

**Borough of Palmyra**  
**Regular Council Meeting Minutes, 6:30 PM**  
**Tuesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

The Regular Council Meeting of the Borough Council of the Borough of Palmyra was called to order by Mayor Tait at 6:30PM

**ROLL CALL**

PRESENT: Brandon Allmond, Laura Cloud, Farrah Jenkins, Michelle McCann, Bernadette Russell, Mayor Gina Ragomo Tait

ABSENT: President Timothy Howard

The pledge of Allegiance was recited followed by a moment of silence.

**OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS STATEMENT** Mayor Tait read the following into the record:  
Public Notice of this meeting pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act has been given  
By the Municipal Clerk in the following manner:

- Posting written notice on the official bulletin board at the Palmyra Borough Hall on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020.
- Mailing written notice to the Burlington County Times, and the Courier Post Newspaper on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019.
- Notice to All Council Members.

Mayor Tait requested a motion for approval of the, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 Council Caucus Meeting Minutes and February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 Executive Session Meeting Minutes.

Mrs. Russell made a motion to approve the minutes from the, Council Caucus Meeting of February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 and the February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 Executive Session Meeting Minutes. Mr. Allmond second the motion.

**At the call of the roll the vote was.**

**INFAVOR: Mr. Allmond, Dr. Cloud, Mrs. Jenkins, Mrs. McCann, Mrs. Russell**

**AGAINST: None**

**Motion Carried**

**CORRESPONDANCE**

Municipal Clerk, Doretha Jackson acknowledged the following correspondence:

Letter – John Flora, Fredon Township

Mr. Gural explained that it would in no way benefit the Borough. Mr. Gural stated in the letter Mr. Flora indicates that would allow residents the opportunity to vote on school board budgets. Mr. Gural noted school budgets no longer require a votes by members of the public. Mr. Gural stated moving the

school board elections to November was all about increasing voter turnout. Mrs. Russell noted that if changed the Borough would have to pay the cost associated with holding that election in April.

## **REDEVELOPMENT**

### Route 73 South Redevelopment Area –Update

Mr. Gural noted an affiliate of Cherokee equities did file a writ on Fillit regarding any cash he might have in regards to the lien that exceeds the cash reserves. Mr. Gural indicated this will liquidate all Fillet's assets especially once the sheriff's sale is executed on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Mr. Gural stated that council had some conversation about acquiring the in pocket liquor license of the former Millmarian. Mr. Gural stated per the letter received from Mr. Rosenberg, the Borough cannot acquire that license and hold on to it. Mr. Gural noted Mr. Stock will be reaching out to the owner of the pocket license and have a conversation with them to determine if it is something they may be able to utilize on the Southside of 73 during the redevelopment.

### 620-622 Highland Avenue Redevelopment Area – Update

Mr. Gural stated Mr. Brewer prepared the Declaration of Taking which he will be filing this week with the \$135,000.00 received from the redeveloper. Mr. Gural noted that Mr. Brewer also prepared the deed that would be issued to the redeveloper once we have possession of the property. Mr. Rosenberg stated once filed the legal ownership of the parcel goes to the redeveloper. Mr. Rosenberg stated the issue regarding the valuation of the property will be decided by the three commissioners and if someone wishes to appeal that decision it would go to superior court and there could be a jury trial. Mr. Rosenberg stated the redevelopment can begin once the deed is transferred.

### Former K of C, Area In Need of Redevelopment Study – Update

Mr. Gural noted Mr. Gerkens should have the conclusions of his study at one of the two March meetings.

### Redevelopment file sharing site

Mr. Gural noted there are still some glitches, but as soon as Mr. Hogue has it ready it will be out to the governing body.

## **PALMYRA HIGH SCHOOL – UPDATE (STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES)**

Mr. Patrick Tait stated it was a big month for sports at Palmyra High School. He congratulated the wrestling team who hosted their first playoff match in twenty years. Mr. Tait indicated nine members made first team and three made second team, and they will be wrestling for District 26 Championships. Congratulations s was also extended to the girls' basketball team which is 20-1 and are looking at a run for the State Championship. Mr. Tait noted a Blood Dive will be held on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February, 2020 and the website has been updated.

