

Council Meeting  
April 3, 2012

Minutes of a Council Meeting of the  
Borough Council held at 7:30 P.M. on  
Tuesday, April 3, 2012, in the Council  
Chamber, Hillsdale, New Jersey.

The meeting was called to order by  
Mayor Arnowitz who also led the Salute  
to the Flag.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF MEETING

Deputy Municipal Clerk Kohan stated, "This is a Meeting of the Hillsdale Borough Council on this 3rd<sup>th</sup> day of April 2012. Notice of the time and place of this meeting has been provided to The Review, Pascack Press, The Record and Community Life; a copy was posted on the bulletin board outside of this meeting room and provided to any interested parties.

Please notify the Municipal Clerk for any disability requirements necessary for attendance at Mayor and Council meetings. The fire exits are located through the double doors to your left. Please silence all cell phones and pagers.

ROLL CALL:

Deputy Municipal Clerk Kohan called the roll those present being as follows: Councilmembers Capawana, DeRosa, Frank, Giancarlo and Hanlon. Also in attendance Borough Attorney Paul.

RESOLUTION:

12074 Appointing Deputy Municipal Clerk Denise Kohn was introduced by Councilmember Hanlon, seconded by Councilmember DeRosa.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Councilmembers Becker, Capawana, DeRosa, Frank,  
Giancarlo and Hanlon

Nays: None

(SEE COPY OF THE AFORESAID ORIGINAL RESOLUTION AFFIXED HERETO)

OATH OF OFFICE: Mayor Arnowitz administered the Oath of Office to Denise Kohan as Deputy Municipal Clerk.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

On motion by Councilmember Giancarlo, seconded by Councilmember Capawana, and unanimously carried, the Minutes of the Special Council Meeting of March 16, 2012, and Special Meeting of March 29, 2012, were approved as presented.

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. BOARD OF FIRE OFFICERS SEEKING APPROVAL FOR RITCHIE MARKOVSKI AND SEAN CHORMANSKI AS REGULAR MEMBERS OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT.
2. BOARD OF FIRE OFFICERS SEEKING APPROVAL FOR MITCHELL RAVES, RYAN LEWIS AND MATTHEW CIUPPA AS MEMBERS OF THE FIRE CADET COMPANY.

Received, filed and approved on motion by Councilmember Capawana, seconded by Councilmember Giancarlo, and unanimously carried.

OATH OF OFFICE:

Deputy Municipal Clerk Denise Kohan administered the Office of Office to Ritchie Markovski, Sean Chormanski as Regular Members of the Fire Department and Mitchell Raves, Ryan Lewis and Matthew Ciuppa as members of the Fire Department Cadet Company.

CORRESPONDENCE:

3. BO PETKOVICH 115 EVERDELL AVENUE, REQUESTING PERMISSION FOR 2012 PASCACK VALLEY TRIATHLON ON STAURDAY, AUGUST 25, 2012.

Received, filed and approved on motion by Councilmember DeRosa, seconded by Councilmember Capawana, and unanimously carried.

4. PASCACK VALLEY H.S. NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY SEEKING APPROVAL OF 5K WALK/RUN ON SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 2013.

Received, filed and approved on motion by Councilmember DeRosa, seconded by Councilmember Capawana, and unanimously carried.

5. BCUA CHIEF ENGINEER REQUESTING ENFORCEMENT OF SEWER ORDINANCE DIRECTIVES.

Received and filed on motion by Councilmember Frank, seconded by Councilmember Hanlon, and unanimously carried.

6. JEANNETTE O'BABA, 32 STANDISH ROAD, REQUESTING REPAVING OF STANDISH AND BEDFORD ROADS.

Received and filed on motion by Councilmember Frank, seconded by Councilmember DeRosa, and unanimously carried.

7. JIM MOLDOW, 21 OVERBROOK PLACE, COMMENTING ON PSE&G POWER OUTAGES.

Received, filed and referred for discussion on motion by Councilmember Frank, seconded by Councilmember Giancarlo, and unanimously carried.

