

Borough of Palmyra
Regular Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday February 20th, 2024, at 6:30 PM

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: Dr. Laura Cloud, Michele McCann, Jessica O'Connor, President Timothy Howard, Mayor Gina Ragomo Tait

ABSENT: Natashia Latimore, John Liebe

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 14th, 2024.
- Mailing written notice to the Burlington County Times, and the Courier Post Newspaper on January 14th, 2024.
- Notice to All Council Members.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

February 5th, 2024 - Council Caucus Meeting Minutes

February 5th, 2024 - Executive Session Meeting Minutes

Mayor Tait requested a motion for approval of the February 5th, 2024, Council Caucus Meeting Minutes and February 5th, 2024, Executive Session Meeting Minutes.

President Howard made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 5th, 2024, Council Caucus Meeting Minutes and February 5th, 2024, Executive Session Meeting Minutes. Mrs. McCann second the motion.

At the call of the roll the vote was:

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

AGAINST: None

CORRESPONDENCE

Municipal Clerk Jackson indicated there was no correspondence received.

REDEVELOPMENT

Rt. 73 South Redevelopment Area- Update

Mr. Gural stated they started pouring the concrete footings on the second warehouse last week. Mr. Gural noted the Conifer, the redeveloper for the 106 affordable housing units, has picked up the construction permits and paid their inspection escrows. Mr. Gural noted that they are still waiting for final approval of their remedial action work plan for the N J Department of Environmental Protection. Mr. Brewer indicated he was working on the frontage area of the redevelopment area.

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

Mr. Gural indicated he had nothing new to report regarding the project.

Sea Box/ELM Office LLC, 321 E. Broad Street - Update

Mr. Gural indicated he had nothing new to report regarding the project.

Mr. Brewer indicated he also had nothing new to report.

PROFESSIONAL UPDATES

William Kirchner, ERI

Mr. Kirchner introduced Katherine and Christa from ERI to the governing body, noting that Christa was present for the stormwater management training presentation and Katherine was an additional contact, in the event that someone could not reach him.

Mr. Kirchner went over the options/costs for the seating at the tennis courts at Legion Field. After some discussion and clarification of the renderings it was decided two benches per court in addition to the bleachers.

Mr. Kirchner explained an opportunity with PSE&G. Mr. Kirchner explained the various road projects that PSE&G are working on for 2024, he noted the streets they intend to work on are Parry Avenue, Cleveland Avenue, Garfield Avenue and Morgan Avenue. Mr. Kirchner presented the 2024 PSE&G Work map, the 2024 Ongoing Road Jobs Map, Moratorium map and the 2024 Road Conditions map explaining each map and noting the conditions of the roads and how the costs are shared with the various utilities. Mr. Kirchner indicated that he is waiting to see what streets NJ American Water is planning on working on in 2024. There was some additional discussion regarding the costs and Mr. Gural noted that we would revisit the costs during the budget workshop.

Mr. Kirchner also noted the storage building plans which are almost complete, indicating once complete they would go before the Land Use Board and the County Planning Board for approval.

Resolution 2024-87, Resolution Appointing Scott Jaffe to the Borough of Palmyra Police Department effective February 20th, 2024, with an annual salary of \$43,313.08 and including a one-time conditional \$2,000.00 sign on bonus.

Mayor Tait asked for a motion to approve **Resolutions 2024-87**

President Howard made a motion to approve **Resolutions 2024-87**. Dr. Cloud second the motion.

At the call of the roll, the vote was:

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

AGAINST: None

Motion carried. Resolution 2024-87 was approved.

Mayor Tait Swore in Scott Jaffe while his stepfather, Harry Garber stood with him and held the bible.

Lt. Murphy stated that Scott grew up in Pennsauken, graduated from Pennsauken High School and served in the United States Air Force where he held the rank of E-4 Senior Airman specializing in Military Police and Security Forces. Mr. Jaffe then attended the Cape May County Police Academy and began working for the North Wildwood Police Department shortly thereafter. Lt. Murphy welcomed Scott to the Palmyra Police Department.

PRESENTATION

Mark Pease Palmyra, Interim Superintendent Board of Education

Mr. Pease stated it was an exciting time for Palmyra and the Palmyra School District, noting that they are looking for the support of the community in the form of a vote on March 12, 2024, in support of the Bond referendum. Mr. Pease stated they wanted to construct a security vestibule at Charles Street School, also install a new roof on Charles Street School, a new fire alarms system noting that the current system is about 62 years old and a new HVAC system. Mr. Pease stated that at the high school and middle school they are looking to expand in anticipation of the new students coming from the redevelopment area and renovating and relocating the main office in the high school. Mr. Pease stated they wanted to expand the cafeteria. Mr. Pease indicated they also want to replace the cinder track with an all-weather track and renovate the auditorium at the high school. Mr. Pease indicated they also wished to make some renovations in the pits for the benefit of all of the students. Mr. Pease spoke about the Senior Freeze Program, and Property Tax relief Program offered by the State of New Jersey for the seniors, noting the increase in the income requirements. Mr. Pease noted the next School Board meeting would be held on March 13th, 2024.

