

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
July 23, 2024
7:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER

SALUTE TO COLORS

Mayor Wronko invited all those present to stand in a salute to the colors.

MAYOR'S STATEMENT AS TO COMPLIANCE WITH P.L. 1975

Adequate Notice of this Meeting has been provided according to the Open Public Meetings Act, Assembly Bill 1030. Notice of this Meeting was included in the Annual Meeting Notice sent to the New Jersey Herald and the Daily Record on January 10, 2024 and was placed on the Official Bulletin Board in the Municipal Building.

In the event the Mayor and Council have not addressed all items on this Agenda by 10:00 PM and they are of the opinion that they cannot complete the Agenda in a reasonable time period, the Mayor and Council may exercise their option to continue this meeting at an agreed to date, time and place. Please turn off all cell phones for the duration of this Meeting.

ROLL CALL

Council Members:

Councilwoman Kuncken – present	Councilman Simpson – present
Councilman Riccardi – present	Councilman Thornton – absent
Councilman Romano – absent	Councilman Wachterhauser – present

Mayor Wronko – present

CITIZEN'S TO BE HEARD

Mayor Wronko opened the meeting to the public after advising attendees that there is a five (5) minute time limit for each speaker.

David Angel stated he is here this evening to speak about the Cub Scout Pack and Boy Scout Troop in Stanhope. They are associated with the First Presbyterian Church on Main Street. Mr. Angel stated he would like to find a way to foster a relationship between the scouts and the Borough in order to have the scouts provide service to the community. The scouts could participate in projects like clean up days and plantings. Mayor Wronko stated there are projects which arise and the governing body would welcome the opportunity to have the scouts involved. Councilman Simpson is an Eagle Scout and the governing body is willing to work with the scouts and keep the lines of communication open. Mr. Angel stated the scouts helped out with the clean up day at the school and had a good time participating. Mayor Wronko stated that Mr. Angel is welcome to reach out to him or any of the governing body members and to let them know about any ideas he may have to collaborate on. Councilman Riccardi stated the Environmental Commission sponsors a cleanup day in the spring and a trail maintenance day in the fall and he will ask the commission to reach out to the scouts as well.

Seeing no one further from the public wishing to speak, Mayor Wronko closed the public portion of the meeting.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

Mayor Wronko read aloud the list of minutes being presented for approval:

June 11, 2024	Work Session and Agenda Meeting & Closed Session
June 25, 2024	Business Meeting & Closed Session

On motion by Councilwoman Kuncken, seconded by Councilman Simpson and carried by a majority voice vote, the minutes for June were approved. Councilman Riccardi abstained from all the minutes for June.

CORRESPONDENCE *(List Attached)*

On motion by Councilman Riccardi, seconded by Councilman Wachterhauser and unanimously carried by voice vote, the list of correspondence was accepted and ordered placed on file.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Public Safety – Councilwoman Kuncken/Councilman Riccardi

(Police, Fire, Ambulance, Court & Violations Bureau, Emergency Management)

Councilwoman Kuncken stated the Fire Department for the month of June reported that they had 12 calls, 5 mutual aid calls, 5 drills, 1 meeting and 1 officers meeting. There were 30 other miscellaneous responses. The total number of man hours volunteered was 199 hours.

Councilwoman Kuncken stated the Fire Marshal report for the month of June states they did not respond to any fire calls or complaints in the Borough. A total of ten inspections were conducted.

Councilwoman Kuncken stated the Police Department for the month of June reported there were 78 motor vehicle stops and they had a total of 271 calls.

Finance & Administration – Councilman Romano/Councilman Thornton

No report was given.

Community Development – Councilman Wachterhauser/Simpson

HSA Fall Festival - Councilman Wachterhauser stated the HSA (Home and School Association) will be holding a Fall Festival on October 5th. They are hoping to revitalize the original Stanhope Day to be held on Main Street. They are soliciting vendors, food trucks and other sponsors. Mayor Wronko stated he attended a meeting along with Councilman Wachterhauser, the HSA, the Recreation Commission, and Paula Zeliff-Murphy from the Chamber of Commerce. The conversation took place knowing there is other work to be done in order to bring this event back. There are insurances which will be required and permits. They are soliciting vendors in an effort to see if there is an interest which would also determine if they will be able to raise money. Councilwoman Kuncken stated she volunteered for Stanhope Day for many years. The HSA may want to rethink using Main Street for the event. Parking is an issue and it does interrupt other things which go on in this area. Councilwoman Kuncken suggested using the school for the event which has parking and a field. Mayor Wronko stated that may be an option. The planning is just beginning. Councilwoman Kuncken stated the event will involve the Police Department, Fire Department, Ambulance Squad, insurance, and the Sanitarian from the County Health Department. The timeline is tight. Administrator McNeilly stated it could be a fun event but it will most likely not generate much funding. Councilwoman Kuncken stated the HSA should check to see if there are other events going on that same day which could hurt the attendance.

