

A REGULAR PUBLIC WORK SESSION OF THE VILLAGE COUNCIL 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 29, 2025 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 7:30 p.m. and read the Statement of Compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act. At roll call, the following were present: Councilmembers Mortimer, Perron, Weitz, Winograd, and Mayor Vagianos. Also present were Keith Kazmark, Village Manager; Heather Mailander, Village Clerk; and Matthew Rogers, Village Attorney.

Mayor Vagianos led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. Mayor Vagianos announced that John Patrick Quinn, a Village employee who worked in the Parks and Recreation Department, died suddenly in his sleep two weeks ago at the age of 34. Mayor Vagianos described Mr. Quinn as an exemplary employee who was valued and appreciated by his co-workers. Mr. Quinn left behind his wife and eight-year-old daughter. Mayor Vagianos said that Mr. Quinn and his daughter, Peyton, had a YouTube channel together, that highlighted their father/daughter adventures. He asked for a moment of silence in honor of Mr. Quinn.

Mayor Vagianos said that he wanted to acknowledge Boy Scout Troop #7, who were present at the meeting this evening. They are working on their communications badges. There was a resounding round of applause.

Mayor Vagianos asked the Village Councilmembers to join him on the floor, as well as the Bergen County Commissioners and members of the sports organizations in Ridgewood present at the meeting this evening. Mayor Vagianos then gave a history of the state-of-the-art lighting improvement project at Veterans Field. Due to a lack of funding, all of the fields were going to receive new lighting, except for the girls' softball field. The Village Councilmembers reached out to the Bergen County Commissioners and the sports organizations in Ridgewood. Phase II of the LED lighting project at Veterans Field will now include lighting for the girls' softball field, thanks to generous donations from the County of Bergen, Ridgewood Board of Education, Ridgewood Baseball and Softball Association, Ridgewood Maroons Soccer, Ridgewood Junior Football Association and Ridgewood Lacrosse Association.

Mayor Vagianos introduced Bergen County Commissioners Mary Amoroso and Tom Sullivan, Ann Kaufman from the Ridgewood Lacrosse Association, Ramon Hache from the Ridgewood Junior Football Association, Scott Muller from the Ridgewood Baseball and Softball Association, and Clay Fisher from Ridgewood Maroons Soccer. There was a resounding round

of applause. Mayor Vagianos thanked everyone, stating that some of these organizations donated without hesitation, even though they had “no skin in the game.”

Bergen County Commissioner Mary Amoroso congratulated the Village Council for completing the lighting project at Veterans Field. She said that she is so proud when Bergen County Open Space funds can be used for such a wonderful recreational project, and ensuring that the girls’ softball field was included in the lighting project, made it even more wonderful.

Bergen County Commissioner Tom Sullivan thanked Mayor Vagianos and the Village Councilmembers for all that they do for the Village. He was especially thankful that the girls’ softball field was included in the project, since he is the father of three girls, one of whom is a student athlete.

On behalf of the Ridgewood Lacrosse Association, Ann Kaufman said that Ridgewood is a town where everyone works together and supports one another. Ramon Hache, speaking on behalf of the Ridgewood Junior Football Association, thanked the Mayor and Village Council for their efforts in seeing this project through to completion. He said that the new lighting, which replaced construction lighting that was loud and polluted the air, will enhance the safety on Veterans Field for all athletes.

Scott Muller, President of the Ridgewood Baseball and Softball Association (RBSA), thanked the Mayor and Council for reaching out to various organizations to ensure that the girls’ softball field would receive the improved lighting as well. He presented a check to the Village Council for \$17,000.00, since the RBSA has more “skin in the game.” Mr. Muller thanked the Board of Education and the governing body of Ridgewood for completing this project, as well as the hardworking Village staff who “made it happen.” He said that he appreciated the steadfast collaboration between the Ridgewood High School Athletic Director’s Office and the staff of the Parks and Recreation Department. Mr. Muller said that the new lights will benefit the high school and recreational sports, as well as visitors to the Kasschau Bandshell and people who attend the Ridgewood Fourth of July celebration.

Clay Fisher, on behalf of the Maroons Soccer Club, said that the completion of the lighting project demonstrated the utmost in teamwork, one of the core values of sports. Mr. Fisher thanked Mayor Vagianos and the Village Council for their efforts to improve the sports environment in the Village. There was a resounding round of applause and pictures were taken.

2. WOMEN GARDENERS OF RIDGEWOOD

Mayor Vagianos then announced that the following matter would be moved up on the agenda.

Sharon Gilsenan, a Ridgewood resident, stated that she is President of the Women Gardeners of Ridgewood, which is currently celebrating its 100th year. The group was formed in 1925. In honor of their 100th anniversary, they would like to donate to the Village a Tuscan bluestone bench, which requires no maintenance and requires no funds from the Village. Photos of the bench were submitted to the Parks and Recreation Department, and Ms. Gilsenan expressed the hope that the bench may be placed near one of the Village gardens that their club maintains. Two of these gardens are located at the Ridgewood Library and at Habernickel Park. Ms. Gilsenan thanked Nancy Bigos, Director of the Parks and Recreation Department, and her staff for their assistance.

Mayor Vagianos asked the Village Councilmembers to join him on the floor, so that pictures could be taken with Ms. Gilsenan. He thanked Ms. Gilsenan and the Women Gardeners Club of Ridgewood for their generous donation. There was a resounding round of applause.

Mr. Kazmark pointed out the Village Council would consider on the agenda this evening the acceptance of this donation of a natural stone bench. He said that the Village Councilmembers should ask any questions they may have regarding this matter, while Ms. Gilsenan is still in attendance at the meeting. Deputy Mayor Perron asked Ms. Gilsenan where she would recommend that the bench be placed. Ms. Gilsenan said that Ms. Bigos has suggested putting the bench on the lawn between Village Hall and the Ridgewood Library. Another suggestion was to place the bench by the pond at Habernickel Park. She said that the ultimate decision lies with the Village Council and the Parks and Recreation Department. Mr. Kazmark indicated that Ms. Bigos is engaged in conversations with key stakeholders about where the bench should be placed.

