

A Regular Meeting of the City Council was held Tuesday, January 12, 2016 at 8:15 PM in the Council Chamber in City Hall, 111 Outwater Lane, Garfield, NJ 07026.

Mayor Tana M. Raymond presided. City Clerk Andrew J. Pavlica announced that the meeting was being held in accordance with provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act and that adequate notice was provided by mail, fax and email to the official City newspapers and to other interested parties and by posting the meeting notice on the bulletin boards in City Hall.

Councilmembers Present: Frank J. Calandriello, Louis G. Aloia, Joseph Delaney, Glenn A. Mati and Tana M. Raymond

Also Present: City Manager Thomas J. Duch, City Clerk Andrew J. Pavlica, City Attorney Representative John Ferraro of the Law Firm of Bruno and Ferraro (for City Attorney John J. Bruno), Labor Counsel John Lavin, City Engineer Kevin J. Boswell and Interim Chief Financial Officer Roy Riggitano

#### REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Councilmember Aloia moved to approve the Reports of the Cabinet as presented orally and in writing during the Work Session held earlier this evening. Councilmember Mati duly seconded the motion.

On call of roll, Ayes 5

#### PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION TO THE BLUE STAR MILITARY STUDENTS

Certificates of appreciation were presented to the Blue Star Military Students from Garfield High School who assisted Benda-Roehrich VFW Post No. 2867 on Veterans Day, November 11, 2015, with the serving of meals to Military Veterans.

#### RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 16-3

RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Garfield, Bergen County, New Jersey that Christopher Shupenko of 2 Garden Court North is hereby appointed as Garfield City Historian to succeed Elizabeth Gray who has resigned from the position.

On call of roll, Ayes 5

(Sgd) Glenn A. Mati  
Louis G. Aloia

Resolution No. 16-4

WHEREAS, Arlene Patire, was appointed to the Zoning Board of Adjustment as a Regular Member pursuant to Resolution No. 11-412, adopted by the City Council at a Regular Meeting held December 20, 2011, and

WHEREAS, her term of office expired January 1, 2016,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Garfield, Bergen County, New Jersey, that Arlene Patire of 184 Midland Avenue, is hereby appointed to the Zoning Board of Adjustment as a Regular Member, effective January 1, 2016, to succeed herself, for a full four year term, said term to expire January 1, 2020.

On call of roll, Ayes 5

(Sgd) Glenn A. Mati  
Louis G. Aloia

Resolution No. 16-5

WHEREAS, Robert Cochrane, was appointed to the Zoning Board of Adjustment pursuant to Resolution No. 12-248 adopted by the City Council at a Regular Meeting held July 24, 2012, and

WHEREAS, his term of office expired January 1, 2016,

RESOLUTIONS

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Garfield, Bergen County, New Jersey, that Robert Cochrane of 72 Manner Avenue is hereby appointed to the Zoning Board of Adjustment as a Regular Member, effective immediately, to succeed himself, for the four year term, said term to expire January 1, 2020.

On call of roll, Ayes 3,  
Nays 1 – Councilmember Aloia,  
Abstain 1 – Councilmember Calandriello

(Sgd) Glenn A. Mati  
Tana M. Raymond

Resolution No. 16-6

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Garfield, Bergen County, New Jersey that Michael Briggs of 70 Main Street, is hereby appointed to the Zoning Board of Adjustment as the third Alternate Member, effective immediately, for sid term to expire January 1, 2017.

On call of roll, Ayes 5

(Sgd) Glenn A. Mati  
Louis G. Aloia

Resolution No. 16-7

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Garfield, Bergen County, New Jersey, that Robert Meehan of 46 Bogart Avenue, is hereby appointed to the Zoning Board of Adjustment as a Regular Member, effective immediately, to succeed Zvonko Veskov, who has resigned from the Board, for a term to expire January 1, 2018.

