

BOROUGH OF CALDWELL
COUNCIL BUSINESS/CONFERENCE MEETING MINUTES
April 21, 2020

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The Council Business Meeting of the Borough of Caldwell was called to order via Zoom Webinar at 7:20pm.

PRESENT: Mayor Kelley, Council President Schmidt, Councilman Lace, Councilman Gates, Councilwoman DePalma-Iozzi, Councilman Rodgers, Councilman Cole.

ALSO PRESENT: Borough Administrator Thomas Banker, Borough Attorney Vincent Nuzzi, Deputy Clerk Kim Conlon.

Adequate notice of this Council/Business Conference Meeting was given on January 1, 2020. Notice was posted on the bulletin board on the first floor of the Borough Hall, One Provost Square, Caldwell, New Jersey. Official newspapers of the Borough were notified of this meeting by mail. Notice was posted and all persons requesting notice were sent same.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

April 7, 2020

Moved by Councilman Lace, seconded by Council President Schmidt. No Discussion. On roll call, all present voted in the affirmative. Minutes approved 4/21/20.

PRESENTATION

1. Presentation to Honor Healthcare Workers.

Healthcare Workers Proclamation read by Councilman Cole. **Guest Speaker Dr. Bankim Shah** from Riverside Medical Group described some of his experiences in battling the Coronavirus; high volume of patients with the virus, hospital bed capacities full, shortage of personal protective equipment, increasing death rates, and 25 colleagues testing positive for the virus. He explained that the situation is improving with more tests and PPE readily available. Dr. Shah urged residents to continue social distancing and hopefully the crisis will look better by July/Aug/September. The Mayor inquired about Dr. Shah's family, and Dr. Shah related that he is following a set of protocols at home to limit his family's exposure. Councilman Lace asked what residents can do to help healthcare professionals combat the virus. Dr. Shah instructed Caldwell residents to stay at home; abide by social distancing guidelines, and wear gloves and masks when out in public.

The **second Guest Speaker was Anne Marie Smetteker**, a Caldwell resident and the Director of Nursing for the Saint Catherine of Sienna Infirmary on the campus of Caldwell University. The infirmary serves the Dominican Sisters of Caldwell. She explained that not only has she tested positive for the Coronavirus, but also has half of their nursing staff. To date, they have had 8 Covid-19 cases and 1 fatality. Their staff have been in constant contact with the State of New Jersey and the County OEM Office, but still have a shortage of protective gear, especially gowns. Ms. Smetteker is hoping that this crisis will result in broad-based changes to how we, as a society, prepare for and cope with pandemics in the future. Councilman Lace asked what residents can do to help healthcare professionals. Ms. Smetteker instructed Caldwell residents to take the virus seriously and to maintain social distancing with others. The Mayor asked Mark Guiliano, the Borough's OEM Officer, if there was anything we could do to help Ms. Smetteker obtain needed supplies for the Infirmary. Mr. Guiliano informed the Mayor and Council that he had already been in communication with the College's Director of Maintenance to provide him with a list of possible suppliers for personal protective equipment.

Council President Schmidt read the following letter sent to the Mayor and Council by **Kristin Gerard**, a Caldwell resident and ICU nurse in Bergen County:

To Christine and Member of the Council,

Thank you for inviting me to share my experience of what it has been like to work at ground zero during the Covid-19 pandemic. My name is Kristen Gerard and I am ICU nurse in Bergen County. 48 days ago, the first case of confirmed Corona Virus was transferred to our medical ICU. That evening the patient coded and unfortunately expired. Staff was extremely nervous because we were well aware of how deadly this virus could be. Most concerning for us was putting our families at risk if we are exposed at work. I personally needed to make sure my children could distance themselves from me if possible. 2 out of 3 of my children

