



CITY OF ABSECON
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CITY COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING

DECEMBER 15TH, 2022 5:30 PM

MINUTES

FLAG SALUTE

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Councilmembers Butch Burroughs, Sandy Cain, Nick LaRotonda, Donna Poley, and Council President Betty Howell

ABSENT: Councilmembers Caleb Cavileer and Steve Light

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Kim Horton, City Administrator/CFO Jessica Thompson, City Engineer Ed Dennis, City Solicitor Bill Blaney Esq., City Clerk Carie Crone, Police Chief J.R. Laughlin

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

PRESENTATION – Council President Howell: Recognized Michael Reilly, Joey Marrone, and Fire Chief Roy Talley for their heroic action during a local housefire on February 23, 2020.

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

2022 ORDINANCE FOR ADOPTION

Motioned for the second reading of Ordinance #21-2022: Councilwoman Cain; Seconded: Councilman Burroughs

Roll Call: Burroughs – Yes; Cain – Yes; Cavileer – Absent; LaRotonda – No; Light – Absent; Poley – Yes; Howell – Yes

21 Amending Ordinance 01-2022, establishing salary ranges – adding a job title.

Motioned to open the meeting to the public for comment or discussion of Ordinance #16-2022: Councilman LaRotonda; Seconded: Councilwoman Poley. All in Favor, None Opposed.

Tina Lawler – 21 Hobart Avenue: Does not perceive the potential position of HR Officer/Financial Assistant to be a full-time finance job. Pointed out that the City already has a part-time finance position, and the employee in that position is being asked to leave and doesn't want to. Introduced Shannon, the employee under consideration. Shared with public that Shannon had no intention of

leaving her job. Expressed issue with the salary range of the new position. Suggested the City just hire a part-time HR Officer to save on a benefits package and pension. Stated Shannon has been working at the City for eight years and does not want to leave. She, herself, has worked for the City for 22 years.

Councilman LaRotonda: Expressed his agreement with T. Lawler.

T. Lawler: Challenged the proposed full-time aspect of the new position. Informed the public that Shannon's current position is currently responsible for payroll and accounts payable.

Mayor Horton: In regard to Shannon's duties for payroll, in the summer, two crossings approached her because they could not access their paystubs, but when she contacted Shannon about the matter, Shannon refused to help, saying that it was "not her job."

T. Lawler: Computer training is not her job. The City has direct deposit and it's all computerized. Times have changed and everything is online now. We are not responsible for computer training people. Shannon already showed them how to access the information a couple weeks before.

Mayor Horton: Although Shannon complains she doesn't have enough to do, she didn't do her job and help the crossing guards.

T. Lawler: Shannon did help them, and then they came back two weeks later because they forgot how to do it. All the employees have to do is log in to their account with their email and password that that created. The crossing guards are requesting computer training.

Shannon Sullivan: Doesn't want to lose her job just because she doesn't teach people how to use the internet.

Mayor Horton: Claimed that, as the employee responsible for payroll, Shannon needed to give them access to the payroll system.

S. Sullivan: Emphasized that it was not an access issue. Has already provided the crossing guards their login information and login instructions of how to access.

Councilman LaRotonda: Asked whether Shannon was told this specific task was her job responsibility, and whether she has received any disciplinary notice.

J. Thompson: Said that Shannon was given verbal instructions to handle the situation.

Mayor Horton: Shannon refused to provide more help to the crossing guards involved in the situation. Indicated that Shannon told her she didn't have enough work to do.

Councilman LaRotonda: Questioned why the City was hiring a full-time replacement if Shannon doesn't have enough work to do.

T. Lawler: Shannon is a part-time employee and still got all her work completed in the part-time hours. According to the title, the new job would be part-time human resources, part-time finance. Questioned why, after eight years of Shannon working for the City, the job is now a problem.

