

MINUTES OF THE
REORGANIZATION MEETING
OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL
JANUARY 7, 2017

THE REORGANIZATION MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF MANVILLE, COUNTY OF SOMERSET, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, WAS HELD ON JANUARY 7, 2017 IN THE BOROUGH HALL OF THE BOROUGH OF MANVILLE, 325 NORTH MAIN STREET, MANVILLE, NEW JERSEY AT 11:00 A.M.

Mayor Onderko welcomed everyone to the 88th Annual Reorganization meeting, called the meeting to order and requested that the Clerk read the Open Public Meetings Act Statement.

“This meeting is being held in compliance with the ‘OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT’, because adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by notifying the Courier News and the Star Ledger, and by posting notice of such meeting in the Borough Hall on a bulletin board reserved for such announcements and by filing of said notice with the Borough Clerk of the Borough of Manville. Formal Action may be taken at this meeting.”

Mayor Onderko requested that the Clerk read the Election Statement for Municipal Offices:

“A statement of the determination of the Board of Canvassers of Somerset County, New Jersey, relative to an election held in the County of Somerset on November 8, 2016 for the election of the following mentioned officers in the Borough of Manville:

Two (2) Three-Year Borough Council seats
The said board does determine that

Philip E. Petrone
Ronald Skirkanish

were duly elected to the Borough Council.

I do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true, full, and correct statement of determination of the Board of Canvassers of Somerset County, New Jersey. In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this 17th day of November, 2016.

County of Somerset
/s/ Brett A. Radi, County Clerk
/s/ Anthony DeCicco,
Chairman County Board of Canvassers

Mayor Onderko requested that Attorney Thaddeus R. Maciag, Esq. swear in Philip E. Petrone and Ronald Skirkanish.

Mayor Onderko requested that Clerk call the Roll:

MAYOR RICHARD ONDERKO
COUNCILWOMAN DAYNA CAMACHO
COUNCILWOMAN MICHELE MAGNANI
COUNCILMAN THEODORE PETROCK, III
COUNCILMAN PHILIP E. PETRONE
COUNCILMAN RON SKIRKANISH
COUNCILMAN STEPHEN SZABO

Also Present:

THADDEUS R. MACIAG, ESQ. BOROUGH ATTORNEY
ANDREA BIERWIRTH, BOROUGH ADMINISTRATOR
MARK PELTACK, CHIEF OF POLICE
PATRICIA ZAMORSKI, BOROUGH CLERK

SALUTE TO THE FLAG AND MOMENT OF SILENCE

Mayor Onderko reminded everyone of the mass shooting at the Fort Lauderdale Airport and asked that we keep the victims and their families in our thoughts and prayers during the moment of silence.

INVOCATION

Rev. Stanislaw Slaby of Christ the Redeemer Church gave the Invocation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF DIGNITARIES

Mayor Onderko acknowledged the Dignitaries present: Somerset County Clerk, Brett Radi; Roseann Brown, Election Board; former Assemblywoman Donna Simon; State Senator Christopher “Kip” Bateman; School Board Member Ned Panfile; School Board Member Sharon Lukac; Manville Municipal GOP Chair Joe Lukac; former Mayor Angelo Corradino; Raymond Heck, Mayor of Millstone; Somerset County Democratic Chair Peg Schaffer; Freeholder Mark Caliguire; former Councilman Mike Kassick; former Councilman Mark Gregor.

PUBLIC PORTION

Mayor Onderko requested a motion to open the Pubic Portion for anyone wishing to offer comments.

Councilwoman Camacho, seconded by Councilman Szabo, made a motion to open the Public Portion.

All present were in favor.

When no one wished to offer comments, Mayor Onderko requested a motion to close the Public Portion.

Councilman Szabo, seconded by Councilman Skirkanish, made a motion to close the public portion.

NEW JERSEY STATE STATUES AND ROBERTS RULES OF ORDER

Mayor Onderko requested a motion to adopt New Jersey State Statutes and Robert's Rules of Order.

Councilman Szabo, seconded by Councilwoman Camacho, made a motion to adopt New Jersey State Statutes and Robert's Rules of Order.

ROLL CALL: AYES: CAMACHO, MAGNANI, PETROCK, PETRONE, SKIRKANISH, SZABO

PRESIDENT OF COMMON COUNCIL

Mayor Onderko requested a nomination for Council President.