Mr. Tait then introduced the two new Junior Student representatives, Elizabeth Lake and Andrew Yansick.

**PUBLIC PORTION**

Mayor Tait asked for a motion to open the Public Portion. Mrs. Russell made a motion to open the public portion for comments. Mr. Allmond second the motion.

**All members present voted in favor of the motion. Motion Carried**

**Mr. Keisler – 5<sup>th</sup> Street** – Mr. Keisler stated he moved into his house about three years ago and the property next to him had been an abandoned property at that point. Mr. Keisler indicated he thought someone bought the property as a contractor began to do some work to it. Mr. Keisler indicated that six months ago he wrote an email to code enforcement when it appeared the project had be abandoned. Mr. Keisler indicated there is trash, in bags, on the front lawn which have been there for months. Mr. Keisler indicated the back yard has a bathtub and sink laying in it, and the entire landscaping is very overgrown. Mr. Keisler indicated he was concerned about vandalism and a break-in, so he wanted to bring it to Council’s attention.

**Mr. McElwee – Columbia Avenue** – Mr. McElwee indicated his granddaughter was on the front page of the Sun for Athlete of the Week for Wrestling.

No one else from the public wishing to be heard, Mayor Tait asked for a motion to close the Public Portion. Mrs. Russell made a motion to close the public portion, Mr. Allmond second the motion.

**All members present voted in favor of the motion. Motion Carried**

**Ordinance 2020-01** An Ordinance To Exceed Municipal Budget Appropriation Limits And To Establish A CAP Bank (N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.14).

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve Ordinance 2020-01 An Ordinance To Exceed Municipal Budget Appropriation Limits And To Establish A CAP Bank (N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.14)., public hearing to be held on March 16, 2020. Mr. Allmond made a motion to approve Ordinance 2020-01. Mrs. Russell second the motion.

**At the call of the roll.**

**INFAVOR. Mr. Allmond, Dr. Cloud, Mrs. Jenkins, Mrs. McCann, Mrs. Russell**

**AGAINST. None**

**ABSENT. President Howard**

**Motion carried. Ordinance 2020-01 was approved on first reading.**

**Ordinance 2020-02** An Ordinance of the Borough of Palmyra, County of Burlington, State of New Jersey, Authorizing the Sale of Real Property (Block 120 Lot 4 on the Tax Map of the Borough of Palmyra) Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:12-13(b) 1 Et seg.

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve Ordinance 2020-002 An Ordinance of the Borough of Palmyra, County of Burlington, State of New Jersey, Authorizing the Sale of Real Property (Block 120 Lot 4 on the Tax Map of the Borough of Palmyra) Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:12-13(b) 1 Et seg.1, public hearing to be held on March 16, 2020. Mrs. Russell made a motion to approve Ordinance 2020-02. Mr. Allmond second the motion.

**At the call of the roll.**

**INFAVOR. Mr. Allmond, Dr. Cloud, Mrs. Jenkins, Mrs. McCann, Mrs. Russell**

**AGAINST. None**

**ABSENT: President Howard**

**Motion carried. Ordinance 2020-02 was approved on first reading.**

**RESOLUTIONS Consent Agenda**

Mayor Tait stated Resolution 2020-95 thru Resolution 2020-97 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 Tait asked if any items needed to be removed from the consent agenda. Council indicated no.

