



BOROUGH OF LEONIA

COUNCIL- Regular Meeting ~ Minutes ~

Trina Lindsey, Borough Clerk

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

March 6, 2023

7:30 pm

Leonia Senior Center

A Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Leonia was held in person at the Leonia Senior Center at 305 Beechwood Place, Leonia, NJ, and virtually via GoToMeeting on March 6, 2023. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 by Council President Grandelis.

Those present were led in the Flag Salute by Councilman Fusco.

Council President Grandelis read the following statement: "In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, the notice requirements have been satisfied. Notice of this meeting by the January 8, 2023 Sunshine Notice containing the time, date, and access information was published in the Record, Star Ledger and has been posted at Borough Hall and on the Borough website."

PRESENT: Council President Grandelis, Councilwoman Maureen Davis, Councilman Pasquale Fusco, Councilman Christoph Hesterbrink, Councilwoman Joanne Terrell, and Councilman William Ziegler

ABSENT: Mayor Zeigler

ALSO PRESENT: Borough Attorney Brian Chewcaskie
Borough Administrator Andrea Wardrop
Borough Engineer Drew Di Sessa
Borough Clerk Trina Lindsey
Deputy Borough Clerk Jonathan Mandel

Public Comment

Lubna Ismail, 156 Ames Avenue, wished to follow up on the Eid Committee of New Jersey's previous request to have a crescent lighting display placed in Leonia to commemorate Ramadan. Ms. Ismail mentioned she had discussed the display with Recreation Superintendent Sean Krakower and wished to ask for assistance from the DPW in the installation of the display. Police presence was also requested for the safety of the public. Mrs. Ismail further discussed the specifics of the event and invited the Mayor and Council to attend.

Lydia Maurice, 392 Grand Avenue, spoke of her admiration of the Leonia Police Department and applauded them for their hard work.

Council President Grandelis responded to Ms. Ismail, thanking her for bringing the Mayor and Council all the necessary information to approve the event. Council President Grandelis stated that the Governing Body and Borough Administrator will be in correspondence with the Police Chief and DPW for the event.

Council President Grandelis echoed Ms. Maurice's sentiments and stated that they will pass along her comments to the Police Chief.

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

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Councilman Fusco, second by Councilwoman Terrell, and all members present voting in favor, that the Minutes of January 4, 2023 Reorganization Meeting were approved.

Motion by Councilwoman Davis, second by Councilwoman Terrell, and all members present voting in favor, that the Minutes of January 18, 2023 Work Session Meeting were approved.

Reports

Council President Grandelis

Finance & Human Resources Committee

The Leonia Finance & HR Committee met on February 8, 2023. Their next meeting is scheduled for March 14, 2023.

Budget reduction strategies have been a major topic of discussion, with additional budget recommendations and considerations to be considered. The ultimate aim is to create a budget that is fiscally responsible and sustainable, whilst meeting the needs of the public.

The Annual Financial Statement (AFS) is Scheduled for completion early next week and will be further reviewed to determine the 2022 fund balance and revenues. This information is crucial for the 2023 budget.

During the review of the 2023 Budget, various systemic issues were found with the 2022 budget. To ensure that the Borough's financial status is accurately reflected these issues must be dealt with. An in-depth review of these issues is currently underway.

The Finance Committee will present the 2023 Budget at the Mayor and Council's March 20, 2023 Work Session Meeting before introduction at a special meeting of the Mayor and Council on March 27, 2023.

EMS

In February, 56 incidents in Leonia required a response from the Englewood Hospital Emergency Medical Services.

Fire Department

The Leonia Fire Department Committee met on February 28, 2023 with its next meeting scheduled for March 23, 2023.

In the month of February, the Leonia Fire Department responded to 28 alarms.

Items of discussion at the Fire Department Committee meeting included the 2023 Operating/Capital Budget, Joint Insurance Fund (JIF) Certification, the Fire Companies 125th-anniversary celebration, and recruitment enrollment.

The Fire Department is looking for volunteers, with those interested encouraged to reach out to Chief Dunn or Council President Grandelis.

Board of Health

The Board of Health met on February 15, 2023 with the next scheduled on March 15, 2023.

Maryellen Peters Neu was nominated and confirmed as President of the Board of Health for 2023.

Dr. David George was nominated and approved as the Vice-President of the Board of Health for 2023.

The Covid Activity level report published in Northern New Jersey is high. The Borough of Leonia has a bivalent Covid booster rate of 25%.

Dr. George would like to make a project with the Board of Health to educate High Schoolers and their families about Fentanyl. This would be a collaborative effort with the Leonia Police Department and various other individuals and groups.

