

A REGULAR PUBLIC WORK SESSION OF THE VILLAGE COUCIL OF THE VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD HELD IN THE SYDNEY V. STOLDT JR. COURT ROOM OF THE RIDGEWOOD VILLAGE HALL, 131 NORTH MAPLE AVENUE, RIDGEWOOD, NEW JERSEY ON JANUARY 10, 2024 AT 7:30 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER-OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT-ROLL CALL-FLAG SALUTE

Mayor Vagianos called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m. and read the Statement of Compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act. At roll call, the following were present: Councilmembers Perron, Weitz, Winograd, and Mayor Vagianos. Also present were Keith Kazmark, Village Manager; Heather Mailander, Village Clerk; and Matthew Rogers, Village Attorney. Councilmember Reynolds was absent.

Mayor Vagianos led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

2. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Janet Daly, 386 Ponfield Place, spoke on the agenda item, parking amendment on Reynen Court. She stated she is a Past President of Connections, an organization for retired women. The organization meets at the First Presbyterian Church on 722 East Ridgewood Avenue, which is located across the street from Reynen Court. She indicated that the meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month from September through June for approximately two to two and a half hours with thirty to sixty members in attendance. At the present time, there is not enough parking in the First Presbyterian Church parking lot, so members park in and around the church on local streets. Some members utilize Reynen Court for parking and have used this particular street for the last five years. All members obey all posted parking signage. She stated she is not aware of any complaints relating to the members parking on Reynen Court. She added she is hopeful the parking will remain available for the members to utilize. She implored the Village Council to consider the needs of the Connections organization, when making a decision for a parking amendment on Reynen Court.

Jan Philips, 234 Union Street, expressed her appreciation for the new website design. Specifically, the ability to see the Police Department roster is an important element in a successful community-policing program. She acknowledged the upcoming weekend of activities to celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day. She noted this is the longest ongoing celebration in the State of New Jersey. There will be a kickoff on Friday and on Saturday, there will be the annual fashion show held at the Library. The “Day of Service” will collect toiletries and food for the Ridgecrest pantry. She added on Sunday, the Friends to Friends Community Church will once again be hosting an art and music festival. There will be a free concert highlighting Rev. Mack

Brandon and the Connections. Sunday will be the annual Interfaith Service, with guest preacher, Rev. Dr. Arturo Pierre Lewis, from Emmanuel Baptist Church.

Rurik Halaby, 1 Franklin Avenue, congratulated the Village Council on their one-year anniversary of serving together. He noted the governing body has accomplished a great deal in a short amount of time. He also stated that the positive shift in the tenor of the community under their leadership. He thanked Councilmember Winograd, Village Manager Keith Kazmark and Dylan Hansen, Network Administrator, for the new website design. He stated the re-design has raised the site to an elite level. He noted some of the areas that improved and that he was able to find the information faster than before. He encouraged all residents to use the new website and if there any suggestions to email Dylan. He acknowledged the success in the 2023 budget planning and stated this year's budget should be examined intently with all areas to be scrutinized. He suggested reconstituting the Financial Advisory Committee.

Denise Lima, 319 East Glen Avenue, expressed appreciation for the enhanced emergency communications relating to storms and road closures. She inquired for a status of the Town Garage project. She noted she did not see any updates on the website for this specific project. She suggested it be added so that residents can track the progress. She stated the section on the website for the Master Plan also did not have many updates on implementation of elements. She noted the frequency of the word historic in the Master Plan, and how it relates to the recommendations regarding: protecting the historic corridors, limiting billboards, utilities and zoning changes. She inquired if there was any movement on making the Route 17 corridor historic. She commented that she sent emails outlining areas of the website that need to be addressed. She stated that she did not see any tangible changes to the website that streamline the process. She stated there seem to be added steps to navigate the new website that were not necessary on the original website. She expressed concern that the cost to redesign the website does not reflect in the improvements made. Furthermore, she commented that the section of the website that houses the Village forms does not seem complete, and stated there are other areas of the website that need improvement.

Christine Fleischmann, 518 East Saddle River Road, provided comments relating to recent flooding that has affected her neighborhood. She stated that she is been a resident for twenty-seven years, and the frequency of the flooding events has increased. Specifically, there have been six events since September 2023. She requested that a meeting with various Village officials including the Village Council, the Village Manager and the residents along the Saddle River be scheduled, to examine and discuss flooding.

Suzanne Ruane, 705 Kingsbridge Lane, expressed her disappointment in that the focus of flooding damage appears to be Recreation facilities and not the Saddle River residents. She stated her neighbors lost two vehicles in the flood and the drone footage was solely of the

Ho-Ho-Kus Brook and football fields. She also inquired as to the Village Council's response to the recent real estate law providing for disclosure of flooding when selling property. She commented on the Kingsbridge Lane pedestrian footbridge, which is not only an eyesore, but also could be contributing to the problem.

Montserrat Limon, 494 East Saddle River Road, inquired as to the results from the Army Corp of Engineers examination of the Saddle River regarding flood remediation. She asked that the neighbors be informed of their findings and if there are any plans to mitigate flooding on East Saddle River Road. She also requested a meeting between the Village Council and the neighborhood to discuss the issue. She stated that when the river floods, her home gets encircled by water.

Olga Burton, 506 East Saddle River Road, stated she has been a resident for over twenty years and been through many flooding events. She echoed the concept of a separate meeting with the residents along the Saddle River. She is hopeful by working together residents of flood prone areas can see some relief. She stated the Kings Bridge Lane pedestrian footbridge mentioned earlier in the public comment, has been left unattended and needs to be addressed. She suggested the Village Engineer be included in this meeting, along with individuals that can provide detailed information.

Micheline Bailey, 512 East Saddle River Road, also provided comments concerning the recent flooding and the impact on the residents within the neighborhood. She expressed concern that the optics look as if the areas such as the high school football field seem to take priority during flooding events. She requested the Village Council address the residents along the Saddle River.