Councilmember Winograd wished the Women Gardeners Club a happy 100th anniversary. She mentioned that Ms. Gilsenan is in charge of the Women's Gardening Program, which benefits many of the parks in the Village. Ms. Gilsenan said that the individual who donated the bench offered to have the bench on display, at no cost to the Village, on the day of the club's Garden Tour, which is scheduled for June 8, 2025. She stated that Mayor Vagianos has proclaimed that day as "Women Gardeners Club Day," in honor of their 100th anniversary.

3. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Sean McCooe, a Ridgewood resident, said that he was celebrating the 79th year of Jamboree. He encouraged everyone to enjoy "Viva Las Vegas!" which will be held on February 6, 7 and 8, 2025 at the Benjamin Franklin Middle School. There is a special showing for seniors, free of charge, on Wednesday, February 5, 2025. Mr. McCooe said that the efforts of 250 volunteers raised \$250,000.00 in scholarship money last year. Need-based scholarships are awarded to deserving Ridgewood High School students who are attending college. Mayor Vagianos thanked Mr. McCooe and his wife, as well as the countless volunteers, who carry on this tradition year after year.

Saurabh Dani, a Ridgewood resident, said that he was not speaking this evening on behalf of the Board of Education (BOE), but rather in his own personal capacity as an individual. He said that he believes there is a “disconnect” between the BOE resolution and the actual agreement in the Transparency Binder. Mr. Dani asked Mr. Kazmark and Mr. Rogers to check the Transparency Binder to make sure that the resolution and agreement reflect the same conditions. He said that the resolution appears to be correct, and he wanted to make sure that the Village Councilmembers have the updated agreement. The resolution shows a 10-year renewal, but Mr. Dani noted that the agreement in the Transparency Binder reflects the older term of five years, and does not contain the updated insurance and liability clauses.

There were no further comments from the public.

Mr. Kazmark asked Ms. Mailander to confirm that the agreement attached to Resolution #25-100 is the latest version of the agreement from the BOE. He stated that after the BOE meeting held on January 27, 2025, the School Superintendent’s Office submitted an executed copy of the agreement the following day to the Village Manager’s Office. Ms. Mailander stated that the older version of the agreement was in the Transparency Binder, and she will ensure that the new version is properly signed.

4. STATE OF THE VILLAGE – MAYOR PAUL VAGIANOS

Mayor Vagianos stated that 2024 was another great year for the Village, with many accomplishments and achievements. He lauded his fellow Village Councilmembers, stating their particular attributes and talents, including former Village Councilmember, Lorraine Reynolds, and new Village Councilmember, Frank Mortimer. Mayor Vagianos spoke about how hard the Village Councilmembers work to make Ridgewood a great place to live. However, he said that the success of the Village Council has been the result of working with great people in the Village and through the tireless efforts of Village staff. There was a resounding round of applause.

Mayor Vagianos then spoke about some of the accomplishments the Village Council and staff achieved in 2024. Regarding the issue of repeated flooding, Mayor Vagianos indicated that the Village is working with Congressman Josh Gottheimer and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct a study and propose long-term solutions regarding this issue. A Residential Flood Advisory Committee, comprised of residents who have been adversely affected by flooding, has been formed to study the problem. The Village hired a company to hydro-jet the stormwater system on Hope and Gilbert Streets, resulting in removal of roots, rubble and silt that had been clogging the system for years. Hydro-jetting of the stormwater system will continue in the spring of 2025. Downed trees and other obstructions in above-ground waterways are being removed. Mayor Vagianos credited Deputy Mayor Perron, the Green Ridgewood Committee, Joan Hubertus and David Refkin for assisting the Village in adopting one of the strongest stormwater management ordinances in the State of New Jersey.

Regarding “old business,” Mayor Vagianos stated that the Kingsbridge Lane Pedestrian Bridge, which has been closed since 2021, has finally been removed from its location. It will be repaired offsite and replaced back in its original location in the spring. The former Town Garage property, which has been an eyesore since 2007, was purchased by the Village and the building was razed. Remediation of the site has commenced, at the expense of the prior owner, and this will be followed by two years of required environmental testing by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). The dilapidated barn at Habernickel Park has also been demolished. The bus station on Oak Street, which is in poor condition, will soon be razed as well, and replaced with another structure. There is a possibility that the bus station may be moved close to the train station to create a transit hub.

Mayor Vagianos stated that the Pease Library, the train station concession stand and the former taxi stand on Broad Street have been vacant for years. However, these sites were all leased in 2024, which will generate needed revenue for the Village and the Ridgewood Library. Mayor Vagianos then stated that in response to complaints, there are more frequent police patrols and enforcement of parking regulations at The View, which he described as one of Ridgewood’s local gems. A buffer zone has been planted to protect residents at the bottom of the hill from flying debris, without blocking the view from the top.

Mayor Vagianos stated that, in collaboration with American Legion Post 53, the Gold Star Families Monument was dedicated in Memorial Park at Van Neste Square this past September. He thanked Tess Giuliani and Lynne Brady for designing the monument; former American Legion Commander Bob Paoli, and current Commander Lou Francis for their leadership and dedication; and all families who have lost a loved one, while serving in the Armed Forces.

