



## BOROUGH OF LEONIA

COUNCIL- Regular Meeting  
~ Minutes ~

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

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**May 16, 2022**

**7:30 pm**

**Leonias Senior Center**

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A Regular 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 May 16, 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

A moment of silence was held in memoriam of the 10 victims of gun violence in Buffalo, NY on May 14, 2022.

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 Maureen Davis, Councilman Pasquale Fusco,  
Councilman Grandelis, Councilwoman Terrell,

ABSENT: Councilman Ziegler

ALSO PRESENT: Borough Administrator Andrea Wardrop  
Borough Attorney Brian Chewcaskie  
Borough Auditor Gary Higgins  
Borough Engineer Drew DiSessa

**Public Comment**

The record will reflect that no such comments were entered into the chat window accessible through GoToMeeting nor via the United States Postal Service or Email.

For the record, a petition was received on May 16, 2022 but as the rules of order state, public comments must be received by 1:00 PM on the Friday prior to a meeting. The petition shall be listed for discussion under correspondence for the June 13, 2022 Regular Meeting.

**Appointments**

**RES. 2022-130 Appointment of Full-Time Senior Bus  
[2022-130 Appointment of Full-Time Senior Bus Driver.pdf](#)**

Motion by Councilman Grandelis, Second by Councilwoman Terrell, that RES. 2022-130 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:	absent

**RES. 2022-131 Appointment of DPW Laborer  
[2022-131 Appointment of Robert Drasher as DPW Laborer.pdf](#)**

Motion by Councilman Fusco, Second by Councilwoman Davis, that RES. 2022-131 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:	absent

**RES. 2022-132 Appointment of Pool Manager for the 2022 Swim Club Season  
[2022-132 Re-Appointment of Recreation Seasonal Pool Manager – Tim Ryan.pdf](#)**

Motion by Councilman Grandelis, Second by Councilwoman Davis, that RES. 2022-132 be approved.

Recreation Superintendent Sean Krakower, in response to a question from Mayor Zeigler, confirmed that the individual being appointed is indeed vaccinated.

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:	absent

**RES. 2022-133 Authorize Hires – 2022 Swim Club Season**  
[2022-133 Authorize Hires – 2022 Swim Club Season.pdf](#)

Mayor Zeigler declined to make these nominations as he has a conflict of interest.

Motion by Council President Flaim, Second by Councilwoman Terrell, that RES. 2022-133 be approved.

Recreation Superintendent Krakower confirmed that all individuals named on this list are indeed vaccinated.

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:	absent

***Approval of Minutes***

Motion by Council President Flaim, second by Councilwoman Terrell, and all members present voting in favor, that the Minutes of January 3, 2022 Reorganization Meeting are approved.

Motion by Council President Flaim, second by Councilwoman Terrell, and all members present voting in favor, other than Councilwoman Terrell who requested abstention, that the Minutes of April 18, 2022 Work Session Meeting are approved.

***Reports***

**Council President Flaim**

Library Board of Trustees

Library Board met on May 11, 2022.

One item of discussion was of the new adult services librarian, Rebecca Spero, who shall begin May 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Director Elysse Fink proposed the use of Accuscan to see which documentation is required to be kept and which can be destroyed.

91 donations were made to the library, which shall be earmarked for the local history room.

The library is celebrating Native American/Pacific Islander month, with the creation of author's bookmarks made to celebrate the occasion.

#### Finance & Human Resources Committee

Budget adoption and recruitment shall be discussed later by Borough Administrator Andrea Wardrop.

#### **Councilwoman Davis**

##### Police Committee

Please see attached below for the April 2022 Police Committee Report

[April 2022 Police Committee Report](#)

##### Board of Health

Ongoing discussions were held in regards to budget and the addition of additional positions to the salary ordinance.

The Board of Health urges residents to continue wearing masks due to recent upticks in COVID-19 cases.

