

**WORK SESSION  
AUGUST 5, 2025**

In compliance with Chapter 231, OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT of the State of New Jersey, adequate notice has been given to all members of the Governing Body, the "Local Source" and the "Westfield Leader" the two newspapers designated to receive such notice. The notice is posted on the Borough Hall bulletin board.

Mayor Paul N. Mirabelli called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM.

PRESENT: Mayor Mirabelli, Councilman Dierkes (by phone), Councilman Matejek, Council President Pacifico, Councilman Van Deusen, Councilwoman Wass, Attorney Post and Administrator Mortimer. Also present were Recreation Director Frank Masella, Engineer Mike Disko, DPW Director Matthew DeAnna, CFO Justyna Zagorska-Diaz, Senior Coordinator Kim Moriak and Police Chief Joseph Giannuzzi. Councilman Rinaldo was absent.

Discussion was held regarding a request for a road opening permit at 250 Oak Tree Road. The homeowner explained the need to convert his oil furnace to gas since the furnace is no longer functioning and unrepairable. The five-year moratorium on Oak Tree Road ends this November. The Council agreed to allow the issuance of a road opening permit. The proper resolution will be prepared for the next meeting.

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Discussion was held regarding an increase to the bid and quote thresholds. The State Treasurer increased the bid threshold from \$44,000 to \$53,000 for municipalities that have an appointed QPA. As a result, the quote threshold for municipalities with a QPA has increased from \$6,600 to \$7,950. It is in the interest of efficiency and economy to raise the thresholds. The proper resolution will be prepared for the next meeting.

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Discussion was held regarding authorization to appoint Davidsen Odnez as a new volunteer firefighter. His background check has cleared. The Deputy Fire Chief recommends the appointment. A motion to approve the new firefighter will take place at the next meeting.

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Discussion was held regarding the need for a resolution covenanting to comply with the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the "Code"), and designating the \$6,600,000 Bond Anticipation Note as a "qualified tax-exempt obligation". A resolution will be prepared for the next meeting.

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Discussion was held regarding authorization to apply for the 2025 Kids Recreation Trust Grant Program. The borough will apply for the resurfacing of the tennis courts at Deerfield School and Borough Hall. The MSBL has not indicated a proposed project. The proper resolution authorizing borough officials to make application for the grant will be prepared for the next meeting.

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Discussion was held regarding a State Tax Court Judgement for 1128 Spruce Drive. The tax appeal was settled and the judgement lowered the assessment for tax years 2022, 2023 and 2024 allowing for a total refund of \$7,234.81. The proper resolution to process the tax judgement will be prepared for the next meeting.

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Discussion was held regarding department refunds. The recreation department would like to refund the participants due to cancellations. The proper resolution will be prepared for the next meeting.

Discussion was held regarding proposed increases for participants in the state health benefits program (SHBP). Health benefits are projected to increase by 36.5%. Municipalities are seeking other options to offer employees. Some of which include joining a health insurance fund (HIF), a private plan at a lower cost if we qualify based on our claim history. The other option is the difference plan under SHBP which requires switching to the NJ Direct2035 plan with higher co-pays paid on a difference card instead of directly from the employee. Plan presentations are scheduled for September 3<sup>rd</sup>.

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Discussion was held regarding the need to repair the HVAC unit in the police department. The HVAC unit is 35 years old and controls the booking room, interview room and break room. Replacement of the condenser and air handler will cost \$33,000. Another quote will be obtained to replace the condenser and insert a coil into the air handler.

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Discussion was held regarding complete disabled veteran exemptions for Block 3.10, Lot 12, Block 3.24, Lot 11.03 and Block 5.21, Lot 17. The disabled veterans were approved for full exemptions by the state and will be entitled to a refund for tax overpayments. The proper resolutions will be prepared for the next meeting.

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Discussion was held regarding the Drug Recognition Expert Callout Program. The program allows the county and borough to cooperate with each other in implementing and operating a callout procedure for certified Drug Recognition Experts to respond to and conduct evaluations when drug use is suspected during a motor vehicle stop. The program will reimburse our DRE's at \$60 per hour.

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Discussion was held regarding an appointment to the Library Board of Trustees. Zach Jabri will replace Andrew Adornato for an unexpired term ending 12/31/29. The proper resolution will be prepared for the next meeting.

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Discussion was held regarding authorization to approve a raffle application from Mountainside PTO for an on-premise draw raffle. A motion to approve the application will take place at the next meeting.

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Discussion was held regarding the appointment of temporary staff. Additional recreation staff and two interns will be appointed. The proper resolutions will be prepared for the next meeting.

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Discussion was held regarding a request from a homeowner on Sawmill Road to trim dead branches from a tree on his property. The borough's tree policy states the borough is not responsible for trimming trees in the right of way unless it causes an imminent danger. The homeowner should maintain the tree.

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**BILLS & CLAIMS:**

The following resolution was introduced by Councilman Dierkes and seconded by Councilwoman Pacifico:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Mountainside that the following bills of the persons named and for the amounts stated below, having been duly audited and found to be correct this 5<sup>th</sup> day of August 2025, the same be paid after Council's review, if and when funds are

available and that the Mayor, Council President, Administrator and Treasurer are hereby authorized and directed to sign and deliver warrants for same in the amount of \$183,263.50 (Copy of bill list attached).

Roll call: Ayes: Dierkes, Matejek, Pacifico, Van Deusen, Wass. Nays: 0.  
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**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:** None  
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Upon a motion by Councilman Van Deusen and a second by Councilman Matejek the following resolution to adjourn to closed session was unanimously adopted:

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act of the State of New Jersey permits the public to be excluded from certain matters to be discussed by the Governing Body; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council desire to discuss personnel which are matters where the exclusion of the public is permitted; and

WHEREAS, public disclosure of the results of this discussion will be made as soon as the matters discussed have been resolved by the Governing Body of the Borough of Mountainside.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Mountainside that the aforesaid matters shall be discussed in closed session upon adoption of this resolution.

Meeting adjourned to closed session at 6:31 P.M.  
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The meeting was recalled to public session at 6:54 P.M.  
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Upon a motion by Councilman Matejek and a second by Councilwoman Pacifico, the meeting was unanimously adjourned.  
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Martha Lopez, RMC  
Borough Clerk