Mayor Vagianos stated that he is proud of the partnership which is being forged with the Ridgewood Board of Education (BOE). Full-time Special Law Enforcement Officer Class IIIs have been deployed in the high school and both middle schools, in order to enhance security and allow the students to form relationships with these officers in a non-confrontational setting. With the assistance of the BOE, new lighting has been installed at Veterans Field. This lighting will use less energy and have less “spillage” of light onto neighboring properties. Mayor Vagianos thanked the BOE, Bergen County, and the Village’s sports organizations for their generous contributions towards this lighting improvement project.

Mayor Vagianos stated that Ridgewood Water, under the leadership of Director Rich Calbi, was recognized as a leader in the industry by the NJDEP for its work on water conservation and PFAS initiatives. In 2024, it was the first water company in New Jersey to receive the “Our Water’s Worth It” award from the NJDEP. Ridgewood Water is now in the process of upgrading the aged water distribution system, with a new pumping station to ensure that adequate water pressure is maintained and to avoid another boil water advisory that was declared last summer. Ridgewood Water has also replaced more than 3½ miles of new water mains and has been

working on the PFAS treatment facility buildout. Mayor Vagianos stated that once this seven-year PFAS remediation project is complete by the end of 2026, Ridgewood Water will begin its long overdue systemwide upgrades in 2027.

Mayor Vagianos then spoke about initiatives concerning the Central Business District (CBD). Deputy Mayor Perron is researching the formation of a Special Improvement District (SID) in the CBD, which will help businesses to thrive. This will be done at no cost to Village taxpayers. The Zoning Ordinance has been changed to make it easier for new businesses to open in Ridgewood, and these changes will allow for different types of businesses to operate in the Village, such as microbreweries.

More accomplishments in 2024 included the construction of new sidewalks on East Glen Avenue and Clinton Avenue; expansion of senior programming; expansion of the recycling program to include Styrofoam, vegetable oil and shredding; a Shared Services Agreement with Mahwah to operate their Health Department; and the planting of more than 300 trees in the Village. Mayor Vagianos stated that, in the future, Shared Services Agreements with other communities and the Board of Education will result in cost savings for the Village. The Ridgewood Public Library served between 15,000 and 20,000 patrons per month in 2024. The Ridgewood Fire Department provided CPR and defibrillator training to dozens of Village staff and residents. The veterans banner program was expanded in the CBD, and Mayor Vagianos thanked Joan Monton for her efforts in this regard. The “My Ridgewood” mobile app was launched, to help Village residents find important information regarding services and events. In addition, the Village expanded its reverse 911 notification program to include an additional 3,400 residents. The Village has maintained its AAA bond rating, with a tax increase of 2.74%, which Mayor Vagianos stated was well below the rate of inflation.

Mayor Vagianos then reviewed upcoming projects in the Village for 2025. A new pavilion is being built at Habernickel Park that will provide shelter during inclement weather to athletes and families. Ridgewood Water will break ground on the last four PFAS treatment facilities. After the completion of this buildout by the end of 2026, the PFAS in the water will be reduced to undetectable levels. This will be done before 46 other states, and much of New Jersey, have begun to comply with stricter Federal regulations to reduce PFAS levels in the water supply. Mayor Vagianos emphasized that PFAS is a worldwide problem, not just a Ridgewood Water problem.

Mayor Vagianos then spoke about Schedler Park. This property was purchased by the Village in 2009 and has been dormant for more than 15 years. In 2025, the property will be brought into compliance with NJDEP standards and, thereafter, the long-awaited development of the property will begin. Mayor Vagianos mentioned the closing of the historic Warner Theater in the CBD, and he expressed the hope that the theater can be turned into a performing arts center.

Discussions have begun in this regard, and Mayor Vagianos said that he will give updates to the public, as the discussions progress.

Mayor Vagianos spoke about the rules of decorum in the courtroom during Village Council meetings and how everyone should focus on the issues that affect them, and not focus on the people who discuss the issues. He said that everyone should speak to each other with respect, rather than launching personal attacks on those with opposing views. He stated that more can be accomplished when people are not fighting with one another. Mayor Vagianos spoke about the inconceivable personal attacks that have occurred on social media, particularly during last year's Village Council Election in November. These attacks are designed to stifle dissent, discussion, and the free flow of ideas. Mayor Vagianos said that it has been suggested that the reason so few candidates ran for Village Council and the BOE in 2024 was the cost of engaging in an election campaign. Although this may be true, Mayor Vagianos said that the main reason is the personal, rather than financial, cost to candidates and their families.

Going forward, Mayor Vagianos asked everyone to please stick to the issues and avoid personal attacks against anyone. He said that such behavior would not be tolerated in the courtroom or the community. He concluded by thanking the Ridgewood community for placing their trust in him and his Village Council colleagues. There was a round of applause.

5. VILLAGE MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Kazmark said that he is distributing the newest version of the agreement with the BOE, regarding the new lighting at Veterans Field, to the Village Councilmembers, so that they can review same before the Special Public Meeting scheduled for this evening.

Mr. Kazmark thanked Carol Bialkowski, Director of Communications and Special Events, and Beth Spinato, Administrative Clerk, both in the Village Manager's Office, for the wonderful job they did in preparing the 2025 Village Calendar. The calendar, which was printed in color this year, was mailed to all Ridgewood households. The calendar's theme is "The Arts in Ridgewood" and highlights fine artists, musical artists, and performance artists in the Village. There are additional copies of the Village Calendar available in the Village Manager's Office.

Mr. Kazmark congratulated and thanked everyone who helped to organize the Ridgewood Lunar New Year Festival, which was held at Ridgewood High School on January 26, 2025. He personally attended the festival and described it as a great event, with delicious ethnic food, performances, and crafts.

During this evening's Closed Session, Mr. Kazmark indicated that they will be discussing the potential settlement of the Blue Collar Union and the White Collar Union labor contracts. Further details will be forthcoming shortly.