8. MARY CAMPOREALE, 14 APPELD COURT, REPORTING CONDITION OF SIDEWALK AND CURBING.

Received and filed on motion by Councilmember Frank, seconded by Councilmember DeRosa, and unanimously carried.

Councilmember Frank indicated that it is the homeowner's responsibility to maintain curbs and sidewalks, however, the DPW will inspect Washington Avenue.

9. JULIE VAN DYKEN, 185 WASHINGTON AVENUE, REQUESTING BATHROOM FACILITIES BE AVAILABLE AT MEMORIAL FIELD.

Received and filed on motion by Councilmember Capawana, seconded by Councilmember DeRosa, and unanimously carried.

DISCUSSION:

- 1) Emergency Services Dispatching.

Mayor Arnowitz said the first item for Discussion is Emergency Services Dispatching requested by our Department Heads. There will be a portion in this meeting to permit anyone who wishes to discuss any of the subjects will be done after Discussion.

Councilmember Frank said there is a lot of public interest because it is an important issue. Two years ago we spent a million dollars of our surplus which was not replenished to close a gap in the budget; last year it was \$400,000 and this year it will be another \$400,000. As Chairman of the Finance Committee he feels a obligation to do everything he can to close that gap and we have to look at every possible saving that could help us. We are looking at Shared Services and on March 16 we had a meeting and the Council indicated they were interested in looking into this for an opportunity for the town. He personally believes this is a good thing and we should proceed as it offers significant savings. We need the entire Council to decide what we are going to do.

Out of 900,000 in Bergen County, 200,000 people are dispatched out of Mahwah. We are developing capital costs for radios or any changes we have to make should we go in that direction and there are many issues that have to be addressed. It is an emotional issue and we have to make sure we do so carefully. He did not believe the Council is prepared to vote on this at this time as we need more information.

He said we need dialogue with the professionals who use the dispatch services all the time. Times and technology has changed and we have to look at things differently than in the past. He recommended that a small committee be set up to collect factual information on how the Police Department, Fire Department and Ambulance operate with dispatch. We need to look at all the true costs involved in dispatching. He recommended that the committee be headed by Councilmember Giancarlo who is also Police Commissioner and he will be on in addition to the Fire and Ambulance Commissioner Capawana, and Borough Administrator and CFO as well. In addition, we need a representative from the Police Department, Fire Department, Ambulance and PBA and DPW to make sure we get all viewpoints. The object would be if we do it, how do we do it and does it make sense for Hillsdale. We will have the Captain who runs the Mahwah facility come down to meet with the group and meet with any other interested parties who are not part of this specific committee and we can arrange for tours in Mahwah.

Councilmember Becker agreed.

Councilmember DeRosa said he was introduced to Shared Services recently and he voted to continue to look at what this means for the town. We need to collect the facts and with the input from the committee there are pros and cons. He is not prepared to vote on it but would need more information.

Councilmember Giancarlo would be happy to head the committee; DPW, OEM, Ambulance, Fire, Police need to go to that facility to see it. We could also have an open meeting here so other citizens can have questions and have them answered.

Councilmember Capawana asked if the public could visit that facility.

Mayor Arnowitz wanted to make it clear to the public that we did not jump into this hastily. He has been to the facility three times. We should get more people to go up because if you see the facility, you will be interested in how they do dispatching. We have been working on this for two years now, we have been discussing the pros and cons. He will form the committee and the Council President will set up the first meeting and we will move forward from there.

Jason Durie, Deputy Chief, Fire Department -

It sounds like this governing body at the meeting on March 16 made a decision to as quickly as possible to move forward with Bergen County dispatch. The Council will form a committee to investigate all the options that are out there for the residents of Hillsdale and emergency responses but keep going towards Bergen County. There is no option of possibly hiring a dispatcher to stay in Hillsdale or Northwest Central Bergen Dispatch in Ridgewood. He did not want to

see this pushed to the wayside. Regarding department heads going up to Mahwah, there are many unanswered questions regarding the county's capabilities, whether they are more efficient or less efficient than our own dispatch here in Hillisdale; their overall goal of where we would be in the communications system within three to five years regarding the trunk and radio systems. He is in favor of the Council forming a committee and inviting the department heads to be a part of it.

