

121st  
REORGANIZATION MEETING OF THE MAYOR & COUNCIL  
BOROUGH OF WESTWOOD, NEW JERSEY  
COMMUNITY CENTER  
55 JEFFERSON AVENUE  
JANUARY 6, 2015

1. **CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Birkner at 7:20 pm. Mayor Birkner then read the Open Public Meetings Law Statement: "This meeting which conforms with the OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS LAW, CHAPTER 231, PUBLIC LAWS OF 1975, is a regular Borough Council meeting. Notices have been filed with our local official newspapers and posted on the Municipal Bulletin Board".

2. **FLAG SALUTE AND INVOCATION:**

The Colors were presented by the Westwood Police Reserves Color Guard.

The invocation was delivered by Reverend Pranschke.

3. **COUNCILMEMBERS - ELECT:**

Christopher Owens was administered his Oath of Office as Member of the Council for a three year term by Assemblywoman Holly Schepisi. Term expiring 12/31/17. Councilmember Owens thanked his family and supporters. At the conclusion of his remarks, Councilmember Owens took his seat on the dais.

Christopher Montana was administered his Oath of Office as Member of the Council for a three year term by Assemblywoman Holly Schepisi. Term expiring 12/31/17. Councilmember Bicocchi thanked his family and supporters. At the conclusion of his remarks, Councilmember Bicocchi took his seat on the dais.

4. **ROLL CALL**

Mayor Birkner - present  
Councilmember Owens - present  
Councilmember Montana - present  
Councilmember Miller - present  
Councilmember Grefrath - present  
Councilmember Bicocchi - present  
Councilmember Arroyo- present  
Borough Clerk Hughes - present

5. **PRESENTATION TO OUTGOING COUNCILMEMBER:**

Mayor Birkner asked former Councilmember Cynthia Waneck to join him for a presentation. Former Councilmember Waneck addressed the audience.

**6. APPOINTMENT/ RE-APPOINTMENT OF MUNICIPAL JUDGE**

**Resolution #15-1: Appointment of Municipal Judge**

Motion: Councilmember Miller Second: Councilmember Owens

Roll Call: Councilmember Owens - Yes Councilmember Montana - Yes  
Councilmember Miller - Yes Councilmember Grefrath - Yes  
Councilmember Bicocchi - Yes Councilmember Arroyo - Yes

**7. APPOINTMENT OF BOROUGH PROFESSIONALS**

**Resolution #15-2: Appointment of Borough Attorney**

Motion: Councilmember Grefrath Second: Councilmember Montana

Roll Call: Councilmember Owens - Yes Councilmember Montana - Yes  
Councilmember Miller - Yes Councilmember Grefrath - Yes  
Councilmember Bicocchi - Yes Councilmember Arroyo - Yes

**Resolution #15-3: Appointment of Borough Engineer**

Motion: Councilmember Bicocchi Second: Councilmember Miller

Roll Call: Councilmember Owens - Yes Councilmember Montana - Yes  
Councilmember Miller - Yes Councilmember Grefrath - Yes  
Councilmember Bicocchi - Yes Councilmember Arroyo - Yes

**Resolution #15-4: Appointment of Various Borough Professionals**

Motion: Councilmember Arroyo Second: Councilmember Grefrath

Roll Call: Councilmember Owens - Yes Councilmember Montana - Yes  
Councilmember Miller - Yes Councilmember Grefrath - Yes  
Councilmember Bicocchi - Yes Councilmember Arroyo - Yes

<u>Position</u>	<u>Firm</u>	<u>Designee</u>
Borough Auditor	Lerch, Vinci & Higgins	Gary Vinci, RMA
Risk Manager	Burton Agency	Robert Kanwisher
Public Defender		Christopher Leyden, Esq.
Prosecutor		Edward G. Johnson, Esq.
Labor Attorney		Raymond Wiss, Esq.
Comm. Appraiser	McNerney & Associates	Robert McNerney
Resid. Appraiser	Appraisal Systems, Inc.	Rick DelGuercio

**Resolution #15-4A: Appointment of Various Borough Professionals by Public Bidding**

Motion: Councilmember Arroyo Second: Councilmember Grefrath

Roll Call: Councilmember Owens - Yes Councilmember Montana - Yes  
Councilmember Miller - Yes Councilmember Grefrath - Yes  
Councilmember Bicocchi - Yes Councilmember Arroyo - Yes

<u>Position</u>	<u>Firm</u>	<u>Designee</u>
Bond Counsel	Gluck & Walrath, LLP	Christopher Walrath, Esq.
Historic Consultant	G. Dietrich Consulting	Gregory Dietrich

**8. MAYOR'S DESIGNATION OF COUNCIL COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS FOR 2015**

Mayor Birkner announces the following Council Committee appointments for 2015:

