



CITY OF ABSECON
Municipal Complex
500 Mill Road
Absecon, New Jersey 08201

Carie A. Crone, RMC
Municipal Clerk

Phone (609) 641-0663x101
Fax (609) 645-5098

CITY COUNCIL

REORGANIZATION & REGULAR MEETING

JANUARY 6TH, 2026 6:00 PM

MINUTES

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY THE MUNICIPAL CLERK

FLAG SALUTE – Mayor

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

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH OF OFFICE

Council-at-Large – Steve Light: Oath administered by Mayor Marrone. Standing with Tommy is Councilman Alex Clark.

Councilperson, Ward 1 – Mike Sykes: Oath administered by Mayor Marrone. Standing with Mike is his wife Shannon, and children Tyler and Addison.

Councilperson, Ward 2 – Rich DeRose: Oath administered by Mayor Marrone. Standing with Rich is his wife Bethanie.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Councilmembers Alex Clark, Richard DeRose, Linda Evans, Nicholas LaRotonda, Steve Light, and Christine Parker

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Thomas Marrone, City Engineer Nick DiCosmo, City Solicitor John Amenhauser Esq., City Clerk Carie Crone, Administrator Jessica Snyder, and Police Chief Laughlin

REORGANIZATION MEETING AGENDA

ELECTION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Councilman Clark – Nominated Councilman Richard DeRose, Seconded: Councilman LaRotonda

C. Crone: Hearing no other nomination, declared nominations closed.

Roll Call: Clark – Yes; Evans - Yes; LaRotonda – Yes; Light – Yes; Parker – Yes; DeRose - Yes

Oath administered by Mayor Thomas Marrone. Standing with Rich is his wife, Bethanie.

ELECTION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT PRO TEM

Councilman Light – Nominated Councilman Alex Clark for Council President Pro-Tem. Seconded: Councilwoman Parker

Council President DeRose: Hearing no other nomination, declared nominations closed.

Roll Call: Clark – Yes; Evans - Yes; LaRotonda – Yes; Light – Yes; Parker – Yes; DeRose - Yes

Oath administered by Mayor Marrone. Standing with Alex is his wife, Julie, daughter Mia.

2026 ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION

- 01** Amending the Code of the City of Absecon, Chapter 3 – Administrative Code, Section 11 – Council Committees.

Council President DeRose – We're streamlining and consolidating committees and expanding by creating a new committee as well.

Motioned for the first reading of Ordinance #01-26: Councilman LaRotonda; Seconded: Councilman Clark

Roll Call: Clark – Yes; Evans - Yes; LaRotonda – Yes; Light – Yes; Parker – Yes; Sykes – Yes; DeRose - Yes

This Ordinance will be posted, laid over, and published according to law. A Public Hearing, second, and final reading will be held on January 22nd, 2026.

COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS – FOR THE YEAR 2026

CONSENT AGENDA: All matters listed under item, Consent Agenda, are considered to be routine by the City Council and will be enacted by one motion in the form listed. There will be no separate discussion of these items. If discussion is desired, that item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and will be discussed separately.

- 01** Authorizing the annual schedule of Regular Meetings of Absecon City Council for the calendar year 2026.
- 02** Awarding a contract for professional services of a City Attorney.
John Amenhauser, Esq. of the DeWeese Law Firm, P.C.
- 03** Awarding a contract for professional services for a Labor Attorney.
Blaney, Donohue & Weinberg, PC

- 04 Awarding a non-competitive contract for professional services of a Public Defender.
Frank Lentz, Esq.
- 05 Awarding a non-competitive contract for professional services for a Municipal Prosecutor.
Barker, Gelfand, James & Sarvas, P.C.
- 06 Awarding a non-competitive contract for professional services of a City Planner.
Polistina & Associates, LLC
- 07 Awarding a non-competitive contract for professional services of a Bond Counsel.
Archer & Greiner, P.C.
- 08 Awarding a contract for professional services for a City Auditor.
Ford, Scott & Associates, LLC
- 09 Appointing a Risk Management Consultant for the Atlantic County Joint Insurance Fund.
Hardenbergh Insurance Group
- 10 Authorizing the Tax Assessor as the Agent in Adjustment appeals to reduce assessments.
- 11 Designating the Interest and Penalty rate on unpaid taxes.
- 12 Designating the official Public Notice locations.
- 13 Adopting the Cash Management Plan of the City of Absecon.
- 14 Establishing the 2025 Temporary Budget for Current Fund and Sewer Utility Fund.
- 15 Appointing a Fund Commissioner for the Atlantic County Municipal Joint Insurance Fund.
Kayla Lovallo
- 16 Appointing an Alternate Fund Commissioner for the Atlantic County Municipal Joint Insurance Finance.
Joy Lewkowski
- 17 Appointing a Fund Commissioner and Alternate Fund Commissioner to the Southern Coastal Regional Employee Benefits Fund.
Jessica Snyder – Fund Commissioner
Kristen Manning – Alternate Fund Commissioner
- 18 Appointing a Councilperson to the Planning Board.
Christine Parker, 1 year

