

Borough of Palmyra
Council Caucus Meeting Minutes
Monday December 7th, 2020

The Council Caucus Meeting of the Borough Council of the Borough of Palmyra was called to order by Mayor Tait at 6:32 PM

ROLL CALL

At the call of the roll:

PRESENT: Brandon Allmond, Michelle McCann, President Timothy Howard, Mayor Gina Ragomo Tait

ABSENT: Laura Cloud, Farrah Jenkins, Bernadette Russell

The pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mrs. Russell joined the meeting at 6:34

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, and in response to Executive Order No. 196 issued by Governor Murphy on November 16 2020 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 November 19, 2020. Notice was posted on the Municipal Door, Official Bulletin Board and the Borough of Palmyra Website and electronic signs on November 19, 2020 and notice was given to all Council Members.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Tait requested a motion for approval of the November 16th, 2020 Regular Council Meeting and November 16th, 2020 Executive Meeting Minutes.

Mrs. Russell made a motion to approve the minutes from the, November 16th, 2020 Regular Council Meeting and November 16th, 2020 Executive Meeting Minutes. President Howard second the motion.

At the call of the roll the vote was:

INFAVOR: Mr. Allmond, Mrs. McCann, Mrs. Russell, President Howard

AGAINST: None

Mrs. Jenkins joined the meeting at 6:37

CORRESPONDENCE

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

Letter received from Fred J. DeAndrea – Senior Director of Government & Regulatory Affairs of Comcast

Email received from Charlie Soper- Pastor of Epworth United Methodist Church

Letter received from Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti Commissioner, N.J. Department of Transportation

Email received from Tiziana A. Johnson of Division of Local Government Services

Letter received from Phillip Khezri of Lowenstein Sandler, LLP

Dr. Cloud joined the meeting at 6:41

Mr. Rosenberg stated, about the letter received from Phillip Khezri; he received a memo from Keith Bongee, the foreclosure council for Fillit which indicates based upon his examination of the law this should not be an impediment to Palmyra acting however he would like some time to investigate the matter himself as the consequences of going against the stay would be against the Borough not Mr. Bongee. Mr. Rosenberg asked the governing body to put resolution 2020-222 off until the next meeting. The governing body agreed.

REDEVELOPMENT

Rt. 73 South Redevelopment Area- Update

Mr. Gural stated the most paramount item presently is Fillit's filing of bankruptcy petition on November 30, 2020. Mr. Gural noted that essentially holds in stay the special master sheriff sale that was scheduled for December 2, 2020, the environmental justice litigation brought by DEP and the assignment of the tax lien certificate. Mr. Gural indicated Mr. Rosenberg would have more information in closed session. Mr. Gural indicated the attorney for fair share housing center agreed to the 60-day extension.

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

Mr. Gural stated he nothing new to report at this time.

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

Mr. Gural stated the Land Use Board adopted their resolution 2020-09 on November 18th, 2020 recommending that Block 80 Lot 6 be designated as an area in need of condemnation area in need of redevelopment. Mr. Gural stated the next step is for the governing body to adopt the resolution

designating Block 80 Lot 6 as an area in need of redevelopment. Mr. Brewer added the property owner should be notified and the next step was to develop a redevelopment plan for Block 80 Lot 6.

PROFESSIONAL UPDATES

William Kirchner, ERI

Mr. Kirchner stated the contractor on the 2020 Road project has completed the road work on Walnut and Pear Streets and NJ American Water completed the paving on Walnut and Pear Streets last week. Mr. Kirchner noted the contractor will be moving over to Leconey, Oregon, Second, Virginia and Maryland but are currently held up waiting for street plates which should be in by the 14th of December. Mr. Kirchner stated the contractor is preparing the traffic control plans for the Temple Blvd project and should have them in within the next week or so. Mr. Kirchner indicated the 5th and Race Streets project is still on hold pending the school being in session. Mr. Kirchner indicated NJ American water is still working on main replacements on Charles, Walnut, Hubbs, Henry and Park Avenue. Mr. Kirchner stated work at the sewer plant has been ongoing, noting the valve repairs have been completed for the bypass and are hoping to have the eq valve repaired this week. Mr. Kirchner indicated the street opening permit is in from the county for the Public Road elimination project and by the end of week the pump station will no longer be in use.

PUBLIC COMMENT

We requested those participants wishing to have or make a Public comment, email their questions or comments in advance to Borough Clerk Rita Jackson at djackson@boroughofpalmyra.com. The opportunity to submit comments prior to meeting expired at 12:00 PM on Monday December 7th, 2020. All comments submitted will become part of the record and included with the Meeting Minutes. For those who chose to “attend” the Virtual Meeting, Mayor Tait opened the meeting to the public for comments. Comments should be limited to no more than (2) two minutes. All comments will become part of the record and included with the Meeting Minutes.

Mayor Tait asked for a motion to open the public comment 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

Mayor Tait asked if any comments were received before the meeting.

