

CELEBRATING
1923 **100 yrs.** **2023**

Borough of Palmyra
Regular Council Meeting Minutes
6:30 PM Monday, May 15, 2023

The Regular Council Meeting of the Borough Council of the Borough of Palmyra was called to order by Mayor Tait at 6:34 PM.

ROLL CALL

At the call of the roll:

PRESENT: Dr. Laura Cloud, John Liebe, Jessica O'Connor, Michelle McCann, President Timothy Howard, Mayor Gina Ragomo Tait

ABSENT: Natasha Latimore

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS STATEMENT

Mayor Tait Read the following open public meetings statement into the record:

In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq. Public Notice of this meeting 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 13th, 2023.
- Mailing written notice to the Burlington County Times, and the Courier Post Newspaper on January 11th, 2023.
- Notice to All Council Members.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Tait requested a motion for approval of the May 1st, 2023, Executive Session meeting minutes.

Mr. Liebe made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 1st, 2023, Executive Session meeting.

President Howard second the motion.

At the call of the roll the vote was:

INFAVOR: Mr. Liebe, Ms. O'Connor, President Howard

AGAINST: None

Abstain: Dr. Cloud, Mrs. McCann

Motion Carried

Mayor Tait requested a motion for approval of the May 10th, 2023, Special meeting minutes.

President Howard made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 10th, 2023, Special meeting with the change noted by Dr. Cloud. Dr. Cloud second the motion.

At the call of the roll the vote was:

INFAVOR: Dr. Cloud, Mr. Liebe, Mrs. McCann, Ms. O’Connor, President Howard

AGAINST: None

CORRESPONDENCE

Clerk Jackson stated there was no correspondence.

REDEVELOPMENT

Rt. 73 South Redevelopment Area

Mr. Gural indicated a lot has been happening very fast. Mr. Gural noted that all the ordinances and resolutions have been complete with Fair Share Housing. Mr. Rosenberg stated that once the second warehouse is fully constructed, the governing body will have saved the taxpayers of Palmyra close to two million dollars a year. Mr. Rosenberg thanked the governing body, Mr. Gural, and Municipal Clerk Jackson for all their efforts and work on the project. Mr. Rosenberg noted that we are 99% there and are waiting for 1.5 million to be placed in an escrow account which should happen this week. At the point we will be in compliance with Fair Share Housing and will be subject to court hearing for final approval of settlement agreement. Mr. Rosenberg noted that we have entered into a construction contract with Conifer for the affordable housing to be built and are hopeful that the construction will begin in the next few months.

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

Mr. Gural and Mr. Brewer indicated they had nothing new to report regarding this project.

ELM Office LLC, 321 E. Broad Street

Mr. Gural noted that ELM Office LLC had received their approvals from the Land Use Board and would be moving forward with the project. Mr. Brewer indicated he had nothing new to report.

PRESENTATION

Mayor Tait presented the following proclamation to Charles Soper:

PROCLAMATION

HONORING PASTOR CHARLES SOPER

WHEREAS, Charlie Soper has pastored the Epworth United Methodist Church in Palmyra, NJ, for many years, and

WHEREAS, Pastor Soper and his wife Laura have strived to make a difference in peoples’ lives, and

WHEREAS, Pastor Soper has served honorably, as a Chaplain for the Palmyra Police Department, and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his many years of service and fellowship with the residents of the Borough of Palmyra; and

WHEREAS, for always being present with a kind word of support, comfort, and hope, and

WHEREAS, for selflessly giving of your time to lend a word of inspiration or prayer;

NOW, THEREFORE I, Gina Ragomo Tait, Mayor of the Borough of Palmyra, on behalf of the Borough Council and the residents of the Borough of Palmyra, do hereby proclaim today as “Charles Soper - Made a Difference Day” in the Borough of Palmyra and ask all residents to take stock of their many blessings and offer a helping hand or word of support or comfort to those in need.

Congratulations! Mayor Gina Ragomo Tait.

