

**WORK SESSION
NOVEMBER 6, 2024**

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 7:33 P.M.

PRESENT: Mayor Mirabelli, Councilman Dierkes, Councilman Matejek, Council President Pacifico, Councilman Rinaldo, Councilman Van Deusen, Councilwoman Wass, Attorney Post and Administrator Mortimer. Also present were CFO Justyna Diaz, Senior Coordinator Kim Moriak and Chief Joseph Giannuzzi.

Discussion was held regarding 2025 reorganization board appointments. Most of the board member positions will be re-appointed for another term except for vacancies on the Library Board of Trustees, Board of Health and Planning Board. The council is considering recommendations to fill these positions.

Discussion was held regarding a request from the Finance Officer for year-end budget transfers. In accordance with state statute, transfers can be made within certain budget appropriations during the last two months of the fiscal year. The proper budget transfer resolution will be prepared for the next meeting.

Discussion was held regarding the Governor's best practices inventory questionnaire. The inventory is designed to provide standards by which local government officials can assess how we are conducting business as compared to other towns to find cost effective ways of providing services. Municipalities need to meet an established percentage of the checklist items to receive some or all of their state aid payment. The borough received an overall score of 38 entitling Mountainside to 100% of the allotted aid.

Discussion was held regarding updating the salary ordinance. The CFO explained when salaries are close to exceeding the ranges they need to be increased as well as when adding new positions. The Mayor and Council reviewed a copy of the salary ordinance which highlighted the ranges being revised. The proper ordinance will be prepared for the next meeting.

Discussion was held regarding establishing a dedication by rider. The CFO needs to create a trust account for the donations received for national night out. The state requires the establishment of all approved dedications by riders in the form of a resolution. The proper resolution will be prepared for the next meeting.

Discussion was held regarding a request from the CFO for a Chapter 159 resolution to include special items of revenue into the 2024 municipal budget for the Emergency Management Performance Grant in the amount of \$10,000. The proper resolution will be prepared for the next meeting.

Discussion was held regarding amendments to the recently tabled NJDEP mandated tree removal and replacement ordinance. Additional revisions include a \$50 application fee, setting limits on the number of trees that can be removed, and establishing diameter criteria to determine eligibility for removal.

Discussion was held regarding a bond ordinance to fund a capital improvement project. The capital project is for the municipal building generator. A fully funded bond ordinance will authorize the funding of this project in order to award the contract this year. The borough expects to receive a grant that will later reimburse the capital account. The proper bond ordinance will be prepared for the next meeting.

The following proclamations were unanimously approved.

WHEREAS, Marie Eleanor Russell, born November 9, 1917, in Scranton, Pennsylvania, has lived an exemplary life, full of dedication to family, community, and her passions, reaching an extraordinary milestone as she approaches her 107th birthday; and

WHEREAS, Marie Russell, together with her late husband, Alexander Russell, built a thriving family business in Linden, New Jersey, owning Russell Wedding and Portrait Studio, followed by Russell Bridal Gowns and Russell Tuxedos. Her dedication and work in these businesses enriched the lives of countless couples; and

WHEREAS, Marie has shown incredible devotion to her three children—Bruce, Cheryl, and Kenneth—her six grandchildren, and her eight great-grandchildren, all of whom have been blessed by her guidance, love, and wisdom; and

WHEREAS, Marie's longevity and good health are a testament to her disciplined life, one characterized by moderation, a preference for walking, and her lifelong habit of drinking only spring water, which has contributed to her vitality; and

WHEREAS, despite the challenges of age, Marie has found a welcoming and supportive community at Mountainside Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation, where she remains an active and beloved member of the facility, known affectionately by staff and residents as "106"; and

WHEREAS, Marie's resilience was demonstrated by her recovery from a mild case of COVID-19 at the age of 104, with her treating physicians attributing her strong immune response in part to antibodies she may have carried from the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1917, a remarkable reflection of the span of her life's journey.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Mountainside do hereby congratulate Marie Eleanor Russel on the momentous occasion of her 107th birthday celebration.

WHEREAS, National Children's Grief Awareness Month and Children's Grief Awareness Day were created to bring attention to the needs of children who are grieving and the benefits they obtain through the support of others; and

WHEREAS, 1 in 13 children in New Jersey will experience the death of a parent or sibling by age 18; and

WHEREAS Imagine, A Center for Coping with Loss was incorporated in October 2011 by Mary L. Robinson and Philanthropist Dr. Gerald Glasser and is now headed by Executive Director Lindsay Schambach; and

WHEREAS, Imagine has provided a space in our community for children and families experiencing the death of a loved one since March 2012; and

WHEREAS, Imagine has furthered their mission from ensuring no child grieves alone to ensuring no one grieves alone by providing grief education and training for schools, community organizations, and business across the State of New Jersey and beyond; and

WHEREAS, Governor Murphy signed into law the Grief Bill – S-3330 on January 4th, allowing schools to teach children grades 8 – 12 about grief and loss and support structures to aid in the grieving process; and

WHEREAS, recognizing that providing support for grieving children is essential for the future health and well-being of our children, our families, and society.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Borough of Mountainside recognizes November as National Children’s Grief Awareness Month, in partnership with Imagine, A Center for Coping with Loss, as part of our collective efforts to ensure no child grieves alone.

The following resolution was introduced by Councilman Van Deusen and seconded by Councilwoman Pacifico.

RESOLUTION 130-2024

WHEREAS, the Borough of Mountainside would like to honor local soldiers returning from active duty; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council would like to request permission from the County of Union to hang a welcome home banner along Mountain Avenue.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the County of Union grant the Borough of Mountainside permission to hang such banner.

Roll call: Ayes: Dierkes, Matejek, Pacifico, Rinaldo, Van Deusen, Wass. Nays: 0.

Discussion was held regarding department appointments. The Administrator mentioned appointing temporary court staffing and recreation winter staff. The proper resolutions will be prepared for the next meeting.

BILL & CLAIMS:

The following resolution was introduced by Councilman Dierkes and seconded by Councilman Rinaldo:

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 6th day of November 2024, 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 \$251,850.08 (Copy of bill list attached).

Roll call: Ayes: Dierkes, Matejek, Pacifico, Rinaldo, Van Deusen, Wass. Nays: 0.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:

Hearing no one wishing to speak, the public portion of the meeting was closed.

Upon motion by Councilman Dierkes and a second by Councilwoman Pacifico, 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 and litigation 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 8:28 P.M.

The meeting was recalled to public session at 9:23 P.M.

Upon motion by Councilwoman Wass and a second by Councilwoman Pacifico, the meeting was unanimously adjourned.

Martha Lopez, RMC
Borough Clerk