Mayor Arnowitz said the trunking concern was one of the questions raised and he thought the Captain who is the head of Mahwah gave a very satisfactory answer to that. It is not necessary for someone to join to go into this trunking system. It is an expensive option and we do not have to do it and the discussion by the Council is that is not an option we are looking at.

Mr. Durie (Contd).

Lodi is on the trunking system and there are concerns of failure and that you can come on in your legacy system today but in three or five years, the hope is that everyone goes to trunk. We definitely to look at that from the emergency response side of this. That is his biggest concern. Do we have to surrender our FCC Licenses if we were going to the dispatch center because if we sign a contract today with the county, or anybody, and three years down the road we find it is not for Hillsdale, if we try to go back to that, the FCC is not in the business of handing back FCC licenses. He is worried about losing the hometown communication that we have day in and day out emergency calls. It is scary to think that if this goes to the wayside, which we are going to be talking to.

Police Chief Stalter -

He appreciates the idea of forming a committee, however, OEM, DPW weren't mentioned, just so they are key players in this decision process. He put forth a proposal to the Administrator which would allow headquarters to be open 24/7. That was one of his concerns from the very beginning and that needs to be looked at closely. Numbers have been bantered about, yet we do not have a plan as to what we are going to do. He requested that numbers not be thrown around until a plan actually exists as to what will be done. He has to tell reporters that he doesn't know where these numbers are coming from because he is not aware of a plan.

We are aware of two things: our county government is in turmoil and nobody gets along with anybody; we have Freeholders hiring attorneys; we have a County Executive who does not agree with a study. That study was released and recommended downsizing and elimination of a county police department; our county executive believes there are too many police chiefs. Before we throw our dispatch and our citizens lifeline to all emergency services and to the services of this borough, we are the only 24/7 agency available by phone or in person in this borough. The dispatch center is a political entity; the county is looking to eliminate funding for ambulance services. As politics change at the county level, priorities change and decisions change. We need to keep that in mind. It is another step of local government coming away from the people, isolating itself, and being driven by the dollar and not the services we give to the people.

Keith Durie, DPW Superintendent -

He did not get up to the county facility due to his surgery. He asked if communications would answer us during the day because we have seven people that ride and work in Hillsdale during the eight hour day. He did not have a clear answer whether or not they were going to answer the DPW to communicate with us and we don't have a clear answer at this point. He is looking forward to working with the committee.

Jon Najarian, OEM -

In 2011, we had five floods, more than we ever had in one year. In two events the water rose from 2-1/2 to 3-1/2 which is flood stage in 20 minutes. The water level is monitored by police cars, entries are made, OEM, police chief, fire chief are all notified. Businesses and residents need to be notified when there is flooding, messages need to be put out. In events, we have extra people in police headquarters assisting the dispatcher, taking calls, etc. If multiple towns have this problem, how can county dispatch accomplish this? Communications between the police department, DPW, fire department are critical in these events and quickly. He wanted to be certain OEM is included in the discussions.

Chris Donaldson, President of PBA Local 207 -

He said the stance of going to the county will save money and not affect the services provided to the residents on a daily basis. The PBA has not yet received a phone call or email inviting us to participate in any way. A Letter to the Editor was submitted by Councilmember Frank that stated that a representative from the PBA was invited to take a tour of the county communications center. This is false. After polling all of our members it was confirmed that no one received any communication or invitation from any member of the governing body. The members of PBA 207 are here tonight to be part of the conversation and we would like to raise some of the concerns that we have had all along but no one bothered to ask us.