**Resolution 2020-95**, Resolution adopting Revised Student Representatives Guidelines Dated February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and Appointing two juniors, Andrew Yansick and Elizabeth Lake to join our two Seniors Patrick Tait and Kaya Robinson as Palmyra High School Student Representatives to Borough Council

**Resolution 2020-96**, Resolution appointing Janeen Rossi as Certified Tax Collector pursuant to Borough of Palmyra's Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual and Offer of Employment dated February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at the annual salary of \$58,000.00 effective February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

**Resolution 2020-97**, Resolution Authorizing the Payment of Bills for the Month of February 2020 In the Amount of \$1,799,039.18

Mayor Tait asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda Resolutions 2020-95 thru Resolution 2020-97. Mrs. Russell made a motion to approve Resolutions 2020-95 thru Resolution 2020-97. Mr. Allmond seconded the motion.

**At the call of the roll, the vote was:**

**INFAVOR: Mr. Allmond, Dr. Cloud, Mrs. Jenkins, Mrs. McCann, Mrs. Russell**

**AGAINST: None**

**Motion Carried Resolution 2020-95 thru Resolution 2020-97 were approved**

**MOTION TO APPROVE TREASURERS REPORTS**

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report for January 2020. Mrs. Russell made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report for January 2020. Mr. Allmond second the motion.

**At the call of the roll.**

**INFAVOR: Mr. Allmond, Dr. Cloud, Mrs. Jenkins, Mrs. McCann, Mrs. Russell**

**AGAINST: None**

**Motion Carried. Treasurers Report was approved.**

•• It should be noted President Howard arrived and took the dais at 6:48 PM.

**COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT**

Mayor Tait indicated Rock the Block with AmeriCorps and Habitat for Humanity will be held on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Mayor Tait indicated they are still looking for houses to participate with the program.

Mayor Tait indicated the project was looking to do 12 to 15 homes and only 6 have applied. Mayor Tait indicated, tomorrow, she will be out walking the neighborhood, on the streets that the project applies to.

Mayor Tait indicated the application is available on our website. Mayor Tait indicated they are

expecting about 150 volunteers for the project. Mrs. Jenkins asked if Habitat was willing to expand the project area if they do not get enough applications. Mayor Tait indicated no. Mr. Russell indicated she would help after school.

Mayor Tait indicated the Palmyra Improvement Association will be hosting guest speaker David Wyche of Burlington County Department of Economic Development on March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at Central Baptist Church.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **NEW Business**

Mayor Tait indicated the 2020 Census Job Fair will be held on Saturday February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020 from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm at the community center. President Howard noted anyone wishing to become a census worker should come out and apply at that time. President Howard also indicated we will be hosting a kick off meeting around April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, which is the official start of the 2020 Census count.

Mrs. McCann indicated the Easter Egg Hunt will be held on April 4<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM at Legion Field. Mrs. Russell asked if there was criteria regarding who, what and how donations can be made for the Easter Egg Hunt? Mayor Tait indication we would not accept advertising fillable eggs as a donation, we would take fillable eggs with no advertisements.

Mayor Tait indicated the Borough's Rabies Clinic will be held on April 18<sup>th</sup> 2020 from 1:00 to 3:00 PM, in front of community center.

Mayor Tait noted that Palmyra Downtown & Public Safety Day will be held on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020.

Dr. Cloud indicated the Green Team documentary film series is looking for additional donations regarding the additional screening fees in the amount of \$200.00 which they found also needed to be paid. Dr. Cloud indicated she was working with Riverton Borough coordinating that expense, and noted when she had additional information she would notify council. Mr. Gural stated that any monies which the governing body needs for any public events to let the administration and governing body know so that everyone is kept in the loop as to what is required financially, Borough facility, or staff wise. Dr. Cloud noted the Green Team may need two hundred dollars.

Mayor Tait indicated anyone wishing to help with any public event to come out as they are always looking for volunteers. Mrs. Russell asked if there was a list of events which the public could find to know what they wanted to volunteer for. Mayor Tait indicated they were on the website, Mr. Gural indicated he could put them on the website if given a list, but currently they are not.

Mr. Gural indicated Ms. Jackson is requesting approval of attendance to the Municipal Clerk's Education Conference from April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020 thru April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020 in Atlantic City with a 3 nights stay. The governing body approved the request.