J. Thompson: In a previous discussion, Shannon stated she did not want to be responsible for payroll, only accounts payable. Shannon claimed that she was only hired for accounts payable, which is false, payroll was also included in her original responsibilities. Disclosed that Shannon does not complete tasks properly, which explains why she feels as though she doesn't have enough work to do.

S. Sullivan: Maintained that she does everything that is needed to do.

J. Thompson: Claimed that Shannon makes too many mistakes for someone who has been at their job for so long.

S. Sullivan: Vehemently denied that claim.

T. Lawler: Reiterated her opinion that the full-time position is unnecessary. Recommended saving the City the cost. Estimated that, including salary, health benefits, pension, the full package would cost about \$85,000. Suggested that the money should be used for a new police officer.

S. Sullivan: Accused the City of pushing the full-time position in order to oust her. Claimed these issues with the City just recently started, specifically when she informed J. Thompson that she began collecting her Social Security.

J. Thompson: Disagreed with that claim. Reminded Shannon that she is the one who asked for a recent reduction in work hours. Repeated that Shannon is not getting her work done and therefore she cannot be trusted with all necessary job tasks.

S. Sullivan: Alleged that J. Thompson indicated she wanted a new full-time employee so that she may take more time off work.

J. Thompson: Denied ever saying that specifically, but admitted that it is difficult for her to take off.

T. Lawler: Questioned whether employees approaching the age of Social Security eligibility should now be concerned about possibly being ousted.

J. Thompson: Denied any truth to the accusation.

S. Sullivan: Suggested that the City prefers to employ someone who is gearing up for their career, rather than winding down.

J. Thompson: Denied that notion, but stated the City rather wants employees who are willing to learn and grow. Emphasized that Shannon has been reducing her job hours and duties, and the City needs more.

S. Sullivan: Adamant that she completes all tasks she is given.

Council President Howell: Stated that one of the crossing guards said that the payroll webpage told her to get in touch with their payroll contact for further instructions, but that Shannon refused to help. Asked Shannon, when she deals with outside organizations, such as the Fire Dept., and whether she bypasses J. Thompson/Chief Laughlin and pays for their bills without proper authorization.

S. Sullivan: Denied it.

J. Thompson: Challenged the denial. Explained the City's purchase order system and emphasized the need for proper approval. Accused Shannon of bypassing her authorization in providing unapproved purchase orders to outside groups.

S. Sullivan: Indicated that's how they have been operating for years.

Councilman LaRotonda: Asked whether this applied only to the Fire Dept.

J. Thompson: Said it applied to all outside organizations.

S. Sullivan: Suggested that only the Fire Dept. is required to do purchase orders.

Council President Howell: Asked whether all outside organizations are required to have J. Thompson's approval.

J. Thompson: Confirmed that all purchases need her approval, but claimed some purchase orders have been going out unapproved. It's an increasingly difficult situation because Shannon is bypassing the system in place.

S. Sullivan: Emphasized, again, that they've been operating like this for years. Questioned, after all this time, why this is now an issue.

J. Thompson: It's a compilation of other issues.

Councilman LaRotonda: Asked if this issue had been brought to Shannon's attention beforehand.

J. Thompson: Affirmed it had. Referred to an instance that had taken place in the spring when Shannon had sent out unsigned contracts to Concert in the Park participants.

S. Sullivan: Claimed J. Thompson gave them to her and told her to send them out, so she did.

S. Sullivan: Believes the City is looking to hire a full-time employee for a position that does not require full-time hours.

Council President Howell: Asked for a description about the position in question.

Councilman LaRotonda: Noted that there was no apparent job description for this position.

J. Thompson: Explained that the work includes new employee onboarding, explaining the employee handbook, training, testing, compliance, benefit administration. Has been unhappy with the employee onboarding process/experience for years. Does not believe enough is being done for the wellbeing of the employees.

T. Lawler: Suggested that the City still start with a part-time employee for the position in question. When a full-time Deputy Clerk was hired, it was understood that this employee was to help J. Thompson, Mayor Horton, and other offices when needed.