Lt. Murphy stated that in October 2016 Chief Pearlman sent a letter out to members of the local clergy as an invitation to become part of the departments newly formed Chaplin Program. Pastor Soper along with several other answered the call and was appointed as part of the Chaplin Program in November 2016. Lt. Murphy stated, that Charles Soper not only met the call but has gone over and beyond that call of duty, Mr. Soper has spent many days and nights riding along side of the men and women of the department. Lt. Murphy thanked Mr. Soper for his service to the Palmyra Police Department.

Former Chief of Police Scott Pearlman indicated the Police Chaplin Program almost never happen but due to the insistence and persistence it happen. Former Chief Pearlman noted that his service was invaluable to the department. Lt. Murphy and Former Chief Pearlman presented Chaplin Charles Soper with a plaque and jacket and again that his for his many years of service.

Chaplin Charles Soper thanked everyone and stated that if you have not you should do a ride along with an officer to understand exactly what goes on in the streets of the Borough, they need good equipment. Chaplin Charles Soper stated they need your support to do their work and they also need good equipment. Chaplin Soper indicated he would continue to do recruiting to get others to come into the program.

PROFESSIONAL UPDATES

William Kirchner, ERI

Mr. Kirchner explained the three resolutions on the agenda for approval. Mr. Kirchner noted that the Temple Boulevard Improvement project is moving along, and that the concrete company has begun the concrete work for the project. Mr. Kirchner stated the pipe company had an emergency elsewhere but will be back soon and the concrete work should be complete.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Tait request anyone wishing to make a comment to sign in at the podium and state your name and address for the record. All comments will become part of the record and included with the meeting minutes.

Mayor Tait asked for a motion to open to the Public for comments President Howard 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

Mr. Defranco – Veterans Drive – Mr. Defranco stated he was present because he heard there was to be an allocation of monies to the soccer field. Mr. Defranco stated there way an emergency situation at his residence and he call 911 at 5:54 pm; he noted that no the first person to arrive was and Palmyra Police officer, it wasn't until 6:15, who really could not help with that type of situation. Mr. Defranco indicated he was disgusted that another township had to come to his home, that our fire department was not dispatched with an EMS staff on it. Mr. Defranco stated the funding for the soccer field should be going to the police department and fire department and the fire department should have an EMT staff on board. Mr. Gural explained the fire department stipend program noting that he was not aware of who is or isn't an EMT. Mr. Gural stated the Borough does have an ambulance squad. Mr. Defranco stated they were shut down or on another call. Mr. Defranco stated we are allocating \$426,000.00 to a soccer field when that money should be going towards our safety.

Ms. Carmody – Temple Blvd – Ms. Carmody stated here because of the Temple Blvd project, which is causing a series of issues with her property. Ms. Carmody stated she attended every council meeting when the Temple Boulevard was being discussed, she has the plans and nothing was to happen on her property. Ms. Carmody noted that since this project started, curbs have been placed on Second Street, they ripped out her entire underground sprinkler system, which was repaired at no cost to her. Ms. Carmody noted that when she arrived home today, she found the end of her property all ripped-up. Ms. Carmody stated that a gentleman working on site told her that they were taking the bottom part of her property to make the street wider. Ms. Carmody stated there are markers which indicate that they are going to be removing her trees. There was additional complaints and discussion regarding the property. Mr. Gural asked Ms. Carmody if she had a survey of her property and if he could have a copy of it. She agreed. Mr. Gural stated he, Mr. Kirchner and Ms. Carmody will can met and discuss the matter and determine exactly what is happening on and off her property. Ms. Carmody agreed. Ms. Carmody asked if her tree was going to be removed. Mr. Kirchner indicated that according to the plans it was not to be removed. There was some additional discussion and Mr. Kirchner indicated he will stop and pick up the copy of the survey. Mr. Rosenberg indicated he would stay in the loop.

Ms. Arnold – Oregon Avenue – Ms. Arnold stated the notice for the special meeting held May 10th, 2023 could have been better, so other people could have attended. Ms. Arnold also stated that the Borough should have notified the public regarding honoring Charles Soper on his retirement. Ms. Arnold

stated that we should all be concern about what happen at Mr. Defranco’s house, noting that safety and services in the Borough are lacking. Ms. Arnold indicated she has not heard any follow-up to various complaints which have been brough before council, noting the drug sales on Race Street, speeding on Horace Avenue, and the lack of funding for Emergency services be it the Fire Dept, Police Dept., or Ambulance Squad. Ms. Arnold asked, “Where is our Chief of Police”?