On call of roll, Ayes 5

(Sgd) Glenn A. Mati  
Louis G. Aloia

Resolution No. 16-8

RESOLUTION APPOINTING THE FIRM OF CONNOR STRONG AND BUCKELEW TO SERVE AS THE CITY OF GARFIELD’S BROKER OF RECORD FOR HEALTH BENEFITS INSURANCE

WHEREAS, the City of Garfield previously issued a RFQ for a Broker of Record to administer, manger, broker various Health Benefits Insurance Packages for all City Employees.

WHEREAS, the Governing Body has determined that the firm of Connor Strong and Buckelew is the most qualified to serve as the Broker of Record; and

WHEREAS, the City of Garfield shall award the Broker of Record to Connor Strong and Buckelew for the 2016 calendar year; and

WHEREAS, the City of Garfield shall pay Connor Strong and Buckelew a flat fee of \$78,500.00 for their services; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the City of Garfield, that the appropriate City Officials are hereby authorized to enter into contract with the firm of Connor Strong and Buckelew to serve as the health insurance benefits Broker of Record for the 2016 calendar year for the flat fee of \$78,500.00.

On call of roll, Ayes 4,  
Abstain 1 – Councilmember Calandriello

(Sgd) Glenn A. Mati  
Tana M. Raymond

Resolution No. 16-9

WHEREAS, Fire Company No. 2 has advised that they have accepted the resignation of Alina Gunia of 32 Orchard Street, Garfield, New Jersey 07026, as an active member, effective January 4, 2016.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Garfield that the action taken by Fire Company No. 2 with respect to the above matter, is hereby approved.

On call of roll, Ayes 5

(Sgd) Glenn A. Mati  
Louis G. Aloia

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 16-10

WHEREAS, Fire Company No. 2 has advised that they have accepted Gerald Francis Jr. of 64 Belmont Avenue, Garfield, New Jersey 07026 as a regular member, effective December 5, 2015. NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Garfield, Bergen County, New Jersey that the action taken by Fire Company No. 2 with respect to the above matter, is hereby approved.

On call of roll, Ayes 5

(Sgd) Glenn A. Mati  
Louis G. Aloia

Resolution No. 16-11

WHEREAS, Fire Company No. 4 has advised that they have accepted Richard Del Favero of 456 Palisade Avenue, Garfield, New Jersey 07026 as a regular member, effective January 8, 2016, NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Garfield, Bergen County, New Jersey that the action taken by Fire Company No. 4 with respect to the above matter, is hereby approved.

On call of roll, Ayes 5

(Sgd) Glenn A. Mati  
Louis G. Aloia

Resolution No. 16-12

RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Garfield that Andrew J. Pavlica, City Clerk, is hereby authorized to issue the following licenses for Games of Skill for the year 2016 described in application, duly filed:

Sportsman's Tavern 245 Outwater Lane Garfield, NJ 07026	1 Pool Table 1 Juke Box	\$ 75.00 50.00
		<hr/>
		\$ 125.00
CP Sunrise 323 Semel Avenue Garfield, NJ 07026	1 Pool Table 1 Juke Box	\$ 75.00 50.00
		<hr/>
		\$ 125.00
Wisla 73 Main Street Garfield, NJ 07026	1 Juke Box	\$ 75.00
		<hr/>
		\$ 75.00

On call of roll, Ayes 5

(Sgd) Glenn A. Mati  
Louis G. Aloia

Resolution No. 16-13

RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Garfield, Bergen County, New Jersey that a Special Meeting of the City Council will be held Tuesday, January 19, 2016 at 7:00 PM in the second floor Conference Room in the City Hall, 111 Outwater Lane, Garfield, New Jersey 07026.

On call of roll, Ayes 5

(Sgd) Glenn A. Mati  
Louis G. Aloia

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 16-14

A Resolution Authorizing an Emergency Contract Be Awarded to Montana Construction Corp. Inc. in Connection with the Repair and Relining of a 12” Sanitary Sewer on Banta Avenue.

