

**Borough of Palmyra**  
**Virtual Council Caucus Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

The Regular Council Meeting of the Borough Council of the Borough of Palmyra was called to order by Mayor Tait at 6:31 pm

**ROLL CALL**

At the call of the roll:

PRESENT: Dr. Laura Cloud, Mrs. Michelle McCann, Mrs. Bernadette Russell, President Timothy Howard, Mayor Gina Ragomo Tait

ABSENT: Mr. Brandon Allmond, Mrs. Farrah Jenkins

The pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS STATEMENT**

Mayor Tait Read the following statement 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. Please be advised the Borough of Palmyra does hereby notify the public that to protect the health, safety, and welfare of our citizens, and to reduce the potential spread of COVID-19 and its variants, 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 “Virtually” (via computer or phone) but all members of the public participating in the meeting virtually may be muted and their video image disabled. Notice of this meeting was published in the Burlington County Times on January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Notice was posted on the Municipal Door, Official Bulletin Board, and electronic signs on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Notice was also posted on the Borough of Palmyra Website on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021, and notice was given to all Council Members.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mayor Tait requested a motion for approval of the November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Regular Council Meeting Minutes.

Mrs. Russell made a motion to approve the Regular Council Meeting Minutes from November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Mrs. McCann second the motion.

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

**INFAVOR: Mrs. McCann, Mrs. Russell, President Howard**

**AGAINST: None**

**ABSTAIN: Dr. Cloud**

**Mrs. Jenkins joined the meeting at 6:34**

Mayor Tait requested a motion for approval of the November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Executive Session Meeting Minutes.

Mrs. Russell made a motion to approve the Executive Session Meeting Minutes from November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Mrs. McCann second the motion.

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

**INFAVOR: Mrs. Jenkins, Mrs. McCann, Mrs. Russell, President Howard**

**AGAINST: None**

**ABSTAIN: Dr. Cloud**

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

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

Letter- Laine Rankin, Director of NJ Division of Local Aid and Economic Development

Thank-you Note- Marie Nagle

Resignation Letters- Casey Malik

Mayor Tait requested a motion to accept Mr. Malik's letter of resignation. Mrs. Russell made a motion to accept Ms. Austin, Mr. Malik's letter of resignation. Dr. Cloud second the motion.

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

### **REDEVELOPMENT**

Rt. 73 South Redevelopment Area- Update

Mr. Gural stated there would be discussion regarding the Fair Share housing obligation in closed session tonight. Mr. Gural indicated an extension was offered by Fair Share housing until January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022, to address their concerns regarding the housing obligation or we could face litigation. Mr. Gural stated Mr. Winckowski would be coming to our meetings to give us updates on the progression of the construction.

Mr. Winckowski stated the developer is primarily working on the NAI property which will be warehouse #2 and the affordable housing; he indicated geotechnical work is being done and they are preparing the grounds for the surface construction. Mr. Winckowski stated they have begun the footings and foundation for warehouse #2 noting the vertical wall construction should begin by late December, January or February weather permitting. Mr. Winckowski stated once the walls go up, they will have more mobility around the site, and they will begin with utilities, water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater sewer. Mr. Winckowski indicated they are waiting for an updated permit from the

Department of Environmental protection for the storm work for the NAI site. Mr. Winckowski indicated the deadline for warehouse# two was June but has been pushed back to September.

Mr. Brewer indicated his discussion would be for closed session.

Mr. Gural informed the governing body about the NJLM's opinion regarding paying/hiring those working on redevelopment sites prevailing wages.

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

Mr. Gural indicated he and Ms. Kilmer had a meeting with Mr. Wade regarding the redevelopment of the former PNC Bank redevelopment project. Mr. Brewer indicated the new court valuation hearing has not yet been scheduled.

#### Sea Box/ELM Office LLC, 321 E. Broad Street - Former Knights of Columbus Property- Update

Mr. Gural stated he had nothing new to report regarding the property.

