

August 8, 2023

Regular meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Victory Gardens, held on August 8, 2023.

Mayor Holeman will call the meeting to order and declare 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 Suarez (arrived at 6:10), Councilwoman Hedgepath, Councilman Hale, Councilwoman Garcia Montes.

ABSENT: Councilman Glass and Councilman Lorenzo.

\*\*\* Attorney Feintuch was also present at this meeting.

Motion to accept the minutes of July 25, 2023 as received by Councilwoman Montes, seconded by Councilman Hale and approved on verbal vote. None opposed.

CORRESPONDENCE: None

VOUCHERS:

Mayor Holeman asked if there were any questions or comments on the vouchers?

Councilwoman Montes asked if voucher # 0811 needed a signature? No, the State is not going to sign off on vouchers. Also # 0809 what is that? It's a tree pruner the Mayor said. It is electric or gas and you use it to cut the high branches that you can't reach. Did we have one? Yes, it was garbage. # 0807 For Baker Insurance, what is that for? It is the bond for the Tax Collector. Is that once a year? Yes.

The Mayor asked if there were any other questions 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 Councilwoman Hedgepath and approved on roll call:

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|---|-----|
| Councilman Suarez (had not arrived yet) |     |
| Councilwoman Hedgepath                  | Yes |
| Councilman Hale                         | Yes |
| Councilwoman Garcia Montes              | Yes |

Councilwoman Montes said she sees that Councilman Glass has a stamp for his signature. Can we get stamps? The Clerk said if you want one we can order it. I just need you to write your name as you want it to appear on the stamp and we will order it.

(See Vouchers Next Page)



CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN  
BOROUGH OF VICTORY GARDENS  
2021 AUDIT

RECOMMENDATION # 1

Description: Management initiates more involvement in the areas of collecting, disbursing and recording to provide for a more adequate segregation of duties.

Corrective Action: The Borough Council and Management will review staffing and duties to see if any changes can be made.

Implementation: Immediately.

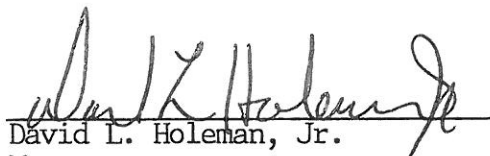
RECOMMENDATION # 2


Description: Consideration be given to implementing accounting systems for encumbrances and fixed assets, as prescribed in the New Jersey Administrative Code.

Corrective action: The encumbrance module for the software is being evaluated for implementation to eliminate that recommendation. Additionally, outside vendors are being considered for inventorying the fixed assets of the Borough so the inventory can be maintained moving forward by internal staff.

Implementation: Immediately.

Adopted: April 27, 2021

  
David L. Holeman, Jr.  
Mayor

  
Deborah Evans, Borough Clerk

Motion to approve the corrective action plan by Councilwoman Montes, seconded by Councilwoman Hedgepath and approved on roll call:

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|--|-----|
| Councilman Suarez (just coming into meeting) |     |
| Councilwoman Hedgepath                       | Yes |
| Councilman Hale                              | Yes |
| Councilwoman Garcia Montes                   | Yes |

OLD BUSINESS:

SIGNED AGREEMENT FROM THE DOVER BOARD OF EDUCATION - I just wanted to let everyone know that we finally have the signed agreement from Dover Board of Education. Our CFO will have to void out all the checks that we have been holding and write a check to them for the amount owed.

The bill that we have tonight for vouchers is the old amount. We are not paying anything on the debt service because we are still waiting to finalize that.

Councilwoman Montes asked how much will the town get back? The Attorney said you won't get anything back. We haven't paid them. We owe them. You can't do anything with the money right now. The Attorney said some parts of this are still in litigation. That is the debt service part of all of this. The debt service was all incurred prior to the Board of Education merger. In one year Dover refinanced their debt service and they are claiming it is new debt and we are saying it is old debt, you just refinanced it. The Judge has to decide that part.

Before we continue with the Old Business, Councilman Hale wanted to discuss something that Councilman Glass asked him to talk about since he wasn't here tonight.

Councilman Hale said we have a quote for the tree limbs that are hanging over the firehouse. They are rotting our roof away and we need to get the tree trimmed back and get the branches away from the firehouse. We have a quote of \$1,600 from Master Services. No one else got back to us. There are a lot of branches. If you look at the firehouse, it is on the right side.

Councilman Hale Continued - Motion was made to pay Master Services to remove the branches at the firehouse at a cost of \$1,600. Motion made by Councilwoman Montes, seconded by Councilwoman Hedgepath and approved on roll call:

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|----------------------------|-----|
| Councilman Suarez          | Yes |
| Councilwoman Hedgepath     | Yes |
| Councilman Hale            | Yes |
| Councilwoman Garcia Montes | Yes |

Councilman Hale said there is another issue with the white vinyl fence. We talked about getting quotes to remove it and replace it with another fence. We have called around to several companies and they aren't giving us quotes. One company wanted to charge \$800 just to remove the fence. We had to take it down. Another company will take the old fence down, remove it and put up a new fence at a cost of \$5,943.00. That was Essex Fence. The other estimate was from S & S Demolition for a cost of \$800.00 and that is take down the fence and remove it. We really haven't decided if we need a fence and if we do, what type? If you want, we can take it down for now and get rid of it then you can decide what you want to do after that.

The Mayor said several companies were called. None called back except Essex Fence. A lot of companies don't go back out and give estimates any more.

Councilwoman Hedgepath said it is an eyesore up there and if we don't put a fence up our DPW will have to maintain the area and keep it decent looking.