Mayor Tait indicated the Mayor's Advisory meeting will be held on March 12<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM at Community Center. Mayor Tait invited everyone to come out and let her know what things you would like to see or change in Palmyra. Mayor Tait indicated she will be holding these types of meetings at least three times a year.

### **OLD Business**

Mayor Tait indicated she asked if that parking spot could be made into a Veteran's parking space.

Mayor Tait indicated three signs have been ordered. Mr. Gural stated when they are received, public works will come out and install them.

Mayor Tait indicated at the last meeting a committee was formed to look into holiday decorations. The committee was Mrs. Jenkins, Mrs. McCann and Mrs. Russell. Mrs. Jenkins indicated she spoke with two different vendors. In the past week, whom both came out and did a sort of walk thru. Mrs. Jenkins indicated she spoke with Holiday Pro Lights and she noted they are like a rental company; we don't own the lights they just come out and install them to our preference. Mrs. Jenkins indicated she had an example of what the lights would look like and would forward them to all to see. Mrs. Jenkins indicated their price would be \$4,000.00 this year if we chose to proceed in that manner, she noted that the price would go down if we chose to continue with them in the following year to \$3,400.00. Mrs. Jenkins indicated she also spoke with Rileigh's and they are extremely high, their estimate was coming in around \$11,000.00 plus the cost of storing them each year as well as installation. Mrs. Jenkins noted they are currently storing our snow flake lights which costs us about \$1,800.00 per year. Mrs. Jenkins indicated that perhaps we may want to consider renting or leasing instead of buying those holiday decorations. There was some discussion regarding the manner in which we should proceed. Mrs. Jenkins explained what the committee was trying to accomplish with the lighting. Mr. Gural indicated if leasing lights the cost needs to be built into the budget, they would not be part of the capital budget. Mrs. Jenkins indicated we could still purchase some lights for the railroad side if we chose with the remaining funds, however if we purchase them then we have to store them.

Mr. Gural indicated he sent an email, regarding the 2019 Burlington County Municipal Park Development Program and our Veterans Memorial Park application, to Mary Pat, she confirmed that we would have funding in March. Mr. Gural noted Mr. McElwee indicated he spoke Freeholder O'Connell who indicated at the next meeting he would make sure it was brought up for discussion. Mayor Tait stated she was waiting for a phone call from Freeholder Haines to let us know.

Mayor Tait indicated the meeting with the businesses regarding the Downtown parking amendments is scheduled for Thursday February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 7:00 pm in Borough Hall. Mrs. Russell indicated she also felt the residents should be notified. There was some additional discussion regarding notification for residents, property owners and business owners. President Howard inquired about the parking outside of Borough Hall. Chief Pearlman stated he did not think it was the Borough's responsibility to provide parking for Riverline commuters, over and above what is already here, when there is so much parking in both Pennsauken and Cinnaminson in areas which are not as congested as downtown Palmyra is. There was some additional discussion regarding decal parking, commuter parking and open parking. Mr. Gural asked council to clarify who would be noticed. Mrs. Russell and Dr. Cloud indicated the residents should be notified along with the property owners and business owners. Chief Pearlman offered to have his officers' hand deliver the letters or notifications.

Mayor Tait indicated she spoke with Tony regarding the mural and he indicated he does not feel the Borough should be paying to advertise the other businesses nor does he want the other business advertised on the building. Mayor Tait noted he wanted to put up siding and a stone finish which he will take care of himself. Mr. Gural indicated he would send a letter to Tony to confirm.

Mr. Gural indicated he received the proof from the engraver for the 19 pavers for Chief Payton I. Flournoy Sr. Memorial Park, he noted once they have completed the proof read the order will be placed, weather permitting.

President Howard indicated his committee will be having a meeting next week as there were still some concerns. Mayor Tait indicated in the draft it notes each group will be required to pay a 1,000.00 security deposit, it was not enforced. Mayor Tait suggested \$750.00, she also indicated there was nothing in the ordinance which indicated these groups should be signing an operating agreement as the other 501c-3 organizations do. President Howard indicated he would come back to council with additional information.

