

**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 MAY 28, 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 7:34 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.

**2. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Jim Bostler, a resident of Ridgewood, said that he is Chairman of the Open Space Committee. He thanked the Village Council for putting on the agenda this evening the topic of placing a local referendum question on the General Election Ballot, regarding an increase in Ridgewood's Open Space Tax.

Boyd A. Loving, a resident of Ridgewood, thanked the Signal Department for making upgrades to the pedestrian crossing lights at the intersection of North Irving Street and East Ridgewood Avenue. He said that pedestrians wishing to cross the street will now be able to see whether or not the warning lights have been activated.

Mr. Loving said that a Ridgewood resident brought to his attention the fact that the 2025 Village Calendar shows that Juneteenth is scheduled for June 19<sup>th</sup> this year. Mr. Loving said that the relevant Village ordinance should be updated to ensure that people did not have to pay for parking on that day, since it is a national holiday, and to ensure that the noise ordinance was enforced (no commercial power tools on that day). Mr. Loving said that he believed Mr. Rogers made some revisions to these ordinances and that these changes were approved by the Village Council in September 2024. Mr. Loving noted that even though Village Hall will be closed on June 19, 2025, there is a meeting of the Citizens Safety Advisory Committee (CSAC) scheduled in Village Hall on that date. Mr. Loving questioned whether or not such a meeting should take place on Juneteenth. He also asked whether the concert scheduled at the Kasschau Memorial Shell on that date would be related to Juneteenth, or whether the concert should be moved to another date as well.

There were no further comments from the public.

Regarding the CSAC meeting scheduled for June 19<sup>th</sup> at Village Hall, Mr. Kazmark said that he believed the Chair of CSAC is trying to reschedule this meeting for a different date, when Village Hall will be open. Mr. Kazmark said that he did not have any information regarding the concert scheduled to take place at the Kasschau Memorial Shell on June 19<sup>th</sup>, but it was his understanding that concerts are held at the bandshell regardless of whether or not Village Hall is open or closed. Councilmember Weitz said that he will discuss this matter with the Kasschau Memorial Shell Committee to see if the concert can be rescheduled on a date other than June 19<sup>th</sup>.

### **3. VILLAGE MANAGER'S REPORT**

Mr. Kazmark began his Village Manager's report by stating that the Memorial Day celebration this year in the Village was very successful. The Ridgewood Run took place on May 26, 2025, and he thanked everyone who organized this event. In addition, Mr. Kazmark thanked the members of American Legion Post 53 for their annual Memorial Day service, which took place at 11:00 a.m. in Memorial Park at Van Neste Square.

Mr. Kazmark said that the Village has been engaged in ongoing discussions, on a weekly basis, with Beth McManus, the Village's Affordable Housing Planner, regarding the Village's Fourth Round Affordable Housing Plan that must be submitted by the end of June 2025. More details will be forthcoming towards the end of June, and this matter will also be discussed at a future Planning Board meeting.

The West Glen Avenue sidewalk project is moving forward. Consent has been received from all affected property owners who live on the south side of West Glen Avenue, regarding the construction of retaining walls, which requires easements and right-of-access agreements. The Engineering Department and Matthew Rogers, Village Attorney, are working together to effectuate the successful completion of the sidewalks on that side of the street, during the upcoming summer months when schools are closed.

Regarding the Kingsbridge Lane Pedestrian Bridge, Mr. Kazmark said that the bridge is expected to be reinstalled sometime this summer. He stated that, unfortunately, some of the existing infrastructure needs to be upgraded before the bridge can be reinstalled.

Mr. Kazmark said that there is a meeting scheduled tomorrow evening with residents who live on Beverly Road and Heermance Place, near Ridgewood High School, as well as representatives from the Board of Education, Village Council, Police Department, Fire Department, and Engineering Department. The ramifications of the proposed roadway improvements will be discussed, as well as the ability of large fire engines to maneuver the roadway.

Mr. Kazmark stated that the Village has been awarded the amount of \$75,510.00, through a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, to be used towards a sewer pipe lining program on South Broad Street. He said that this is the first time in a long time that Ridgewood has become eligible for CDBG funds, which are to be used for a designated neighborhood.

The opening of Graydon Pool will take place on Saturday, May 31, 2025, and the pool will be open throughout the summer from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. through Labor Day.

The Ridgewood Parks and Recreation Department, in collaboration with the Open Space Committee, will once again be hosting Park Walks this year. The Park Walk in May will take place at Habernickel Family Park on Saturday, May 31, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. Deputy Mayor Perron will be leading this Park Walk, and everyone is encouraged to attend.

Mr. Kazmark stated that irrigation regulations are in effect, which limit watering to two days per week. Residents with even-numbered addresses are permitted to water on Wednesday and Sunday, and residents with odd-numbered addresses are permitted to water on Tuesday and Saturday. No irrigation is allowed on Monday, Thursday or Friday.

The Ridgewood Guild will be sponsoring “Music in the Night” at various locations throughout the Central Business District (CBD) on Friday nights during the summer, beginning on May 30, 2025 and continuing through Labor Day.

Pride Day will be held in the Village this year, in Memorial Park at Van Neste Square, on Saturday, June 7, 2025. There will be an outdoor market from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and the flag raising ceremony will take place at 1:00 p.m. Everyone is encouraged to attend this event.

The Primary Election will be held on Tuesday, June 10, 2025. All polls will be open on that day from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Mr. Kazmark stated that the Holi Festival will take place on Saturday, June 8, 2025 in the parking lot at MacMurphy’s Restaurant, 8 Godwin Avenue, from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Food and snacks, as well as organic colors, will be offered for sale. There will be musical entertainment by Acoustic Dudes, King Jellyfish Band, Millburn Moksha, Sticks and Stones, and The Stilettos.

The Ridgewood Guild is sponsoring free “Movies in the Park” on Wednesday nights at 9:00 p.m. in Memorial Park at Van Neste Square, on June 11, June 25, July 9, July 23, August 6, and August 20, 2025.

Village Hall offices will be closed on June 19, 2025 in observance of the Juneteenth holiday. The Recycling Center will also be closed, and there will be no curbside bulk refuse pickup during that week.

Upcoming Village Council meetings are as follows: Work Sessions on June 4 and June 25, 2025; and Public Meeting on June 11, 2025. All meetings are held at 7:30 p.m.