First, there is a concern about closing police headquarters for any part of the day. There is no substitute for help from a police officer or dispatcher waiting to help someone in need when they enter the building. The citizen would have to pick up a phone by a locked door, the phone would ring in Mahwah, the police officer in patrol would be radioed to meet that person at the entrance. The person, young or old, who has come to the police station for help will have to wait outside for an available unit to respond. It should be noted that we have had someone having a heart attack for help, a woman who was attacked by her boyfriend at police headquarters for her own safety; persons who have had a bad accident up the road. Our police station is in the center of town on a busy street, footsteps from the train station and Downtown Park. Children have walked into the police station if they were frightened or scared or in need and have been told that their local police officers are here for help and our police station is an open door. Are we now prepared to tell the kids that the doors are no longer open for them?

What is the real cost for the changeover to the county dispatch. Different numbers have been mentioned in the newspaper and council meetings. What is the final cost of this project? It seems that any of the numbers we have heard are realistic. There only have been mentions of round numbers and potential money savings. The police and residents deserve to hear the hard numbers. Until that happens, any

savings to the town is questionable. What are the reoccurring fees and what are the one time fees? What about required upgrades to police cars, upgrades to the computer terminals so we can communicate with the new dispatchers. If the police department were closed for any time, it would require new building security features, how much would this cost to convert our current headquarters?

Another misleading statement made by Councilmember Frank is that police department is not communicating surrounding towns via radio. This is false; we can and do communicate with all surrounding towns including New Jersey State Police, Bergen County Police, Bergen County Sheriff's Department and various other law enforcement jurisdictions in the north region. Under the county plan, there is an expectation will have purchased expensive county radios; the real concern is that these county radios operate on a digital band that would require mounting of a new antenna somewhere in town. Who is going to pay for this? Once we have these county radios we will not be able to communicate with our surrounding towns, not the way we do now. County radios will not allow us to directly communicate with our neighbors any more. If the governing body believes these upgrades and changes can be skipped and postponed, then the changeover to the county dispatch will be even worse than we have ever predicted. The changeover to Bergen County Dispatch has its own problems but to do it halfway and cutting corners would even be worse. It would place the safety of police officers in jeopardy and risk the lives of residents who need us.

Why can't we keep dispatch in house using civilian dispatchers who work for us, who represent Hillsdale, who care about this town? Our per diem dispatchers have saved us thousands of dollars by reducing police overtime while still providing in-house service. Wouldn't it be wiser to expand our in-house civilian dispatching to cover more shifts with quality people, save the town money and maintain the same level of service the residents are accustomed to. For some time now, the governing body has reduced the number of police officers through attrition. Those positions have not been filled; we are currently at the lowest number of active police officers in years; now on top of all that, outsourcing dispatch further strips the Hillsdale Police Department capabilities by turning the controls over to a stranger in Mahwah. How far will this go? Are the residents truly aware of how much cutting and trimming has already been done; thousands of dollars have already been saved but still that is not enough. The residents of this town might be surprised to know just how much cutting the police has gone on and what this dispatching idea will really do to their town's police department.

For all of these reasons and more, we urge the residents to become involved in this discussion now matter what your opinion. Call, email or go to a Council meeting, get the answers to the questions the PBA is asking. The recent hasty vote to move forward as quickly as

possible with county dispatch makes us worry that the changeover will happen without all of these important questions answered. It could happen sooner than we think and mistakes will be made. It can happen so quickly that corners will be cut and safety measures skipped in the name of cost savings. We all must make sure that this Mayor and Council make the right decision based on safety, not dollars and cents. Decisions made today will affect us all tomorrow. He urged the Mayor and Council to do their homework, slow down. He asked that the PBA be part of the committee.

Councilmember Giancarlo said he wants a communication chain where he is talking to one person. He will go to all the heads that spoke tonight.

Mayor Arnowitz said we are losing a very important police officer in a few days, Sergeant Scordato. He thanked him for his services to our community and to the residents. He will be missed.

## 2) Tier Two Use Charges - Bergen County Utilities Authority.

Administrator DeJoseph said the BCUA charges us for every property in the borough, whether it is borough-owned or non-borough owned, tax exempt property, disabled veteran. He brought this forward as requested by the finance committee in the past to look at everything. Other towns do charge via ordinance for all these properties based on the flow of sewage because that is how the municipality is charged. This is an annual fee based on 2010 usage. The American Legion uses \$15.81 worth of sewage for example.

