

A Special Meeting of the City Council was held Friday, January 8, 2021 at 7:00 PM in the Council Chamber in City Hall, 111 Outwater Lane, Garfield, NJ 07026.

Mayor Richard Rigoglioso presided. City Clerk Andrew J. Pavlica announced that the meeting was being in accordance with provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act and under guidelines set forth by the New Jersey Division of Local Government Services in an email dated March 12, 2020, and in accordance with Executive Order 104 issued by Governor Phil Murphy, and in accordance with Local Finance Notice No. 2020-21 issued September 24, 2020, for Remote Public Meetings held during a Declared Emergency. City Clerk Pavlica announced that adequate notice was provided by mail, fax and email to the Official City newspapers and to other interested parties and by posting the meeting notice on the bulletin boards, and front and back doors of City Hall, and on the City Website. City Clerk Pavlica also announced that a special public notice was published in the January 2, 2021 edition of the Bergen Record and the Herald News newspapers advising of this meeting being held remotely, and the public was also directed to the City Website for guidance in order to listen and watch and participate.

Councilmembers Present: Joseph Delaney, Pawel Maslag, Romi Herrera, Erin N. Delaney and Richard Rigoglioso
Also Present: City Clerk Andrew J. Pavlica

City Clerk Pavlica introduced Ex-Chief James E. Kovacs of Fire Company No. 2 who acted as Master of Ceremonies.

Master of Ceremonies Kovacs advised that City Manager Thomas J Duch could not be in attendance tonight due to a death in his family.

Master of Ceremonies Kovacs recognized Fourth Assistant Fire Chief Alan Tani who called the Department to Order and led the meeting in the Flag Salute.

Master of Ceremonies Kovacs announced that Father George Konyev of Three Saints Russian Orthodox Church was not available to give the Invocation because he was running late. Master of Ceremonies Kovacs offered a Special Invocation and offered a moment of silence for the firefighters who passed away in 2020 and who answered their final alarm.

Master of Ceremonies Kovacs publicly recognized the various dignities in the audience.

Master of Ceremonies Kovacs called upon Outgoing Fire Chief Michael Colon to conclude Unfinished Business for the Firematic Year 2020:

Garfield Fire Department
Fire Calls 2020
Total Calls: 768

Building Fires	17
Careless Cooking Calls	73
Vehicle Fires	4
Brush or Mulch Fires	7
Outside Rubbish Fires	7
Dumpster Fires	3
Utility Pole/Transformer Fires	2
Outside Equipment Fires	1
EMS Medical Assists	11
Water or Swift Water Emergencies	12
Motor Vehicle Accidents	15
Vehicle Extrications	2
Natural Gas Leaks or Odor Calls	65
Carbon Monoxide Incidents	19
Refrigeration Leaks	1
Electrical Problems	19

Special Meeting January 8, 2021, Continued

Water or Steam Leaks	29
Transformer or Power Line Emerg.	27
Service Calls	81
Company or Dept. Drills	32
Assist Police Calls	6
Mutual Aid Given	23
Good Intent Calls	60
False Alarms	246
Severe Weather Calls	<u>6</u>
	768

Resolution No. 20-15

WHEREAS, Michael Colon has served as Fire Chief of the Garfield Volunteer Fire Department for the year 2020, and

WHEREAS, the services rendered to the citizens and taxpayers of the City of Garfield have been such as to be above and beyond the ordinary call of duty, and

WHEREAS, under the jurisdiction of Michael Colon the Garfield Volunteer Fire Department maintained its high standard of service and devotion to duty with respect to protection of life and property of the citizens and taxpayers of the City of Garfield, all of this be in keeping with the highest traditions of the standards set for fire service, and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Garfield desires to express its appreciation to Fire Chief Michael Colon for his singular devotion and dedication to the fire service of the City of Garfield,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Garfield, Bergen County, New Jersey, that Fire Chief Michael Colon be and is hereby commended for the excellent service he has rendered to the citizens and taxpayers of the City of Garfield during his tenure as Chief of the Volunteer Fire Department,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be spread upon the minutes of the City of Garfield and that a certified copy of this approved resolution also be included in the personnel jacket of Fire Chief Michael Colon.

On call of roll, Ayes 5

(Sgd) All Five Councilmembers

Each Councilmember and the Mayor offered words of thanks and congratulations to Ex-Fire Chief Colon.

At this time, Mayor Rigoglioso presented a certified copy of Resolution No. 20-15 to Ex-Fire Chief Colon and pinned the Ex-Fire Chief Badge on him.