Stan Kukulka, 500 East Saddle River Road, stated he has been a resident for twenty-two years and been through many flooding events. He commented that the flooding seems to be getting worse. He inquired if there are any plans to dredge the river or clean it. He added that there would be many residents that can assist in that process. He stated there is a lot of debris that is causing blockages. He stated his home has been flooded many times, causing remediation, and asked that something be done to help.

Leo Ruane, 705 Kingsbridge Lane, reiterated comments relating to the dredging of the Saddle River. He stated that he spent most of the day cleaning up from the flooding event. He inquired if there were any solutions or discussion on an agenda to provide relief to the residents along the Saddle River.

Zhihao Deng, 10 Nauset Lane, inquired if the Village Council is working on any solutions for the Saddle River Road residents. He noted that many of the residents impacted by the flooding, were unable to join the meeting due to cleanup.

Qiaoli Gao, 690 Howard Road, stated that after moving into Ridgewood in 2017, the first flooding event was Hurricane Ida and they sustained devastating damage. This included the entire basement being flooded and about three feet into the first floor. Yesterday's event caused the same damage. As stated by other neighbors, it is just an untenable situation and the residents cannot go through this situation, every time there is a major rain event. She reiterated there should be a joint meeting with residents and the Village Council to come up with solutions.

Ed Fleischmann, 518 East Saddle River, has lived in Ridgewood for twenty-seven years. His home is a generational family residence, as he purchased it from his grandparents, providing a long working knowledge of flooding events over the decades. He stated the Kingsbridge Lane pedestrian footbridge acts as a choking point, which keeps the water back. He inquired if the bridge can be removed and if that part of the river can be widened. He asked if there were any areas of the Saddle River banks that could be used as overflow.

Aurora Flanigan, 512 East Saddle Road. She reiterated comments provided by her neighbors along the river. She is looking for support and relief from the Village Council regarding flooding in this area. The flooding events compound the anxiety each time it rains, not knowing if it will result in property loss. She stated all the neighbors help each other, which is the only reason many people stay. She implored the Village Council to focus on the homeowners as well as the recreation facilities, so that everyone can feel safe and secure.

Toshi Hokari, 524 East Saddle River Road, stated he has been a resident for the last eight years. However, the flooding events are numerous, and he hopes that something can be done to assist the residents.

Megan Kukulka, 500 East Saddle River Road, provided perspective as someone growing up in Ridgewood, having been carried out of her home during floods in her childhood. As a young adult, she is concerned with her older parents in the home and how they will cope in a situation if she is not able to get to them in an emergency.

Luis Lopez, 494 East Saddle River Road, reiterated all comments regarding the flooding and the need for assistance from the Village Council. He stated that he and his neighbors are a wealth of historical data regarding the river, and that collectively, something must be done.

Narges Mazandarani, 700 Howard Road, indicated that as an eight-year resident, she is experiencing the same issues raised by her neighbors. She indicated that it seems like every week, there is a possibility that the river will flood. She stated that a meeting with the residents should be held, to allow for suggestions and helpful input from the residents.

Andrew Pisano, 687 Howard Road, stated along with his neighbors, they are deeply concerned with the increased flooding activity. He stated that even during normal rainy days, everyone must

monitor the river to assess whether their homes will be impacted. He is looking for answers as to why this is happening so frequently, if anything is being done to provide relief to the residents, and what can be done proactively to avoid devastating damage. This also impacts property values dramatically.

There were no additional public comments, and Mayor Vagianos closed public comment.

3. VILLAGE MANAGER'S REPORT

Keith Kazmark, Village Manager, stated that he would address the flooding first in his report. He expressed his sincere empathy for all those affected by the flooding. He stated he comes from a municipality that also floods; however, he has never seen the recent frequency of flooding, in such a short span of time, with the devastating impact on homeowners. He stated he spoke with many residents along the Saddle River and the Ho-Ho-Kus Brook and it became apparent to engage the services of the United States Army Corps of Engineers. He stated this is not something for which a local solution can be implemented. The NJ Department of Environmental Protection will only allow minimal permitted activity in the waterway, such as de-snagging and de-silting. This is quite limiting in producing long lasting results. This required the attention of Federal and State intervention, to provide substantial and permanent change. Mr. Kazmark stated that after the September flooding events, he, and Superintendent of Schools, Mark Schwarz were able to open a dialogue with the Army Corps of Engineers, along with the support of Congressman Josh Gottheimer. Last week, a meeting was held with Village and school officials, along with seven or eight representatives from the Army Corps of Engineers to discuss the Ho-Ho-Kus Brook and the Saddle River. A letter to request the engagement of the Army Corps of Engineers is drafted, and will be sent shortly. The Village will be sharing all documents and photos to assist the Army Corps of Engineers to collect data and review repetitive loss data, which reflects insurance loss claims.

The Village Engineer has been tasked to open a dialogue with the NJDEP to discuss the allowance of de-snagging and de-silting the waterways. The Village Council will review the proposal and budgetary approvals will have to be set aside for this program if permitted by the NJDEP. He explained that while de-snagging is often more beneficial, since it removes branches and debris, de-silting is often less beneficial, since it moves the problem downstream, which will impact other residents. He stated that NJDEP will not permit dredging of either waterway. He stated that he is committed as Village Manager to ensure the residents' safety and security of their homes. He noted that the commentary that only the football fields are priority of administration are not warranted or factual.

The Village must also balance the protection of the assets of the Board of Education and the taxpayers of the community, including Village Hall. It is sometimes difficult to convey this commitment when the media is highlighting the visual of the football field, which is seen by the

residents on television and social media. He reiterated that he and the Village Council hold the residents and their need to be safe and secure in their homes, as a top priority. Mr. Kazmark stated he is aware that the Kingsbridge footbridge was slated for a repair and that the funding will be incorporated into the 2024 Capital Budget. However, with recent commentary from the residents that the bridge might be contributing to the flooding, he stated the bridge repair should be revisited and examined.