#### **Councilman Fusco**

##### Department of Public Works

Please see attached below the Department of Public Works Monthly Report for April 2022

[April 2022 Department of Public Works Report](#)

##### Building Department

Please see attached below the April 2022 Construction Permit Activity Report and the Cash Receipts Audit Report.

[April 2022 Construction Permit Activity Report](#)

[April 2022 Cash Receipts Audit Report](#)Planning Board

Abbreviated report due to the Mayor and Councilman Fusco being exempt on sitting through the hearing on 131 Fort Lee Road.

The hearing for the Pacific Outdoor billboard was postponed until June.

An extended hearing was held regarding 135 Howard Terrace. The hearing was held to remediate a number of unlawful improvements made during the period the current owner owned the property. These improvements were executed and approved by the Building Department. The applicant said he would come back and bring a corrective plan in July. The point being made is that there are a number of older homes in the Borough that were made prior to zoning becoming law, but when an application such as this one is made to seek absolution on a number of ills knowing it was never going to pass, it wastes the time of the Planning Board.

Mayor Zeigler noted that Councilman Fusco makes a point that a number of residents will perform illegal work and once they are caught, they finally seek to avail themselves of code law by seeking a permit from the building department. The problem lies in that it wastes everyone's time, especially those who may be paying for professionals to attend the Planning Board meeting to assist with their application. The mayor is pleased that the Planning Board upheld this individual to their highest standards and remained professional.

**Councilman Grandelis**EMS

44 calls to service, with one late response.

Recreation Commission

The Recreation Commission met on April 19, 2022 and is scheduled to meet again on May 17, 2022.

The Leonia Pool preseason started on May 16, 2022 and pool staff is currently preparing for opening day on May 28, 2022.

The Leonia Summer Camp is back to pre-pandemic levels in registration.

The annual senior town meeting shall be held on May 18, 2022 at Wood Park. Councilman Grandelis made a shoutout to the Fire Department thanking them for cooking for the event.

Spring programs began in late April to great success and high registration numbers.

### Fire Department

The Leonia Fire Department met on April 19, 2022 and shall meet again May 19, 2022.

Chief Caruolo spoke to Leonia High School students on Friday May 13, 2022. The High School is also looking to have a program where students may attend night classes at the Fire Department.

Company 1 of the Fire Department hosted a Saturday seminar at the High School's Little Theatre, which was a great success. Councilman Grandelis was in attendance to give support to the Fire Department.

### **Councilwoman Terrell**

#### Board of Education

The Board of Education met twice in April and is continuing to close out the school year.

#### Law and Ordinances Committee

The Law and Ordinances Committee hosted Planning Board Chairman Mike DeGidio to discuss code regarding home businesses, as it is currently antiquated.

### **Mayor's Report**

Mayor Zeigler thanked the Borough Administrator and all the individuals who had a hand in the planning and running of Leonia Day.

A letter was received from the American Post Legion #1 inviting the Mayor and Council to attend the Memorial Day Parade on May 30, 2022.

A request from Superintendent of Schools Edward Bertolini was received, requesting permission to install security planters by Fort Lee Road to assist with pedestrian safety. Borough Administrator Wardrop requested that time be given for herself and the Borough Engineer to discuss and review this request.

### **Borough Administrator's Report**

Project Team Meetings continue to be held every Tuesday morning for the construction of the new municipal building.

A Bond Rating of AA from Standard & Poor's was received for the Municipal Building Bond Issue.

The bond sale of the 12.4 million general improvement bonds will take place on May 19, 2022.

The Groundbreaking Ceremony for the new municipal building took place at Leonia Day on May 15, 2022 and the entire event was a great success.

Electric Vehicle charging station cabling will be installed by Zimick Electric very soon, possible completion date within the next few weeks.

The Borough Administrator attended the NJ Municipal Managers spring conference and attended a panel discussing the placing of charging stations and setting fees.

