



Minutes
Open Sessions

November 10, 2021
7:39 pm

Virtual Regular Meeting
Mayor and Council of the Borough of Bogota
Bogota Council Chambers
375 Larch Avenue
Bogota, NJ 07603

Mayor Kelemen called the meeting to order, asked for a moment of silent prayer for Anthony Culmone, former Fire Chief and led the flag salute. The notice requirement of the Open Public Meeting Law has been satisfied as notice was sent to two newspapers and posted on the Borough Hall bulletin board on October 6, 2021.

Mayor Kelemen	Present
Council President Carpenter	Present
Councilman Connors	Present
Councilwoman Fede	Present
Councilwoman Granquist	Present
Councilwoman Murphy	Present
Councilman Robbins	Present

Also Present: Borough Attorney, William Betesh; Joseph Scarpa –Borough Administrator; and Deputy Clerk, Yenlys F. Bolivard.

Citizen Remarks: One five (5) minute time limit per person.

Councilman Connors made a motion for citizen remarks. Council President Carpenter seconded the motion.

Nunez - Congratulated the democrats on winning the election and hope they can accomplish their work. He also mentioned that the Mayor/Council need to consider a different approach in responding to the citizens.

Harper –Joined in congratulating on the re-election. Concerned about the Borough not having a summary report on how the recreation center will continue to be funded, and alarmed regarding the amount of trees that are going to be removed for the use of the recreation center parking lot. She asked the town to do an executive study.

Garcia- Supported Harper's comments. Concerned about the future of the children in Bogota and all the trees that are going to be removed to build a parking lot.

Sofia- Worried about the speed limit on the intersection of Cypress Ave (freeway). Needs to be addressed it is dangerous as it is now. She feels some things need to be discussed in referring to the recreation center. Wanted to know if the town is still planning on cutting down trees in Olsen Park.

Flores- West Shore Ave and River Road intersection – almost got hit by a vehicle. Suggested a wall garden and more police to patrol the area.

Villamar- Supported Harper and her concern about the trees and the recreation center. Recommends to minimize parking spaces and reduce the size of the building.

Councilwoman Murphy motioned to close citizen remarks, Councilman Robbins seconded the motion.

Mayor and Council answered citizen questions:

Council President Carpenter thanked residents for their congratulations to the Democratic Party on their winning the election. She also expressed how she understands citizen concerns and will work closely with the developer regarding the financial report summary. The recreation center will be funded by the Pilot Program from the Atwater.

Councilman Robbins addressed Westshore Ave People do not pay attention to the patterns of the intersection. We will research for a better solution.

Councilman Connor addressed the speed limit. Said it will be a long process to correct it, not an easy task but he is working directly with the police department for a solution.

Councilwoman Murphy mentioned all council people participated in one way or another in the Mayor /Council's decisions and interrelation with citizens. She respects the passion of citizens' concerns about the trees.

Discussion:

Returning to In-Person Meeting for Mayor and Council – Will resume in January 2022- Borough will follow the Board of Education method of doing the meeting in person and also allow residents, official electors/employees to log in remotely if they choose.

Borough Tax Map – Borough Attorney Betesh discussed the importance for an updated Borough Tax Map, which was last updated about 10 years ago. The tax assessor has recommended this update, which is also being required by the county. The Borough Engineer submitted a proposal, dated April 1, 2021, outlining two options for the update. The digital option will cost \$61,000,

but it gets updated every year at no additional cost. The paper option will cost \$12,000, but does not update automatically. All council members voted in favor of the digital upgrade option. An emergency resolution #169 was added to the agenda and voted on. All in favor, the motion carried.

OPRA request (Cost). Mayor Kelemen discussed the many OPRA requests seeking emails from elected officials / employees; Councilwoman Carpenter stated, she would prefer a uniform process dealing with OPRA in regards to Mayor/Council/ employees. Borough administrator Joseph Scarpa recommended to add in the RFQ, as part of the requirements, an annual fee or hourly rate for principal and associate employees, and a reduced rate for OPRA requests.

2021 Best practices: Administrator, Joseph Scarpa, addressed Best Practices. It was submitted successfully to the State and everything went well. Councilwoman Fede mentioned that some questions were not completed. Mr. Scarpa said that some of questions didn't apply to the Borough.

Consent Agenda:

- 21-161 Approval to Advertise for RFQs for 2022
- 21-162 Group Affidavit Form – Certification of Governing body Receiving 2020 Audit
- 21-163 Approval to Waive Fees related to Hurricane Ida
- 21-164 Approving Neglia Engineering Associates quote on River Road
- 21-165 Approval of purchase of two (2) fire engines
- 21-166 Sustainable Jersey Grant application
- 21-167 Refund of Duplicate Tax Payment to Block 36, Lot 15
- 21-168 Budget Transfer Resolution

Voted on consent agenda: Council President Carpenter made motion to approve the consent agenda; Councilman Connors seconded the motion. The motion carried. All present in favor, none opposed.

