

Borough of Palmyra
Council Caucus Meeting Minutes
Monday June 1st, 2020

The Regular Council Meeting of the Borough Council of the Borough of Palmyra was called to order by Mayor Tait at 6:33 PM

ROLL CALL

At the call of the roll:

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

The pledge of Allegiance was recited.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS STATEMENT

Mayor Tait read the following into the record:

In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq., and in consideration of Executive Order No. 103, issued by Governor Murphy on March 9, 2020, declaring a State of Emergency and a Public Health Emergency in the State of New Jersey, the Borough of Palmyra does hereby notify the public that to protect the health, safety and welfare of our citizens while ensuring the continued functioning of government, the meeting of the Mayor and Council will be a Virtual Council Meeting. Members of the public are invited to “attend” the Virtual Council Meeting but all members of the public participating in the meeting may be muted and their video image disabled. Notice of this meeting was published in the Burlington County Times on January 9th, 2020 and notification was sent to the Burlington County Times on May 26th, 2020. Notice was posted on the Municipal Door, Official Bulletin Board and the Borough of Palmyra Website and electronic signs on May 26th, 2020 and notice was given to all Council Members.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Tait requested a motion for approval of the, May 18th, 2020 Regular Council Meeting Minutes.

Mrs. Russell made a motion to approve the minutes from the, May 18th, 2020 Regular Council Meeting. President Howard second the motion.

At the call of the roll the vote was:

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

AGAINST: None

Motion Carried

CORRESPONDENCE

Municipal Clerk, Ms. Jackson acknowledged the following correspondence received:

Thank-You Note received from the Horan Family

REDEVELOPMENT

Rt. 73 South Redevelopment Area- Update

Mr. Gural indicated Stock Development has completed the Geo Tech excavations on the National Amusements property and we were able to get them on the CDF facility at the Nature Cove for Geo Tech testing also. Mr. Gural indicated all the testing looks positive and the developer will be finishing his due diligence and get to the Redevelopment Agreement.

Outlaw Training & Fitness/620-622 Highland Ave Redevelopment Project – Update

Mr. Brewer indicated we are still waiting for the commissioners to set the date for the hearing.

Redevelopment Study Block 80 Lot 6, former Knights of Columbus property

Mr. Brewer stated Mr. Gerken has completed a draft report, and there are a few things which need to be finalized to complete the report; which will then be presented to the Land Use Board for consideration. Mr. Brewer indicated it would most likely be heard at the July meeting of the Land Use Board. Mrs. Russell asked if the draft could be discussed. Mr. Brewer indicated it is a draft and until finalized they would not be comfortable with that. Mr. Rosenberg stated the report is for the Land Use Board; the governing body will not get it until the Land Use Board has heard it and rendered a decision for the governing body.

PROFESSIONAL UPDATES

William Kirchner indicated the Public Road Pump Station Elimination Project bids we just received and reviewed. Mr. Kirchner stated there were seven bidders and bids came in within \$1,000.00 of this estimate. Mr. Kirchner indicated the bid with both alternates one and two total \$905,833.50. Mr. Kirchner indicated the resolution for award is on the agenda tonight. Mr. Kirchner indicated the paving portion of the project will go out to bid shortly. Mr. Kirchner indicated we also received DOT approval of the non-TAP portion of the Temple Blvd Project. Mr. Kirchner explained how the funding has been acquired for the Temple Blvd Project and the various portions each funding source will be used for. Mr. Kirchner stated he has been working on the DOT grant for 5th and Race Street Project and is hoping to have the submission to DOT for plan approval within the week and as soon as we have that approval of those plans and specs it will go out to bid. Mr. Rosenberg asked Mr. Kirchner if he was familiar with Coastline's qualifications. Mr. Kirchner indicated he was and the company had completed projects for him before, in other municipalities.

Mr. Gerken then updated the governing body on the report he sent regarding the status of the various grants and planning projects going on in town. Mr. Gerken noted the application for Municipal Aid to DOT for a grant would apply to Spring Garden Street from Walnut Street to Park Avenue and is

almost ready for submission. Mr. Gerkens noted the application to the US Economic Development Administration Public Works program to assist the redeveloper with the sewer connection for the Southside of Rt. 73. Mr. Gerkens noted it would be a significant amount of money and the redeveloper is paying for the development of the application. Mr. Kirchner indicated the cost for the sewer connection could be more than a million dollars. Mr. Gerkens indicated the redevelopment study for the Knights of Columbus building should be ready for public hearing at the July Land Use Board Meeting. Mr. Gerkens indicated he is working on the update to the Land Use Element of the Master Plan of the Borough of Palmyra noting it should be complete by September. Mr. Gerkens also stated that once the redeveloper is under contract the Southside Rt. 73 redevelopment plan will need to be revised. Mr. Gerkens stated the Borough's housing obligation for COAH will have a completeness hearing sometime this fall.

PUBLIC COMMENT

We requested those participants wishing to have or make a Public comment, email their questions or comments in advance to Municipal Clerk Rita Jackson at djackson@boroughofpalmyra.com. The opportunity to submit comments prior to meeting expired at 12:00 PM on Monday June 1st, 2020. All comments will become part of the record and included with the Meeting Minutes.