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are living now at alternative locations, and I have not seen either one of my parents in over 2 months. At first, we were under the impression that only the very old, as well as patients with pre-existing conditions,

were at risk from complications if they contracted the virus. We all quickly found out that this was not the case. Our largest patient population is between 25-60 years of age and many have no pre-existing conditions. Some appear to be the picture of health like our beloved principal Mr. Brown. Two nights after the first case came to our unit, I admitted my first COVID-19 patient, who was transferred to us for intubation. At that point, our ICU was only 50% COVID-19. After being off for only two days, I returned to witness our entire unit COVID-19, and two more "alternative sites" in the hospital turned into ICUs. As the curve of admission begins to flatten, we now have 7 alternative ICUs and have had to turn our cafeteria into a COVID step-down unit. There are literally bodies all over on ventilators. When I get home and think about the night I had to work, it just doesn't seem real. We are fortunate to have nurses from all over the county come and help ease the burden. We all have double the patient load and sometimes we feel like we can never keep up with all of the drips and patients that are coding. The only thing I can compare it to is a battlefield during the war. The hardest thing for me is to witness these people dying alone and to hear the fear and anxiety in the voices of their loved ones.

There may be a sign that we are flattening the curve with all of the social distancing in place, but I can tell you firsthand, we have a long way to go. It is so frustrating to hear about people protesting to open up our country. They have no idea how deadly this is. We need help from our Federal Government to expand testing. That is the only way to keep this virus under control. This last week alone, I lost 3 high school classmates, 3 nurses, and two MD's I used to work with. The outpouring of love I have felt from friends, loved ones, and the community, has really helped me get through this challenging time. Last night I had the opportunity to care for a woman who came to us 25 days ago, 30 weeks pregnant. She almost died. We delivered her baby via C-section, and had to put her on heart/lung bypass (ECMO), as well as the ventilator. She is now extubated and off of ECMO. Baby is perfect and Mom had the opportunity to see her via facetime. It's nights like that that keep me going. When I leave in the morning, I pass through our lobby and take note of our small victories. As of this morning, we are up to 816 COVID-19 discharges and 49 off the ventilator. My message to our community...Please keep doing what you are doing. When you follow our social distancing Guidelines, you are saving lives and every life counts.

2. Matthew Courtwright- Eagle Scout Presentation.
3. Aidan LeChac- Eagle Scout Presentation.
4. Arbor Day Proclamation, designating May 9, 2020 as Caldwell's Arbor Day.
5. Neighbor Brigade Presentation-**Carol Defrance**. The West Essex Chapter of the Neighbor Brigade was established in November, 2017, providing support to community members in need by delivering groceries, prepping meals, offering rides to doctor appointments, and various other services. The organization is looking for volunteers to help residents, especially seniors in Marion Manor, who would be able to deliver groceries. Anyone interested can sign up online by visiting neighborbrigade.org.

SPECIAL REPORT

CALDWELL COVID-19 TASKFORCE

Mark Guiliano, Caldwell's OEM Officer, reported that to date, the Borough had 86 positive Coronavirus cases and 7 fatalities from the virus. There are some positive signs in that the numbers for Essex County have been flattening out. Hospital admissions are down in the County and emissions are up. Mr. Guiliano reported that Municipal Government is still operating, and he thanked all staff for their continued efforts to work together, especially the Department of Public Works, who have worked tirelessly to keep everyone safe by cleaning the buildings and municipal vehicles. The town has been receiving lots of donations from residents, however, there is still a need for masks and gowns. He reminded residents to only put bulk items out to the curb during bulk collection and to remember to be prepared for emergencies like power outages, as we are approaching storm season.

Andrew Pollara, Caldwell Fire Chief, reported that the number of town fire calls has decreased and thanked citizens for donations of masks and gloves.

Chief Bongiorno reported that as of Governor Murphy's Executive Order, New Jerseyans are required to wear facemasks in grocery stores and other public establishments. There has been an increase in vehicular traffic on Bloomfield Avenue. Residents should only be going out for essential supplies. The Police Department has been noticing "Birthday Parades", which is acceptable, as long as participants stay in their vehicles. Chief Bongiorno also reported that the Motor Vehicle Commission is closed, but that the State has granted citizens a two-month extension on inspection, registration, and license renewals. The Police Department also wants to extend their appreciation to Mario BiFalco and the Public Works Department for keeping everyone healthy at Borough Hall and for cleaning the Police Department and Police vehicles.