Councilwoman Magnani nominated Councilwoman Camacho.

Councilman Skirkanish nominated Councilman Szabo.

Mayor Onderko requested a Roll Call for the nomination of Councilwoman Camacho as Council President:

ROLL CALL: AYES: CAMACHO, MAGNANI, PETROCK
NAYES: PETRONE, SKIRKANISH, SZABO

Mayor Onderko requested a Roll Call for the nomination of Councilman Szabo as Council President:

ROLL CALL: AYES: PETRONE, SKIRKANISH, SZABO
NAYES: CAMACHO, MAGNANI, PETROCK

Mayor Onderko stated that since both Roll Calls ended in a tie, he would appoint Councilman Szabo as Council President for the year 2017.

STANDING COMMITTEES FOR 2017 :

FINANCE

Councilman Petrock, Councilwoman Camacho, Councilman Petrone

POLICY, PLANNING, PERSONNEL

Councilwoman Camacho, Councilman Skirkanish, Council President Szabo

PUBLIC WORKS

Councilwoman Magnani, Council President Szabo, Councilman Petrock

PUBLIC SAFETY, FIRE, POLICE, RESCUE, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Council President Szabo, Councilman Skirkanish, Councilwoman Magnani

PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Councilman Petrone, Councilwoman Magnani, Councilwoman Camacho

PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT

Councilman Skirkanish, Councilman Petrock, Councilman Petrone

MAYOR’S PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

Clerk, Patricia Zamorski, read the Pay-to-Play Statute and announced the Professional Appointments for 2017:

“In accordance with the pay-to-play statute, N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.7, criteria have been established and the qualifications of each appointee have been evaluated, and nominations have been made based upon my determination that the person named best meets the criteria.”

Borough Attorney:

Thaddeus R. Maciag, Esq.

Maciag Law, LLC

Borough Auditor:

Suplee, Clooney & Company

Non-Audit Accounting:

PM Consulting, LLC

Bond Counsel:

Steven Rogut, Esq.

of Rogut McCarthy, LLC

Tax Attorney:

Michael, O’Grodnick, Esq.

of Mauro, Savo, Camerino, Grant & Schalk

Labor Attorney:

Franklin G. Whittlesey, Esq.

of Scholl, Whittlesey & Gruenberg, LLC

Redevelopment Attorney:

Thaddeus R. Maciag, Esq.

Section 8 Housing Administrator: Community Consultants, LLC
Environmental Engineer: Prestige Environmental
Architect: Cornerstone Architectural
Appraiser: Sterling DiSanto & Asso.
Risk Management & Insurance: Boynton Genova Agency
Flood Mitigation Consultant: Tetra Tech, Inc.

Mayor Onderko requested a motion and Roll Call on the Mayor's Appointments.

Councilwoman Camacho, seconded by Councilman Petrock, made a motion to approve the Mayor's Professional Appointments.

ROLL CALL: AYES: SZABO, CAMACHO, MAGNANI, PETROCK, PETRONE, SKIRKANISH

PLANNING BOARD

Mayor Onderko requested that the Council name a Class 3 Council Member to the Planning Board.

Councilwoman Camacho, seconded by Councilwoman Magnani, nominated Councilwoman Camacho as Class 3 Member of the Planning Board.

ROLL CALL: AYES: SZABO, CAMACHO, MAGNANI, PETROCK, PETRONE, SKIRKANISH

SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mayor Onderko requested a nomination for a Council appointment to the Solid Waste Advisory Committee.

Councilwoman Camacho, seconded by Councilwoman Magnani, nominated Mayor Onderko as a member of the Solid Waste Advisory Committee.

ROLL CALL: AYES: SZABO, CAMACHO, MAGNANI, PETROCK, PETRONE, SKIRKANISH

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Chief: Ken Skirkanish
Deputy Fire Chief : Joe Barilla
Assistant Fire Chief : Robert Kostowski

Mayor Onderko asked that the Fire Chiefs come forward to be sworn in.

Attorney Maciag swore in the Fire Chiefs.

The Clerk announced the following appointments:

HILLSBOROUGH MUNICIPAL COURT APPOINTMENTS

Municipal Judge: John Richardson, Esq.
Municipal Prosecutor : Frank Blandino, Esq.
Public Defender: Francesco Taddeo, Esq.
DWI Prosecutor: William Fox, Esq.