Motion was made to have S&S Demolition to remove the fence and take it away at a cost of \$800. Motion made by Councilwoman Montes, seconded by Councilwoman Hedgepath and approved on roll call:

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|----------------------------|-----|
| Councilman Suarez          | Yes |
| Councilwoman Hedgepath     | Yes |
| Councilman Hale            | Yes |
| Councilwoman Garcia Montes | Yes |

Councilwoman Montes wanted to thank the Mayor for going up to the scene where the tree fell on the house and taking care of what needed to be done as well as going to the firehouse with the Red Cross. Mayor said he was there on behalf of the Council also. Councilwoman Hedgepath was at the firehouse also.

Councilwoman Hedgepath said that the Mayor and Pastor Tim from the Garden Chapel helped financially also.

DISCUSSION ON THE AMENDMENT TO THE POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL - The Clerk said she gave a copy of the pages Council wanted to discuss to everyone. Everyone has a copy of the current page from the Manual regarding health benefits.

Councilwoman Montes said that she called a few towns and they don't offer health benefits after retirement anymore. There are a few towns that do but most of them don't. The ones that were covered under the old policy get them but no new people coming in. When people retire they do get the Medicare.

Councilwoman Montes asked what we do about vacation time? You can carry a week over into the new year but you have to use it by April 1st or you lose it. For sick time we can carry over year to year.

Councilwoman Hedgepath wants to take a look at the policy for separation. We can discuss that at the next meeting.

Councilwoman Montes said no medical coverage after retirement/separation for employees beginning when new policy is written. This would be for the employee and or spouse/family.

Motion was made to change the policy manual and have the Attorney draw it up for the next meeting. Motion made by Councilwoman Montes, seconded by Councilwoman Hedgepath and approved on roll call:

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|----------------------------|-----|
| Councilman Suarez          | Yes |
| Councilwoman Hedgepath     | Yes |
| Councilman Hale            | Yes |
| Councilwoman Garcia Montes | Yes |

Attorney Feintuch said he gave the Clerk the application form for the cannabis applicants. She will make copies and give them to the Council for the next meeting. Please look it over and bring any questions back to the next meeting. This body has a final say on who goes in. They have approval from the State and approval from the Planning Board. Part of the process is that they have to do something for the town. You have to get a commitment from them. They can do something for playgrounds, roads, seniors, etc.. I haven't see what they are

Attorney Feintuch Continued - going to do as a project for the Borough. How much will they spend and will it be an annual thing for maintenance. The application is in depth.

Councilwoman Montes asked if just because we said we would have 2 doesn't mean we have to approve them if they don't meet what needs to be done? That is correct. Council has to look at the liquor store. That is bad over there. I don't think that is a good place to have them in. Everyone needs to look at the plan that the Clerk has.

The Clerk said she has a plan for both businesses that everyone on Council needs to look at before you give approvals. There is a lot that is covered in the Planning Board resolutions. I will get a copy to the Council and the Mayor. At the Planning Board meeting there was discussion on putting parking in the grass area behind the building, but then you have to worry about the impervious coverage. I think there was something also that the County Planning Board did not approve for parking in the front of the building. So that has to be taken into consideration. They want an addition on the building which I think is going to be very hard to do and have a way to get around the building.

The Attorney said everyone review everything and be ready to discuss at the next meeting.

Councilman Suarez asked what type of projects are other towns getting done from the cannabis. The Clerk said she heard that some towns are having a road put in, some are doing playground equipment, others are doing some type of park

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

Jim Janone - Did anyone see Mayor Blackmon up at the scene of where the tree fell. I don't know why she was up there. People said they saw her. People wanted to know why she was here. The tree trimming those trees have been overgrown for years. If you remove some of the branches have you considered the people on the other end? You don't want those trees to fall over on their property. We are only taking branches and they are professionals that are taking them down. Sidewalks on Coolidge and Monroe, will they be addressing the storm drains? I think that is in the proposal. I will ask Leon. Does anyone know about one of our DPW having back problems? No, we aren't aware of it.

Joan Cegelka - I don't know if anyone heard this or not, the tree that fell, it was reported that it was in the Victory Gardens section of Dover. No one heard that. We need to get our own zip code. We have to be recognized as VG and not Dover. The Clerk said we tried before to get our own zip code but we were told that the town itself is not big enough. The Attorney said it is a Federal program. You would have to contact our Congressman. Will you do it or should I do it? You can do it the Clerk said.

The money we are holding back from Dover, I heard that it may go into the General Fund. Can that go into a special fund to be designated for tuition in case we need it. I don't know, that would be up to the CFO after discussion with the Council. The money that was left over from our Board of Education when we were told we had to merge with Dover, that money was supposed to be used to help reduce taxes. Do you know how much we used and how many years we have left of that money? I don't know the Clerk said off the top of my head. I believe we should have at least 10 or more years left. We use \$48,000 every year. We are using that much every year. What happens when money is gone? Taxes will go up. Did you accept your Audit yet? We haven't gotten it yet from the Auditors. What was in the Corrective Action Plan? What recommendations? The same as we have every year. Segregation of Duties and the encumbrance system. You have that program in Edmunds. We don't have Edmunds. We talked about it when Derek was here. Then Joe came in and said he didn't need it he could use Quick Books. So we are using Quick Books. You are talking about cannabis. Has anyone been to the Planning Board meetings? The Clerk said she reads the minutes. It sounds like you may not want the one by the liquor store. The County has to give approvals to them the Clerk said because of the parking in the front of the building.

Motion to close the meeting to the public by Councilwoman Montes, seconded by Councilwoman Hedgepath 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  
Borough Clerk