He stated he offered to schedule a meeting with the residents on site, so that he can report back to the NJDEP and the Army Corps of Engineers. He suggested that a formal meeting with the residents would be more beneficial, after all of the data has been reviewed by the Army Corps of Engineers. He cautioned that the Army Corps of Engineers will have to take into consideration the impact upstream and downstream with any solution they offer, so not to cause a negative impact in any other municipality. He provided the recent example of the East Ridgewood Avenue Bridge whereby the NJDEP was concerned with a local expansion of the culvert and how it would impact downstream. He extended the offer to meet with residents along both waterways, to gain insight to the issues and be able to pass through the valuable information to the Army Corps of Engineers and the NJDEP.

He thanked Dylan Hansen and the IT department for the successful launch of the new Village website. He asked for residents to send in suggestions for improvements, as the site is used more. He noted that a redesign and launch is usually a nine-month undertaking and it was able to be consolidated it into three months. He stated that while much of the feedback has been positive, there are always areas that can be improved.

He stated that he was recently elected Chair of the Northwest Bergen Central Dispatch Management Committee. It is made up of representatives of both Ridgewood and Glen Rock that manage Central Dispatch operations. He announced that a letter has been sent to the Department of Transportation requesting \$100,000 in funding to rehabilitate the bus station in the Central Business District. He thanked Councilmember Winograd for facilitating a meeting with Assemblyman DePhillips to secure the funding for this project. He reported there is a pre-construction meeting scheduled tomorrow, on location at the Habernickel barn, for its demolition. The project is slated to be underway and completed this winter.

He reported the Village is in the process of on-boarding three new police officers and thanked Chief Lyons and the Detective Bureau for working to find three exceptionally qualified candidates. It is anticipated that they will begin the police academy in the spring. Discussions are in process regarding the intersection of Oak Street and Glen Avenue. A preliminary meeting was held with the Police Department, Engineering and Councilmember Reynolds to find tangible changes to the intersection. He thanked the Police Department for sharing their data. Modifications to some of the traffic lights in and around the intersection are being examined will be implemented.

A kickoff meeting was held with Connelly and Hickey, Historical Architects, last week regarding the pedestrian tunnel design project, which is located under the train station. It is anticipated that conceptual plans will be available late summer to share with the Village Council and the public, for feedback. Construction on the project will most likely be in 2025.

Mr. Kazmark announced that the Recycling Department has issued the “Green Guide 2024” that will be mailed to all Village residences. He encouraged everyone to read the guide to familiarize themselves with what materials can be recycled, as well as the schedule. The 2024 Village Calendar has been delivered to the printer and should be mailed out to homes shortly. He reminded everyone that the last page in the 2023 calendar is January 2024.

Mr. Kazmark congratulated Ridgewood High School basketball player Johnny Jackson on scoring over 1,000 points during his high school career. The Village is currently selling parking permits for 2024 in the lobby of Village Hall. A copy of your driver’s license and registration is needed at the time of purchasing the permit. He announced that Christmas tree pick up is Tuesdays on the east side and Thursdays on the west side from January 2nd through the 25th. Wreaths and garland will be collected as part of regular garbage. He reminded no plastic bags around the tree and residents can always drop off their trees at the Graydon Pool parking lot area, designated for Christmas Trees. He announced that the Chamber of Commerce will kick off Restaurant Week January 14th through January 18th and January 21st through January 25th. Restaurant Week provides an opportunity to enjoy the many dining establishments in Ridgewood, at reduced pricing, as well as showing support to local businesses. All Village offices and the Recycling Center will be closed on Monday, January 15th, in observance of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. In addition, there will be no curbside bulk pick up during the week. He reminded residents the requirement to remove snow from sidewalks within 24 hours of the snow, to provide pedestrian safety. He encouraged residents not to shovel the snow back into the roadways. He thanked Mike Junta, Streets Supervisor, for the outstanding job last week in clearing the Village roadways of snow. On behalf of the Ridgewood Police Department, he reminded residents there is no overnight parking on any Village roadway during a snow event and garbage and recycling containers should be curbside during and after a snow event.

Mr. Kazmark announced the upcoming Village Council meeting schedule included January 17th as a Public Meeting and January 31st as a Work Session. He announced February 7th and 28th will be Work Sessions, with a Public Meeting on February 14th. Budget meetings are currently being scheduled, and will be announced when confirmed.

Mayor Vagianos expressed his deepest concern for all those residents who sustained flooding damage in the recent flooding events, as well as having to endure the repeated occurrences. He stated that he and Deputy Perron toured flood prone neighborhoods and spoke with many residents. He acknowledged the prior comments about the frequency of the “100-year flood” and that the Village is facing these events more frequently than ever. The Village is restricted in what

is permitted in the waterways as governed by the NJDEP, and how it affects other municipalities upstream and downstream. He thanked Councilmember Winograd for the foresight of having multi-leveled agencies and government representatives meeting to discuss flooding in April of 2023 and most recently, the Village Manager outreach to the Army Corps of Engineers for their assistance. He acknowledged the commentary about the Village Council concern for the sports fields. He stated while the fields are considered in the totality of the damage, they do not take precedence over the residents and their homes. He thanked the Village Manager and Village staff who worked throughout the night to protect Village Hall from damage. He reiterated the Village will work thorough all viable avenues to seek out solutions, that will be permitted by higher government agencies, in order to provide the relief so needed by the residents.

Deputy Mayor Perron commented that Green Ridgewood has been studying flooding for many years. She stated the ironic part in the examination is that Green Ridgewood was slated to present their report on flooding to Village Engineering, and the Village Manager but could not enter the building because of flooding. Within Green Ridgewood there is a sub-committee called the resiliency committee. They have produced several suggestions that will be presented to Village administration when a meeting can be set. She announced that Green Ridgewood will be meeting tomorrow evening and invited all to join. She reported that the Village has de-snagged and de-silted much of various waterways and unfortunately, it was not a permanent solution. She reminded residents to call the Fire Department for pumping out water from their homes. She also announced the Blue Acres Program to provide relief. Residents who have been flooded and made repeated insurance claims, they may want to research the Blue Acres acquisition programs. The Village Council approved a flood mitigation plan in 2021, whereby the Village can purchase a home at fair market value. The home would be removed, allowing floodwaters to drain into soil, in order to avoid some of the potential property damage, and mitigate flooding downstream. She stated any residents interested in this program should contact her.

