

May 12, 2020

Regular meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Victory Gardens, held on May 12, 2020.

Mayor Holeman called the meeting to order and declared a quorum present.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of Our Country.  
Please remain standing for a moment of silence for our military.

This meeting has been advertised in one newspaper, The Daily Record, in compliance with the New Jersey Open Public Meeting Act.

ATTENDANCE: Councilman Glass, Councilwoman Hedgepath, Councilwoman White, Councilman Lorenzo, Councilwoman Garcia Montes.

ABSENT: Councilwoman Cheatham.

Motion to accept the minutes of April 28, 2020 as received by Councilwoman Montes, seconded by Councilwoman Hedgepath and approved on verbal vote. Councilman Lorenzo abstained as he was not present for that meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE:

At the last meeting Council wanted to know why Debbie D., Eddie and Hectors pay is not listed on the voucher listing? I have a copy of the minutes from October 9, 2018. It states that our new CFO, Joe wants to get rid of a comment in the audit regarding an encumbrance system. He said at that time, he wants to remove the salaries off the voucher listing. He stated in his monthly report that he gives to the Council he can list the salaries of those persons. He wanted to know if Council would agree to having those figures removed.

Council agreed to have this. There was a motion and a second on it and approved on roll call.

COUNTY OF MORRIS - They are letting us know that our participation in the Community Development Program and the Home Program will automatically renew for the next three years. That will be for 2021, 2022 and 2023.

COVID 19 - I received a message from Peter in Rockaway Township. we still have 38 cases of Covid 19 in the Borough. No new cases.

Motion to accept the correspondence as received by Councilwoman Montes, seconded by Councilwoman Hedgepath and approved on verbal vote. None opposed.

VOUCHERS:

Mayor Holeman asked if there were any questions or comments on the vouchers? Hearing none, he asked for a motion to pay the bills.

Motion to approve the vouchers for payment by Councilwoman Montes, seconded by Councilman Glass and approved on roll call:

Councilman Glass	Yes
Councilwoman Hedgepath	Yes
Councilwoman White	Yes
Councilman Lorenzo	Yes
Councilwoman Garcia Montes	Yes

**VOUCHER REPORTS**

Date of Council Meeting:

May 12, 2020

<u>Voucher #</u>	<u>Payable to:</u>	<u>Type of Service</u>	<u>Amount</u>
5/1/2020	Deborah Devery	Clerk OE - reimbursement sanitizer & mask	35.47
5/2/2020	Deborah Evans	Clerk OE - Petty cash	41.50
5/3/2020	Gannett New Jersey Newspapers	Clerk OE - Sewer Ordinance	70.26
5/4/2020	Glass Gardens, INC, ShopRite	Clerk OE - Fruit basket for Vera Cheatham	31.34
5/5/2020	JCP&L - Fire	Fire OE	153.59
5/6/2020	JLM Computers	Clerk OE	95.00
5/7/2020	Morris County MUA	Streets & Roads	380.25
5/8/2020	NJNG - Fire	Fire OE	183.00
5/9/2020	NJNG - Boro Hall	Utilities	736.00
5/10/2020	NJ State League of Municipalities	Clerk OE - Online seminars for Debbie D.	130.00
5/11/2020	R&L DataCenters, Inc.	Finance	250.00
5/12/2020	Rubinetti, Peter	Trash Removal	11,233.33
5/13/2020	Verizon, #1	Utilities	70.34
5/14/2020	Verizon, #3 - 7536	Utilities	60.28
5/15/2020	NJ Health Benefits	Group Insurance	4,809.80
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18,280.16</b>

**NEW BUSINESS:**

UPDATED SALARY ORDINANCE - The Clerk said she gave everyone a copy of this. Not everyone had an update to the salary. This means that not everyone needed to have their line item increased. And this is a range. It doesn't mean that the person is making that much money.

Councilwoman Montes asked which salaries changed? Mine, Debbie's and the Tax Collector. Do we do this Ordinance every year? No, that is why we have the maximum. This way we don't have to do it every year.

Motion was made to introduce the salary ordinance by Councilwoman Montes, seconded by Councilwoman Hedgepath and approved on roll call:

Councilman Glass	Yes
Councilwoman Hedgepath	Yes
Councilwoman White	Yes
Councilman Lorenzo	Yes
Councilwoman Garcia Montes	Yes

(See Ordinance Next Page)

NEW BUSINESS: UPDATED SALARY ORDINANCE -

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH  
A SALARY RANGE AND FIXING SALARIES OF OFFICIALS AND  
EMPLOYEES OF THE BOROUGH OF VICTORY GARDENS

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF VICTORY  
GARDENS, IN THE COUNTY OF MORRIS, NEW JERSEY, AS FOLLOWS:

The Mayor and Council of the Borough of Victory Gardens having determined that  
the compensation for various officials and employees of the Borough have to be  
adjusted to enact this amendment to the existing salary ordinance.

