



CITY OF ABSECON
Municipal Complex
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Absecon, New Jersey 08201

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CITY COUNCIL

SEPTEMBER 16, 2021

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Council Pro Tem, Howell at 5:30 p.m.

FLAG SALUTE

STATEMENT OF THE SUNSHINE LAW
NOTIFICATION THAT THIS MEETING IS ELECTRONICALLY RECORDED

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Burroughs, Cain, Cavileer, Howell, Larotonda, Light,
ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Kim Horton; City Attorney, Fred Scerni; Jessica Thompson,
Administrator/CFO; Carie Crone, City Clerk

NOMINATION TO FILL THE VACANCY OF COUNCILMAN KEITH BENNETT

Nomination was made for Donna Poley by Council Pro Tem Betty Howell – seconded by
Councilwoman Cain

No other nominations were made.

ROLL CALL: Burroughs, yes; Cain, yes; Cavileer, yes; Howell, yes; Larotonda, yes; Light, yes

123 Filling the vacant Councilperson, Ward 1 position.

Motion to move Res. #123-2021 – Councilman Larotonda – second – Councilwoman Cain

ROLL CALL: Burroughs, yes; Cain, yes; Cavileer, yes; Howell, yes; Larotonda, yes; Light, yes

Administration of Oath of Office

Donna was sworn in by Mayor Horton.

ELECTION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Nomination was made for Councilwoman Howell by Councilman Burroughs – seconded by Councilman Larotonda

No other nominations were made.

ROLL CALL: Burroughs, yes; Cain, yes; Cavileer, yes; Larotonda, yes; Light, yes; Poley, yes; Howell, yes;

Administration of Oath of Office

Betty was sworn in by Mayor Horton

ELECTION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT PRO TEM

Nomination was made for Councilwoman Cain by Councilman Burroughs – seconded by Councilman Light

No other nominations were made.

ROLL CALL: Burroughs, yes; Cain, yes; Cavileer, yes; Larotonda, yes; Light, yes; Poley, yes; Howell, yes

Sandy was sworn in by Mayor Horton

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

2021 RESOLUTIONS

124 Appointing a Full-Time Patrol Officer – namely Max Lorenzo.

Motion to move Res. #124-2021 – Councilman Light – second – Councilwoman Cain

ROLL CALL: Burroughs, yes; Cain, yes; Cavileer, yes; Larotonda, yes; Light, yes; Poley, yes; Howell, yes

Police Chief Laughlin - gave a brief background on Max and welcomed him as a fulltime officer. He was sworn in by Mayor Horton.

PRESENTATION – Atlantic County Court Consolidation

Jim Ferguson, county counsel and Mark Sandson, retired Superior Court Judge both appeared on behalf of the County. In 2020, the County Executive approached him with the idea of forming a county-wide regional municipal court. There was a committee put together with representatives from the court system, who sent out invites and they received 17 responses back from towns who would explore the idea. There are commitments from 8 municipalities, which is the minimum to get this started. He then explained how it would work and the work being done on the old criminal court house in Mays Landing that will house the court system. There are significant savings to the city to do this. Spread sheets have been created to show that towns would save between 30-35% over what they are spending now. The agreement is set up for the participating municipalities to have input as well and there will be committees made for certain departments. They would like to have it up and running by January 2022. They reviewed figures for a three-year average and based on that Absecon's annual cost for its court was \$187,500 per year. The revenue average was \$165,700, so based on those numbers we would have a deficit of \$21,000 per year. Under this model, our contribution would be a little over \$95,000 and the savings would be \$94,500.

Using the revenue average, you'd have a surplus of \$71,200. Police officers' appearances would be done virtually, so there is no travel. It would be a two-year commitment and if not happy, you can give 6 months' notice and then you can withdraw. They asked for the city to give this some review.