J. Thompson: Indicated that the full-time Deputy Clerk has, in fact, taken on extra responsibilities that once belonged to others.

T. Lawler: The salary range for this new position is significantly higher than most current City employees.

J. Thompson: Her intention in the upcoming year is to provide proper raises to current City employees, so that the salaries will be compliant with inflation and fitting for their job duties. Many positions have taken on a lot more work than before, due to increasing demands.

Councilman LaRotonda: Believes this matter should be discussed in the new year.

S. Sullivan: Asserted that she is not resigning.

J. Thompson: Clarified that she discussed a lay-off.

Council President Howell: Asked whether Shannon was offered to take on the full-time position.

S. Sullivan: Confirmed that she had, but she originally took the position eight year ago because she wanted to work part-time.

Councilman LaRotonda: Expressed his opinion that even if there are performance issues with Shannon, the position should still remain part-time. Believes the money should be dedicated to hiring more police officers.

J. Thompson: Asked whether the City wants an employee who is actually capable of performing all the tasks that are required in this role, or if they prefer a temporary band-aid. This position will be responsible for ensuring the City's compliance with state and federal training.

Councilwoman Poley: Asked whether J. Thompson has discussed this job position with other municipalities.

J. Thompson: Confirmed that she had and that all the municipalities she spoke to have emphasized the need for a human resource officer.

Councilman LaRotonda: The state requires certain training, such as harassment, which are available online. Questioned J. Thompson's role in ensuring compliance as the City Administrator.

J. Thompson: Due to the increasing demands, all municipalities are lacking a support staff to ensure total compliance.

Council President Howell: Stated that this conversation shouldn't become a performance review.

S. Sullivan: Agreed, mentioning how her performance isn't the actual matter at hand.

Councilman LaRotonda: Asked whether Shannon has any history of disciplinary action.

J. Thompson: Confirmed there has been disciplinary action. Has tried to avoid taking more disciplinary action in recent months in order to avoid the possibility of a volatile work environment, until this new position was approved. However, things need to change moving forward. There is not enough office staff and the City needs another full-time employee in order to fulfill the responsibilities required.

Council President Howell: Asked why there was urgency to approve this new position.

J. Thompson: due to the fact that there is important work that is not getting completed, and it is putting an undue hardship on other City employees, including herself. In order to complete a new position, two readings of the ordinance are required and then there is an advertising period, and then an interview period. Afterwards, the intention is to focus on increasing current employee salaries.

Councilwoman Cain: Asked how many hours a week was Shannon hired to work and how many she works now.

S. Sullivan: Started working at 28 hours a week and is now working 21 hours a week.

Council President Howell: Asked about the reduction in hours.

S. Sullivan: Explained the reduction is because she is now collecting Social Security and can accomplish all her work in the 21 hours.

Councilwoman Cain: Pointed out that Shannon has the option to apply for the full-time position and put her Social Security on hold.

S. Sullivan: Is not interested in working full-time hours.

Councilman LaRotonda: Emphasized that Shannon has indicated she gets all her work done in the 21 hours she works each week.

J. Thompson: The City is not able to depend on Shannon to do all the tasks necessary for the position. Emphasized the need for a qualified individual to successfully accomplish all required tasks.

Thomas Marrone – 1104 Spring Lane: Criticized the salary range for the proposed position. As a small business owner, expressed his familiarity with the salary ranges. Asked about the desired qualifications in possible candidates, specifically regarding their educational concentration.

J. Thompson: Ideal candidates would have interpersonal skills and a bachelor's degree (ex: communications).

T. Marrone: As someone with a bachelor's degree in communications, questioned the pairing of an HR position with a financial position.

J. Thompson: The positions for the City encompass various kinds of work and employees in certain positions are required to have a wide variety of skills and knowledge.

Councilman LaRotonda: Asked for clarification regarding the breakdown of time that J. Thompson spends on each of her two positions (CFO & City Administrator).

