

**BOROUGH OF PALMYRA
MINUTES-FEBRUARY 2, 2015**

CALL TO ORDER.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

MOMENT OF SILENCE.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Mayor Scheffler, President Dobbs, Mrs. Tait, Mr. Nowicki, Mr. Bostock,
Ms. Arnold, Mr. Howard.
Absent: Ms. Kane (student representative).

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS STATEMENT

Public Notice of this meeting pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act has been given by the Borough Clerk in the following manner:

- A. Posting written notice on the official bulletin board at the Palmyra Borough Hall on January 7, 2015.
- B. Mailing written notice to the Burlington County Times, and the Courier Post Newspaper on January 7, 2015.
- C. Notice to All Council Members.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES. President Dobbs made a motion to approve the minutes from December 15, 2014, Mr. Bostock second the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion with Mrs. Tait and Mr. Howard abstaining. President Dobbs made a motion to approve the minutes from January 4, 2015, Mr. Bostock second the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

CORRESPONDENCE.

A. Resignation from Kim Gillespie-crossing guard. Mr. Bostock made a motion to approve the resignation, President Dobbs second the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

B. Letter of Award-Burlington County Municipal Alliance-Mayor Scheffler explained that the Borough in partnership with the school has applied for the Municipal Alliance grant that is used for alcoholism and drug abuse education. The Borough received the award of \$7,461.00 with a cash match requirement of \$1,865.25 and an in-kind requirement of \$5,595.75. The school will be handling the majority of the grant.

C. Thank you cards, Mayor Scheffler acknowledged thank you cards from Dale and Cindy Palmer, Mrs. Brett and Chief Pearlman and his wife for thinking of them during a family death.

D. Mayor Scheffler announced that Palmyra has been recognized as the 6th most affordable place to live in the entire state and the most affordable community in Burlington County. The study was based on average localized costs like average property taxes and mortgage payments. Mayor

Scheffler explained that it took years of fiscal responsibility to get where the Borough is now. Ms. Arnold discussed that she has forward the information to the Burlington County Licensed Realtors.

PROFESSIONAL UPDATES.

A. Environmental Resolutions-Mr. Kirchner-discussed Resolution 2015-50, the resolution authorized the generator agreement between the Borough and the State Office of Emergency Management to purchase and install a back-up generator for the center. Mr. Kirchner reported that the sewer plant project is about 2/3rd of the way through the funding. The project is 75% completed of actual physical changes. One tank has been rehabbed and back on line, the other tank should be finished by mid-April. Mr. Gural discussed that he had request that Mr. Kirchner look at 4th street between Delaware and Race Street. Mr. Kirchner explained that the street is in bad condition, but that the Department of Transportation for the State is out of funding and that it would be a cost of about \$350,000 to fix just that portion. Mr. Gural explained that the Borough has never undertaken a large project without funding from the state. Mr. Gural also reported that Mr. Kirchner had reviewed the street in front of the Delaware Avenue School and that at this time it is not in need of repairs. Mr. Kirchner explained that some of the trouble on 4th Street is that it looks like the last time it was repaired it was just a quick fix and the gutters are not flowing. Usually concrete gutters are used and the puddles stretch out 6-7 feet on the roadway. Mr. Gural discussed that the school would like to see 4th street become a one-way due to the school traffic. Mayor Scheffler inquired if the Borough should move this street up on the priority list for grants. Mr. Kirchner reviewed that the Borough has two grants at DOT waiting for funding and that the DOT runs out of funds in June. The federal funding of road projects has also dried up. Ms. Arnold inquired about the timeframe and if 4th street is an immediate safety concern. Mr. Kirchner replied that there is no legal reason to bump up this street as long as it has been identified on the plans for improvement. Ms. Tait explained that the water laying on the street freezes and a lot of people are falling.