Mr. Gural indicated the Legion Field restrooms will be open beginning March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 on the weekends only; beginning April of 2020 the restrooms will then begin opening the entire week.

Mr. Rosenberg indicated he sent Ms. Arnold a letter regarding the disbursements and requesting documentation for reimbursement he also noted unauthorized computer usage. Mr. Rosenberg stated he has not had a reply from Ms. Arnold. Mr. Gural stated the letter requested the information be turned in within the next 10 days. Mr. Gural indicated the 10 days has not yet passed. Mr. Gural indicated at the conclusion of that period we will send an invoice for the total amount due.

Mr. Rosenberg indicated he sent a memo regarding the sign ordinance and potential amendments to it regarding political/electioneering signs. Mr. Rosenberg stated whatever applies to other signs also applies to political sign. He stated we must treat political signs the same as any other sign, we cannot over regulate political usage. Mr. Rosenberg stated you can limit size but cannot limit the contents or time of placement/ period of time of which they may be posted. There was some additional discussion regarding how to redesign the ordinance. Mr. Rosenberg told council they cannot restrict signs in the right of way. Mr. Rosenberg indicated he could propose some amendments to the current ordinance for Council to consider, which more closely mimicked the current laws. Council agreed.

There was some additional discussion regarding the current policy and restrictions regarding placement times and removal times. Mr. Rosenberg indicated our ordinance indicates there is no placement of signs on Borough property. Mr. Gural indicated we allow the athletic organizations to place signs on the backstops and fences at Legion Field.

Mayor Tait indicated we have already spoken about the Tax Collector vacancy and the inactive liquor license of Villari's Milmarian Restaurant.

#### **ADMINISTRATOR REPORT**

Mr. Gural stated the Budget Workshop will be held on March 28th at 8:00 AM.

Mr. Gural stated he and Mr. Kirchner met again regarding the installation of the two grinder pumps. He indicated they called in our sewer operator and all of them together could not find another manner/ option in which to proceed other than what was presented. Mrs. Jenkins asked if we have an idea of what the future maintenance cost will be on those two pumps. Mr. Gural stated Mr. Kirchner is working on that and preparing a maintenance schedule.

Mr. Gural indicated the BURLCO JIF Safety Celebration Kickoff Breakfast is March 5<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 AM at Old York Country Club in Chesterfield, looking for as many as possible to attend.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Brandon Allmond – Communications & Public Relations; Board of Education** – Mr. Allmond stated he had nothing additional to add to his report. Mr. Allmond welcomed the new student representatives and thanked them for coming and volunteering to serve.

**Laura Cloud- Green Team** – Dr. Cloud indicated she had nothing additional to add to the Green Team report.

**Farrah Jenkins – Administration & Finance** – Mrs. Jenkins indicated she had nothing additional to add to her report.

**Michelle McCann– Public Buildings, Parks & Grounds; Youth Recreation** – Mrs. McCann indicated the Public Buildings Parks & Grounds committee will be meeting next week.

**Bernadette Russell – Construction, Code Enforcement, and Business Community & Development Shade Tree-** Mrs. Russell indicated she had nothing to report for shade tree and everything has already been covered for Construction, Code enforcement and Business development.

**President Howard – Public Safety & Municipal Court; Public Works & Sewer** – Mr. Howard indicated he had nothing additional to report from his committees.

**Mayor Ragomo-Tait – Redevelopment & Negotiations** – Mayor Tait indicated the Black History Month Celebration was held at the community center on Sunday, featuring the Universal African Dance and Drum Ensemble. Mayor Tait indicated the performance was fantastic. Mayor Tait thanked the Community Center staff and Michele Sykes for engaging the performers.

Mayor Tait asked for a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Allmond made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Russell second the motion.

**All voted in favor of the motion. Motion Carried**

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Doretha R Jackson, RMC  
Municipal Clerk