J. Thompson: Expressed difficulty in answering the question due to the two position's interspersion, but settled on half and half.

Councilman LaRotonda: Considered keeping J. Thompson in her current position as full-time CFO and perhaps hiring a new part-time Administrator, who would be responsible handle human resource matters, among other matters.

T. Marrone: Asked whether the issue was that tasks are not being completed in the time allotted.

J. Thompson: Clarified that tasks are not being completed because the employee filling the current position is not qualified to properly accomplish them, which results in other employees needing to pick up the additional responsibility for them.

T. Marrone: Pointed out that ultimate responsibility lies with the department head. As a business owner, referred to his own efforts to ensure compliance through HR. Specified that he understands the need for HR, but disagrees with the need for a new full-time HR position. Emphasized the need for new police officers. Mentioned the possibility of considering this new position in the future, but

asserted that priority should be focused on hiring a new police officers to help the currently overworked and understaffed Police Department.

J. Thompson: Informed T. Marrone that those issues are also plaguing the administrative staff.

T. Marrone: Compared the jobs' differing natures of work.

J. Thompson: Acknowledged the difference, but maintained that the administrative staff is also overwork and understaffed.

T. Marrone: Declared that if the issue at hand is the result of a poorly performing employee, then the solution is to find someone who can properly fill the position in the current allotted time, without paying for additional benefits. Concluded by urging the Council to delay moving forward with the proposed position and instead focus their efforts on hiring more police officers.

Council President Howell: According to recent research, in comparison to other municipalities, the City's employees are significantly underpaid. The proposed salary range of \$50,000-\$60,000 is the standard range for the job in question. Expressed concern, however, about the current City employees who remain significantly underpaid, and who deserve a proper raise. Urged the Finance Committee, who won't meet again until January, to discuss solutions to this problem. Doesn't see the harm in waiting another month in order to ensure thoroughness. Concerned about how the City is being perceived to older populations. Expects employees to do anything their bosses tell them to do, without question. Reiterated her opinion that the Finance Committee should meet for further consideration about the proposed position. Also mentioned the need for future discussion regarding Shannon's job performance and possible disciplinary action.

Councilman LaRotonda: Appreciated Council President Howell encouraging a delay in the position's approval in order to focus on taking care of the City's current employees. Considering the significant salary discrepancies between the newly proposed position and the City's currently filled positions, doubted positivity in employee morale at City Hall.

Dale Conover – 34 E. Lee Ave: Praised Council President Howell for encouraging a delay in the position's approval. During his tenure as Absecon's Deputy Fire Chief, had nothing but positive experiences and interactions with Shannon Sullivan, Tina Lawler, and City Clerk Carie Crone. They all have been very helpful and, by working together, were able to get things accomplished for the Fire House. Described the purchase order process he went through with the City. Encouraged the City save money by keeping the position part-time, and rather, spend the money on new police officers.

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

Councilman LaRotonda: Motioned to table Ordinance #21-2022 until next year, so that Finance & Budget Committee may further discuss the option.
(No Second Motion)

Motioned for the final reading and adoption of Ordinance #21-2022: Councilwoman Cain; Seconded: Councilman Burroughs

Roll Call: Burroughs – Yes; Cain – Yes; Cavileer – Absent; LaRotonda – No; Light – Absent; Poley – Yes; Howell – No

Bill Blaney: Noted to Shannon that Ordinance #21-2022's approval does not terminate her employment, but rather, authorizes a new position that can be hired. Assured her that she still has a job with the City.

Ordinance #21-2022 has been heard and is finally approved.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 144** Authorizing the transfer of appropriations in the 2022 Local Municipal Budget Per N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-58.
- 145** Authorizing a refund of an overpayment of taxes and sewer for 2022 on the listed property.
- 146** Authorizing the Tax Collector to refund taxes for the 1st and 2nd Quarter of 2023 on the property located at 143 Ohio Avenue (Blk. 217, Lot 15).

