

**READINGTON TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
MEETING – December 18, 2023**

Mayor Huelsebusch *calls the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.* announcing that all laws governing the Open Public Meetings Act have been met and that this meeting has been duly advertised.

PRESENT: Mayor J. Huelsebusch, Deputy Mayor A. Mueller, Mr. J. Albanese and Mr. V. Panico, Mr. J. Heller left the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

ALSO PRESENT: Administrator R. Sheola, Municipal Clerk K. Parker, Attorney S. Dragan

ABSENT: None

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Clerk read the following Resolution:

RESOLUTION
EXECUTIVE SESSION

WHEREAS, *N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq.*, the Open Public Meetings Act, permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, the Township Committee is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist and desires to authorize the exclusion of the public from the portion of the meeting in accordance with the act;

NOW, THERFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee of the Township of Readington, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey as follows:

- The public shall be excluded from discussion of and action upon the specified subject matter as set forth in the following Exhibit “A.”

EXHIBIT A

<u>Subject Matter</u>	<u>Basis of Public Exclusion</u>	<u>Date Anticipated</u> <u>When Discussion Will</u> <u>Be Disclosed to Public</u>
Bolarakis, Devoe & Parker vs. Twp of Readington	Litigation	Certain information at the discretion of the Township Committee tonight...other Information will remain confidential
Police Department	Personnel	“ “ “
Memorandum of Understanding / Public Safety Director	Contract Negotiations	“ “ “
PBA	Contract Negotiations	” “ “
Request for Proposals (Professional Services)	Contract Negotiations	” “ “
Block 55, Lot 34 (James)	Contract Negotiations	“ “ “
Indemnification and Hold Harmless Agreement / Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity	Contract Negotiations	” “ “
Attorney-Client Privilege	Attorney-Client Privilege	“ “ “
Executive Session Minutes	Attorney-Client Privilege	“ “ “

- December 4, 2023

Rotimi Owoh, Esq. (on behalf Potential Litigation..... “ “ “
African American Data Research Institute) v. Readington Police Department (Hunterdon),
GRC Complaint No. 2021-332

Affordable Housing..... Potential Litigation..... “ “ “

2. It is anticipated at this time that the stated subject matter will be made public on or about the time set forth in Exhibit “A”.
3. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Panico to adopt this resolution, seconded by Mr. Albanese with a vote of ayes all, nays none recorded.

The meeting reconvened at 7:35 p.m.

Mayor Huelsebusch led those present in the *Salute to the Flag*.

Executive Session:

Litigation / Bolarakis, Devoe & Parker vs. Township of Readington

Mayor Huelsebusch stated that this matter remains in Executive Session.

Personnel / Police Department

Mayor Huelsebusch stated that this matter remains in Executive Session.

Personnel / Memorandum of Understanding / Public Safety Director

Mayor Huelsebusch stated that this matter remains in Executive Session.

Contract Negotiations / PBA

A MOTION was made by Mr. Mueller to approve the memorandum of understanding for PBA Local 317 covering 2022 through 2026, seconded by Mr. Panico and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese -Aye
Mr. Mueller - Aye
Mr. Panico - Aye
Mayor Huelsebusch - Aye

Contract Negotiations / Request for Proposals / Professional Services

Mayor Huelsebusch stated that this matter remains in Executive Session.

Contract Negotiations / Block 55, Lot 34 (James)

Mayor Huelsebusch stated that this matter remains in Executive Session.