Mr. Kazmark said that the Village Councilmembers are continuing with the 2025 budget discussions. The next Budget Meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 3, 2025. Additional cuts were made to the various departmental budget requests, following the last Budget Meeting held on January 22, 2025.

Mr. Kazmark stated that the second round of responses to questions submitted by the public to Matrix New World Engineering, regarding the soil contamination at the Schedler property, have now been posted on the Village website under the “Schedler” tab.

A significant automobile accident occurred this week at the intersection of Kenilworth Road and Laurel Avenue. Mr. Kazmark said that he is in the process of working with the Ridgewood Police Department to review the cause of this accident. It appears that one of the drivers blatantly ran a stop sign at that intersection. Police Chief Forest Lyons, along with Sergeant Ray Tarino of the Traffic Division, are doing a complete review of this intersection in an effort to improve safety. Some recommendations from the Police Department will be reviewed by the Citizens Safety Advisory Committee (CSAC). Mr. Kazmark indicated that the Police Department has already initiated some steps to enhance safety at that intersection.

Mr. Kazmark reminded all residents in the Village that sidewalks in residential districts must be cleared of ice and snow within 24 hours after a snowstorm. During and after snowstorms, residents are asked to place their trash receptacles at the end of their driveways, to ensure the safety of sanitation workers while picking up trash.

Mr. Kazmark announced that the 2025 Jamboree show this year, “Viva Las Vegas!”, will be held on February 6, 7 and 8, 2025 at the Benjamin Franklin Middle School. Tickets may be purchased online at rhsjamboree.org.

All Village offices will be closed on February 12, 2025 and February 17, 2025 in observance of Lincoln’s Birthday and Presidents Day, respectively. No garbage or recycling pickups will occur on those days, and the Recycling Center will be closed on both days. Residents should check their Village Calendar to find out the garbage and recycling pickup days for their particular areas.

The Valley Hospital, Ridgewood Public Library, and Ridgewood Health Department are continuing their collaboration to offer Ridgewood residents updated health and wellness information and have scheduled educational events for the entire family. On February 13, 2025, from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m., a virtual program entitled “When to See a Cardiologist” will be held. Interested individuals should register online at valleyhealth.com/events or call 1-800-825-5391.

Upcoming Village Council meetings are as follows: Work Sessions on February 5 and February 26, 2025; and a Public Meeting on February 10, 2025. All Work Sessions and the Public Meeting

start at 7:30 p.m. Village Council Budget Meetings are as follows: February 3, February 19 and February 27, 2025, all starting at 5:00 p.m.

6. VILLAGE COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilmember Winograd thanked the Martin Luther King (MLK), Jr. Committee of Glen Rock and Ridgewood, one of the longest running celebratory committees in the State of New Jersey, for organizing wonderful events in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., from January 17 through January 20, 2025. The 2025 theme was “Be Love, Do Justice.” Councilmember Winograd also thanked Reverend Jan Phillips and everyone who was involved in organizing these events.

Councilmember Winograd said that she is now the Village Council Liaison for the Stigma-Free Committee, taking the place of Mayor Vagianos. During the latest Stigma-Free Committee meeting, there were discussions about how to holistically approach stigma-free topics. Several interns are working on graphics for the committee logo.

The first meeting of the Residential Flood Advisory Committee (RFAC) was held recently, with a goal toward finding ways to alleviate repeated flooding in residential areas. Both the scale and frequency of flooding have increased in recent years in Ridgewood. Councilmember Winograd is the Village Council Liaison for the RFAC. The committee is comprised of two residents who live near the Saddle River, two residents who live near the Ho-Ho-Kus Brook, and two residents who experience repeated flooding from stormwater runoff. Discussions at the first RFAC meeting focused primarily on the logistics of how often they will meet and the dates on which they will meet. Future meetings will be open to the public.

Councilmember Winograd thanked the Fields Committee, the Board of Education, the Village staff, and sports organizations in Ridgewood for their assistance and monetary donations regarding the lighting improvement project for Veterans Field. She is the Village Council Liaison for the Fields Committee. Fields Committee meetings are held at 8:00 a.m.

Councilmember Winograd wished everyone who celebrates a “Happy Year of the Snake.” She was unable to attend the Lunar New Year Festival this past Sunday, but she thanked everyone involved in organizing this event.

Councilmember Mortimer attended his first Citizens Safety Advisory Committee (CSAC) meeting as Village Council Liaison on January 16, 2025. Some residents spoke about their concerns regarding speeding near the Friends Neighborhood Nature School on Highwood Avenue. One instance of speeding led to an automobile accident in that area. CSAC members heard updates from the Ridgewood Police and the Engineering Department regarding traffic issues in the Village, including sight obstructions at intersections, sidewalks, and the intersection

of Oak Street and East Glen Avenue. The next CSAC meeting will be held on February 20, 2025, at which time the accident that occurred at the intersection of Laurel Avenue and Kenilworth Road will be discussed. Councilmember Mortimer personally visited that intersection today, so that he could observe the conditions there and speak with neighbors about their concerns.

Councilmember Mortimer attended a meeting of the Parks, Recreation and Conservation (PRC) Board last night. The new pavilion to be installed at Habernickel Park will be delivered on Friday, January 31, 2025. He stated that 2025 will mark the 10-year anniversary of HealthBarn, which occupies the Gatehouse at Habernickel Park. The PRC members spoke about the completion of the recent renovation of Lower Hawes Field, which will remain closed until April 2025, so that the newly planted grass can take root.

Councilmember Weitz stated that he attended the Ridgewood Lunar New Year event at Ridgewood High School on January 26, 2025, which he stated was a fantastic celebration with great food and camaraderie.

Councilmember Weitz also pointed out that the Fourth of July Committee met on Monday evening to begin planning the Fourth of July celebratory events for 2025. He thanked Tara Masterson and everyone working on this endeavor.