- 19 Re-Appointing and appointing Members to the Zoning Board.
Michael Reilly-Regular Member,
Matthew Lawler-Regular Member, Greg Seher-Regular Member Arianne
Sellers-Alt. 1,
- 20 Appointing Members to the Financial Advisory Board
Matthew Assad, Greg Seher and Mike Reynolds
- 21 Re-Appointing Part-Time Special Law Enforcement Officers, Class II
Leigh Gadd
Matthew Hartman
- 22 Appointing a Mercantile License Clerk.
Carie A. Crone, RMC
- 23 Appointing a Deputy Registrar of Vital Statistics
Kayla Lovallo
- 24 Appointing a Lien Clerk for the City of Absecon.
Jessica A. Snyder, CTC
- 25 Designating a Tax Search/Assessment Search Officer.
Jessica A. Snyder, CTC
- 26 Authorizing the Tax Collector to participate in an Electronic Tax Sale.
- 27 Authorizing a fee for the creation, printing and mailing of Tax Sale Notices for
Electronic Tax Sale.
- 28 Certifying the Governing Body is in compliance with the United States Equal
Employment Opportunity Commission's "Enforcement Guidance on the Consideration
of Arrest and Conviction Records in Employment Decisions under Title VII of the Civil
Right Acts of 1964"
- 29 Authorizing the purchase of Rock Salt through Altantic County Cooperative, Contract
#41-ACC.
- 30 Authorizing utilizing Winner Ford Cherry Hill NJ State Contract #20-Fleet-01189 to
purchase two (2) 2026 Ford Utility Interceptors for the Police Department.
- 31 Authorizing for professional cleaning services for the Municipal Complex Building and
Public Works Building.
- 32 Ensuring Time Capsule to be opened in the year 2052.

Motioned to move Consent Agenda: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilman Sykes
Roll Call: Clark – Yes; Evans - Yes; LaRotonda – Yes; Light – Yes; Parker – Yes; Sykes – Abstain;
DeRose - Yes

APPROVAL OF BILL LIST – \$587,719.61

Motioned to accept: Councilman Clark; Seconded: Councilman LaRotonda

Roll Call: Clark – Yes; Evans - Yes; LaRotonda – Yes; Light – Yes; Parker – Yes; Sykes – Yes; DeRose – Yes

STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

Mayor Thomas Marrone: Here to address the State of the City, the state of the City of Absecon is not great, but it is a whole heck of a lot better then it was a year ago. We've done a lot of work in our committees, and coming from those committees are Ordinances, Resolutions and legislation. Starting with Public Safety, we put up extra stop signs throughout the City to stop the speeding, and though unpopular I stand behind Council and our Public Safety Committee for doing a great job. Six new Officers on the road this year. After reviewing our Ordinances, we decided to be more aggressive to curb things such as excessive begging and Motel/Hotel length of stays to curb other Counties from using them as homeless shelters. We have one more Officer currently in the academy. Public Safety and Public Works committees have worked hand-in-hand and have done an excellent job. In 2026 we're going to see raised crosswalks around town to curb speeding, a blinking light at Highland and New Jersey Avenue, and the number one mission we've been talking about for years, is to finally get Shore Road raised. We've also had a mission to try and make our Community Events as great as possible and our Community Affairs team did a bang-up job. This year was the best Creekfest we've ever had, this was the first year, due to generous donations and cost saving efforts, Creekfest not only broke even, we're actually a little ahead. The special touches added to the Senior Brunch this year where nothing less then exceptional. And the Christmas tree this year in the center of town had more lights more decorations and was a great event.