#### **4. VILLAGE COUNCIL REPORTS**

Councilmember Mortimer gave a shout out to Dave in the Signal Department who recently made four “Bee City” signs for the Village. Ridgewood has been a “Bee City” since 2017, was the 51<sup>st</sup> or 52<sup>nd</sup> municipality in the United States to receive this designation, and was the first municipality in New Jersey to receive this designation.

The Citizens Safety Advisory Committee (CSAC) met on May 15, 2025, and they discussed changing the next CSAC meeting date to a date other than on Juneteenth (June 19, 2025). There was a discussion about the dangerous intersection of East Glen Avenue and Northern Parkway, and Councilmember Mortimer said that the Signal Division will soon be installing a pedestrian-activated crosswalk device at that intersection. At the Public Service Electric & Gas (PSE&G) right-of-way on East Glen Avenue, a radar speed sign will also be installed (a sign which shows the speed at which a car is traveling). Regarding sight triangle obstructions, Councilmember Mortimer stated that five more property owners have brought their properties into compliance, and four new summonses have been issued. Councilmember Mortimer said that since 2024, a total of 41 summonses for sight triangle obstruction violations have been issued, and 34 of those 41 summonses have been resolved.

Councilmember Mortimer said that approval for a leading left-hand turn traffic signal at the intersection of West Glen Avenue and Maple Avenue still needs to be obtained from Bergen County. Councilmember Mortimer also spoke about the roadway revisions planned for Beverly Road, near Ridgewood High School.

Councilmember Mortimer said that the Parks, Recreation and Conservation (PRC) Board met last night, and there was a discussion about adding two more pickleball courts at the Glen School. Nancy Bigos, Director of the Parks and Recreation Department, has been working alongside the Engineering Department to determine that there is sufficient room at the site to add two additional courts. This work will be completed while the existing courts are being resurfaced. Councilmember Mortimer said that the new pavilion at Habernickel Park was supposed to have a grand opening on Saturday, but this has been delayed due to the rainy weather. The grand opening should take place within the next three to four weeks. The equipment and materials needed to complete Phase II of the lighting improvements at Veterans Field were delivered on May 15<sup>th</sup>. Councilmember

Mortimer said that there was also a discussion during the meeting about the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference assessment of various parks in the Village, as well as a discussion about the reopening of Hawes Field at the end of April, after the recent renovations were performed.

Councilmember Winograd reported that the Ridgewood Stigma-Free Committee met recently, and they were joined by the Stigma-Free Committee from Tenaflly. She reminded everyone that May is “Mental Health Awareness Month,” and there has been a great social media campaign developed to spread the word about mental health awareness. Some Best Practices were discussed during the meeting, and some of the Ridgewood social media campaign content was gleaned by the Tenaflly Stigma-Free Committee. Councilmember Winograd thanked Dawn Cetrulo, Director of the Health Department, and Carol Bialkowski, Director of Communications and Special Projects, for their assistance in developing the content for the Stigma-Free Committee.

Councilmember Winograd said that members of the Ridgewood Beautification Team (RBT), Deputy Mayor Perron, and several volunteers participated in Planting Day in the Central Business District (CBD) on May 17, 2025. The RBT has accepted an intern, an economics major at The College of William and Mary, to assist in beautifying the CBD in the next few months.

Councilmember Winograd said that the ACCESS Committee met recently, and they have also accepted an intern to assist on the committee, particularly with the invitation list for the sensory-friendly dinners. There is a member of the ACCESS Committee who dedicates their time to exploring examples of inclusionary playgrounds (which are not necessarily compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act). Councilmember Winograd said that an ACCESS Committee field trip has been planned, which will include children in attendance.

Councilmember Winograd said that 104 saplings will be planted in the Willard School area through the Adopt-A-Sapling program in October of this year, which is a record thus far. This is especially nice, since a lot of large trees in the Willard School area were decimated during Superstorm Sandy. Councilmember Winograd said that the saplings to be planted are less expensive than purchasing bigger trees. She thanked the Shade Tree Commission and the Parks and Recreation Department for their assistance in this regard, including public outreach.

Councilmember Winograd said that the sign fundraising effort, which allows people to purchase street signs of Ridgewood streets, with Project Graduation (Ridgewood High School) has concluded. She explained that many street signs in Ridgewood have been stolen in the past, and this sign fundraising effort was initiated at Ridgewood High School to try to deter such actions in the future. Councilmember Winograd thanked the Signal Division and the members of Project Graduation for their assistance in this regard.

Councilmember Weitz said that he was driving near the intersection of Maple Avenue and Linwood Avenue last week, and he witnessed a serious car accident between two vehicles. A Village employee (not a first responder) took immediate action to block off the accident scene and call emergency responders. This employee then attended to one of the injured drivers. Councilmember Weitz pulled over and attempted to ascertain if the other driver was injured or not. The police response time was between 60 to 90 seconds. The female police officer who first responded was just sworn in at a Village Council meeting a few months ago, yet she quickly took authoritative action like she had been doing this for 20 years. A fire engine, ambulance and more police quickly responded to the scene thereafter, to investigate the accident, obtain witness statements, and help the injured victims.

Councilmember Weitz said that while he will continue to complain about rising taxes, he will never complain about the way tax dollars are spent in Ridgewood, particularly when it comes to public safety and law enforcement. Councilmember Weitz encouraged everyone to thank a first responder whenever they come into contact with one. He said that he sent a commendation email praising the actions of the Village personnel who responded to this accident to the Village Manager's Office, and Mr. Kazmark stated that, in turn, he sent Councilmember Weitz's email to Police Chief Forest Lyons and Fire Chief John Judge to share with their respective employees.

Deputy Mayor Perron said that an Ad Hoc Committee called "Outdoor Air" met yesterday to brainstorm some ideas to present outdoor art in Ridgewood, including murals in various locations and "knit-bombing." She explained that knit-bombing (or yarn bombing) is a type of street art that employs colorful displays of knitted or crocheted yarn on outdoor structures, such as trees or street signs. Individuals interested in this type of art should contact Jeanne Johnson or Deputy Mayor Perron.

Deputy Mayor Perron said that she enjoyed participating in Planting Day with the Ridgewood Beautification Team, since it was well organized and did not take up much of her time. She said that she is looking forward to seeing all of the beautiful flowers grow this year. Deputy Mayor Perron also attended the educational "Parkinsons Walk" sponsored by the Ridgewood YMCA at the Ridgewood Duck Pond. The Schoolhouse Museum held its annual members' meeting with the Historic Preservation Committee recently. Deputy Mayor Perron described The Schoolhouse Museum as one of Ridgewood's "treasures," although it is privately run, and encouraged everyone to visit the museum to view its artifacts and exhibits, such as "Children's Toys in History."