PUBLIC PORTION – (Agenda items only)

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

(No Discussion)

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

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.

Council President Howell read Resolutions #144-146 by title.

Motioned to move the Consent Agenda: Councilman LaRotonda; Seconded: Councilwoman Cain
Roll Call: Burroughs – Yes; Cain – Yes; Cavileer – Absent; LaRotonda – Yes; Light – Absent; Poley – Yes; Howell – Yes

APPROVAL OF BILL LIST – \$ 1,599,276.60

Motioned to accept: Councilwoman Cain; Seconded: Councilman Burroughs
Roll Call: Burroughs – Yes; Cain – Yes; Cavileer – Absent; LaRotonda – Yes; Light – Absent; Poley – Yes; Howell – Yes

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Meeting Minutes – 12/1/2022

Motioned to accept: Councilman LaRotonda; Seconded: Councilwoman Poley
Roll Call: Burroughs – Yes; Cain – Abstain; Cavileer – Absent; LaRotonda – Yes; Light – Absent; Poley – Yes; Howell – Yes

REPORTS

Councilwoman Poley – Community Affairs Committee: Shared topics of discussion from the last meeting. On December 6th the City had their downtown tree lighting which was attended by Santa and Mrs. Claus. Thanked Councilman LaRotonda for escorting Santa on the Fire Truck, Stan from Hometown Variety his help, the Absecon School Choir for doing an amazing job performing, and Friendly Deli for providing free hot chocolate. Emergency Management Coordinator, Jim Eberwine,

will be hosting a Weather 101 Seminar on December 20th at 3:30PM in Council Chambers. Encouraged the public to keep up to date with community events posted on the Community Affairs Facebook page. The next Community Affairs meeting will be in February 2023.

Councilwoman Cain – Public Safety Committee: Met this past Monday, December 12th at City Hall. Praised Jim Eberwine's interesting knowledge and encouraged everyone to join him at his Weather Seminar. The Ambulance Squad informed them that calls have increased. Many calls are from the motels on Route 30. Discussed with the Police Chief how the motels house many homeless people traveling through the city. After a period of relative calm, unfortunately problems with the motels are re-emerging. Regarding the Fire Dept., Tower 8 is schedule to have work done in the beginning of the new year. Fire Chief Roy Talley shared that they had a very successful Santa in the Park event, with a record number of children in attendance. This upcoming Friday and Saturday, Santa will be around the city on the Fire Trucks. Friday night they will be on the around the city north of the White Horse Pike and on Saturday they will be south of the White Horse Pike, after dark at about 5:30PM. December 17th the Police and Fire Dept. will have their annual Toy Drive delivery. The Fire Station is ordering new doors to prevent any future mishaps. The Police Dept. is currently doing background checks to hire a new full-time police officer. They are also looking into possibly hiring Class I Officers.

Chief JR Laughlin – Police Dept. Warned the public that people don't want to be police officers anymore, so the hiring process is extremely difficult now. Recruiting is a widespread problem across the entire country. Received some applications for Class II Officers and currently in the background check part of that process. Currently in the process of going through the full-time officer applications. Expecting to make selections within the next few weeks. In order to make recruiting easier, and with a better selection, suggested Council make amendments to some City ordinances so that the Police Dept. may add a Class I position, recruit within the City/local colleges, and be in compliance with state efforts for diversification. Due to the current culture there is simply disinterest in the job. In light of the holiday season, encouraged everybody to look out for their neighbors. Requested everybody slow down driving on the streets. Wished everyone a safe and happy holiday/new year.

Councilwoman Cain: The next Public Safety meeting will be in February 2023.

Council President Howell: Asked if there were any updated reports from the Fire Dept about their training.

Councilwoman Cain: Fire Chief Talley indicated that he was checking with their records, but that they would be updated by the end of the year.

Councilman Burroughs – Public Works Committee: There has been no meeting since the last Council Meeting. Next meeting will be on December 20th.

