



## BOROUGH OF LEONIA

COUNCIL- Work Session Meeting  
~ Minutes ~

312 Broad Avenue  
Leonias, NJ 07605  
<http://www.leonianj.gov/>

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**April 18, 2022**

**7:30 pm**

**Leonias Borough Hall - Virtually**

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A Work Session Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Leonias was held in person at the Leonias Senior Center at 305 Beechwood Place, Leonias, NJ, and virtually via GoToMeeting on April 18, 2022. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 by Mayor Zeigler.

Those present were led in the Flag Salute by Council President Flaim

Mayor Zeigler read the following statement: "The conditions of the open meeting act have been met by notice placed on the bulletin board at Borough Hall as well as the Borough website. Notice has also been published in the Bergen Record with copies sent to the Star Ledger."

PRESENT: Mayor Judah Zeigler, Council President Bernadette Flaim,  
Councilwoman Davis, Councilman Fusco, Councilman Grandelis,  
Councilwoman Terrell, Councilman Ziegler

ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT: Borough Attorney Brian Chewcaskie  
Borough Engineer Drew DiSessa  
Borough Administrator Andrea Wardrop  
Borough Auditor Gary Higgins  
Chief Financial Officer Sheryl Luna  
Bond Counsel Steve Rogut

**Public Comment**

Alec Melman, 172 Highwood Avenue

Mr. Melman wishes to receive a clear answer from Borough Administrator Wardrop as to where the project on Broad Avenue, between Park Avenue and Highwood Avenue, stands. Mr. Melman specifically was looking for information as to an update on when the contractor will begin work and held concerns regarding the contractor and the work itself.

Borough Administrator Wardrop deferred to Borough Engineer DiSessa, who would have more insight into the status of the project. Borough Engineer DiSessa mentioned that the tree removal was completed the week prior and that he was looking to acquire the schedule of the contractor to have them remobilize their work as to the concrete and curb work. Once the concrete and curb work has been completed, milling and paving shall follow. It is hoped that work will continue within the following two weeks to finish the sidewalk and curb.

**Appointments**

**RES. 2022-117 Appointment DPW Laborer – Anadon Hoti**  
[2022-117 Appointment of Anadon Hoti as DPW Laborer.pdf](#)

Motion by Councilman Fusco, second by Councilwoman Davis, that RES. 2022-117 be approved

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Council President Flaim:	aye	Councilman Grandelis:	aye
Councilwoman Davis:	aye	Councilwoman Terrell:	aye
Councilman Fusco:	aye	Councilman Ziegler:	aye

**RES. 2022-118 Appointment Recreation Office Manager – Destiney Sampson**  
[2022-118 Appointment of Destiney Sampson as Recreation Office Manager.pdf](#)

Motion by Councilman Grandelis, second by Council President Flaim, that RES. 2022-118 be approved

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Council President Flaim:	aye	Councilman Grandelis:	aye
Councilwoman Davis:	aye	Councilwoman Terrell:	aye
Councilman Fusco:	aye	Councilman Ziegler:	aye

**RES. 2022-119 Appointment DPW Office Manager/Project Assistant – Keri Mescall**

**[2022-119 Appointment of Keri Mescall as DPW Office Manager-Project Assistant.pdf](#)**

Motion by Councilman Fusco, second by Council President Flaim, that RES. 2022-119 be approved

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Council President Flaim:	aye	Councilman Grandelis:	aye
Councilwoman Davis:	aye	Councilwoman Terrell:	aye
Councilman Fusco:	aye	Councilman Ziegler:	aye

***Approval of Minutes***

Motion by Council President Flaim, Second by Councilman Ziegler, and all members present voting in favor, that the Minutes of December 18, 2021, Budget Meeting were approved.

***Adoption of Ordinances***

**ORD. 2022-05**

The Borough Clerk read the title of the ordinance into the record:

“BOND ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE UNDERTAKING OF THE REMEDIATION PHASE OF THE BOROUGH HALL RENOVATION PROJECT IN, BY AND FOR THE BOROUGH OF LEONIA, IN THE COUNTY OF BERGEN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, TO APPROPRIATE THE SUM OF \$300,000 TO PAY THE COST THEREOF, TO MAKE A DOWN PAYMENT, TO AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO FINANCE SUCH APPROPRIATION AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF BOND ANTICIPATION NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF SUCH BONDS.”