5 Ridge Road – Councilman Wachterhauser stated he reached out to Congressman Kean’s office regarding 5 Ridge Road which is a HUD owned property. The property has been cleaned up a bit but there is a tarp on the roof. Councilman Wachterhauser stated the goal is to have HUD fix the property or sell it. Administrator McNeilly stated the maintenance company is located in Wisconsin and has been more responsive than any other company in the past. The Borough has requested to be put in touch with the person who can make the decision to sell the property. Councilman Wachterhauser stated Congressman Kean’s office has a Congressional Liaison for HUD. Administrator McNeilly stated the current house is a cape cod style. The house could be taken down and the foundation could be used to place a modular home on the site. It could easily become a viable property.

Municipal Infrastructure – Councilman Thornton/Councilman Romano

(Water Distribution, Sewer Collection System, Road Construction & Maintenance, Buildings & Grounds)

No report was given.

Information Technology – Councilman Riccardi/Wachterhauser

Councilman Riccardi stated the Borough's computer server has been completely migrated over to the cloud. The old server is still in place while everyone gets used to the new process. Once there are no outstanding issues, the old server will be decommissioned. The next phase of the project will be implementing the security issues required by the JIF.

Mayor Wronko stated systems are being looked into which would allow for a more structured way for residents to report issues so they would not have to call and email the Administrator's Office. Councilman Riccardi and Councilman Thornton are researching the programs. This is still a work in progress.

Boards/Commissions – Simpson/Councilwoman Kuncken

Councilman Simpson stated Family Fun Day was held this past weekend and it went very well despite that little bit of rain which occurred. There were a lot of families who participated and enjoyed the day. There were snacks and games for everyone. Councilman Simpson thanked the Recreation Commission for doing a stellar job organizing everything. There was a lot of time, effort and energy which went into planning the day. Councilman Simpson also thanked the Fire Department and the Ambulance Squad for their assistance.

Councilman Simpson stated there are some meetings scheduled for the month of August. They are as follows: Shade Tree – August 6th, Recreation – August 7th, Environmental – August 8th, Land Use – August 12th and the Board of Health has no meeting scheduled.

Councilwoman Kuncken stated the main canopy which is used for the hot dog station, pop corn machine and the cotton candy, has some tears in it. The Recreation Commission is going to have to include a few things in their budget for next year. Another item is the hot dog pot. In the past, the one which was used belonged to an individual. Fortunately, this year Maureen Kurtz was able to borrow one from a family member but the Recreation Commission will need to order their own. Councilwoman Kuncken stated she and Councilman Romano have talked with Sydney Bookspan and Maureen Kurtz about adding those items to the Recreation budget for next year. Councilwoman Kuncken stated Family Fun Day was a success even with the quick rainstorm that came through. The children had a great time running around and getting wet. The people on the Recreation Commission are a good group of volunteers.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Grove Road and Elm Street – Administrator McNeilly stated a pre-construction meeting was held for the ADA ramps and sidewalk repairs for Grove Road and Elm Street. The contractor will start, weather permitting, on July 29th. The project duration is projected to be one to two weeks. Riverside Paving is all ready to begin on milling and paving once the ramps are complete. Denville Line will be in prior to the start of school to put down the thermoplastic stop bars and crosswalks. This will also include the crosswalk that goes into Delaware Avenue, Hickory Drive, Oak Drive and Valley Road. The thermoplastic is being used to prevent having to paint the crosswalks repeatedly. The DPW will be replacing worn out signage in the school area. New Jersey Natural Gas is on top of the house connections and they have done a great door to door campaign. The six houses on the cul-de-sac on Elm Street have one hundred percent gas line participation.

Stanhope Senior Citizen Club Request – Administrator McNeilly stated the Stanhope Senior Citizen Club has submitted a donation request based on the Borough's formula. The governing body had decided on a formula which is different than it had been in the past. The formula is based on the same premise as the one used for Little League. There is a certain amount based on the number of members. Administrator McNeilly stated the Senior's membership has pushed the amount requested to \$3,127. The amount budgeted is \$3,000. The additional amount can be pulled from another line item within the Mayor and Council budget. Administrator McNeilly asked the governing body if they want to give the CFO approval to do so. Mayor Wronko stated he is of the opinion the amount requested should be paid. Councilwoman Kuncken agreed but stated a discussion will need to take place during budget discussions. The formula being used this year had been discussed at great length last year.