Mayor Arnowitz asked the Council to tread lightly with this. Montvale is already billing the high school but when you start billing churches and legions, we have to discuss this. He asked the Council to think about it and it will be put on the agenda at a future meeting.

## 3) Waste Management Request to Reduce Operating Hours.

Mayor Arnowitz said Waste Management has a Host Agreement and anytime they want to change the Host Agreement, we have to agree to it. Part of their many hours is their hours of operation. He did not believe we would have a problem with their reducing the number of hours and it does not affect us financially. At this point in time we only get free tipping from them. Our Host Community Agreement will be coming up for review this year; hours of operation are not a factor, tonnage is. Over the years with recycling, tonnage has been reduced dramatically and they can do the same amount of business in a shorter period of time.

Motion to reduce operating hours was made by Councilmember Giancarlo, seconded by Councilmember DeRosa.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Councilmembers Hanlon, Giancarlo, Frank, DeRosa,  
Capawana and Becker

Nays: None

GENERAL PUBLIC HEARING:

Mayor Arnowitz opened the meeting to the public and invited comment from the audience.

Kevin O'Brien, Parkview Drive -

He reached out to the Council last month with respect to challenges in our neighborhood; 55 gallon chemical containers which are unsightly, conditions of waste, portable shed or garage on the front lawn to be utilized for parking. He was in touch with the police chief who is willing to speak with the resident who is using Parkview as a race track for his motorcycle. The police department is under staffed, over worked, but will take the time to reach out to get compliance from this individual.

Timothy P. O'Reilly, 51 Central Avenue -

The hours of operation of the Host Community requires that someone be at the scale house, any garbage or anything that comes into that facility, whether it is recyclables or anything else, is to be paid \$5/ton. It should also be audited every year to make sure that we are getting that money.

Mayor Arnowitz said that contract was thrown out eight years ago by a previous Council. We do not receive tonnage any longer.

Mr. O'Reilly (Contd).

He said to be sure that we are getting paid for the trailers coming in at night. He is concerned about the way the budget is being looked at. He understands the 2% Cap but there are many people in the community that would like to have the services that they have, they would like the programs that they have and they would like the things they do have. For such a drastic change, the people should be given the opportunity to decide. Last year when Councilmember Frank filled in as Administrator he asked if he took any money for that position as there was \$1,000 marked in the budget for anybody filling that position per month.

Mayor Arnowitz said no.

Mr. O'Reilly (Contd).

There are a lot of things that happen that nobody talks about, says things about. It is serious, there is money available to do certain things, other things get pushed aside and you get rid of. He would rather pay a little more money and suggested this be presented to be people to vote whether they want to pay for it or not. He would like

to keep services the way they are. He doesn't like the changes that are made. He understands some changes have to be made but people come to Hillsdale, buy homes and raise families and they want to keep services and homes as they have. That is the value of our community.

Richard Correrri, 21 Clayton Street -

Woodcliff Lake and Park Ridge are on the northern border for Northwest Bergen Dispatch; Westwood and Washington Township are on our southern border as well as River Vale on the east and Saddle River on the west. In-house dispatching is an important part of our community; it is a pool for police officers and dispatchers, the pool they can use to get to the residents of Hillsdale. It is a source of communication for our residents during emergencies for them to ask questions pertaining to power failures, drinking water contamination, flooding, or any other problem. It might be a safe haven for someone alone and looking for an understanding person to talk to in the middle of the night. Who knows the better the residents of our town than the police and dispatchers? Will central dispatch know who I am? What are the costs associated with central dispatch? Is there rental and usage cost for phone lines? Will new equipment be required to be centrally dispatched? How much will that equipment cost? Will our fire department and ambulance corps be required to get new equipment to communicate? What happens after five years? What will the costs be then? Will we be able to return to dispatching locally if we are not happy when the agreement is over? What will it cost Hillsdale to do that? How will police headquarters remain open and more importantly, what happens to the dispatchers who are working for us now? There are so many more things he would like to know about central dispatching; the right thing to do is to show us all the information on both sides of the dispatching issue and let the residents decide.