Councilman LaRotonda – Economic Development Committee: Last met on December 7th. Appreciated J. Thompson's attendance. Discussed possible initiatives to help encourage new businesses in town, specifically tax incentives or grants. Will discuss possible options in the upcoming year. Wished everyone a happy holiday. Encouraged residents to shop local in Absecon.

J. Thompson – City Administrator/CFO: The tax collection rate is currently at 98.62%. Residents are encouraged to pay their unpaid taxes. Curbside leaf collection is continuing until the end of the month. Any remaining leaves will have to be picked up with the regular yard waste manner. There will be another opportunity for yard waste, typically held throughout April. Wished everyone a happy holiday.

Councilwoman Cain: According to the recycling calendar, there will still be recycling and trash in two weeks, however there will be no yard waste pickup.

J. Thompson: Confirmed that is correction. There is less yard waste this time of year and each collection is a cost to the City, so for years, the City only has one yard waste collection during each month of winter to save money. The recycling schedule remains every other week and regular trash once a week.

E. Dennis – City Engineer: The Planning Board approved the plans for the New York Avenue Subdivision Application. The approval puts the City in position to move ahead with that project in whatever manner they choose. This was a major step which put the City in position to act on this project. There was a lot of participation in the Planning Board meeting with a lot of input from the public that is being considered as part of the compliance work they need to do with Planning Board professionals. Suggestions included additional tree planning to offset the clearing. The City also received an update from the NJDOT that the City will be awarded a grant for \$619,000 for the sidewalk project on Crestview Ave. This is in addition to the \$235,000 that has been awarded from the NJDOT for Calderon Ave. The project will be completed in 2023. There has been a lot of interest in installing sidewalk on Calderon Ave. in order to increase safety, especially for kids walking to school. Wished everyone happy holidays.

Mayor Horton: Received a letter from Dennis Levinson in response to her expressed concern about speeding on California Avenue. The County will look into the matter, as well as signage for local special needs child. Prepared a letter to the governor to express her concern over the double-digit rate increase to NJ State Health Benefit Plans. The topic was discussed at the Mayors Association meetings. Other municipalities have also sent letters to express their disappointment and frustration with the increase.

Recognized and thanked Councilwoman Donna Poley for all her work and commitment to the community. When creating the Community Affairs Committee 11 years ago, she reached out to Mayor Pete Elco and his wife, Joann, about recommendations for committee recruits, and Donna's name was at the top of their list. They called Donna's energy and ideas "boundless" and said her "can-do" attitude should be bottled. She was an amazing addition to the committee team. As Chairman, Donna reinvigorated Senior Dinner, and through her successful campaigning and fundraising, enabled event attendance to be free of charge. Through her connections, the committee was enhanced with even more talented people. Her motivational, leadership, and delegation skills, are impressive. Community Affairs events were as successful as they were due to Donna's leadership. Since becoming a Councilwoman, she has continued to serve the community by spearheading fun and successful events such the Halloween House Decorating Contest, Scarecrow Walk, Movies in the Park, etc. Donna was always helping community connection. As a member of the Public Safety Committee, she was a defender for the concerns of Absecon residents. She championed the 3-Way-Stop project on Elberon and New York to ensure community safety, and advocated for more Dog Waste Stations around the city for our pets. As part of the Economic Development Committee, she reached out to other municipalities to seek ideas to benefit our local businesses. Thanked Councilwoman Poley again for all her service to the City, and is looking forward to seeing all the things she accomplishes in the future.

Councilwoman Poley: Loves being part of this community, as she has been here for 25 years. For those 25 years she has been involved in community service and volunteering, and within the last 11 years she has been involved specifically in Community Affairs, and then as Councilwoman. Thanked Mayor Horton, her fellow Councilmembers, City Solicitor Bill Blaney, City Engineer Ed Dennis, CFO/Administrator Jessica Thompson, City Clerk Carie Crone, Police Chief Laughlin, Deputy Clerk Mary Fetske, and everyone she's worked with in City Hall. Has loved her interactions with the citizens in Absecon, especially being in a position where she could support them and help them with their problems. Concluded by saying how much of a pleasure it was serving the community and thanked the residents. Wished everyone happy holidays.