Deputy Mayor Perron stated in regards to the comments made by Denise Lima on the Master Plan updates and historic corridors, she forwarded Ms. Lima's emails to the Village Planner. There is a sub-committee that tracks the recommendation implementation for the elements in the Master Plan.

Councilmember Weitz also expressed deep concern for the residents who sustained damage in the flooding. He noted that the Village must adhere to all restrictions and provisions as outlined by the NJDEP concerning flooding remediation. He thanked the Village Manager for engaging the services of the Army Corps of Engineers and gaining the support of Congressman Gottheimer, so that issues and concerns of the residents can be heard, at the appropriate level.

He stated that although a permanent solution has not been reached by the Village or any other municipality, relating to climate change, we are all going through this together. He assured the residents that the Village Councilmembers are doing everything in their power to help people affected by the flooding. He acknowledged the transparency of the information being communicated to the residents. He also thanked all staff members that worked late into the evening to ensure containment of possible flood damage.

Deputy Mayor Perron thanked the Village Manager for his hard work, as well as the Special Operations volunteers who work through the night to close streets, and then left this morning to go to their day jobs.

Mr. Kazmark thanked the Police Department, Fire Department, Jeremy Kleiman (OEM Coordinator), Department Directors, the Streets Division and the Signal Division. He remarked that everyone handled a significant snow event and then worked together for flood preparation. This included preparing Village Hall and cleaning out catch basins. He stated that he was with the Police Department last night on East Saddle River Road after midnight and the calls for service were coming in non-stop. He thanked Fire Chief Judge and the department for their assistance in pumping out residences. He announced the Recycling Center will reopen tomorrow at normal time and thanked the staff of the center. He stated there will be emergency flood trash collection both tomorrow morning and Friday morning for those residents affected by the flood.

Councilmember Winograd stated that while there is an appreciation there were no human injuries during this event, it is very distressing to hear from homeowners about the damage to their homes. She acknowledged the impact on the mental health of residents that experience the repeated flood events. She expressed sincere empathy for those who have been affected. She commented that the full Village Council is not permitted to assemble as a group, as it would constitute a quorum; however, the Village Council Members can meet in groups of two to tour properties and speak to residents.

The Village Council is tightening zoning laws to control less impervious land and has a commitment to planting more trees, which would assist in drainage. She reiterated the constraints the municipality faces, as permitted remediation allowable by the NJDEP does not provide for many solutions. She encouraged residents to plant more trees on their properties to assist in flood drainage. The Village has partnered with Glen Rock regarding flood mitigation, and if there is another municipality that wants to join in the conversation, to please reach out. She reiterated her concern for all those affected with damage to their property.

She stated the Town Garage project has not been listed for public discussion because the Village does not own the property and it is still privately held. She stated the website redesign is a fluid project and therefore, if anyone has suggestions or notices something to be improved, to please reach out. She reiterated that one of the campaign issues she and Councilmember Weitz focused

on, was the availability of information. The website and social media helped the Village prepare for these storm events.

4. VILLAGE COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilmember Weitz stated the majority of his report was presented in his responses to public comment. He added a Happy New Year to all, and congratulated his fellow Councilmembers on their first year of service.

Councilmember Winograd thanked the Communications Committee for making the redesign of the website project come to fruition. As stated before, please reach out with feedback or improvements. She thanked Assemblyman DePhillips for his assistance in the request for funding of the bus station rehabilitation. She thanked the Village Manager for his assistance in the bus station project as well. She thanked a student intern, Cole, for his hard work on the Master Library Scheduling Software. She acknowledged his hard work and his efforts will benefit the sports community to balance the efficiencies of scheduling fields in the Village. She announced that if anyone is interested in serving as an intern, to contact the Village.

She thanked all of the volunteers that helped plant the 500 daffodil bulbs between the taxi station and the stairway on the train station. The Shade Tree meeting was held last night. Changes to the private tree removal ordinance will be submitted to the Village Attorney for drafting and then reviewed by the Village Council in February. She announced Shade Tree selected the second area of Adopt a Sapling to be in the Somerville area. She is looking for participation from the full Village Council to help plant 50 saplings sometime around October 19th. She announced the Ridgewood SEPAG is hosting the third sensory-friendly dinner on January 23, 2024 at the Pancake Brasserie on East Ridgewood Avenue. She encouraged everyone to participate in the Martin Luther King Jr. Day events.

Deputy Mayor Perron reported the Central Business District Advisory Committee (CBDAC) met in December and discussed recommendations for outdoor entertainment during the summer, moving forward, as well as lighting in the downtown. Blade signs, which run perpendicular to the building, were also discussed. A review of departed businesses and newly opened businesses was conducted and CBDAC will be meeting tomorrow morning via Zoom. For Zoom information, please reach out to Deputy Mayor Perron for the link. A reminder that Green Ridgewood will be meeting tomorrow in the Senior Lounge at 7:30 PM and the Open Space committee will be meeting next Thursday at the Stable at 7:00 PM. She stated the purpose of the Open Space Committee is to acquire more property for open space, parks, and fields.

Mayor Vagianos announced the Upper Ridgewood Community Church held their last service this past Sunday. He stated he was honored to attend, and remarked that the church has been a cornerstone of the Westside Community for over 100 years. He shared some positive news,

reporting on a former resident of Ridgewood and active member of Mt. Carmel Church, Jim Roth. He was diagnosed with Mantle Cell Lymphoma seventeen years ago. It is known as an indolent form of cancer that grows slowly, but it is persistent. The average life expectancy is three years. He has been through seven remissions, most recently yesterday. The scans came back after a difficult stem cell transplant and he is in complete remission. As this is such positive news, which is desperately needed in these trying times, and he is still a dedicated member of our community, Mayor Vagianos felt it necessary to report on this wonderful development.

