

**BOROUGH OF RIVER EDGE
MAYOR AND COUNCIL
WORK SESSION MINUTES
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2016**

PRESENT:

Mayor	Edward J. Mignone
Councilman	Vito Acquafredda
Councilman	Alphonse Bartelloni
Councilwoman	Ellen Busted
Councilwoman	Mary Davis
Councilman	Thomas Papaleo

ALSO PRESENT:

Borough Attorney	Thomas Sarlo
Borough Administrator	Alan Negreann
Borough Clerk	Stephanie Evans

ABSENT:

Councilwoman	Kathleen Murphy
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Mayor Mignone called the meeting to order 7:00 PM by reading the Open Public Meetings Act and asking for a roll call.

BOROUGH ADMINISTRATOR'S TOPICS

1. **Garbage Collection Bids** – Mr. Negreann explained that at the last meeting we had presented some material with regards to the garbage collection bids, please remember we had one bid from Sterling, the costs did exceed our current contract by more than \$100,000.00 each year. We heard from the contractor and the contractor's representative. The Borough Attorney researched the bond and it's his understanding from the Clerk that we do have the renewal bond and other documents in hand regarding the requirements. So it is his recommendation that we reject the Sterling bid on basis it really exceeds our budget and cost estimates for this work and we award to our current contractor. We have resolutions on both actions tonight, 16-346 would be to reject the bid, the Sterling bid, and 16-347 would be to award to Galaxy or to Smentkowski as the collector. Mayor Mignone asked when we get to consent we table one, Mr. Negreann said no one we have to reject the bids and make the award, we have to do both. Mayor Mignone said we are renewing Smentkowski's contract. Mr. Negreann asked if the Borough Attorney had any additional comments. Mr. Sarlo stated that he was in touch with New Milford's attorney and they were in much the same position as River Edge, they didn't go out to bid but they were waiting for the bond to renew their option and that bond did come in and he reviewed it and they were awarding the contract and everything was in order. Mr. Sarlo reviewed our performance bond which was the last piece we were waiting on and he didn't have a problem with approving the option based on the documentation he received. Mr. Negreann said that he did received today a resolution from New Milford where they made they made their award from October 16, 2016 to October 15, 2017.
2. **2017 Citizens Budget Committee** – Mr. Negreann stated that it has been the custom of the borough and he was here tonight to receive direction on the appointments of the Citizens Budget Committee members. The Budget Committee is something this town has been doing since the 1970's, we've included citizens in on our budget preparation process. We had six citizens last year and if you approve extending an offer to them to

participate for 2017 we would send out letters of invitation to them and list those that desire to participate. Mayor Mignone thought that was a good first step to reach out, he assumed they would all like to participate again this year and we will find out. If anyone has any other recommendations we can take those up at the end of the year. Councilman Papaleo said that they hadn't received prior notice of the names and it would be good if they could be emailed to the council. Mayor Mignone asked Mr. Negreann to read the list of the members from last year which were: Albert Ruhlman, Anthony Barbary, Michael Ginch, Kenneth Krautheim, Constantin Cracusescu, and Theresa Esposito. Mr. Negreann thanked the Mayor and said he would get the correspondence out to everybody. Also just for the council's information the Finance Committee's meeting has been rescheduled for October 3rd to review our debit position followed by another Finance Committee meeting on October 17th to review salaries and wages and make some recommendations after they have done those reviews. Then typically our forms will be going out to our departments in the next several weeks giving them several weeks to response in various categories that we have and then to come back to the council about starting to schedule budget preparation meetings. Mayor Mignone asked Mr. Negreann if maybe we could update more of those trend tables we had over the years, maybe we could update some of the older ones. Mr. Negreann said he was looking at that today

WORK SESSION CONSENT AGENDA

1. Amend Contract with Matthew Giacobbe, Esq., Labor Attorney in the amount not to exceed \$5,000.00
2. Amend Contract with Anthony Suarez, Esq., Special Counsel for COAH in the amount not to exceed \$3,000.00
3. Approve the Recreation Commission's request for banner placement at 140 Kinderkamack Road from September 28th through October 16th to promote River Edge Day

