

PLANNING BOARD, CITY OF GARFIELD
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
Conducted on May 22, 2025

The Regular Meeting was called to order by Chairman Kovacs at 7:00 p.m. who thereupon read the statement required by the Open Public Meeting Act. Secretary called the roll.

ROLL CALL:

Mayor Everett Garnto
Deputy Mayor Kevin Kane
Chairman James Kovacs
Vice Chairman John Tamweber
Michael Garcia
Costantino Conte
Fasil Khan
Suny Mellawa, 1st Alternate
Gerald Walis, 2nd Alternate

Absent:

James Clark

Others present were:

Alyssa Cimino, Esq., Attorney of the Planning Board
Eileen Boland, Planning Board Engineer
Lyndsay Knight, Planning Board Planner
Beth Calderone, Certified Court Reporter

(Flag Salute)

SUNSHINE LAW: Read by Chairman James Kovacs
PUBLIC LAW 1975 CHAPTER 231 "OPEN PUBLIC MEETING ACT" PUBLIC
HEARING: November 21, 2024 Council Chambers, City Hall Commencing at 7:00 p.m.

The Chairman asked for a motion to approve the Regular meeting minutes from the meeting held on April 24, 2025.

Motion to approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on April 24, 2025.

Moved: Vice Chairman John Tamweber
Second: Deputy Mayor Kevin Kane

Mayor Everett Garnto, Jr. – Aye
Deputy Mayor Kevin Kane - Aye
Chairman James Kovacs – Aye
Vice Chairman John Tamweber – Aye
Michael Garcia - Aye
Costantino Conte – Aye
Fasil Khan – Aye
Motion Approved.

New Business

1. Hearing on whether to adopt the City of Garfield Housing Element and Fair Share Plan prepared by Joseph Burgis, P.P., AICP of Burgis Associates, Inc. dated May 12, 2025.

Allison Fahey, Project Planner – sworn. The 2025 Housing Plan was prepared in accordance with the Amended Fair Housing Act signed by the governor in March, 2024 which changed the Fair Housing regulations. The City of Garfield was given a rehabilitation obligation of 322 units and a prospective need obligation of zero units. This Plan is written so that the City will fulfill its obligation between now and June, 2035. The Plan proves that the City has already rehabilitated 171 units as part of the Garfield Housing Authority Regrouping Project from a couple of years ago. The Plan also takes into account 8 credits from the third round housing plan. Therefore, the City has 143 units left to fulfill.

The Chairman asked how the increase in overcrowding was determined. The number seems to be lower than it should be.

Ms. Fahey testified that the data used in the housing plan comes from the American Community Survey which is small part of the census. The American Community Survey uses period estimates. For this plan they used five year estimates, which is an average of five separate period estimates, including 2023, 2022, 2021, 2020 & 2019 so there is a margin of error in some of the data and some fluctuations.

The Chairman stated that in his experience, the number is closer to 7-10% range. This overcrowding is documented through the dwelling inspection program and the lead inspection program.

Mr. Walis asked if the percentage is lower does that mean less that has to be rehab'd.

Ms. Fahey testified that a unit that is considered overcrowded is considered unsatisfactory. A low number does not necessarily mean less rehabbing and a higher number does not mean more rehabbing because there are several other factors going into the calculations.

Ms. Cimino asked since this is a new law are there any recommendations you can make, in order to have as much accuracy as possible for the next round,

Ms. Fahey testified that for the third round there was a mid-point review. Municipalities would take stock of where they stand in relation to their obligation and how they were doing. My recommendation would be that it be done more often than one time between now and 2035 so things could be monitored more closely.

Ms. Fahey listed the items being amended in the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan for the record.

The Chairman asked for a motion to adopt the City of Garfield Housing Element and Fair Share Plan dated May 12, 2025 and amended on May 22, 2025.

Moved: Fasil Khan
Second: Michael Garcia

Mayor Everett Garnto, Jr. – Aye
Deputy Mayor Kevin Kane - Aye
Chairman James Kovacs – Aye
Vice Chairman John Tamweber – Aye
Michael Garcia - Aye
Costantino Conte – Aye
Fasil Khan – Aye
Motion Approved.

The Chairman asked if there were any bills or correspondence.

Ms. Cimino stated that there were no bills or correspondence.

The Chairman opened the meeting to the public.

The Chairman asked if anyone from the public wanted to come forward.

The Chairman stated that no one from the public came forward.

Motion to close the public session.

Moved: Mayor Everett Garnto, Jr.
Second: Michael Garcia

Mayor Everett Garnto, Jr. – Aye
Deputy Mayor Kevin Kane - Aye
Chairman James Kovacs – Aye
Vice Chairman John Tamweber - Aye
Michael Garcia - Aye
Costantino Conte – Aye
Fasil Khan – Aye
Suny Mellawa, 1st Alternate - Aye
Gerald Walis, 2nd Alternate - Aye
Motion Approved.

The Chairman asked for a motion to close the meeting.

Motion to close meeting.

Moved: Deputy Mayor Kevin Kane
Second: Mayor Everett Garnto, Jr.

Mayor Everett Garnto, Jr. – Aye
Deputy Mayor Kevin Kane - Aye
Chairman James Kovacs - Aye
Vice Chairman John Tamweber – Aye
Michael Garcia - Aye
Costantino Conte – Aye
Fasil Khan – Aye
Suny Mellawa, 1st Alternate - Aye
Gerald Walis, 2nd Alternate - Aye
Motion Approved.

Respectfully submitted,



Alyssa Cimino
Planning Board Attorney

Approved at the meeting on June 26, 2025.



ALYSSA CIMINO
Planning Board Attorney