WHEREAS, a sanitary sewer on Banta Avenue, near Midland Avenue, is approximately 20 feet deep, and;

WHEREAS, a recent TV inspection of this line indicated portions of the line were broken and further that a high voltage electric cable was situated near or above this line, and;

WHEREAS, the City is concerned with immanent failure of this line thereby resulting in impacts to not only the sanitary sewer system but also to the high voltage PSE & G electric cable, and;

WHEREAS, the City Engineer has declared an emergent condition exists in connection with this concern, and;

WHEREAS, this project will proceed as an emergency contract without the need for public bidding.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, Montana Construction Corp. Inc. is hereby awarded an emergency contract pursuant to a proposal dated January 8, 2016 in the amount of \$91,425.55.

On call of roll, Ayes 5

(Sgd) Glenn A. Mati  
Louis G. Aloia

Resolution No. 16-15

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PAYMENT OF \$7,000.00 TO DMR ARCHITECTS FOR ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES PERFORMED IN CONNECTION WITH THE RELOCATION OF THE GARFIELD POLICE STATION

WHEREAS, the City of Garfield hired DMR Architects to develop architectural plans related to the temporary relocation of the Garfield Police department to 59 Outwater Lane.

WHEREAS, the Governing Body has determined that DMR Architects competently performed \$7,290.00 worth of work in connection with the creation of the architectural plans; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the City of Garfield, that the appropriate City Officials are hereby authorized to pay DMR Architects the sum of \$7,290.00.

On call of roll, Ayes 5

(Sgd) Glenn A. Mati  
Tana M. Raymond

Resolution No. 16-16

WHEREAS, the City Treasurer of the City of Garfield has identified the following checks to be stale, and

WHEREAS, the City Treasurer has been deemed to cancel of record the following checks which are dated prior to December 2015.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Garfield, Bergen County, New Jersey that the stale check on City of Garfield Current Account shall be treated as MRNA

<u>Account #</u>	<u>Check #</u>	<u>Dollar Amount</u>
Animal Rescue #800986007	174	\$ 72.00
Disability #800744005	1237	1,305.00
	1239	522.30
Escrow Developers #800744039	1528	729.00
	1535	1,130.75
Payroll Agency #800741860	2945	34.52
	3501	126.76

On call of roll, Ayes 5

(Sgd) Glenn A. Mati  
Louis G. Aloia

Resolution No. 16-17

WHEREAS the Receiver of Taxes reports that she has received a request from the following property owner for a refund due to a County Board Judgment for the year 2015.

RESOLUTIONS

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Garfield, that the proper offices are hereby authorized to issue a check refunding this overpayment and forward same to the Receiver of Taxes for the purpose of noting her records and for mailing to the property owner.

BLOCK	LOT	OWNER	REASON	AMOUNT
126	13	Messina, Charles	CBJ on Added Assessment	\$2,802.76

On call of roll, Ayes 5

(Sgd) Glenn A. Mati  
Louis G. Aloia

Resolution No. 16-18

WHEREAS the Receiver of Taxes reports that she has received a request from the following property owner for a refund due to a County Board Judgment for the year 2015.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Garfield, that the proper offices are hereby authorized to issue a check refunding this overpayment and forward same to the Receiver of Taxes for the purpose of noting her records and for mailing to the property owner.

BLOCK	LOT	OWNER	REASON	AMOUNT
149.02	44	Garfield Norse LLC	TCJ	\$4,621.75

On call of roll, Ayes 5

(Sgd) Glenn A. Mati  
Louis G. Aloia

Resolution No. 16-19

WHEREAS the Receiver of Taxes reports that she has received a request from the following property owners for a refund due to over paid taxes for the year 2016.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Garfield, that the proper offices are hereby authorized to issue a check refunding this over payment and forward same to the Receiver of Taxes for the purpose of noting her records and for mailing to the property owner.