B. Tax Assessor-Glenn McMahon discussed with Borough Council the Real Property Assessment Program that Burlington County is hoping to roll out this year. Mr. Gural had attend one of the first meetings with the county last week and that the county has made no effort to keep the towns in the loop. At the meeting, Mr. Drayton stated that no final decisions had been made, but that the program would start in October of 2015. Mr. McMahon explained that in 2013 there was an email to the assessor that they wanted the county to join when Monmouth County did, but Burlington County was not ready. The assessors were under the impression that they would look at it in 2015 and start in 2016. The county does not have to ask the assessors, but they do want to include them. The post cards about the assessments and taxes that are now sent in January will be sent later in the year and the tax appeals will be completed earlier so that towns have the information for their budgets. The program requires that 20% of the properties be reassessed every year and that information is to be applied to all properties in the Borough. This means that 650 sites would have to be looked at each year and the cost would be about \$16-\$17 an item. There was a discussion at the county level about whether the additional cost of the program would be considered outside of caps or inside of caps for the budget. Mr. McMahon explained that the next meeting with the county is on February 17th to review the first meeting. He will also have to attend five (5) mandatory classes for tax assessors on assessing a property. Mr. McMahon explained that if a town does not agree to participate the County has the right to replace the assessor and have the County do the assessments. Mr. Bostock inquired about the towns that have had a recent revalue and if they have to do the 20%. Mr. McMahon explained that if a town has completed a revalue of the entire towns recently, they will only be required to do the 20% each year, but if they have not done a revalue, they have to first do a complete revalue and then the 20%. Mrs. Tait inquired as to how the 20% properties are chosen. Mr. McMahon explained that a lot of it will be based on the area that homes are selling in. There will be no need in the future for a full revalue of all of the properties. Ms. Arnold inquired how they can achieve a fair

value with only 20%. Mr. McMahon replied that the assessor adjusts based on the 20% and has to review all of the line items. Mr. Rosenberg inquired if Mr. McMahon was under the impression that the towns in the county had no choice and that the program would move forward this year. Mr. McMahon replied that it is not a done deal, but towns have no way to opt out of the program. Mr. Gural discussed that the county wants all properties at 100% because it helps with their tax dollars. There will also be less tax appeals. Mayor Scheffler thanked Mr. McMahon for the update and that it is a complicated issue.

RESOLUTIONS- Consent Agenda- Resolution 2015-46 to Resolution 2015-50 will be enacted as a single motion, if any resolution needs additional discussion it will be removed from the consent agenda and voted on separately. Mayor Scheffler removed 2015-49 from the consent agenda. Mrs. Tait made a motion to approve the consent agenda with the removal of 2015-49. President Dobbs second the motion. At the call of the roll, the vote was:

AYES: President Dobbs, Mrs. Tait, Mr. Nowicki, Mr. Bostock, Ms. Arnold, Mr. Howard.
NAYES; None.

- A. Resolution 2015-46, Resolution Authorizing Cancellation of Municipal Certificate of Sale For Block 81, Lot 13.01.
- B. Resolution 2015-47, Resolution Authorizing Submission Of A Strategic Plan For The Borough Of Palmyra Municipal Alliance Grant For Fiscal Year 2016.
- C. Resolution 2015-48, Resolution Establishing Public Official Bonds For Year 2015.
- D. Resolution 2015-49, Resolution Approving The Bill List In The Amount Of \$1,770,871.79. President Dobbs made a motion to approve the resolution, Mr. Nowicki second the motion. At the call of the roll, the vote was:

AYES: President Dobbs, Mrs. Tait, Mr. Nowicki, Ms. Arnold, Mr. Howard.
NAYES: None.
ABSTAIN: Mr. Bostock.

- E. Resolution 2015-50, Resolution Of The Borough Of Palmyra Accepting Conditions Of Approval And Authorizing The Mayor To Execute A Sub-Grant Agreement For The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (CFDA#97.039) FEMA-DR-4086-NJ-107-R With The State Of New Jersey Office Of Emergency Management.
- F. Special Permit-Approval of Social Affairs Permit For Palmyra Cove. President Dobbs made a motion to approval the permit, Mrs. Tait second the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

DISCUSSION ITEMS.

- A. Budget dates- Borough Council will hold the annual budget work session on Saturday, March 7 at 8am.
- B. Budget Seminar-there is a budget seminar sponsored by Bowman and Company on February 3rd for any council member wishing to attend.
- C. NJLM Orientation-the League of Municipalities is holding several seminars for newly elected officials.
- D. Lawn signs-Chief Pearlman discussed that the cost of the signs for the public will be \$8.00 that covers the Borough cost of the signs. Ms. Arnold inquired if the signs can be placed somewhere other than private property. Chief Pearlman will check on the location of the signs.