It has been 25 years since an assessment has been performed of Hazmat Sites in and around the Borough of Leonia. The Board of Health team has been charged to work with Emergency Management to come up with a list of locations for a point of reference.

Councilman Ziegler inquired as to whether the Office of Emergency Management has not done any inventory in 25 years. Council President Grandelis replied that at this point he cannot give an indication on whether or not they have but will report back once he has learned more.

A Grant Opportunity is available through Mid-Bergen Regional that would provide funds for a Health Educator in the Borough of Leonia.

Councilwoman DavisPolice Department

Please see the attached February 2023 Police Committee Report

[February 2023 Police Committee Report](#)

Councilman FuscoDepartment of Public Works

Please see the attached Department of Public Works Monthly Report for February 2023

[February 2023 Department of Public Works Report](#)

Building Department

Please see attached the February 2023 Construction Permit Activity Report and the Cash Receipts Audit Report

[February 2023 Construction Permit Activity Report](#)

[February 2023 Cash Receipts Audit Report](#)

Planning Board

The Planning Board had a very light agenda, with the one item being the continuation of the application of 180 Fort Lee Road.

Councilman HesterbrinkLibrary

The Director of the Library had a baby.

The use of the library continues to increase.

The budget is on the minds of the Library Board.

Historical Preservation Commission

The Historical Preservation Commission was unable to meet due to technical issues.

Councilwoman TerrellBoard of Education

The Board of Education met on February 7, 2023.

Laws and Ordinances Committee

The major focus of the Law and Ordinances Committee has been on codification, or the updating of the online eCode360 with all the most recent ordinances. An update with be provided to the Mayor and Council in April.

Councilman ZieglerFacilities Committee

Due to favorable weather conditions, steady progress has been made on the new municipal building. Currently, the project is ahead of schedule, and providing the weather is cooperative there shall be the pouring of concrete slab on the first floor soon.

The Borough's environmental mitigation experts, GZA, have advised of the need for three more monitoring wells to be installed. Their purpose is to detect any additional oil contamination left over from the removed oil tank. The tank itself and any contamination has already been removed.

On tonight's agenda is a resolution for the purchase of audiovisual and security technology. It is of paramount importance that this be approved at this time so that the wiring and electrical work may be done whilst the walls are open. If it is done at a later date, it could bring on additional change orders for the project.

Clerk of the Works CBRE identified furniture, shelving, and other furniture that was being discarded by another client. All of this furniture was diverted to the Borough of Leonia at no additional cost, saving a total of \$40,000.

Shade Tree Commission

The Shade Tree Commission met on February 8, 2023.

A major focus of the Shade Tree Commission at their meeting was the enforcement of the Shade Tree Ordinance and the tree removal permitting process. It was the goal of the meeting to learn how to streamline the process, with a constructive discussion being held on it.

Other topics of discussion were the capital budget, spring planting goals, and the annual application filing for Tree City USA.

Environmental Commission

The Environmental Commission discussed Overpeck Park IV and waste and recycling updates. Currently, there is a lack of market for recyclables today with less credit being made by the Borough of Leonia. The paper recycling market is stronger than plastics.

Borough Administrator's Report

The Municipal Building Project is underway, with the project team meeting on February 14, 2023 for a digital sign presentation by KC Sign Company.

The project team met with CTICI for the Audiovisual and Security Technology requirements of the new Police Department. CTICI and CBRE put a lot of time into the development of the quote, going room by room. The Borough Administrator has confidence in the quote as it is presented.

The Federal TAP Grant held a public info center on February 9, 2023. McCormick Taylor Design gave a brief but pertinent presentation regarding the project. Another hearing shall be scheduled in August.

The Operating Budget preparation is underway, with the discussion being held by the Finance Committee on how to further decrease and bring the budget into a comfortable vicinity. The Finance Committee met with the CFO and Auditors, who are working on the AFS. The AFS must be completed before the introduction of the budget, which is projected to be introduced on March 22, 2023.

May is a very busy month for events, with those being held including Leonia Day, Fire Company Anniversary, and Memorial Day. The Borough of Leonia is also in communication with the Eid Committee of New Jersey for their request to host a crescent lighting ceremony in celebration of Ramadan.

The Capital Budget had its first review on February 16, with every project for every department being discussed in detail. The Finance Committee will review any updates made to the Police Department's capital budget based on the committee's comments.

The EV Station in Beechwood Lot is beginning to draw customers and see light usage. 23 charging sessions have been made by the public, with the average session length being around 1 hour and 45 minutes.

A grant opportunity has presented itself in the form of the FY24 Congressional Appropriations Grant. Discussion shall be held to determine a valid project.

Council President Grandelis asked if the grant itself is a matching grant, to which the Borough Administrator replied that it is a reimbursement grant.

