

**BOROUGH OF NORWOOD
MAYOR AND COUNCIL MINUTES
PUBLIC MEETING, MAY 4, 2010**

The Public Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Norwood was held at Borough Hall on the above date.

Mayor Barsa called the meeting to order at 8:05 PM and led those in attendance in a salute to the American Flag and asked for a moment of silence.

Mayor Barsa stated:

“Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Law, P.L. 1975, Ch. 231, setting forth the time, date, place and purpose of this Public Meeting through a legal notice published in the Record and Press Journal, filing a copy in the Borough Clerk’s office and posting on the bulletin board.”

Roll Call:

Mayor Barsa	Present
Councilman Marino	Present
Councilwoman Orecchio	Present
Councilman Scott	Present
Council President Condoleo	Present
Councilman Rapaport	Present
Councilman Nicolai	Present

Also Present:

Andrew T. Fede	Borough Attorney
John Speer	Borough Engineer
Doug Doyle	Labor Attorney
Steve Wielkotsz	Borough Auditor
Maureen Neville	CFO/Treasurer

Mayor Barsa pointed out the fire exits and requested that all cell phones be turned off or to vibrate.

Public Comment on Agenda Items Only:

Prior to opening the meeting to the public, Mayor Barsa read a prepared statement, see Attachment “A”. At the end of the statement, there was a round of applause.

It was moved by Mr. Rapaport to open the meeting to the public for comment. The motion was seconded by Mr. Condoleo with an amendment that there be a three- minute rule. All Council Members present voted for the motion.

Chief of Police, Jeff Krapels expressed concern for public safety if there is a reduction in manpower in his department.

Public Comment Continued:

Mr. Jerry Squillante, 34 Pierson Avenue said that he felt if the Chief of Police was willing to give something back to the town then the officers should. Mr. Squillante said he did not wish to see anyone get laid-off.

Mrs. Elaine Pulitte, 100 South Avenue said she was opposed to the lay-offs.

Mrs. Rose Santiago, 191 Hudson Avenue questioned if it was true that Norwood submitted a bid to offer police protection in Rockleigh. She was informed that there have been informal conversations, but no bid has been submitted.

Mr. Demetrios Milliaressis, 100 Mohawk Avenue wanted to know if the Mayor and Council had a strategic plan to get the town out of the crisis it is in and offered some suggestions for the future such as eliminating the Zoning Board of Adjustment, eliminating the position of director of recreation, canceling the fireworks and consolidating the municipal court. He asked that the Council form a budgetary committee comprised of the finance committee and residents to review the budget and look for areas to cut. He suggested a sixty-day moratorium on the lay-offs.

Mr. Nuffy Savino, Burlington Street suggested that all night games be cancelled so that the field lights wouldn't be put on and requested that the recreation programs open their books for inspection. He suggested that a mailing go out to the residents requesting donations to fund a "Crime Watch".

Mr. George Hertzberg, 24 Carter Street, informed that he would be working with Councilman Scott to conduct an Art Auction to help fund the Norwood Public Library. The paintings were Mr. Hertzberg's mother's and he has offered to donate them for the auction.

Mr. McNiff, 11 Adams Street, said he had reviewed the budget and calculated that it costs the average taxpayer 55 cents per day to keep the two officers. He said he felt it was essential to have the first responders for the town.

Mr. Greg Salerno, 401 D'Ercole Court, said that he fully supports the Police, but wanted to know why they had not come forward to make the same sacrifices as the other employees to save the two police officers' jobs.

An un-named resident from Burlington Street said he was against the lay-off and suggested that the Council take more time before making their decision.

Mr. Mark Plescia, Eton Terrace said he moved back to Norwood to raise his family and was not opposed to paying additional taxes.

Mrs. Rose Santiago, 191 Hudson Avenue, mentioned the proposed new building on Livingston Street and increased revenue that the town will receive. She said she was opposed to a reduction in police salaries.

Public Comment Continued:

Paul Kapu, Norwood Police Officer for ten-years as well as the union representative read a prepared statement informing the public of his feelings regarding the lay-offs and contract negotiations.