The 2022 Operating Budget is set to be adopted and the amended salary ordinance shall be introduced at the June 13<sup>th</sup> Regular Mayor and Council Meeting. The Salary Resolution shall be introduced and adopted subsequently.

Next steps regarding Capital Budget shall be discussed with department heads during a meeting on May 17, 2022. The Capital Budget shall be brought before the Finance Committee for discussion soon.

As discussed by Councilman Fusco, recruitment initiatives have taken place to fill vacancies in the Department of Public Works.

Chief Financial Officer recruitment efforts have continued, with Borough Administrator Wardrop meeting with two separate candidates.

Technology for the Senior Center shall be discussed later to ensure the best audiovisual solution is created for the continued use of the Senior Center for Mayor and Council meetings.

The Municipal Court shared service agreement has continued forward, with Teaneck moving on their end to approve of it via resolution.

The Borough Administrator and Council President Flaim continue work on the alleyway project, with the goal being to create an area next to Borough Hall where residents may sit down to rest and eat. Talks about bringing local musicians in for entertainment as well as sculptures have been discussed. The Borough Administrator wishes to know how the Council wishes to proceed with the idea of bringing sculptures, and whether to have further discussion at a later meeting or not for approval to do such. Councilman Grandelis wished to know if when construction begins at Borough Hall if the sculptures can be moved, to which the Borough Administrator confirmed they could. The Mayor and Council were approving of the initiative.

Negotiations with the bargaining authorities for the DPW and Crossing Guard unions are underway.

Shredding of 250 boxes of items from the basement of the Borough Hall was completed on May 5, 2022. This allows for more storage space for other boxes to be brought in from the Recreation Department.

Borough Administrator Wardrop finished her report by thanking Borough Interns Maya DeClerk and Gustavo Iglesias for all their contributions and help for the length the school year through their externships.

### **Borough Attorney's Report**

Borough Attorney Chewcaskie stated that the Borough of Leonia was unfortunately not successful in the appellate division in regards to the Department of Transportation Litigation. This however does not prevent the Mayor and Police Chief from acting in emergency situations as they arise.

In regards to affordable housing, the Borough Attorney and Borough Planner met with the mayor to go over recommendations for the Housing Element Fair Share Plan, which shall be presented to the Planning Board in June.

The noise control ordinance was reviewed and conditionally approved by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection, coming back with two small changes to be implemented with the new reintroduced ordinance to be introduced at this meeting.

Mayor Zeigler noted that he is disappointed with the decision by the appellate division that reaffirmed the commissioner's earlier assessment.

### **Borough Engineer's Report**

The Broad Avenue Section 9 project is in the process of having the concrete curb work be completed, with milling and paving to be begun within the next two weeks.

Design plans are to be created for the Broad Avenue section between Crescent and Hillside.

Capital Roads for 2022 and Senior Center Waterproofing project are currently in the design phase.

The Annual DEP stormwater report made it on time by May 1, 2022.

Councilman Fusco wished to know the situation as to the bump-outs on Park Avenue. Engineer DiSessa mentioned the change order is up for approval during this meeting. Some demolition is expected in order to complete any changes necessary to the curbing.

### **Adoption of Ordinances**

#### **Ordinance 2022-06**

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

CALENDAR YEAR 2022 ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK



Borough Auditor Gary Higgins explained that this is a common ordinance done on an annual basis, allowing the Governing Body to bank the additional 1% over the 2.5% index ordinance for this year. This doesn't appropriate and spend money, but allows the Borough to bank and use it within the next two years as a tool if needed.

Let the record show that no members of the public came forward either virtually or in person during the public hearing of Ordinance 2022-06.

Motion by Council President Flaim that the foregoing ORD. 2022-06 be passed and adopted on second reading. Second by Councilwoman Terrell.

