

The Minutes of the Workshop Meeting of the Township Committee of the Township of Cranford, County of Union, State of New Jersey on **September 13, 2021** at **7:02 p.m.** remotely and by electronic means.

THIS MEETING IS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE “OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT” AS ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THIS MEETING HAS BEEN PROVIDED BY E-MAILING THE ANNUAL SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS TO THE WESTFIELD LEADER, THE UNION COUNTY LOCAL SOURCE, THE STAR LEDGER, AND TAP INTO CRANFORD, BY POSTING SUCH ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULE ON A BULLETIN BOARD IN THE TOWN HALL RESERVED FOR SUCH ANNOUNCEMENTS AND THE FILING OF SAID NOTICE WITH THE TOWNSHIP CLERK OF CRANFORD. FORMAL ACTION MAY BE TAKEN AT THIS MEETING.

Present: Mayor Kathleen Miller Prunty  
Deputy Mayor Brian Andrews  
Commissioner Jason Gareis  
Commissioner Thomas H. Hannen, Jr.\*  
Commissioner Mary O’Connor

Absent: None

\*Commissioner Hannen arrived to the Workshop Meeting at 7 :15 p.m.

Township Attorney Ryan Cooper, Township Administrator Jamie Cryan, Township Clerk Patricia Donahue, Chief Financial Officer Lavona Patterson, Police Chief Ryan Greco and Fire Lieutenant Matt Lubin were present.

### **Public Comments**

Mayor Miller Prunty opened the public comments portion of the meeting and asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing no comments, Mayor Miller Prunty closed the public comments portion of the meeting

### **Storm Ida Update**

Emergency Management Coordinator Matt Lubin spoke about the debris clean-up conducted by Messercola Excavating and the Department of Public Works after Storm (Hurricane) Ida. Lieutenant Lubin stated that FEMA had now designated Union County as a Disaster Area. He noted that the FEMA Disaster Relief Center in Union County was located in the O’Donnell Dempsey Senior Center in Elizabeth.

Mayor Miller Prunty stated that Elizabethtown Gas let her know that representatives from the Company would be “blanketing” Cranford on the following day. She stated that such outreach should help with (needed) hot water.

Mayor Miller Prunty asked Lieutenant Lubin to speak about the recent fire at the Conservation Center. Lieutenant Lubin stated that there were a number of ignition sources in the debris piles and briefly elaborated. He stated that hazardous material (HAZMAT) experts had been in the area shortly after the fire began to monitor air quality. A brief discussion ensued.

Mayor Miller Prunty asked Police Chief Ryan Greco about the status of the roads leading to the Township’s schools. Chief Greco stated the challenge faced by the Township were the number of flooded and abandoned cars left on the streets during Storm Ida. He stated that the roads to the schools were now cleared.

Mayor Miller Prunty stated that the Township was very well served during the storm, and commended the efforts of Police Chief Greco, Fire Chief Czeh and Fire Lieutenant Matt Lubin (and their departments.)

### **Garwood Shared Services with Cranford - Building Department (Construction Code Official)**

Administrator Jamie Cryan stated that he was planning to meet with Garwood’s Administrator and Garwood’s Mayor to discuss renewing the Construction Code Official Shared Services

agreement between the Township of Cranford and the Borough of Garwood. Mr. Cryan reviewed the fees collected during the current contract tenure of 2017 to 2021.

### **2022 Professional Services Proposed Timeline**

Township Clerk Patricia Donahue reviewed the proposed 2022 Professional Services Request for Proposals (RFP) timeline noting that the legal ad would be placed in the Westfield Leader on Thursday, October 21<sup>st</sup> and the receipt of bids would occur on Wednesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>. She briefly elaborated about the proposed process.

### **Review Official Meeting Agenda**

Commissioner Hannen confirmed that the St. Michael's resolution pertaining to their 150th Anniversary Block Party was on the following evening's Official Meeting Agenda. Township Clerk Patricia Donahue responded that the Block Party resolution was on the Official Meeting Agenda (Resolution No. 2021-317.)

Ms. Donahue spoke about the Township Committee Drop Box access.

