



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

APRIL 7, 2022

REGULAR MEETING - 5:30 PM

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Council President, Betty Howell.

FLAG SALUTE – Mayor

ROLL CALL: Burroughs, Cain, Cavileer, LaRotonda, Light, Poley, Howell

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Horton, Jessica Thompson, Bill Blaney, Carie Crone, Eddie Dennis

STATEMENT OF THE SUNSHINE LAW

NOTIFICATION THAT THIS MEETING IS ELECTRONICALLY RECORDED

OATH OF OFFICE – Mary Fetske was sworn in as Deputy Clerk/Administrative Assistant was sworn in by Mayor Horton

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

2022 RESOLUTIONS OUT OF CONSENT

58 Allowing the Budget to be read by title only.

Motion to move – Councilman Light – second – Councilwoman Poley

Roll Call: Burroughs, yes; Cain, yes; Cavileer, yes; LaRotonda, yes; Light, yes; Poley, yes; Howell, Yes

PUBLIC HEARING – 2022 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

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

All were in favor.

Greg Seher – 625 Yarmouth Ave. – asked about the grant funding that ½ was given last year and ½ this year. He's happy that there is no increase, but wondered why there could be no decrease? Caleb – explained the details of the process of getting to this budget. The residents should be happy to learn that the budget to be passed includes a zero-cent increase to the municipal tax rate while improving infrastructure and public safety and maintaining the high level of services our residents have come to enjoy. He listed the projects that are included in the budget since the budget surplus has been going up. Is there a reason for that rather than having a tax decrease in these difficult times?

Caleb – feels we have a strong budget that continues to provide us with a nice way of life for everyone. The money that we are receiving from the government won't continue years and years on, so we require a bit of that surplus to balance the budget each year. Having that there will prevent a catastrophe in the future.

Betty – all the expenses that go up for the resident also go up for the city, so we want to make sure we are covered.

Jessica – our plan is that we don't wish to spend more than 50% of the surplus

Betty – we have all been involved in this process

Leo McLaughlin - 205 Pennsylvania Ave. – he feels we are paying for things we don't need. Most of you know we have two waste streams in this state. One is unnecessary, which is recycling and 95% of it ends up in landfills. Why are paying for it? Why do we have garbage inspectors? He can't believe we spend so much money on it. There are 4 incinerators in this state where at the end of the month it changes from recycling material to supplemental waste. The four sites burn 40-60 tons an hour of waste for 3-4 solid days. I'm sure no one even knows this or looked into it. It's a shame that we are paying enormous amounts of money for a waste stream that means nothing except filling the pockets of certain people. Unfortunately, he knows but is too small a person to change it. He wanted to make everyone aware of it and hopes they hear him. He loves this town and all the workers in it, but when he sees the recycling trucks come around, he gets sick because seeing money that could be spend on something else.

Chris Seher – 707 Chelsea Road – he replied to the previous speaker and said 95% is an exaggeration. The cost of recycling to us is not impacting the budget that much. He asked if there is a state requirement for a minimum amount that has to be set aside in the current fund balance and if so, what is that percentage.

Jessica – the minimum requirement is with the school budget not with the municipality

Chris – explained the tax rates for the previous years and the fund balance numbers and how a tax decrease could be feasible.

Motion to close public – Councilwoman Poley – second – Councilwoman Cain
All were in favor.

59 Authorizing Self-Examination of the 2022 Budget.

Motion to move – Councilman Cavileer – second – Councilwoman Poley

Roll Call: Burroughs, yes; Cain, yes; Cavileer, yes; LaRotonda, yes; Light, yes; Poley, yes; Howell, Yes

60 Adopting the 2022 Municipal Budget.

Motion to move – Councilman Cavileer – second – Councilman Burroughs

Roll Call: Burroughs, yes; Cain, yes; Cavileer, yes; LaRotonda, yes; Light, yes; Poley, yes; Howell, Yes

2022 RESOLUTIONS OUT OF CONSENT

- 61** Consenting to the appointment of Captain to the City of Absecon Police Department, namely Jeffrey Mazer.

Betty - Jeff was sworn in today due to a family emergency, so we would like to congratulate him.

- 62** Consenting to the appointment of Lieutenant to the City of Absecon Police Department, namely Richard Huenke, Jr.

Motion to move – Councilman LaRotonda – second – Councilwoman Cain

Roll Call: Burroughs, yes; Cain, yes; Cavileer, yes; LaRotonda, yes; Light, yes; Poley, yes; Howell, Yes

OATH OF OFFICE – Chief Laughlin – thanked everyone for coming out tonight and knows that the Mazer and Huenke families are both proud. We will formally swear Jeff in a couple of weeks. This is special for him because he was involved in the hiring process for the two gentlemen and has trained them. They are very dedicated and detail oriented and they have served our city very well. He then gave a brief background of Rich and was then sworn in by the mayor.