Deputy Mayor Perron spoke about the deadline at the end of June 2025 for the Village to submit its Fourth Round Affordable Housing Plan to the State. A Special Public Meeting will be held with the Planning Board on June 12, 2025 to discuss the Village's Fourth Round Affordable Housing Plan. The regularly scheduled meeting for the Planning Board will take place on June 3<sup>rd</sup>.



Deputy Mayor Perron said that this year's Memorial Day service, held by American Legion Post 53, was particularly memorable. She stated that the students did a wonderful job, and American Legion Post 53 presented a special award and statue this year to Sally Ann Skoric to honor her for her many years of contributing her amazing vocal talent to the organization's events.

Members of the Ridgewood AM Rotary Club will once again be painting the red fireboxes in Ridgewood, concentrating this year on the Heights area to the Willard district. Deputy Mayor Perron said that utilizing these fireboxes is the fastest way to alert the Fire Department during an emergency, even faster than using a cell phone. Richard Tarlton on the Signal Division will supply vests and paint to the volunteers engaged in this event.

Deputy Mayor Perron thanked Ms. Bigos for locating several donors to contribute a total of \$8,600.00, without having to use taxpayer dollars, towards municipal park trail maintenance in conjunction with the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference. The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference will assess Village parks (Irene Habernickel Family Park, Grove Park, Kings Pond/Gypsy Pond Park, Twinney Pond Park, and the Dunham Trail), determine what trail improvements are needed, and will offer training workshops to volunteers and Village employees on how to maintain these trails. Deputy Mayor Perron thanked the Ridgewood Stablehands, Conservancy for Ridgewood Public Lands, Ridgewood AM Rotary Club, and HealthBarn USA, all of whom financially contributed towards this project.

Deputy Mayor Perron stated that Green Ridgewood is once again partnering with the Master's Program at Columbia University, with the Climate School. Approximately 10 to 12 students will start today, for a three-month period, to assess the Saddle River Park System. This park system encompasses six municipalities that run along the Saddle River. Deputy Mayor Perron said that there has been significant erosion, flooding, and downed trees along the banks of the Saddle River over the past few years. The Columbia University students will assess the safety of the area and make suggestions for improvements, if needed.

Mayor Vagianos thanked Deputy Mayor Perron for her never-ending commitment to the environment. Mayor Vagianos also attended the Memorial Day services, which he described as especially moving. There were hundreds of people in attendance at the event. Mayor Vagianos believed that this was the 114<sup>th</sup> consecutive year that American Legion Post 53 has hosted this Memorial Day event. Deputy Mayor Perron said that it was actually the 106<sup>th</sup> year, and that there are 114 names of deceased soldiers who were Ridgewood residents, listed on the memorial.

Mayor Vagianos said that he also attended the Parkinson's Walk, along with hundreds of other people. He thanked Ramon Hache, Executive Director of the Ridgewood YMCA, and Simona Vitali-Bryant, Parkinson's Program Director at the YMCA, for their efforts in organizing this

event. Mayor Vagianos said that Parkinson's disease is a terrible affliction and has personally affected his own family.

Mayor Vagianos said that he was late in attending the Closed Session held this evening, since he was attending the sensory-friendly dinner hosted by the ACCESS Committee (organized by Jaimie Davis). He explained the purpose of the sensory-friendly dinners and how they give families with special needs children the opportunity to dine out in a less stimulating/noisy environment. There will not be any sensory-friendly dinners held during the summer, but they will resume in September of this year.

## **5. DISCUSSION**

### **A. BUDGET**

#### **1. AWARD CONTRACT – CROSSING GUARD SERVICES**

Mr. Kazmark indicated that this matter pertains to the awarding of a contract for the furnishing and delivery of crossing guard services for Village school posts for the Ridgewood Police Department, for the period from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026. One bid was received on March 26, 2024 from All City Management Services, Inc., for a one-year period, with an option to renew for a second year, upon agreement by both parties. The sole bidder in 2024 was All City Management Services, Inc., with a quote of \$576,352.00 for 31 morning and 31 afternoon school crossing guard posts for one school year. It is recommended that the second year of this contract be awarded to All City Management Services, Inc., of Santa Fe Springs, California, in an amount not to exceed \$576,352.00. The successful bidder has agreed to hold their prices to the same as last year's prices.

Councilmember Mortimer said that he appreciates the dedication shown by these school crossing guards, especially since he has two children who attend Travell Elementary School.

#### **2. AWARD CONTRACT – DECONTAMINATION WASHER FOR FIREFIGHTER GEAR**

Mr. Kazmark indicated that this matter pertains to the awarding of a contract for the purchase of a Solo Rescue SCGA decontamination washer from TJII, Inc., of Turtle Creek, Pennsylvania, in an amount not to exceed \$36,395.50. At the time of the grant application made by the Ridgewood Fire Department, the Solo Rescue Decontamination Washer was the only unit on the market that met both National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1851 (standard on selection, care, and maintenance of open-circuit, self-contained breathing apparatus), as well as NFPA 1852 (selection, care, and maintenance of protection ensembles for structural firefighting) standards. This washer



is designed to decontaminate SCBA units, helmets, boots, and gloves. Additional funds for this purchase were obtained through the American Rescue Plan Firefighter Grant. Fire Chief John Judge reached out to two other vendors, but one vendor never responded, and the other vendor ceased communication after Chief Judge requested a New Jersey Business Registration Certificate. The full cost of the purchase (\$36,395.50) will be covered through the American Rescue Plan Firefighter Grant 2024. The current gear washer at Fire Headquarters is used strictly for turnout coats and pants.

**3. AWARD CONTRACT UNDER STATE CONTRACT –  
FIREFIGHTER TURNOUT GEAR**

Mr. Kazmark explained that this matter deals with the awarding of a contract, under State contract, for the purchase of Ricochet Turnout Gear for the Ridgewood Fire Department. Funding for this purchase is available through the American Rescue Plan Firefighter Grant 2024 (\$32,219.61), 2024 Capital Account “Fire – Firefighter Gear” (\$13,003.36), and the 2025 Various Capital Ordinance (\$3,810.83). It is recommended that this contract be awarded to Strategic Safety Dynamics, LLC, of Smithtown, New York, in an amount not to exceed \$49,033.80. This is for the purchase of 12 sets of turnout gear to replace old, outdated gear, and for the purchase of new firefighter hoods for every firefighter. The hoods should be replaced every ten years. These new hoods are completely PFAS-free, as well as particulate blocking, to aid in reduction of cancer.