Councilwoman Busted stated that Bobbi Conway asked that she add #3, add a sign on Continental by the American Legion where the current Farmers Market sign is at the conclusion of the market, which would be September 28th and she discussed with Councilwoman Davis and they were in agreement it would be ok. Mayor Mignone said the market isn't ending on the 28th, it is going until the end of October, and we approved it go until October 31st. Councilman Acquafredda agreed with this statement. Councilwoman Davis stated that the vendors needed to know this. Mayor Mignone said that Anderson Farms knew this because he had been in discussions with them about it, because they were surprised it was going to end so early. Mayor Mignone also confirmed that the date was done by resolution with the Clerk. He was sure John Lynch could find a way to have both. Councilwoman Busted said she would amend the request to have a 2nd River Edge Day banner at a location to be determined around the American Legion. Mayor Mignone said at a location to be determined, if we have to remove, we can always move the Farmers Market sign at this point since we only a couple more weeks. Councilwoman Davis we should left, if she didn't know what was going on she didn't think the rest of the people did either. Mayor Mignone said that people have asked him why is it saying that because last year it went to October 20th and we approved it to go to October 31st. Councilwoman Davis said that she knows it's been on the ads an on everything else saying the end of September. The vendors just talked her this past week asking if they there going to have a "Harvest Day". Mayor Mignone said that he know Bob Silvestri was intending on staying through October because he had said so, and Anderson had said he was staying through October. He had just confirmed this with the

vendors this past weekend. Councilwoman Busted asked if they could approve a 2nd banner location to be determined between Bobbi Conway and the Superintendent of Public Work, John Lynch.

Mr. Sarlo made reference to #2 regarding Mr. Suarez, we are going to have a closed session at the next meeting regarding 7-eleven litigation. There has been some developments with COAH, but he wasn't particularly certain about River Edge but he knows a lot of towns that has been some movement. Since we are going into closed session if you want a report and you would like Mr. Suarez to come in. Mayor Mignone said we were supposed to have a meeting with the master at the end of August and it was delayed and it wasn't rescheduled. We can schedule it and he doesn't know if that meeting ever took place because he wasn't privy to that. It was his understanding it was going to happen towards the end of this month. If there is information be sure to put it on the agenda. Mr. Sarlo agreed to that and said he would ask him if there is an update because a lot of towns are meeting the Special Master and starting to formulate plans. Mayor Mignone said we had a meeting scheduled but certain people's vacations got in the way and couldn't reschedule and they were trying for the end of September and he hasn't been given any notice since then. Mr. Sarlo said so in closed session then. Mayor Mignone said that would be a good idea.

Motion by Councilman Papaleo, second by Councilman Bartelloni to approve.
All in favor 5-0

Motion by Councilman Papaleo, second Councilman Bartelloni to approve.
All in favor 5-0

FOR DISCUSSION

1. **Health Waivers** – Mr. Negreann explained that in 2010 the law changed with regards to health benefits and the borough implemented a program for health waivers. That meant any employee who had coverage from another source could receive a stipend in lieu of taking our coverage. So we have, as of today, we have 7 employees who have elected to go under their spouse's plan or have some other form of coverage in lieu of taking our coverage through the State's health benefit's plan. They are allowed to receive 25% of the premiums savings to the borough not to exceed \$5,000.00. We received another directive at the beginning of August from the State stating that we need to recalculate the way the methodology has been presented to by deducting any co-pays the employee has made from the amount of the premium then take the 25% not to exceed \$5,000.00. This will mean a reduction in the benefits to the 7 employees of a few hundred dollars depending on what level of coverage which they took and how much they have for a co-pay. That information was put into a payroll stuffer for the employees and they will be receiving that very shortly. There is also a Best Practice requirement stating that the Mayor and Council should have a discussion over it as to where they would like to continue having this program in the future, it is not subject to collective bargain, it is totally at the discretion of the governing body to do this. He can tell you that had all of those 7 employees selected single coverage we would be saving in excess of \$40,000.00, had all those employees elected family coverage we would be saving in excess of \$184,000.00. Not everybody took a family plan, there is some combination there, but we are saving a significant amount of money by offering this plan to the employees and he would recommend we continue to do this even though the State is asking us to examine it each and every year. He wanted to update the Mayor and Council to a slight change in the program and also the benefit we have and frankly meet the Best Practice requirement that we bring to your attention and have a discussion on it. If you have any questions, he would be happy to answer at this time. Mayor Mignone started by saying the 25% of a family plan would be much more

than 15% of a single plan, Mr. Negreann replied a family plan is a little over \$31,000.00, and a single plan is a little over \$11,000.00. Husband and wife plan is a little over \$22,000.00, and that is for the Direct 10 or the Direct 15 Programs. There are other programs or levels of coverages that are offered in the State benefits, most of our employees are either in the Direct 10 or 15. Councilman Papaleo said to satisfy the requirement to have a discussion, he doesn't mind talking about it, and he thinks it's a good idea. Mayor Mignone was wondering if there was a way of taking it a little lower, its saving a significant amount of dollars. There was further discussion. Mr. Negreann thanked the Mayor for the opportunity and said this was all he on this for tonight.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Grove Street
Borough of River Edge Senior/Community Center
Shade Tree Commission
Sidewalk and Curb Responsibility