### **Minute Approval - Closed Session Minutes of June 15<sup>th</sup>, July 12<sup>th</sup>, August 9<sup>th</sup> and August 10, 2021**

Commissioner O'Connor made a motion to adopt the June 15<sup>th</sup>, July 12<sup>th</sup>, August 9<sup>th</sup> and August 10, 2021 Closed Session Minutes. Commissioner Hannen seconded the motion. Mayor Miller Prunty, Deputy Mayor Andrews and Commissioners Gareis, Hannen and O'Connor voted to approve the Closed Session minutes of June 15<sup>th</sup>, July 12<sup>th</sup>, August 9<sup>th</sup> and August 10, 2021

### **Public Comments**

Mayor Miller Prunty opened the public comments portion of the meeting and asked if there were any questions or comments.

Ms. Gina Black of 34 Columbia Avenue - stated that she had concerns, specifically concerns about 1) flood control and 2) redevelopment. She stated that overdevelopment was burdening the Township's infrastructure. Ms. Black stated that the Township was proposing to build two (2) developments in flood zone areas. She further elaborated.

Hearing no comments, Mayor Miller Prunty closed the public comments portion of the meeting

### **Review Official Meeting Agenda (continued)**

Chief Financial Officer Lavona Patterson stated that she would review the financial resolutions which were on the following evening's Official Meeting which pertained to Storm Ida. She briefly elaborated about the Township's emergency appropriation. Ms. Patterson then reviewed Resolution No. 2021-321 and Resolution No. 2021-322 (which pertained to the New Jersey Infrastructure Bank, the State of New Jersey and the SFY 2022 New Jersey Water Bank Financing Program.)

### **Late Starter - Finance Department Update**

Ms. Patterson stated that the tax bills had been mailed. She stated that the (average) total property tax increase was \$40.00 per household.

Commissioner Hannen inquired about the Township's projected \$400,000 Storm Ida expenditures. Ms. Patterson responded that the \$400,000 figure was expected to cover debris pickup. Further discussion ensued about the expected Township costs related to Storm Ida.

### **Closed Session**

On motion of Deputy Mayor Andrews, seconded by Commissioner O'Connor and passed, the following resolution was adopted by roll call vote:

### **Resolution No. 2021-98.23**

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Township Committee will go into closed session to discuss the following, the minutes of which will be released at some time in the future at the discretion of the Township Committee:

**Legal**

- Legal Update
- Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority (RVSA)
- Personnel Projects

**Personnel**

- Pool and Recreation Department
- Clerk's Office – Clerk/Receptionist
- Zoning Officer
- Finance – Part-time Position

**Minute Review**

- Closed Session Minutes of June 15<sup>th</sup>, July 12<sup>th</sup>, August 9<sup>th</sup> and August 10, 2021

**Recorded Vote:**

Aye: Mayor Miller Prunty, Deputy Mayor Andrews, Commissioners Gareis, Hannen & O'Connor  
Nay: None  
Abstained: None  
Absent: None

On motion of Commissioner O'Connor, seconded by Deputy Mayor Andrews and passed, the Township Committee returned to open session at 8:19 p.m.

**Commissioner Reports**

Commissioner Hannen spoke about the recent Engineering Meeting in which Storm Ida was discussed. He reviewed where the flooding occurred in Cranford. Commissioner Hannen spoke about the pump which was disabled during Storm Ida. He spoke about plans to add a pump near Riverside Drive and Kensington Avenue. Further discussion ensued regarding residential damage incurred during the Storm.

Commissioner Hannen asked how we could prepare better for the next storm. Commissioner Gareis stated that the Police Department has two (2) Hummer vehicles and they may need a total of four (4) Hummers. Discussion ensued on where to store the Hummers and the relative cheap cost of Hummers versus the high expense of Hummer tires and batteries.

Commissioner Hannen elaborated further about the pump situation in Cranford. Commissioner Gareis spoke about the use of the berm during Storm Ida. Discussion then ensued regarding the current residential elevation program and expected "shovel in the ground" timing as well as number of homes expected to participate. Further discussion ensued.

On motion of Commissioner Hannen, seconded by Commissioner O'Connor and passed, the Township Committee adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Donahue  
Township Clerk

Dated: September 13, 2021