5. DISCUSSION

a. RIDGEWOOD WATER

Director of Ridgewood Water Richard Calbi joined the meeting. Mr. Calbi wished everyone a Happy New Year and announced Ridgewood Water is another year closer completing the PFAS Master Plan.

Mayor Vagianos indicated he had one more item before Mr. Calbi begins. Mayor Vagianos commented the Ridgewood American Legion post began a project to put a Gold Star monument in Memorial Park at Van Neste Square. He stated that after a long process, the Village Council approved the project. Last week, the contract was signed for the monument to be constructed, as all the funding is now in place. They expect completion to be prior to Gold Star Family Day, which is the last Sunday in September. The Village Council is proud of their efforts, and looking forward to the dedication.

Deputy Mayor Perron added this monument is being dedicated 100 years after the installation of the World War I monument in Memorial Park at Van Neste Square.

Mr. Calbi stated Ridgewood Water tracks precipitation in conjunction with the daily operation of the Ridgewood Water Utility. New Jersey climatology records have been kept since 1895. He noted that while 2023 was not the highest year for precipitation on record, the month of December had the greatest amount of precipitation for one month, since records have been kept. There was a total 8.2 inches of rainfall in December 2023, which is unprecedented in this region.

Mr. Calbi requested that agenda items be taken out of order and start with 8-C-6 to allow for Sean Hamlin to address the Village Council.

c. BUDGET

6. AWARD CONTRACT UNDER STATE CONTRACT -RENTAL OF SANITATION TRUCKS

Mr. Calbi and Sean Hamlin, Supervisor of Recycling and Sanitation, spoke about the dire situation of the status of the Solid Waste and Recycling Fleet. Mr. Calbi reported that a handful trucks went permanently out of service mid-year of 2023. More recently four to five trucks are in a state of disrepair and are not road worthy. Mr. Hamlin provided a summary on the Packer Trucks. He noted in the right column of the report, there are five trucks that will be sold on Gov Deals and another five trucks are disabled. He stated for the past four weeks, operations have been running with fewer trucks than normal. The current routes are being handled by four sanitation trucks and three recycling trucks, while normal operations are run with six sanitation trucks and four recycling trucks. This has caused a multitude of problems, necessitating the usage of pick-up trucks to finish sanitation routes. The employees are being affected as it makes the work twice as physically demanding, and overtime is increasing. The overtime costs were caused by having to bring employees in on Saturdays to pick up from the apartments that were not able to be picked up, because of the loss of trucks.

Mr. Hamlin stated he performed research on truck rental companies. There is a company that has two trucks that can be rented immediately. The proposal is to rent two trucks for at least three months. He expects that in the first quarter, the delivery of the truck purchased in 2023 will occur. He informed the Village Council that the company the Village purchases trucks through, received their annual allotment in January and it was only twenty vehicles. He immediately inquired and twelve were already sold. Mr. Hamlin stated that if the Village does not put in an order quickly new trucks will not be able to be purchased until 2025. He outlined there is a truck coming up for sale shortly and is looking for authorize to purchase the Dennis Truck under option 1 in the handout. He stated that another issue facing the Village is yard waste starts in April, and currently there are no trucks to collect the yard waste.

Councilmember Winograd provided comments regarding capital budget allotment for the department. She asked if there was anything that can be purchased, to obtain EV credit. Mr. Hamlin commented that if the Village rents the two trucks for the year and decides to keep them, 25% of the rental cost can go to the purchase of the truck for next year. Mr. Calbi stated the recommendation is for the short-term rental so that the recycling crews can start to use them immediately and gauge whether they are worth purchasing. The rental trucks are 2022/2023 models. Mayor Vagianos asked how quickly the rental trucks can be on site. Mr. Hamlin indicated once a Purchase Order is forwarded to the company, the trucks are shipped the next day. Mr. Kazmark stated that Mr. Rooney, Chief Financial Officer, has been advised if the Village Council approved this item at next week's Public Meeting, an offline check would be requested to expedite the transaction. Mr. Hamlin is hopeful some of the disabled trucks will be

back in service soon. Mr. Hamlin said they are still identifying some of the repairs, some of the trucks are waiting for parts and it will take some time. He stated there is a good chance one truck will come back online within the week. Since current trucks are being used at maximum capacity, they cannot be taken out of usage for maintenance service.

Mr. Hamlin stated that there is a necessity to order Kenworth trucks that say dual steer, as they are used as backups for the Mack trucks. Those trucks are needed for the pickup of fiber. They are single manned trucks and if they are out of service and a different truck is used, then four employees must be sent out, instead of two. Mr. Hamlin stated those are the two trucks that should be purchased as soon as possible, since the dealer is down to eight available trucks. He indicated that if a verbal agreement is sent to the dealer, two trucks would be held for the Village. Mr. Kazmark indicated that this is a two-part discussion. The handout illustrates the challenges in the fleet, but the immediate request would be to approve the rental agreement for two trucks. The purchasing of two new trucks will be presented in the upcoming departmental budget meetings that will begin shortly. Mr. Kazmark indicated that an overall fleet replacement Master Plan for all departments, must be put into place for long term budget planning and operations. Mr. Kazmark emphasized the need to approve the rental trucks to provide continuity of service for Ridgewood residents. Mayor Vagianos asked the Village Council if they agree to move forward with the two rentals. There were no objections, and Mr. Hamlin was provided approval to proceed with renting two trucks.

a. RIDGEWOOD WATER

1. AWARD OF CONTRACT UNDER NORTH JERSEY COOPERATIVE PRICING SYSTEM CONTRACT PASSAIC VALLEY SEWAGE COMMISSION- INSTALLATION AND PROGRAMMING RIDGEWOOD WATER SCADA SYSTEMS

Mr. Calbi stated Ridgewood is a member of the North Jersey Cooperative Pricing System Contract-Passaic Valley Sewage Commission. The contract is Not to Exceed \$82,500. The Carr/Linwood PFAS treatment facility upgrades are \$52,500. The SCADA program is required to complete the project, and the additional \$30,000 is for miscellaneous SCADA work throughout the system. The need for this service became a priority due to the key SCADA employee's resignation in 2023 and the position remains open. The funding for this project is appropriated in the Ridgewood Water Capital Budget.