Mr. Rosenberg noted that the soft cost/professionals of the overall price was a significant cost. Mr. Rosenberg asked what the has Board of Education done to make the soft costs as limited as possible. Mr. Pease stated they are working with Garrison Architects whose guidance and direction are vital to the program and that the Board trusts that they are giving the Board a fair cost for the tasks and the project. Mr. Rosenberg noted that the soft cost numbers are astronomical, in his opinion, after looking at the proposal. Mr. Toner indicated every year they review the contracts for the solicitor and the architectural teams. Mr. Toner indicated they are not hard numbers as they had not had the internal

discussion about the architectural work yet. Mr. Toscano indicated that 15% of the soft cost are construction contingencies, noting that whatever is not spent will be used to pay down the principal of whatever is borrowed. There was some additional discussion, and Mr. Rosenberg stated that the cost should be broken down for the taxpayers, noting that 8% of the total contract/purchase price goes to the architect, and what are they doing for 8% of 18.4 million. Mr. Toner indicated they do a lot, civil engineering, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, fire protection, audio visual engineering and security. Mr. Toner indicated that there is an opportunity to bid on some of the projects and that is something which they should consider. There was some additional discussion. Ms. O'Connor asked if only the residents of Palmyra could vote on the referendum and if the residents from the sending schools had an opportunity to voice their opinion on the referendum. Mr. Pease indicated that they did visit the other school districts so they could understand that they are seeking improvements in the facilities, and it is important to the students from Beverly and Riverton. Ms. O'Connor asked if those communities would make a contribution to the debt servicing of the bond. Mr. Pease indicated no, however they receive tuition for those students that attend Palmyra. Mr. Pease indicated Riverton and Beverly residents cannot vote on the School Board Referendum.

PUBLIC COMMENT

This public portion is questions for Mr. Pease regarding the upcoming referendum. Please 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 the motion.

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

Mr. Toner- Washington Street- Mr. Toner indicated that they have a budget every year that includes debit service and a portion of the tuition of students from other districts is used to pay down the debit service.

Mr. Tuscano noted that a general education students tuition cost is \$14,800.00 and a special education students tuition is about \$20,400.00. Mr. Tuscano stated the more students we attract the more revenue we generate to apply to the debit service and other programs.

Ms. McCann asked what percent of students Riverton residents are. Mr. Tuscano indicated 16%, however that number changes from year to year.

Mayor Tait clarified for the residents that the referendum has nothing to do with the school budget noting that the regular school budget can be raised up 2% and the referendum still needs to be paid in addition to the annual budget. Mr. Pease agreed.

Mr. Gural indicated that on the School District's referendum website there is a tax impact calculator which if you put in the value of your home, it will tell you what the tax impact will be for each year.

Mr. Gural also noted that Ms. Johns, the Borough's Tax Collector is an expert on the Senior freeze and if anyone needs help filling out the forms they can contact here.

Mr. Atkins – Garfield Avenue- Mr. Atkins asked about the timing of the improvements to the sports facilities. Mr. Pease indicated it is a two-year window on all the projects.

Ms. Arnold Oregon Avenue- Ms. Arnold stated the current school tax rated is 2.377 over 56% of the taxes paid go to the school, and the referendum will add additional costs to the 56%. Ms. Arnold asked why it has gotten to this point and why previous boards haven't taken the time to address some of these issues. Ms. Arnold stated she understood the safety and comfort of the students, but we also need to take a look at the performance of the students. Ms. Arnold indicated that according to the State of New Jersey as reported by the Palmyra School District, 26.8% of the high school students are absent, more than 10% of the school days. Ms. Arnold expressed concern about the cost to the taxpayers and potential new people looking to move into Palmyra. Ms. Arnold asked how many students are in the Palmyra school district. There was discussion regarding students' performance and the State averages in mathematics, English.

Ms. Allen-Lincoln Avenue - Ms. Allen stated that there are about 1,000 students in the school system and about 60 students are from Riverton and about 60 students are from Beverly.

Mrs. Rix – Mrs. Rix asked if it included the grant from the State. Mr. Tuscano indicated yes.

Mrs. Veitenheimer – Rowland Street – Ms. Veitenheimer asked if there were grants or other funding for some things which needed to be done. Mr. Toner indicated they did receive a small share for some site work around the track. Mrs. Veitenheimer indicated that the taxes here are more than in some other towns and asked are we supposed to get the money, she indicated that with the senior freeze taxes have to be paid before they are reimbursed, and they are not reimbursed until July of the following year. Why are we trying to attract students from other municipalities, which is only costing us more money. There was some additional discussion.