<u>COMMITTEE</u>	<u>LIAISON</u>	<u>DEPUTY LIAISON</u>
Finance, Admin. & Cap. Projects	Peter Grefrath	Robert Miller
Fire & Ambulance	Robert Miller	Peter Grefrath
Police & Emergency Mgt.	Ray Arroyo	Christopher Owens
Land Use	Robert Bicocchi	Christopher Montana
Public Properties	Christopher Owens	Ray Arroyo
Health & Recreation	Christopher Montana	Robert Bicocchi

**9. SELECTION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT FOR 2015**

**Resolution #15-5: Nomination of 2015 Council President:**

Motion: Councilmember Grefrath Second: Councilmember Miller

Roll Call: Councilmember Owens - Yes Councilmember Montana - Yes  
Councilmember Miller - Yes Councilmember Grefrath - Yes  
Councilmember Bicocchi - Yes Councilmember Arroyo - Abstain

**10. SWEARING IN OF POLICE OFFICER:**

**Resolution #15-6: Appointment of Police Officer**

Motion: Council President Arroyo Second: Councilmember Owens

Roll Call: Councilmember Owens - Yes Councilmember Montana - Yes  
Councilmember Miller - Yes Councilmember Grefrath - Yes  
Councilmember Bicocchi - Yes Council President Arroyo - Yes

Mayor Birkner administered the Oath of Office to Samuel Mann. Chief Regino presented Officer Mann with his badge.

**11. PUBLIC FORUM:**

Motion to open the Public Forum: Councilmember Montana Second: Councilmember Owens  
Voice Vote: A voice vote was taken with all present voting in the affirmative.

No member of the public wished to speak.

Motion to close the Public Forum: Councilmember Owens Second: Councilmember Montana  
Voice Vote: A voice vote was taken with all present voting in the affirmative.

**12. BUDGET MEETINGS:**

Mayor Birkner announced that preliminary work has been done on the 2015 Municipal Budget, and a schedule of Budget Meetings will soon be published in the official Borough newspaper and posted on the Municipal Bulletin Board. Tentatively, the line-by-line budget review meetings will be held in February.

**13. CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor Birkner announced that the Resolutions listed on the Consent Agenda would be enacted with one motion. Copies of all Resolutions were available to any person upon request. Any

Councilmember who wished to remove any Resolution(s) to be voted upon had the opportunity to do so at this time and said Resolution(s) would be moved and voted upon separately.

**Motion to approve Consent Agenda Resolutions #15-7 through #15-32:** Councilmember Grefrath Second: Councilmember Bicocchi

Roll Call: Councilmember Owens - Yes    Councilmember Montana - Yes  
          Councilmember Miller – Yes        Councilmember Grefrath - Yes  
          Councilmember Bicocchi – Yes     Council President Arroyo – Yes

**Resolution Titles**

- 15-7        OFFICIAL ELECTRONIC MEDIA
- 15-8        TEMPORARY BUDGET
- 15-9        MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2015
- 15-10      DEPOSITORIES OF FUNDS
- 15-11      AUTHORIZATION OF PAYMENT SIGNATORIES FOR 2015
- 15-12      FACSIMILE SIGNATURES ON CHECKS
- 15-13      ESTABLISHMENT OF INT. RATES ON DELINQUENT TAXES & ASSESS.
- 15-14      ADOPTION OF PETTY CASH & CREDIT CARD POLICIES
- 15-15      ESTABLISHMENT OF PETTY CASH FUND
- 15-16      ESTABLISHMENT OF PETTY CASH FUND FOR RECREATION
- 15-17      ESTABLISHMENT OF PETTY CASH FUND FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE
- 15-18      DEPOSITORY OF ATTENDANCE RECORDS
- 15-19      APPOINTMENT OF ASSESSMENT SEARCH OFFICER
- 15-20      APPOINTMENT OF TAX SEARCH OFFICER
- 15-21      MAGISTRATE'S ORDER DESIGNATING VIOLATIONS CLERK
- 15-22      APPOINTMENT TAX ASSESSOR / ATTORNEY - TAX APPEALS
- 15-23      2015 MUNICIPAL HOLIDAYS
- 15-24      OFFICIAL BOROUGH NEWSPAPERS
- 15-25      \$20.00 CHARGE FOR PAYMENTS MADE WITH INSUFFICIENT FUNDS
- 15-26      \$5.00 CHARGE FOR TAX ACCOUNT REPORTS TO SEARCH COMPANIES
- 15-27      TAX SALE COSTS
- 15-28      CASH MANAGEMENT PLAN 2015
- 15-29      MUTUAL AID – PASCACK VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENTS
- 15-30      AUTHORIZATION OF A FEE FOR ISSUANCE OF DUPLICATE TAX SALE CERTIFICATES
- 15-31      BERGEN COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT MUTUAL AID
- 15-32      AUTHORIZING CONTRACTS WITH H-GAC