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	absent

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

#### **Ordinance 2022-07**

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

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING AND SUPPLEMENTING CHAPTER 181 ENTITLED "NOISE" OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF LEONIA

Borough Attorney Brian Chewcaskie explained that a letter was received from the NJ Department of Environmental Protection who approved the ordinance with some minor corrections. These corrections do not change the ordinance itself, as they were minor changes made to the verbiage.

Motion by Councilwoman Davis, Second by Councilwoman Terrell that ORD. 2022-07 be introduced and passed on first reading, and setting June 13, 2022 at 7:30 p.m. or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard for second reading and adoption.

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	absent

***Non-Consent Resolutions*****2022 Municipal Budget****RES. 2022-134 Self Examination of Budget Resolution**  
**[2022-134 Self Examination of Budget Resolution.pdf](#)**

Motion by Council President Flaim, Second by Councilwoman Terrell that resolution 2022-134 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	absent

**RES. 2022-135 Read Budget by Title Only**  
**[2022-135 Read Budget by Title.pdf](#)**

Motion by Council President Flaim, Second by Councilwoman Terrell that resolution 2022-135 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	absent

Borough Auditor Gary Higgins explained that the Borough of Leonia's Budget was under self-examination this year, which is allowed every 2-3 years as long as certain criteria are met as set by the Division of Local Government. The Borough Auditor, as a registered Municipal Accountant is able to review to make sure the budget is compliant.

Overall budget is up 1.4%, with the tax levy up 1.3%. The tax rate is up 1.3 cents per 100 dollars of assessed valuation. The average home is roughly \$438,000, meaning the average tax increase is \$55 for the average home. This is merely municipal, as the Governing Body has no control over the school budget or county and their respective effect on taxes.

The Borough only used 33% of available surplus funds, with \$900,000 remaining in surplus. This has had a positive effect on the Bond Rating, which helped the Borough receive an AA.

Mayor Zeigler thanked all that were involved in the adoption of the budget as it constitutes a great amount of work.

### ***Public Comments on Adoption of 2022 Municipal Budget***

Let the record show that no members of the public came forward either virtually or in person with comments as to the adoption of the 2022 Municipal Budget.

**RES 2022-136 Adopt 2022 Local Municipal Budget.pdf**  
[2022-136 Adopt 2022 Local Municipal Budget.pdf](#)  
[2022-136 Adopt 2022 Local Municipal Budget Backup.pdf](#)

Motion by Council President Flaim, Second by Councilwoman Davis that resolution 2022-136 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	absent

### ***Consent Resolutions***

~~**RES. 2022-137 Authorize Bill List**~~  
~~[2022-137 Authorize Bill List.pdf](#)~~  
~~[2022-137 Bill List Backup.pdf](#)~~

**RES. 2022-138 Authorize Payment to GovPilot for Contractual Services Provided in 2022/2023**  
[2022-138 Authorize Payment to GovPilot for 2022-2023.pdf](#)

**RES. 2022-139 Authorization to apply for Bergen County Open Space Grant**  
[2022-139 Authorization to Apply for the Bergen County Open Space Grant Application.pdf](#)

**RES. 2022-140 Change Order: AJM Contractor to provide for Curb Extensions at Park and Broad**

[2022-140 Change Order AJM Contractors Curb Extension Broad and Park Avenues.pdf](#)

**RES. 2022-141 Authorize Agreement with Acclaim Inventory LLC for Fixed Asset Inventory Services**

[2022-141 Authorize Agreement with Acclaim Inventory LLC.pdf](#)

**RES. 2022-142 Final Payout of Unused Sick Days**

[2022-142 Authorization of Final Payout of Unused Sick Time – Gary Bickford.pdf](#)

**RES. 2022-143 Memorial Day Parade - \$2,500 Financial Assistance to American Legion Post #1**

[2022-143 Provide \\$2,500 in financial assistance to offset costs associated with Memorial Day Parade.pdf](#)

