

**TOWNSHIP OF CEDAR GROVE
ESSEX COUNTY NEW JERSEY**

PUBLIC COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES

JANUARY 8, 2024

1. ROLL CALL, INVOCATION AND FLAG SALUTE

Mayor Peterson called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Present: Councilmember Maceri, Mega, Deputy Mayor Skabich, Mayor Peterson

Also Present: Township Manager Zichelli, Township Attorney Nabbie and Township Clerk Forde

Absent: Councilman Zazzali

The flag salute was led by Mayor Peterson.

Mayor Peterson made the required announcement concerning the Open Public Meetings Act as follows: Adequate notice of this meeting was duly provided to the Verona-Cedar Grove Times and the Star Ledger on December 14, 2023, filed with the Township Clerk, and posted on the public bulletin board in the Municipal Building Lobby in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

2. EXTRAORDINARY BUSINESS OF THE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL

a) Ceremonial Administration of Oath to Fire Chief Chris Donlon.

Former Fire Chief Leigh Peterson administered the Oath of Office to Fire Chief Christopher Donlon.

Fire Chief Donlon thanked the Township Council and Manager for making him Chief of the Fire Department. He thanked his family and introduced the 2024 line officers.

Mayor Peterson thanked Fire Chief Mike Grasso for the wonderful job he did during the past two years. She shared that Chief Donlon that she looked forward to working with him and was very proud of him. She thanked the Fire Department and declared that they were the best in the State.

Councilwoman Mega thanked the Chief for his service and thanked the Fire Department for their service.

Councilman Maceri congratulated and thanked the Chief for his service and thanked the line officers. He said the Cedar Grove Fire Department was the finest in the State.

Deputy Mayor Skabich thanked the Fire Department for their dedication and service, particularly for its participation in the September 11th Memorial, at the High School.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) To consider approval of minutes of regular public meeting – December 4, 2023.

Councilman Maceri moved approval of the minutes as presented, seconded by Councilman Mega, and passed by the following vote:

AYE: Councilmember Maceri, Mega, Deputy Mayor Skabich, Mayor Peterson
NO: None
ABSENT: Councilman Zazzali

4. PUBLIC HEARING

- a) To consider adoption of the Township seeking funding through the State of New Jersey Green Acres Program for improvements at the Lower Playground within Community Park located near Little Falls Road and Slattery Drive.

Municipal Engineer Alexandra Handel reported that the Township sought to apply for funding through Jake's Law State of New Jersey Green Acres Program for improvements at the Lower Playground within Community Park located near Little Falls Road and Slattery Drive. She reported she was in attendance to present the concept plan.

Exhibit 1 (Existing Conditions at Community Park). The Municipal Engineer reported the Township sought to obtain a one-year grant for a 75% match from Green Acres to 25% municipal funding. She reported it was the first time the grant was open to municipalities. She explained that she and the Township Manager agreed Community Park would be a good fit for this funding, specifically the Lower Playground, which is next to the Community Pool and parking lot in Community Park. She reported that the main requirements were keeping the shade trees and making the playground inclusive so fencing was required. She explained that the Township could propose actual fencing or shrubbery. She reported that she met with the Recreation Board and posted a poll on the Township's FaceBook page. She reported that a big chunk of the recommendations was for fencing throughout the playground. She reported the fencing requirement was met.

Exhibit 2 (Concept Plan) The Municipal Engineer reported the concept plan was for a completely revitalized Lower Playground. She reported all the equipment, play surface and swing set would be removed. She reported a handicapped space was in the parking lot closest to the entrance was proposed along the concrete walkway that went along the existing paving area that has the flagpole. She reported pavers will be salvaged and reutilized. She reported the existing area had two entrances which would be combined into one inclusive playground. She reported the playground equipment would be for two to five years of age and five to twelve years of age. She reported the new ADA swing sets proposed along the Peckman River. She reported multi-seating areas and benches in addition to four new shade trees were proposed. She reported that the Township did not anticipate removing any existing trees.

Exhibit 3 (Conceptual Playground Rendering) The Municipal Engineer reported this was the concept plan for the Playground and none of the equipment had been finalized. She reported that any recommendations could be incorporated. She reported the equipment would be ADA accessible and in an inclusive environment. She reported the Township proposed a total "all-in" cost of approximately \$1.2 million and an anticipated 75% match would \$906,000 with the Township matching \$302,000. She asked for any recommendations or comments on the conceptual plan. She reported a resolution from the Governing Body was needed as part of the application process.

