



CITY OF ABSECON
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CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 5th, 2025 6:30 PM
MINUTES

FLAG SALUTE – Mayor

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Councilmembers Alex Clark, Linda Evans, Nick LaRotonda, Christine Parker, Mike Sykes, and Council President Richard DeRose

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Thomas Marrone, City Solicitor John Amenhauser Esq., City Clerk Carie Crone, Engineer Ed Dennis, Police Chief J.R. Laughlin.

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

PRESENTATION OF RETIREMENT FOR LT. ADAMS – Chief Laughlin – Thanked everyone for coming out tonight. On behalf of the City of Absecon, thanked Ray for all he did for us. Thank his family, goes unsaid too often, thank you for sharing him and that's difficult in police work because we're always 24-7. Ray and I started about the same time, in that time I've learned; if Ray is grumpy, anxious or rambunctious give him something to do because it means he's bored. Ray could never have enough work to do and there was nothing I could give him that he wouldn't excel at. I leaned on him a lot when I became Chief, and we built a real good team together. Thank you for that Ray. The guys really miss you, especially when I'm on the warpath, because there's no one to ground me. Ray had a really unique way of calming me down and bringing out the best in me.

Today I have the honor of speaking about a truly remarkable member of the Absecon Police Department family, Lt. Ray Adams. Began his career in February of 2000, bringing with him an unmatched work ethic and commitment to service that never wavered over his 25-year career. 2011 promoted to Sergeant, taking the lead on several critical assignments. Helped shape the development of many young officers, laying the foundation for their careers, with patience, guidance and wisdom. 2019 promoted to Lieutenant where his responsibilities expanded significantly. Despite the formality of his rank and the importance of his administrative duties, Lt. Adams was always willing to get his hands dirty – literally. Ray could do it all and did it with humility and heart. Lt. Adams officially retired on January 31st, 2025 after 25-years of distinguished service to the City of Absecon. On behalf of the entire Department and the Community we serve, I want to thank Lt. Adams for his decades of service and wish him the very best in his well-earned retirement.

Lt. Ray Adams – Very proud that my whole career was here in Absecon and happy that that was the way it was. I do miss it and coming into this building, but will still show up once in a while. Thank you everyone.

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

2025 ORDINANCES FOR ADOPTION

- 04** Replacing Ordinance #08-2019, relating to Criminal History Record Background Checks for employees and volunteers involved with City Programs or services that can/will have contact with minors.

Motioned for the second reading of Ordinance #04-2025: Councilman Clark; Seconded: Councilman LaRotonda. Roll Call: Clark–Yes; Evans–Yes; LaRotonda–Yes; Light–Yes; Parker–Yes; Sykes–Yes; DeRose–Yes

Motioned to open the meeting to the public for comment or discussion of Ordinance #04-2025: Councilman Clark; Seconded: Councilman LaRotonda
All in Favor, None Opposed.

No Discussion.

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

Motioned for the final reading and adoption of Ordinance #04-2025: Councilman Clark; Seconded: Councilwoman Parker
Roll Call: Clark–Yes; Evans–Yes; LaRotonda–Yes; Light–Yes; Parker–Yes; Sykes–Yes; DeRose–Yes

Ordinance #04-2025 has been heard and is finally approved.

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.

- 114** Authorizing the continuance of an Interlocal Services Agreement with the Atlantic County Improvement Authority for the administration of the Program Income from the Housing Rehabilitation Grant.
- 115** Approving the insertion of a Special Item of Revenue into the 2025 Municipal Budget to allow for the receipt of \$26,804.31 from the State of New Jersey Clean Communities Grant.
- 116** Approving the insertion of a Special Item of Revenue into the 2025 Municipal Budget to allow for the receipt of \$80,000.00 from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs.