Contract Negotiations / Indemnification and Hold Harmless Agreement / Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity

A MOTION was made by Mr. Mueller to approve the Hold Harmless Agreement for Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity for 17 James Street, seconded by Mr. Albanese and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese -Aye
Mr. Mueller - Aye
Mr. Panico - Aye
Mayor Huelsebusch - Aye

Attorney-Client Privilege / Attorney-Client Privilege

The following resolution was offered for consideration:

#R-2023-194

***RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE AWARD OF A CONTRACT FOR
AIRPORT PLANNING SERVICES***

WHEREAS, the Township of Readington has a need to acquire airport planning services through a fair and open process pursuant to the provisions of *N.J.S.A. 19:44a-20.5*; and

WHEREAS, the Township Administrator has determined and certified in writing that the value of the services may exceed \$17,500; and

WHEREAS, Marr Arnold Planning LLC (“MAP”) has submitted a proposal indicating they will provide airport planning services and technical expertise related to future development planning effort at Solberg-Hunterdon Airport at a rate of \$175 per hour; and

WHEREAS, MAP has completed and submitted a Business Entity Disclosure Certification which certifies that MAP has not made any reportable contributions to a political or candidate committee in the Township of Readington in the previous one (1) year, and that the contract will prohibit MAP from making any reportable contributions through the term of the contract; and

WHEREAS, the Chief Financial Officer’s Certification of the availability of funds is on file – (*N.J.A.C. 5:30-5.4*); and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Township Committee of the Township of Readington, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey, authorizes the Mayor to enter into a contract with MAP as described herein; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Business Disclosure Entity Certification and the Determination of Value be placed on file with this resolution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that said contract shall expire on December 31, 2024; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this Professional Service Contract are on file with the Municipal Clerk and are available there for public inspection; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Resolution shall take effect immediately.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Mueller to adopt this resolution, seconded by Mr. Panico and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese -Aye
Mr. Mueller - Aye
Mr. Panico - Aye
Mayor Huelsebusch - Aye

Attorney-Client Privilege / Executive Session Minutes / December 4, 2023

A MOTION was made by Mr. Mueller to approve the Executive Session Minutes of December 4, 2023, for content only, seconded by Mr. Panico with a vote of ayes all, nays none recorded.

***Potential Litigation / Rotimi Owoh, Esq. (on behalf of African American Data Research Institute)
vs. Readington Police Department (Hunterdon), GRC Complaint No. 2021-332***

Mayor Huelsebusch stated that there was no action needed on this item.

Potential Litigation / Affordable Housing

Mayor Huelsebusch stated that this matter remains in Executive Session.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Mayor Huelsebusch read the following statement:

All items listed with an asterisk “” are considered to be routine by the Township Committee and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a committee member or citizen requests, in which event the item will be removed from the General Order of Business and considered in its normal sequence on the agenda.*

1. * **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** of meeting of December 4, 2023
2. * **Tax Overpayments**

The following resolution was offered for consideration:

READINGTON TOWNSHIP
HUNTERDON COUNTY, STATE OF NEW JERSEY
RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, there exists a property tax overpayment where the property owner who made the overpayment no longer owns the property, and

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector is unable to locate this prior owner.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Readington, that the Tax Collector is hereby authorized to cancel the following tax overpayment:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>BLOCK</u>	<u>LOT</u>	<u>QUAL</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
2022	95	12.009		\$1,033.71

3. * **Tax Cancellations**

The following resolution was offered for consideration:

READINGTON TOWNSHIP
HUNTERDON COUNTY, STATE OF NEW JERSEY
RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Readington Township Tax Collector recommends that property taxes owed for the year 2023 on the following properties be cancelled for the reasons stated:

<u>BLOCK/LOT</u>	<u>PROPERTY OWNER</u>	<u>REASON</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
31/37.01	Unknown	Unknown Owner	\$ 38.99
61/4.01	Unknown	Unknown Owner	13.00
72/28 Q0502	Hunterdon County	Exempt Owner	63.54
73/23.01	Readington Township	Exempt Owner	68.53
73/25	Readington Township	Exempt Owner	116.41

Tax Cancellation Resolution cont'd:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Committee that the Tax Collector is hereby authorized to cancel \$300.47 from the tax records for the year 2023.