Mrs. Gina Stonitsch, 143 Kensington Avenue thanked the Mayor and Council as well as the employees for their sacrifices. Mrs. Stonitsch referenced newspaper articles in which Harrington Park is looking into laying off two police officers and Old Tappan Police Department made concessions to help the town. She said she felt the officers should work with the town.

Mr. Fred Reiman, Blanch Avenue said he was opposed to the lay-offs and that the elected officials should work it out.

Mrs. Barbara Cho, 146 Millbrook Circle referenced the shift work the officers have to do and thanked them for their service.

Mr. John McAusland, Counsel for the PBA referenced the municipal portion of the resident's tax bills. He said that the PBA is willing to work with the Mayor and Council and informed that beginning in May they will be contributing 1.5% of their base pay towards their medical benefits. He informed that the police expense line was increasing by 74% with the purchase of two new police cars.

The owner of Paragon Towing introduced himself and said he was opposed to the lay-offs. He also stated that in the twenty-one (21) years that he has been towing for the Borough he has never given them a bill.

Mr. Tom Brizzolara, 320 High Street stated that everyone loves the Norwood Police Officers, but that it is time that everyone begins to pay into their medical benefits and that he contributes 22% toward the cost of his.

Mrs. Martha Kleinlaut, Glenn Avenue, President of the Norwood Senior Citizen Club informed that all of the members of the club have had to take cutbacks including a freeze on their Social Security monthly checks. She said she felt everyone should come to the table willing to make sacrifices.

Mr. George Hertzberg, 24 Carter Street suggested that if there was additional money left over from the Art Auction it could go to the Borough to help save the police positions.

There being no other member of the public wishing to be heard, a motion to close the meeting to the public was made by Mr. Rapaport, seconded by Mrs. Orecchio and declared carried upon the affirmative vote of all Council Members present.

Presentation:

Mrs. Ruth Falkenstern, Risk Manager presented the Mayor and Council with two awards from the Bergen County Joint Insurance Fund. The first award was the Gold Award and the second was for Most Consistent.

Proclamation:

Mayor Barsa read the following proclamations:

Municipal Clerks Week

Whereas, The Office of the Municipal Clerk, a time honored vital part of local government exists throughout the world, and

Whereas, The Office of the Municipal Clerk is the oldest among public servants, and

Whereas, The Office of the Municipal Clerk provides the professional link between the citizens, the local governing bodies and agencies of government at other levels, and

Whereas, Municipal Clerks have pledged to be ever mindful of their neutrality and impartiality, rendering equal service to all, and

Whereas, The Municipal Clerk serves as the information center on functions of local government and community, and

Whereas, Municipal Clerks continually strive to improve the administration of the affairs of the Office of the Municipal Clerk through participation in education programs, seminars, workshops and the annual meetings of their state, province, county and international professional organizations, and

Whereas, it is most appropriate that we recognize the accomplishments of the Office of the Municipal Clerk.

Now, Therefore, I, James P. Barsa, Mayor of the Borough of Norwood, do recognize the week of May 2 through May 8, 2010, as Municipal Clerks Week, and further extend appreciation to our Municipal Clerk, Lorraine L. McMackin and to all Municipal Clerks for the vital services they perform and their exemplary dedication to the communities they represent.

Celebrate Arbor Day

WHEREAS, in 1872, J. Sterling Morton proposed to the Nebraska Board of Agriculture that a special day be set aside for the planting of trees, and

WHEREAS, this holiday, call Arbor Day, was first observed with the planting of more than a million trees in Nebraska, and

WHEREAS, trees can reduce the erosion of our precious topsoil by wind and water, cut heating and cooling costs, moderate the temperature, clean the air, produce life-giving oxygen and provide habitat for wildlife, and

WHEREAS, trees are a renewable resource giving us paper, wood for our homes, fuel for our fires and countless other wood products, and

WHEREAS, trees in our town increase property values, enhance the economic vitality of business areas and beautify our community, and

WHEREAS, trees wherever they are planted are a source of joy and spiritual renewal.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, James P. Barsa, Mayor of the Borough of Norwood, do hereby proclaim April 31, 2010 as Arbor Day in the Borough of Norwood, and I urge all citizens to celebrate Arbor Day and support efforts to protect our trees and woodlands, and

FURTHER, I urge all citizens to plant trees to gladden the heart and promote the well-being of this and future generations