- 117 Approving the insertion of a Special Item of Revenue into the 2025 Municipal Budget to allow for the receipt of \$4,900.00 from the State of New Jersey Highway Traffic Safety.
- 118 Approving the insertion of a Special Item of Revenue into the 2025 Municipal Budget to allow for the receipt of \$4,200.00 from the State of New Jersey Highway Traffic Safety.
- 119 Approving the insertion of a Special Item of Revenue into the 2025 Municipal Budget to allow for the receipt of \$200.00 from the Atlantic County Utilities Authority.
- 120 Authorizing Change Order No. 2 for the Crestview Avenue Pedestrian Safety Improvements.
- 121 Appointing a Fund Commissioner and Alternate Fund Commissioner for the Southern Coastal Regional Employee Benefits Fund.
- 122 Requesting the Planning Board to prepare a new Housing Element and Fair Share Plan and Spending Plan to address the City of Absecon's 4th round Affordable Housing Obligations.
- 123 Approving an emergency pump replacement of pumps at Drive Inn.
- 124 Authorizing a refund of an overpayment of taxes for the 2nd quarter of 2025 on the listed properties.
- 125 Authorizing to cancel a portion of 2nd quarter taxes and the remainder of 2025 taxes on the property located at 1109 New York Avenue (Block 45, Lot 7).
- 126 Recognizing the members of the Absecon Waterfront Advisory Committee.
- 127 Authorizing Remington & Vernick, City Engineers, to administer the Engineering Services for the Pedestrian Crosswalk Safety Improvements FY 2025 NJDOT Safe Streets to Transit Program.

PUBLIC PORTION – (Agenda items only)

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

Maria Prete - 603 Sooy Ln. – Resident for a couple of years, trying to come to the meetings to understand history behind things. Appreciated during the budget meetings hearing the historical data. Would like a to know if there is a process to where the money is granted for is made sure to go to that. How do you know the plans for grant funding?

Ed Dennis – Grant from NJDOT was for Safe Streets to Transit Program, that was received to do raised crosswalks throughout the City. Grants are for very specific projects.

Council President DeRose – A lot of the grants are more of a reimbursement, we do the work then apply for the Grant and then the State looks at what we did. So that's kind of the Checks and Balances.

Maria Prete – Does the State tell you exactly how the money has to be spent?

Council President DeRose – Yes, it's very strict.

Mayor Marrone – Resolutions 117 and 118 from the State of New Jersey Traffic Safety, that's either reimbursement or funds for a specific campaign of policing.

Maria Prete – Another item about housing, states there's certain obligations.

Council President DeRose – Yes, the State mandates it, so it's just us getting into compliance.

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

CONSENT AGENDA VOTE

Motioned to move Consent Agenda: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilman Clark

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

APPROVAL OF BILL LIST – \$999,610.06

Motioned to accept the Bill List: Councilman Clark; Seconded: Councilwoman Parker

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Closed Session as to form and content only – 3/6/2025

Regular Meeting Minutes – 5/1/2025

Closed Session as to form and content only – 5/1/2025

Regular Meeting Minutes – 5/15/2025

Motioned to accept the Minutes: Councilman Clark; Seconded: Councilwoman Evans

Roll Call: Clark–Yes; Evans–Yes; LaRotonda–Yes; Light–Yes; Parker–Yes; Sykes– Yes-5/1, Abstain-5/15; DeRose–Yes

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Light – Public Works: Met this week, public always welcome. Discussed the progression of the South Shore Road Project, Roads for the 2025 Road Program. Recognized Public Works for the outstanding job they do at the parks and fields. Memorial Day Ceremony outstanding, great job done by the Committee. All properties are maintained well beyond.

Next meeting July 7th @5pm. Condolences to the family of long-time resident Rose Hickerson.

Councilman Clark – Finance: Will not be meeting this month. We've worked long and strenuous the last couple months on the budget. Next meeting will start working on proposing so more cost saving ideas, as well as updating some fees. Starting to look at the budget for 2026.

Councilwoman Evans – Community Affairs: Memorial Day parade, beautiful weather and a lot of participants. Council did the bike decorating judging. Honor Society did a wonderful job at Veterans Park – flowers and power washing. Creekfest will be September 21st, 3-7pm. Anybody that would like to join the committee or help out in any way reach out to me or anyone on Council. We have a short time, but we're going to make it happen.

Councilwoman Parker – Public Safety: New Officers are excelling in the Academy. Made first appearances at the Memorial Day Parade. Thank you to the Police Department, EMS and the Fire Department for keeping everyone safe during the parade and housing us at the Fire House for the Bike Brigade. Thank you to the Police Department for putting the monthly report on social media.

Nice ceremonies for Lt. Adams tonight, swearing in and promotion at the last meeting. National Night Out August 5th, 6-9pm.