4. * ***Resolution to Administer Municipal Grant Alliance for Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse / Fiscal Grant Cycle October 2020-June 2025***

The following resolution was offered for consideration:

#R-2023-195

***Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse
 Fiscal Grant Cycle October 2020-June 2025***

WHEREAS, the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse established the Municipal Alliances for the Prevention of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse in 1989 to educate and engage residents, local government and law enforcement officials, schools, nonprofit organizations, the faith community, parents, youth and other allies in efforts to prevent alcoholism and drug abuse in communities throughout New Jersey.

WHEREAS, the Township Committee of the Township of Readington, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey recognizes that the abuse of alcohol and drugs is a serious problem in our society amongst persons of all ages; and therefore has an established Municipal Alliance Committee; and,

WHEREAS, the Township Committee further recognizes that it is incumbent upon not only public officials but upon the entire community to take action to prevent such abuses in our community; and,

WHEREAS, the Township Committee has applied for funding to the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse through the County of Hunterdon;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township of Readington, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey hereby recognizes the following:

1. The Township Committee does hereby authorize submission of a strategic plan for the Central Hunterdon Municipal Alliance grant for fiscal year 2024 in the amount of:

DEDR	\$15,463.00
Cash Match	\$3,865.75
In-Kind	\$11,597.25

2. The Township Committee acknowledges the terms and conditions for administering the Municipal Alliance grant, including the administrative compliance and audit requirements.

5. * ***Payment of Bills*** – (Complete bill list is on file in Clerk's Office)

<u>Fund Description</u>	<u>Fund No.</u>	<u>Received Total</u>
GENERAL	3-01	\$ 1,800,489.71
SEWER UTILITY OP FUND	3-02	\$ 137,733.82
OPEN SPACE TRUST FUND	3-11	\$ 400,000.00
OTHER TRUST	X-03	\$ 84,006.16
PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS	X-06	\$ 208,348.53
2023 CAP IMPROVEMENTS	X-23	\$ 19,453.93
TOTAL OF ALL FUNDS		\$ 2,650,032.15

A MOTION was made by Mr. Albanese to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Mr. Panico and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese -Aye
Mr. Mueller - Aye
Mr. Panico - Aye
Mayor Huelsebusch - Aye

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC for items listed on the agenda only

There were no comments from the public.

PUBLIC HEARING

As it was after 7:45 p.m., *A MOTION* was made by Mr. Panico to adjourn the regular meeting to hold a Public Hearing, seconded by Mr. Albanese with a vote of ayes all, nays none recorded.

Clerk read by Title:

***AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 21 “FIRE DEPARTMENT ”
OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF READINGTON***

ORDINANCE #28-2023

Mayor Huelsebusch asked if there were any comments from the governing body.

Deputy Mayor Mueller stated that the Committee is not in a position to act on the ordinance at this time because there are still ongoing conversations with the fire departments that require further discussion.

Mayor Huelsebusch asked if there were any comments from the public.

Patrick Paul requested that the Committee establish the need of a dedicated chief before considering adopting the ordinance.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Panico to close the Public Hearing and open the regular meeting, seconded by Mr. Albanese with a vote of ayes all, nays none recorded.

Clerk read by Title:

***AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 21 “FIRE DEPARTMENT ”
OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF READINGTON***

ORDINANCE #28-2023

A MOTION was made by Mr. Panico to adopt this ordinance, seconded by Mr. Mueller and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese -Nay
Mr. Mueller - Nay
Mr. Panico - Nay
Mayor Huelsebusch - Nay

The Ordinance was defeated

CORRESPONDENCE / OTHER INFORMATION

5. Notice of Public Hearing from Debora Padgett, Planning Board Clerk Township of Hillsborough, in the *Matter of the Adoption of Climate Change-Related Hazard Vulnerability Assessment of the Master Plan Land Use Element*. No action taken.
6. Notice of Board of Adjustment Public Hearing from Steven Gruenberg, Esq., Attorney for Applicant, Whitehouse Mall, LLC in the *Matter of the Applicant Seeking Amended Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan Approval to Permit Existing Tenant (Starbucks) to Relocate from Current Location to the End of the Westerly Side of the Building and Provide Drive-Up Window Service*. No action taken.