Please See Exhibits Attached

Mayor Peterson opened the public hearing on this item. There being no one present wishing to be heard, Mayor Peterson closed the public hearing.

Mayor Peterson reported the Township received a good amount of feedback from the public via the Township's FaceBook page. She reported it maxed out.

Councilwoman Mega asked if the project would only move forward if Green Acres matched funding. Mayor Peterson responded affirmatively.

The Municipal Engineer reported that the deadline was February 7th with a turnaround period of two to three months. She reported if Green Acres awarded funding, the design could start next July or August.

The following resolution had been posted on the bulletin board and a brief synopsis was given by the Township Clerk:

GREEN ACRES APPLICATION ENABLING RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Green Acres Program ("State"), provides grants and/or loans to municipal and county governments and grants to nonprofit organizations for assistance in the acquisition, development, and stewardship of lands for outdoor recreation and conservation purposes; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Cedar Grove desires to further the public interest by obtaining funding in the amount of \$1,209,212.00, in the form of a \$906,909.00 (75%) matching grant and, if available, a \$0.00 loan, from the State to fund the following project(s): Reconstruction of Lower Playground within Community Park at a cost of \$1,209,212.00;

WHEREAS, the State shall determine if the application is complete and in conformance with the scope and intent of the Green Acres Program, and notify the applicant of the amount of the funding award; and

WHEREAS, the applicant is willing to use the State's funds in accordance with such rules, regulations, and applicable statutes, and is willing to enter into an agreement with the State for the above-named project;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Governing Body resolves that

1. Township Manager Joseph Zichelli or the successor to the office of Mayor Kerry Peterson is hereby authorized to:
 - a. make application for such a loan and/or such a grant,
 - b. provide additional application information and furnish such documents as may be required, and
 - c. act as the authorized correspondent of the above-named applicant;
2. The applicant agrees to provide its matching share to the Green Acres funding request, if a match is required, in the amount of \$302,303.00 (25%);
3. In the event the State's funds are less than the total project cost specified above, the applicant has the balance of funding necessary to complete the project;

- 4. The applicant agrees to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations in its performance of the project; and
- 5. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

CERTIFICATION

I, Township Clerk Dale A. Forde, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Township Council of the Township of Cedar Grove at a meeting held on the 8th of January 2024.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunder set my hand and the official seal of this body this 8th day of January, 2024.

Dale A. Forde, Township Clerk

Councilman Maceri moved to adopt the Green Acres Application Enabling Resolution seeking funding for improvements at the Lower Playground within Community Park located near Little Falls Road and Slattery Drive in Cedar Grove in the amount of \$1,209,212.00 in the form of a \$906,909.00 (75%) matching grant, seconded by Councilwoman Mega and passed by the following vote:

AYE: Councilmember Maceri, Mega, Deputy Mayor Skabich, Mayor Peterson
 NO: None
 ABSENT: Councilman Zazzali

5. MEETING OPEN TO RESIDENTS OF THE TOWNSHIP WISHING TO BE HEARD ON ANY ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Mayor Peterson opened this portion of the meeting to anyone wishing to be heard on any item on the agenda.

There being no one present wishing to be heard, Mayor Peterson closed this portion of the meeting.

6. REPORTS OF TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS

- a) Township Manager – The Township Manager reported Budget Hearing Dates were scheduled for January 29, January 30, and possibly January 31 at 5:00 pm. The Township Manager reported he awaited the NJIIF and Worker’s Compensation assessments to finalize the appropriation side of the 2024 proposed budget. He reported he would distribute the budget electronically to the Council and would provide a hard copy if necessary. The Township Manager reported the Township had snow this past weekend. He reported DPW did a great job clearing the roads. He thanked the County for their DPW clearing out County roads. He reported DPW was prepared to handle the incoming rain.
- b) Township Clerk – No Report. The Council congratulated the Township Clerk on her one-year appointment anniversary.

- c) Township Attorney – No Report. The Township Attorney requested an Executive Session to discuss contract negotiations.
- d) Other Reports

Councilman Maceri – Councilman Maceri asked the Township Attorney about the new bill regarding COAH. The Township Attorney responded she would report back to the Governing Body at the next meeting.

Councilwoman Mega – Councilwoman Mega thanked everyone who kept the roads neatly done.

Deputy Mayor Skabich – Deputy Mayor Skabich commended DPW on a great job. She reported the roads were impeccably done.