Councilmember Weitz thanked Mr. Kazmark for “kicking off” the budget season. He felt that the first Budget Meeting held on January 22, 2025 was very productive.

Deputy Mayor Perron stated that Green Ridgewood hosted the Sustainable Jersey Hub meeting recently, at which representatives of environmental groups from several counties in New Jersey were present. Richard Calbi, Director of Ridgewood Water, and Michael Cohrs, Business Manager of Ridgewood Water, spoke before the group during the meeting. Lois Krause also spoke about leaf blowing and microplastics. The next meeting of Green Ridgewood is scheduled for Thursday, February 6, 2025 at 7:30 p.m., in the Senior Lounge at Village Hall. The public is welcome to attend.

The Special Improvement District (SID) Steering Committee for the Central Business District (CBD) met this week. Deputy Mayor Perron stated that it was a very productive meeting and they are currently working on a feasibility study.

Deputy Mayor Perron said that she also enjoyed attending the Martin Luther King, Jr. celebratory event. She said that the music was joyous and the speaker was very enlightening.

Deputy Mayor Perron concluded by stating that the Planning Board Reorganization Meeting was held last week. Richard Joel was selected as Chairman and Michael Stern as Vice-Chairman.

7. **DISCUSSION**

A. **BUDGET**

1. **EXTEND DEADLINES FOR ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT, 2025 ANNUAL BUDGET INTRODUCTION, AND 2025 ANNUAL BUDGET ADOPTION**

Mr. Kazmark indicated that this first item deals with a resolution that needs to be adopted and sent to the Division of Local Government Services (DLGS) in Trenton for extension of various filing deadlines. The deadline for submitting the Annual Financial Statement will be extended from February 10, 2025 to March 7, 2025; the deadline for introducing the 2025 budget will be extended to March 31, 2025; and the deadline for adopting the final budget for 2025 will be extended to April 30, 2025. Mr. Kazmark said that these dates have been extended annually by the DLGS for years. The most recent Local Finance Notice requires the Village to pass a resolution by March 31, 2025, in order to utilize these extensions. Mr. Kazmark noted that this has not been a requirement in the past.

2. **AWARD CONTRACT UNDER EDUCATIONAL SERVICES COMMISSION OF NJ COOPERATIVE PURCHASING CONTRACT – LIGHTING UPGRADES FOR THE GIRLS’ SOFTBALL FIELD ON VETERANS FIELD**

Mr. Kazmark indicated that this matter pertains to Resolution #25-99 and the awarding of a contract, under the Educational Services Commission of New Jersey Cooperative Purchasing Program, to extend the upgraded permanent lighting at Veterans Field to the girls’ softball field. It is recommended that this contract be awarded to Musco Sports Lighting, of Farmingdale, New Jersey, in an amount not to exceed \$258,000.00. Musco Sports Lighting is the vendor hired by the Village to perform the initial phase of the lighting improvements.

3. **AUTHORIZE SHARED SERVICES AGREEMENT – LIGHTING FOR THE GIRLS’ SOFTBALL FIELD ON VETERANS FIELD – RIDGEWOOD BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Mr. Kazmark indicated that this item pertains to Resolution #25-100, which would approve the authorization of a Shared Services Agreement with the Ridgewood Board of Education for the installation of upgraded lighting for the girls’ softball field on Veterans Field. The term of the agreement shall be for ten years, and shall automatically renew for additional ten-year terms, until the agreement is mutually cancelled by both parties.

Mr. Kazmark stated that Phase I of the lighting upgrades, previously awarded, was done by Musco Sports Lighting at a cost of \$700,000.00. These funds were contained in the 2024 Capital Budget. This phase included lighting upgrades at the soccer fields and varsity baseball field, but not the girls' softball field. The Village Council sought financial contributions from various entities, including four sports organizations in Ridgewood, the Board of Education, and Bergen County. Mr. Kazmark explained that there was approximately \$40,000.00 in the 2024 Capital Budget, earmarked for park development. The Village received a \$103,000.00 grant from the Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund for this project. The Board of Education is contributing \$80,000.00 towards Phase II of this lighting project. The sum of \$17,000.00 was received from the Ridgewood Baseball and Softball Association, \$10,000.00 from Maroons Soccer Association, \$10,000.00 from the Ridgewood Junior Football Association, and \$10,000.00 from the Ridgewood Lacrosse Association. These contributions total \$270,000.00. The contract awarded to Musco Sports Lighting is in an amount not to exceed \$258,000.00. In addition, Mr. Kazmark said that another cost involved in this phase of the project has to do with electrical upgrades for the lighting, and the balance of these monies will be used for that purpose.

B. POLICY

1. ACCEPT DONATIONS FROM VARIOUS SPORTS GROUPS – LIGHTING UPGRADES FOR THE GIRLS' SOFTBALL FIELD ON VETERANS FIELD

Mr. Kazmark explained that this item (Resolution #25-98) pertains to the acceptance of donations from various sports groups in the Village for lighting upgrades for the girls' softball field on Veterans Field. He described the picture on the screen, which depicted the seven lighting poles which were installed as part of Phase I of the lighting project, as well as three existing poles which have been retrofitted with new lighting. For Phase II of the lighting project, the three existing poles will be eliminated and existing hardware will be repurposed on four new poles, which will add the extra lighting for the girls' varsity softball field on Veterans Field. Mr. Kazmark reiterated that Phase I entailed the erection of the seven new poles and retrofitting of the three existing poles, while Phase II will entail the removal of the three poles and replacing them with four new poles.

Mr. Kazmark anticipates that Phase II of the lighting project will be completed in time for opening day of baseball, in April of this year. He publicly thanked Bergen County, the Board of Education, Ridgewood Baseball and Softball Association, Ridgewood Maroons Soccer, Ridgewood Junior Football Association, and the Ridgewood Lacrosse Association for their generous contributions towards this project. He said that this was truly a community endeavor.