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Maria Burak, Caldwell's Health Liaison and Senior Citizen/Human Services Officer, reminded residents to continue social distancing, wear masks in public, and frequently wash hands. For any residents feeling anxious or depressed, visit the Borough of Caldwell Website, which provides hotlines and help resources. The senior bus is still operational on Wednesdays, only. The bus leaves at 6:30am. Only 4-5 patrons on the bus at a time and each rider must wear a mask. The Food Pantry wishes to thank all its volunteers and donors. Food bags are distributed every Wednesday, from 11:00am-1:00pm. Donations can be left in the lobby Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 9:00am-4:00pm. Giftcards to local residents are a great way to make a donation and help local businesses. Councilwoman DePalma-Iozzi asked how one would make a monetary donation. Ms. Burak explained that residents, wishing to make a monetary donation could leave a check made out to the Caldwell Food Pantry, in the Borough Hall drop box, labeled "For Maria".

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENTS ON RESOLUTIONS OR ANY TOPIC

Members of the public are invited to comment at this time on ANY issues, whether or not on the agenda.

Motion to Open the Public Meeting Portion:

First: Councilman Lace Second: Councilman Gates

NO PUBLIC COMMENTS.

INTRODUCTION OF AN ORDINANCE

ORDINANCE #1389-20: BOND ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING GENERAL CAPITAL PROJECTS IN THE AMOUNT OF _____.
PULLED.

PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION OF AN ORDINANCE

ORDINANCE #1385-20: AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF CALDWELL AMENDING CHAPTER 250 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF CALDWELL, ENTITLED "CALDWELL BOROUGH ZONING ORDINANCE" BY AMENDING VARIOUS SECTIONS OF SAME PURSUANT TO THE 1999-2025 HOUSING ELEMENT AND FAIR SHARE PLAN (459 Bloomfield Avenue).

Moved for open discussion by Councilman Rodgers, seconded by Councilwoman DePalma-Iozzi. No discussion. Moved for closing of open discussion and adoption by Councilman Lace, seconded by Councilman Gates. On roll call, all voted in the affirmative. Ordinance adopted 4/21/20.

ORDINANCE #1387-20: BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR WATER MAIN REPLACEMENTS WITHIN THE WATER UTILITY IN AND BY THE BOROUGH OF CALDWELL, IN THE COUNTY OF ESSEX, NEW JERSEY, APPROPRIATING \$2,700,000 THEREFORE AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$2,565,000 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE BOROUGH TO FINANCE PART OF THE COST THEREOF.

Moved for open discussion by Councilman Lace, seconded by Council President Schmidt. No discussion. Moved for closing of open discussion and adoption by Council President Schmidt, seconded by Councilman Lace. On roll call, Councilman Lace, Councilman Gates, Councilman Rodgers, Council President Schmidt, and Councilwoman DePalma-Iozzi all voted in the affirmative; Councilman Cole abstained. Ordinance adopted 4/21/20.

ORDINANCE #1388-20: BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR SEWER UTILITY IMPROVEMENTS IN AND BY THE BOROUGH OF CALDWELL, IN THE COUNTY OF ESSEX, NEW JERSEY, APPROPRIATING \$2,000,000 THEREFORE AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$1,900,000 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE BOROUGH TO FINANCE PART OF THE COST THEREOF.

Moved for open discussion by Councilman Gates, seconded by Councilman Rodgers. No discussion. Moved for closing of open discussion and adoption by Councilman Lace, seconded by Councilwoman DePalma-Iozzi. On roll call, Councilman Lace, Councilman Gates, Councilman Rodgers, Council President Schmidt, and Councilwoman DePalma-Iozzi all voted in the affirmative; Councilman Cole abstained. Ordinance adopted 4/21/20.