Mayor Wronko called for a straw poll vote asking if the governing body members want to approve using funds from another line item to cover the cost of the Senior's donation request. The results are as follows: Councilwoman Kuncken – yes, Councilman Wachterhauser – yes, Councilman Riccardi – yes, Councilman Simpson – yes.

New Street Parking & Trees – Administrator McNeilly stated the requested removal of the No Parking signs on New Street has been completed. The overhanging trees causing obstruction have also been taken care of.

Public Safety Meeting – Administrator McNeilly stated a Public Safety meeting date needs to be scheduled.

Budget 2025 Timeline – Administrator McNeilly stated it is time to begin work on the 2025 budget. The timeline is as follows:

Department Capital Request Memo – August 2, 2024
Department Capital Requests Due Back – September 3, 2024
Department Budget Request Memo – August 2, 2024
Department Budget Requests Due Back – September 3, 2024
Budget and Capital Requests Presented to Governing Body – November 1, 2024
Proposed 2025 Budget Discussion – November 12, 2024 (Work Session Meeting)
Tax Assessor & Auditor Presentations – December 10, 2024

Councilman Riccardi asked if any of the trees which were cut back were on the State property. Administrator McNeilly stated he is unsure but the DPW did cut back branches on both sides of the street.

Mayor Wronko stated he contacted the State regarding trees which are an obstruction on Route 183 and asked them to take care of cutting them back.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Affordable Housing Trust Fund (Planner William Hamilton) – Administrator McNeilly stated Mr. Hamilton is not here this evening. This discussion will take place at the meeting scheduled for the end of August.

Ordinance Change for the Recreation Commission – Mayor Wronko stated he has discussed an ordinance change with regard to the Recreation Commission which will be prepared for August. The reason for the change is that the current ordinance gives responsibilities to members which were never accounted for. Our community does not need the type of commission the ordinance provides for. The members can operate under a committee format. Administrator McNeilly stated he will distribute the proposed revisions provided by the Borough Attorney to the governing body for discussion at the next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Mayor Wronko offered the following ordinance for public hearing and final adoption which was read by title.

Ordinance for Public Hearing and Final Adoption

Ordinance 2024-12

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING A NON-BINDING REFERENDUM BALLOT QUESTION REGARDING PERMITTING CANNABIS RETAIL BUSINESSES IN THE BOROUGH OF STANHOPE

WHEREAS, the Borough of Stanhope, per Borough Code Section 100-52.1, prohibits all classes of cannabis licenses within the Borough of Stanhope; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Stanhope has received multiple inquiries regarding the establishment of cannabis retail businesses in the Borough; and

WHEREAS, the Borough Council wishes to obtain the non-binding Borough public sentiment as to the allowance of cannabis retail businesses within the Borough; and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 19:37-1 permits governing bodies to ascertain the sentiment of legal voters upon a question by submission of such question to a vote of the electors in the municipality at any election held therein, by adopting at a regular meeting an ordinance or resolution requesting the County Clerk to print upon official ballots to be used at the next ensuing general election a proposition to be formulated and expressed in the Ordinance in concise form; provided the request shall be filed with the County Clerk not later than eighty-one (81) days previous to the election.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope, as follows:

Section 1. The Mayor and Council does hereby request that the following non-binding referendum question be forwarded to the Sussex County Clerk to be placed on the November 2024 General Election Ballot:

CANNABIS QUESTION REFERENDUM

Shall the Stanhope Borough Committee adopt an Ordinance revising the Stanhope Borough Code, to allow cannabis **retail** businesses within the Borough of Stanhope?

[] Yes

[] No

INTERPRETIVE STATEMENT

This referendum seeks non-binding public input as to whether the Borough’s current Cannabis Ordinance, Section 100-52.1, should be revised to allow cannabis businesses.

A Yes vote on referendum question will mean that the voters desire that cannabis retail businesses be permitted within the Borough of Stanhope.

Section 2. The Sussex County Clerk is hereby requested to print the Referendum and Interpretive Statement on the Official Ballot for the next Election held in November 2024.

Section 3. Severability. If any provision of this Ordinance or the application of this Ordinance to any person or circumstances is held invalid, the remainder of this ordinance shall not be affected and shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 4. Repealer. All ordinances or parts of ordinances or resolutions inconsistent or in opposition to the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby repealed in their entirety.