Councilmember Weitz and Mayor Vagianos both thanked Chief Judge for aggressively pursuing these available grants. Mayor Vagianos noted that these two purchases, which total approximately \$85,000.00, are being offset by grant funds obtained by Chief Judge in the amount of approximately \$68,000.00.

**4. AWARD CONTRACT UNDER STATE CONTRACT – MANHOLE  
FRAMES AND COVERS**

Mr. Kazmark indicated that this item pertains to an award of contract, under the New Jersey State Cooperative Purchasing Program, for the purchase of manhole frames and covers for the Engineering Department. These manhole frames and covers are purchased to replace worn or defective ones, when a street is resurfaced in the Village. Manhole frames and covers are also provided to the contractors resurfacing Bergen County roads in the Village, as the County does not provide them. It is recommended that this contract be awarded to Campbell Foundry Company, of Harrison, New Jersey, in an amount not to exceed \$36,310.00.

**5. AWARD CONTRACT UNDER STATE CONTRACT – LIBERTY  
DIGITAL RECORDING SOFTWARE AND SOUND UPGRADES  
IN SYDNEY V. STOLDT, JR. COURTROOM**

Mr. Kazmark explained that this matter deals with the awarding of a contract, under State Contract, for the purchase of the upgrade and renewal of the Liberty Court Reporter software, as well as the sound system upgrades, for the Village of Ridgewood Court Room.

Dylan Hansen, Director of the I.T. Department, explained the scope of services provided under this contract. He stated that this software will upgrade the recording system that Ms. Mailander currently uses to record Village Council meetings, so that the minutes can thereafter be transcribed through the Liberty Court Player. The current system is over 10 years old. Two additional speakers will be added to the Sydney V. Stoldt, Jr. Courtroom's sound system (in the rear and mid sections of the courtroom), and an additional amplifier will be purchased to control the rear sound from the front. New digital sound boards will be installed in the back of the courtroom, which will allow Mr. Hansen to control the sound when members of the public are speaking from the podium. Processors are also being purchased to avoid any echoing. Mr. Hansen said that the purchase of this additional equipment should enhance the ability of the audience in the courtroom to hear what is being said. This contract does not include the purchase of new microphones. The purchase of new microphones will be looked into, once this phase of the project is completed. It is recommended that this contract be awarded to Business Information Systems (BIS), of Boca Raton, Florida, in an amount not to exceed \$28,140.83.

Councilmember Weitz remarked that the sound quality in the courtroom has been a constant problem for quite a while, and many people in the audience are always complaining that they cannot hear what is being said during Village Council meetings. Councilmember Weitz felt that spending approximately \$28,000.00 for speakers was too expensive. Mr. Hansen clarified that the upgrades to the Liberty Court Player software will cost about \$6,000.00. Councilmember Weitz reiterated that he felt \$28,000.00 was too much to spend to improve the sound quality in the room, and Mr. Hansen again stated that it will cost \$28,000.00 for everything, not just the speakers. It will cost \$6,000.00 for the license for the Liberty Court Player, so that it is compliant for the Municipal Court, and about \$22,000.00 for the audio components (sound boards, amplifier, and speakers).

Councilmember Weitz said that he learned from Mr. Kazmark that no complaints have been received when the courtroom is used for judicial matters in Ridgewood. He asked Mr. Hansen if there is a cheaper alternative than what Mr. Hanson has proposed this evening, to improve the acoustics in the room, and whether or not there are any available grants that he could apply for, to offset the cost of these audio upgrades. Councilmember Weitz asked if the hearing loop systems that will be discussed this evening will be more widely available for use in the Village. Mr. Hansen

replied that the loop is good for people who have hearing-assisted devices, and would not work for everyone. Mr. Hansen again explained that the \$28,000.00 cost is not just for speakers, but rather includes wiring, labor, replacing all sound processors in the back of the room, amplifiers, etc. He explained that it will take four or five days to install all of the additional equipment.

Councilmember Mortimer asked Mr. Hansen if an outside vendor made the proposed recommendations after inspecting the acoustics in the courtroom, or if Mr. Hansen decided on the upgrades himself. Mr. Hansen indicated that two different vendors inspected the courtroom, one of which is used by local municipalities for their municipal audio systems. Only one vendor submitted a full proposal to Mr. Hansen. This vendor (BIS) made its own recommendations. This vendor is also a regional reseller of the Liberty Court Player software. When asked by Councilmember Weitz whether the employees who work for this new vendor are the ones who originally installed the sound system in the courtroom, Mr. Hansen replied that the prior company no longer exists, but that some of the employees from the old company now work for this new vendor.

Mr. Kazmark remarked that BIS “pretty much has the market” in northern New Jersey and has a State Contract, which makes it easier for municipalities to contract with this vendor. He said that a “second set of eyes” also inspected the courtroom to determine what, if anything, needed to be done to improve the acoustics in the room, and he wanted to see if the two proposals differed in any way. However, Mr. Kazmark stated that this second vendor was somewhat difficult to communicate with, which made him feel that if they were not responsive during the bid/quote process, then they would not be responsive if the contract were eventually awarded to them.

Councilmember Mortimer asked if BIS had made any recommendations referable to upgrading the microphones in the courtroom. Mr. Hansen said that BIS looked at the microphones and indicated that they are in good shape, for the most part. However, they recommended new windscreens for them. Once the current microphones are wired into the new sound processors, BIS will be able to determine if the microphones need to be sent out for repairs or if they are satisfactorily working.

Councilmember Weitz said that he was surprised by Mr. Hansen’s statements, since it seems that Councilmember Weitz needs to be “obnoxiously close” to the microphones when he is speaking from the dais. He reiterated that it seems too expensive to spend \$22,000.00 on audio components to improve the sound quality in the courtroom, when he suspects that the sound issues seem to lie with the quality of the microphones. Councilmember Weitz asked if the microphones should be explored first, rather than spending money on upgrading audio components. Mr. Hansen said that, currently, he cannot turn up the gains on the existing microphones to enhance audio clarity, since “feedback” will be heard from the speakers if the gains are turned up. The microphones cannot be made more sensitive at this time. The newer equipment will allow him to adjust the gains on the

microphones, to make them more sensitive to audio output and to avoid feedback from the speakers.

