



Borough of Red Bank

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April 7, 2021

Mayor & Council,

I have recently accepted a job offer and therefore, I am resigning as Administrator for the Borough of Red Bank effective May 6, 2021.

I am grateful for you entrusting me with the care of the Borough, from the often unsung employees who are the backbone of the municipality to the residents, businesses, and visitors. I hope that in the nearly three years of service to the Borough, though some decisions may not have been politically convenient or popular, I have made you proud through deliberate, decisive and thoughtful management.

These three years have been marked by extreme challenges, starting with a daunting Management Enhancement Review, to failing systems within our municipal facilities, and ending with a once-in-a-generation pandemic. Nevertheless, each challenge was faced head-on with success. More than 60% of the Review Recommendations have been addressed, including the large blemishes on the Borough's reputation (we developed accountability systems to ensure hundreds of backlogged permits were closed and a stalled water meter conversion contract was completed). We implemented technological upgrades (VOIP telephones, hosted email and cloud-based solutions) to become more agile and resilient in the face of building & environmental disruptions while saving money and maintaining services to the public. We adapted through the pandemic to create a business model for the rest of the state while maintaining a stable tax rate despite a daunting financial outlook.

In three years, a marathon of long-stalled projects were completed and a refreshed strategy was developed to improve critical infrastructure: 16 roads for a total of 21,000 feet of pavement were rehabilitated and rebuilt with associated water & sewer upgrades, the protracted Bellhaven Nature Preserve project was finally completed and under budget, hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants funded sorely needed improvements to neglected public properties like Johnny Jazz Park, East Side Park, Mohawk Pond, Count Basie Fields and Riverside Gardens, conceptual planning for the future of Marine Park was finally concluded, and our coin-operated, turn dial parking meters and kiosks were converted to a state-of-the-art smart parking system providing convenience to patrons and streamlining Borough operations.

All of this was accomplished by doing more with less. No stone was left unturned to find hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of savings: equipment leases were renegotiated, cell phone usage was scrutinized, departments and operations were restructured, and new shared services agreements were struck. Revenue was increased. Once denied grant applications were amended and re-submitted and new opportunities were found - a total of \$6 million worth of grant applications have been submitted and thus far, \$2,378,000 has been received.

This is just a brief recapitulation of some of the tremendous progress that I have been able to advance with the indefatigable department heads thanks to your support and confidence in me. I'm grateful and appreciative for the Mayor's patience and diplomacy— he is a model statesman. I greatly admire Councilman

Erik Yngstrom's calm and steady devotion to public advocacy, especially for often overlooked causes and the tireless volunteers who make Red Bank run. Councilwoman Kathy Horgan has brought wisdom and perspective uncommon in local government and she kept me inspired with her leadership by example and words of encouragement. The energy and optimism of Councilmembers Kate Triggiano and Hazim Yassin should give everyone hope for a bright future for Red Bank - they have so much passion and good intention with every initiative and project they propose. Despite our many disagreements and healthy debates, the five of you demonstrated time and time again your commitment to professional governance, choosing "right" over "easy", and setting aside the political games that hold back progress at the expense of taxpayers.

I am prepared to assist with an orderly transition until my last day.

Respectfully,


Ziad Andrew Shehady