Mr. Kazmark added that as of yesterday, there are 915 Ridgewood student athletes who have signed up to play sports this year, including kickball, baseball, and softball. This number

includes 105 travel softball athletes and 194 travel baseball athletes. In addition, there are 70 students at Ridgewood High School enrolled in baseball (from freshman to varsity) and 44 students enrolled in the softball program (from freshman to varsity), for a total of 114 high school students who will benefit from the lighting improvements on Veterans Field.

C. OPERATIONS

1. ACCEPT THE VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD'S FOURTH ROUND AFFORDABLE HOUSING OBLIGATION

Beth McManus, the Village's Planner for Affordable Housing, said that there is a resolution for consideration by the Village Council this evening. The resolution declares the Village's participation in the Fourth Round Affordable Housing Obligation (from 2025 through 2035) and declares the Village's Fourth Round Affordable Housing Obligation. After the resolution is approved by the Village Council, it will be submitted to the Affordable Housing Dispute Resolution Program, and the official Fourth Round Housing will begin. Ms. McManus stated that there are two types of affordable housing obligations in New Jersey. The first type is a rehabilitation obligation, an estimate of substandard or overcrowded units in a municipality, that can be rehabilitated and are occupied by low-income and moderate-income households. This is calculated based upon census data and American Community Survey data for each New Jersey municipality. The second type is a new construction or "round" of obligation (indicating the different rounds of affordable housing obligations). This type consists of the anticipated number of new affordable units that must be created in a municipality in order to be compliant with the law.

Ms. McManus said that there is a new Fair Housing Act for 2025, which states, among other things, that the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) should calculate non-binding municipal affordable housing obligations. The Village must do its due diligence, review the details of the DCA calculations, and either agree or disagree with the calculations set forth by the DCA. If the Village disagrees with the calculations, then data must be set forth in support of same.

Ms. McManus stated that the DCA calculated that the Village's rehabilitation obligation is four units. She stated that she has reviewed the data and the methodology used by the DCA to arrive at this calculation, and she feels that the calculation is correct. The resolution this evening will set forth that the Village accepts the four-unit rehabilitation obligation.

Ms. McManus indicated that the DCA calculated the Village's Fourth Round Affordable Housing Obligation to be 427 units. She has reviewed the data used by the DCA to arrive at this calculation and believes that the DCA made some errors, especially regarding the amount of developable land that exists in Ridgewood. Ms. McManus believes that there is some room for

interpretation. She recommends that the resolution not cite the 427 units, but rather cite an obligation of 394 units. This reduced obligation reflects her recommended changes to the amount of developable land in Ridgewood calculated by the DCA. It eliminates property in flood hazard areas and floodways, as well as properties with configurations inadequate for proper development, such as land used as buffer zones or land with narrow dimensions. The resolution will have a report attached, developed by Ms. McManus, which specifically sets forth why she feels that the areas identified by the DCA are incorrect.

Ms. McManus stated that although the obligation of 394 units is quite large, the Village has already done, and will continue to do, a Vacant Land Adjustment. This adjustment will not be addressed in the resolution pending this evening, but will be addressed in the Village's Housing Plan which will be developed. Ms. McManus said that once the Housing Plan is developed, she believes that the 394-unit obligation will be dramatically reduced, in order to reflect the amount of development that is anticipated and the amount of vacant and developable land that currently exists. She stated that in the Third Round Affordable Housing Obligation, the Village took a Vacant Land Adjustment, which adjusted both the third round and prior round obligations, which called for over 850 units combined. The adjusted obligation ended up being 55 units after the adjustment. Ms. McManus stated that the next big deadline is June 30, 2025, which is the date by which the Village must submit its adopted Housing Plan.

Councilmember Weitz asked Ms. McManus when she would be able to tell the Village Councilmembers what the adjusted number is. Ms. McManus replied that she has already begun assembling that data and she should have an estimate of the adjusted number within a month or so. She said that things may change as developers or property owners make suggestions or land usage changes. To put residents' minds at ease, Councilmember Weitz explained that even though this evening's resolution will declare the Village's Fourth Round Affordable Housing Obligation to be 394 units, this does not mean that the Village plans to build that number of units. Ms. McManus concurred with his statement and stated that there is language in the resolution which reserves the right of the Village to take the Vacant Land Adjustment. Councilmember Weitz thanked Ms. McManus for all of her efforts in this matter.

Councilmember Winograd said that she wanted to thank the League of Women Voters for educating Village residents about the affordable housing process. She agreed with Ms. McManus that the current number of 394 units will be drastically reduced. Councilmember Winograd thanked Ms. McManus for her hard work. Mr. Kazmark reiterated that the prior obligation of the Village of 850 units ended up being 55 units.

Deputy Mayor Perron pointed out that the resolution refers to five units for rehabilitation on the third page. Mr. Rogers said that he will make sure that the signed resolution refers to four units for rehabilitation. Mayor Vagianos thanked Ms. McManus for guiding the Village so carefully and thoughtfully through the complex affordable housing process.

There was a motion by Councilmember Winograd to suspend the Work Session and convene a Special Public Meeting, seconded by Councilmember Mortimer.

Roll Call Vote

AYES: Councilmembers Mortimer, Perron, Weitz, Winograd, and Mayor Vagianos

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

At the end of the Special Public Meeting, the Work Session was reconvened.

8. DISCUSSION

A. RIDGEWOOD WATER

1. ESTABLISH WATER DEPARTMENT ANNUAL MAINTENANCE FEE

Mr. Kazmark stated that this matter pertains to the establishment of annual maintenance fees for Ridgewood Water, which are paid on all Ridgewood Water properties located in Ridgewood, instead of paying property taxes on these properties.