Correspondence:

Mayor Barsa read the following correspondence into the record:

1. A letter from Senator Gerald Cardinale informing of the introduction of Senate Bill S-1787 allowing counties and municipalities to comply with certain publication requirements by means of the Internet
2. A Resolution from the Borough of Leonia opposing United Water's request for a rate increase
3. A Resolution from the Borough of Oradell opposing United Water's request for a rate increase
4. A letter from the Board of Public Utilities acknowledging receipt of the Borough of Norwood's Resolution opposing United Water's request for a rate increase
5. A letter from the Girl Scouts of Northern New Jersey inviting the Mayor and Council to a Gold Award Ceremony on Thursday, May 20, 2010
6. A letter from Lombardo Excavating withdrawing their bid to operate the leaf composting facility

Mayor Barsa informed that anyone wishing a copy of the correspondence could request it from the Borough Clerk.

Consent Agenda:

Mayor Barsa reviewed the items on the Consent Agenda and asked if any Council Member wished to remove an item. No Council Member wishing to be heard, Mayor Barsa requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of the following items:

Approval of the minutes of the March 31, 2010 Executive/Work Session

- 10:93 Opposing the Repeal to the Bergen County Blue Laws
- 10:94 Opposing Public Law 2009 c 118 creating a Pilot Program in Gloucester County to permit the County to take over tax assessment
- 10:95 Authorizing the issuance of Raffle Licenses #10:09 and 10:10 to Holy Family Interparochial School for their annual carnival
- 10:96 Granting a Solicitor's Permit to Mr. Ahmad Yasin, 25 Donald Street, Clifton, to sell ice cream
- 10:97 Granting a Street Opening Permit to PSE&G for the installation of a gas service at 59 Adams Street
- 10:98 Adopting a Lay Off Plan for the Borough of Norwood
- 10:99 Authorizing the Borough of Norwood Tax Collector to prepare and mail estimated tax bills in accordance with P.L. 1994 C.72
- 10:100 Special Emergency Appropriation for the Re-assessment of Real Property

It was moved by Mr. Scott and seconded by Mrs. Orecchio to approve the Consent Agenda. On the roll call vote, all Council Members present voted for the motion.

Public Hearing of Ordinance 10:06:

Mayor Barsa stated he had before him an ordinance for Council action entitled:

**CALENDAR YEAR 2010 ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE
MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO
ESTABLISH A CAP BANK (N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.14)**

It was moved by Mr. Condoleo and seconded by Mr. Rapaport to open the meeting to the public for discussion on this ordinance. There being no member of the public wishing to be heard, it was moved by Mr. Rapaport and seconded by Mr. Scott to close the meeting to the public. A motion to adopt Ordinance 10:06 was made by Mr. Scott and seconded by Mrs. Orecchio. On the roll call vote:

Ayes: Marino, Orecchio, Scott, Condoleo, Rapaport and Nicolai
Nays: None

There being six (6) ayes and no nays, Ordinance 10:06 was approved. Mayor Barsa announced that the ordinance was finally adopted and will take effect upon publication in the Press Journal.

Public Hearing of 2010 Municipal Budget:

Mayor Barsa said he would entertain a motion to approve Resolution 10:101 Authorizing the Budget to be read by title only. It was moved by Mr. Scott, seconded by Mr. Rapaport to approve resolution 10:101. On the roll call vote, all Council Members present voted for the motion.

Mayor Barsa invited Mr. Steve Wielkocz to address the public on the 2010 Municipal Budget. Mr. Wielkocz informed that when the budget was introduced on April 6, 2010 it was \$411,000 over the tax levy cap, and this was due in part to the loss of \$521,000 in state aid. The Borough has made application for a tax cap levy waiver, but have been informed that the State will be scrutinizing those applications and looking for areas that municipalities make additional cuts. The municipal tax increase is \$371.00 on an average assessed home of \$713,000. With an additional \$140,000 in cuts from the lay-off and furloughs the amount to be raised by taxation has been reduced to \$271,000. That is still more than the law allows, but hopefully will be enough for the tax cap levy waiver. With the approval of the budget amendment, the tax increase will be \$307.00 for the average assessed home.