BLOCK	LOT	OWNER	REASON	AMOUNT
168	9	Corelogic	O/P	\$227.20

On call of roll, Ayes 5

(Sgd) Glenn A. Mati  
Louis G. Aloia

Resolution No. 16-20

RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Garfield that the Chief Financial Officer shall and is hereby authorized to make the following transfers as per instructions from the Chief Financial Officer:

Account Name	Account Number	Transfer From	Transfer To
UCC Enforcement/Building Dept.	5-01-22-195-195-063		6,000.00
Communications	5-01-28-370-370-063		4,000.00
Other Insurance Premiums	5-01-23-210-210-000		37,000.00
Solid Waste Collection	5-01-26-305-305-000		95,000.00
Police Department S/W	5-01-25-240-240-011		
		110,000.00	
Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield	5-01-23-225-225-001		

Department of Public Works S/W	5-01-26-290-290-011	25,000.00	
		7,000.00	
		<hr/>	
		142,000.00	142,000.00
		<hr/>	<hr/>

On call of roll, Ayes 5

(Sgd) Glenn A. Mati  
Louis G. Aloia

Resolution No. 16-21

Resolution Re: 2016 Temporary Budget Appropriations.

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A.40A:4-19 provides that where contracts, commitments or payments are to be made prior to the adoption of the 2016 Budget, temporary appropriations should be made for the purposes and amounts required in the manner and time therein provided, and

WHEREAS, said total temporary appropriations are limited to 26.25% of the total appropriations in the 2015 Budget exclusive of any appropriations made for debt service, capital improvement fund in the said 2014 Budget.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the City of Garfield, that the following appropriations be effective January 1, 2016, be made and a certified copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Borough Chief Financial Officer for his records.

General Appropriations within Caps 2016 temp #1

General Government:

Administration and Executive

Salary and Wages \$81,188.10  
Other Expenses \$17,062.50

Mayor and Council

Salary and Wages \$12,010.69

Clerks Office

Salary and Wages \$64,073.36  
Other Expenses \$17,062.50

Elections

Other Expenses \$10,500.00

Financial Administration

Salary and Wages \$61,795.13  
Annual Audit \$14,700.00  
Other Expenses \$15,750.00  
Other Expenses ADP Payroll Service \$9,450.00

Tax Assessment

Salary and Wages \$26,266.01  
Other Expenses \$12,075.00

Revenue Administration

Salary and Wages \$49,177.80  
Other Expenses \$24,150.00  
Sewer Billing Expenses

Legal Services and Cost

	Salary and Wages	\$33,093.90
	Other Expenses	\$15,750.00
	Tax Appeal Counsel	\$13,125.00
Engineering Services and Cost		
	Salary and Wages	\$7,865.03
	Other Expenses	\$7,087.50
Public Buildings and Grounds		
	Salary and Wages	\$14,139.30
	Other Expenses	\$26,250.00
Municipal Land Use Law NJSA 40:55D-1 Planning Board		
	Salary and Wages	\$2,945.25
	Other Expenses	\$6,825.00
Zoning Board of Adjustment		
	Salary and Wages	\$3,254.48
	Other Expenses	\$2,887.50
Public Safety		
Fire		
	Other Expenses	\$83,212.50
Aid to Ambulance Corps		
	Salary and Wages	
	Other Expenses	\$18,900.00
Police		
	Salary and Wages	\$2,159,626.61
	Other Expenses	\$78,750.00
	Pension Pursuant to R.S. 42:12	\$1,050.00
	Police Cars	\$24,150.00
	Traffic Division	\$5,512.50
Uniform Fire Safety Inspection Act		
	Salary and Wages	\$48,370.35
	Other Expenses	\$8,137.50
Emergency Management		
	Salary and Wages	\$852.60
	Other Expenses	\$10,500.00
Streets and Roads		
Road Repairs and Maintenance		
	Salary and Wages	\$357,123.90
	Other Expenses	\$81,375.00
	Snow Removal	\$78,750.00
	Recycling Program Other expenses	\$2,887.50
Health and Welfare		
	Salary and Wages	\$53,968.69
	Other Expenses	\$11,812.50