2. AWARD CONTRACT-RAW WATER MAINS-PHASE 1-CONTRACT 1- CONNECTION TO PROSPECT TREATMENT FACILITY

Mr. Calbi stated this is to award a contract to construct raw water mains as part of the PFAS Master Plan buildout. These raw water mains are part of the Prospect Treatment Facility in Glen

Rock. It will connect two satellite wells to that facility so the capacity of the facility can handle all the wells that have been designed for the Prospect Treatment Plant. Seventeen Bids were received and opened on December 17, 2023. Mott MacDonald, Engineer of Record, reviewed all bids and recommends the lowest responsible bidder, Underground Utilities Corp., in the amount of \$2,603,250.00 . There was another apparent low bidder that withdrew their bid due to fatal flaws in their bid, which is permitted under NJ purchasing laws. Funding for this project has been accounted for in the Ridgewood Water Capital Budget and is being funded through the NJ I-Bank, subject to authorization of award from the NJDEP I-Bank funding division.

3. AWARD CONTRACT-MASS NOTIFICATION SYSTEM-RIDGEWOOD WATER AND VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD

Mr. Calbi stated this is to award of a second year of a multiyear contract, originally awarded last year to SHI International for a mass notification system in an amount not to exceed \$35,772.30. This system is the “Everbridge” system used by Ridgewood Water and the Village for the reverse 9-1-1 notification system. Costs for the contract are split between the Village and Ridgewood Water Operating Budgets. There are plans to utilize this system this year to build an employee database for emergency notifications.

4. REJECT BID-LINE STOP AND VALVE INSERTION SERVICES

Mr. Calbi is recommending the rejection this recent bid. He stated although he previously recommended the award of contract for this bid, subsequent to that recommendation, a review of the bid document with the Village Attorney revealed the bid specifications were not proper and did not include the wording” or equivalent”. Therefore, he is recommending the rejection of the bid and authorization to rebid the project.

b. PARKING

1. AMEND CHAPTER 265- VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC-AMEND LANGUAGE FOR 15-MINUTES PARKING SPACES

Mr. Kazmark announced there are two ordinance revisions recommended by the Village Engineering Department.

The first is to clarify language to Chapter 265-47 with regard to 15-minute spaces. There exists some confusion between Municipal Court Staff and violators with the interpretation of the present language. This ordinance will specifically address the 15-minute parking space use. He noted there is a memo attached in the packet from Ptl. Tarino to the Village Engineer, along with the sample ordinance revision. Mayor Vagianos asked for clarification on potential language changes. Mr. Kazmark stated he will provide the Mayor with a copy of the current ordinance

tomorrow for review. Village Clerk Heather Mailander stated the addition to the ordinance states the patron must pay the meter for a 15 minutes space directly, and there are no other means of payment at a 15-minute meter. The original ordinance was not clear that alternative payment i.e. Park Mobile was prohibited. Councilmember Winograd inquired if clarifying signage would be added at the 15-minute spots to include this provision.

2. AMEND CHAPTER 265- VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC- REYNEN COURT AND COTTAGE PLACE

Mr. Kazmark stated residents of Reynen Court requested “No Parking” signs for the west and south side of the street, to prohibit High School students from parking there during school hours. The Village Engineer conducted a survey of Reynen Court and nearby streets. Four responses were submitted, three responses were supportive of the ordinance, and the fourth response was a resident of North Van Dien and indicated they felt it was unnecessary.

It was recently brought to the Village Engineer’s attention that the existing parking restrictions for the section of Cottage Place, north of Franklin Avenue, are unworkable. The current ordinance has a three-hour time limit parking from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The time period between 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. is unregulated. Observations confirm that Central Business District employees are parking all day in that area. The proposed ordinance would permit 3-hour time limit parking from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. thus eliminating the all-day parking allowance.

Councilmember Weitz asked how many surveys were sent out for the Reynen Court parking change. Mr. Kazmark stated due to the weather emergencies the regularly scheduled meeting with the Village Engineer was postponed. He indicated that he will speak to the Village Engineer and follow up tomorrow. Councilmember Weitz stated that if there was not strong support for the restriction, then the ordinance should remain unchanged. Councilmember Winograd agreed with Councilmember Weitz’s interpretation of the responses.

Deputy Mayor Perron highlighted that motorists use Reynen Court as a cut through to avoid the traffic light, and usually speed. The curvature of the roadway, and allowing parking on both sides of the street, makes for a dangerous situation. She noted that the potential restrictions would provide the relief to the residents from school parking and provide for the parking needed by the Connections group, meeting at the church. The only exception would be when they host a movie day, and perhaps they could change the time of their meeting on movie day, so it does not conflict with the times parking is prohibited. Mayor Vagianos stated the ordinance covers both issues. Councilmember Weitz stated he would prefer to have the survey data before committing to a position. Mr. Kazmark stated according to the map submitted, it appears that twenty-seven homes received surveys. Mayor Vagianos stated the objective of the ordinance is to prevent high school student parking. Mr. Kazmark suggested the item be tabled until more information can be

gathered from residents of Reynen Court. Councilmember Winograd stated that more information is needed. She stated she agreed with Councilmember Weitz that the sentiment of the entire street should be determined before enacting the ordinance. Councilmember Weitz stated that in the absence of an issue felt by all, he preferred not to legislate. Mayor Vagianos reiterated that he supports the ordinances as an issue was brought to the Village and examined by both the Police and Engineering departments, with recommendations to implement the restrictions.