At this time, Mayor Barsa asked for a motion to open the meeting to the public for the sole purpose of discussing the 2010 Municipal Budget. The motion was made by Mr. Scott, seconded by Mrs. Orecchio and declared carried upon the affirmative vote of all Council Members present.

Mr. Thomas Faranda, 370 High Street wanted to know the cost of the school and county taxes and if the Mayor and Council anticipate making additional cuts to bring the taxes down. It was explained that the school and county taxes are beyond the control of the Mayor and Council and that the Council will continue to review the budget and look for ways to make adjustments.

Mr. Dave Hausman, Briarwood questioned if there was a contingency plan to address the number of tax appeals. The Mayor explained the appeal process.

Mr. Ken Cho, 146 Millbrook Circle questioned the budget and the estimated tax increase and wanted to know why there was an increase and not a reduction. It was explained that the Borough lost \$521,000 in state aid and received an increase in the cost for pensions of \$236,000 as well as an increase in medical costs.

Mrs. Lisa Kurtz, 401 D'Ercole Court invited the public to come to more Mayor and Council meetings to see how hard they have been working to reduce the budget.

Mr. Tom Brizzolara, 320 High Street, said that he had been on the Council for nine out the last ten years and that there is no fat in this budget. The Council has consistently cut the appropriations and now there is nothing left to cut but services. Mr. Brizzolara suggested that the Council develop a plan to reduce services.

There being no member of the public wishing to be heard, Mr. Scott motioned, seconded by Mr. Condoleo to close the meeting to the public. All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion. The meeting was closed to the public. Mayor Barsa asked for a motion to approve Resolution 10:102 approving the 2010 Budget Amendment. It was moved by Mr. Scott, seconded by Mrs. Orecchio to approve Resolution 10:102. All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

Introduction of Ordinance 10:09:

Mayor Barsa stated he had before him an ordinance for Council action entitled:

An Ordinance Authorizing An Emergency Appropriation N.J.S. 40A:4-53

It was moved by Mr. Scott and seconded by Mr. Rapaport to approve Ordinance 10:09 on its first reading. All Council Members present voted for

the motion. Mayor Barsa announced that the public hearing on this ordinance will be Wednesday, May 26, 2010 at 8:00 p.m.

Public Hearing on Ordinance 10:08:

Mayor Barsa stated he had before him an ordinance for Council action entitled:

An Ordinance Amending Chapter 50 of the Code of the Borough of Norwood Regarding the Police Department and the Fees Charged to Private Contractors for Police Services

It was moved by Mr. Scott and seconded by Mrs. Orecchio to open the meeting to the public for discussion on this ordinance. All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

Mr. John Jost, 125 Glenn Avenue asked for an explanation of this ordinance. Mayor Barsa informed that this ordinance sets the hourly rate that the Borough charges for outside contractors to hire police officers.

Mr. Tom Faranda, 370 High Street wanted to know who schedules the officers. It was explained that there is a rotating schedule for overtime that is kept in the Police Department.

There being no one else wishing to be heard, it was moved by Mr. Scott and seconded by Mr. Condoleo to close the meeting to the public. A motion to adopt Ordinance 10:08 was made by Mr. Condoleo and seconded by Mr. Rapaport. On the roll call vote:

Ayes: Marino, Orecchio, Scott, Condoleo, and Rapaport
Nays: None
Abstain: Nicolai

There being five (5) ayes, no nays and one abstention, Ordinance 10:08 was approved. Mayor Barsa announced that the ordinance was finally adopted and will take effect upon publication in the Press Journal.

Committee Reports:

Councilman Marino:

Utilities:

Mr. Marino informed that he attended a meeting recently in the Freeholders Meeting Room at the County regarding United Water's request for a rate hike, where he spoke out against their request.

Board of Health:

The Board of Health has formed a committee to review their budget to look for areas where they may make cuts.

Recreation:

Mr. Marino informed that the meeting for last night was cancelled and reschedule for the following Monday.

Councilwoman Orecchio:

EMS:

Mrs. Orecchio reported that Norwood EMS recently held CPR training at their facility.

Board of Education:

Mrs. Orecchio complemented the Board of Education for their tough decision making regarding the school budget.