2. ESTABLISH INTEREST RATES FOR DELINQUENT PAYMENTS TO RIDGEWOOD WATER

Mr. Kazmark explained that this item pertains to the establishment of interest rates for delinquent payments to Ridgewood Water. This resolution authorizes an interest rate of 8% per annum on the first \$1,500.00 and 18% per annum on the balance over \$1,500.00 for nonpayment of bills beyond the due date for all bills in excess of \$50.00. The resolution would also authorize Ridgewood Water to charge a 6% per annum penalty on any fiscal year delinquency in excess of \$10,000.00, as is imposed to taxpayers for the nonpayment of property taxes. Mr. Kazmark said that the above is consistent with New Jersey statutes.

B. PARKING

1. AMEND PARKING REGULATIONS ON LIBRARY PLACE, CORSA TERRACE AND SOUTHWEST PARKING LOT AREA OF PEASE BUILDING

Mr. Kazmark indicated that Christopher Rutishauser, Village Engineer, has sent a memorandum regarding clarification of the parking regulations on Library Place, Corsa Terrace and the parking

lot at the southwest corner of the Pease Library. Northwest Bergen Central Dispatch (NWBCD), a tenant in the Pease Building, has indicated that there is insufficient parking for their staff. In addition, the Parking Enforcement Officers (PEOs) are confused about the parking regulations in those areas. Mr. Rutishauser has asked for changes to the parking ordinances for those aforesaid locations.

Mr. Kazmark pointed out various additions and deletions requested by Mr. Rutishauser. One change would allow for the parking lot adjacent to the Pease Building on Corsa Terrace to be used only for tenants or visitors to the Pease Building. Another change would permit reserved parking spaces for NWBCD on the three easternmost spots on the north side of the eastbound direction of Library Place as it approaches Garber Square. The spaces shall be unmetered and placarded accordingly. The changes in Section G would allow for reserved parking spaces for NWBCD on the northernmost two parking spaces along the west side of Library Place on its approach to the turn toward Garber Square, as well as all of the parking spaces in the parking lot at the southwest corner of the Pease Building. All of these spaces shall also be unmetered and placarded accordingly. Another change would prohibit parking at all times on Library Place from Garber Square to a point 182 feet west thereof, with the exception of the marked parking spaces for NWBCD.

When questioned by Mayor Vagianos, Mr. Kazmark confirmed that these changes are only for clarification and do not change the substance of the parking ordinance.

C. BUDGET

1. AWARD CONTRACT UNDER NORTH JERSEY WASTEWATER COOPERATIVE PRICING SYSTEM, PASSAIC VALLEY SEWERAGE COMMISSION – ADDITIONAL STORM SYSTEM CLEANING AND TV INSPECTION OF SEWER MAINS

Mr. Kazmark indicated that this matter pertains to the awarding of a contract, under the North Jersey Wastewater Cooperative Pricing System through the lead agency, the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission Cooperative Purchasing Program, for additional storm system cleaning and CCTV inspection in the Hope Street and Spring Street areas. It is recommended that this contract be awarded to Rapid Pump and Meter Service Co., Inc., of Paterson, New Jersey, in an amount not to exceed \$40,000.00. Rapid Pump and Meter Service Co., Inc., previously investigated the conditions in the storm sewer collection system in the aforesaid areas, and a number of obstructions were found and cleared. The previous purchase order has been used up, and additional storm system cleaning and TV inspection are needed.

Councilmember Winograd indicated that this storm system cleaning and inspection will not only benefit the nearby homeowners who have experienced repeated flooding, but also the nearby

assets owned by the Board of Education. She thanked the Engineering Department for their efforts in this regard. She added that the outpouring of gratitude from neighbors near Hope Street was very heartwarming.

Deputy Mayor Perron pointed out that the proposal by Rapid Pump and Meter Service, Co., Inc., states that confined space entry is not included in this proposal. She said that such a scenario could occur and the matter would have to be revisited to provide for such confined space entry services, via a Change Order.

Mayor Vagianos thanked Gerry Moore who lives in the Hope Street/Spring Street area for organizing the residents in the area and keeping them informed about the progress being made to alleviate flooding.

2. AWARD CONTRACT – DISPOSAL OF RECYCLABLE MATERIALS

Mr. Kazmark indicated that this item deals with the awarding of a contract for the disposal of recyclable materials for the Recycling Department. On October 9, 2024, the Village awarded a three-year contract, with two additional one-year renewal options, for providing the processing of curbside mixed paper, old corrugated containers, and comingled containers, to Atlantic Coast Recycling. It is recommended that year one of the three-year contract be awarded to Atlantic Coast Recycling of Passaic, New Jersey, in an amount not to exceed \$72,000.00 for 2025.

3. AWARD CONTRACT – 2025 CONCESSION REFRESHMENT SERVICE – GRAYDON POOL

Mr. Kazmark stated that this item pertains to the awarding of a contract for concession refreshment service at the Water's Edge Café at Graydon Pool for the 2025 summer season, with an option for 2026. It is recommended that this contract be awarded to the Legacy Hospitality & Entertainment Group, LLC, of Wayne, New Jersey.

Councilmember Weitz noted that this would be a new vendor at the concession stand at Graydon Pool this year. He said that he assumed due diligence was done by Ms. Bigos regarding this vendor. Mr. Kazmark said that he believed that Ms. Bigos researched other locations serviced by the Legacy Hospitality & Entertainment Group, LLC, and was satisfied that they would be able to provide the required services.