Ms. Veitenheimer – Rowland Street – Ms. Veitenheimer stated she was pleased with the clean-up which the Public Works department of doing on the streets, noting that Legion Field Park is also much cleaner. Ms. Veitenheimer stated she felt we needed to rethink the money being spent on the soccer field at Legion Park, noting that the money could be better spent elsewhere.

Mr. Gural noted, that the redeveloper of the RT 73 redevelopment project is paying for the improvement to Legion Field Park, Borough funds are not being utilized for that project.

There was some additional discussion regarding the funding, size of the field, and the children utilizing the field. Mrs. McCann noted the many children play on the field and its concerning why residents have a problem with making it safe.

There was additional discussion regarding the providing of emergency services and the potential that they could not be operating at any time. Mr. Gural indicated he would be looking into it.

Seeing no one else wishing to make a comment, Mayor Tait asked for a motion to close to the public for comments. President Howard 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

ORDINANCE ON SECOND READING Public Hearing

Ordinance 2023-04, An Ordinance of Borough of Palmyra Amending Chapter 215 of the Code of the Borough of Palmyra Entitled “Sewers” increasing the Senior Discount

Mayor Tait asked for a motion to open to the Public for comments regarding Ordinance 2023-04 President Howard made a motion to open to the public for comments. Mrs. McCann second the motion.

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

Mayor Tait asked if there were any comments, seeing none. Mayor Tait asked for a motion to close to the Public for comments President Howard made a motion to close the public portion for comments on Ordinance 2023-04. Mr. Liebe second the motion.

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

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve Ordinance 2023-04.

President Howard made a motion to approve Ordinance 2023-04. Dr. Cloud second the motion.

At the call of the roll, the vote was:

INFAVOR: Dr. Cloud, Mr. Liebe, Mrs. McCann, Ms. O'Connor, President Howard

AGAINST: None

Absent: Ms. Latimore

Motion carried. Ordinance 2023-04 was approved.

Ordinance 2023-05, Bond Ordinance Providing for Various Improvements to Legion Field by and in the Borough of Palmyra in the County of Burlington, State of New Jersey; Appropriating \$425,000.00 Therefor and Authorizing the Issuance of \$403,750.00 Bonds or Notes of the Borough to Finance Part of the cost Thereof.

Mayor Tait asked for a motion to open to the Public for comments regarding Ordinance 2023-05 President Howard made a motion to open to the public for comments on Ordinance 2023-05. Dr. Cloud second the motion.

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

Mayor Tait asked if there were any comments, seeing none. Mayor Tait asked for a motion to close to the Public for comments on Ordinance 2023-05. President Howard made a motion to close the public portion for comments on Ordinance 2023-05. Dr. Cloud second the motion.

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

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve Ordinance 2023-05.

President Howard made a motion to approve Ordinance 2023-05. Dr. Cloud second the motion.

At the call of the roll, the vote was:

INFAVOR: Mr. Liebe, Mrs. McCann, Ms. O'Connor, President Howard

AGAINST: Dr. Cloud

Absent: Ms. Latimore

Motion carried. Ordinance 2023-05 was approved.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution **2023-149** thru Resolution **2023-157** 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 resolutions needed to be removed from the consent agenda for additional discussion. Mayor Tait then removed resolution 2023-149, and introduced Mrs. Browne to the governing body then read Resolution 2023-149.

Resolution 2023-149, Resolution Appointing Donna Browne as Certified Municipal Court Administrator of the Borough of Palmyra Municipal Court effective May 15, 2023, pursuant to the terms of her offer of employment

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve resolution 2023-149.

President Howard made a motion to approve resolution 2023-149. Dr. Cloud second the motion.

At the call of the roll, the vote was:

INFAVOR: Dr. Cloud, Mr. Liebe, Mrs. McCann, Ms. O'Connor, President Howard

AGAINST: none

Motion carried. Resolution 2023-149 was approved.