**14. ORDINANCES FOR FIRST & FINAL READING:**

**Ordinances on Introduction**

Mayor Birkner commented that it's unusual to have ordinances on the Reorganization Agenda. However, Engine 16 is facing some serious repairs that would be quite expensive to perform. Considering the apparatus is over 20 years old, it makes sense to replace it rather than sink

money into rebuilding it. The Westwood Fire Department has worked hard to find the Borough the best deal on a replacement engine that meets the needs of the Fire Department and falls within the financial constraints of the Borough. Tonight's bond ordinance to put the funding in place to purchase the apparatus.

**15-1 An Ordinance of the Borough of Westwood, In the County of Bergen, New Jersey, Providing for the Acquisition of Fire Apparatus for the Borough Fire Department and Other Related Expenses in and for the Borough of Westwood and appropriating \$421,350 Therefor, and Providing for the Issuance of \$400,283 in Bonds or Notes of the Borough of Westwood to Finance the Same**

**BE IT RESOLVED** that Ordinance #15-1 entitled "An Ordinance of the Borough of Westwood, In the County of Bergen, New Jersey, Providing for the Acquisition of Fire Apparatus for the Borough Fire Department and Other Related Expenses in and for the Borough of Westwood and appropriating \$421,350 Therefor, and Providing for the Issuance of \$400,283 in Bonds or Notes of the Borough of Westwood to Finance the Same" is hereby introduced by title; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Borough Clerk is hereby directed to advertise said ordinance with a January 20, 2015 hearing date in the official newspaper according to law.

Councilmember Miller commented that this is a significant capital investment. The Fire Department spent a large amount of time determined what was needed, not what was wanted. He thanked and commended the Fire Department for their work.

**Motion to pass the ordinance on First Reading:** Councilmember Miller

Second: Councilmember Grefrath

Roll Call: Councilmember Owens - Yes    Councilmember Montana - Yes  
          Councilmember Miller - Yes        Councilmember Grefrath - Yes  
          Councilmember Bicocchi - Yes     Council President Arroyo - Yes

**15. ANNUAL APPOINTMENTS AND DESIGNATIONS TO VARIOUS MUNICIPAL OFFICES:**

Mayor John Birkner, Jr. - Affirmative Action Compliance Official, Fund Commissioner B-MED, B-MEL & JIF

Karen Hughes - Assessment Search Officer, Local Ethics Official

Denise Holmes - Deputy Borough Clerk

Letitia Candeloro - Court Administrator

Elizabeth Kraus - Deputy Court Administrator

Rick Woods - Recycling Coordinator, Clean Community Coordinator

Sharon Blehl - Right-To-Know Coordinator, Bloodborne Pathogens Coordinator

Stefanie Stokes - Tax Search Officer

Robert Hibler - Borough Historian

Mayor Birkner invited all appointees to the dais. Judge Karch administered the Oaths of Office.

16. **APPOINTMENTS TO VARIOUS BOARDS**

Board of Health

Sabrina Johnston, 3 Yr. Term, Expiring 12/31/17  
Louise Cue, 3 Yr. Term, Expiring 12/31/17  
Donna Bott, 3 Yr. Term, Expiring 12/31/17  
Councilmember Christopher Montana (Council Liaison)

Recreation Advisory Board

Jodi Murphy, 3 Yr. Term, Expiring 12/31/17  
Jason Scheffer, 3 Yr. Term, Expiring 12/31/17  
Roberta Cozic, Unexp. Term, Expiring 12/31/16  
Bermari Roig, Alt. #2, 3 Yr. Term, Expiring 12/31/17  
Councilmember Christopher Montana (Council Liaison)

Westwood Municipal Alliance (Annual Term)

Gary Buchheister, Annual Expiring 12/31/15

Library Board of Trustees

Barbara Stewart, 5 Yr. Term, Expiring 12/31/19  
Frank Zimmerman, Mayors Alternate, Annual Expiring 12/31/15  
Ray Gonzalez, School Supt., Annual Expiring 12/31/15  
Councilmember Robert Miller (Council Liaison)

Westwood Parking Authority

John Oberg, 5 Yr. Term, Expiring 12/31/19  
Councilmember Ray Arroyo (Council Liaison)

Environmental Advisory Committee

Joseph Helmy, Term Expiring 12/31/17  
Heidi Sandiford, Term Expiring 12/31/17  
Councilmember Peter Grefrath (Council Liaison)

Safety Committee - (Annual Appointments)