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ORDINANCE #1386-20: AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ACQUISITION OF THE REAL PROPERTY DESIGNATED AS BLOCK 22, LOT 9 ON THE TAX MAPS OF THE BOROUGH OF CALDWELL, NEW JERSEY, ALSO KNOWN AS 26 SMULL AVENUE, FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$500,000).

Moved for open discussion by Councilman Gates, seconded by Councilwoman DePalma-Iozzi. No discussion. Moved for closing of open discussion and adoption by Councilman Lace, seconded by Councilwoman DePalma-Iozzi. On roll call, all voted in the affirmative. Ordinance adopted 4/21/20.

ORDINANCE #1383-20: AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF CALDWELL AMENDING CHAPTER 250 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF CALDWELL, ENTITLED "CALDWELL BOROUGH ZONING ORDINANCE" BY AMENDING VARIOUS SECTIONS OF SAME PURSUANT TO THE 1999-2025 HOUSING ELEMENT AND FAIR SHARE PLAN (80 Roseland Avenue).

Moved for open discussion by Councilman Lace, seconded by Councilman Rodgers. No discussion. Moved for closing of open discussion and adoption by Councilman Lace, seconded by Councilman Cole. On roll call, all voted in the affirmative. Ordinance adopted 4/21/20.

ORDINANCE #1384-20: AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF CALDWELL AMENDING CHAPTER 250 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF CALDWELL, ENTITLED "CALDWELL BOROUGH ZONING ORDINANCE" BY AMENDING VARIOUS SECTIONS OF SAME PURSUANT TO THE 1999-2025 HOUSING ELEMENT PURSUANT TO THE 1999-2025 HOUSING ELEMENT AND FAIR SHARE PLAN (30 Smull Avenue).

Moved for open discussion by Councilman Lace, seconded by Councilman Rodgers. No discussion. Moved for closing of open discussion and adoption by Councilman Lace, seconded by Councilman Gates. On roll call, Councilman Lace, Councilman Gates, Councilman Rodgers, Councilwoman DePalma-Iozzi, and Councilman Cole all voted in the affirmative. Council President Schmidt voted no. Ordinance adopted 4/21/20.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT ON RESOLUTIONS

4-114: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN EXECUTIVE SESSION FROM WHICH THE PUBLIC IS EXCLUDED- For the Meeting of April 21, 2020.

4-115: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PAYMENT OF THE BILLS AND THE ISSUANCE OF CHECKS FOR THE PERIOD THROUGH April 4, 2020- April 17, 2020.

4-116: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ISSUANCE OF ONE (1) TAXICAB LICENSE TO Sezai Gurses, Metropolitan Limousine, 806 Murray Street, Avenel, NJ. APPLICATION AND APPLICANT HAVE BEEN APPROVED BY APPROPRIATE MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENTS.

4-117: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE REFUND OF PAYMENT TO Mount Saint Dominic Academy FOR PRIVATE USE FOR PUBLIC PROPERTY (PUPPA) APPLICATION.

Moved by Council President Schmidt, seconded by Councilwoman Depalma-Iozzi. No Discussion. On roll call, all voted in the affirmative. Resolutions approved 4/21/20.

4-118: RESOLUTION DESIGNATING THOMAS A. BANKER AS BOROUGH ADMINISTRATOR FOR THE BOROUGH OF CALDWELL.

Moved by Council President Schmidt, seconded by Councilwoman DePalma-Iozzi. Discussions Ensued. Mr. Banker explained that this Resolution removes the "acting" from his job title. On roll call, Council President Schmidt, Councilman Gates, Councilman Rodgers, Councilwoman DePalma-Iozzi, and Councilman Cole all voted in the affirmative. Councilman Lace abstained. Resolution approved 4/21/20.

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COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Borough Council Members

Council President Schmidt reported that the Caldwell Community Center is looking for safety guidelines on how to re-open and are in the process of putting together a social distancing plan for when the Community Center is open again. In the meantime, the pool deck has been sanitized. The Library Board met on April 15th via Zoom. As can be expected, their revenues are down, but their costs are limited as well. They have been receiving requests for library cards, so they have been busy issuing temporary cards. The library has been in touch with our schools, providing information for students who are interested in obtaining library cards. They are continuing to find innovative ways to reach out to our community, including our businesses.