Borough Attorney's Report

The State filed a motion to dismiss the complaint made by the Borough of Leonia to the Council on Local Mandates. The Borough of Leonia replied to this motion, with an argument to be scheduled on the motion.

An updated list of outstanding tax appeals was provided to the Mayor and Council.

On February 22, 2023 a bid was received for the borough-owned property by Palisades Park. Lease terms are expected to be on for approval at the next Mayor and Council meeting.

Councilman Ziegler inquired as to whether the cost associated with the Borough of Leonia's action on the Council of Local Mandates was part of the attorney's retainer or a separate charge. Borough Attorney Chewcaskie stated that it is a separate charge as it is litigation. Permission was received from the Borough of Fort Lee to consolidate the complaint, thus lowering the cost to both municipalities. The total cost of the service is expected to be less than \$10,000.

Borough Engineer's Report

Broad Avenue Section 10 and 11 were awarded and preconstruction meetings and walkthroughs are being scheduled for the end of March.

Broad Avenue Section 12, which is from Hillside Avenue to Lakeview Avenue, is currently under design and is projected to be introduced and bid out in Fall 2023.

The 2022 Capital Roadways project is under design, with the start of these projects expected to begin at the end of the year.

The roofing project for the Recreation Center is underway, with it expected to begin at the end of March to early April.

Councilman Fusco inquired as to how much of Broad Avenue is remaining to be fixed after the completion of the currently underway Broad Avenue Section 10, 11, and 12 projects. Borough Engineer Di Sessa stated that all of Broad Avenue is accounted for with the projects. The basic improvements to Broad Avenue are expected to be completed by the end of 2023, with further improvements to be completed by the end of 2024.

Adoption of Ordinances

Ordinance 2023-03

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

"AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 275 "TREES", SECTION 275-24 "ISSUANCE OF TREE REMOVAL PERMITS", SUBSECTION 275-24(C) "TREE REMOVAL CONTRACTOR" AND SECTION 275-26(D) "VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES" OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF LEONIA"

Borough Attorney Chewcaskie explained that the proposed ordinance is aligned with the current discussion regarding enforcement with two changes being proposed. The first change is that the tree removal contractor is to independently verify with the Building Department that the proper tree permit has been issued. The second change is that the Borough of Leonia has the discretion to publish the names of anyone found to violate any provisions of the Shade Tree Chapter.

Councilman Ziegler motioned that ordinance 2023-03 be adopted on second reading.
Seconded by Councilwoman Terrell.

Let the record show that no members of the public came forward either virtually or in person during the public hearing of Ordinance 2023-03.

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

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

Non-Consent Resolutions

RES. 2023-83 Authorization to Purchase Audiovisual, Security & Cabling Technology Services for the New Municipal Center

[2023-83 AV & Technology Purchase.pdf](#)

Motion by Councilman Ziegler, second by Councilman Fusco, that Resolution #2023-83 be approved.

Councilman Ziegler stated that if there was to be a point of self-criticism, the original cost estimate for av and security technology presented to the public at the Town Hall was substantially less than what the actual was. As the reality of the actual costs of this technology was revealed, it was a surprise and disappointment. There is around \$400,000 expected out of pocket. Councilman Ziegler broke down the costs of the technology in further detail.

Councilman Hesterbrink wished to make some points as to the project. Firstly, he wished to know if other vendors were considered for the project. Secondly, there is training to be provided for the technology but an average IT person may not be able to sustain it. Thirdly, Councilman Hesterbrink mentioned that he did not see any mention of any IT or security concerns. Finally, Councilman Hesterbrink wished to know who would be overseeing this complex and costly installation.

Borough Administrator Wardrop introduced the various individuals in charge of the project and stated that they would be able to answer any concerns and questions.

Borough Administrator Wardrop replied to Councilman Hesterbrink's first point by explaining that the Borough of Leonia did not need to go out to bid for the project as they collaborated with CBRE through the Clerk of the Works to utilize a vendor who could offer the best pricing and quality through a Purchasing Cooperative through the State of New Jersey.

Borough Administrator Wardrop also explained that the Tier III Security Plan already in place through the JIF and Municipal Liability Excess fund will continue for the new building.

Borough Administrator Wardrop stated that oversight of the project will be through Project Manager CBRE in collaboration with the Borough Administrator and Chief of Police.

Borough Administrator Wardrop asked that Rob Thatcher from the technology supplier CTCI provide information to address Councilman Hesterbrink's concerns relating to ongoing support.

Mr. Thatcher explained that any work completed by CTCI has a warranty for the first year and that the company prides itself on its commitment to a project. Over the course of the first year, CTCI will be available and if any issues arise with the technology, they will gladly replace it where it is apparent. It is not expected for CTCI's relationship with the Borough of Leonia to stop after the first year and once it has passed there can be discussion as to service and maintenance plans. Mr. Thatcher provided further detail about the services provided by CTCI.