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES

Tax Assessment Search Officer : Lisa Gerickont

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Deputy Director : Det. William Yankoski
Deputy Director : Susan Asher

PLANNING BOARD

Class 2 Member: Joseph Barilla
Alternate #1: Brandon Agans
Alternate #2: Stephen Rodzinak
Alternate #3: Tara Kenyon
Alternate #4: Michael Kassick

LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD

BOARD MEMBER: Sandra Scrape
ALTERNATE MEMBER #2: Susan Asher

RECREATION COMMITTEE

Committee Member: Susan Asher
Committee Member: Kimberly Fleming
Committee Member: Dawn Vornlocker
Committee Member: Christina Pfeiffer

BOARD OF HEALTH

Board Member: Barbara Snyder
Board Member: Ruth Slovik

COUNCIL LIAISONS

Board of Education: Councilman Petrock
Board of Health: Councilman Skirkanish
Manville Business & Professional: Councilman Skirkanish

County Appointments:

Somerset Raritan Valley Sewerage Authority: Councilman Petrone

Somerset Regional Animal Shelter:
Somerset Regional Animal Shelter (Alternate):
Municipal Alliance Coordinator:
Municipal Alliance Committee Members:

Leeanna Schumacher
Ruth Slovik
Wilhemina Allen
Jessica Gonzalez
Kelly Harabin
Nan Peterson, Library Director
Ann Facendo, Superintendent
Det. William Sampson
Mayor Richard Onderko
Stephanie Cornelson
Vincenzo LoMedico
Josephine Pschar

Youth Services Coordinator:
Solid Waste Advisory Committee:
Office on Aging Advisory Committee:

FLOOD CONTROL COMMISSION

Member: Robert Kaminski
Member: Maritza Stern

Mayor Onderko requested that all appointees that were present come forward to be sworn in.

Clerk, Patricia Zamorski, swore in all appointees.

Mayor Onderko announced that Mayor McMullin from Raritan had also arrived. He thanked him for coming.

RESOLUTIONS BY CONSENT

Mayor Onderko requested a motion to adopt Resolution #2017-1 through #2017-8.

Council President Szabo, seconded by Councilman Skirkanish, made a motion to adopt Resolution #2017-1 through #2017-8.

ROLL CALL: AYES: SZABO, CAMACHO, MAGNANI, PETROCK, PETRONE, SKIRKANISH

Resolution #2017-1

WHEREAS, it is necessary that the Mayor and Borough Council fix the time and place for holding Regular Meetings during the ensuing year.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council that the REGULAR MEETINGS of the Governing Body of the Borough of Manville, County of Somerset, during the ensuing year of 2017, shall be held as follows:

January 23rd
February 13th
February 27th
March 13th
March 27th
April 10th
April 24th
May 8th
May 22nd

June 12th
June 26th
July 10th
August 14th
September 11th
September 25th
October 9th
November 13th
November 27th
December 11th

All meetings shall be held in the MANVILLE MUNICIPAL COURTROOM, 325 North Main Street, Manville, New Jersey, at **7:00 p.m.** unless otherwise stipulated by Mayor and Borough Council.

ALL SPECIAL MEETINGS shall be called at the request of the Mayor and/or any adjournments or CONTINUATION MEETINGS shall be called the day set by motion duly adopted by said Borough Council to continue said meeting.

Borough of Manville
/s/ Richard M. Onderko, Mayor

ALL PRESENT IN FAVOR PER ROLL CALL

Resolution #2017-2

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:5-14 mandates that the Governing Body of a municipal corporation, shall, by resolution passed by a majority vote of the full membership thereof, designate as a depository for its monies, banks or trust companies having their places of business in the State and organized under the laws of the United States and this State.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Manville, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey that:

- 1) Fulton Bank of New Jersey, North Main Street, Manville, NJ 08835
- 2) Bank of America, 69 South Main Street, Manville, NJ 08835
- 3) TD Bank, 452 Union Avenue, Bridgewater, NJ 08835
- 4) Peapack Gladstone Bank, Bridgewater, NJ 08835
- 5) Investor's Savings Bank, Somerset, New Jersey

Be and are hereby designated as depositories for the Borough of Manville for the year ending December 31, 2017.