E. Shade Tree Advisory Board ordinance amendment-Mr. Nowicki would like to see the ordinance amended to increase the number of people on the advisory board. Mr. Nowicki would like to see at least six members and two alternate's members. Mayor Scheffler discussed that it is a good idea and that there is a need for a fully staffed board.

F. Sidewalk ordinance amendment-Mr. Nowicki would like to see an amendment to the ordinance that gives a property owner an extension of time if the Shade Tree Advisory Board has to do something with the tree at the property. The timeframe for the homeowner to fix the sidewalk should not start till the Borough has completed their work on the tree.

G. Safe & Secure Grant. Chief Pearlman informed council that the Borough can apply for the Safe and Secure Grant, but that it requires the Borough to make an employee full time from a position that is now part time. Mr. Gural explained that there is a concern about the Borough having over the limit number of employees for the Affordable Health Care Act. Chief Pearlman explained that he will wait to apply for this grant at another time.

H. HDSRF funding-Nature Cove meeting-Mayor Scheffler will report on this next month after the meeting that she has scheduled on the issue.

I. Veterans medals policy/procedures-Mayor Scheffler discussed that Mr. Norcross had suggested that the Borough give medals to the Veterans of Palmyra. The original count was 200, but now it looks like there are close to 1600. Mr. Nowicki discussed that the medals could be given to all residents who are residents or to only those who lived in Palmyra when they enlisted. Mayor Scheffler explained that Borough Council does not want this issue to ever become politicalize and needs to have a clear policy on the award of the medals. Mr. McElwee-War Memorial Committee discussed that the medals should be the same policy as the names engraved at the War Memorial. Mayor Scheffler discussed forming an ad-hoc committee to create a draft policy. Mr. Norcross explained that the War Memorial Committee is already involved in discussions on the medals and to receive a medal from the county you must have been a resident of the county when you enlisted. The War Memorial Committee would like to hand them out at the Memorial Day Ceremony. The County also requires that you or a family member apply for the medal. Mayor Scheffler replied that the Council will go along with the War Memorial Committee recommendations. Mr. Bostock discussed that he is glad that the Veterans are taking charge of the issue and that the medals are very special to the Veterans.

J. Borough logo signs for light poles.-Mr. Bostock explained that in December there was discussions on putting up logo signs with businesses names on them in the business district and if it was permitted by the sign ordinance. Mayor Scheffler discussed that the business would sponsor a banner and have their name on the bottom of it, but the banner would be the Boroughs. Mr. Rosenberg discussed that it would not be necessary to change the ordinance since the banner would be the Borough's. Mr. Bostock would like to have Mrs. Kilmer involved and move the matter forward.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORT. Mr. Gural distributed 2015 Local Government Desk book to councilmembers.

PUBLIC COMMENTS. Mr. Nowicki made a motion to open the meeting to the public, Mrs. Tait second the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

Ms. Veitheimer-Rowland discussed that she was under the impression that the reassessment program in Monmouth County was only a pilot program and that the State was waiting to see the response from it. Mr. Gural replied that Monmouth County has adopted the program and that they are adding three more counties to the program, Burlington County is strongly looking at joining. Ms. Veitheimer recommend that the towns should come together and say that they cannot

afford the program. Mayor Scheffler replied that Mr. McMahon has been arguing that point for the Borough, but that the County Board of Taxation is strongly encouraging the program. Ms. Veitheimer discussed that it is not seem fair to have only 20% of the property's value increased each year along with their tax increase. Mr. Gural explained that the tax assessor will be required to adjust all properties each year according to the 20% review.

Mr. McElwee-Columbia Avenue informed council that Mr. Howard has met with Mozier and has come up with a few designs for the plaque. The plague that was at the Memorial in front of WAWA will be placed on the flagpole at the War Memorial. Mr. McElwee inquired if the lawn signs that Chief Pearlman is selling can be placed on trees. Mayor Scheffler replied that no signs are allowed to be put on telephone poles or trees. The signs come with a stand similar to the real estate signs. Mr. McElwee thanked council for their support of the Boys and Girls State Program.