Municipal Clerk, Ms. Jackson indicated no comments were received prior to the meeting.

Mayor Tait asked for comments from those attending the meeting.

No one wishing to make comments Mayor Tait requested a motion to close the public comment 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

ORDINANCE ON SECOND READING Public Hearing

Ordinance 2020-10 An Ordinance of the Borough of Palmyra to Provide for and Determine the Rates and Ranges of Compensation of Each Employee and Officer of the Borough of Palmyra for Years 2021 and 2022. This Ordinance Expires December 31st, 2022 Unless Otherwise Amended.

Mayor Tait asked for a motion to open the public hearing for Ordinance 2020-10. Mrs. Russell made a motion to open to the public for hearing Ordinance 2020-10. President Howard second the motion.

All members present voted in favor of the motion.

Seeing no comments, Mayor Tait asked for a motion to close the public hearing of Ordinance 2020-10. Mrs. Russell made a motion to close the public hearing of Ordinance 2020-10. President Howard second the motion.

All members present voted in favor of the motion.

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve Ordinance 2020-10. Mr. Allmond made a motion to approve Ordinance 2020-10. Mrs. Russell second the motion.

At the call of the roll:

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

AGAINST: None

Motion Carried. Ordinance 2020-10 was approved.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 2020-222, Resolution Authorizing Assignment of Municipal Tax Lien Certificates was tabled to next meeting at the request of Mr. Rosenberg.

Mayor Tait asked if any resolution needed to be pulled from the resolution consent agenda. Borough Council indicated no. Resolutions **2020-223** and Resolution **2020-232** were enacted as a single motion.

Mayor Tait read the following resolutions into the record:

Resolution 2020-223, Resolution Authorizing a Refund of Various Overpayments

Resolution 2020-224, Resolution Awarding Change Order #1 to Coastline Construction LLC for the Sanitary Sewer Replacement/Public Road Elimination Project Resulting in a Decrease Amount of \$4,500.00 for a new Adjusted Contract Price of \$901,333.50 per ERI's Letter Dated October 26, 2020

Resolution 2020-225, Resolution Approving the Place-to-Place transfer of Plenary Retail Distribution License number #0327-44-004-005 for HARIKRISHNA Liquors Inc.

Resolution 2020-226, Resolution Authorizing the Chief Financial Officer to Make Budget Transfers to the 2020 Budget

Resolution 2020-227, Resolution Authorizing the Purchase of Paper Vision Capture Software System thru Accu-Scan Digital for record retention of the Borough of Palmyra Per proposal dated July 30, 2020 in the amount of \$38,250.00; this being a Capital Item Exceeding \$15,000.00.

Resolution 2020-228, Resolution Authorizing the Finance Officer to Pay Vendor Bills During the Month of December 2020

Resolution 2020-229, Resolution Authorizing the Cancellation of Outstanding Checks from the Borough of Palmyra Payroll Account

Resolution 2020-230, Resolution Authorizing the Cancellation of Outstanding Checks from the Borough of Palmyra Current Fund Account

Resolution 2020-231, Resolution Authorizing the Cancellation of Grant Appropriations and Grant Receivables

Resolution 2020-232, Resolution of the Borough of Palmyra Designating Block 80 Lot 6 Within the Borough as a Condemnation Area in Need of Redevelopment

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve resolutions 2020-223 thru 2020-232. Mr. Allmond made a motion to approve Resolutions 2020-223 thru 2020-232. Mrs. Russell seconded the motion.

At the call of the roll:

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

AGAINST: None

Motion Carried. Resolutions 2020-223 thru Resolution 2020-232 were approved.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mayor Tait thanked the Fire Department and Mr. Jamerson for doing such a wonderful job with the Santa Visit. Mayor Tait indicated the holiday decorations in the park and on Broad Street are awesome, and she thanked Councilwomen Jenkins for doing a great job on that project.

Mayor Tait indicated the Borough of Palmyra is now up to 247 cases with 5 deaths. Please continue to wear masks and take precautions. Mr. Gural indicated all offices are closed tomorrow as we will be having a deep cleaning of the building and borough vehicles as well. Mr. Gural indicated another inspector is out as he may have been exposed to covid-19. Mr. Gural spoke about the new executive orders issued and our response to them. There was some additional discussion regarding covid-19 the cleaning of the building and surface vs. airborne spreading of the virus.

Mr. Gural indicated a tentative date has been scheduled to begin the negotiation process.

Mr. Gural stated the deadline was late November for requests for the purchase of Borough-owned lots. Mr. Gural noted the process of making those sales is by way of ordinances as Mr. Rosenberg advised, so those sales will take place next year. Mr. Gural indicated the general obligation bond sale went very smoothly, noting the sale of 6.7 million in funds which were bonded at a rate of 1.4389%. Mr. Gural indicated we are in an incredibly good position financially, however there will still be the need for a sewer rate increase.