Mayor Tait then read the following resolutions into the record: Resolution **2023-150 thru Resolution 2023-157**.

Resolution 2023-150, Resolution Authorizing the Contract Award to Lexa Concrete, LLC for the 4th Street Road Improvement Project in the amount of \$274,569.00 Subject to review of the bid documents by the Borough Solicitor and Certification by the CFO.

Resolution 2023-151, Resolution Approving Aaron S. Danielson as an active member of the Palmyra Fire Department

Resolution 2023-152, Resolution Authorizing Change Order #1 to Byrd Dog Paving, LLC with an increase in the amount of \$26,000.00 for the Temple Boulevard Improvement Project making the Total Adjusted Contract price \$720,349.01 per Environmental Resources, Inc recommendation letter dated May 1, 2023

Resolution 2023-153, Resolution authorizing the Borough of Palmyra to execute an agreement with Burlington County for the Cooperative Participation in the HOME Investment Partnership Program.

Resolution 2023-154, Resolution Authorizing the Cancellation of Taxes for a Totally Disabled Veteran, Block 84 Lot 3 for Partial Tax year 2023 and thereafter and refunding Taxes paid in the amount of \$1,806.46.

Resolution 2023-155, Resolution Authorizing an Electronic Tax sale for 2023

Resolution 2023-156, Resolution Awarding the 2023 Wastewater Vactoring Contract to GE Mechanical, LLC in the total amount of \$152,938.00 subject to the Solicitor's review and certification of CFO

Resolution 2023-157, Resolution Authorizing the Payment of May 2023 bills in the amount of \$2,320,435.24.

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve the consent agenda, Resolution 2023-150 thru Resolution 2023-157.

President Howard made a motion to approve the consent agenda, Resolution 2023-150 thru Resolution 2023-157. Mr. Liebe second the motion.

At the call of the roll, the vote was:

INFAVOR: Dr. Cloud, Mr. Liebe, Mrs. McCann, Ms. O'Connor, President Howard

AGAINST: none

Motion carried. Resolutions 2023-150 thru Resolution 2023-157 were approved.

MOTION TO APPROVE TREASURERS' REPORTS

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report for April 2023. President Howard made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report for April 2023. Mrs. McCann second the motion. **All members present voted in favor of the motion. Motion Carried**

PUBLIC EVENTS

Mayor Tait noted the Virtua Mobile Grocery Store is in the Community Center parking lot on Thursdays from 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm.

Mayor Tait noted The Community Outreach for Noise Issues in Philadelphia meeting was held Thursday May 4, 2023 at 7:00 pm in the community center.

Mayor Tait noted that Palmyra Downtown Safety Day was held on May 6, 2023.

The Board of Public Utilities and the Borough of Palmyra hosted an open meeting May 12th, 2023, in the Community Center at 7:00 pm.

Mayor Tait stated an Information Resource Meeting with the NAACP will be held May 18, 2023 at 7:00 pm in the Community Center.

Mayor Tait noted the Community Garden down at the Cove will open this Saturday for planting.

Dr. Cloud noted that the downtown clean-up originally scheduled before Palmyra Day will be this Sunday at 1:00 pm, meeting at Chief Flournoy Park.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mr. Gural noted we are still in the process of hiring one additional person for the Community Center Staff. Mr. Gural indicated the Deputy Municipal Court Administrator position is a process which really could not be undertaken until we appointed Ms. Brown as Court Administrator, as she was appointed this evening that process will commence. Mr. Gural stated the Deputy Clerk position is again posted on NJLM website and we await responses.

Mr. Gural stated the Board of Education offices are moving in this coming Thursday and we have the space ready for them.

Mr. Gural indicated the YMCA Summer Camp is coming, it is a free program for 50-60 students.

Mr. Gural indicated the Sewer Salary guide is in process.

Mr. Gural stated we have given Republic our 90-day notice and shall begin July 19, 2023. Republic has requested that we move that date up to June but we are not ready just yet.

Mr. Gural noted that he and Mr. Berg are working on the Stormwater Management Coordinator.