Mayor Horton: Read a letter of recognition dedicated to Councilman Caleb Cavileer. Described Caleb as industrious, honest, approachable, creative, talented, reliable, persistent, and resourceful. Caleb is a remarkable human being and has been a remarkable councilman, working tirelessly the past four years for the people of Absecon. As Finance Committee Chair, Caleb took the initiative to properly review finances and learn the intricacies of budgeting, in order to provide high quality services to the community while keeping the finances in check. Being the Chair of Finance is a daunting task, but one that Caleb embraced. As a member of the Public Works Committee, he reached out to residents to keep up to date with their neighborhood concerns. As a member of Community Affairs, Caleb spearheaded many projects and saw to their completion, including, Make a Difference Days, Community Cleanups, Rocks with Love, Book Swaps, Tour de Lights, and Abseconopoly, Earth Day Celebrations, Scavenger Hunts, Bingo Games, Memorial Day Parades, Essay Contests with the schools, National Night Outs, Creekfests, House Decorating Contests, Tree Lightings, and maintaining the Community Affairs website (with Councilwoman Poley). These events motivated residents to go outside and interact in some way with their communities, even throughout the period of COVID. Thanked Caleb for his dedication to the community, and assured him that he will be missed.

Carie Crone – City Clerk: Monthly Report – November 2022:

- Municipal Court: \$6,164.40
- Tax Office: \$1,750,430.05
- Construction Office: \$16,808
- Municipal Clerk's Office: \$3,441.93

PUBLIC PORTION

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

Linda Wallace – 8 Ables Run Drive: Thanked Councilwoman Donna Poley and Councilman Caleb Cavileer for their many years of service to the Absecon residents, and especially their work in bringing so many wonderful events to local individuals and families through Community Affairs. Their dedication and incredible work ethic have made Absecon a much better place than it was when they began. Hoping the newly elected Councilmembers will continue the good work that was begun by Caleb and Donna.

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

Council President Howell: The past few years, especially with COVID, have taken a toll on everyone's lives. But this Council, even in the face of adversity, has been able to overcome the obstacles and provide back to the community, specifically to the City's senior citizens and police officers, homeless people passing through, and by leading legal cannabis efforts and fighting racism. Councilwoman Poley and Councilman Cavileer, along with the other members of Council, have been beacons of light for everyone in their efforts to tackle community issues while providing fun and enjoyment to the residents. Thanked Councilmembers Poley and Cavileer for all their hard work. Shared that Absecon has been named the #4 city in South Jersey as the cheapest place to live.

CLOSED SESSION - #147-2022 – Litigation

Bill Blaney: Declared that, in accordance with the Open Records Act N.J.S.A. 10:4-6, the City Council will be going into Closed Session. Explained that the reason to go into Closed Session is to discuss possible litigation. It is unlikely that there will be action taken after Closed Session, but there remains the possibility because the litigation matter involves claims of racial discrimination. There are no racial discriminations within this case, as the matter was denied under Common Law.

Motioned to enter Closed Session: Councilman LaRotonda; Seconded: Councilwoman Cain
All in Favor, None Opposed.

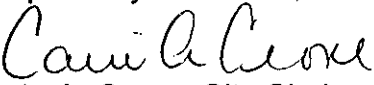
(Closed Session)

Motioned to adjourn Closed Session and re-enter the meeting: Councilman LaRotonda; Seconded: Councilwoman Cain
All in Favor, None Opposed.

ADJOURNMENT

Motioned to adjourn: Councilwoman Poley; Seconded: Councilman LaRotonda
All in Favor, None Opposed.

Respectfully submitted,


Carie A. Crone, City Clerk

Approved: 2/2/23