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Victory Gardens,  
County of Morris, State of New Jersey, that there is hereby established  
a salary range for the officials and employees of the Borough of Victory  
Gardens as follows:

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>ANNUAL MAXIMUM</u>
Mayor	\$ 10,000.00
Councilperson	\$ 5,000.00
Municipal Clerk/Administrator	\$ 100,000.00
Administrative Secretary/Deputy Clerk	\$ 43,000.00
Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer	\$ 25,000.00
Book Keeper	\$ 20,000.00
Tax Assessor	\$ 15,000.00
Tax Collector	\$ 15,000.00
Zoning Officer	\$ 9,000.00
Construction Code Official	\$ 9,000.00
Building Inspector	\$ 6,000.00
Plumbing Inspector	\$ 6,000.00
Electrical Inspector	\$ 6,000.00
Fire Official/Dep. Em. Mgmt. Coordinator	\$ 8,000.00
Property Maintenance Inspector	\$ 20,000.00
Certified Public Works Manager	\$ 4,500.00
Clean Communities Stipend	\$ 2,000.00
Hourly Employees:	
Minimum Per Hour:	\$ 9.00
Maximum Per Hour:	35.00

Deborah Evans, Borough Clerk

David L. Holeman, Jr Mayor

I, Deborah Evans, Clerk of the Borough of Victory Gardens, do hereby certify  
that this is a true and exact copy of the Ordinance adopted by the Mayor and  
Council of the Borough of Victory Gardens at a meeting held on \_\_\_\_\_.

Deborah Evans  
Borough Clerk

Introduced:  
Adopted:

5-12-2020

OLD BUSINESS:

PUBLIC HEARING/ADOPTION OF SEWER ORDINANCE -

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE SEWER RATE SCHEDULE  
FOR THE BOROUGH OF VICTORY GARDENS

Motion to open the meeting to the public on the Ordinance only. Motion made by Councilwoman Montes, seconded by Councilman Lorenzo and approved on verbal vote. None opposed.

Jim Janone - I'm looking at how you did the breakdown for the sewer fees. Just looking at the Clerks part of this \$12,851 is that what you are saying is being allocated for the administrative costs for the Borough?

Joe said yes. If you look at that Jim said, you are saying that the Clerk and the secretary put in 300 hours. That is impossible. Joe said you divide that by 12 months. Sewer collections are done throughout the year. Joe said you are talking about an hour a day. If you look at other municipal budgets, Joe said, that have a dedicated sewer account you will see how much they spend doing just the billing, collecting, etc. Standard is 25% to 30%. I went mild with 10%.

Jim said a lot of these figures you have here are bogus. Who is making these figures up? Joe said he doesn't make figures up. These are reasonable estimates if we separate a sewer utility. These would be the projected costs if we separated the sewer utility. Joe said the sewer rates have to cover the cost of the sewer billings we get from the RVRSA. The rates from the RVRSA went up 18% for this year. Our sewer rates haven't increased since 1997. It was necessary and needed to be done just to cover the assessment from the RVRSA.

Motion to close the meeting to the public by Councilwoman Montes, seconded by Councilwoman White and approved on verbal vote. None opposed.

Motion to approve the sewer ordinance. Motion made by Councilman Glass. There was no second on this motion.

Councilman Lorenzo asked when this raise would come into affect? It would be this year. It would be tough to do this now especially with the increase in the Board of Education for the school kids. People are out of work.

This is a 30 increase for the year per household. RVRSA is holding back on charging us more Joe said. We have to raise this money in order to pay the RVRSA bill.

Councilwoman Montes said we are looking at an increase in the school taxes of almost \$700 per household, isn't that right? Yes.

The Mayor said our rates have went up 18% with the RVRSA. They aren't giving us a break. We still have to pay them even if we don't raise our rates. How are we going to pay them if the sewer billing doesn't raise? We are raising the rates so we don't have to do another ordinance later on to move money around to cover the costs from the RVRSA. We will be paying more in the long run.

Councilwoman Montes made a motion to table this. I want to see the numbers. The Mayor said this is the man we hired to make sure we are doing the right thing and to watch what is being spent. The Mayor said that he thinks Mr. Janone is wrong on figuring his numbers out.

Councilman Lorenzo said can we hold this off until next year? The Clerk said we can adopt tonight but hold off the implementation date until next year. Is that feasible? Yes. The Mayor asked if we don't adopt where will that money come from? Joe said that we budgeted \$140,000 this year. That will cover this year. We wanted to raise the rates because we want to be responsible and not have to raise the sewer rates every year. The rate increase amounted to \$4.00 more a month for the residents. It would be \$11 more a

OLD BUSINESS CONTINUED:

SEWER ORDINANCE CONTINUED - Councilman Lorenzo said we already budgeted for this years increase for RVRSA. So we should have enough money to pay that increase for this year. So, why can't we hold off for now?

