

Borough of Palmyra
Virtual Regular Council Meeting Minutes
Monday March 15th, 2021 at 6:30 pm

The Regular Council 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, Laura Cloud, Michelle McCann, Bernadette Russell, Mayor Gina Ragomo
Tait

ABSENT: Farrah Jenkins. President Timothy Howard

The pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mrs. Jenkins joined the meeting at 6:35

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. Please be advised 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 12th, 2021. Notice was posted on the Municipal Door, Official Bulletin Board, and electronic signs on March 5th, 2021. Notice was also posted on the Borough of Palmyra Website on March 11th, 2021 and notice was given to all Council Members.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Tait requested a motion for approval of the March 1st, 2021 2021 Council Caucus Meeting Minutes. Mrs. Russell made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 1st, 2021 Council Caucus Meeting Minutes. Mrs. McCann 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

CORRESPONDENCE

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

E-mail – Joe Riley

Letter – Danielle Scoleri, Planning Board Engineer- County of Burlington

REDEVELOPMENT

Rt. 73 South Redevelopment Area- Update

Mr. Gural stated Mr. Rosenberg forwarded a report to the governing body earlier in the day regarding the request of the redeveloper for the governing body to consider a pilot on the affordable housing component of the redevelopment project. Mr. Gural noted, our response was that if considered it could not have any negative affect on the Borough. Mr. Gural explained. Mr. Gural noted he and Mr. Rosenberg were working diligently on the PILOT for the warehouse component of the project and would have additional information later.

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

Mr. Gural indicated he had no current update regarding the redevelopment project.

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

Mr. Gural stated the governing body adopted of the Redevelopment Plan for Blk 80 Lot 6 at the last meeting and he noted the property has been sold but had nothing further to report.

PROFESSIONAL UPDATES

William Kirchner, ERI

Mr. Kirchner indicated that construction has begun on the Temple Blvd Road Improvement project. Mr. Kirchner stated the Bride Commission let us use two sign boards which were put in place last week. Mr. Kirchner stated that around the 22nd on March traffic will begin to be re-routed and they will be installing storm drains. Mr. Kirchner noted the local asphalt company has re-opened, so the contractor is looking at getting the milling and paving done on Virginia, Oregon, and Leconey Avenues. Mr. Kirchner stated the 5th and Race Street project is on hold until the school year has ended.

Mayor Tait indicated in attendance with us tonight are the PHS Student Representatives. Andrew Yansick, Senior PHS Student Representative reported that beginning March 29th, 2021 the school would be moving into more of a in person schedule, that the students would be going in four days a week, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, he noted Wednesday would be a cleaning day for the school and the

students would be remote. Mr. Yansick noted they are beginning the planning of the PHS Jr. Sr. Prom which the students are looking forward to. Mayor Tait asked Mr. Yansick, PHS Sr. Student Rep to introduce the new PHS Jr. Student Representative. Mr. Yansick introduced Cody McCann, PHS Jr. Student Representative. Cody McCann stated he plays soccer, tennis and is in various clubs at Palmyra High School, noting he is looking forward to starting this new opportunity. Elizabeth Lake, PHS Senior Student Representative reported that spring sports have started at Palmyra High School and are going well. Ms. Lake noted that the Panthers with Heart Club has delivered 100 care packages to a Valley Youth Homeless shelter in Philadelphia, and they are planning to continue the project at least four times thru out the year. Ms. Lake then introduced Naomi Caban the new PHS Jr. Student Representative. Ms. Caban indicated she plays tennis and is in various clubs at Palmyra High School and is excited also to begin this new opportunity. Mayor Tait indicated she would be reaching out to the students in the near future regarding the vaccine registration project.

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve Cody McCann and Naomi Caban as the PHS Junior Student Representatives to Borough Council.

Mrs. Russell made a motion to approve the motion and Mr. Allmond Second the motion.

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

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 March 15th, 2021. All comments will become part of the record and included with the Meeting Minutes.

For those who “attended” the Virtual Meeting, Mayor Tait opened the meeting to the public for comments. All comments are part of the record and are included with the Meeting Minutes.

Mayor Tait asked for a motion to open to the Public for comments.

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 if there were any additional comments from those present.