**RES. 2022-144 Authorize the Borough Administrator to Advertise for the Position of Full-Time Technical Assistant to the Construction Official**

[2022-144 Authorization to Advertise for a Technical Assistant for the Building Department.pdf](#)

~~**RES. 2022-145 Accept Resignation of Technical Assistant to the Construction Official**~~

~~[2022-145 Accept Resignation – Peter Thabit.pdf](#)~~

Motion by Councilwoman Davis, second by Councilman Fusco, 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:	aye
Councilman Fusco:	aye	Councilman Ziegler:	absent

**RES. 2022-137 Authorize Bill List**[2022-137 Authorize Bill List.pdf](#)[2022-137 Bill List Backup.pdf](#)

Pulled for a Separate Vote.

Motion by Council President Flaim, second by Councilwoman Davis, that the RES. 2022-137 be approved.

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

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

**RES. 2022-145 Accept Resignation of Technical Assistant to the Construction Official**[2022-145 Accept Resignation – Peter Thabit.pdf](#)

Pulled for a question by Mayor Zeigler

Mayor Zeigler questioned as to the employee's sudden departure, as he was hired recently in July, 2021. Borough Administrator Wardrop mentioned that the employee cited his long commute and stress within the workplace as reasons for his departure.

Motion by Council President Flaim, second b Councilman Fusco, that the RES. 2022-145 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:	absent

***New Business*****Agreement with Leonia Retirement Housing Corp. (200 Glenwood Avenue) – Senior Bus Service – Sean Krakower/Brian Chewcaskie**

Borough Attorney Brian Chewcaskie explained that Recreation Superintendent Sean Krakower negotiated with Leonia Retirement Housing Corp. to provide funding for a full-time bus driver for the Senior Bus service. As a result of that negotiation, an agreement was drafted where Leonia Retirement Housing Corp. will provide \$13,000 in funding for salary over a 5-year period. There seems to be a benefit in having a full-time bus driver in both a logistical and financial sense. The municipality will have the

decision as to whether to continue funding the position but now there is another entity willing to cover a large portion of its total. The only obligations the Borough has towards this agreement is the continued provisions already being provided. There is no preference being given to the residents of the facility over that of other Leonia seniors. All that is required is an authorization to accept the agreement by resolution from the Governing Body.

There were no objections to placing a resolution accepting this agreement on the agenda for June 13, 2022.

### **Cannabis Businesses – Maureen Davis**

Councilwoman Davis explained that last summer, a necessary ordinance was passed prohibiting cannabis in Leonia. If this ordinance was not passed when it was, the prohibition of any of the 6 licenses that were permitted by the State of New Jersey would not be allowed for several years. These licenses were prohibited in order to take the time to digest and consider if the Borough of Leonia is interested in allowing cannabis businesses. In the meantime, some surrounding towns, such as Fort Lee, have passed ordinances allowing certain types of licenses. The Borough Attorney was requested to provide some information as to what other municipalities are doing in order to better understand the Borough of Leonia's options.

Borough Attorney Chewcaskie stated that what he sees is that from a total ban there has been reconsideration as to certain businesses and uses of cannabis within municipalities. Most municipalities have shied away from retail use, but Oakland has permitted all uses but for retail, such as warehousing, manufacturing, and cultivation. They found through studies performed that permitting cannabis manufacturing would have no interference with residential properties. Fort Lee at this time is only permitting medicinal use, but further consideration as to expansion of use is expected in the future. Other communities such as Montclair, Rochelle Park, and Lodi all permit retail. Most of said retail use occurs on areas that are highways. It seems that most consideration is being placed on the location of proposed businesses, with little impact being seen environmentally. The public may be of a mind to have it within their municipality, but may not want it so close to where they are living. The first step is for the Borough of Leonia to consider what, if any, types of cannabis use it wishes to permit.