Section 5. Effective date. This Ordinance shall take effect after its final passage and publication as required by law.

On motion by Councilwoman Kuncken, seconded by Councilman Riccardi and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, the foregoing ordinance was adopted.

Mayor Wronko opened the meeting to the public for questions or comments on this ordinance only. Seeing no one from the public wishing to speak, Mayor Wronko closed the public portion of the meeting.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Kuncken – yes
Councilman Riccardi – yes
Councilman Romano – absent

Councilman Simpson – yes
Councilman Thornton– absent
Councilman Wachterhauser – yes

On motion by Councilman Riccardi, seconded by Councilman Simpson, and unanimously carried by voice vote, the Mayor and Council instructed the Clerk to post the ordinance and authorized publication of same.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTIONS

Mayor Wronko offered the following resolutions which were read by title.

Resolution 134-24 **AUTHORIZING THE SIGNING OF GOVERNMENT ENERGY AGGREGATION PROGRAM AGREEMENTS**

WHEREAS, pursuant to an ordinance adopted by the Borough of Stanhope on September 13, 2026, the Borough publicly declared its intent to commence a Government Energy Aggregation Program (“GEA”) by participating in the Sussex-Warren Area Energy Cooperative (“SWEAC”); and

WHEREAS, SWEAC has negotiated a new rate of \$0.1119/kWh for the standard program option (no additional renewable energy) and \$0.1196/kWh for the 100% Stanhope program option (resident must opt-in to this option in order to receive the additional renewable energy) for a term of 15 months, effective September 2024; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, duly assembled in public session, as follows:

The Borough Clerk and Mayor are hereby authorized and directed to execute, on behalf of Stanhope Borough, any documents necessary to carry out the purpose of this Resolution including the Supplier Services Agreement.

On motion by Councilman Simpson, seconded by Councilwoman Kuncken and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Kuncken – yes	Councilman Simpson – yes
Councilman Riccardi – yes	Councilman Thornton– absent
Councilman Romano – absent	Councilman Wachterhauser – yes

Resolution 135-24 **RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING REFUND OF CASH BOND FOR BLOCK 11304 LOT 6**

WHEREAS, Corey Kirk was required to post a cash bond for a driveway at Block 11304, Lot 6, 30 Linden Ave; and

WHEREAS, the engineer has approved the work;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope, that the Borough shall refund to the following owner the following amount:

Corey Kirk	\$5,000.00
30 Linden Ave	
Stanhope, NJ 07874	

On motion by Councilman Riccardi, seconded by Councilman Simpson and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Kuncken – yes	Councilman Simpson – yes
Councilman Riccardi – yes	Councilman Thornton– absent
Councilman Romano – absent	Councilman Wachterhauser – yes

Resolution 136-24 **A RESOLUTION BY THE BOROUGH OF STANHOPE AUTHORIZING THE CONDITIONAL OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE STANHOPE BOROUGH POLICE DEPARTMENT FOR ERICA PEIDRAHITA**

WHEREAS, upon recommendation of the Borough Police Chief, the Borough is seeking to issue a conditional offer of employment for a new Police Officer; and

WHEREAS, one candidate, Erica Piedrahita, will be presented with a Conditional Offer of Employment; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Piedrahita has been found to meet the minimum initial requirements for the position of Police Officer, but must meet other additional requirements before the offer becomes final; and

WHEREAS, medical and psychological evaluations, interviews, continued background cooperation and drug tests are a few of the additional requirements that needs to be completed for Ms. Piedrahita; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Piedrahita must adhere to all of the conditions of the Conditional Offer of Employment, including obtaining certificates in the timeframe designated and satisfactorily completing the one-year probation period.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey as follows:

Erica Piedrahita is hereby conditionally offered a position of Police Officer effective July 24, 2024.

On motion by Councilman Wachterhauser, seconded by Councilwoman Kuncken and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Kuncken – yes	Councilman Simpson – yes
Councilman Riccardi – yes	Councilman Thornton– absent
Councilman Romano – absent	Councilman Wachterhauser – yes

Resolution 137-24

RESOLUTION GRANTING WATER AND SEWER ALLOCATION TO APPLICANT, TM BUILDERS, FOR ONE LOT LOCATED ON CHESTNUT TRAIL, IDENTIFIED ON THE TAX MAP OF THE BOROUGH OF STANHOPE AS BLOCK 11101, LOT 28

WHEREAS, TM Builders has filed an application with appropriate fees for water and sewer allocation to service a one-family residential property on Block 11101, Lot 28; and

WHEREAS, the Borough’s checklist and Ordinance Sections 100-34C(4) and 100-35D all require a certification from the Mayor and Council that adequate water supply and sewerage capacity exist to service the proposed development; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council wish to comply with the Ordinance requirements to certify the availability of water and sewer for the existing multi-family dwelling;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope that the application submitted by TM Builders for water and sewer allocation be and is hereby granted as follows:

Water Allocation: 400 gpd Sewer Allocation: 400 gpd

On motion by Councilman Simpson, seconded by Councilman Wachterhauser and unanimously carried by voice vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted.