### **PROFESSIONAL UPDATES**

William Kirchner, ERI -Mr. Kirchner explained the various resolutions on the agenda and why they are necessary. Mr. Kirchner stated the Temple Blvd TAP Grant is currently advertised and out for bid, noting bids will be due back in January of 2022. Mr. Kirchner indicated the annual bid projects are also out to bid and are due back December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021, so awards can be made at the reorganization meeting in January.

### **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](mailto:djackson@boroughofpalmyra.com). The opportunity to submit comments prior to meeting expired at 2:00 PM on Monday December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021. All comments will become part of the record and included with the Meeting Minutes.

For those who “attended” the hybrid 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. Dr. Cloud 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.

Ms. Still – Veterans Drive – Ms. Still stated the following: My name is Valerie Still. I bought the house on Veterans Dr. in the West End of Palmyra for my parents in 1991. Mrs. Still stated she noticed the Board of Education meetings are open to the public and some public events are being held however the council meetings are still not being held in person. Mr. Still indicated she has still not

gotten a response from the governing body regarding the allegations regarding systemic racism in the Palmyra School system. Ms. Still stated she has still not received a response regarding the racist emails circulating in town or her comments regarding nepotism in the governing body. Ms. Still indicted other public officials are voicing their opposition the various racist things but this governing body has had no comment. Ms. Still stated words have consequences and can incite violence.

Dr. Cloud indicated she departed the last meeting before her comments, but she did receive her comments and she invited Ms. Still to email her so she could learn more about what is going on so if there is something she can assisted with she will.

Mrs. Russell indicated she does not know anything about the emails from “black al” so does not know what she is referring to. Mrs. Russell also noted that she hoped the enthusiasm Ms. Still is bringing to Council meetings is also being taken to the Board of Education meetings. Mrs. Russell noted that council does not control or have any part in who the Board of Education hires.

Seeing no additional comments Mayor Tait requested a motion to close the public comment portion.

Mrs. Russell made a motion to close the public comment portion. Mrs. McCann second the motion.

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

## **RESOLUTIONS**

Mayor Tait stated, Resolution 2021-226 thru Resolution 2021-242 would be enacted as a single motion, if any resolution needed additional discussion, it would be removed from the consent agenda and voted on separately. Mayor Tait asked if anything needed to be removed. Noting no one requested additional discussion on any resolutions, Mayor Tait read the following resolutions into the record:

**Resolution 2021-226**, Resolution Awarding a Contract to Environmental Resolutions, Inc. (ERI) for On Call Contr4acting Services per their Proposal Dated November 11, 2021, in the amount of \$6,000.00

**Resolution 2021-227**, Resolution of the Borough of Palmyra Awarding Change Order #1 to Pioneer General Contracting Co. Inc. for the 2021 Road Improvement Project with the Increase amount of \$30,340.00 from the Original Base Price of \$386,565.00 making the new Adjusted Contract Price \$416,905.00 per Environmental Resolutions Inc. request dated November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021

**Resolution 2021-228**, Resolution Authorizing the Chief Financial Officer to Make Budget Transfers to the 2021 Budget in the amount of \$10,300.00

**Resolution 2021-229**, Resolution of the Borough of Palmyra to Renew Membership in the Southern New Jersey Regional Employee Benefits Fund

**Resolution 2021-230**, Resolution Authorizing a Sewer Bill Installation Plan for Sewer Account # 3000000-0

**Resolution 2021-231**, Resolution Authorizing the Finance Officer to Pay Vendor Bills During the Month of December 2021

**Resolution 2021-232**, Resolution appointing Tracy Kilmer as Construction, Codes, Inspections and Housing Office Supervisor at an annual salary of \$5,000.00

**Resolution 2021-233**, Resolution Appointing Rebecca Flynn as Technical Assistant to the Construction Official/TACO at the hourly rate of \$15.50 per the Terms and Conditions in her offer of Employment dated November 30, 2021

**Resolution 2021-234**, Resolution Approving the Amended Police CBA, and Salary Guide for Employees hired after January 1, 2011

**Resolution 2021-235**, Resolution Urging the New Jersey Legislature to create Legislation that would Establish Emergency Medical Services as Essential Government Services.