Mark Sandson – he was asked to work with Jim on this process and explained how the process would work. There wouldn't be long lines of people waiting for their case to be heard and sometimes getting rescheduled; cases will be assigned times. He knows Absecon's court is a good one, but having 16 separate courts in the county, doesn't make sense. This process shares the taxpayer's money and there will be more benefits to them. There is no downside to this and it saves the city money.

Council President, Howell – wanted more information on how it will help the mentally ill
Mayor Horton – doesn't see how this could be a good thing for Absecon and with the manpower you will need, she feels our county taxes will go through the roof.

Mark Sandson – you're going to save about \$100,000 for the city.

Jessica Thompson, Admin./CFO - stated the numbers for us

Jim – he doesn't know how the numbers came about and maybe the county and the city looked at different things when coming up with the costs, but he still thinks the city would see a savings by joining.

Discussion went back and forth regarding the expenses and savings.

Steve likes the County's efforts with helping people with different problems and issues.

2021 ORDINANCES FOR ADOPTION

- 15** Dedicating to the County, for public use, an easement of right of way, across and through land in the City of Absecon, identified on the Municipal Tax Map as Block 229, Lots 1 and 2.

Motion for second reading – Councilman Light – second – Councilman Burroughs

ROLL CALL: Burroughs, yes; Cain, yes; Cavileer, yes; Larotonda, yes; Light, yes; Poley, abstain; Howell, yes

Motion to open to the public – Councilman Light – second – Councilman Larotonda

All were in favor. No public comment

Motion to close public – Councilman Light – second – Councilman Larotonda

All were in favor.

Motion for final reading and adoption – Councilman Light – second - Councilwoman Cain

ROLL CALL: Burroughs, yes; Cain, yes; Cavileer, yes; Larotonda, yes; Light, yes; Poley, abstain; Howell, yes

- 16** Repealing and Replacing Chapter 300 – Solid Waste, Article III – Recycling, Sections 33-50.

Motion for second reading – Councilman Light – second – Councilwoman Cain

ROLL CALL: Burroughs, yes; Cain, yes; Cavileer, yes; Larotonda, yes; Light, yes; Poley, abstain; Howell, yes

Motion to open to the public – Councilman Cavileer – second – Councilwoman Cain

All were in favor. No public comment.

Motion to close public – Councilman Larotonda – second – Councilwoman Cain

All were in favor.

Motion for final reading and adoption – Councilman Light – second – Councilwoman Cain

ROLL CALL: Burroughs, yes; Cain, yes; Cavileer, yes; Larotonda, yes; Light, yes; Poley, abstain; Howell, yes

CONSENT AGENDA

125 Authorizing the release of a Maintenance Guarantee posted by 236 East Absecon Mobile Home Park, LLC, Block 173, Lot 1.

126 Approving the insertion of a special item of revenue into the 2021 Municipal Budget to allow for the receipt of \$500.00 from the Atlantic County Utilities Authority.

Caleb – this was a summer challenge to collect litter and clean up areas in town and the city won first place.

127 Authorizing refunds of overpayments on taxes for the 3rd quarter of 2021 on the properties listed.

128 Authorizing to advertise for a Part-time Plumbing Sub-Code Official.

PUBLIC PORTION (for agenda items)

Motion to open the meeting to the public – Councilwoman Cain – second – Councilman Cavileer

All were in favor. No public comment.

Motion to close to the public – Councilman Larotonda – second – Councilwoman Cain

All were in favor.

CONSENT AGENDA - Resolutions read by title that have been moved to consent.

Motion to approve – Councilman Light – second – Councilwoman Cain

ROLL CALL: Burroughs, yes; Cain, yes; Cavileer, yes; Larotonda, yes; Light, yes; Poley, yes; Howell, yes

APPROVAL OF BILL LIST - \$1,513,434.33

Motion to approve – Councilman Cavileer – second – Councilwoman Cain

ROLL CALL: Burroughs, yes; Cain, yes; Cavileer, yes; Larotonda, yes; Light, yes; Poley, abstain; Howell, yes

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Meeting Minutes – 9/2/2021

Motion to approve – Councilman Light – second – Councilman Cavileer

ROLL CALL: Burroughs, yes; Cain, yes; Cavileer, yes; Larotonda, yes; Light, yes; Poley, abstain; Howell, yes

REPORTS

Council President Howell – reminded the residents that council have three different committees that they are on, so at times you hear them report on something that doesn't have to do with their position.