2022 ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION

- 05** Bond Ordinance providing for various 2022 Capital Acquisitions and improvements by and in the City, appropriating \$1,755,000 therefor and authorizing the issuance of \$1,363,250 Bonds or Notes to finance part of the cost thereof.

Jessica – these are the items that are in the budget for road program for the NY Ave. infrastructure and for some recreation improvements.

Motion to introduce – Councilman Cavileer – second – Councilwoman Poley

Roll Call: Burroughs, yes; Cain, yes; Cavileer, yes; LaRotonda, yes; Light, yes; Poley, yes; Howell, Yes

2022 ORDINANCES FOR ADOPTION

- 04** Reappropriating \$44,796.44 proceeds of obligations not needed for their original purposes to provide for additional services in the 2022 Road Program.

Motion for second reading – Councilman Cavileer – second – Councilman Burroughs

Roll Call: Burroughs, yes; Cain, yes; Cavileer, yes; LaRotonda, yes; Light, yes; Poley, yes; Howell, Yes

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

All were in favor.

Motion to close public – Councilwoman Poley – second – Councilwoman Cain

All were in favor.

Motion for final reading and adoption – Councilman Cavileer – second – Councilman LaRotonda

Roll Call: Burroughs, yes; Cain, yes; Cavileer, yes; LaRotonda, yes; Light, yes; Poley, yes; Howell, Yes

2022 RESOLUTIONS

- 63** Authorizing the Tax Collector to cancel the 2nd Quarter taxes for the 2022 preliminary and to prorate and refund the 1st Quarter taxes of 2022 on the property located at 32 W. Delray Lane (Blk. 258, Lot 1.127)

Jessica – this is cancelling and refunding due to a veteran's exemption

- 64** Allowing for the Absecon Parent Teacher Organization's Annual City-Wide Yard Sale.

Carie – this is normally held by the Absecon Board of Education, but they are no longer doing it, so the PTO is taking it over

- 65** Accepting a Performance Guaranty and Engineer's escrow funds for improvements on property known as Block 236, Lot 2, 3 & 4.

Jessica – this is to reduce some of the cash portion that is being held in exchange for a letter of credit and will holding on to 10% of the cash portion

- 66** Accepting a Volunteer Firefighter into the Absecon City Fire Department.

- 67** Authorizing Municipal support for Greensky Dispensary LLC to receive a Class 5 Retail Cannabis License from the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission to operate within the City of Absecon.

Jessica – we had legislation last year authorizing the licenses in the city and we have been receiving applications and we had a good presentation from Greensky and the committee that was formed felt favorably and wanted to bring it for a vote. We do have a representative from Greensky if anyone has questions.

PUBLIC PORTION – (For Agenda items only)

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

All were in favor.

Greg Seher – 625 Yarmouth Ave. – regarding Greensky, is that an endorsement of the city's choice or does anyone who meets the city's requirements get a city license.

Bill Blaney, city attorney – there are only 3 licenses that can be given. Our plan is only to endorse three, so we don't have four or five with not having licenses. If people are rejected, we may reopen it up.

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

All were in favor.

CONSENT AGENDA

Consent Agenda: All matters listed under Consent Agenda, are considered to be routine by this 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 considered separately.

Betty read: Resolutions #63- #67 to again

Motion to move consent agenda – Councilman Light - second – Councilman LaRotonda

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

APPROVAL OF BILL LIST – \$1,534,861.09

Motion to accept: Councilman Cavileer - second – Councilman LaRotonda

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Meeting Minutes – 3/17/2022

Closed Session as to form and content only – 3/3/22

Motion to accept: – Councilman Light - second – Councilwoman Cain

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

REPORTS

Steve Light – Parks & Playgrounds – they met on the 22nd and they welcomed new member, Jim Grimley. They discussed the concerts this year that start on 6/27 and there will be ten of them. They spoke about the team players and sticking to the 85% requirement of resident priority; the scheduling of fertilizing the fields and the ballfield lights being serviced. They received input about some invasive plant life that is taking over some of the areas in our parks and open spaces. Public Works will be asked to help line the fields this year. His next meeting is April 19th at 7:00 p.m.

Donna Poley – Community Affairs – they met tonight and discussed the Clue game, which had 5 winners. Earth Day cleaning and shredding will be held on 4/23 from 9 a.m. to noon. Senior Dinner will be May 1st from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the UMC. September 18th will be the Creek Fest. People can read about everything on the Community Affairs face book page. Next meeting will be 5/5 at 4:30.