**Resolution 2021-236**, Resolution Appointing Paul Gerstle to the Palmyra Police Department as a Patrolman Effective December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021, with an Annual Salary of \$42,085.14

**Resolution 2021-237**, Resolution Appointing John Begonja to the Palmyra Police Department as a Patrolman Effective December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021, with an Annual Salary of \$ 38,349.56.

**Resolution 2021-238**, Resolution Awarding Change Order #1 to Municipal Maintenance Company for the for the 2020 Sewer Capital Improvements with the increase amount of \$837.25 from the original price of \$153,410.00 making the new adjusted Contract price \$154,347.25 per Environmental Resolutions Inc. request dated December 1, 2021

**Resolution 2021-239**, Resolution Awarding Change Order #1 to Command Company, Inc. for the Veterans Memorial Park Improvements project with the net increase amount of \$660.00 from the original contract price of \$121,857.00 making the new adjusted Contract price \$122,517.00 per Environmental Resolutions Inc. request date December 1, 2021

**Resolution 2021-240**, Resolution Awarding Change Order #2 to Pioneer General Contracting Company for the 2021 Road Improvement Project with the Decrease amount of \$395.74 from the previous adjusted contract price of \$416,905.00 making the New Adjusted Contract price \$416,509.26 per Environmental Resolutions Inc. request Dated December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021

**Resolution 2021-241**, Resolution of the Borough of Palmyra, County of Burlington, authorizing a Lien be Placed on Block 116, Lot 9 for Failure to Comply with Obnoxious Growth and Property Maintenance Violations

**Resolution 2021-242**, Resolution of the Borough of Palmyra, County of Burlington, authorizing a Lien be Placed on Block 126 Lot 12 for Failure to Comply with Obnoxious Growth and Property Maintenance Violations

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve the consent agenda, Resolutions 2021-226 thru Resolution 2021-242.

Mrs. Russell made a motion to approve the consent agenda, Resolution 2021-226 thru Resolution 2021-242. Mrs. McCann second the motion.

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

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

**AGAINST: None**

**Motion carried. Resolutions 2021-226 and Resolution 2021-242 were approved**

## **PUBLIC EVENTS**

Mayor Tait thanked Santa for his visit and the Fire Department for all their help getting him around town. Mayor Tait thanked Ms. Sykes for setting up the selfie station at the community center and encouraged all to come out, take their pictures and enter the contest. Mayor Tait also noted the Holiday house decorating contest, noting that additional details were on the website for sign-up. Mayor Tait also noted the “winter coat giveaway” that will be held on Saturday December 11, 2021, with Senator, Troy Singleton’s office at the Community Center. Mayor Tait noted you must register with Senator Singleton’s office to receive a coat.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Mayor Tait stated Reorganization meeting of the governing body will be held January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022, at 6:30 pm virtually.

Mr. Gural indicated we have had nineteen new covid 19 cases in the past week. Mr. Gural indicated the numbers are rising significantly. There was discussion regarding case numbers and timing of surges.

Mr. Gural indicated that those who are not vaccinated have been cooperative and are getting tested weekly in accordance with our policy. Mr. Gural noted an agreement had been reached with the school and they are testing free on Monday afternoons for those employees requiring covid-19 tests.

Mr. Gural stated that it was agreed at the last meeting to increase the sift rate of the Crossing Guards to \$20.00 per shift. He noted that signing bonuses had also been discussed. Mr. Gural indicated the signing bonus would be \$200.00 which equates to full time salary of ten shifts. Mr. Gural indicated he and the Labor Attorneys are currently working on the polices to include those details for the crossing guards and to include the staff/new hires training and education policy which would require an employee who completed classes which the Borough paid for to stay with the Borough for some period (to be determined) or be responsible for repayment of the funds for the various classes they have taken. Mr. Gural stated that all departments within the Borough have a someone to share the load of working needing to be completed in the various departments except the Municipal clerks’ office and the Administrator’s office. Mr. Gural noted that when an employee left, some years ago, that the Deputy Clerk’s position and Assistant Administrator position were neve filled. Mr. Gural noted that when the Elections came it was necessary to deputize individuals to help with the elections. Mr. Gural noted the various items listed on the agenda as ongoing and how much time is necessary to amend ordinances for council consideration, noting the parking ordinance and Legion field ordinance changes. Mr. Gural noted the redevelopment project consumes almost fifty percent of his time not to mention the additional work via ordinances, resolutions, emails etc. requiring attention due to redevelopment. Mr. Gural explained it is necessary and time to fill those positions as assistance is required. Mayor Tait asked Mr. Gural to prepare job descriptions for the governing body to consider.