4. **AWARD CONTRACT – ANNUAL MAINTENANCE – SOFTWARE FOR FINANCE DEPARTMENT**

Mr. Kazmark indicated that this matter pertains to the awarding of a contract for annual maintenance of proprietary computer hardware and software for the Finance Department. It is recommended that this contract be awarded to Edmunds & Associates, of Northfield, New Jersey, in an amount not to exceed \$25,000.00. This software is used for tax collection, financial accounting, payroll, escrow accounting, human resources, and accounts receivable functions.

5. **AUTHORIZE RENTAL OF TWO TRUCKS – SANITATION DEPARTMENT**

Mr. Kazmark explained that this item deals with an authorization to continue renting two trucks for the Sanitation Department. The eight-month rental of two Freightliner M2 rear load packer trucks has expired, and the Sanitation Department needs two rear load packer garbage trucks to fill a void that has existed in their fleet since 2023, due to trucks lost to mechanical issues. This rental can be achieved at a reduced price under the Sourcewell Cooperative Purchasing Program, at the price of \$7,300.00 per month, per truck, in an amount not to exceed \$73,000.00 in 2025. Mr. Kazmark indicated that Sean Hamlin, Recycling Coordinator/Supervisor of Solid Waste, will talk more about these trucks during the budget meetings.

6. **ESTABLISH 2025 SIGNIFICANT SEWER DISCHARGER FEES**

Mr. Kazmark indicated that this matter pertains to the establishment of 2025 significant sewer discharger fees. The Village has an ordinance that establishes a fee structure based upon equivalent dwelling units (EDUs) for commercial/industrial, minor and significant dischargers to the Village's sanitary sewage collection system. Nonprofit and tax-exempt properties are billed for the sewage treatment services they receive. The rate for 2023 and 2024 was \$4.70 per 1,000 gallons of flow in excess of 109,500 gallons per year, discharged from commercial properties, as measured by water meter consumption during the two winter quarters. It is recommended by Mr. Rutishauser that the rate for 2025 for significant dischargers be increased to \$4.85 per 1,000 gallons of flow. Nonprofits are billed from the first gallon of water they consume.

7. **ESTABLISH INTEREST RATE FOR DELINQUENT TAXES AND NONPAYMENT OF ASSESSMENTS AND OTHER MUNICIPAL LIENS FOR 2025 AND SET GRACE PERIOD AND DUE DATE**

Mr. Kazmark explained that this item deals with the establishment of an interest rate of 8% per annum on the first \$1,500.00 of property tax delinquency and 18% per annum on any amount in excess of \$1,500.00 becoming delinquent after the due date. This resolution would also permit

the Tax Collector to fix a penalty of 6% per annum on any fiscal year delinquency in excess of \$10,000.00. There will be a ten-day grace period for quarterly tax payments.

8. ESTABLISH INTEREST RATES FOR DELINQUENT PAYMENTS FOR SIGNIFICANT SEWER DISCHARGER BILLS FOR 2025

Mr. Kazmark indicated that this resolution would establish an interest rate of 8% per annum on the first \$1,500.00 for delinquent payments for significant sewer discharger bills for 2025, and 18% per annum on the balance over \$1,500.00 for the nonpayment of bills beyond the due date for all bills in excess of \$50.00. The resolution would also authorize the Tax Collector to charge a 5% penalty per annum on any fiscal year delinquency in excess of \$10,000.00. There will be a 30-day grace period for all bills.

9. AUTHORIZE ELECTRONIC TAX SALES

Mr. Kazmark stated that this resolution would authorize electronic tax sales through New Jersey Tax Lien Investors/RealAuction.com, pursuant to the rules and regulations promulgated by the Director of the Division of Local Government Services.

10. AUTHORIZE CANCELLATION OF TAX OVERPAYMENTS AND DELINQUENT AMOUNTS

Mr. Kazmark stated that this resolution would authorize the cancellation of delinquent property tax amounts or refund of property tax overpayments in amounts less than \$10.00.

11. AUTHORIZE TAX COLLECTOR TO CHARGE FOR MAILING OF TAX SALE NOTICES

Mr. Kazmark explained that this resolution would authorize the Tax Collector to charge for mailing out tax sale notices, which costs are not to exceed \$25.00 for each set of notices for a particular property.

D. OPERATIONS

1. ACCEPT DONATION – NATURAL STONE BENCH

Mr. Kazmark stated that this matter pertains to the acceptance of a donation from the Women Gardeners of Ridgewood of a natural stone bench valued at \$5,000.00 to the Village of Ridgewood Parks and Recreation Department.

**2. ESTABLISH BERKSHIRE ROAD AS A THROUGH STREET AND
ESTABLISH STOP SIGNS ON INTERSECTIONS WITH
BERKSHIRE ROAD**

Mr. Kazmark explained that this matter pertains to a proposed ordinance to establish Berkshire Road as a through street. This would permit the Village to install stop signs at the intersections of streets entering onto Berkshire Road. This is in response to an investigation performed by Sergeant Tarino, of the Ridgewood Police Department Traffic Safety Bureau.

9. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Boyd A. Loving, a Ridgewood resident, stated that he observed the accident that occurred at the intersection of Laurel Avenue and Kenilworth Road. Mr. Loving said that the Ridgewood Fire Department is “the best.” He said that one really needs to witness the prompt and organized actions of the firefighters to truly appreciate what they do, describing it as “poetry in motion.” He said that any funds allocated to the Fire Department in the budget is worth every cent.

Mr. Kazmark indicated that he would pass along Mr. Loving’s comments to Chief Judge, and Mayor Vagianos said that he completely agreed with Mr. Loving.

There were no further comments from the public.

10. RESOLUTION TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION

Ms. Mailander read Resolution #25-102 to go into Closed Session:

11. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Village Council, on a motion by Councilmember Winograd, seconded by Councilmember Mortimer, and carried unanimously by voice vote, the Village Council's Regular Public Work Session was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Paul Vagianos
Mayor

Heather A. Mailander
Village Clerk