Mayor Peterson – Mayor Peterson commended DPW and echoed the sentiments of the other Members of Council.

7. NEW BUSINESS

- a) To consider resolution concerning 2024 Temporary Budget.

The following resolution had been posted on the bulletin board and a brief synopsis was given by the Township Clerk:

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL OF THE TOWNSHIP OF CEDAR GROVE ADOPTING THE 2024 TEMPORARY BUDGET

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-19 of the Local Budget Law provides that where any contracts, commitments or payments are to be made prior to the adoption of the budget, temporary appropriations shall be made on or before the 30th day of the budget year; and

WHEREAS, the aggregate of such temporary appropriations is limited to 26.25% of the total appropriations in the preceding budget, exclusive of Debt Service, Capital Improvement Fund and Public Assistance in the 2023 budget are as follows:

Current Fund	\$5,285,811.96.00
Water Utility	\$685,631.99
Sewer Utility	\$795,631.25
Pool Utility	\$214,747.84
Solid Waste Collection District	\$632,840.01

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Cedar Grove, County of Essex, State of New Jersey that temporary appropriations are hereby made as follows for 2024 and that a certified copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Chief Financial Officer.

Current Fund	
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Salaries & Wages	\$2,423,052.05
Other Expenses	\$2,862,759.92
Total	\$5,285,811.96
Water Utility	
Salaries & Wages	\$197,212.29
Other Expenses	\$488,419.70
Total	\$685,631.99
Sewer Utility	
Salaries & Wages	\$258,685.02
Other Expenses	\$536,946.23
Total	\$795,631.25
Pool Utility	
Salaries & Wages	\$91,949.88
Other Expenses	\$122,797.96
Total	\$214,747.84
Solid Waste Collection District	
Salaries & Wages	\$47,999.16
Other Expenses	\$584,840.85
Total	\$632,840.01

Councilwoman Mega moved adoption of the resolution, seconded by Councilman Maceri and passed by the following vote:

AYE: Councilmember Maceri, Mega, Deputy Mayor Skabich, Mayor Peterson
 NO: None
 ABSENT: Councilman Zazzali

- b) To consider resolution concerning 2024 Temporary Pool Capital Budget.

The following resolution had been posted on the bulletin board and a brief synopsis was given by the Township Clerk:

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE 2024 TEMPORARY POOL UTILITY CAPITAL BUDGET

WHEREAS, N.J.A.C. 5:30-4.4B, provides that prior to adopting a permanent capital budget, a municipality can adopt a temporary capital budget; and

WHEREAS, the Township of Cedar Grove desires to constitute the 2024 Temporary Pool Utility Capital Budget by inserting therein a pump for the Pool Utility

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Cedar Grove, County of Essex, State of New Jersey that temporary capital appropriations be made and the Municipal Clerk is directed to file one certified copy of this resolution with the Director of the Division of Local Government Services.

**TEMPORARY POOL UTILITY CAPITAL BUDGET OF THE TOWNSHIP OF
CEDAR GROVE
Essex County, New Jersey
Project Schedules for 2024**

Project	Estimated Costs	Pool Utility Budget Appropriation	Capital Improvement Fund	Capital Fund Balance	General Serial Bonds
Pump for Pool Utility	\$40,000.00	\$40,000.00	0	0	0

The Township Manager reported this temporary capital budget would provide for new pool pumps in the pool house. He reported the Township wanted to complete this before the pool opened this year.

Deputy Mayor Skabich moved adoption of the resolution, seconded by Councilwoman Mega and passed by the following vote:

AYE: Councilmember Maceri, Mega, Deputy Mayor Skabich, Mayor Peterson
 NO: None
 ABSENT: Councilman Zazzali

- c) To consider resolution concerning interest on delinquent taxes.

The following resolution had been posted on the bulletin board and a brief synopsis was given by the Township Clerk:

ESTABLISHING INTEREST RATE-DELINQUENT TAXES

WHEREAS BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Council of the Township of Cedar Grove that the rate of interest to be charged on delinquent taxes shall be as follows:

For taxes not in arrears, 0% for nine (9) calendar days following the due date. Taxes not paid during this ten-day period shall be deemed to be in arrears as of the said first day of the month.