Mr. Gural indicated we will have some surplus vehicles and he has asked the various departments to put together their lists of vehicles so they can be declared surplus and be sold in the near future.

Mr. Gural stated there have been several complaints regarding trash collections. Mr. Gural noted the contract will be expiring in the year of 2023. Mr. Gural noted the changes in the industry mostly due to covid-19 but the significant increases in pricing for solid waste removal. Mr. Gural noted previous conversations regarding the possibility of the Borough collecting its own trash. Mr. Gural indicated that the possibly of starting in one area of the Borough purchasing one trash truck and see how it goes and learn the business. Mr. Gural noted it is an almost 2-year process to get trash trucks. There was additional discussion regarding the current market conditions and the possibilities. Mr. Gural indicated he would put together additional information and email it to the governing body.

### **ADMINISTRATORS REPORT**

Mr. Gural indicated the Code Enforcement Officer position is still open.

Mr. Gural indicated the 2022 Budget process is under way and department heads are due to return their budgets by weeks end.

Mr. Gural indicated the professional RFPs are due this coming Friday and Ms. Jackson will be preparing thumb drives with all the responses for the governing body. Mayor Tait noted they will be in your mailboxes so you can pick them up and look them over to choose the necessary appointments for Reorganization in January.

### **ONGOING REMINDER PROJECTS**

Mr. Gural indicated the following items are things which the governing body is currently working on, and additional information will be coming later. Mayor Tait thanked Kwan Hui for all her efforts in working on the Pedestrian bike path.

- Purchase Orders - Council signature requirement
- Sidewalk/snow & ice removal Ordinance
- Handicap Parking Sign Ordinance
- Parking Ordinance - additional amended code subsections required
- Veterans Affairs Committee Ordinance
- Accessory Structures/cargo containers- Zoning/Land Development Ordinance amendments
- Sewer lateral responsibility ordinance, sewer fees, potential water usage billing
- Fund Balance (Surplus) usage policy
- DVRPC - Local Bicycle/Pedestrian Planning Assistance Program

### **MAYOR / COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS AND COMMENTS**

**Dr. Cloud** – No Comment

**Mrs. Russell** – No comment

**Mrs. Jenkins** – No Comment

**Mrs. McCann**- No Comment

**President Howard** – No Comment

**Mayor Tait** – Mayor Tait noted this is the last meeting of the year and thanked everyone for all their work this year and keeping the Borough moving forward. Mayor Tait thanked the PIA for their efforts with the Winter Festival. Mayor Tait wished all a Happy and safe holiday.

Mayor Tait asked Mr. Gural and Mr. Rosenberg if there were items for closed session. Mr. Gural and Mr. Rosenberg indicated yes regarding contracts, negotiations, attorney-client privilege, and litigation.

**Resolution 2021-243, 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:  
Negotiations, Contracts, Potential Litigation

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve Resolution 2021-243. Mrs. Russell made a motion to approve Resolution 2021-243. President Howard second the motion.

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

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

**AGAINST: None**

Into closed at 7:51 pm

Out of closed at 8:37 pm

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

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

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Tait asked for a motion to adjourn.

Mrs. Russell made a motion to adjourn the meeting. President Howard second the motion.

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:38 PM

Doretha R. Jackson, RMC

Municipal Clerk

Borough of Palmyra

Approved: February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022