Ms. Veitenheimer- Rowland Street – Ms. Veitenheimer stated she received the letter with her new sewer bill which indicted the residential rates were increased. Ms. Veitenheimer asked if the commercial rates were also increased. Mr. Gural indicated all rates were increased approximately 10%,

including the commercial rates. Ms. Veitenheimer asked what was going on with the potholes and repairs in town noting they are a number of very large potholes. Mayor Tait indicated those repairs can now take

place noting that the asphalt company had re-opened, as the cold patch that was being used was just not holding up.

Mr. Scanlan – Morgan Avenue – Mr. Scanlan indicated his concern with the proposed new Fortress Energy and Delaware Rivers Partners export terminal in Glassberg County where they export fracked gas overseas. Mr. Scanlan noted the gas would be extracted in North East Pennsylvania and would be transported 200 miles by truck out to Gibbstown thru populated communities like Palmyra. Mr. Scanlan noted that some of the proposed maps go thru Palmyra. Mr. Scanlan indicated Governor Murphy can stop the project, but he needed to hear from people along the exposed communities. Mr. Scanlan urged the governing body to reach out to the Governor by resolution to reject the Gibbstown Logistics Center Export Terminal project. Mayor Tait asked him to forward the information to her so she could look into it before calling the Governor.

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

RESOLUTIONS

Mayor Tait stated **Resolution 2021-106 and Resolution 2021-107** 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 either resolution needed to be removed from the consent agenda. Seeing none

Mayor Tait read the following resolutions into the record:

Resolution 2021-106, Resolution Approving LOSAP Eligible Volunteers for 2020 in Accordance with Chapter 21: A1 of the Code of the Borough of Palmyra Entitled “Fire Department Length of Service Awards Point System”

Resolution 2021-107, Resolution Authorizing the Payment of March 2021 Bills in the Amount of \$1,249,307.25

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve Resolution 2021-106 and Resolution 2021-107.

Mrs. Russell made a motion to approve Resolution 2021-106 and Resolution 2021-107. 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. Resolutions 2021-106 and Resolution 2021-107 were approved

MOTION TO APPROVE TREASURERS' REPORTS

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve the Treasurer's Reports for November 2020, December 2020, and January 2021. Mrs. Russell made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Reports for November 2020, December 2020, and January 2021. Dr. Cloud second the motion.

At the call of the roll:

INEAVOR: Mr. Allmond, Dr. Cloud, Mrs. Jenkins, Mrs. McCann, Mrs. Russell

AGAINST: None

Motion Carried. Treasurers Reports was approved.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mr. Gural stated we are working with a presume re-opening date of May 1, 2021 on a limited basis for Borough Hall.

Mayor Tait indicated the Field usage Ordinance will be delayed as there still needs to be some changes made to it.

Mr. Gural indicated we are remarkably close to a settlement with the Collective Bargaining Agreement with Palmyra Police Association, noting he forward several documents to the governing body and there are a few minor items they are still working on.

Mayor Tait indicated she spoke with Congressman Norcross's office last week and they noted that we are due some funding from the American Rescue Plan/Act. Mayor Tait noted she is looking into the program and parameters and as soon as she has additional information, she will forward it to everyone.

Mr. Gural indicated he and Mr. McGill interviewed several candidates for the Public Works vacancy and is hoping to have additional information for the governing body at the next meeting after the budget workshop.

Chief Campbell indicated they will be holding interviews on the 29th and 30th, of March for the Police Department vacancies. Chief Campbell noted she would have additional information following that process.

Mr. Gural indicated the Purchase Orders - Council signature requirement and Sidewalk/snow & ice removal ordinance are on the agenda until we can address them after the budget. Mayor Tait reminded council that purchase orders are in the conference room that need to be signed.

Mr. Gural indicated Ms. Kilmer forwarded a letter received from the State to him which he forwarded to the governing body regarding another Sober Living Facility application filed at the State for 600 W 6th Street, Unit B. Mr. Gural noted he is not aware of anything which we can do regarding the application.

Mr. Gural noted the information received from Chief Campbell regarding the number of calls to this address and 526 W 6th Street. Mr. Rosenberg noted he is reviewing the sample ordinance provided by Ms. Kilmer regarding this matter and will have a report at the Caucus meeting in April.

