

# ***DRAFT MINUTES***

*These are the Draft Minutes of the Agenda Conference of the North Plainfield Borough Council held on Monday, April 12, 2021.*

*Every attempt has been made to make these as comprehensive and conclusive as possible. However, as it is a draft document, it is not to be construed as a formal depiction of the official conduct of business and is subject to revision up to and following the Council's actual approval of same. If changes are necessary, revised minutes will be posted to the website.*

**MINUTES** of the Agenda Conference (virtual) of the Council of the Borough of North Plainfield held on Monday, **April 12, 2021** at 7:32 p.m. via Zoom.

**PRESENT:**

Council Members: Aimee Corzo  
Suzette Given  
Steven McIntyre  
Everett Merrill  
Keiona R. Miller  
Wendy Schaefer  
Frank "Skip" Stabile, Council President

Also Present: Lawrence La Ronde, Mayor  
David Hollod, Business Administrator  
Eric M. Bernstein, Esq., Borough Attorney (8:00 p.m.)  
Phil George, Esq., Associate Borough Attorney  
Patrick DeBlasio, Chief Financial Officer  
Kathleen Intravartolo, Treasurer, CTC, QPA  
Richard K. Phoenix, RMC, Borough Clerk  
Stephanie Sherwood, RMC, CMR, Deputy Clerk

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was led by Mr. Hollod.

A moment of silence was observed for the men and women serving in our Armed Forces.

The Council President read the following Notice of Compliance:

"This virtual meeting is being held in compliance with N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq. Adequate notice of this meeting was provided by transmitting notice to the official newspapers of the Borough, The Courier News, WKMB Radio, WJLP-TV, the Alternative Press and also to the Star Ledger on December 28, 2020 and by posting a copy of this notice on the bulletin boards in the Municipal Building and the Memorial Library reserved for such purpose."

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **Discussion of Budget** – D.E.H. (Patrick DeBlasio, CFO and Kathleen Intravartolo, Treasurer, CTC, QPA, to be present) Mr. DeBlasio explained that he and Ms. Intravartolo had prepared a new Budget as requested at the last meeting. Utilizing \$253,000 of the \$353,000 FEMA monies would allow for an increase of approximately \$137.66 per homeowner, rather than the \$174.62 seen in the first Budget. The remaining FEMA funds would be sent to surplus. Mr. DeBlasio stressed that a decrease in property valuations of \$21,000,000 in 2019 led to an increase in 2020 of approximately \$45.00 per homeowner. Joining in, Ms. Intravartolo reported that the sewer tax rate had not increased and just one sewer tax appeal had been filed. Responding to Ms. Schaefer’s inquiry, Ms. Intravartolo reported that 110 properties went to tax sale last year, the majority for sewer fees.

Thanking them for their efforts with the budget preparations, Mr. Merrill applauded the 97.57% tax collection rate. Addressing Mr. Merrill’s inquiry, Mr. DeBlasio shared concerns with utilizing \$2,000,000 of the surplus as certain one-time revenues would not be available next year. Ms. Corzo inquired after the \$2,100,000 in Federal relief funds and if direction for the use of same had been received. Mr. Hollod stressed that the funds cannot be used for tax cuts. Mayor La Ronde reiterated his concerns that a significant snow storm could potentially deplete the surplus leaving us vulnerable for next year. Responding to requests for clarification, Mr. DeBlasio confirmed that less surplus could lower our rating which would amount to higher interest rates.

On straw vote, Council members Corzo, Given, McIntyre, Miller, and Schaefer favored moving forward with the second Budget while Council President Stabile and Council Vice President Merrill preferred the first Budget. Council President Stabile announced that they would proceed with the second version of the Budget at the next meeting. Mr. DeBlasio rejoined that a Cap Bank Ordinance would need to be introduced at the next meeting as well.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None.

**REPORTS OF BOARDS, COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS:**

Mr. Merrill reported that the Board of Education vacant slot would be filled by Amnet Hernandez and Michelle Robertson would serve as President.

Motion to adjourn by Ms. Miller, seconded by Ms. Corzo and carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

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Borough Clerk

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Council President