Health Officer	Other Expenses	\$9,712.50
Recreation and Education	Salary and Wages	\$182,578.73
	Other Expenses	\$65,625.00
Memorial Day committee	Other Expenses	
	Celebration of Public Events	
	Other Expenses	\$13,387.50
Housing Inspection	Salary and Wages	\$21,181.91
	Other Expenses	\$4,200.00
Recycling Program	Salary and Wages	
	Other Expenses	
Garbage & Trash Removal	Other Expenses	\$525,000.00
Animal Control	Other Expenses	\$13,125.00
Municipal Court	Salary and Wages	\$85,962.45
	Other Expenses	\$14,700.00
Public Defender PL 1997 c. 256	Salary and Wages	\$1,519.88
Prosecutor	Salary and Wages	\$14,210.44
Insurances:	General Liability	\$301,875.00
	Group Insurance Plan for Employees	\$1,087,809.45
	Health Benefit Waiver	\$21,525.00
	Contribution to Redevelopment Agency	\$11,812.50
Uniform Construction Code Officials	Salary and Wages	\$47,824.61
	Other Expenses	\$6,562.50
Unclassified		\$65,625.00
Communications	Electric	\$107,625.00
	Street Lighting	\$72,187.50
	Telephone	\$13,125.00
	Gasoline	\$53,550.00
Total Operations within Caps		\$6,314,188.65

	=
Contingent	=
Total Operations including Contingent	\$6,314,188.65
detail S & W	\$12,174,874.00
Other	\$10,455,200.00
Deferred Charges and Statuary Expenses	
Deficit Street Bond Trust	
Deficit in Ded penalty trust	
Over expenditure Ordinance	
Cancel Green Acres	
Police and Firemen's Retirement System of NJ	\$448,650.04
Public Employees Retirement System	\$142,165.54
Prior year bill Pseg	
Over expenditure Appropriation Reserves	
Social Security Expenses	\$126,000.00
Consolidated Police and Firemen's Pension Fund	
Pension Adjustment Fund	\$3,937.50
Unemployment	\$6,562.50
Total Deferred Charges	\$727,315.58
	=
Total General Appropriations within Cap	\$7,041,504.23
	=
Operations Excluded from Cap	
Passaic Valley Sewer Commission	\$1,830,000.00
Maintenance of Free Public Library	
Salary and Wages	
Other Expenses	\$223,125.00
Insurance:	
General Liability	
Group Insurance Plan for Employees	
Jif Settlement	
LOSAP	\$18,375.00
PFRS	
PERS	
Group Insurance	\$14,690.55
Redevelopment Agency Contribution	
Total Other Operations excluded from Caps	\$2,086,190.55
	=
Saddle Brook Tax Collector	\$5,250.00