Councilwoman Davis stands as to the opinion that following a similar model as to Oakland would allow for the Borough of Leonia to capitalize on its ability to generate wealth for the Borough. Possible consideration may be held in the future to expand upon what is permitted.

Councilman Fusco believes that the Borough Attorney makes a good point as to that the majority of these towns have retail located within highway areas and the consideration must be had that the Borough is small in size. There are plenty of schools within walking distance as well as the fact that 90% of the town is residential. Councilman Fusco is unsure of where retail would fit within the Borough, should that

consideration be made in the future. Councilman Fusco has his concerns as to its possible effects on the health of children within town, even if it is restricted to only non-retail businesses, as how Oakland has modeled their system.

Council President Flaim is interested in exploring the topic further as to all uses other than retail.

Councilwoman Terrell requested more information in respect to whether there are distance parameters that would classify certain areas as unsuitable for cannabis related businesses. Borough Attorney Chewcaskie clarified that there are no distance parameters, but they can be imposed as part of the zoning ordinance in terms of distance from other areas zoned for purposes such as education. In small towns you must be considerate of said parameters as they may block the types of use that have been discussed and potentially desired.

Councilman Grandelis is open to exploring the topic, as long as retail is not being considered at this point. Councilman Grandelis however wishes there to have detailed research be done into environmental concerns such as odor.

Mayor Zeigler agrees and confirmed the sentiment that due to the statutes being written poorly the Borough had no decision other than to prohibit all uses in order to make a more informed decision in the future.

The mayor also requested to know if the Borough Attorney has draft ordinances, to which it was confirmed. The topic shall be brought to the attention of the Laws and Ordinances Committee for further discussion.

### **CTCI Proposal for Audiovisual Solutions in Senior Center – Andrea Wardrop**

Borough Administrator Wardrop made mention that she and Borough Hall staff is taking the improvement of technology within the Senior Center for the purpose of Mayor and Council meetings very seriously. Between the April 18, 2022 Work Session and this current meeting, Verizon was brought in to bring the internet speed up to 1GB. Tonight's meeting has proven that the hybrid model can work with the right equipment. Currently equipment from the Audiovisual company CTCI is being utilized for the meeting. There are opportunities to bring the equipment proposed to be purchased to the new municipal building or Borough Hall, but due to the price tag the Borough Administrator felt a discussion must first be held. Borough Administrator Andrea Wardrop thanked and asked that the Assistant to the Borough Clerk Michael Greco speak more as to the proposed setup, as he has had a major role in the process.

Assistant Michael Greco gave an explanation as to the proposal, stating that what is being proposed is a user-friendly setup that would allow for a better-quality meeting. It was also mentioned that through a conversation with Councilman Grandelis that some of this equipment could be later used to bring the Senior Center up to modern standards and allow for a wider range of opportunities for potential events for the Senior Center.

Mayor Zeigler noted that as this is a large sum of money and thus it is not good practice to build a new building around a stop gap setup or if the equipment cannot be moved to the new building. Borough Administrator Wardrop spoke of the possibility for some of the equipment to stay within the Senior Center but other pieces could be reappropriated for use in the new municipal building. The Borough Administrator invited Councilman Grandelis to speak more as to his vision for the Senior Center.

Councilman Grandelis explained that what the Senior Coordinator and Recreation Superintendent is trying to do is plan ahead for the upcoming generation of seniors. New age seniors have different wants and desires from the current generation, such as video games and other virtual media. By upgrading the current equipment in the Senior Center, it allows for an expanded program that can allow for events such as virtual health seminars from medical professionals.

Mayor Zeigler holds reservation as to the cost of the proposal as he wishes to make sure that whatever is brought into the Senior Center can be integrated into the new municipal building.

Borough Administrator Wardrop mentioned that she spoke with CTCI to ensure that the cost reflected is the best that can be provided.

On a question from Councilwoman Davis, Borough Administrator Wardrop explained that the Borough is in a cooperative purchasing agreement with CTCI.