Darren Blankenbush, Safety Delegate  
Gary Buchheister, Alternate Delegate  
Richard Woods, Member  
Armand Marini, Member  
Sylvia Kokowski, Member  
William Haffler, Fire Department Member  
Denise Holmes, Member  
Christine Compesi, Member  
Barbara Constantine, Member  
Jack Sauer, Member  
Martha Urbiel, Member  
Sgt. Matthew McClutchy, Member

Robert Hoffmann, Borough Administrator

Heritage Society

Councilmember Christopher Owens (Council Liaison)

Technology Committee

Councilmember Christopher Owens (Council Liaison)

Website Committee

Councilmember Christopher Owens (Council Liaison)

Historic Preservation Commission

Joseph Rivers, 4 Yr. Term, Expiring 12/31/18

Tyler Rubin, Alt. #1, 2 Yr. Term, Expiring 12/31/16

Councilmember Robert Bicocchi (Council Liaison)

Zoning Board of Adjustment

Marc Truscio, Unexp. Term, Expiring 12/31/17

George James, Unexp. Term, Expiring 12/31/15

William Martin, Member, Term Expiring 12/31/18

Cynthia Waneck, Alt. #1, Term Expiring, 12/31/16

Michael Klein, Alt. #2, Term Expiring, 12/31/15

Councilmember Robert Bicocchi (Council Liaison)

**17. SWEARING IN OF ALL APPOINTEES**

**Motion to Accept All Appointees:** Councilmember Owens Second: Councilmember Montana

Roll Call: Councilmember Owens - Yes    Councilmember Montana - Yes  
          Councilmember Miller - Yes        Councilmember Grefrath - Yes  
          Councilmember Bicocchi - Yes     Council President Arroyo - Yes

Mayor Birkner read the Mayor's appointments to the Planning Board:

Planning Board

Dan Olivier, (Class IV) 4 Yr. Term, Expiring 12/31/18

Yash Risbud, Alt. #2, 2 Yr. Term, Expiring (12/31/16)

William Martin, Class II, Annual Expiring 12/31/15

Councilmember Robert Bicocchi, Class III (Council Liaison)

Mayor Birkner invited all appointees to the dais. Judge Karch administered the Oaths of Office.

**18. APPOINTMENT AND SWEARING IN OF POLICE RESERVES**

Mayor Birkner invited the 2015 Police Reservists to the dais to be administered their Oaths of Office.

Mayo Credle, Capt.

John Brobson, Lt.

Damon Vincenty

Arnold Luna

Michael Amoruso, Sgt.  
Donna Heil  
Kenroy Morrison  
Jake McDougall

Shawn Yates  
Shaun Walsh  
Raheem Jackson  
PO Niko Pieratos, Liaison Officer

**19. OATHS OF OFFICES, CERT MEMBERS**

Mayor Birkner invited the 2015 CERT members to the dais to be administered their Oaths of Office.

Nick Ariemma  
Mayo Credle, Jr.  
Matt D'Elia  
Janet Dunn  
Beth Holmes

Pauline Mavridis  
Christopher Miras  
Christopher Morgan CERT/CART  
Damon Vincenty

**20. OATHS OF OFFICES, AMBULANCE CORPS OFFICIALS**

Mayor Birkner invited Captain Steve Wolf to the dais to be sworn into office by Judge Karch.

Mayor Birkner invited 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Kevin Brennan and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Ruth Lang to the dais to be administered their Oaths of Office by Judge Karch.

**21. OATHS OF OFFICE, FIRE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS**

Mayor Birkner invited 2015 Fire Chief James Voorhis, Deputy Chief William Haffler, Senior Captain Kevin Woods, Captain Michael Griffin, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Brian Kronewitter, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Steven Fatovic, 3<sup>rd</sup> Lt. Brian Wicenski to the dais to be administered their Oaths of Office by Judge Karch.

**22. PRESENTATION OF AWARDS**

a) Presentation to Outgoing Fire Chief James Charles Mawdsley

Mayor Birkner and Fire Department liaison Councilmember Miller present Ex-Chief Mawdsley with a certificate. Ex-Chief Mawdsley addressed the audience.

b) Volunteer Emergency Services Hall of Fame:

Mayor Birkner and Councilmember Miller presented certificates to William Haffler, Westwood Volunteer Fire Department and Craig Hegner, Westwood Volunteer Ambulance Corps; and Mayor Birkner and Council President Arroyo presented the certificate to Donna Heil, Westwood Police Reserves, in acknowledgement of their induction into the Volunteer Emergency Services Hall of Fame. Each of these recipients was nominated by their peers in recognition of outstanding service.

**23. MAYOR'S REMARKS**

Text of the Mayor's speech is attached.

**24. BENEDICTION**

Reverend Pranschke delivered the Benediction.

**25. ADJOURNMENT**

2015 Reorganization Meeting  
January 6, 2015

Motion to Adjourn: Councilmember Miller Second: Council President Arroyo  
Voice Vote: All those present vote in the affirmative. The time was 8:25 PM.