Pastor Smith-Miller's Temple Church of God in Christ invited the Mayor and Council to celebrate the church's 65th anniversary on April 18th. Mayor Scheffler and Ms. Arnold expressed interest in attending. Mr. Howard explained that he had reached out to Jim May of the Historical Society to see if they had any history on the church.

Mr. Reed-Temple Boulevard discussed that he had sold his mother's home in December and that the house is 92 years old. He had a buyer for the home for a lower amount than it was assessed and there was no way that the house was worth the assessed value. Mr. Reed explained that he had another buyer but after seeing the list of repairs that was needed to obtain a certificate of occupancy, he backed out of the deal. Mr. Reed explained that he had hired Ms. Arnold as his realtor and that there were four pages of violations that needed to be corrected to get his CO. Mr. Reed does not feel that he should have to fix the cracks in the basement floor since they have been there since he was young. He was required to replace the basement steps since they did not meet code and that he had to obtain a permit for the water heater that he installed. Mr. Reed thinks that the inspection to sell the home was unfair and that Ms. Arnold knows what he has been going through since she was the realtor. Mayor Scheffler replied that Mr. Reed brings forth a lot of issues but the ordinance was weighed by council and that the home can be sold as is and the buyer makes the repairs before they move in. Mr. Reed explained that he is bringing it to council's attention and that a lot of elderly residents will not be able to sell their home due to the inspection. Mayor Scheffler explained that the Borough is attempting to improve the housing stock with the occupancy inspections and the rental registration ordinances. Mr. Reed explained that he feels that the house is appraised too higher. Mayor Scheffler replied that there were ways to appeal the appraisal and that Mr. Reed should have taken advantage of the process.

Mr. Schwering-Broad Street inquired as to how far along is the Borough in getting all of the rental properties registered. Mayor Scheffler replied that the ordinance is in litigation and that the Borough hopes to work out an agreement soon and move forward with the registrations. Mr. Schwering inquired about a plan to fill the empty storefronts in the business district and that there is no connection between the businesses. Mr. Bostock explained that there is nothing in place currently. Ms. Arnold is working on a welcome packet with Mrs. Kilmer. Mr. Schwering discussed that someone needs to work on recruiting new businesses and that there was a survey done through the BID. The better the downtown businesses look and work will improve housing values. Ms. Arnold explained that she is working on promoting a business each month at the council meeting. Mr. Schwering discussed that the business district had submitted some ideas for the sign ordinance and that they were ignored. Ms. Arnold replied that she is interested in listening to the business. Mr. Bostock discussed that council is trying to get all of the businesses to register and would like to list them on the website.

Ms. Veitheimer-Rowland agreed with Mr. Reed and that was her fear when the ordinances were discussed that she would not be able to sell her house as is when the time came. Mayor Scheffler explained that the ordinance does have the ability for a seller to sell their home as is and that a temporary co will be given if the items are not life-threatening. If they are life-threatening the seller or the buyer would have to correct the situation before moving in. Ms. Veitheimer inquired if the same company was still performing the rental inspections. Mr. Gural replied that yes it is the same business and that the Borough does pursue the landlords that have not registered their rentals.

Mr. Reed-Temple Boulevard discussed that it will be difficult to sell a home if word gets around that it is a pain to sell or buy a home due to the ordinance for the CO.

No one else wishing to be heard, President Dobbs made a motion to close the public portion, Mrs. Tait second the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

CLOSED SESSION. Resolution No. 2015-51, Resolution Excluding The Public From Certain Meetings Pursuant To Section 8 Of The Open Public Meeting Act C. 231 P.L. 1975. (Litigation and personnel) Mrs. Tait made a motion to approve the resolution, Mr. Nowicki second the motion. At the call of the roll, the vote was:

**AYES: President Dobbs, Mrs. Tait, Mr. Nowicki, Mr. Bostock, Ms. Arnold, Mr. Howard.
NAYES: None.**

**Council went into executive session at 8:18 pm.
Council returned to public session at 9:31pm.**

Adjournment. President Dobbs made a motion to adjourn at 9:32pm, Mr. Bostock second the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.