Borough Administrator Wardrop made note of Bond Counsel Steve Rogut’s presence at the meeting and mentioned his decision, with permission of the Governing Body, to add \$300,000 to help pay for remediation of the Borough Hall. As the current interest rate climate is good, it is important to add this bond ordinance amount to the prior bond ordinance adopted, ORD 2022-04. Bonds shall be issued and closed on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Bond Counsel Rogut had no additional in regards to ORD. 2022-05.

The record will show that there were no public comments in regards to ORD. 2022-05.

Councilman Ziegler motioned that ordinance 2022-05 be adopted on second reading. Seconded by Councilwoman Davis.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Council President Flaim:	aye	Councilman Grandelis:	aye
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Councilwoman Davis: aye  
Councilman Fusco: aye

Councilwoman Terrell: aye  
Councilman Ziegler: aye

### ***Introduction of Ordinances***

#### **ORD. 2022-06**

The Borough Clerk read the title of the ordinance into the record:

“BOROUGH OF LEONIA BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY CALENDAR YEAR 2022 ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK (N.J.S.A. 40A-4-45.14)”

Chief Financial Officer Sheryl Luna explained that this is a typical process to introduce the budget on a yearly basis.

Council President Flaim motioned that ordinance 2022-06, second by Councilwoman Davis be introduced and passed on first reading.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Council President Flaim: aye  
Councilwoman Davis: aye  
Councilman Fusco: aye

Councilman Grandelis: aye  
Councilwoman Terrell: aye  
Councilman Ziegler: aye

### ***Non-Consent Resolutions***

#### **RES. 2022-120 Utilizing an Alternate Method of Calculating the Reserve for Uncollected Taxes**

[2022-120 Utilizing an Alternate Method of Calculating the Reserve for Uncollected Taxes.pdf](#)

Borough Auditor Garry Higgins explained that through this resolution, the Borough of Leonia would be able to use a three-year average in its tax collection rate when calculating the reserve of uncollected taxes. As 2021’s collection rate happened to be lower than normal, however, the Borough of Leonia may elect to calculate the reserve for uncollected taxes by using the average of the percentage of taxes levied of 99.10% of the three preceding years. Adopting this resolution will allow the Borough of Leonia to utilize a rate of 99.07%, which is higher than the 2021 calendar year collection rate.

Motion by Councilman Ziegler, second by Council President Flaim that RES. 2022-120 be approved.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Council President Flaim: aye  
Councilwoman Davis: aye  
Councilman Fusco: aye

Councilman Grandelis: aye  
Councilwoman Terrell: aye  
Councilman Ziegler: aye

**RES 2022-121 Anticipation of revenue for Municipal Court based on 3-year report**

**[2022-121 Anticipation of revenue for Municipal Court based on 3-year report](#)**

Borough Auditor Higgins stated there was new legislation passed to help anticipate revenue adversely affected by the COVID-19. As the COVID-19 pandemic hurt the revenue of many municipal departments, the Division of Local Government Services allows for a municipality to use a three-year average for the calculation of affected revenues. This would allow the Borough of Leonia to up its revenue for its Municipal Court by \$40,000 higher than it would be if it used the standard method of calculation.

Motion by Councilman Fusco, second by Council President Flaim that RES. 2022-121 be approved.

Mayor Zeigler asked Chief Financial Office Luna if she was comfortable with the projected revenue amount and foresaw it being accurate, to which the Chief Financial Officer confirmed she was.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Council President Flaim:	aye	Councilman Grandelis:	aye
Councilwoman Davis:	aye	Councilwoman Terrell:	aye
Councilman Fusco:	aye	Councilman Ziegler:	aye

**RES. 2022-122 Introduction of the 2022 Operating Budget**

**[2022-122 Introduction of 2022 Operating Budget.pdf](#)**

**[2022-122 Budget Prep Report.pdf](#)**

**[2022-122 Swim Pool 041422.pdf](#)**

Borough Auditor Higgins wished to give some updates as to the process of budget adoption, with the introduction being tonight's April 18<sup>th</sup> Work Session Meeting. A municipality must wait a minimum of 28 days to adopt a budget. If a budget revision is required, the hearing will be on May 16<sup>th</sup> with the meeting being advertised, depending on the amendment. If no line items see an increase or decrease for this budget of more than 10%, there will be the opportunity to pass the amendment and budget both during the May 16<sup>th</sup> Mayor and Council Meeting.