NEW BUSINESS

1. ***Request to Waive Interest on Tax Bill - letter dated December 1, 2023 (1802 South Branch Drive)***

A MOTION was made by Mr. Albanese to waive the interest on tax bill for 1802 South Branch Drive, seconded by Mr. Panico and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese -Aye
Mr. Mueller - Aye
Mr. Panico - Aye
Mayor Huelsebusch - Aye

2. ***Application for Special Event Permit / Black River Roasters / Cousins Maine Lobster Truck***

A MOTION was made by Mr. Panico to approve the special event permit application, seconded by Mr. Albanese and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

Mr. Albanese -Aye
Mr. Mueller - Aye
Mr. Panico - Aye
Mayor Huelsebusch - Aye

3. ***Resolution to Authorize Budget Appropriation Transfers***

The following resolution was offered for consideration:

#R-2023-196

RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE BUDGET APPROPRIATION TRANSFERS

WHEREAS, certain transfers of funds for various 2023 budget appropriations are necessary to cover anticipated expenditures; and

WHEREAS, *N.J.S.A. 40A:4-58* provides for transfer of appropriations with an excess over and above the amount deemed necessary to fulfil their purposes to those appropriations deemed to be insufficient; and

WHEREAS, the appropriations subject to fund transfers hereby are not within those restricted by *N.J.S.A. 40A:4-58* for transfer purposes.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Readington that the Chief Financial Officer shall and is hereby authorized to make transfers between appropriation accounts of the 2023 Municipal Budget as follows:

Resolution #R-2023-196 cont'd:

Current Fund	FROM	TO
Commercial Insurance	\$32,000.00	
Natural Gas	\$27,000.00	
Police Department Other Expenses	\$25,000.00	
Municipal Court Other Expenses	\$1,000.00	
Uniform Construction Code Other Expenses	\$26,000.00	
Municipal Court Salaries & Wages		\$6,000.00
Group Insurance		\$75,000.00
Engineering		\$12,000.00
Legal Services		\$15,000.00
Telephone		\$3,000.00
TOTAL	\$111,000.00	\$111,000.00

A MOTION was made by Mr. Panico to adopt this resolution, seconded by Mr. Albanese and on Roll Call vote the following was recorded:

- Mr. Albanese -Aye
- Mr. Mueller - Aye
- Mr. Panico - Aye
- Mayor Huelsebusch - Aye

4. * **Resolution to Administer Municipal Grant Alliance for Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse / Fiscal Grant Cycle October 2020-June 2025**

This matter was addressed under the Consent Agenda.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator Sheola reported that Republic Services has indicated that residents can go to their office on Frontage Road in Clinton on designated dates in January to return remaining stickers and await a check from their headquarters. Administrator Sheola continued that when the dates are set the Township will post them on the website.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Attorney Dragan reported that the Township prevailed in the Government Records Council (GRC) complaint that was listed under executive session, advising that the Clerk was compliant with the OPRA request and found of no wrongdoing.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

JOHN ALBANESE

Mr. Albanese stated that he had nothing further to report.

JUERGEN HUELSEBUSCH

Mayor Huelsebusch stated that they will provide a police update in the new year and the next Open Space walk will be held on the 1st of January.

ADAM MUELLER

Mr. Mueller thanked the Readington Trails Association for the pizza appreciation luncheon provided to the Department of Public Works.

VINCENT PANICO

Mr. Panico stated that he had nothing further to report.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Jacqueline Hindle asked if the Township will be requesting a public meeting regarding the Solberg Master Plan and the plans for communicating information to residents.

COMMENTS FROM THE GOVERNING BODY

As there was no further business, *A MOTION* was made by Mr. Albanese at 8:25 p.m. to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Panico with a vote of ayes all, nays none recorded.

Submitted by:

Karin M Parker, *RMC*
Municipal Clerk