Mayor Vagianos said that he agreed with Councilmember Weitz about the microphones, because he feels that a properly functioning microphone should pick up one's voice if they are in the general vicinity of the microphone. Mayor Vagianos said that he must lean into the microphone to speak from the dais, and he is constantly reminding people speaking at the podium to speak very close to the microphone. He asked if the new audio components would obviate the need for persons speaking from either the dais or podium to place their mouths so close to the microphone. Mr. Hanson said that, according to BIS, the new audio components will enable better functionality of the existing microphones and should obviate the need for people to be extremely close to the microphones while speaking.

Mr. Kazmark stated that Mr. Hansen is merely relaying the statements made to him by BIS, and Mayor Vagianos said that no one is being critical of Mr. Hansen. However, Mayor Vagianos stated that he still feels that the microphones are the real problem with sound quality in the courtroom. There was a discussion about the acoustics in the courtroom and the reason why the gains on the microphones cannot be turned up all the way without getting feedback or reverberation from the speakers. He again asked if there is a less expensive alternative than spending over \$22,000.00 for additional audio components. Mr. Hansen said that the current sound system cannot be adequately adjusted to allow for better sound quality, and even if new microphones were purchased, the current sound system is inadequate to accommodate more functionality and prevent feedback from the speakers. He believes that the new sound equipment will make the current microphones more sensitive, so that there will be better sound quality.

Mr. Kazmark suggested that perhaps the vendor, BIS, could attend a Village Council meeting to make a presentation about the proposed audio components, before a final decision is made about awarding the contract to BIS.

Councilmember Winograd noted that Business Information Systems (BIS) is located in Boca Raton, Florida, but they have a New Jersey State Contract #21-TELE-01333. She asked if the Village Councilmembers could be supplied with a list of New Jersey municipalities who have hired BIS for their sound needs and have been satisfied with their services. She would like to listen to some meetings broadcast by these municipalities to ascertain the sound quality of same. Councilmember Winograd said that she agreed with the purchase of the software and upgrades for the Liberty Court Player. She pointed out that the pervasive sound issues in the courtroom have existed for years and not only affect Village Council meetings, but also meetings and hearings held by the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment, and Municipal Court. She stated that other types of microphones have been sampled, but the more sensitive the microphone, the more

“kickback” there is. Councilmember Winograd emphasized how important sound quality is in the courtroom, since a lot of important meetings are held there.

Councilmember Weitz said that he was told by Mr. Kazmark that there was never a complaint about the sound quality in the courtroom during Municipal Court hearings. Councilmember Weitz asked if the sound problems encountered during Village Council meetings are encountered during Planning Board or Zoning Board of Adjustment meetings.

Councilmember Mortimer said that he would assume the same problems would be encountered during those meetings as well. He felt that focusing on the microphones as being the source of the sound issues was shortsighted. He said that he would like to see the full proposal from BIS, because he believes that the acoustics in the courtroom contribute a lot to the sound quality issues. Councilmember Winograd pointed out that the sound quality on the recorded Village Council meetings is crystal clear. She felt that the addition of two more speakers in the back of the room would help the audience hear what is being said.

Mr. Kazmark said that BIS bought out Gramco Business Communications (Gramco), at a time when Gramco “had the market” in northern New Jersey regarding audio/visual systems for municipalities. Although BIS is based in Florida, they have offices and teams operating in northern New Jersey. Mr. Kazmark said that, based upon responses to a poll/survey he sent out, it was clear that almost every municipality in northern New Jersey uses BIS for their sound system needs. Mr. Kazmark agreed that the sound quality of the recorded meetings is excellent, since no complaints have ever been received.

Addressing Councilmember Weitz’s question, Mr. Kazmark said that he has never heard any complaints about the sound quality in the courtroom from members of the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Adjustment, or from the Municipal Court Administrator. He asked Deputy Mayor Perron if she had ever heard any complaints about the sound quality during such meetings. Deputy Mayor Perron stated that if there is somebody who can’t be heard, it is usually because that person has a handheld microphone and neglects to hold the microphone near their mouth when they are attempting to point out an element on their application. She pointed out that the sound quality in the courtroom ten years ago was much worse than it is now. Deputy Mayor Perron said that the necks on the current microphones are not long enough, and it is not ergonomically beneficial for one to have to lean forward so far just to be heard from the dais. Mr. Hansen said that he would look into whether or not there were extensions which could be placed on the microphones to make the necks longer.

Deputy Mayor Perron asked Mr. Hansen what he meant by there being a “dead zone” in the courtroom. Mr. Hansen said that sometimes the sound is muffled when one sits in certain areas of the courtroom, mostly the back corners of the room, or in the back of the room by the pictures. He

pointed out where the surface-mounted speaker was in the courtroom on the ceiling. Councilmember Winograd suggested that perhaps the chairs in the back of the courtroom could be pushed forward so that the audience could better hear what is being said from the dais.

Councilmember Weitz thanked Mr. Hansen for his work in trying to improve the sound system in the courtroom. He said that he would like to hear more information from the vendor (BIS) before spending approximately \$22,000.00 on additional audio components. He agreed with Deputy Mayor Perron that members sitting on the dais have to hunch over just to get close to the microphones to speak. Councilmember Mortimer said that he would also like to ask additional questions of representatives of the vendor, who are sound engineer professionals. He said that he would like to know specifically the reasoning or science behind their recommendations. There was a consensus that the vendor would be invited to attend a Village Council meeting so that they can answer questions from the Village Councilmembers before a decision is made. Mr. Kazmark directed Mr. Hansen to reach out to BIS to see if their representative could attend the Village Council Work Session on either June 4th or June 25<sup>th</sup>. Councilmember Mortimer asked that the full BIS proposal be included in the packet for the next Village Council meeting, and Mr. Hansen confirmed that he would supply the full proposal to the Village Councilmembers.

**6. AWARD CONTRACT UNDER PASSAIC VALLEY SEWERAGE COMMISSION COOPERATIVE PURCHASING PROGRAM – THREE NETZSCH SLUDGE PUMPS**

Mr. Kazmark indicated that this item pertains to the award of a contract, under the North Jersey Wastewater Cooperative Pricing System, through the Lead Agency, the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission (PVSC) Cooperative Purchasing Program, for the purchase of three Netzsch sludge pumps for the Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF). In monitoring the plant's pumps, it is felt that there is a much greater priority to purchase three replacement Netzsch sludge pumps than the previously awarded three Penn Valley sludge pumps. 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 \$336,325.00. To offset the cost, Christopher Rutishauser, Village Engineer, proposes to use the value in Village Council Resolution No. 25-207 that awarded the purchase of three Penn Valley sludge pumps, plus some other old Capital Fund accounts. Several of the current pumps are wearing out and need frequent repairs.