Councilwoman Kuncken asked where Chestnut Trail is located. Administrator McNeilly stated Chestnut Trail is located at the end of Valley Road.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Resolution 138-24

RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF STANHOPE AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF BILLS

WHEREAS, the Chief Finance Officer has certified that funds are available in the proper account; and

WHEREAS, the Chief Finance Officer has approved payment upon certification from the Borough Department Heads that the goods and/or services have been rendered to the Borough;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope that the current bills list, dated July 23, 2024 and on file and available for public inspection in the Office of the Chief Finance Officer and approved by the Chief Finance Officer for payment, be paid.

On motion by Councilman Riccardi, seconded by Councilman Wachterhauser and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Kuncken – yes
Councilman Riccardi – yes
Councilman Romano – absent

Councilman Simpson – yes
Councilman Thornton – absent
Councilman Wachterhauser – yes

ATTORNEY REPORT

Attorney Ursula Leo stated she had no report this evening.

CITIZEN’S TO BE HEARD

Mayor Wronko opened the meeting to the public after advising attendees that there is a five (5) minute time limit for each speaker.

Nancy Hoyt asked what is happening with the first house on the left-hand side of High Street. It is a mess. Administrator McNeilly stated there are two issues at that location. One is with regard to the gas station which has an active violation at this time. The timeframe has passed for making the required repairs to the retaining wall. The house is owned by another entity. There are two liens against the property and a foreclosure. Many people have asked for something to be done with the house and the Borough gets as far as it can and it is in the court system. There is a similar home located on Ridge Avenue that those residents are dealing with as well.

David Angel stated he was here the other night at the karate studio. He was approached by someone who lives in the area and he was told that the Kelly Lot Parking Lot is private and for use only by the tenants of the apartments. Mr. Angel asked if the lot is a public lot. Administrator McNeilly confirmed the Kelly Parking Lot is public. The only lot with any restrictions is the one located here at the municipal building. The lot behind the deli is also a public parking area.

Rosemarie Maio stated the Shade Tree Commission has applied for a grant for a hazardous tree inventory to be conducted. Part of the grant requires an incredible questionnaire from the State which can only be completed by a Forester. Ms. Maio stated the Forester the Shade Tree Commission has been using for years is no longer responding and they are in desperate need of a Forester. All of the State Forester’s are unavailable due to the fact they are involved with the farm assessments. Ms. Maio stated she is concerned that the Shade Tree Commission will lose the grant and that would mean that the hazardous tree inventory cannot be done. The inventory could be done to a point, but the technical aspect of the inventory is way beyond the expertise that the members of the Shade Tree Commission have. It also requires the Forester to sign off on it. Ms. Maio stated the commission has been doing everything possible to find a Forester to work with them but she is of the opinion they will not find one. The Forester they have been using for

years has been wonderful but he is now involved in the farm assessments. Mayor Wronko thanked Ms. Maio for the effort the commission is putting forth and for providing the update.

Seeing no one from further the public wishing to speak, Mayor Wronko closed the public portion of the meeting.

CLOSED SESSION

1. The general nature of the subject matter(s) to be discussed is as follows:
 - 1 – Contract (Planet Network)
 - 2 – Litigation/Potential Litigation (20 Main Street & PFAS)
2. It is anticipated at this time that the above stated subject matter(s) will be made public at the conclusion of each individual specified subject matter.
3. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

On motion by Councilwoman Kuncken, seconded by Councilman Riccardi, and unanimously carried by voice vote, the foregoing resolution was adopted.

The Mayor and Council went into Closed Session at 7:33 P.M.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

At the conclusion of the Closed Session, the Mayor and Council reconvened the public meeting at 7:59 P.M. with all present.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Councilman Riccardi, seconded by Councilman Simpson and unanimously carried by voice vote the meeting was adjourned at 7:59 P.M.

Approved:

Linda Chirip
Deputy Clerk for
Ellen Horak, RMC
Borough Clerk