Resolution to be voted on separately:

PC21-17 Payment of Claims –Motion to approve Councilman Robbins, seconded by Council President Carpenter.

Approvals:

Minutes 10-21-21 pending
Closed Session Minutes 10/21/21 pending

2nd Citizen Remarks:

One Five (5) minute time limit per person

Harper- mentioned that some of her questions were not addressed and she has spent a lot of time doing the research. She also commented about addressing OPRA, which should be all about transparency.

Councilman Connors made a motion to close 2nd citizen remarks and councilman Robbins seconded the motion.

Mayor and Council answered citizen questions:

Councilwoman Murphy addressed residents' comments by saying that she deeply cares for all their concerns and respects their passion.

Reports:

Five (5) minute time limit per Council Member

Mayor - Christopher M. Kelemen- Happy to say the town has no new cases of COVID and only four were reported the week before. He would like to thank the Bogota community for all their cooperation and expressed his sadness regarding 15 members that lost their lives from COVID.

He addressed last week's October Fall Festival. It was a great success and he would like to congratulate all involved in the event; "it was indeed a great turn out".

On another note he addressed that the third annual Menorah lighting is scheduled for Sunday November 28 @4:00 pm.

He has been working on the annual volunteer first responders' dinner scheduled for January 8th.

Congratulated Coach Appleton and his High School football team and the High School Girls Volleyball Team for last night's Northern NJ Championship game. They will be competing in the State Games this Saturday.

He will be meeting with Councilwomen Fede and Grandquist, DPW Superintendent Kohles, Ridgfield Park commissioner Mark Olsen, and Linda Murphy recycling coordinator. They will be given a tour of the Ridgfield Park facility and discuss some options moving forward with a possible shared services agreement.

The week of November 15 is the League of Municipalities convention and he will be attending. He wished all a Happy Veterans Day. Borough Hall be closed and unfortunately the VFW won't have any services. He thanked all that have served. "May God always bless each and every one of our brave Veterans."

The Mayor, wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Councilwoman Granquist- she reported on the trimming of trees –stump removal will be taken care of- Department of Public Work is doing a great job in the fall clean up.

Councilman Connors – Board of Education will be offering English as a Second Language (ESL). A total of 12 people are attending the classes. He mentioned that the Masonic Temple has been closed and purchased. The Board Ed hired a new physics teacher. Football had a great season and Volleyball will be play on November 13, 2021 for the State competition.

Cross country will run on Sunday. The middle school Open House is November 13, from 12:00 pm -2pm. He reported the Police Department had about 248 summons. He has no report for the recreation committee as it was schedule the same day as the council meeting.

Councilwoman Murphy – she reported that the Library Board meeting was canceled and the next one will be December 3. Planning and zoning subdivision was approved. She wished Happy Thanksgiving to everyone.

Councilman Robbins- He addressed that he had a meeting with Fire Chief Kalman regarding the use of the horns. He said Fire Chief Kalman will address the concerns with each Fire House regarding the horns, however, as of now, the situation will not change until further research. On another note, he motioned to extend the Borough Administrator Joseph Scarpa’s contract until December 31, 2022. He expressed the need for an administrator in the Borough, and as of now there is no one in the process of taking his position. He mentioned that Mr. Scarpa has done and continues to do a great job for the Borough. A vote was taken, and was passed with Council President Carpenter, Councilwoman Murphy, Councilman Robbins and Councilwoman Granquist voting “yes” and Councilman Connors and Councilwoman Fede voting “no”.

Councilwoman Fede- Requested to add Police Lieutenant and County Radio Communications to next agenda. Expressed not being comfortable with the process of renewing the Administrator’s contract.

Mayor Kelemen/ Councilman Connors – objected to the renewing of Mr. Scarpa contract; the process was not done the correct way, it should have been discussed with the Personnel Committee.

Administrator Joseph Scarpa- The bids for the Recreation Center will be due by December and wished a Happy Thanksgiving to Everyone.

Borough Attorney, Betesh – Noted that he was not aware of the vote to extend Joseph Scarpa’s contract ahead of time. However, he prefaced that this extension did not alter Mr. Scarpa’s employment status with the Borough, as the Borough Administrator’s position is protected by statute, and he serves at the pleasure of the Governing Body. Therefore, he would continue working for the Borough whether or not his contract was extended, and can only removed by an affirmative vote of four council members. Therefore, had Mr.Scarpa’s contract not been extended, he would have simply continued working for the Borough without a contract.

Closed Session:

Adjournment 11:03

I hereby certify that this a true copy of the minutes.

Yenlys