For taxes in arrears, 8% per annum on the first \$1,500 of the delinquency, 18% per annum on any amount in excess of \$1,500, both to be increased to the maximum allowed by law in the event of an increase in the statutory maximum.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that pursuant to NJSA 54:4-67, as amended, a penalty shall be charged to a taxpayer with a delinquency in excess of \$10,000 who fails to pay said delinquency prior to the end of the calendar year. The penalty so charged is hereby fixed at 6% of the amount of the delinquency; and if taxes are fully paid and satisfied for that calendar year by the holder of an outstanding tax sale certificate, the holder shall be entitled to receive the same 6% penalty as part of the amount required to redeem such certificate of sale; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Tax Collector is hereby directed to collect interest on taxes in accordance with the terms of this resolution.

Deputy Mayor Skabich moved adoption of the resolution, seconded by Councilman Maceri and passed by the following vote:

AYE: Councilmember Maceri, Mega, Deputy Mayor Skabich, Mayor Peterson
NO: None
ABSENT: Councilman Zazzali

- d) To consider resolution concerning 2024 Petty Cash Funds.

The following resolution had been posted on the bulletin board and a brief synopsis was given by the Township Clerk:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Township Council of the Township of Cedar Grove hereby authorizes the establishment of a petty cash fund for the following departments in the amounts set forth effective January 1, 2024.

Finance Department	\$120.00
Engineering Department	\$100.00
Police Department	\$100.00
Library	\$100.00
Recreation	\$ 60.00

WHEREAS, a check will be drawn by the Treasurer of the Township of Cedar Grove establishing a petty cash fund, which will not be charged to a budget appropriation, but will create an asset on the Current Fund Balance Sheet known as “Cash-Petty Cash Fund”.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Cedar Grove, Essex County, New Jersey, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:5-21 that petty cash funds be established in the aggregate of \$480.00.

Councilwoman Mega moved adoption of the resolution, seconded by Councilman Maceri and passed by the following vote:

AYE: Councilmember Maceri, Mega, Deputy Mayor Skabich, Mayor Peterson
NO: None
ABSENT: Councilman Zazzali

- e) To consider resolution 2024 Cash Management Plan.

The following resolution had been posted on the bulletin board and a brief synopsis was given by the Township Clerk:

CASH MANAGEMENT PLAN

BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Cedar Grove, County of Essex, that for the year 2024, the following shall serve as the cash management plan of the Township of Cedar Grove.

1. Cash Management and Investment Objectives

The Township of Cedar Grove objectives in this area are:

- A. Preservation of capital.
- B. Adequate safekeeping of assets.
- C. Maintenance of liquidity to meet operating needs.
- D. Diversification of the Township's portfolio to minimize risks associated with individual investments.
- E. Investment of assets in accordance with State and Federal Laws and regulations.

2. Designation of Official Depositories

1. The following Government Unit Depository Protection Act approved banks are authorized depositories for deposit of funds:

PNC Bank	626 Valley Road, Upper Montclair, NJ 07043
TD Bank	85 Pompton Avenue, Cedar Grove, N.J.
Bank of America	508 Pompton Avenue, Cedar Grove, N.J.
State of N.J. Cash Mgmt Fund	State Street Bank and Trust P.O. Box 5994, Boston MA 02206-5994
Valley National Bank	491 Pompton Avenue, Cedar Grove, N.J.
Citizens Bank	310 Pompton Avenue, Cedar Grove, N.J.
Columbia Bank	1027 Pompton Avenue, Cedar Grove, NJ
Provident Bank	464 Eagle Roack Avenue, W. Orange, NJ 07052
Lakeland Bank	86-88 Main Street, Little Falls, NJ 07424

2. Designated official depositories are required to submit to the Chief Financial Officer, a copy of the Governmental Unit Deposit Protection Act Notification of eligibility, which is filed semi-annually with the Department of Banking each June 30th and December 31st of each year.

3. CASH MANAGEMENT

1. All funds shall be deposited within 48 hours of receipt in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:5-15.

2. The Chief Financial Officer shall minimize the possibility of idle cash accumulating in accounts by assuring that the amounts in excess of negotiated compensating balances are kept in interest bearing accounts or promptly swept into the investment portfolio.