Attest:

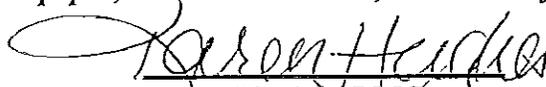
  
Karen Hughes, RMC  
Borough Clerk

Proofed by: Denise Holmes, Deputy Clerk

**BOROUGH OF WESTWOOD  
OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL CLERK  
PROOF OF PUBLICATION AFFIDAVIT**

**DATE: December 23, 2014**

*As the duly appointed Municipal Clerk for the Borough of Westwood, in the County of Bergen, State of New Jersey, I, Karen Hughes, hereby certify that a Public Notice, of which a copy is attached hereto, was published in The Record newspaper, in the December 10, 2014 issue of said newspaper.*

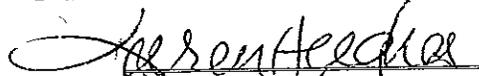
  
**Karen Hughes, RMC  
Municipal Clerk**

**BOROUGH OF WESTWOOD  
REORGANIZATION MEETING NOTICE**  
PLEASE TAKE NOTE that the 121st Reorganization Meeting of the Borough of Westwood will take place on Tuesday, January 6th, 2015 at 7:00 PM at the Community Center, 55 Jefferson Avenue, Westwood, New Jersey. The Reorganization Meeting will be preceded by the Sine Die Meeting, which will take place at 6:30 PM at the same location.  
Karen Hughes, Borough Clerk  
Borough of Westwood  
Dec. 10, 2014-fee:\$14.18(15) 3793009

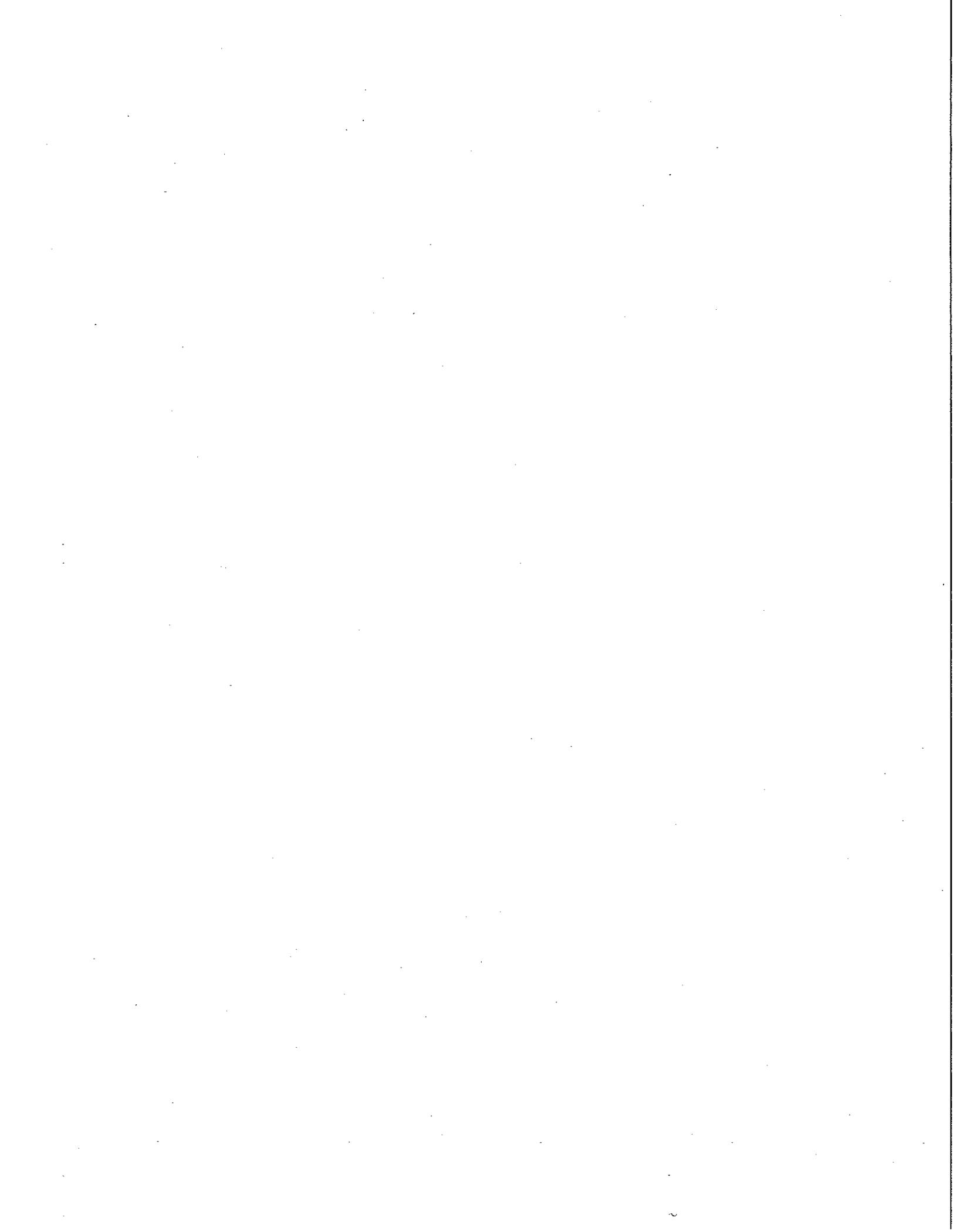
**BOROUGH OF WESTWOOD  
OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL CLERK  
PROOF OF PUBLICATION AFFIDAVIT**