Councilman Light – main topics were the concerts in the park and maintenance and scheduling of our fields. He appreciates everyone's efforts with Public Works and a lot of hard work goes into our fields as well as all our coaches.

Councilwoman Cain – announced some upcoming events. Movie night will be Oct. 1st or the 2nd if rain. Oct. 9th shredding will be available from 9 a.m. to noon as well as a city-wide cleanup. The Halloween Decoration Contest will be judged on Oct. 28th. Her next meeting will be 10/7 @ 4:30

Councilman Cavileer – discussed a note sale

Councilman Burroughs – nothing to follow-up and the next meeting is cancelled

Council President Howell – met with Public Safety and emergency management is getting together with her, our engineer and Mayor to make sure we are prepared during this hurricane season. The firehouse open house will be 10/23. The ambulance calls have gone up and everything is smoothly.

Chief Laughlin – asked the residents to keep in mind that they get calls daily regarding speeders and patrol is sent to those specific areas. Our small town isn't so quiet anymore, so by adding all the new residences, the traffic has gotten worse, so he asked everyone to be patient.

Jessica Thompson, Admin/CFO – the recycling carts will be delivered next week along with information about the program. There is a RFID tag on them that will be for each address on them, so they can be located if they are lost.

MONTHLY REPORTS – Carie Crone

Municipal Court - \$7,627.24

Municipal Clerk - \$3972.00

Construction - \$12,079.00

Tax Collection - \$2,731,245.21

Mayor Horton – congratulated Donna on her new position. She thanked the 9/11 committee for the wonderful event they organized. She recognized Betty Hudson, Richard Hudson, III, Howard Cohen and Richard Simons for answering the call on that fateful day and assisting those in need as EMT's.

PUBLIC PORTION

Motion to open the meeting to the public – Councilman Light – second – Councilman Cavileer
All were in favor.

Greg Seher – 625 Yarmouth Ave. – Congratulated the new council members and the others in their new spots. Asked Jessica if the County gave her the numbers they presented ahead of time? Jessica – I have the numbers, although interestingly, I had provided them the correct numbers and then they changed them. That's why I surprised that they were willing to take somebody else's words for what our expenses are, rather than what I provided. She believes that we run our court efficiently and that they assumed we had costs that others have, to explain the difference in their numbers.

Greg – with the newly legalization of marijuana, he is concerned with the state rules regarding minors and the parents not being allowed to be contacted. Has Absecon taken any steps to find a way to solve this problem?

Chief Laughlin – we will be following the laws of the state and if you have an issue, you should contact your legislatures. We can't violate anybody's rights and have a lot of extra litigation on our end.

Greg – asked Betty if they could look into some of the ordinances on parking and uses downtown that the Planning Board had suggested. Also encouraged council to put the meeting recordings on YouTube at all times. It's free and easy to do and someone could watch whenever.

Motion to close public portion – Councilman Light – second – Councilwoman Cain
All were in favor.

CLOSED SESSION - #129 – Litigation

Attorney Fred Scerni – stated closed session is needed to discuss pending litigation
We have returned to public session and in closed session council discussed certain pending litigation and they met with two attorneys who are representing the city in the current litigation. They received an update as to the current status and possible settlement strategies that are being discussed. Council shared their opinions with these attorneys who will now undertake their position and go further with this litigation.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn – Councilman Cavileer – second – Councilman Larotonda
All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,


Carie A. Crone, City Clerk

Approved: 10-7-21