Total Interlocal Service Agreement = \$5,250.00

Public and Private Programs Offset by Revenues

Board Of health Priority Health Funding  
Other Expenses

Assistance to Firefighters Grant

Recycling tonnage Grant

Secure our Schools

Local Share Match

200 Club

Clean Communities Grant

Juvenile Justice Block Grant

Municipal Alliance on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Grant

State Share

Local Share

Enhance 911 Grant

Hep B

Hazardous Discharge Site Remediation

Amerigroup Health

Cool Cities/Tree Grant

Adolescent Health Grant

Recycling Tonnage Grant

\$9,142.35

Amerigroup Insurance

Municipal Recycling Assistance Program BCUA

Emergency Management Grant

Click it Ticket It

You Drink You drive you lose

Body Armor Grant

Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Fund

\$1,458.98

Emergency Management

DDEF

Over the Limit

Safe Routes to Schools

Muni Alliance

Health Community

Child Adolescent

Historical Society

Public Health Funding

Over the Limit

Total Private Programs = \$10,601.33

Total Operations from Caps = \$2,102,041.88

Down Payments of Improvements

Capital Improvement Fund

\$31,500.00

Improvements to City Hall

Total Improvements = \$31,500.00

Municipal Debt Service

Payment of Bond Principal

\$454,125.00

Payment of Bond Anticipation Notes and Capital Notes

\$36,750.00

Interest on Bonds	\$174,562.50
Interest on Notes	\$15,750.00
DCA Loan	\$2,756.25
Repayment of Refunding Bond Ordinance Green trust	\$17,062.50
Total Municipal Debt Excluded from Caps	\$701,006.25
	=
Deferred Charges	
Special Emergency	\$90,000.00
Cancel General Capital Fund Grants Receivable	
Deferred Charges	
Ordinance 2064	
Ordinance 2065	
Ordinance 2202	
Ordinance 2426	
Ordinance 2504	
total Appropriations from Cap	\$2,924,548.13
	=
Total General Appropriations	\$9,966,052.35
	=
Reserve for Uncollected Taxes	\$472,500.00
total General Appropriations Current Fund	\$10,438,552.35
	=
Water Utility Revenues	
Rents	
Additional Water Rents	
Rate Reserve	
Total Revenues	
Operating	
Salary and Wages	\$31,500.00
Other Expenses	\$426,562.50
Employees Group Insurance	\$11,812.50
Prior Years Bills	
Capital Improvement fund	
Debt Service	
Payment of Bond Principal	\$70,875.00
Interest on Bonds	\$48,825.00
Payment of Bond Anticipation Notes	
Interest on Notes	
Loan Repayment 1981 Water Supply fund	
Loan Repayment 2004 Elt Loan	\$110,250.00
Deferred Charges	
Emergency Authorization	
Over expenditure of Ordinance	

Statutory Expenditures	
Contribution to Public Employees Retirement System	
Social Security System	\$2,887.50
Unemployment Insurance	
Deficit Prior Year	
Surplus Budget Approp	
Surplus	\$123,375.00
total Appropriations	\$826,087.50
	=
Tax Point	\$256,581.00
avg assessment on home	\$281,000.00
On call of roll, Ayes 5	(Sgd) Glenn A. Mati Tana M. Raymond

BILLS AND CLAIMS

Resolution No. 16-22

RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Garfield that the following bill No. 1882 to 1885 covering, Dog Trust Fund and Trust Other totaling \$1024.31 and the Current Fund Reserve totaling \$225,853.50, and the Current Fund totaling 4,263.758.84 and the Current Water Reserve totaling \$11,336.71 Current Water Fund totaling \$68,653.77, General Capital Fund totaling \$37,567.45 per attached Computer Lists, be ordered paid and the proper officers are hereby authorized to issue checks for same provided there are funds in the respective appropriations, and  
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the action of the Mayor, City Clerk and City Treasurer in issuing checks in payment on the Ratification List, which includes twenty two (22) items prior to the meeting be ratified.

See

the

Following Pages Numbered \_\_\_\_\_

For

Bills

And

Claims

ORDINANCES

Ordinance No. 2728

The following entitled ordinance was introduced at a Regular Meeting held Tuesday, December 22, 2015; it was duly published; a copy was posted on the bulletin board in City Hall; copies were made available to the general public and having complied with the law, this ordinance was not read in full and the City Council can now proceed with the public hearing and final passage:

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND AND REVISE CHAPTER 48-28 OF THE CITY CODE  
OF THE CITY OF GARFIELD, ENTITLED "RATES OF COMPENSATION;  
ADMINISTRATIVE FEE; PAYMENT FOR SERVICES," TO CHANGE THE RATE OF  
COMPENSATION FOR OFF DUTY POLICE OFFICERS

City Clerk Pavlica read the ordinance by title.