**DATE: March 11, 2015**

*As the duly appointed Municipal Clerk for the Borough of Westwood, in the County of Bergen, State of New Jersey, I, Karen Hughes, hereby certify that a Public Notice, of which a copy is attached hereto, was published in The Record newspaper, in the January 9, 2015 issue of said newspaper.*

  
**Karen Hughes, RMC**  
**Municipal Clerk**

BOROUGH OF WESTWOOD Mayor & Council 2015 Meeting Schedule 1st Tuesday - Work Session, 3rd Tuesday - Public Meeting Unless Otherwise Noted (*) 7:30 pm (Closed Session) - 8:00 pm (Open Session)	
Tuesday, January 6: Sine Die - 6:30 pm Reorganization - 7:00 pm Tuesday, January 20 - Public Meeting	No July work meeting scheduled Tuesday, July 21 - 7:00 pm Closed - 8:00 pm Public
Tuesday, February 3 - Work Session Tuesday, February 17 - Public Meeting	No August work meeting scheduled Tuesday, August 18 - 7:00 pm Closed - 8:00 pm Public
Tuesday, March 3 - Work Session Tuesday, March 17 - Public Meeting	Tuesday, September 1 - Work Meeting Tuesday, September 15 - Public Meeting
Tuesday, April 7 - Work Session Tuesday, April 21 - Public Meeting	*Tuesday, September 29 - October Work Meeting *Tuesday, October 13 - Public Meeting
Tuesday, May 5 - Work Meeting Tuesday, May 19 - Public Meeting	*Tuesday, October 27 - November Work
*Tuesday, June 9 - Work Meeting Tuesday, June 23 - Public Meeting	*Tuesday, November 10 - Public Meeting
	Tuesday, December 1 - Work Meeting Tuesday, December 15 - Public Meeting
The Governing Body of the Borough of Westwood reserves the right to take formal action at any of these meetings.	
Karen Hughes, RMC Borough Clerk January 9, 2015; Fee: \$62.37 (66)	3805084



Westwood – 2015

**Councilmembers elect :**

**Owens**

It is my privilege to extend a warm welcome back and congratulations on his election to Council member Owens. Chris was appointed to fill the seat of former council member Sciara who had stepped down earlier this year. During this past year, Chris had worked with us as our Health and Recreation Liaison, and has been active in progressing the councils objectives as we head into 2015. His election brings another voice of experience to the dais and I very much look forward to working with him as we continue to keep Westwood moving forward.

**Montana**

It is my further privilege of welcoming a new member to the governing body.

Involved for many years in service to the Westwood community, Chris Montana is a very welcome addition to the governing body. Chris has served on the Zoning Board and has been involved with several of the youth programs in the borough. Most significantly, the leadership and guidance he has provided as a volunteer in our special needs recreation program has been nothing less than outstanding. I very much look forward to working together with Chris in the years to come.

**Cynthis Waneck**

At this time, I would like to take a moment to thank outgoing Councilwoman Cynthia Waneck who has stepped down from the borough council after nine years of service. In the seven years that I have had the honor of serving with Cindy, I can truly say that she has graciously served our community and has a genuine love of Westwood. We worked closely on many projects that have brought Westwood recognition as a premiere community to live in New Jersey. Her exchange of ideas has always been welcome, and I am proud to have served with her. I and the members of the borough council, our community, and the Westwood family wish her all the best as she begins a new chapter in her life.

## Mayors Report

I find it remarkable how this past year has gone by in what was seemingly a blink of an eye. It has been quite a year with tremendous progress realized throughout the borough. It has most certainly been an honor to represent the residents of Westwood and an absolute privilege to serve with the members of this governing body, the municipal staff, all of the volunteer organizations, and each of the fine individuals that demonstrate daily the outstanding qualities of our town.

Each year this governing body strives to bring the best to Westwood by meeting the challenges we are faced with and completing our goals and objectives. As a result, each year there are accomplishments both large and small, yet no gains worthy of mention would have been achieved without the talented and dedicated staff of the Borough.