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

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

Municipal Clerk Doretha Jackson read the following comment submitted into the record:

Maggie Dougherty- Park Avenue

I intend to join the virtual borough council meeting this evening however, I wanted to submit to you my thoughts on going forward with reopening of the park tavern. We have been in business for 38 years and, as all bars and restaurants in the state, have been closed for almost 3 months. Although the people who frequent the park tavern are our customers, they are also our friends as well as neighbors in our Palmyra community and we are committed to reopening in the safest possible manner.

However, we do not want to be left behind when reopening is eventually permitted and larger establishments in neighboring communities are given the green light for operation. As it seems to be that outdoor establishments will be allowed to be opened in the relatively near future, we wanted to express our interest in using our porches and parking area to conduct our business. Since the state is allowing flexibility to establishments concerning their licensed areas, we would like to know what the Township would consider allowing or recommended for us. We have a large property which could accommodate with very minor alteration an enclosed outdoor area for people to gather while respecting social distancing requirements. We feel that these adjustments are necessary in order for our business to remain viable during these unprecedented times. I am available to discuss this with council and welcome their ideas or suggestions on how to make this happen.

Mayor Tait indicated she also had a conversation with Mr. Oberg regarding the same matter.

Mr. Oberg – Broad Street – Mr. Oberg indicated 5 West was closed for almost the last three months. Mr. Oberg indicated during that time they made some improvements to the facility. Mr. Oberg indicated they opened for take-out but that too has slowed. Mr. Oberg indicated this new temporary permit will benefit his business and he was hoping to get some guidance into what they would be able to do. Mr. Gural suggested the governing body form a committee to reach out to Mr. Oberg and Ms. Dougherty regarding this issue and get their ideas as to what they would like to do; once that committee has received the information they can bring it back to the governing body to determine how we could, if we could, help with those ideas. Mr. Gural explained the new temporary permit that ABC may be offering to the governing body. Mrs. Russell indicated she was willing to work with that committee. Mrs. Jenkins and President Howard indicated they would also be willing to sit on that committee. Chief Pearlman indicated he too would like to help as he was sure if and when the permit was available a police department signoff would be required. Mr. Oberg indicated that he and Maggie have been in contact and are talking about a plan which would be similar so as not to hinder the Borough but would work for them as well as the other business in town who would like to do this. Mrs. Russell indicated location is a huge part of the plan in determining what could be done at each location. Mr. Oberg indicated that the time it would be permitted is also important as we are located near residential areas. Mrs. Jenkins indicated Mr. Oberg and Ms. Dougherty need to get together and get their plan/ideas to us so the governing body can put together something for the next meeting which will be in two weeks. Chief Pearlman suggested and council agreed that all plans and ideas should be sent to Rita Jackson, the Municipal Clerk to be dispensed to the members of the committee and all other necessary staff so that comments and recommendations can be presented to the entire governing body at the next meeting for consideration.

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, President Howard second the motion.
All members present voted in favor of the motion. Motion Carried

ORDINANCES public hear to be held June 15th, 2020

Ordinance 2020-05 An Ordinance of the Borough of Palmyra, County of Burlington, State of New Jersey, Appropriating the sum of \$22,000.00 now Available from the Capital Improvement Fund for Laptops with Secure Remote Access Implementation Improvements.

Mayor Tait asked if there was any discussion or questions. Seeing none, Mayor Tait requested of motion to approve Ordinance 2020-05. Mrs. Russell made a motion to approve Ordinance 2020-05. President Howard seconded the motion.

At the call of the roll, the vote was:

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

AGAINST: None

Motion Carried, Ordinance 2020-05 was approved.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution **2020-128** and Resolution **2020-129** will be enacted as a single motion, if either resolution needs additional discussion it will be removed from the consent agenda and voted on separately. Mayor Tait asked if anything needed to be removed. No one requesting anything be removed, Mayor Tait read the following resolutions into the record:

Resolution 2020-128, Resolution Appointing Tanyika Johns, as Interim Tax Collector for the Borough of Palmyra Working Part-time with office hours on Monday evenings for the amount of \$15,000.00.

Resolution 2020-129, Resolution Awarding a Contract to Coastline Construction, LLC for the Sanitary Sewer Replacement (For Public Road Pump Station Elimination) Project Per ERI's Recommendation of Award Letter Dated May 27th, 2020 in the amount of \$905,833.50.

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve resolutions 2020-128 thru 2020-129. Mrs. Russell made a motion to approve Resolutions 2020-128 thru 2020-129. President Howard seconded the motion.

At the call of the roll, the vote was:

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

AGAINST: None

Motion Carried, Resolution 2020-128 thru 2020-129 were approved.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mr. Gural indicated Mr. Gerkens gave an overview of the COAH Settlement Agreement with the Fair Share Housing Center during his presentation noting that this deals with our third-round obligation.

Mr. Gural indicated the new obligation is between 102 and 116 units.