Councilwoman Terrell inquired as to where in the quote is the one-year guarantee laid out in writing. Mr. Thatcher explained that it is part of CTCI's standard terms for every new installation and explained further the training and support offered during this period.

Councilman Hesterbrink inquired as to whether there were service levels that are based on the situation occurring. Mr. Thatcher replied that there are no service levels that CTCI have written explicitly but they can be prepared to respond within an hour and dispatch within four. Technicians are on hand to respond after hours, with a response time of around four hours.

Councilwoman Terrell commented that she appreciates the verbal assurances given by CTCI but would like for it to be all presented in writing as part of the formal quote.

Motion to approve the resolution, pending the changes to the quote proposed by Councilwoman Terrell. Motion by Councilman Ziegler, Second by Councilwoman Terrell.

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

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

RES. 2023-84 Authorization to Purchase Audiovisual Recording Equipment for Interview Rooms for New Police Headquarters

[2023-84 AXON Interview Room Resolution.pdf](#)

Motion by Councilman Ziegler, second by Councilman Fusco, that Resolution #2023-84 be approved.

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

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

Consent Resolutions

RES. 2023-85 Authorize Bill List

[2023-85 Authorize Bill List.pdf](#)
[Bill List Backup.pdf](#)

RES. 2023-86 Equal Opportunity Employment

[2023-86 EOE Cert Affidavit.pdf](#)

RES. 2023-87 Authorize Capital Purchase of Police Radio Communication Equipment – New Municipal Building

[2023-87 Authorize Capital Purchase of Police Radio Communication Equipment.pdf](#)
[Leonia PD Consolette & MCD.pdf](#)

RES. 2023-88 Authorize Capital Purchase of Police Radio Communication Equipment – Portable and Mobile Radios

[2023-88 Authorize Capital Purchase of Police Radio Communication Equipment – Portable and Mobile Radios.pdf](#)
[Leonia PD APX8000 & 8500.pdf](#)

Motion by Councilwoman Terrell, second by Councilwoman Davis, that the Consent Agenda be approved.

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

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

RES. 2023-85 Authorize Bill List

[2023-85 Authorize Bill List.pdf](#)
[Bill List Backup.pdf](#)

Resolution #2023-85 was pulled by Councilwoman Terrell for a separate vote.

Motion by Councilwoman Davis, second by Councilman Fusco, that Resolution #2023-85 be approved.

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

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

RES. 2023-86 Equal Opportunity Employment
[2023-86 EOE Cert Affidavit.pdf](#)

Resolution #2023-86 was pulled by Councilwoman Terrell for further discussion.

Councilwoman Terrell asked that Borough Attorney Chewcaskie explain as to the importance of the resolution before its signing.

Borough Attorney Chewcaskie explained that it is required by the Federal Government that the Mayor and Council be familiar with hiring practices. An amendment was made regarding the consideration of arrest and conviction records.

Borough Administrator Wardrop explained that the Borough of Leonia ensures it abides by the Equal Opportunity Employment laws and all advertisements of employment opportunities abide by them as well.

Councilwoman Davis inquired as to whether the amendments to the hiring practices are concerning recent changes to marijuana convictions. Borough Attorney Chewcaskie explained that it is about the consideration of prior convictions in the hiring practice. This is a required resolution before the municipality submits its budget to the Division of Local Government Services.

Councilwoman Terrell wished to confirm that arrest cannot be held against an applicant but a conviction can be considered, to which the Borough Attorney confirmed.

Councilman Hesterbrink stated that he would feel more comfortable signing after he has had the time to read the law.

Motion to Table Resolution #2023-86 by Councilman Fusco. Second by Councilman Ziegler.

On a roll call, the vote on tabling RES. 2023-86 was recorded as follows:

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

Resolution #2023-86 shall be reintroduced at the March 20, 2023 Work Session of the Mayor and Council.

Unfinished Business

Alternate Street Parking 194-3: Warwick Lane 194-30 – Joanne Terrell

Councilwoman Terrell explained that residents from Warwick Lane came to the Mayor and Council to discuss the alternate street parking ordinance and the no parking signs in the cul-de-sac.

Chief of Police Tamagny explained the history of the parking ordinance and further explained the decision-making process in deciding to remove the no parking signs. The cul-de-sac will follow alternate-side parking regulations.

An updated ordinance will be presented to the Mayor and Council at the March 20, 2023 Work Session.

Adjournment:

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, on a motion by Councilman Ziegler, second by Councilwoman Terrell, and unanimously carried, to adjourn this meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Mandel,