They are the front line and face of Westwood, and they provide the municipal services that keep our town running smoothly. We have seen several retirements in 2014, including several in our police department. While they certainly leave big shoes to fill, I am both proud of and confident that our administrative vacancies will transition smoothly, and our new police hires will uphold the high standards of integrity and professionalism that our department is acclaimed.

Anyone that spends any time in Borough Hall during the day will quickly recognize that our Clerk's office is the Borough's general information center and the first resource our residents turn to in every possible situation. They are indeed the heartbeat of Borough Hall. This is where you go when looking for everything from a block party permit to a residential parking decal or volunteer application form. Of course those are but a few of the important functions carried out in our Public Information Office. The Clerk's office is also responsible for the efficient operation of each of our election districts. Compounding the workload of election season, this year we saw the relocation of Districts 3 & 8 from Brookside Elementary School to the Westwood Municipal Building. This was a large undertaking, yet our Clerk and Deputy Clerk managed this transition smoothly and effectively.

In addition to responding to resident requests for information, issuing permits and licenses, and maintaining all borough records and the borough codes, and coordination of all of our volunteer board applications and terms of office, the Clerks office manages and prepares the agenda information books and records all of the minutes from each of the mayor and council meetings. They prepare all resolutions and ordinances, and without question keep the work flow through Borough Hall moving.

Our Administrator runs the day-to-day operations of the Borough making sure that Westwood is running properly. Westwood is lucky to have had one of the best in the State for close to eight years. Robert Hoffmann has been so recognized by his peers and public officials throughout New Jersey. Aside from all of the large operational responsibilities of the administrator, to me the greatest successes are the things that all too often went unnoticed. The small details, and the interaction with our residents,

servicing to make sure their questions are answered, and needs met every time they come in the door or call on the phone with a problem or a question. Anyone that has had the opportunity to work with Bob here at the Borough will tell you that he is indeed a fine gentleman. He is respectful and considerate, thorough and efficient, despite being pulled in many different directions all at once, or being given tasks at the last minute and being expected to find solutions almost immediately. Westwood is a busy town, much more so than any other in the area. Having had Bob work here was a tremendous advantage to Westwood in our application for numerous grants on some major infrastructure upgrades, and smaller projects alike. Prior to his arrival Westwood paid a professional consultant to apply for and seek grant opportunities. Bob Hoffmann did that work for us, saving Westwood hundreds of thousands of dollars in fees for services that were completed in-house.

While I believe that no individual is irreplaceable in any organization, the vacancy left in the administrators office will leave a big void in the everyday operation of the Borough.

We will move on and forward, and in short order begin a search for a permanent replacement. Instead we must seek out the most experienced and qualified candidate based on professional credentials, not home town nepotism or political favors.

Each and every one of our municipal services is based on the sound principles of customer service based management. All of our employees whether from our Building Department or Board of Health, to the Recreation or Social Services Department, recognize that our residents are our customers. We have an extremely professional staff and I am proud of the work they do every day to ensure that the needs of our residents are met.

Our Municipal Court, Tax Office, Fire Prevention Bureau, Volunteer Ambulance Corps., Volunteer Fire Department, Police Reserves, Parking Authority, Finance, Social Services, and Health Departments continue to improve services to our residents, expanding programs, increasing revenue streams and maintaining public health and safety.

Our police department is always deserving of a special mention for all of the great work they do in maintaining a safe and secure municipality. They have again successfully maintained their accreditation status and continue to operate under the specific requirements and prescribed standards considered the best practices in law enforcement.

As a result of the retirement of three senior officers representing a combined 84 years of service and dedication, Westwood hired two new officers in 2014 and have sworn in another tonite to keep our roster filled and the safety of our residents uncompromised. I should point out that 247 applicants tested for these positions, with the best of the best coming out on top after an arduous selection process. As our residents come to know our newest officers they will quickly see how lucky we are to have them. We further promoted a new sergeant to fill the vacated space of one of our retirees, and I am hopeful that we will finally be able uphold the commitment to fill the table of organization with in the police department by filling command positions that are currently vacant.

I am proud of the residents who became certified by the Bergen County Office of Emergency Management as members of the Community Emergency Response Team and the County Animal Response Team. They have already begun serving the community, and their input has greatly enhanced our Office of Emergency Management operation.

We are always looking for more members of this important group, so please consider volunteering your service to the community by becoming a member of CERT. Application forms are available in the Clerks office.