Affirmation was provided by the Governing Body to proceed with acceptance of the proposal, with the Borough Administrator expected to ensure the best price is received from CTCI.

### **Capital Budget Planning Committee Discussion – Judah Zeigler**

Mayor Zeigler spoke as to how the Borough of Leonia has a Capital Budget Planning Committee that was created through ordinance and within recent years it has been a struggle to find individuals willing to serve on the committee. Mayor Zeigler wished to ask the Governing Body on their opinions as to whether the duties fulfilled by the Capital Budget Planning Committee and its ordinance be repealed and brought back to the Governing Body.

Council President Flaim expressed her interest in seeing these duties come back to the Finance and HR Committee.

Mayor Zeigler made note that Arthur Zayat, a member of the Capital Budget Planning Committee, concurred with the sentiment that the committee be abolished.

There were no disagreements with moving forward in introducing an ordinance to repeal the initial ordinance creating the committee.



**Work Session vs. Regular Meeting Discussion – Judah Zeigler**

Mayor Zeigler made note that the Mayor and Council is struggling with a breach of process, with committees making decisions that were not first discussed during a Mayor and Council meeting. This issue also removes the public's ability to view and voice their opinions in these discussions and thus Mayor Zeigler requests that the separation between Regular Meetings and Work Session be followed more closely. Formal action in Work Session should be avoided unless there is a dire need for it to occur.

Borough Clerk Trina Lindsey requested clarification as to whether resolutions are to be avoided for Work Sessions. Mayor Zeigler clarified that with the exception of Bills List and emergency authorizations that her understanding is correct.

**DPW – Promotion to Assistant Superintendent and 2022 Salary Recommendations for DPW Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent – Andrea Wardrop/Pasquale Fusco**

Borough Administrator Wardrop made mention that during the budget discussions reason was found to bring Mr. Kevin Malloy to the position of Assistant Superintendent from his current role of General Foreman, along with providing a salary increase for this increase in duties. These items were discussed prior by the Mayor and Council and due to the upcoming salary ordinance, the Borough Administrator felt it was pertinent to discuss it now.

Mayor Zeigler inquired as to the percentage increase in salary for this new role, to which the Borough Administrator confirmed it would be above 3%.

Councilman Fusco explained that as their salaries have been stagnant for a while it was felt that the DPW Superintendent and General Foreman were due an increase, with the Assistant Superintendent position being created to bring the General Foreman's salary up to a reasonable level.

Councilwoman Davis made mention that one of the most important things she has learned is the need for well thought out succession planning. With the number of certifications required for higher positions, it is sometimes difficult to motivate employees to pursue them. By adding this new role, it would lend better to the process of succession planning to give individuals more to strive for.

Mayor Zeigler made mention that raises in salaries are not made unless there is a salary inequity or if an individual takes on new roles and responsibilities. Mayor Zeigler wishes to know if there is an inequity in the Superintendents current salary that is not up to par with his contemporaries in surrounding municipalities. Borough Administrator Wardrop explained that there is a range problem where the Superintendents salary is currently bumping up against other roles within the Department of Public Works. Borough Administrator Wardrop also made mention that in regards to the General Foreman, his current salary in 2021/2022 is \$96,600 with

the new proposed salary that comes with the role being \$105,000 or an increase of 8.6%.

Mayor Zeigler wished to confirm that by adding this additional role that the department will not be too top heavy for its size. Councilman Fusco explained that due to the size of the department, many individuals perform and are cross trained in each other's duties. This resolution recognizes the extra duties being performed by the General Foreman, which is operating almost as an Assistant Superintendent in its current state.

No further discussion was found necessary and there was no issue with bringing these items both as resolutions in a subsequent Mayor and Council meeting.