3. The method of calculating banking fees and compensating balances shall be reviewed on a monthly basis.

4. Investment decisions shall be guided by the cash flow projections prepared by the Chief Financial Officer.

4. PERMISSIBLE INVESTMENTS

1. Bonds or other obligations of the United States of America or obligations guaranteed the United States of America.
 2. Government money market mutual funds.
 3. Any federal agency or instrumentality obligation authorized by Congress that matures within 397 days from the date of purchase, and has a fixed rate of interest not dependent on any index or external factors.
 4. Bonds or other obligations of the local unit or school districts of which the local unit is a part.
 5. Any other obligations with maturities not exceeding 397 days, as permitted by the Division of Investments.
 6. Local Government investment pools.
 7. New Jersey Cash Management Fund
 8. Repurchase agreements of fully collateralized securities.
5. AUTHORITY FOR INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT
1. The Chief Financial Officer is authorized and directed to make investments on behalf of the Township. All investment decisions shall be consistent with this plan and all appropriate regulatory constraints.
6. SAFEKEEPING
1. Securities purchased on behalf of the Township shall be delivered electronically or physically to the Township's custodial bank, which shall maintain custodial and/or safekeeping accounts for such securities on behalf of the Township.
7. AUDIT
1. The Cash Management Plan shall be subject to annual audit conducted pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:5-14.

The Township Manager reported this plan set forth the depositories where the Township can put its money. He reported the Township was not married to any one depository and sought to place its money wherever interest is greatest and customer service is valued.

Councilwoman Mega moved adoption of the resolution, seconded by Deputy Mayor Skabich and passed by the following vote:

AYE: Councilmember Maceri, Mega, Deputy Mayor Skabich, Mayor Peterson
NO: None
ABSENT: Councilman Zazzali

- f) To consider introduction of Pending Ordinance #24-924 – Ordinance to Exceed the Municipal Budget Appropriation Limits and to Establish a CAP Bank.

The Clerk read the ordinance by title only:

PENDING ORDINANCE NO. 24-924

**ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION
LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK
(N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45-.14)**

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.2, municipalities and counties shall be prohibited from increasing their final appropriations by more than two-and-one-half percent (2.5%) unless action is taken by the Governing Body to increase their final appropriations subject to the cap to the statutorily permitted three-and-one-half percent (3.5%), subject to certain exceptions; and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.15a provides that a municipality may, when authorized by ordinance, appropriate the difference between the amount of its actual final appropriation and the three-and-one-half percent (3.5%) rate as an exception to its final appropriations in either of the next two succeeding years; and

WHEREAS, the Township Council of the Township of Cedar Grove finds it advisable and necessary to increase its CY2024 budget by up to 3.5% of the previous year's final appropriations, in the interests of promoting the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens; and

WHEREAS, the Township Council hereby determines that a 3.5% increase in the budget for said year, amounting to \$148,534.49 in excess of the increase in final appropriations otherwise permitted by the Local Government Cap Law is advisable and necessary; and

WHEREAS, with a 3.5% increase, the Township Council authorizes an increase in final appropriations in an amount not to exceed \$519,870.69; and

WHEREAS, the Township Council hereby determines that any amount authorized hereinabove that is not appropriated as part of the final budget shall be retained as an exception to final appropriations in either of the next two succeeding years.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, by the Township Council of the Township of Cedar Grove, in the County of Essex, a majority of full authorized membership of this Governing Body affirmatively concurring, that, in the CY 2024 budget year, the final appropriations of the Township of Cedar Grove shall, in accordance with this ordinance and N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.14, be increased by 3.5%, amounting to \$148,534.49 in excess of the increase otherwise permitted by the Local Government Cap Law and that the CY 2024 municipal budget for the Township of Cedar Grove be approved and adopted in accordance with this ordinance; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that any amount authorized hereinabove that is not appropriated as part of the final budget shall be retained as an exception to the final appropriation in either of the next two succeeding years; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that a certified copy of this ordinance as introduced be filed with the Director of the Division of Local Government Services within five (5) days of introduction; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that a certified copy of this ordinance upon adoption, with the recorded vote included therein, be filed with the Director of the Division of Local Government Services within five (5) days after such adoption.

The Township Manager reported this ordinance allowed for an increase in appropriations by 3.5% or \$148,534.49 beyond the increase otherwise provided for by law. He reported that any increase in appropriations authorized by this Ordinance that is not appropriated as part of the final budget can be retained as an exception to the final appropriation in either of the next two succeeding years. He reported his goal this year is to establish a healthy CAP bank.

Councilwoman Mega moved that the ordinance be passed on first reading, published in the Verona-Cedar Grove Times as a pending ordinance with a public hearing of February 5, 2024, seconded by Deputy Mayor Skabich, and passed by the following vote:

AYE: Councilmember Maceri, Mega, Deputy Mayor Skabich, Mayor Peterson
NO: None
ABSENT: Councilman Zazzali

- g) To consider introduction of Pending Ordinance #24-925 – An Ordinance Amending Chapter 23 of the Code of the Township of Cedar Grove, Entitled “Fire Department”.

