

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
BOROUGH OF DEMAREST
Work Session**

**MEETING Minutes
March 13, 2023**

This meeting was called to order at 7:33 at the Council Chambers of the Borough of Demarest, 118 Serpentine Rd. Demarest, NJ.

Mayor Bernstein invited all to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Mayor Bernstein, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember Jiang

Absent: Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember LaPira, Councilmember Marks

Also Present: Deena Rosendahl, Borough Attorney
Julie Falkenstern, Borough Administrator
Cameron Keng, CFO
Carl O'Brien, Borough Engineer

Work Session Discussion Items:

Engineering Report

Mr. O'Brien asked that the Borough consider approving resolutions at their next meeting authorizing Colliers to proceed with the proposals related to Pine Terrace and Madison Ave. Mayor Bernstein asked Mr. O'Brien to review drainage/paving of Orchard.

Purchasing Procedure/ DPW Equipment Request

Mayor Bernstein reported that there is a request for a new machine to rake the ball fields and he wants to remind the Council that expenses of this nature and magnitude should come before the Council for discussion and approval before a purchase is made.

Woodland Speed Complaint

Mayor Bernstein thanked the Police Department, in particular, Captain Visaggio and the DPW for the timely relocation of the speed sign to assist in enforcement of speed limits in the area. Additionally, the Mayor said there have been discussions between the residents about ideas to further alleviate speeding on Woodland. He further stated that he would like to put off a decision by the Council on any road closure since there is not a full council present tonight.

Police Safety Equipment

Mayor Bernstein reported that it was brought to his attention that the police vests are outdated, and he is asking for the Council's approval for an approximate expenditure of \$7,000 to purchase updated vests. The CFO to ensure that funds are available.

Councilmember Hamilton made a motion to direct the CFO to effectuate the purchase. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Fox.

Ayes: Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Marks,
Nays: None
Absent: Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember LaPira, Councilmember Jiang

DPW Equipment Request

Councilmember Hamilton reported that the DPW's rake machine is broken and is needed for Spring field preparation. Mr. Gangi has three quotes and would like to purchase the lowest quoted at approximately \$22,000.00. Councilmember Hamilton is looking for CFO to ensure funds are available. Mr. Keng recommends that the Borough consider using funds from the Open Space Trust fund to acquire the equipment.

Councilmember Hamilton made a motion to direct the CFO to effectuate the purchase. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Fox.

Ayes: Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Marks,
Nays: None
Absent: Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember LaPira, Councilmember Jiang

Consent Agenda:

Resolution No. 50-23 Authorization to Join Middlesex Cooperative
Resolution No. 51-23 Revised scope of FY 2020 CDBG funded ADA project
Resolution No. 52-23 Support of Northern Valley Greenway
Resolution No. 53-23 Authorizing Redemption and Distribution of Tax Sale
Resolution No. 54-23 Veteran Tax Exemption

Mayor Bernstein asked for resolution number 52-23 to be removed and tabled to the April 24 meeting.

Councilmember Fox asked for an explanation of Resolution No. 50-23.

Ms. Falkenstern explained that the resolution allows us to purchase through the Coop but does not obligate us to any particular purchase.

Councilmember Hamilton made a motion to approve the consent agenda (excepting No. 52-23 which has been tabled). The motion was seconded by Councilmember Jiang.

Ayes: Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Marks,
Nays: None
Absent: Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember LaPira, Councilmember Jiang

Councilmember Hamilton noted that the DPW's backhoe is in need of repair and would like the CFO to confirm that funds are available. Mayor Bernstein asked Councilmember Hamilton to send quotes when available to the Borough Administrator and she will make sure it is handled correctly.

Councilmember Hamilton made a motion to open the meeting to the public. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Jiang and approved by all present.

Andrew Woods

Mr. Woods believes that his complaint at a previous meeting about the Construction Official caused him to retaliate by making an unnecessary inspection and issuing a failure of that inspection. He also believes that his response to an OPRA request was incomplete. He renewed his complaints against the Construction Official.

Mayor Bernstein reminded Mr. Woods that the Mayor and Council are not enabled to discuss the Construction Official's employment. Councilmember Fox also reminded Mr. Woods that his license and performance under those licenses are the purview of the UCC.

Mr. Woods was reminded by the Mayor, Borough Administrator and Borough Attorney that they are unable to answer these questions in this format.

Before the closed session was convened a resident congratulated Liam Foley on his retirement from the Police Department, and Mayor Bernstein noted that his retirement begins at the end of the month and thanked him for his service.

Councilmember Hamilton made a motion to convene to closed session to discuss personnel and litigation issues. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Fox and approved by all. Action may be taken when the meeting is reopened.

The meeting was reconvened at 8:03 pm

Councilmember Fox made a motion to extend an employment offer to Peter Suh to act as the Part Time Finance Assistant for a salary of \$40,000.00 the terms of which will be memorialized by resolution at the next meeting, the motion was seconded by Councilmember Jiang.

Ayes: Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember Fox, Councilmember Marks,
Nays: None

Absent: Council President Slowikowski, Councilmember LaPira, Councilmember Jiang

Councilmember Hamilton made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilmember Fox and approved by all.

The meeting was therefore adjourned at 8:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Falkenstern, Borough Administrator for the Acting Borough Clerk