Ex-Fire Chief Colon said, "I would like to congratulate incoming Fire Chief Kyle Kovacs. I wish you a safe and successful term as Chief. I would like to thank City Manager Duch for all of your cooperation and assistance during my term as Chief. Thank you to Mayor Rigoglioso and the entire City Council for providing the Fire Department with the most up to date equipment and personal protective equipment. With your help we were able to replace 50 sets of turnout gear, purchase computer tablets for all apparatus, and we took delivery of a 2020 Pierce Velocity Engine for Fire Company No. 1. I also want to thank the Garfield Police Department, the DPW and Superintendent Sam Garofalo, Lt. Michael Marsh as well as Police Officer Rebecca Schmidt for all their help during this difficult time with the Covid-19 Pandemic and James Kovacs of Fire Prevention for all of your help during my term. A big shout out to all the members of the Garfield Fire Department for all their help. A special thank you to the members of Fire Co. 1 for the confidence and trust you showed in me this year and for re-electing me to another term as Chief. I will continue to work hard to advance and improve our Company and this Fire Department. And finally to my wife, Lori, and my son, Michael Jr., thank you for standing by me and supporting me during this difficult year. I love you both very much. I wish everyone a Happy, Healthy and Safe New Year."

Ex-Fire Chief Colon presented a bouquet of flowers to his wife, Lori.

Special Meeting January 8, 2021, Continued

New Jersey State Senator Nellie Pou was recognized and expressed her sincere appreciation to the Outgoing and Incoming Chiefs and Officers and the entire Fire Department and she congratulated everyone including the Mayor and Council and Administration, especially the newly elected Councilmembers. She concluded by wishing everyone a “Happy New Year”!

City Clerk Pavlica administered the Oath of Office to the Line Officers of Fire Company No. One, followed by Fire Companies No. Two, Three, Four and Five.

City Clerk Pavlica announced that in accordance with an election held by the Garfield Volunteer Fire Department, City Manager Thomas J. Duch appointed the following to their respective offices for a term of one (1) year:

Michael Colon	Fourth Assistant Chief
Alan Tani	Third Assistant Chief
Anthony Swistak	Second Assistant Chief
Edward J. Morano	First Assistant Chief
Kyle Kovacs	Fire Chief

City Clerk Pavlica administered the Oath of Office to the Assistant Fire Chiefs for the year 2021.

Mayor Rigoglioso administered the Oath of Office to Fire Chief Kyle Kovacs while his family held the Bible.

Mayor Rigoglioso presented the Fire Chief Badge to Chief Kyle Kovacs on behalf of the City of Garfield.

Fire Chief Kovacs presented a bouquet of flowers to his mom, Anna, his sister, Vicky, and his niece, Katarina.

Fire Chief Kovacs said, “I would like to begin by thanking the Mayor and City Council, Senator Pou, City Manager Duch, City Clerk Pavlica, Father George from Three Saints Russian Orthodox Church, all my brother and sister firefighters, as well as my guests for attending the Garfield Fire Department’s 2021 Installation of Officers under these difficult circumstances. I would especially like to acknowledge Ex-Chief Harry Yakimik who has over 60 years of service with Engine Company 2 and, despite the risk of the virus, honored me by attending our ceremony tonight. I would also like to acknowledge the many people we would have liked to have been with us tonight but were unable to attend. Being sworn in as the Garfield Fire Chief is the fruition of a boyhood dream. I can remember playing on the firetrucks as a kid. When I turned 18, my brother Jimmy called me and asked me if I wanted to go to fire school. Without much thought, I told him that sounded alright and started my training. Thirteen years later, I cannot imagine my life without the Fire Department and I am beyond grateful to serve as one of Garfield’s youngest chiefs. It has been a phenomenal ride and I am extremely proud of my service. I would never have been where I am today without the wonderful people I was blessed to have in my life. I would like to begin by recognizing my parents, Jim and Anna. Dad has already served as Chief and is always there for me with ideas and support. Mom has done an amazing job caring for my siblings and I and she deserves special recognition. She is the best person I know and has sacrificed more than most could possibly understand, having given three children and a husband to the fire department. I am so proud of my sister Vicky who will serve alongside me this year as a lieutenant. I cannot thank my brother Jimmy enough because he has shaped my life and career more than anyone will know. I truly operate as a professional firefighter because of his guidance. Jimmy always held me to a higher standard, and although he wasn’t always gentle, he never steered me wrong. I will forever be grateful. I am also blessed with my wonderful nephews and nieces, Nick, Katarina, Emma and Benny whom I love very much. I am lucky to have a group of friends and mentors from around the country that I can look to for guidance and support. I have personally spent a great deal of time and energy preparing for this role, but none of this would be possible without the help of the special people in Engine 2. They are an incredible group, and I am honored to share this experience with them. I have a great respect for the distinct privilege and awesome responsibility that being

Special Meeting January 8, 2021, Continued

Fire Chief entails. I will look to my Assistant Chiefs and our Mutual Aid partners to help me ensure that we have a safe and successful year. Already, we have secured a \$50,000 grant to install computers in the fire trucks and help modernize our operations. This year we will continue to improve the efficiency of the Garfield Fire Department and further develop the great people who serve. I thank you for this opportunity and I promise to do my best to leave this department better than I found it. Thank you all for joining me here tonight.”

Father George Konyev of Three Saints Russian Orthodox Church, concluded the ceremony with a Special Benediction.

Katarina Kovacs recited the Fireman’s Prayer.

Each Councilmember and the Mayor offered words of congratulations.

At 8:05 PM, there being no further business, Councilmember Maslag moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Herrera duly seconded the motion.

On call of roll, Ayes 5

Andrew J. Pavlica, CITY CLERK