Borough Auditor Higgins requested that \$16,000 be taken out of the Municipal Court budget line and be added to the \$0 that currently makes up the line for the prosecutor. This recommended change shall be made only if the Chief Financial Officer is comfortable with following through with the request.

Overall, there is a municipal budget data sheet that showcases the various increases and changes in the budget from the previous year's amounts. The Borough is subject to a 2% potential tax levy increase, to which the town is only increasing by 1.3% with

two other banks from prior years also being carried forward. The total tax levy is \$726,000, being well under what could be requested in the budget compared to the tax levy. If one looks at the tax rate analysis, the introduced budget is set to be 92.8 cents per \$100 per assessed tax evaluation for municipal uses only. This 92.8 cents per \$100 per assessed tax evaluation is a 1.3-cent tax increase from 2021. The assessed home value in Leonia for 2022 was \$438,344.

Borough Auditor Higgins closed by stating the formality of budget adoption is to introduce it tonight and make amendments after the public hearing on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

Motion by Council President Flaim, second by Councilman Ziegler that RES. 2022-122 be approved.

Mayor Zeigler noted that budget adoption is a long process and thanked Borough Hall staff and professionals for all their hard work throughout. Mayor Zeigler also mentioned that the total assessed value of 2021 was flat and that for the Borough to remain financially viable, its evaluation cannot remain flat or lower.

Councilman Ziegler echoed the appreciation expressed by Mayor Zeigler and stated that the budget is a representation of where we are today and where we want to be in the future. The higher cash flow of \$900,000 allows for the Borough to enter into bond sales with companies at a much greater level. This is a budget that speaks highly of the time and effort that goes into ensuring that every tax dollar is accounted for and kept under stringent control.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Council President Flaim:	aye	Councilman Grandelis:	aye
Councilwoman Davis:	aye	Councilwoman Terrell:	absent
Councilman Fusco:	aye	Councilman Ziegler:	aye

**RES. 2022-123 Combination of several authorizations of bonds into a single issue**

[2022-123 Details Resolution.pdf](#)

Bond Counsel Steve Rogut noted that this resolution lists forward various items, such as how much is to be borrowed from the three ordinances to be passed and redemption provisions for the bond. RES 2022-123 also states that the Borough of Leonia will be able to refinance and authorizes the sales of bonds.

Motion by Council President Flaim, Second by Councilman Fusco that RES. 2022-123 be approved.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Council President Flaim:	aye	Councilman Grandelis:	aye
Councilwoman Davis:	aye	Councilwoman Terrell:	absent
Councilman Fusco:	aye	Councilman Ziegler:	aye

**RES. 2022-124 Authorizing the publication, printing and distribution of a notice of sale and the publication of a summary notice of sale and prescribing the forms thereof for general improvement bonds**

[2022-124 Notice of Sale Resolution.pdf](#)

Bond Counsel Rogut explained RES. 2022-124 authorizes the publication of the sale of bonds. This resolution also states that the Borough will provide disclosure of financial information while bonds are outstanding. Finally, it authorizes the sale of the bonds through an electronic bidding process.

Motion by Councilwoman Davis, Second by Councilman Fusco That RES. 2022-124 be approved.