Sandy Cain – Public Safety – met on Monday and Jim Eberwine attended and Jessica Gragg from the ambulance squad both said all is good and quiet. Roy Talley, fire chief was there and the codes for fire pits will be updated and people should know that if you are using one, to make sure there is a cover on it and that is at least 25 ft. away from any structure and at least 2 ft. off the ground and not near any trash or construction and don't burn any debris. You need to be 5 ft. from any property line. A hose or fire extinguisher should be near by just in case. The police department is looking for a new crossing guard at the five corners intersection. Next meeting is 5/2 at 4:30.

Caleb Cavileer – Finance – he gave his report earlier

Butch Burroughs – Public Works – reminded everyone that leaf pickup starts Monday through 5/6

Nick Larotonda – Economic Development – reminded the business owners about the 4/20 meeting at 4:30 p.m. with the NJ Economic Development Authority here in the chambers to discuss grant funding for local businesses.

Jessica – the newsletter is online now and there are some copies in city hall. The tax sale will now be held on 9/21 due to some state legislations.

Ed Dennis – we are kind of in a limbo period until the budget got adopted. They will get rolling on the projects now. The 2022 road program was already in the design process and on schedule.

Mayor Horton – welcomed Mary Fetske who was sworn in and congratulated Capt. Mazer and Lt. Rich Huenke in their promotions.

PUBLIC PORTION

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

Raj Patel, president from Greensky – 32 Ashton Drive – Voorhees, NJ – thanked the city for the opportunity to present their vision for the business of cannabis and is greatly appreciated. His team is excited to bring their talent and experience to the town.

Greg Seher – 625 Yarmouth Ave. – congratulated those who were part of the old ballfield redevelopment and the new businesses that are going there. It's a great project for the town. Asked about the tax revenue on the project and Jessica explained. In February of 2020, there was a memo from the former planner with two draft resolutions that would help businesses with regards to their parking and use ordinances and he gave them to Nick. Questioned the motels and the fatality that happened recently and asked if there is something the city could do about code enforcement or changing the ordinance as to what defines a motel. The speeding on Pitney Road is a concern and children cross it a lot since it's near the school. Could something like a speed hump be installed in the vicinity of the park entrance and Hobart Ave. He clarified the recycling issue. Nick – he will reach out to the county
Steve – we have worked with the county with the sidewalks and lighting and we are trying to get improvements.

Dale Conover 43 E. Lee Ave. – read a statement with regards to his disciplinary action as a member of the Fire Department.

Leo McLaughlin – 205 Pennsylvania Ave. – asked what is going on with the project at the old firehouse site

Eddie – he was contacted by the redeveloper and he is trying to arrange a meeting with to give us an update and it's supposed to be positive news.

Jill Conover – 43 E. Lee Ave. – she is Dale's wife and she feels there has been a target on his back by this administration that started over a year ago. She feels the calls should have been made directly to Dale and not between the city solicitor and fire chief. All of this happened because he hit a "liked" button on someone else's comment on Facebook and then making a comment a "waste of taxpayer's dollars" regarding the boat ramp. This administration and city solicitor decided to suspend Dale from his volunteer firefighting position and it went on for weeks while in Florida and not one call was made to him from the administration or city solicitor, just the fire chief.

Chris Seher – 707 Chelsea Road – regarding the retail marijuana and the number of licenses.

Bill - explained the process of the procedure

Chris – questioned the process of what happened to Dale

June Dutch – 120 Hobart Avenue – she can't believe what she is hearing tonight. Have we come to the point where someone can make a comment on Facebook and the town can decide to penalize you? Since when is that breaking the law? She doesn't understand why they should be penalized. Is there such a law, if so, who enforces it?

Motion to close public – Councilwoman Poley – second – Councilwoman Cain
All were in favor.

Steve – explained what happened to him last year and how he was targeted on social media and never said anything back.

CLOSED SESSION - #68-2022 – Contract Negotiations

Bill Blaney – city solicitor – the reason for closed session is to discuss contract negotiations. Two issues will be discussed and it's unlikely that there will be action taken tonight at the end.

Motion to enter closed session – Councilman Light – second – Councilman Cavileer
All were in favor.

Steve – we'd like to keep the Falivene family in our thoughts and prayers as well as the Dennis family for their loss. We are thinking of you.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn – Councilwoman Poley – second – Councilman LaRotonda
All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,


Carie A. Crone, City Clerk

Approved: 4-21-22