Councilwoman Busted wanted to mention the purchase of speed back signs and she would like to move that along by requesting Mr. Negreann work with the Borough Engineer to identify, how should we move this along. Mayor Mignone said we should maybe get a couple of recommendations from Mr. Ascolese, to him he thinks it would be best to start with mobile ones so we could move them and they can be purchased under State contract and probably the quickest way to get them. Mr. Negreann said what we try to do is aggregate our capital needs that is the most efficient and cost effective way of doing the finances, so rather than do individual capital purchases throughout the year we try and prepare a program then put into a bond ordinance so we have the attorney working on it only once, we don't have several ordinances that have to be advertised and legal costs and things of that nature so certainly Mr. Ascolese can make his recommendations and he thinks the Police Chief can go out and do the leg work on proposals and do the quotations and we will have that ready for the capital budget. As soon as we go through our process then this could be purchased. Mayor Mignone said he doesn't consider, this are probably, you are looking at aggregate less than \$5,000.00. Mr. Negreann said it should then come out of an operating budget. Mayor Mignone said it was put on the capital budget but as, we paid as capital surplus as he remembered, that is how we accounted for it in the budget. It can be check, but we should at least get it started and get specifications. Mr. Negreann asked if they were saying these were provided for already, Mayor Mignone and Councilwoman Busted both replied yes. Mr. Negreann said he will double check and see where the Police Chief is on it. Councilwoman Busted said that the County did send a letter regarding Kinderkamack and Midland pedestrian improvements and they approve that we could put an LED lighted sign on Midland and we should perhaps consider that as part of this as well. She knows that Traffic and Safety was going to be making a recommendation about one that they felt one was good along with the police department's input. Mayor Mignone said the other sign that was asked to go there, he is getting a little leery of too much signage and getting blinded to signage, but Chief Cariddi had also wanted on coming down towards Kinderkamack, he wanted a sign like we have at the triangle coming out to Kinderkamack "right turn on red after full stop" and we don't have that. He thought the county was going to do that, and the Mayor wasn't sure who is supposed to do it. It was the Chief's understanding from his discussion with Mr. Ascolese at one point so we just need to follow up to see where there is, it isn't a major sign for us to procure. Councilman Bartelloni mentioned that the report also recommended a particular path for

the children to take, is there any sort of public education program you are going to work with in terms of educating them saying cross here. Councilwoman Busted said Sergeant Varrecchia was going to be speaking with the children about the proper way of crossing. Councilwoman Busted asked Mr. Negreann if he had what he needed, and he replied he was going to reach out to the Chief and see where he is and remind him these funds are available.

Mayor Mignone addressed Mr. Sarlo regarding a draft on abandoned properties. Mr. Sarlo said yes the abandoned properties draft will be ready for the next meeting and the Mayor sent him correspondence to review and this could be listed and circulated, but he wanted to discuss it with the Mayor before to make sure they were in agreement.

Mayor Mignone stated that he really wanted to work on some of this Shade Tree issues. Mr. Sarlo said he should sit down with Shade Tree and talk with them at their next meeting.

Mayor Mignone and Councilwoman Davis discussed the Farmers Market. Mayor Mignone said that last year they went to the third week of October, Paramus ended the second week. He had said to them that if they wanted to continue to the end of October, the vendors told him as long as they had produce to provide, they are at the end of their crops, they thought at least the 2 or 3 week of October, he hadn't gotten official confirmation yet. Councilwoman Davis said that she know everyone had talked about having an "October Day". Mayor Mignone said last year one of the issues was the resolution stated the market would end the first week in October but they continued past the date of the resolution without permission. That was one of the reasons we decided to make it open-ended to the end of October because of one of the things that happened last year.

Mr. Negreann wanted to report on the Library barrel vault, it looks like it's all completed and we will be looking for architect to be submitting final payments to the contractor. In his own opinion he thinks it turned out very good, and Mayor Mignone agreed. It was also stated and agreed to wait at least 6 weeks before issuing final payment. Mayor Mignone said he would prefer the first frost just to see what happens at least 6-8 weeks and then let him say it's secured and there are no loose pieces. It has been so long in the making let's make sure it's done and done correctly.

NEW BUSINESS

MOTION TO OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Motion by Councilman Acquafredda, second by Councilman Bartelloni to open.
All in favor 5-0

MOTION TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING

Motion by Councilman Acquafredda, second by Councilman Bartelloni to close.
All in favor 5-0

MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 7:24 PM

Motion by Councilman Acquafredda, second by Councilwoman Busted.
All in favor 5-0

Stephanie Evans, RMC
Borough Clerk