Mayor Raymond declared hearing on same and asked if there were any objections.

There being no objections, Mayor Raymond declared the public hearing closed.

Councilmember Delaney moved that said ordinance do now pass on final passage and that the City Clerk be directed to publish said ordinance in full together with the statement or notice required by law. Councilmember Mati duly seconded the motion.

On call of roll, Ayes 5

CITIZENS AND TAXPAYERS

Ms. Judy Fraser, 88 Prospect Street, read the following statement: "As most everyone here knows, I've been attending the council meetings for quite some time now and I've watched and listened to a lot of things said by members of the council, witnessed the swearing in of new officers, various awards being given to different winning school teams and much more. But tonight I want to take this opportunity to express my personal opinions and ask questions I'd like to hear answered by the council.

I have watched John Easom come to the front of the chamber, meeting after meeting, month after month to make a request that the people who are tapped into the NIXL program be notified of upcoming city council meetings or alerted to the cancellation of scheduled meetings. Nothing has been done to fulfill his request but some council members have stated they would look into it and get something done. John is still waiting, and so am I. Can anyone explain why there is a delay for something so simple and why it hasn't been resolved?

When the issue of possible gang graffiti began cropping up around town, the ordinance currently on the books regarding the fine imposed on property owners who don't remove the graffiti from their defaced building within a certain time limit was challenged by Councilman Mati. I'm paraphrasing here, but he pointed out that it was one of the most ridiculous ordinances he'd ever heard of. I am in agreement with him. Why would the city penalize the victims of vandalism? It's not fair and makes absolutely no sense. The council, as far as I know up to this time, has not addressed the problem or taken steps to rescind or re-write the ordinance on the books. Why not?

Currently, Garfield has a law that requires bike helmets to be worn by all cyclists. There is often a reminder posted on the LED board at the High School but I rarely see a child, teen or an adult wearing one while cycling on the streets. In my neighborhood alone, I see lots of kids and the occasional older adult riding around with no helmet. If this law was written because it's a public safety issue, why isn't it enforced, or better yet, how can it?

Are the police supposed to pull over a juvenile and issue a ticket? If this council is serious about bike safety, and the LED board clearly states in bold letters: IT'S THE LAW!!!, perhaps the procedures to enforce it should be made, clearer. I like to stick to facts, but in this case, I'm sure no one on the Police Department has actively enforced it, so what is the point? It appears to be an ordinance that goes nowhere. Just as an aside, when I visit the Saddle River Park, every mother, father and child can be seen wearing a helmet as they cycle through the park as well as the children scooting along on Razrs or roller blades. Can anyone explain the stark difference between us and them?

CITIZENS AND TAXPAYERS

My next question is for Mayor Raymond. I know one of your objectives while serving your term was to tackle the absentee landlord issue and the problems that it's caused in the city. Can we expect some kind of statement or update soon that will outline the progress you've made and how you've achieved what you set out to do? I'm sure the citizens of Garfield would like to know when the shameful neglect of certain properties and the resulting illegal apartments in those houses will come to an end or if there's an end in sight.

When I went online to check the date for this meeting, I noticed the unemployment statistic had been removed. Why? I know it stood at 8.4% which is embarrassing to say the least, but I'd like to request that it be put back. It's information that is useful and should be posted for everyone to see. Finally, on April 28th I was right here in this room and witnessed one of the most raucous, heated and sometimes out of control meetings I've ever attended. The main issue raised that night had to do with possible gang activity in Garfield. It seemed that everyone had an opinion about a lot of things going on in town. The discussion moved on to bad parenting, out of control kids, and policing to name just a few of the issues. At one point, the problems with the behavior of some young people at Century Field were brought up. Councilman Mati suggested bringing back the bike patrol in the park from 3 to 11 because that was the time when there was the most activity. To quote his words: "Visibility is prevention." It was one of the most sensible suggestions I had heard. Yet, on Memorial Day, I spoke to Chief Amos and asked how the bike patrol was shaping up so far. I was disappointed and more than baffled when he gave me a tight little smile and said it was really hard to get the men to sign up. It's another example of something positive not acted upon because there is no follow-up. The Department brags they have a bike patrol at hand. My question is: Why isn't it being used and why are there no men assigned to patrol? I see this as another step backward instead of a step forward that the benefit of community policing brings to the department and our citizens.