The Clerk read the ordinance by title only:

PENDING ORDINANCE NO. 24-925

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 23 OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF CEDAR GROVE ENTITLED “FIRE DEPARTMENT”

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A: 14-7 et. seq. and N.J.S.A. 40:69A-90, the Governing Body of a municipality is empowered to create and establish a fire department; and

WHEREAS, ordinances regulating fire departments and the operations therein are subject to modifications due to changing needs of a municipality and to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of such operations of the fire department; and

WHEREAS, the Township Council of the Township of Cedar Grove deems it to be in the best interests of the Township and the Cedar Grove Volunteer Fire Department to expand membership of it three companies.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Township Council of the Township of Cedar Grove as follows:

The Code of the Township of Cedar Grove, Chapter 23, entitled “FIRE DEPARTMENT,” is hereby amended as follows:

Section 1.

Section 23.2 Company Membership is deleted in its entirety with the following provision replacing it:

(A) The membership of Engine Company No. 1 (Center) shall consist of a maximum of 36 persons, including a Chief Officer, Captain and Lieutenant. The membership of Engine Company No. 2 (North End) and Engine Company No. 3 (South End) shall each consist of a maximum of 31 persons, including a Chief Officer, Captain and Lieutenant. Each company shall select its own members. Each company member shall become a member of the Fire Department subject to certification by the Fire Chief and he meets the qualifications set forth in Section 23-3.

Section 2.

All ordinances of the Township of Cedar Grove which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby repealed as to the extent of such inconsistency.

Section 3.

Should any selection, clause, phrase, or provision of this Ordinance be deemed unconstitutional or invalid by a Court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the remaining portions of this Ordinance.

Section 4.

This Ordinance shall take effect upon final passage, adoption, and publication in the manner prescribed by law.

The Township Manager reported this Ordinance allowed for expanding membership of the volunteer fire department. He reported that adding membership spots, allowed for the Department to actively recruit new members.

Deputy Mayor Skabich moved that the ordinance be passed on first reading, published in the Verona-Cedar Grove Times as a pending ordinance with a public hearing of February 5, 2024, seconded by Councilwoman Mega, and passed by the following vote:

AYE: Councilmember Maceri, Mega, Deputy Mayor Skabich, Mayor Peterson
NO: None
ABSENT: Councilman Zazzali

8. MEETING OPEN TO RESIDENTS OF THE TOWNSHIP WISHING TO BE HEARD ON ANY ITEM ON OR OFF THE AGENDA CONCERNING TOWNSHIP BUSINESS

Mayor Peterson opened this portion of the meeting to anyone wishing to be heard on any item on the agenda.

1. Kate Hartwyk, County Liaison - Ms. Hartwyk reported the Deer Management Program would begin at the Hilltop Reservation on Thursday, January 11th at 6:30 PM and will continue for six weeks.

2. Mike Ferrara - Mr. Ferrara apologized to the Mayor and Council for a FaceBook post he posted in 2021. He congratulated the Township Manager on his appointment. He asked the

Council for information regarding a mural of a panther with panther pride written that was painted on a small garage near South End School. He mentioned that he would like to interview the artist for a book he was writing.

There being no one else present wishing to be heard, Mayor Peterson closed this portion of the meeting.

AUTHORIZATION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meetings' Act (N.J.S.A.10:4-12 (b) (1-9) permits the exclusion of the public from a Meeting of the Mayor and Council in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Township of Cedar Grove are of the opinion that such circumstances exist.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Township of Cedar Grove, County of Essex, State of New Jersey that:

1. The public shall be excluded from discussion of any action in the Executive Session of the Meeting of the Mayor and Council of January 8, 2024.
2. The general nature of the subject matters to be discussed is contract negotiations.
3. It is anticipated at this time that the above stated subject matter will be made public as soon thereafter as it is deemed in the public interest to do so.
4. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

Councilwoman Mega moved adoption of the resolution, seconded by Councilman Maceri, and passed by the following vote:

AYE: Councilmember Maceri, Mega, Zazzali, Deputy Mayor Skabich, Mayor Peterson
NO: None

10. ADJOURNMENT

Councilwoman Mega moved adjournment of the public council meeting, seconded by Councilman Maceri, and passed by a voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 PM.

KERRY PETERSON MAYOR

ATTEST:

DALE A. FORDE MUNICIPAL CLERK