In January we became aware of how bad our budget crisis was and where we were financially. Kudos to the Finance Committee, Councilman Clark and everyone, because everyone had a hand in this. This crisis was handled with transparency and honestly, and we'll continue to do so. Economic Development is booming and we've seen some great businesses open this year. As we move forward we want to make one thing clear, Absecon is business friendly. Our Parks and Playgrounds have been kept in pristine shape and our Parks and Playgrounds Committee made major volunteer driven updates to our buildings, parks infrastructure and sports fields. They also got us a new path from the Wagon Wheel to Crestview Avenue. Council President along with the rest of Council have done a wonderful job, they've streamlined a lot of aspects of how this City Government runs, with fresh ideas and efficiency driven mindset. Tax collection rate best ever, 99.49% collected this year. Changes for this year, we welcome Jessica Snyder, who is now our Business Administrator and Tax Collector. Construction Office, we wished Mike a happy retirement and welcomed Pat Malia as our new Construction Official, also John Fairweather as the new Zoning Official and Trinity Inspections for our Sub-Code inspections. We hired a new Recycling Coordinator, Stan Kolbe. A note to the residents, he's just giving out warnings, he's out there only giving friendly advisory notices, just letting you know you can't have recycling in the trash. We pay for trash not recycling, so doing so means your costing the City money – and Stan has been doing a great job trying to enforce those regulations. And the last office that has gone through a big change is the Finance Office, I want to thank Kristen Manning, CFO and Nellie Yee, Deputy CFO, under the shared services contract with Galloway Township. Very thankful for the Galloway Administration and Government for working this out, these ladies have worked way more hours than anyone anticipated and are doing a bang-up job with our budget.

We got a lot done, we took action this year. For over a decade, the City has been a sinking ship, last year we collectively decided we're not going to bail it out or try to fix the sinking that was fueled by old policies and a complacent way of governing, just to stay afloat. We're building better and safer, fueled by responsible government, choices and most importantly actions. In 2026 we promise to still work tirelessly for you, we promise continued loyalty and commitment – because Absecon is our home. God Bless America and God Bless the great City of Absecon.

COMMENTS

Councilman Light – Thank everyone for their support and would like to especially thank all of our City employees for all their hard work they do every day, it doesn't go unnoticed. I appreciate it and our residents appreciate it.

Councilman Clark – Want to second what Councilman Light said, we appreciate everything that all our City employees have done for us, our Police Department, and everybody working here. Looking forward to a good and successful 2026.

Councilwoman Evans – Looking for a bigger and better 2026, we work well together and I'm glad this team is still intact.

Councilwoman Parker – Glad the Governing Body will be staying the same. Congratulations to all the were sworn in tonight. One of the big highlights this year was getting to name John T. Gorman Way – John Gorman's family is being honored as the 2025 Citizen of the Year.

Councilman Sykes – This was my first full year on City Council, it's been a privilege getting to work with everyone sitting up here and all the employees, Police and committees. I know see the amount of work that your Council puts in and it can't be done without the citizens either. We rely on the citizens to inform us of the wants and needs of the City, and will continue to do our best to provide that to you.

Councilman LaRotonda – Thanked everyone for coming out tonight. Happy New Year and congratulations to all those sworn in tonight. Looking forward to the new year and truly an honor serving with all you guys and serving the community. Thank you to all our City employees.

Council President DeRose – Ditto to absolutely everything. Thank you to our professionals, John and Nick and to Carie. Looking forward to 2026. Every personal conversation I've had with Council, all said the same thing, let's do more. 2025 was a busy and intense year, but it was energizing and exciting that every Council member said the same thing.

PUBLIC PORTION

Motioned to open to the public: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilman Sykes
All in Favor, None Opposed.

Sheriff Joe O'Donoghue – Want to thank Chief Laughlin for his professionalism. I addressed this two years ago, I expressed the necessity of supporting your local law enforcement agency and I want to commend you on not only did you accede what I thought, but certainly what the Chief was anticipating. We have a wonderful working relationship with you Chief, if he calls we come, we augment and support. Your Chief is doing a phenomenal job and taking that agency where it needs to be. Also want to compliment Council on all you've done and how hard you work, not every town has that benefit. Would like to compliment your Mayor, I go to a lot of meetings and your Mayor is at every meeting and he always has great intent for his City that he loves so much and it exudes from him. We all have a connection to this town and admire the small-town innocence that you still maintain in what we're facing in this society right now. Thank you all for your diligent work. God Bless you in your endeavors, stay strong and know the Sheriff's Department will always be there when you need us.

Motioned to close to the public: Councilman LaRotonda; Seconded: Councilwoman Parker
All in Favor, None Opposed.

ADJOURNMENT

Motioned to adjourn: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilwoman Parker
All in Favor, None Opposed.

Respectfully submitted,


Carie A. Crone, City Clerk

Approved: 1-22-26