### **2022 Salary Increase for Administrative Assistant conducting QPA related work – Andrea Wardrop/Trina Lindsey**

Borough Administrator Wardrop explained that her Administrative Assistant Cui Wang is currently undertaking QPA courses and is assisting current QPA Trina Lindsey with multiple duties for the role. It was discussed at budget the possibility of giving Administrative Assistant Wang an additional \$5,000 increase in salary to reflect the new duties and responsibilities undertaken.

QPA/Borough Clerk Trina Lindsey explained that the Administrative Assistant has been undertaking new roles and duties, such as providing massive assistance with RFPs in the previous year.

Mayor Zeigler confirmed with Council President Flaim that this increase was already brought to the attention of the Finance & HR Committee.

There were no disagreements with this increase being approved by resolution in a future meeting.

### **2022 Fire Stipends – Louis Grandelis/Bernadette Flaim**

Councilman Grandelis explained that efforts have been made to bring stipends within the Leonia Volunteer Fire Department up to par with the Boroughs fellow municipalities within Bergen County. This increase was first discussed back in December, 2021 as a budget item. The Finance & HR Committee was in agreement with this suggestion.

Council President Flaim wished to add that as part of the committee review in regards to this revised stipend program, they were in agreement with it as it fit within the budget.

Councilman Grandelis asked that Fire Chief Caruolo and Deputy Chief Dunn be invited up to speak as to their thought process for this increase, to which there was no objection.

Fire Chief Caruolo explained that the thought process behind these increases is to improve upon retention and recruitment efforts. For an example, the Borough of

Leonia's stipend per month in 2021 was \$166, some examples of comparison were given, such as Fairview's offered \$366 and Ridgefield's offer of \$500.

Mayor Zeigler asked to know if it was fair to make the assumption that part of why the Fire Department never received a stipend increase is that one was never asked for. Chief Caruolo mentioned that he cannot speak for the previous Fire Chiefs. Mayor Zeigler mentioned that this must be a collaborative effort between the Mayor and Council and Fire Department.

Fire Chief Caruolo explained that the payment given to each member is dependent on the number of calls that are responded to. Mayor Zeigler requested that more information be provided so a proper calculation can be made as to how much the increases shall cost the Borough.

Mayor Zeigler asked that more research be done into figuring out how much stipend increases will affect the retention rates and recruitment efforts of the department.

Mayor Zeigler raised concerns as to why the Fire Department members were paid under a W-2 when they should potentially be processed under a 10-99 form. More research shall be done into the topic as to why this distinction is made.

Motion by Councilwoman Davis, Second by Councilman Grandelis that a resolution be placed upon the June 13, 2022 Regular Meeting.

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:	absent

### ***Public Comment***

Allison Miller, 116 Palisade Avenue, made mention that on the website it stated that the May 16, 2022 Mayor and Council meeting would be held in the basement of the Leonia Library and that is why she arrived late. Ms. Miller held concern that as a member of the Players Guild that they have not changed rules regarding mask and vaccine mandates.

It was explained by Mayor Zeigler that the Borough of Leonia has no control over the rules enacted by those renting the property. The Borough Attorney confirmed that the Borough of Leonia leases the property but those leasing it from the Borough have the power to enact their own rules.

Ms. Heller explained that she wished to speak as to this to be recorded for the public records, as she feels it is discriminatory and that they should follow the guidelines set by the Borough's health policy.

***Closed Session***

Motion by Council President Flaim, Second by Councilwoman Terrell, and with all in favor the meeting entered Closed Session at 10:05 PM.

BE IT RESOLVED in compliance with N.J.S.A. 10:4-12, the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Leonia entered into Closed Executive Session to discuss the following matters:

A. Litigation

Minutes will be taken of the meeting and released to the public at the time that the matter is resolved. After Closed Executive Session, the Mayor and Council will reconvene to adjourn the meeting.

***Adjournment:***

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Councilman Ziegler, second by Councilman Fusco, and unanimously carried, to adjourn this meeting. The meeting adjourned at 10:21 PM.