The Mayor said if we do the increase now it will give us a little cushion for next year. The RVRSA costs are going up. It will give us a chance to collect a little more before another increase hits. It's up to Council, you either do it now or later but there is a chance that later the costs will go up more.

Councilman Glass made a motion that we adopt this Ordinance tonight. There was no second.

Councilwoman Montes made a motion that we table for 6 months and come back to it at that time. Seconded by Councilwoman White and approved on roll call:

Councilman Glass	No
Councilwoman Hedgepath	Yes
Councilwoman White	Yes
Councilman Lorenzo	Yes
Councilwoman Garcia Montes	Yes

The Clerk said before you open the meeting to the public, I have reached out to most of the Council to let them know about the school taxes going up almost \$700 per household. This is because Dover says we have 61 more students goign to school this year compared to last year. I can't see where they are. Looking at the paperwork that Dover gave us, they are telling us last year we had 213 kids enrolled in Dover. This year we have 274. Of that amount, we have 50 kids coming out of Brook Run Apartments and 57 out of Victory Hill East Apartments. There are another 13 coming out of the condos. That means that there are another 154 kids coming from the 1 and 2 bedroom houses in here. I have looked at all the street addresses that Dover gave us where these kids are coming from, and they are all our streets with the exception of 1. There was 1 for Thompson Avneue in Dover. I did ask for the names of the children, the addresses as to where they are coming from and the parent/guardian. I have the list for this year. I am still waiting for a list from last year so I can compare it. Mark sat in on the meeting with me when we met with Dover. So, Dover is telling us that on an average home assessed at \$171,481 the increase will be \$654.38 per year per household. That will break down to \$54.53 per month. Right now with all the checking I am doing it all looks correct. I asked Joe to look at this also as well as the Auditor.

Joe said it seems that Dover is billing us per student. The Mayor said we had our own Board of Education at one time here. It was Governor Christie that said any town with a population that is low will be consolidated with the Town here the kids go to school. So for us they consolidated out school boar with Dover.

The Clerk said you may want to look at hiring a housing inspector. You have to get control of how many people are in these homes, apartments, condos. They go by square footage. My thought is to send a letter to the apartments and the condos and ask them about the children in there. We are sending a letter to Victory Hill East Apartments. We are asking him to verify how many kids in his apartments. I don't know how else to do this. I feel bad. There is overcrowding. What can we do and how do we approach this subject.

Joe said he agrees with Debbe about hiring a housing inspector. If we go by square footage then that would reduce the number of people in these homes. The landlord would be fined and held accountable for how many they have in each apartment. Same for the houses and/or condos. This is the best bet to trim enrollment.

Councilwoman Montes said there isn't much we can do about it now. What

I asked Dover about giving us a break on the buses. I asked that because school hasn't been in since March 15. There are no buses running so we should get a break on that. He said they are a contract and if they work or not it is still the same amount. He did say he would look into it though.

Councilwoman Hedgepath said they don't ask for information on the kids. You go tell them where you live and they issue a bus pass. They don't ask you to show proof. The Clerk said they told her when they issue bus passes they ask for a lease or a tax bill. Councilwoman Hedgepath said they never asked her for anything.

Councilman Glass asked if we think maybe people have pulled their kids out of private schools and are having them go to Dover now because of the economy? I don't think so, but the increase can be anything.

Councilwoman White said that in the apartments where she is, the kids have doubled since last year.

The Clerk said we don't have a choice here. I am still looking into the kids and where they are coming from. I am still waiting for the list from last year to compare. Deb is working on a spreadsheet. It is up to you to decide if you want to hire a housing person. We have sent an email to the complex owner. We are waiting to hear back from him.

The Mayor said we need to contact the person in charge in Dover that gives out the bus passes. We need to see how many of those are being given out every year.

The Clerk said she wanted to make sure everyone was aware of that. I will see what else I can find out.

Motion was made to open the meeting to the public by Councilwoman Montes, seconded by Councilman Lorenzo and approved on verbal vote. None opposed.

Jim Janone - It says in our ordinance that we have two separate fees for sewer, one for treatment and one for transmission. You probably need to change the ordinance. Commercial are billed quarterly. It says that all are billed quarterly. Well they aren't. I agree that you should have a housing inspector. Dover had this problem at one time. They caught a lot of people that way. Do we have a housing ordinance? we go by the square footage. Why can't we contact the owners of the apartment complexes and the condos. We have started to do that.

Motion to close the meeting to the public by Councilwoman Montes, seconded by Councilman Lorenzo and approved on verbal vote. None opposed.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Councilwoman Montes, seconded by Councilwoman Hedgepath and approved on verbal vote. None opposed.

Submitted By:

*Deborah Evans*

Deborah Evans  
Borough Clerk