**7. AWARD CONTRACT UNDER THE INTERLOCAL PURCHASING SYSTEM – FLOOD GATES AT VILLAGE HALL – VARIOUS LOCATIONS**

Mr. Kazmark indicated that this matter pertains to the award of a contract for the purchase of flood mitigation devices for Village Hall, through The Interlocal Purchasing Program (TIPS),



Cooperative Purchasing Program. The door dam flood barriers are used by the Level One entrances to Village Hall whenever there is a warning of potential flood conditions. These barriers have worked well since being installed in 2008, and the only event that overtopped them was Hurricane Irene on August 28, 2011. During several recent installations and demobilizations of the door dams, the Traffic and Signal Division has noticed that the current panels and systems are getting very worn out, and they feel that the system may fail in the future. They are recommending replacement of the current door dams. The original company that installed the door dams is no longer in business, but Rich Tarleton, Superintendent of Traffic and Signal, has found a local company that makes a product that can be retrofitted into the existing concrete flood walls. It is recommended that this contract be awarded to Orange Flood Control, LLC, of Old Tappan, New Jersey, in an amount not to exceed \$171,250.00. Funding for same is contained in some old Capital Accounts.

Mayor Vagianos asked how many Level One entrances will be covered by the door dams, and Mr. Kazmark said that there is the entrance to the Community Center, the main lobby entrance on the first floor, multiple entryways in the back of Village Hall, along the Police Department area, and the lunchroom entrance. Mayor Vagianos remarked that the sum of \$171,250.00 seems like a lot of money to spend on door dams, but acknowledged that he does not know much about the actual system. Mr. Kazmark assured Mayor Vagianos that Mr. Tarleton extensively explored options for the flood mitigation devices.

Deputy Mayor Perron said that she noted the jamb mounts located near the Police Department entrance, lunchroom entrance, and Senior Center, but she did not notice any such jamb mounts near the main lobby entrance to Village Hall or the employee entrance. Mr. Kazmark explained that some of the jamb mounts are built into the façade of Village Hall, such as shown on the page in the proposal showing the Sally Port Garage, where the tongue-and-groove is built into the façade of the lower part of the cement wall. Mr. Kazmark said that there are areas where the entrance doors are wider, and center supports are needed in those areas. He described the configuration of the components comprising the door dams and mounts, and how “arms” can be installed during a flood event to connect the door dams together.

**8. AUTHORIZE CHANGE ORDER – IRRIGATION SYSTEM SERVICES – UPGRADE OF IRRIGATION SYSTEM AT COMMUNITY GARDENS**

Mr. Kazmark indicated that this matter pertains to the authorization of a Change Order to the 2024 irrigation bid, due to an outstanding project at the Community Garden. Ms. Bigos has indicated in her memo that the Community Garden’s irrigation system has experienced continuous breakages for the past several years, due to age and the use of substandard piping. She has determined that the most effective and sustainable solution was to upgrade the existing infrastructure to a more



reliable irrigation system. The 2024 irrigation bid was contracted for \$18,000.00, and the additional cost of repairs at the Community Garden is \$6,575.00, for a total amount of \$24,575.00. This Change Order is requested for these repairs.

**9. INCREASE FEES FOR CONNECTION TO SANITARY SEWER COLLECTION SYSTEM**

Mr. Kazmark indicated that this matter pertains to an increase in fees for connection to the sanitary sewer collection system. Mr. Rutishauser's memorandum indicates that the last time fees were raised was three years ago and, in light of the current economic conditions, he is recommending that the Village consider increasing the fees for connecting to the Village's sanitary sewer collection system. Connection fees are a one-time fee. Annual service charges will still apply to any new connections from outside of the Village.

**B. POLICY**

**1. PLACE LOCAL REFERENDUM QUESTION ON GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT – INCREASE RIDGEWOOD'S OPEN SPACE TAX**

Mr. Kazmark indicated that this matter pertains to a recommendation to raise the Open Space Tax from 0.005 cents per \$100.00 valuation, averaging \$36.00 per household in 2024, to 0.01 cents per \$100.00 valuation, which would result in an increase of approximately \$36.00 per average household. Mr. Kazmark pointed to a memorandum from James Bostler, Chairman of the Open Space Committee, in which he recommends raising the Open Space Tax. He is recommending that a local referendum question be placed on the General Election ballot in November 2025 to increase Ridgewood's Open Space Tax. Mr. Bostler felt that this adjustment is essential to meet the Village's growing demand for open spaces and recreational facilities. Mr. Kazmark said that a decision on whether or not to do so would need to be made by the Village Councilmembers by no later than mid-August 2025.

Councilmember Mortimer, who is the Village Council Liaison to the Open Space Committee, said that it is important to first look at how the current Open Space Tax has enabled the Village to obtain significant acquisitions, such as Habernickel Park, the Schedler property, and the expansion of Citizens Park. Regarding the Schedler property, Councilmember Mortimer said that while there has been some disagreement about how to develop that property, the Open Space Tax enabled the Village to purchase this property, save the historic house, and plan for the development of a park on the site, rather than have a developer construct a 7-11, industrial gas station, or commercial complex on the property, which would have generated a lot of traffic.

Councilmember Mortimer said that with the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic and increased outdoor activities, it became clear that the Village had a shortage of open space to accommodate the need for not only participation in sports, but for residents to engage in a healthy lifestyle and various interests, such as yoga. The amount of open space has not increased in the Village since the pandemic, so discussions at meetings of the Parks, Recreation and Conservation Board revolve around how to manage that shortage of open space. He said that the additional \$36.00 per household raised by increasing the Open Space Tax would significantly enhance the Village's capacity to respond promptly when properties become available and to strategically plan future acquisitions. Councilmember Mortimer said that he was in favor of letting Ridgewood residents decide via referendum whether or not to increase the Local Open Space Tax.

