council to research other municipalities as to how they handle commercial vehicles. The Ordinance Committee will review the municipal code pertaining to commercial vehicles and report back to the Council.
- b. **Snow Cleanup Ordinance** – Discussion ensued as to the time schedules within the ordinance for snow to be cleared from sidewalks. Chief Foligno also suggested inserting into the ordinance the need for salting/sanding of sidewalks. An introduction will be placed on the June 21, 2018 Regular Meeting agenda.

6 – DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

- a. **Library Board Minutes – April 16, 2018** – Accepted without discussion.

- b. **2017 Zoning Board of Adjustment – Secretary’s Report** – Accepted without discussion.
- c. **Millennium Strategies Report – May 2018** – Accepted without discussion.
- d. **Municipal Court Report – May 2018** – Accepted without discussion.
- e. **Building Department Report – March & April 2018** – Accepted without discussion.
- f. **Finance Department Report – May 2018** – Accepted without discussion.
- g. **Recreation Department Report – May 2018** – Accepted without discussion.
- h. **Police Department Report – May 2018** – Accepted without discussion.

7 – COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Councilwoman Balistrieri discussed registrations for recreation programs, the repair of the sprayground flooring and improvements to Birchwood Park. She further discussed the donation of the Girls’ Softball scoreboard by Spencer Savings Bank. Councilwoman Balistrieri reported on the work being performed by the Department of Public Works.

Councilman Chirido reported on the Homeowners’ Association.

Councilman Dombrowski reported progress.

Councilwoman Giandomenico reported on the Volunteer Ambulance Corps.

Councilwoman Pellegrine discussed a special meeting of the Board of Health to amend their bylaws and announced the next meeting. She discussed the different opportunities available to the public from the Police Department and the Police Chief’s desire to make more opportunities available to the residents. She also spoke about the Chamber of Commerce and the creation of a flier for the Residents Assistance Program.

Council President Golabek reported on the Board of Education Superintendent position and the recent Planning Board meeting in which a property on Summit Avenue was before the Board.

Mayor Caramagna discussed the upcoming bandshell dedication.

8 – 2nd PUBLIC HEARING:

No one wished to be heard.

9 – EXECUTIVE SESSION:

- a. **Personnel – Police Department**
- b. **Personnel – Fire Prevention Bureau**
- c. **Personnel – Municipal Clerk’s Office**
- d. **Personnel – Municipal Clerk’s Office/Health Department**

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act P.L. 1975, Chapter 231 permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist; and

WHEREAS, the Governing Body wishes to discuss:

- Personnel – Police Department**
- Personnel – Fire Prevention Bureau**
- Personnel – Municipal Clerk’s Office**
- Personnel – Municipal Clerk’s Office/Health Department**

Minutes will be kept and once the matter involving the confidentiality of the above no longer requires that confidentiality, then the minutes can be made public.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the public be excluded from this meeting.

A motion was made by Councilman Chirido and seconded by Councilwoman Pellegrine to enter into Executive Session. Motion carried unanimously.

Personnel – Police Department
Personnel – Fire Prevention Bureau
Personnel – Municipal Clerk’s Office
Personnel – Municipal Clerk’s Office/Health Department

A motion was made by Councilman Dombrowski and seconded by Councilman Chirido to return to the public portion. Motion carried by the members present.

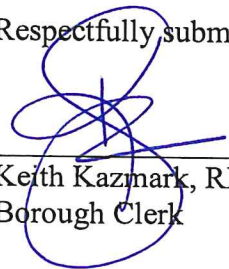
Personnel – Police Department

The public portion was reconvened at 9:50 p.m. Let the record show that all members of the Council are present and Councilwoman Balistriero has left the conference table to recuse herself from the Police Department matters. Mr. Kazmark stated that multiple employees have selected to have their items discussed during a public portion. Mr. Kazmark handed over the meeting to Mr. Thibault to explain this process. Mr. Thibault stated that this discussion would normally happen behind closed doors but will now be held in public. He further stated that the public can only listen, there is no speaking or exchange of discussion with the Mayor and Council. Mr. Kazmark stated that Enmanuel Pena, Darlene Juskin, Michael Ingrasselino were all properly RICE Noticed and all elected to be spoken about during the public portion and that Michael Johnson who originally elected to have discussion during the executive session has advised through his attorney that he has decided to change his selection to be heard during the public portion.

Mr. Thibault stated that the item regarding Officer Johnson requesting to remain on a leave without pay while pursuing another job is moot as a result of criminal charges recently filed against him. Therefore, no decision needs to be made on this item. Officer Pena’s status has been changed from suspension with pay to a suspension without pay based on disciplinary charges related to his admission that he discarded a makeup bag with an estimated value of over \$500 which was evidence of a crime. Officer Ingrasselino was suspended without pay recently on disciplinary charges that he falsified departmental reports. Mr. Thibault addressed Officer Ingrasselino’s attorneys statements by commenting that using Bob Verry as a consultant was legally permissible, there was no violation of the 45-day rule and that an officer was recently terminated in another civil service jurisdiction from falsifying one internal department record, whereas Officer Ingrasselino has falsified multiple reports. In regard to Mrs. Juskin, Mr. Thibault advised that she rejected the Boroughs offer to resolve her disciplinary matter and asked whether anyone on council disagreed with the prior decision to terminate her employment. No one from Council disagreed.

A motion was made by Councilman Dombrowski and seconded by Councilman Chirido to return to adjourn. Motion carried by the members present.

Respectfully submitted,



Keith Kazmark, RMC/CMC/MMC
Borough Clerk

Minutes approved at the September 20, 2018 Regular Meeting of the Mayor & Council.