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Council President Flaim:	aye	Councilman Grandelis:	aye
Councilwoman Davis:	aye	Councilwoman Terrell:	absent
Councilman Fusco:	aye	Councilman Ziegler:	aye

***Consent Resolutions***

**RES. 2022-125 Authorize Bill List**

[2022-125 Bill List Backup.pdf](#)

[2022-125 Authorize Bill List.pdf](#)

**RES. 2022-126 Agreement for Professional Consulting Services from Hoplite in regards to deployment of 5G Services**

[2022-126 Agreement for Professional Consulting Services for Hoplite in regards to deployment of 5G Services.pdf](#)

**RES. 2022-127 Municipal Court Shared Service Agreement with Teaneck**

[2022-127 Authorize Municipal Court Shared Service Agreement with Teaneck.pdf](#)

**RES. 2022-128 Authorize Grant Application – NJDOT Local Aid Infrastructure Fund (LAIF)**

[2022-128 LAIF Application Resolution Broad Ave. Sec. 10.pdf](#)

**RES. 2022-129 Authorize Cancellation and Refund of Taxes for 2022 Disabled Veteran Exemption**

[2022-129 Authorize Cancellation and Refund of Taxes for 2022 Disabled Veteran Exemption.pdf](#)

Motion by Council President Flaim, second by Councilman Grandelis, that the consent agenda be approved

On a roll call, the vote was recorded as follows:

Council President Flaim:	aye	Councilman Grandelis:	aye
Councilwoman Davis:	aye	Councilwoman Terrell:	absent
Councilman Fusco:	aye	Councilman Ziegler:	aye

### ***Unfinished Business***

#### **Animal Licensing/Registrar Discussion – Board of Health**

The Board of Health President is not in attendance and thus there are no current updates in regards to the Registrar position. As stated by Borough Attorney Chewcaskie, the Registrar position is a function of the Board of Health and thus it is their responsibility and right to fill it.

Mayor Zeigler requested that a notice be put on the website directing any residents who have questions in regards to pet licensing to the email of the Board of Health's President.

Borough Administrator Wardrop mentioned that the Borough Clerk's Office has been working with the Health Inspector to process pet license applications.

#### **May Meeting Schedule**

Borough Administrator Wardrop wished to discuss the May Meeting schedule. As 28 days must pass between the budget introduction and adoption, the first meeting in May would be on May 16<sup>th</sup>. Borough Administrator Wardrop wished to know if Mayor Zeigler had a desire to host any further meetings in May. Mayor Zeigler confirmed that no further meetings shall be hosted in May other than the Regular Meeting on May 16<sup>th</sup>.

Councilman Ziegler will not be in attendance during the May 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

#### **Monopole Discussion – Pasquale Fusco**

Councilman Fusco began the discussion by reminding the Council of a request by AT&T to put additional equipment on top of the firehouse. As the extra weight of this equipment would put a further burden on the roof of the firehouse, Councilman Fusco desires to negotiate the transfer of the equipment to a standalone monopole in a different location.

Councilman Fusco brought to the Council's attention an update as to the situation, Borough Attorney Brian Chewcaskie has been in contact with Peter Lupo, of Hoplite Communications, LCC, and AT&T. AT&T has been receptive to the idea of working



with the Borough to put in a new monopole, with AT&T being tipped as to the idea that this would allow for an opportunity to further upgrade the service.

Borough Attorney Chewcaskie clarified that as it stands, AT&T has some understanding that their options are limited in regards to further upgrading the equipment on the roof and thus has been looking at alternative options. As AT&T is a heavily structured organization, the proposal and correspondence made by the Borough Attorney and Mr. Lupo can take some time to go through the chain of command.

Mr. Chewcaskie understands there is limited availability to continue to upgrade on top of the roof. Going through Chain of Command.

### **Additional Items for Discussion**

Councilman Ziegler reminded the Council of various items he proposed previously, about Borough Owned Vacant Land Analyses, Electric Vehicle Charger Locations/Types, and the relationship between Property Maintenance and Code Enforcement.

Borough Attorney Chewcaskie made mentioned that in regards to Electric Vehicle Charging Stations, he has had some experience with other municipalities creating ordinances to allow them to comply with the model ordinance. The Borough Attorney offered to make these examples available to the Council, to which Councilman Ziegler expressed his interest.

### **Adjournment:**

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Councilman Ziegler, second by Council President Flaim, and unanimously carried, to adjourn this meeting. The meeting adjourned at 8:13 PM.