Deputy Mayor Perron stated that she was the former Village Council Liaison to the Open Space Committee. She felt that the increase of the Open Space Tax, as described in Mr. Bostler's memorandum, was erroneous, but a discussion ensued wherein it was explained that the increase would be raised from half a cent (0.005) to one cent (0.01) for every \$100.00 of valuation. Deputy Mayor Perron said that over the past 20 years, the Village has used the Open Space Trust Fund to pay the Village's debt service for the purchases of parkland, totaling around \$300,000 annually, over a 20-year period (approximately \$5 million). She said that Habernickel Park has been paid off, and the Village must continue to act as a good steward of its parks. She stated that the Village is statutorily allowed to use monies in the Open Space Trust Fund for maintenance of its parks. Deputy Mayor Perron said that as one walks through the parks in Ridgewood, one can see evidence of flooding, erosion, and invasive plants, and she believes that Village parks could be maintained better. Deputy Mayor Perron said that she was in favor of placing this referendum question on the November 2025 General Election ballot, and she expressed the hope that Ridgewood residents will make intelligent decisions when it comes time to vote on this referendum question, this coming November.

Councilmember Weitz said that the Open Space Tax is a wonderful use of tax dollars, and will only add approximately \$36.00 to the average tax bill. He said that he is a staunch supporter of democracy, and is in favor of placing this referendum question on the November 2025 General Election ballot, so that Ridgewood citizens can decide whether or not they will agree to increase the Open Space Tax.

Councilmember Winograd said that she is a "big fan" of open space, and she thanked the Open Space Committee for bringing this matter to the attention of the Village Council. She said that she wanted to make sure that the public understands exactly what the referendum question will represent on the November 2025 General Election ballot. Councilmember Winograd said that all of the Village parks are overutilized, particularly Memorial Park at Van Neste Square. She said that she was in favor of placing this referendum question on the November 2025 General Election ballot, particularly since there will be a large turnout for the gubernatorial election. She said that

without the Open Space Trust Fund, Habernickel Park would have become a housing complex and the Schedler property would have become a strip mall.

Mayor Vagianos agreed that Village parks get a lot of use, and he agreed with most of the comments made this evening. He said that if the Village had not purchased the Habernickel or Schedler properties, they would have been overdeveloped into either housing complexes or strip malls. Mayor Vagianos indicated that he is in favor of placing this referendum question on the November 2025 General Election ballot, so that Ridgewood citizens can decide whether or not they will agree to increase the Open Space Tax.

Mr. Kazmark then described the process by which the referendum question would be sent by the Village Clerk's Office to the Bergen County Clerk's Office for placement on the November ballot. Ms. Mailander would need to prepare an appropriate resolution, which would include the actual ballot question. The resolution, after adoption by the Village Council, would then be sent to John Hogan at the Bergen County Clerk's Office.

### **C. OPERATIONS**

#### **1. AUTHORIZE MEMBERSHIP IN THE INTERLOCAL PURCHASING SYSTEM (TIPS) NATIONAL PURCHASING COOPERATIVE**

Mr. Kazmark explained that this matter pertains to consideration by the Village Council to adopt a resolution authorizing the Village to join The Interlocal Purchasing System (TIPS). TIPS is a national purchasing cooperative, and the relevant resolution authorizes the Village Manager to execute any necessary agreements. This cooperative can be another means with which the Village can save money on its purchasing.

#### **2. ACCEPT DONATIONS – NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY TRAIL CONFERENCE – TRAIL PLAN AND WORKSHOPS – VARIOUS PARKS**

Mr. Kazmark stated that this item pertains to the acceptance of donations totaling \$8,600.00 from several Ridgewood-based community organizations, for the purpose of allowing the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference to do assessment walkthroughs and obtain GPS data collection, along the trail systems within the Irene Habernickel Family Park, Grove Park, Kings Pond/Gypsy Pond Park, Twinney Pond Park and the Dunham Trail. Recommendations will be made regarding municipal park trail maintenance. Documentation of these findings will be produced for both internal municipal use, and three training workshops will also be conducted. These donations have been made by the Conservancy for Ridgewood Public Lands (\$3,000.00); The Ridgewood AM

Rotary Club (\$2,500.00); HealthBarn USA (\$2,200.00); and the Ridgewood Stablehands (\$900.00).

Mayor Vagianos thanked all of the organizations who generously contributed towards this project.

**3. DECLARE PROPERTY SURPLUS – ENGINEERING VEHICLE**

Mr. Kazmark said that this matter deals with the declaration of surplus property from the Engineering Division, specifically a 2010 Ford Escape. This vehicle has been flooded several times, but has been able to be used after each event. However, it has been discovered that the flooding has led to accelerated corrosion of the vehicle's subframe. Fleet Services has recommended that this vehicle not be used and declared as surplus property, as the frame corrosion may cause a structural frame failure at any time. In discussing the situation with the Police Department, the Police Department offered to take the Ford Escape for trade-in on future leases of vehicles for their department. An old police car would then be used as a replacement for the Ford Escape.

**4. AUTHORIZE GRANT APPLICATION THROUGH BERGEN COUNTY – HEARING LOOP FOR ANNIE ZUSY YOUTH CENTER, PATRICK A. MANCUSO SENIOR CENTER, AND SYDNEY V. STOLDT, JR. COURTROOM**

Mr. Kazmark said that Carol Bialkowski, Director of Communications and Special Projects, has been working on a special grant application through Bergen County, to obtain grant monies for the purpose of installing hearing loop systems in the Annie Zusy Youth Center, Patrick A. Mancuso Senior Center, and Sydney V. Stoldt, Jr. Courtroom, to enhance communication and language access for the deaf and hard of hearing community.

Ms. Bialkowski stated that a "hearing loop" is the gold standard of technology for people who are experiencing hearing loss. If a hearing loop were to be installed in the Sydney V. Stoldt, Jr. Courtroom, for example, a thin copper wire would be installed under flooring material or along a ceiling to create a "looped zone" in a room. A sound source, such as a microphone, feeds into an amplifier. The amplifier sends a current through the hidden copper wire, generating a magnetic field. The telecoils built into most hearing aids and cochlear implants pick up the magnetic signal, and the hearing aid converts the signal into sound that is customized for the listener's individual pattern of hearing loss. Portable loop receivers are provided for people who do not have a hearing device with a telecoil. Hearing loops, an ADA-compliant communications technology, allows people with hearing loss to listen to clear, intelligible sound, regardless of background noise or distance from the source of the sound.

Ms. Bialkowski stated that the New Jersey Department of Human Services is offering grants to counties (maximum \$70,000.00 award per county) to enhance communication and language access for the deaf and hard of hearing. Bergen County is willing to apply for the grant on behalf of the Village, and the deadline to do so is May 30, 2025. She thanked Councilmember Winograd for her efforts in this regard.