FURTHERMORE, prior to the deposit of any municipal funds in the afore-mentioned depositories, said entity shall file, with the Borough Treasurer, a statement indicating that the bank is insured under the Government Units Deposit Protection Act (R.S. 17:9-41).

Borough of Manville
/s/ Richard M. Onderko, Mayor

ALL PRESENT IN FAVOR PER ROLL CALL

Resolution #2017-3

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 54:4-67 governs the interest rates charged on delinquent Tax and Water/Sewer Utility payments.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Manville, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey that the interest rates charged on delinquent Tax and Water/Sewer Utility payments shall be eight percent (8%) for the first \$1,500.00 of delinquency and eighteen percent (18%) thereafter, for the year 2017. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Manville Tax Collector and the Manville Utility Collector.

Borough of Manville
/s/ Richard M. Onderko, Mayor

ALL PRESENT IN FAVOR PER ROLL CALL

Resolution #2017-4

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 54:5-61 relating to the amount of penalty to be charged on a tax sale certificate has been amended to read as follows:

“When taxes, interest and costs shall in excess of \$200.00 but less than \$5,000.00, a two percent (2%) penalty on any amount due shall be charged. When taxes, interest and costs shall exceed the sum of \$5,000.00, such additional sum shall be equal to four percent (4%) of such amount paid and when that sum exceeds \$10,000.00 such additional sum paid shall be equal to six percent (6%) of such amount paid. This section shall also apply to all existing tax sale certificates held by municipalities on the effective date of this act.”

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Manville, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey that under N.J.S.A. 54:4-61, the Tax Collector of the Borough of Manville is authorized to charge, on a tax sale certificate, a two percent (2%) penalty on any amount due in excess of \$200.00 but less than \$5,000.00; a four percent (4%) penalty on any amount due in excess of \$5,000.00 but less than \$10,000.00; and a six percent (6%) penalty on any amount due in excess of \$10,000.00. These penalties are to be applied to all municipal held tax sale certificates as well as those which may be acquired by the municipality as a result of future tax sales.

FURTHERMORE, a copy of this resolution shall be forwarded to the Tax Collector.

Borough of Manville
/s/ Richard M. Onderko, Mayor

ALL PRESENT IN FAVOR PER ROLL CALL

Resolution #2017-5

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:5-17-1 allows the Tax/Utility Collector to cancel tax/utility balances and/or tax/utility overpayments in the amount of \$10.00 or less that remain uncollected at the close of the fiscal year.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Manville, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey that the Tax/Utility Collector of the Borough of Manville, is hereby authorized to cancel all tax receivables of \$10.00 or less and all utility receivables of \$5.00 or less for the year 2017.

Borough of Manville
/s/ Richard M. Onderko, Mayor

ALL PRESENT IN FAVOR PER ROLL CALL

Resolution #2017-6

WHEREAS, it is legally essential that heads of various departments be responsible and sign for the receipt of material or the performance of any services on behalf of the Borough of Manville.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Manville, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey that the following heads of departments and other officials shall be and are responsible for the receipt of any merchandise shipped or performance of services delivered to the Borough of Manville, within their area of responsibility:

ADMINISTRATOR
CLERK
CHIEF OF POLICE
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS
CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER
TAX/UTILITY COLLECTOR
FIRE CHIEF
FIRE SUPERINTENDENT
ZONING OFFICER
RECREATION DIRECTOR

FURTHERMORE, that the above named are to affix the date showing when and where the said merchandise was received or the services performed; in the event of a discrepancy in the materials received or services performed, the Department Head is to report the same to the Chairman of the Committee in charge of the Department and the Purchasing Agent.

FURTHERMORE, the Borough Clerk is hereby authorized to send a copy of this resolution to the above named Department Heads.

Borough of Manville
/s/ Richard M. Onderko, Mayor

ALL PRESENT IN FAVOR PER ROLL CALL

Resolution #2017-7

WHEREAS, the Borough of Manville has declared that the opportunity for all Socially and Economically Disadvantaged (SED) business concerns should exist for free entry into business, growth and exposure; and

WHEREAS, the Borough must ensure that a fair proportion of the Borough's total purchases and contracts for construction, property supplies and services, etc. be placed with SED businesses. The policy hereby declared by the Borough of Manville shall not be inconsistent with the Set-Aside Act for SED businesses, N.J.S.A. 52:32-17, et. seq., Local Public Contract Law; N.J.S.A. 40A:11-41, et. seq., and the N.J. Wastewater Trust Act; N.J.S.A. 58:11-B-1, et. seq.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Manville, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey to implement this action and serve

as a sponsor for these activities, the Governing Body hereby appoints the Borough Clerk to serve as “Public Agency Compliance Officer.”