Mr. Gural indicated Chief Campbell provided an email dated March 2nd, and Mr. Rosenberg provided an opinion dated March 11, 2021 which also included the legislation and a sample ordinance regarding marijuana legalization. Mr. Gural urged the governing body to read the information noting that a

decision will need to be made. Mr. Rosenberg stated the governing body must make the following decisions; whether it wishes to allow cultivation, distribution, transportation, and/or retail use of marijuana. Mr. Rosenberg noted that if nothing is done by default all the items mentioned will become permitting uses in the Borough of Palmyra for a period of five years. Mr. Rosenberg stated if it is the intention of the Governing Body to exclude any of those items it must be done by Ordinance. Mayor Tait noted that from the signing of the bill by Governor Murphy the Borough has 180 days to make those changes. Mr. Rosenberg agreed. Mayor Tait stated that along with the state tax there is a local 2% tax; if you elect to opt out then the Borough is not eligible for the state or local taxes revenues.

Mr. Gural stated an employee who resigned in January with 20 plus years of service requested his sick time pay out; that employee did not retire. Our policy allows for payment of accrued but unused sick time upon retirement with 20 years of service. Mr. Rosenberg upon review indicated the following: the issue hinges on the meaning of the word retirement, it would seem that retirement could mean one ceasing working for the Borough based upon the required number of years of service or applying for and qualifying for a PERS pension. Mr. Rosenberg also noted: if the employee says they are retiring then they meet the requirements as the policy refers to "retirement", it is up to the employee to decide when and where they apply for a PERS pension. Mr. Rosenberg noted the ambiguity should be resolved in the favor of the employee. Mr. Gural noted he agreed with Mr. Rosenberg and believed the employee should receive his accrued but unused sick time, at the rate of 60% of unused accrued sick time not to exceed \$15,000.00. The Governing body agreed.

Mr. Gural stated he sent everyone information regarding the open position of Code Enforcement Officer, he noted if anyone has questions, they should be in closed session.

Mr. Gural noted that every one of the governing body members needs to attend the JIF Elected Officials Training Seminar noting that the Borough receives \$250.00 deduction from our insurance premium. Mr. Gural noted it is online and urged everyone to sign up for the training and to complete it before May 1, 2021

Mr. Gural noted the need for everyone who works with or around minor children to take the Safe Treatment and Protection of Minors Training Webinar also required to have a criminal background check completed by the Police Department.

Mayor Tait stated that she and Mr. Gural meet with Michelle and Rick Dreby regarding various things which the Harbour feels it needs. Mayor Tait indicated they are working on the list and are pointing them in the direction for resolve the things which we cannot help with. Mr. Gural stated part of the discussion was in regard to the potential dedication of Main Harbour Drive to the Borough. Mr. Gural indicated back in 2016 there was discussion and the beginning of the process of dedication of Main Harbour Drive to the Borough including an engineering study of the roadway to make sure it conforms to current criteria. Mr. Gural noted in 2017 there was a change amongst the Harbour Board, and it seemed they had less interest in the process. Mr. Gural explained also during that time we applied for a grant for improvements to Main Harbour drive for the handicap sidewalk improvements. Mr. Gural stated that because the ownership issue was not resolved we were unable to utilize the funding. Mr. Gural stated he asked Mr.

Kirchner to send him a proposal to looking into the engineering study of the roadway and he should have additional information at the next council meeting in April.

Mr. Gural indicated the sewer bills are in the mail and information has been posted on our website regarding them.

ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

Mr. Gural reminded all that the 2021 Budget Workshop will be held Saturday March 27, 2021 at 8:00 am virtually. Mr. Rosenberg indicated the Roto Cylinders Tax Appeal is ongoing litigation and he will advise the governing body if they are any new developments. Mr. Gural indicated he would forward to the governing body Mr. Rosenberg's report regarding how all other tax appeals were resolved.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mrs. Russell- no comment

Dr Cloud – Dr. Cloud stated dates will be coming soon for the stream clean-ups down at the river.

Mrs. Jenkins – no comment

Mr. Allmond – Mr. Allmond welcomed the new student represents from Palmyra High School.

Mrs. McCann- no comment

Mayor Tait stated our Covid-19 case count is up to 438 with 6 deaths; noting the numbers are still rising. Mayor Tait indicated she and Fire Chief Dreby have set April 17th, 2021 as the date for the covid-19 registration sign-up at the community center. She noted additional information would follow.

Mayor Tait indicated she is working with the health department in regard to getting a vaccine clinic held in Palmyra possibly in May of 2021.

Mayor Tait asked Mr. Gural and Mr. Rosenberg if there were items for closed session. Mr. Gural and Mr. Rosenberg indicated no.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Tait asked for a motion to adjourn.

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

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Doretha R Jackson, RMC Municipal Clerk

Approved: April 5th, 2021