Council President Schmidt would like to thank Mike Guerrero of Gelati's for bringing fresh milk and eggs to our seniors at Marion Manor. Also, many thanks to those who have reached out wishing to volunteer through the Neighbor Brigade. One member of our Women's Club is 75 years old and has had 2 knee replacements. She reached out not to request assistance, but to volunteer! This shows the wonderful spirit of our community.

The Signage Committee met on April 20th. They are looking into the signage process. The idea is to have a proven, stream-lined process that will ease the burden on our businesses. Also, as it stands, pre-existing signs will not be affected by the new ordinance. However, we hope that businesses will get on board with the new code guidelines, which should make our downtown more appealing. Project Mainstreet met on April 9th. They are hoping to create an event to bring our community together once everything opens up.

Councilman Lace commended Council President Schmidt for her entry for the April 17th Poetry Day Event.

Councilman Gates reminded residents to complete their information for the 2020 Census.

Mayor Kelley expressed his appreciation for everyone's efforts to help combat the COVID-19 Virus. He thanked Caldwell residents for their continued efforts to practice social distancing.

Borough Administrator Thomas Banker stated that he was proud of the work of all Borough Employees, who are all still working on a full-time basis. He thanked the Council for passing Capital Improvement Ordinances, so that residents can look forward to water, sewer, and road Improvements. He explained that the 2020-2021 Budget will be delayed. At this time, it is unclear, due to the current crisis, as to the guidelines that will be set by the New Jersey State Government, and the amount of support they will be able to provide. The goal is to have a Budget that is compliant and realistic. Submission will hopefully be for the May 5th Council Meeting. Mr. Banker reported that the Borough had experienced a sanitary main sewer problem on Westville Avenue, behind the high school, but that the town had a blockage under control.

Borough Attorney Vincent Nuzzi expressed that he was impressed with the conduct of our Chief of Police, James Bonjourno and reported that he has been communicative with him with regard to legal issues.

Councilman Rodgers informed the Mayor and Council that local businesses in Caldwell were in the process of writing a letter to Governor Murphy's Office asking for a delay in the celebration of Mother's Day this year, possibly a June date, so that businesses won't be negatively impacted financially who rely on the holiday for sales.

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Councilman Lace provided an update for the Safe Routes to School Program. Sergeant Pellegrino had been in contact with Easy Ride of Essex County. They are waiting for the state to announce the award winners. Caldwell's Grover Cleveland Middle School would at least receive Gold Star status for submitting before the deadline. Councilman Lace expressed that it would be a good time to implement the Complete Streets Resolution that was passed by the Caldwell Council in 2014, but was never enacted. He is hoping to add it to the Agenda soon. All events for the Grover Cleveland Birthplace are still on hold. Donation dinners for the West Essex Rescue Squad are booked through June 19th.

On a motion made by Council President Schmidt, seconded by Councilman Rodgers and unanimously affirmed, the Council moved into Executive Session at 9:23pm.

Mayor Kelley read the following statement: BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED in accordance with the Provisions of N.J.S.A. 10:12 and 13, the public shall be excluded from the Executive Session of the Governing Body which is being held for the discussion of the following subject matters: 1. Pending or anticipated litigation or contract negotiation; 2. Personnel matters; 3. This Executive Session shall continue for an indefinite period of time and upon termination of the Executive Session, the Governing Body may choose to resume the public portion of the meeting. The discussion, which shall be conducted in closed session, shall be disclosed upon termination of litigation or contractual matter, upon resolution of the personnel matter with consent of said person or persons and as provided by N.J.S.A. 4-12 but in no case later than two (2) years from this date. These minutes shall be available as soon as the matter is resolved or not later than two years hence.

Prepared by: _____
Kim Conlon Deputy Borough Clerk

Date: _____