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this resolution be forwarded to Pamela Lyons, Administrator of the Office of Equal Opportunity Public Contracts Assistance, N.J.D.E.P.

Borough of Manville
/s/ Richard M. Onderko, Mayor

ALL PRESENT IN FAVOR PER ROLL CALL

Resolution #2017-8

BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Manville, County of Somerset, State of New Jersey that:

- 1) The Courier News
- 2) The Star Ledger

Be and are hereby designated as official newspapers for the Borough of Manville for the year ending December 31, 2017.

Borough of Manville
/s/ Richard M. Onderko, Mayor

ALL PRESENT IN FAVOR PER ROLL CALL

COMMUNITY SPIRIT AWARD

Mayor Onderko presented a Community Spirit Award to the Manville Arts Council. He explained that the Manville Arts Council is a group of Manville residents that have come together to support the Arts within our Community. He thanked the founding members: Heather Ball, Karen McDermott, Beth Borrus and Amy Hartmann-Ohlson.

President of the Manville Arts Council, Heather Ball thanked the Mayor and Council, the Community, and Nan Peterson, Director of the Manville Public Library. She stated they are looking forward to continuing to bring the Arts programming to our community.

COMMENTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Councilman Petrone wished everyone a Happy New Year. He thanked the voters of Manville for their confidence. He thanked his wife and son for allowing him to run for Council. He stated that he is looking forward to working with Mayor Onderko and the Council and bring Manville in a positive direction. He stated that he feels he is qualified for the position of Councilman being a lifelong resident, former Councilman, Borough Clerk, and Director of Public Works. He stated that we have to stabilize taxes by bringing in ratables and reviewing services and Shared Services. He thanked several of his friends and acquaintances for their support, as well as the Administrative staff at Borough Hall. He also thanked the Manville Police Department, and all the volunteers of the Fire Department and Office of Emergency Management. He also thanked the members of the Department of Public Works for their support. He asked God’s blessing on everyone, and on America.

Councilwoman Magnani stated that she grew up here in Manville, she left, and moved back. She stated that she loves this town. She thanked Mayor Onderko and Dayna Camacho for their assistance during her first year on Council. She stated that she has been blessed to meet many wonderful residents. She stated that she is proud to be a Councilwoman, and she will work for the residents. She wished God's blessing for everyone. She asked that residents come to her with their issues. She thanked Andrea Bierwirth for all she has done as Administrator, and she stated that Patricia Zamorski is the Borough's right arm.

Council President Szabo thanked everyone for coming to the Reorganization meeting, and wished everyone a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year. He thanked everyone for their votes for Council President. He thanked all the Fire Department, Police Department, and Rescue Squad for all they do.

Councilman Skirkanish wished everyone a Happy New Year. He thanked all the guest who attended this morning in the snow. He thanked his wife Gail for all her help, and thanked Kathy Petrone. He also thanked all the members of the Democratic Club and the voters who made it possible. He thanked Joe Lukac and Steve Rodzinak for running a clean campaign, and he thanked Phil Petrone for being a great running mate. He stated that each year there are many changes, some good, some bad, but he would like to see some projects completed like the demolition of the Grant property and the bathrooms at Northside Park. He stated he would like to renew our relationship with the owners of the Rustic Mall and bring in a plan to the Planning Board as soon as possible to stabilize taxes. He stated he would also like to sell the eight lots adjacent to the Rustic Mall and the property by the library to bring in more revenue. He stated that Manville is a good town and in good shape, but once these projects are completed, we will be in better shape with stabilized taxes. He stated that we need to work with the new Flood Taskforce that combines Somerset and Hunterdon County and do everything we can to stop flooding. He stated he is glad to be back on Council, and he will do his best to make Manville a great place to live. He thanked everyone and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Councilwoman Camacho thanked everyone for attending the Reorganization meeting, and congratulated everyone that was sworn in to their new positions. She stated that the Borough is still faced with challenges and financial uncertainty. She stated that we have faced difficulties in the past, and we have to look past party lines and work together as one united front so that we can make Manville the best that it can be. She thanked everyone again for attending and asked everyone to drive safely.