Mr. Gural indicated the Bicycle & Pedestrian Planning study information is on the website and we are looking for feedback from our residents. Mr. Gural noted they were present at Palmyra Day also seeking feedback. Ms. O'Connor noted that Governor Murphy had declared Friday May 19th, 2023 is "National Bike to Work day", and perhaps we could include that on the website to help with the encouragement of feedback for the bike routes.

Mr. Gural noted that Mr. McBride had reach out to him regarding partnering with the School Board in regards to the sustainable NJ and PSE&G about the program which we will receive \$25,000.00 grant from. In the conversation the spoke about the grant we applied for, for EV charging stations. Mr. McBride expressed an interest in partnering with that grant also. Mr. Gural indicated he would supply additional information as it becomes available.

Mr. Gural stated we are applying for the NJ DOT Municipal Aid grant for Leconey Avenue noting that the Borough may wish to consider acquiring the west lot off Leconey Avenue to extend the parking lot on the east side of Leconey Avenue

Mr. Gural noted we are also applying for the T-Mobile Hometown Grant Program to replace the playground equipment at Legion Field.

Mayor Tait stated the next council meeting is scheduled for June 19th, 2023 and the Juneteenth Celebration which we co-host with Cinnaminson and Riverton is the same date. Mayor Tait asked council if they would be ok with changing the meeting date to Tuesday June 20th, 2023 so that all could attend the Juneteenth Celebration. Council agreed with the date change.

MAYOR / COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Dr. Cloud-no comment

Mr. Liebe stated that the Board of Education was very receptive with partnering for the sustainable NJ grant and the Bicycle & Pedestrian Planning study grant. Mr. Liebe asked why we do not coordinate our Yard Sales dates with the Borough of Riverton. Mayor Tait noted that we just began having two yards sales during the year and indicated there is no reason why it could not be coordinated.

Mrs. McCann thanked residents for their comments and speaking up regarding their concerns.

Mrs. O'Connor –no comment

President Howard stated he attended the Fire Company Celebration. President Howard indicated he presented a proclamation to John Miller for 50 years of service to the department and the resident of Palmyra. President Howard thanked everyone for their efforts on another great Palmyra Day.

Mayor Tait thanked public works for all their help with Palmyra Day. Mayor Tait asked for a volunteer to go to the garden planting at the Cove this weekend as she will be out of town.

ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

Mr. Gural stated he would be sending new info regarding the training for the 2023 Burl Co JIF Elected Officials Training. Mr. Gural noted that for every council member that completes the training the Borough receives a \$250.00 dollar reduction on our insurance billing.

Mr. Gural thanked all for completing their financial disclosure statements for 2023.

Mr. Gural again noted that the meeting scheduled for June 5th, 2023, was cancelled and the next meeting scheduled for June 19th, 2023, will be held on Tuesday June 20th, 2023 as Council is hosting the Juneteenth Celebration in Wood Park with Cinnaminson Township and Riverton Borough on the 19th, of June.

Mr. Gural indicated that the Borough is require to post the following notice on the agenda of our meetings due to our participation in the LIWAP program:

The State Low Income household water assistance program or LIWAP can help you pay the arrears for your water and sewer bill. The program may also be able to help address tax liens due to water and sewer arrears. To get more information or apply go to waterassistance.nj.gov or call NJ 211.

Mayor Tait asked Mr. Rosenberg and Mr. Gural if there were items for discussion in the executive session. Mr. Gural and Mr. Rosenberg indicate yes, regarding:

Contracts, Negotiations and Personnel

Resolution 2023-142 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:

Contracts, Negotiations and Personnel

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve Resolution 2023-142. President Howard made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-142. Dr. Cloud second the motion.

At the call of the roll, the vote was:

INFAVOR: Dr. Cloud, Mr. Liebe, Mrs. McCann, Ms. O'Connor, President Howard

AGAINST: None

Resolution 2023-142 was approved.

Into closed at 8:09 pm

Out of closed at 9:17 pm

Mayor Tait requested a motion to open to public. President Howard 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. President Howard made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Cloud second the motion.

All voted in favor of the motion. Motion Carried

Meeting adjourned at 9:18 PM

Doretha R Jackson, RMC

Municipal Clerk

Approved: July 17, 2023