Councilman Scott:

Planning/Zoning/Building Department:

Mr. Scott reported that the Building Department collected \$9,000 in fees for the month and that he feels the Borough could cut costs by merging our building department with Harrington Park.

Council President Condoleo:

Fire Department:

No report this evening.

Finance Department:

Mr. Condoleo said that the public has heard a lot of detail this evening regarding the state of the Borough's finances and the difficult decisions that had to be made. He asked for the community to work together to help reduce expenses and pledged that the Finance Committee will continue to look at the Budget for ways to trim it.

Councilman Rapaport:

Planning Board:

Since the Planning Board has not met, Mr. Rapaport had nothing to report.

Beautification Committee:

Mr. Rapaport reported on a recent presentation held at the Colonial Inn by Mr. Fred Daibes to outline his plans for the "Cost Cutter" building. The residents that were invited voiced their approval of the proposal. The committee will look at street lighting and pavers.

Police Department: Mr. Rapaport reported that Chief Krapels has presented a schedule with two less officers and that all shifts would be covered. Mr. Rapaport said that the Council did not ask the police personnel to do anything different than the rest of the borough employees. The 1.5% give back in the cost for medical coverage is being mandated by Trenton. The PBA is looking for additional givebacks that the Borough cannot offer at this time.

Councilman Nicolai:

DPW:

Mr. Nicolai informed that Mr. DiRese has been putting notices in the resident's mailboxes informing them that their landscape contractors must remove all trees, shrubs and grass that they cut.

Environmental Commission:

Mr. Nicolai congratulated the Commission on a successful Earth Day on Sunday, April 25, 2010.

FEMA:

Mr. Nicolai informed that residents who suffered damage from the recent wind storm may be eligible for FEMA money. They must submit an application and estimates.

Public Comment:

At this time, Mayor Barsa asked for a motion to open the meeting to the public for comment. The motion was made by Mr. Scott, seconded by Mrs. Orecchio and declared carried upon the affirmative vote of all Council Members present.

Mrs. Lisa Kurtz, 401 D'Ercole Court asked the remaining public why they didn't make comments when the police were present.

Mr. Ron Gangieri, 233 Sutton Place wanted to know if the lay-offs were restricted to only the police. Mayor Barsa informed that the lay-offs are only in the police department now, but that he did not know what the future held.

Mr. Dave Hausman said that if the police took the package it would still not be enough to protect all of the officers.

Mr. Joseph Ascolese, High Street wanted to know what the Borough's plans were after going to Trenton next week to request a tax cap levy waiver. He was informed that two police officers would be laid off.

Mr. Ken Cho, 146 Briarwood Avenue suggested that the funding to the Library be cut and that the Library could make up the loss with charging user fees. Mr. Scott explained how state law dictates how a library is to be funded. Mr. Rapaport explained the formula used for determining how much money a library must receive from the municipality.

Mr. Dominick Congiusti, 195 Livingston Street said that he has been listening to all that the employees have given back to the town and that he is not advocating lay-offs, but felt that the police should give something back also.

Ms. Gina Stonitsch, 143 Kensington Avenue asked if overtime could be negotiated with the police receiving straight time. She was informed that was not legal and could not be done.

Public Comment Continued:

A Demarest Avenue resident suggested that the Borough turn off street lights to save money in the budget. He was informed that the Borough had already looked into this and was told that they could not turn off the street lights.

Mrs. Diaz, 375 14th Street wanted to know if the funding to the Library was in jeopardy even with the police layoffs. She was informed that the Library has been asked to make additional concessions.

Ms. Cynthia LaTerra, Summit Street wanted to know if the Borough's plan includes laying off two police officers. She was told that unless the police are willing to make concessions, two police officers will be laid off. Ms. LaTerra said that the Library is not just for children and seniors, but that it offers many services to the residents especially those that are unemployed.

There being no other member of the public wishing to be heard, it was moved by Mr. Rapaport and seconded by Mrs. Orecchio to close the meeting to the public. On the roll call vote, all Council Members voted for the motion.

Adjournment:

It was moved by Mr. Rapaport and seconded by Mrs. Orecchio to adjourn. All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion and the meeting was adjourned. Meeting adjourned at 10:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorraine L. McMackin, RMC, CMC
Administrator/Clerk