Councilman Petrock wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and wished God's blessings on everyone. He stated that the Mayor and Council will give the residents one hundred percent. He thanked all the volunteers and workforce and residents. He stated it is a great town and we have made a lot of progress. He stated that the public should come in and speak to the Mayor and Council if they have questions. He thanked everyone and blessed them.

MAYOR'S ANNUAL ADDRESS

Mayoral Address - January 7th, 2017

Good morning. Welcome to the 88th reorganization of our town Council and a Happy New Year to all. I would like to recap the year that just passed highlighting some of our major accomplishments and give a brief overview of where we are headed in 2017 with setting goals and objectives to help move Manville forward.

2016 was a transformative year for me personally and for our Borough. First, I decided to retire back in February after a 33 year career in information technology and corporate finance. This allowed me to be able to devote more time to helping Manville. It was a difficult decision because I really loved my job and the company's mission but it was the best decision given the situation having our Borough Administrator leave us due to his retirement. And as we are all another year older, as a hidden benefit of my old age, I signed up for membership in the Manville Seniors organization and look forward to their calendar of events this year. It's really not so bad getting another year older being a senior citizen.

To be honest 2016 didn't begin so well. I walked into an empty mayor's office without much of a transition. We encountered a major snow storm in January and a massive fire that burned for days in February at the government depot on our border with Hillsborough. Our fire and EMS first responders gave mutual aid to our neighbor in need under frigid conditions. There is no doubt Manville first responders, including our police force, are among the very best and bravest. During the summer Hurricane Matthew caught everyone's attention. The storm at one point was projected to come up the east coast and there was talk of another "Floyd like" event for NJ. I grew up on North Second Avenue, which is one of our hardest hit flood zones, not too far from Borough Hall. Watching my childhood home be knocked down in March, I'm keenly aware of the adverse effects of flooding our town has encountered and may endure again with each approaching hurricane season. Climate change seems to have made severe rain events much more frequent and the threat of flooding now ever present. We need to manage our Borough's finances going forward with that threat in mind.

We also entered into a new 3-year sheltering agreement with the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2290. This ensures our veterans' the peace of mind that they will never encounter any financial burdens while operating as our emergency shelter. Our veterans are a big part of our community and they deserve our full support.

As your Mayor, I take public safety very seriously and started work immediately to acquire our own portable generator for our emergency shelter. I know we lost power in the past at our shelter and I did not want our town to be in that position ever again. Working with our state OEM and various FEMA contacts we received a \$75,000 grant to help offset 80% of the cost of purchasing the generator.

I would like to give a big "thank you" to our Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno. I met her at an event and she told me if I ever needed anything I could call her cell phone. So I wrote down the number for future reference. As weeks past, I felt we needed help to expedite this purchase moving the grant through FEMA. I called the Lt. Governor and she picked up and got me in touch with a representative from our Home Land security department. Within a week or two, we were given the green light to make the purchase after months of waiting. The trailer based generator is housed at our OEM building.

In Manville, 2016 will most likely be remembered for a property tax crisis highlighted by the outcome of a town wide, county mandated re-assessment and a school funding formula out of touch with current day realities. The current school funding formula sadly makes Manville's school district one of the most underfunded in the state. In addition, the on-going Blue Acre buyout program with 108 homes being taken off our tax rolls compounded the uncertainty. The overall value of our town fell 20% from the height of the real estate market back in 2008. The re-assessment was necessary to put an end to a run of costly property tax appeals we encountered every year since 2012. Based upon the number of tax appeals filed, it is clear our residents want lower property taxes.

Keeping Manville affordable will be the top priority of this governing body during 2017 and in the years ahead. The one major accomplishment I'm most proud of is acquiring over \$500,000 dollars of aid and grants to help stabilize our municipal property tax rate during 2016. That amount of money equates to over a \$100 dollars savings on an average assessed home in town. This was a team effort of the council and across all our departments. I thank all our Borough employees for their dedication to our town during some tough fiscal times. Acquiring the much-needed state and federal aid for Manville will remain a priority.