Chief Laughlin: Our recruits were out helping with the Memorial Day Parade, the community loved seeing the new faces. They graduate the academy in July. They will also be out at National Night Out. Community Affairs did a great job on the Memorial Day Parade. First time in a long time that Bayview Firehouse was invited, went a long way on bridging those relationships again. Thank you for doing that, and it was a great addition. Daylight savings. Lock Doors and adjust lighting to deter thefts.

Councilman Sykes – Parks and Playgrounds: Met 5/20, was unable to attend, thanked President DeRose and Councilman Light stepping in. Thanked the Absecon School System, Principle Clark and Superintendent Dooley for an excellent job at Veteran's Park. They put a new slab down, moved bench back to make access for wheelchairs along the walkway, painted benches. They did an amazing job; the Veteran's community were very pleased with the work that was done. First Concert in the Park, 6/22 here at Heritage Park. Requested Lloyd update the Pitney Recreation sign, he said they'd try to get to it in a few weeks, and in three days, it was done. Stopped by to personally thank him, and got a great tour of Public Works. Public Works works tirelessly and do a great job, asked for a few things to be done and they were done within a few days. Looking towards a permanent bathroom at Heritage Park, looking into grants to help fund. Welcomed two new members to the committee.

Councilman LaRotonda – Economic Development – Aldi's and Steals and Deals are open, nice to see those vacant storefronts become occupied again. Congratulated Calabria's on their 17th year here in Absecon. Please continue to support our local businesses.

Councilwoman Parker – the patio is now open at Lola's.

Councilman LaRotonda – Jersey Cow is making a lot of headway. They participated in the Memorial Day Parade by handing out samples.

Council President DeRose: June is Post Traumatic Stress Awareness Month, if you know anyone that's struggling, make sure they get the help they need. Happy Pride Month to all the residents that are celebrating.

Mayor Thomas Marrone: Being born and raised in Absecon, I remember when Lt. Adams. Ray is a great guy and I congratulate him and his family, for his accomplishments in this City.

Engineer Ed Dennis: Going to see a lot of activity next week on our Road Programs, all weather dependent. Contractor will be starting milling on Veteran's Way tomorrow and Monday. Tuesday you'll see the base paving go down on Michigan Ave. And final paving being done on Fourth Street. Wednesday they'll be out at Richmond Circle. Then they'll do final paving on Michigan Ave. and Veteran's Way. Then they'll go to Creek Road and paving Richmond Circle on Thursday. Road Program will be wrapping up in the next few weeks. Crosswalk project, capital project, we'll get started on the engineering. Grants – Met with NJ IBank last week to get that process started, believes there's a lot of opportunity there for us to take advantage of some significant funding.

Mayor Marrone – Thank you and your firm for the diligent work your doing to get our road raised. Moving slow, but at least it's moving and you guys have worked very hard. To the County, it is no longer a nuisance, but a public safety hazard.

Councilman Light – Can you share the progress for the ADA compliance here in the lobby. And do we need to do anything to let the businesses know about the paving on Veteran's Way.

Ed Dennis – Businesses would have already been notified by the Contractor and we also have an inspector out there to make sure they're aware. For the City Hall vestibule, there's funding allocated from the Atlantic County Improvement Authority, to do ADA upgrades. Vestibule will be gone, no second set of doors, much more accessible and compliant

PUBLIC PORTION

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

Arianna Seller – 66 Natalie Terrace – Here on behalf of the Absecon Cultural Arts Alliance, as the co-chair of the 10th Annual Best Flower Pot in Town Garden Party. Will be on July 9th, at 6pm at the Jonathan Pitney House. Partnering with White House Wine and Spirits for light bites and refreshments. Also, excited to announce the partnership with Jersey Cow, they will be sponsoring desserts for the party. We have thirty contestants including Mayor Marrone and Council President DeRose.

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

CLOSED SESSION - #128-2025 – Pending Litigation

John Amenhauser – Pursuant to Section 12B of the Open Public Meeting Act, Council will go into closed session to discuss matters related to pending litigation, related to vacant and abandoned property litigation as well as a Tax Court pending trial matter.

Motioned to go into Closed Session: Councilman Clark; Seconded: Councilwoman Parker
All in Favor, None Opposed.

(Closed Session)

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

ADJOURNMENT

Motioned to adjourn: Councilman Clark; Seconded: Councilwoman Evans
All in Favor, None Opposed.

Respectfully submitted,


Carie A. Crone, City Clerk

Approved: 6-18-25