Councilmember Weitz remains open to changing his position, but he would like to hear from affected residents on this issue before doing so. Councilmember Winograd stated she supports the change to the Cottage Place parking. Mayor Vagianos recommended that the Reynen Court parking restrictions be listed at the next Work Session, when the full Village Council is present for the discussion.

c. BUDGET

1. ESTABLISH THE 2024 TEMPORARY BUDGET

Mr. Kazmark stated the Village must establish the 2024 Temporary Budget appropriation to allow the Village to operate during the first quarter. The temporary budget amount is statutorily prescribed at 26.25% of prior year's budget, exclusive of debt service and capital projects. The Village Council is supportive of this resolution.

Councilmember Winograd circled back to the parking restriction ordinance for Cottage Place. She stated that it appears there is support by the Village Council, to move forward and introduce this ordinance next week. The entire Village Council was supportive of listing this ordinance for parking restrictions on Cottage Place on next week's Public Meeting agenda. She asked if the nearby churches could be made aware of the change.

2. 2024 CAPITAL ORDINANCE - PAVING

Mr. Kazmark stated the paving portion of the Capital Budget is historically carved out and executed as a priority to accommodate bidding and construction schedules. He stated that the final list of streets to be paved with this bond ordinance will be on file in the Village Clerk's Office, prior to the introduction.

Councilmember Winograd inquired when the County will be approached for paving Ackerman Avenue. Mr. Kazmark stated it is his list to check into, and the Village's local paving list will be on file at introduction in the Village Clerk's Office.

3. AMEND VARIOUS SALARY ORDINANCES

Mr. Kazmark reported there is a need to amend salaries for various positions, in various ordinances. Mayor Vagianos asked for background on the need for the amendment. Mr. Kazmark indicated that the ranges need to be expanded, to accommodate the annual increases under the Collective Bargaining Agreements. In addition, there were a couple of changes of title positions and some new titles.

4. AWARD CONTRACT-PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYORS SERVICES ON RETAINER

Mr. Kazmark stated this annual award is to provide for a retainer contract with the professional Land Surveyor for surveying and mapping. This provides for land surveying services in preparation for the Village tax assessment map in the amount of \$1,900.00.

5. AWARD CONTRACT UNDER COUNTY CONTRACT-JANITORIAL SERVICES ON RETAINER

Mr. Kazmark explained this item is to award a contract under the County Cooperative Purchasing for janitorial services for Village Hall and the Stable. He stated the result of thorough discussion with various Village officials, is to outsource the janitorial services. The employee that has been assigned to Village Hall in the evenings will be reassigned to Clean Communities work, under Sean Hamlin. Mayor Vagianos asked for background on the recommendation to outsource. Mr. Kazmark responded that Village Hall is a large facility and requires a lot of maintenance and management, due to the hours of operation of the building. The collective decision is that a larger staff is needed to address the needs of the building and the most economical way to do that is to contract with a third party. The employee to be transferred will be able to tend to facilities in the CBD that need attention. Mr. Kazmark confirmed funds are available for this contract. He added that there could be cost savings in this measure, as some of the employee's salary could be covered with Clean Communities grant funding. There was an inquiry as to who provides the cleaning supplies. Mr. Kazmark stated in this contract, the Village would provide the cleaning supplies.

6. PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED

7. AUTHORIZE SHARED SERVICE AGREEMENT -TREE REMOVAL ON COUNTY ROADS (BERGEN COUNTY)

Mr. Kazmark summarized the policy issued by Bergen County last year, that provided for tree removal on County roads, has been revoked. Bergen County issued a revised Shared Service Agreement that will allow the Village to pass a resolution and sign the Shared Service

Agreement that will remain in effect for the next five years. It will not be necessary to do this on a per tree basis. This will be a blanket agreement and blanket insurance will cover the entire five-year period.

8. AUTHORIZE SHARED SERVICE AGREEMENT – SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICE (BOARD OF EDUCATION)

Mr. Kazmark stated this is the Shared Service Agreement for the cost of the School Resource Officer (SRO) between the Village and the Board of Education. This is a continuation of the SRO program. Mayor Vagianos asked why the Village isn't using a SLEO (Special Law Enforcement Officer) for this role. Mr. Kazmark explained that the Police Chief and the Superintendent of Schools are currently in discussion on how to restructure the program; however, at the present time the SRO is needed. If in the future, there is a decision to deploy a SLEO in one or more of the schools, than a revision to this agreement would come before the Village Council. Details on how a new program would be implemented are being discussed by the Police Chief and the Superintendent of Schools.

9. Removed from Agenda

10. AUTHORIZE SHARED SERVICE AGREEMENT -HEALTH OFFICER (MAHWAH)

Mr. Kazmark stated he has been in contact with the Township Administrator of Mahwah, Ben Kezmarsky, for Health Officer Services. In light of the closure of Valley Hospital, he and Dawn Cetrulo (the Village's Health Officer) are comfortable in providing this service. Mr. Kazmark stated there will be a revenue from this agreement and there is a notice provision in the contract should the Village find the need to terminate the contract after reviewing operations in the future.

11. SUPPORT BERGEN COUNTY MUTUAL AID PLAN AND RAPID DEPLOYMENT FORCE

Mr. Kazmark stated this is an annual resolution approved in concert with other Bergen County municipalities.

12. AMEND FEES- GRAYDON POOL MEMBERSHIP-TENNIS/PICKLEBALL MEMBERSHIP AND SUMMER DAY CAMP FEES

Mr. Kazmark stated various fees should be adjusted in the Recreation Department. The memo from Nancy Bigos, Director of Parks and Recreation, outlined that Graydon Pool, Tennis and pickleball fees remain unchanged as they were increased in 2023. However, the non-resident fees for tennis/pickleball are recommended for an increase and a limit of 30 badges will be allotted.