Quotes have been received from two vendors, and Ms. Bialkowski said that she would recommend using Audio Directions as the Village's vendor. She said that Chip and Sally from Audio Directions spent two hours onsite with Deanna Schablik, who runs the programs at the Community Center, and Jovan Mehandezic, of the Engineering Department, going through all three rooms to ascertain what would be needed to enhance communications. The quote from Audio Directions for installing the required equipment in all three rooms amounts to \$62,500.00. However, additional equipment must be installed by the Village in the Senior Lounge and Youth Center, and Ms. Bialkowski obtained a quote from Rich Tarleton regarding the audio equipment that would need to be purchased for those two rooms. This additional equipment would cost \$19,050.00. These two amounts combined total \$81,550.00, but the maximum amount of the grant is only \$70,000.00. In preparation for receiving this grant, and not knowing exactly how much grant funds would be awarded, Bergen County would need to know beforehand whether or not the Village plans to fund the remaining sum or reduce the number of rooms in which hearing loops are installed (in order to remain under \$70,000.00).

Mr. Kazmark said that there is some money available in open capital through I.T., and he recommended that these funds be used to bridge the gap between the available grant monies and the actual cost of equipping all three rooms. He felt that it was critical to outfit the Senior Lounge and Youth Center with the hearing loops, especially since those rooms are widely used by the senior community in Ridgewood. Ms. Bialkowski added that Sheila Brogan and Beth Abbott, Co-Chairs of Age-Friendly Ridgewood, are both in favor of this project. Mayor Vagianos and Deputy Mayor Perron stated that they are both very excited about this project.

Upon questioning by Deputy Mayor Perron, Ms. Bialkowski said that the copper wiring in the courtroom would go under the carpeting, and the wiring in the Youth Center and Senior Lounge would be installed along the floor in a figure-eight pattern and would not present a tripping hazard.

Councilmember Mortimer asked what the life expectancy was of this hearing loop system. Ms. Bialkowski replied that Audio Directions warrants their system for seven years. Councilmember Mortimer noted that hearing loop receivers with headphones or earbuds would be available for hard-of-hearing individuals to use, if they did not have hearing aids or had hearing aids without telecoils in them. Ms. Bialkowski stated that four portable listening devices per room would be included in the price quoted by Audio Directions. Councilmember Mortimer suggested that perhaps two more portable listening devices for the hearing loop system be purchased separately,

for use in the courtroom. Ms. Bialkowski stated that each headphone device costs approximately \$355.00, but Audio Directions would supply a total of 12 headphone devices, so they can be swapped out from room to room, when necessary. Councilmember Winograd stated that the Village already owns four similar headphones, but they are intended for use by disabled individuals (for ADA compliance) rather than strictly by individuals with hearing loss.

Mayor Vagianos thanked Ms. Bialkowski for her hard work in researching this grant application and project, and he said that it was obvious that all of the Village Councilmembers are as excited as she is about this project. Councilmember Winograd praised Ms. Bialkowski for her efforts in this regard as well. She said that hearing loss is prevalent in people of all ages, not just the elderly population. She described it as the “invisible disability.” Councilmember Winograd said that she fully supports this project. Ms. Bialkowski shared that she personally suffered a hearing loss at a very young age.

Councilmember Weitz expressed his support for this project as well. He asked Mr. Kazmark to elaborate on the “old capital funds” through the I.T. Department to offset the cost of this project. Mr. Kazmark replied that there are available funds in some old capital accounts with the I.T. Department (approximately \$11,000.00) that can be used to pay for the excess costs of this project.

## **6. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Chris Dobson, a resident of Ridgewood, spoke about Federal grants and the current “upheaval” in the administration in Washington, D.C., with agencies being closed and Federal workers being laid off. He feels that it would behoove the Village to develop a “Federal grant strategy” to ensure that the Village is able to receive as many Federal grants as possible. He gave kudos to the Village Councilmembers for their positive actions taken in Village government, and to Ridgewood citizens who show up to express their concerns at Village Council meetings and hold Village officials accountable.

Boyd A. Loving, a resident of Ridgewood, said that he believed that Councilmember Mortimer stated this evening that 11 property owners in Ridgewood have been issued summonses for sight triangle obstruction violations, but have not yet brought their properties into compliance. Mr. Loving said that it concerns him that a Ridgewood resident would receive a summons and not take action to correct the situation. He asked what further steps are taken by the Village, if a property owner does not bring their property into compliance.

There were no further comments from the public.

Addressing Mr. Loving’s question, Mr. Kazmark said that regarding a property owner ignoring a summons received for a sight triangle obstruction violation, the Municipal Court Judge has the

discretion to issue a bench warrant against the property owner. This decision cannot be made by the Village Council or Village Manager.

Addressing Mr. Dobson's comments, Mr. Kazmark stated that the Village has already "fell victim" to the upheaval being witnessed in Washington, D.C. A few weeks ago, the Village was notified late on a Friday evening that the Village would be losing some Federal grant monies which had been granted to the Ridgewood Health Department. Fortunately, a Federal Judge put a stay on that decision, and the Village is still seeking guidance from the State of New Jersey as to how the Village will deal with the loss of Federal funds now, and in the future. These grant monies were used to hire two full-time employees to perform services for the Health Department. Mr. Kazmark said that most of the money previously allocated was previously approved by Congress, so those funds are somewhat protected, since it is a Congressional authorization. Mr. Kazmark assured everyone that the Village is thoroughly vetting all available Federal grant opportunities.

Councilmember Winograd clarified for the public that the grant for the hearing loop system, previously discussed this evening, is a grant available through the State of New Jersey and not through the Federal government.

Addressing Mr. Loving's concerns, Mayor Vagianos said that once a summons is issued to a Ridgewood property owner for a sight triangle obstruction violation, the matter becomes an issue for the court to decide. The court can issue a bench warrant or fines for noncompliance. Councilmember Mortimer said that summonses are now being issued rather than just warning letters, resulting in more compliance by property owners, within the past few months.

Matthew Rogers, Village Attorney, said that if a summons is ignored by a property owner until a court adjudication, then the court has the discretion to enhance the penalty, depending upon the egregious nature of the violation. Mr. Kazmark added that at the time a bench warrant is issued by the court, the property owner would have had no fewer than six to eight forms of communication from Village officials/employees. Property owners receive initial packets which include photographs of the sight obstruction, as well as backup information such as the relevant ordinance, with a diagram of how the obstruction must be abated, together with follow-up warning letters, visits from the Police Department or Engineering Department, and multiple violation notices.



**7. 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 9:07 p.m.

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Paul Vagianos  
Mayor

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Heather A. Mailander  
Village Clerk