Mayor Tait indicated the reorganization meeting date will be Monday January 4th, 2021 at 6:30 pm. Mayor Tait and the governing body agreed there will be no need for the December 21st, 2020 Council Meeting as all matters have been taken care of for the year.

Mr. Gural indicated the 2021 budget worksheets have been disbursed to the department heads with instructions for return deadlines. Mr. Gural stated he would keep everyone aware as we proceed. Mr. Gural stated because of all the precautions we took with the budget this year we did not exceed the budget and we will be able to return some amount of money to surplus. He however noted that the sewer utility fee increase that we have been putting off for many years, we will not be able to put off any longer. Mr. Gural explained the effects of covid-19 on the water usage within the Borough. Mr. Gural stated they were also looking into adjusting the way the rates are calculated.

Mr. Gural stated that we received information from the Palmyra Senior Citizens Program, President Marva Jones, noting that they will be dissolving their program and are donating all the equipment, etc. to the Community Center/Borough. Mr. Gural stated he had also heard from other members who would like to see the program continue and the Borough run the program. Mr. Gural indicated that currently we are not able to run the program but would assist them if they decided to put together a program. Mr. Gural stated that the governing body may wish to consider a program or helping in the future.

Mayor Tait indicated she, Mr. Gural, Mr. Allmond and Mrs. Jenkins met with Mr. Leavy of the Board of Education regarding what would be happening with the affordable housing in the redevelopment project. Mayor Tait noted that we are in litigation with the fair share housing and as things move along, we will keep them aware of what is happening.

Mr. Gural indicated the Juvenile Justice Commission Grant is one we apply for every year and use to run the summer camp program. Mr. Gural stated Mr. Gerken attended a mandatory meeting to keep us in compliance should we reapply for it again, noting currently it is complicated as we may or may not be able to have a summer camp program this upcoming year. There was some discussion regarding the summer camp program and our ability to host it. After that discussion, the governing body decided we would not be applying for the grant. Mr. Gural indicated the 2021 Local Efficiency Achievement Program Grant had just opened and Mr. Gerken asked if this were something, we would be interested in, noting it is funding regarding studies to investigate shared services. Mr. Gural indicated it could be a very worthwhile funding source. Mayor Tait asked if the Broad Street traffic study could be used for the funding. Mr. Gural stated he would ask Mr. Gerken. Mayor Tait stated she would call the Mayor of Riverton and see if there was something we could work together on, noting she would get back to council.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Yansick – Mr. Yansick reported that the School district will be going fully virtual until January 11th, 2021. Mr. Yansick stated the National Honor Society of Palmyra High School will be making appreciation/holiday cards for the hospital staff and first responders.

ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

Mr. Gural indicated the NJ Local Government Emergency Fund Grant Application is being amended by Ms. Condo and Me. Gerkens.

Mr. Gural stated the Senior Freeze has been extended to 12/31/2020. Mr. Gural stated they can call the tax office with questions.

Mr. Gural indicated an amendment to the state constitution was approved by ballot vote and provides the honorable discharged Veterans residing in the state or their surviving spouses no longer need to serve during a specific war period or other emergency to receive the annual two-hundred-fifty property tax deduction. Mr. Gural stated the application is available on our website or they can call the tax office with questions.

Mr. Gural stated the RFP/RFQ proposals have been submitted and Ms. Jackson has forwarded the list and prepared thumb drives with copies of the proposals that are in your mailboxes, anyone wishing to view the hard copy of any of them can view them in the clerk's office. Mr. Gural noted they are for appointment at the reorganization meeting.

Mr. Gural indicated the Tax Sale report is included in your packets.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Dr. Cloud -no comment

Mrs. Jenkins wished everyone a Happy and Safe Holiday.

Mr. Allmond wished everyone a Happy Holiday and thanked the entire staff for all their efforts of keeping the Borough going throughout this year during the pandemic.

Mrs. McCann wished everyone a Great Holiday and urged everyone to stay safe.

Mrs. Russell wished everyone a Happy Holiday and asked everyone to stay safe, noting she had five children in her class test positive for covid-19.

President Howard wished everyone a Happy Holiday and thanked the administrative staff for all their work in keeping the Borough functioning this year.

Mayor Tait asked everyone to have a Safe and Happy Holiday. Mayor Tait thanked Mr. Gural, Ms. Jackson, Ms. Condo, and Mr. McGill and public works for all their work this year. Mayor Tait thanked the Borough staff for all their efforts in keeping the Borough functioning thru this pandemic.

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

Mayor Tait asked for a motion to approved **Resolution 2020-233** 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 with Fillit, contract negotiations with PURE**

Mrs. Russell made a motion to approve Resolution 2020-233. President Howard second the motion.

At the call of the roll:

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

AGAINST: None

Motion Carried. Resolution 2020-233 was approved

Borough Council went into closed session at 8:10 pm

Borough Council returned from closed session at: 8:53 pm

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

All voted in favor of the motion. Motion Carried

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 8:56 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Doretha R Jackson, RMC

Municipal Clerk