We worked hard to balance the municipal budgets the past two years with increases of \$24 in 2015 and \$8 dollars in 2016 on an average assessed home. Governor Christie's 2% property tax cap has helped confront the property tax crisis we face living here in NJ. This law helps curtail any excessive spending to rein in the growth rate of property taxes.

So the transformation of Manville has begun and it will continue; focused on lowering the operating costs of the services we provide. Our municipal court was outsourced to Hillsborough beginning in 2016 and we did not replace 3 full-time employees who either retired or resigned saving significant budget dollars heading into our 2017 budget cycle. Our projected budget surplus will also help offset any significant municipal tax increase this year.

Last July, we hired our new Borough Administrator, Andrea Bierwirth, after a long search for the best-qualified candidate for the job. Andrea's municipal and financial experience has been a big help in getting our financial house in order. We began work on a 3-5 year capital program and analyzed our long term debt payments from prior bond issuances. In 2018, a major bond repayment will be completed which may allow for a capital improvement plan to be executed at that time.

2017 should be a good year for our Borough after a resurgence of our community spirit in 2016. The Manville High School football, wrestling and cross country teams had successful winning seasons. Our rec program offerings throughout the year, especially our Community Day event and recent tree lighting on our Main Street were well received. Our library is thriving with its many program offerings and increased circulations. There's no doubt we live in a nice community with great potential.

With a new President taking office later this month, there is a sense of renewed optimism about the future of our country. This recent holiday season saw record spending. Consumer confidence seems to be back. This all paints a favorable picture for redevelopment to finally begin for the Rustic Mall property.

I am hopeful we will see a shovel in the ground this year with a project that may consist of luxury apartments, limited commercial space, and some low-income senior housing. The time is now to put the past behind us and move the project forward for the good of our town center to help rejuvenate our Main Street business district and increase our tax ratables.

Three other important work efforts are on our radar in 2017. One is to codify our Borough ordinances and develop an on-line, searchable catalog of the laws that govern our Borough. Another is to have our tax maps updated. They need to be converted to an electronic format to accurately reflect our tax ratables. And third, our on-going participation and achievements in the Community Rating System will allow for further reductions in flood insurance premiums that many homeowners pay.

Residents currently paying flood insurance receive a 15% discount. We would like to achieve a 25% discount level this year as flood insurance rates continue to escalate. These deliverables are long overdue and come with some additional budget costs that are unavoidable. But the benefit to our residents is well worth the expense. I think we all can agree there is plenty of work to be done in the months ahead.

Recently I received a post-campaign email message from President-elect Donald Trump that I would like to share an excerpt from that pertains to addressing the many problems that confront us as Americans...

And I quote our President-elect... **“I REFUSE to accept that it can’t be done. This is the country that declared its independence, won two world wars and landed a man on the moon. This is America. We can and we WILL get it done. ”**

That message resonates with me concerning the future of Manville and getting help with flood mitigation work to actually lower flood water levels here. I refuse to accept it can’t be done!

Of the 21 towns in Somerset County, Manville is by far the most impacted. It has become a regional issue also. Our multi-town Raritan and Millstone flood commission is doing a great job keeping the spot light on the problem.

I am hopeful with new Presidential leadership in Washington DC, that cost-effective plans for helping Manville will become a reality. By taking action to help lower flood water levels during times of flooding, it will help save homes and neighborhoods which will give our residents a sense of renewed hope.

In closing, I have a picture hanging in the Mayor’s office from the 1980 USA Olympic hockey team’s win over the Soviet Union. It’s inscribed “Do you believe in miracles?” Well, I believe in miracles. I believe in hard work and with perseverance, our efforts will eventually pay off and progress will be made. Let’s keep the faith!

To read about our progress this year, please sign up for the "Community News", a free monthly newspaper mailed to homes that will keep everyone informed of our progress throughout the year. I am looking forward to a productive 2017.

God bless our Borough by keeping us safe from future flooding and may God continue to bless the country we all love, the United States of America.

Thank you,
Mayor Richard M. Onderko

BENEDICTION

Rev. Stanislaw Slaby gave a benediction.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Onderko announced that the meeting will adjourn for refreshments at in the hallway and at the VFW. He requested a motion to adjourn the Reorganization Meeting.

A motion was made by Council President Szabo, seconded by Councilman Petrock to adjourn the 88th Annual Reorganization Meeting.

All present were in favor.



ATTEST:

Patricia A. Zamorski, Borough Clerk