Pamela Sturt, 42 Maple Avenue -

She asked about the money in the budget that comes from taxes.

Mayor Arnowitz explained that the town is obligated to have a certain amount of surplus on hand for emergencies and it is his opinion that we have taken way too much out of surplus over the past few years and we are dangerously low. We need means to replace our surplus.

Ms. Sturt (Contd).

Her questions is where does this surplus money come from, it all comes from taxes. In the end it is the residents of the town that are paying for this. When the committee finishes their investigation and before the Council votes, the public should have another opportunity to express their wishes. The Council represents the residents and should take into consideration any large percentage of their consideration what we want. Each time the committee will update the residents with any information they have. If we choose to come to a meeting, we will hear everything they find. The residents vote for the Council so it is what we want. She has gone into the police headquarters on occasion with questions, sometimes something very important, and that is more important than being able to email. The committee should come up with a very accurate estimate of the costs of each option so they can inform the residents before a vote goes through. She also wants to have the police headquarters open all of the time and that is very important to her and she would be willing to pay for that.

Denice Vergnes, 103 Clayton Street -

She is happy to hear that the council has made a commitment to work with different parties. Everyone should be a team and work for our best interest in the long term. It is very easy to make a quick fix but we have to be cognizant how this is going to effect us. She moved here 10 years ago and it was her best decision and it was because of the people who dedicate their time, care enough, and a police department. There are conflicts within this room and it is difficult to get everyone to agree. She asked what is broken and what do we need to fix? Every time she needed something from this community she got nothing but the best in service. She is not comfortable betting on something you don't know. Technology is great but it is the people behind it who drive it. Is it important to save \$100,000 but if your child is stuck somewhere and they are able to walk into a police department; domestic violence and someone needs help. That is what we are here for, to serve, and she hopes as you are doing numbers you keep that in the back your mind. You have to remember people. Does the deficit really come from the police department? Do we have 2012 budget yet because she didn't see it published.

Mayor Arnowitz said the idea that the police station is being closed; this is still an item for discussion. If we were to join Mahwah and close the police station, there will still be a means and safety venue for someone to go to the police station and get through to Mahwah and be in a safe environment. It won't be the same as we now have. Hillsdale does not take 9-1-1 calls and they are received and handled by Paramus who then calls Hillsdale and Hillsdale dispatches. Dollars and cents are important but that is not what we are looking at here. He doesn't see anything that Mahwah would do that won't be better than what we do now. Everything will be looked at and discussed and taken

into consideration.

Ms. Vergnes (Contd).

There are three new members of the Council, 50%, new people who are still on the learning curve. Let's document this so we all feel good, change is hard and difficult, but give us the cost analysis. When telecommunications go down and another 9-1-1 and she couldn't get through to her children, she would like to know that someone would go to the police department to make sure her kids got home that day. She understands technology but she also knows budget and asked where these shortfalls are? The police department is already on bare bones, already understaffed. What about the schools, they have to be finalized, and Woodcliff Lake say they are not going to part of the school district. Do we sacrifice one arena to take care of another? You need to tell us that going to Mahwah is going to cost us \$500,000 in the next five years but it is going to save us one million in the next six or we are going to have to come up with a cash outlay at what expense. Where is the cost analysis of what we are doing now? That is what we need to see and know and this is such a big decision and can six people become a vote for the people?

Jim Moldow, 21 Overbrook Place -

He said if you look at the Borough Seal around the circle would be the police, OEM, fire department, ambulance, PBA, and in the middle of the circle would be the residents. He requested that one member or perhaps two members of the community to be on this committee. During Tropical Storm Floyd we lost power, cell phones, land mines and phones were out for days. It is very reassuring to the public to know the police station is there. During Hurricane Irene, one hundred percent of the people were evacuated and took the warnings of the police department who went door to door. We do not want to lose that to save a couple of dollars.

Paul Kapu,