Mr. Gural indicated he spoke with Sgt. Leusner regarding the Collective Bargaining Agreement with Palmyra Police Association and the potential one-year extension with 2% ATB increases. Sgt. Leusner indicated he would speak with the unit and get back to him. Mr. Gural stated he has not yet had a reply from Sgt. Leusner.

Mr. Gural stated he and the staff have had some discussions regarding the staff returning and re-opening of the building to the public. Mr. Gural indicated he forwarded some staff suggestions to the governing body and although we do not have the go ahead from the governor; we are making arrangements to do this process in steps. Mr. Gural indicated first to bring back the staff to a greater degree and then to begin to open to the public. Mr. Gural indicated various proposals will be presented at a later date for consideration of the governing body.

Mr. Gural indicated due to the decision to close the community center for the summer and not knowing when we would be ready to open that building to the public; we are returning the pre-paid community center usage fees and security deposits. Mr. Gural indicated Mrs. Sykes has prepared a listing of the various amounts and with the finance department will be returning those amounts to the

various organizations. Mr. Gural indicated we will be essentially starting over when we reopen the center. Mr. Gural noted with the changes to the ordinance regarding the fields and usage of them; the community center usage should also be revisited to incorporate any needed changes due to the current circumstances with Covid-19. President Howard indicated he would work with his committee on the ordinance updates.

Mr. Gural explained we have had some issues with the response time with the Animal Control Officers. Mr. Gural noted this is an annual shared service contract we have with Willingboro Township. Mr. Gural indicated there is a means by which we can withdraw from that contract if we so desire, noting that we pay them \$14,000.00 a year to provide those services but we are required to provide 30 days' notice. Mr. Gural also noted there is a qualified local company that performs that very same service that we use to use before we entered into that shared service agreement. Mr. Gural indicated he and Chief Pearlman are setting up a meeting with that company and will have additional information at the next meeting. Mrs. Russell asked if there would be additional discussion in executive session. Mr. Rosenberg indicated yes. Mrs. Russell indicated she was concerned about the inadequate response time. Chief Pearlman explained the various problems and staffing issues Willingboro is currently experiencing. Mr. Gural indicated the revenues that Willingboro is receiving from the other municipalities and the Borough in the shared service agreement more than cover the cost expenditures they are putting out for the share service agreement; they need to hire additional staff.

Mr. Gural stated that we usually adopt the Capital and Sewer Bond Ordinances in late August or September, however we are trying to expedite those funding mechanisms due to the road improvement projects which need to be funded. Mr. Gural indicated he forwarded under separate email, the capital improvements projects that were approved during the budget process. He indicated things can be changed or amended before adoption of the Capital and Sewer Bond Ordinances are approved. Mr. Gural indicated we only want to do this once as it is costly process. Mr. Gural indicated we would like to introduce at the next meeting June 15th, 2020 and adopt on July 20th, 2020. Mr. Gural indicated we will need your feedback in the next couple of days so that we can have bond counsel prepare the ordinances for introduction.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mrs. Russell stated that in light of everything that has transpired during the past week everyone needs to take a step back and respect one another.

Mrs. McCann - no comment

Dr. Cloud -no comment

Mrs. Jenkins – Mrs. Jenkins indicated the admin and finance committee would like to set up a meeting with Mr. Gural to discuss some of the items on the capital budget which was sent to us. Mr. Gural indicated to let him know when they wished to meet.

Mr. Allmond - no comment

President Howard indicated he, Mr. Gural, Chief Pearlman, Lt. Campbell and Mayor Tait met today to discuss what was going on in New Jersey, the county and our neighborhoods in light of the many protests that have been going on around the country. President Howard also noted the candle light service being held virtually for Mr. George Floyd.

Mayor Tait indicated the Attorney General's office is holding a virtual town hall meeting on Wednesday June 3rd, 2020 at noon.

There was some discussion regarding the recent events going on around in the country regarding protests and diversity in the country.

Mayor Tait asked Mr. Gural and Mr. Rosenberg if there were items for closed session. Mr. Gural indicated yes.

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve resolution 2020-130.

Resolution 2020-130 Resolution Excluding the Public from Certain Meetings Pursuant To Section 8 of the Open Public Meeting Act C. 231 P. L. 1975 for matters relating to:

Litigation, Contracts, Personnel

Mrs. Russell made a motion to approve Resolution 2020-130. President Howard seconded the motion.

At the call of the roll, the vote was:

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

AGAINST: None

Motion Carried, Resolution 2020-130 was approved

Mr. Gural explained the process and noted that we would return to this meeting, after the executive session and indicated it would be about an hour.

Borough Council went into closed session at 7:43 pm

Borough Council returned from closed session at: 9:29 pm

Mayor Tait requested a motion to open to the public. Mrs. Russell made a motion to re-open the meeting to the public. President Howard second the motion

All voted in favor of the motion. Motion Carried

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Tait asked for a motion to adjourn.

Dr. Cloud made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Russell second the motion.

All voted in favor of the motion. Motion Carried

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Doretha R Jackson, RMC

Municipal Clerk