At one point in the meeting, the Vice Principal of our Middle School put forward a suggestion that someone should talk to the Judge regarding sentencing of juveniles and use the law to force their parents to attend parenting classes as well and if they don't go, put them in jail. I won't express my opinion or what I think of that statement at this time, however, Mayor Raymond then turned to Tom Duch and asked him to call the judge to see if anything can be done. I found that very unsettling and so my question to Mr. Ferraro is this: Is what the Mayor suggested even legal? I don't profess to be an expert but I wondered if a phone call that tries to inject an influence in the sentencing a judge might hand down would be construed as an illegal interference with the judicial system.

I could say much more with regard to that meeting last April but due to time constraints, I won't elaborate now. However, I want everyone to know that I obtained the recording of that night and carefully typed out the transcript from that meeting so what I've said here tonight is both factual and true.

I'll close with a thank you for listening and I wish everyone a belated Happy New Year.

Mr. Richard Rigogolsi, 13 Summit Avenue, said that if the kids are doing something wrong, something must be done to the parents. He said that if the parents do not appear in Court, the Judge should make the parents pay the consequences.

COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS

Councilmember Calandriello said that when he rides the town at night, there does not seem to be a lot of activity. He said that with scrap being down in price, there has been a rise in the theft of batteries. He said that he would like to see the Crime Watch reinstated. He said that he thought the Police bicycle watch was a great thing and that it kept everyone on their toes. He said that the City has a lot of young Police Officers who are in good shape and he thinks they should be assigned that role. He said that last Thursday, the Fire Chief and Officers were sworn in and it was a great service and swearing in. He said that Wallington Mayor and Ex-Fire Chief Mark Tomko was the Master of Ceremonies and this event really showed off the volunteering of the Fire Department in the City.

Councilmember Aloia said things have changed dramatically in the City and that his neighbor's car was stolen. He said that we spend way too much time indoors and if we sat outside, things might be different. He said that it was a great night with the Blue Star Students being recognized tonight.

CITIZENS AND TAXPAYERS

Councilmember Delaney spoke about graffiti removal and he spoke on the need to clean the traffic box at Midland Avenue and Outwater Lane. He said that the City needs to do more in regard to removing graffiti and making sure recycling is picked up. He said that Wood Ridge and Fair Lawn increased their recycling tonnage and the City should check with them to see how they increased it. He said that there is glass in the parking lot on River Drive. He asked if anyone checked out the homeless tent that was put up along the River front. He said that there is no snow plowing or leaf pickup right now, so the City has to use DPW employees better at this time. He said that he was concerned with graffiti, potholes and cleanliness.

Councilmember Mati spoke about pot hole repair by PSE&G. He said that the Police Department will be going through changes in the next few months. He said that little issues need to be addressed and that is how they did it in New York City and that is how it should be done here to reduce the bigger crime issues. He said that there are so many issues in Twentieth Century Field and there used to be Special Police assigned up there. He said that with new leadership and more officers, the City can get to these problems.

Mayor Raymond spoke in favor of community policing and police officers on bikes. She said that it was good to see our Veterans here tonight. She said that she would like the dedication of Midland Avenue as the Avenue of Heroes in February. She commented that the State Champion Garfield High School Soccer Team will be at an upcoming meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:35 PM, there being no further business, Councilmember Mati moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Aloia duly seconded the motion.

On call of roll, Ayes 5

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Andrew J. Pavlica, CITY CLERK