Never short on accomplishments is our amazing Department of Public Works. From routine maintenance of our parks, to the unexpected weather emergency, our DPW is the best in Bergen County. Fortunately 2014 was without any major natural disasters, however that did not mean our DPW got any real breaks. Our DPW staff works hard everyday, meeting the needs of the borough in good weather and in bad, in emergency situations or handling the routine. You can be sure that they give us their best, and yet ask for very little in return. Next time you see them, give them a thank you, because while you may not notice them as they quietly go about their jobs, I can't imagine what our town would be like without them.

We have already begun the 2015 budget process, with departmental budgets submitted for committee review. Our line-by-line review meetings are being scheduled with the finance committee and will commence later this month and early February.

Westwood maintains a AA Bond rating, a particularly significant accomplishment when viewed against the backdrop of the current economic climate. CFO Durene Ayer, Borough Administrator Robert Hoffmann, and our finance team are to be commended for all of the hard work they have put in to help make this possible and to keep our municipality on secure financial footing.

Just in case anyone has not noticed, one of the larger and most important infrastructure projects that Westwood has initiated in many years has been completed. Our Intersection Modernization and Rail Signalization project was completed under budget, so much so, that the County of Bergen was able to utilize the additional funds to complete a major drainage project along Fourth Ave. Eight catch basins and over 700 feet of storm sewer pipe were installed to alleviate flooding that has affected homeowners in that area during heavy rain events.

The reconfiguration and modernization of the intersections and rail crossings along Broadway had been long overdue. The impact is evident, serving to make traffic flow more efficiently through our downtown business district. Traffic has historically been a major issue around our downtown business district and the work we accomplished makes our downtown safer for pedestrians and motor vehicles.

There were some difficulties for sure when PSE&G advised us that their "Energy Strong" infrastructure upgrades were targeted for downtown Westwood. Make no mistake, there

were hard decisions to make during this project, and I have always made mine based on the good of the Borough as a whole. It was through a tremendous level of cooperation between the agencies involved that we were able to postpone the final stages of the intersection project and put the PSE&G Energy Strong project on the fast track so both could be finished in our business district before the winter and holiday season.

Most of the PSE&G work has now been completed, however there remain about 800 feet of gas mains on Kinderkamack Road to be completed, as well as 1200 feet of gas mains on Broadway heading into Hillsdale. The rest of the work will consist of individual home connections followed by the paving of the roadways impacted. We will do our best to coordinate the paving within the scope of the municipal road repaving plan in order to maximize the number of roadways we can complete in 2015. It is our further hope that with oil and gas prices at their lowest in recent memory, the price we pay for asphalt will be reduced, allowing for additional paving as part of our 2015 budget.

In 2014 we completed the purchase and demolition of two more home on the Nugent Place flood zone. Looking forward in 2015, we have begun the process of obtaining grant funding to acquire one more property on Nugent Place that, if received, will return an entire section of the flood plain back to passive parkland. Each of the homes had suffered from severe repetitive losses due to flooding, and the properties will remain green space in perpetuity.

Another project slated for 2015 will be the remediation of the old Police Pistol Range at Westvale Park. This is a project initiated in 2008 but delayed in order to maximize grant funds toward the project. We have recently completed the applications to receive 100% grant funding and are working with our municipal engineer to make this parcel of land an active recreation area and another great addition to the facilities at Westvale.

In closing, I would say that 2014 was a pretty good year in town. Major milestones were reached, projects large and small were undertaken, and Westwood continued to move forward. 2015 is here, and with it a new set of challenges. We have many projects on the horizon, and I look forward to continuing to lead Westwood on the path to positive progress.

I would again like to thank all of the municipal employees, volunteers, and elected officials that work hard every day to make Westwood special, and why our community is our dear home. I thank you again for giving me the opportunity to serve as your Mayor. It truly is my privilege and my honor to do so.

As I close out this evening I wanted to take a moment to remember a very special member of our Westwood family. January 14<sup>th</sup> will be the fifth anniversary of the heroic actions that took the life of Marine Sgt. Christopher Hrbek during combat operations in the Helmand Province of Afghanistan.

In honor of Chris, I have been advised that the Westwood High School Varsity Wrestling Team will be dedicating their season in honor of Chris. He was a wrestler in high school

and I know that the lessons he learned on the mat served him well in a life that was certainly too short. He inspired those around him, and his presence is felt among the young men who promise to uphold his dedication, commitment, and perseverance. There is a special ceremony planned for Wednesday January 21<sup>st</sup>, 7:00 PM prior to the Westwood Wrestling match at the High School. Please come out to support Chris' memory and see first hand the impact he has had on our local youth.

The Hrbek family has asked me to invite you to a special memorial service that will take place Saturday January 17<sup>th</sup>, 11:00 AM at Zion Lutheran Church. I ask that you continue to keep Chris and his family in your thoughts and prayers, and continue to do so for all of our brave servicemen and women who have given their lives in honor the freedom, democracy, and American values we so cherish.

Thank you and God Bless You.