Also included in the memo is an increase to the Summer Day Camp fee as the amount has remained at \$600.00 per child since 2019. The recommendation is to increase the registration fee to \$725/per child, inclusive of three field trips.

d. POLICY

1. ESTABLISH REGULATIONS-LEAD PAINT INSPECTION

Mr. Kazmark explained that a new law was signed by Governor Murphy that prescribes all rental dwelling units must be inspected for lead paint within two years of the effective date of the public law, which was July 2022, and upon rental turnover. The Village has contracted with LEW Environmental Services to provide this service. Mr. Kazmark thanked Dawn Cetrulo, Heath Officer and Heather Mailander, Village Clerk, for their assistance in this process. An ordinance must be adopted that governs the process. There was an inquiry if there is funding available to cover the costs. Mr. Kazmark reported that the inspection fee will cover some of the costs and that the Village has received a grant that will provide funding for outreach and support, with initiating the program. The Village is working on a grant extension that will carry until June of 2023.

2. ANTI-NEPOTISM ORDINANCE

Mr. Kazmark reported that there are two ordinances required to be enacted that will allow the Police Department to hire Police Officers through the alternate route process. Currently the hiring process was limited to the Civil Service examination list and through inter-departmental government transfers, with participating Civil Service jurisdictions. This will allow for alternate route candidates, those who have successfully completed the Police Academy and been issued a Police Training Commission certification number, to be able to employed by the Village of Ridgewood. There are two ordinances required in order enter this Civil Service Process. The first is an anti-nepotism policy and the second is an amendment to Chapter 3 of the Village Code to include a new section for entry level Police Department hiring of Police Officers.

e. OPERATIONS

1. ADOPT NOTICE OF CLAIMS FORMS

Ms. Mailander, Village Clerk, explained that requirements issued by the Joint Insurance Fund require an annual adoption of a resolution for the Notice of Tort Claim form.

2. DECLARE VARIOUS PROPERTY SURPLUS

Mr. Kazmark summarized the process for declaring various property surplus. He stated Village Engineer Christopher Rutishauser prepared a memo listing the various surplus property, along with a brief description for each item. A resolution shall be adopted in order to dispose of the surplus property, on the approved Government Auction website, GovDeals.

3. APPOINT MEMBERS TO THE SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT STEERING COMMITTEE

Mr. Kazmark stated there are three more individuals that need to be appointed to the Special Improvement District Steering Committee. They were omitted from the original list. It is recommended to include them on a revised resolution. The individuals are: Tom Hillmann, property owner; Kathryn Schmidt, Editor of Ridgewood Living; and Joan Groome, Executive Director of Ridgewood Chamber of Commerce.

9. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Suzanne Ruane, 705 Kingsbridge Lane, added comments relating to the drone footage spoken about earlier. She stated the drone footage was part of the report that was part of the September 23rd flooding and it concentrated on the sports fields flooded by the Ho-Ho-Kus Brook. She also stated that the comment made earlier representing the Kingsbridge footbridge causing the damming on the Saddle River is incorrect. She reported that further down river, there is a low-lying bridge that crosses Route 17, over the Saddle River. It is approximately six to ten feet lower than the Kingsbridge footbridge. This lower bridge could potentially be the cause of the damming. She asked if there was drone footage of the Route 17 bridge. She remarked that there is a resident that lived next to the Route 17 bridge who wanted to build a retaining wall to mitigate flooding on the property. The resident was informed by the Village Engineer that her property is in the flood zone, in order to prevent Route 17 from flooding. She was informed that the retaining wall was not permitted and that fines would be assessed if any structure was installed. Ms. Ruane suggested this area be examined by the Army Corps of Engineers, as well as having the Army Corps of Engineers provide an opinion about whether the removal of trees on the Schedler property has affected drainage and flooding. She stated that on Monroe Street there is a cascading flooding effect.

Rurik Halaby, 1 Franklin Avenue, commented that this meeting has been high quality. He complimented the Village Council on their sincerity, knowledge of subject matter and transparency. He complimented the Village Manager on his management of the flooding issue with informative responses.

There were no further public comments. Mayor Vagianos closed public comment.

Mr. Kazmark provided responses to public comments concerning the drone footage. The drone footage was taken in September of the damage that was done to Municipal and Board of Education property in anticipation of having to submit it for insurance claims. There was a concern that if there was not true photo documentation of the damage, there could be potential exposure to claim denial. The drone footage was able to capture the damage. Mr. Kazmark thanked the Police Chief and the Police Department for their assistance in using their drone team. He reinforced that while the footage has been used in presentations and shared with other agencies, it was primarily taken to provide insurance claim documentation support. Therefore, only sites of Village property were filmed in the drone footage. He stated there may be an opportunity to get drone footage of other locations, as part of the fact and document sharing with the Army Corps of Engineers.

Mr. Kazmark read an email from Christine Fleischmann sent earlier in the week, concerning flooding. She asked for specific items to be addressed inclusive of the Kingsbridge Lane footbridge creating a dam; downed trees creating potential hazards; and the issue of landscapers using the river as a leaf depository. He stated this is where the Kingsbridge Lane footbridge was first identified as a contributing factor from the residents along the Saddle River. He stated this is conflicting information provided from the residents along the Schedler property, who have been advocating for the Kingsbridge footbridge repair. He stated the NJDEP regulates the development in the flood zone, so enforcement would be coming from that agency.

Councilmember Winograd noted that while trees are being removed from the Schedler property, they have been identified as invasive. In addition, the re-planting effort exceeds the number of trees that have been removed and are non-invasive. Mr. Kazmark stated the Army Corps of Engineers will most likely not render an opinion on other property and the causation of flooding. Their objective, if accepted, will be to determine how to make the best impact on the channel, along with any type of water diversion to be put in or near the waterways that will have the least impact on other communities.

10. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Village Council, on a motion made by Deputy Mayor Perron, seconded by Councilmember Winograd and carried unanimously by voice vote, the Village Council Regular Public Work Session was adjourned at 10:02 p.m.

Paul Vagianos
Mayor

Heather A. Mailander
Village Clerk