There were additional comments from Mr. Tuscano and Mr. Toner.

Seeing no one else wishing to make a comment, Mayor Tait asked for a motion to closed to the Public for comments President Howard made a motion to close the public portion for comments. Mrs. McCann second the motion.

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

PRESENTATION

Christa Ouellette, ERI – Stormwater Management Presentation/Training

Ms. Ouellette indicated that the State of New Jersey requires yearly training for Mayor, Council, the Land Use Board, and several other key employees within the Municipality. Ms. Ouellette noted the ordinances on the agenda for consideration and explained what and why they are required. Mrs.

Ouellette noted the classes/videos which need to be completed by March 18th, 2024. Ms. Ouellette stated she would be sending the listing of the classes, completion certifications and a link for a website

helping you to understand the requirements. Ms. Ouellette asked that the completion certificates be returned to her upon completion.

PUBLIC COMMENT

This public portion is for discussion on professional updates, resolutions and ordinances listed on the agenda. Please 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

Seeing no one wishing to make a comment, Mayor Tait asked for a motion to closed to the Public for comments President Howard made a motion to close the public portion for comments. Dr. Cloud second the motion.

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

ORDINANCE ON FIRST READING (Public Hearing March 18, 2024)

Ordinance 2024-03, An Ordinance of Borough of Palmyra requiring the retrofitting of existing private storm drain inlets.

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-03.

President Howard made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-03. Dr. Cloud second the motion.

At the call of the roll, the vote was:

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

AGAINST: None

Absent: Ms. Latimore, Mr. Liebe

Motion carried. Ordinance 2024-03 was approved.

Ordinance 2024-04, An Ordinance of the Borough of Palmyra establishing requirements for the storage of salt and other de-icing materials on properties not owned or operated by the Borough of Palmyra

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-04.

President Howard made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-04. Dr. Cloud second the motion.

At the call of the roll, the vote was:

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

AGAINST: None

Absent: Ms. Latimore, Mr. Liebe

Motion carried. Ordinance 2024-04 was approved.

Ordinance 2024-05, An ordinance of the Borough of Palmyra recognizing the service of Borough employees who volunteer for the Palmyra Fire Department

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-05.

President Howard made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-05. Dr. Cloud second the motion.

At the call of the roll, the vote was:

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

AGAINST: None

Absent: Ms. Latimore, Mr. Liebe

Motion carried. Ordinance 2024-05 was approved.

Ordinance 2024-06, An Ordinance Amending Chapter 190, Article III of the Code of the Borough of Palmyra Entitled Parks and Recreation areas "Legion Field Complex"

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-06.

President Howard made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-06. Dr. Cloud second the motion.

At the call of the roll, the vote was:

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

AGAINST: None

Absent: Ms. Latimore, Mr. Liebe

Motion carried. Ordinance 2024-06 was approved.

ORDINANCE ON SECOND READING (Public Hearing)

Ordinance 2024-01, An Ordinance of Borough of Palmyra to Address the Requirements of the Department of Community Affairs (Department) Regarding Compliance with the Municipalities Prior Round and Third Round Affordable Housing Obligations

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

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

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-01.

President Howard made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-01. Dr. Cloud second the motion.

At the call of the roll, the vote was:

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

AGAINST: None

Absent: Mr. Latimore, Mr. Liebe

Motion carried. Ordinance 2024-01 was approved.

Ordinance 2024-02, An Ordinance to Exceed the 2024 Municipal Budget Appropriation Limits and to Establish a CAP Bank (N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14)

Mayor Tait asked for a motion to open to the Public for comments 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. Ms. O'Connor second the motion.

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

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-02.

President Howard made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-02. Ms. O'Connor second the motion.

At the call of the roll, the vote was:

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

AGAINST: None

Absent: Ms. Latimore, Mr. Liebe

Motion carried. Ordinance 2024-02 was approved.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution **2024-88 thru** and Resolution **2024-93** 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 resolution needed to be removed from the consent agenda for additional discussion. Seeing none, Mayor Tait read the following resolutions into the record:

Resolution 2024-88, Resolution Appointing Charles R. Wolf as a member of the Borough of Palmyra Fire Department

Resolution 2024-89, Resolution to Award a contract under the Sourcewell National Cooperative Purchasing Agreement to Grandturk Equipment Co., Inc. for One new Labrie Automizer side loader 31 CU YD trash truck per quote dated January 23, 2024, in the amount of \$178,593.80

Resolution 2024-90, Resolution to Award a Contract under the Sourcewell-National Cooperative Purchasing Agreement to Hunter Jersey Peterbilt for one new 2025 Peterbilt 520 RH Drive, Tandem

Axle CAT & Chassis with 66,000 LB GVW per quote dated January 23, 2024, in the amount of \$219,118.00.

Resolution 2024-91, Award to Under the Educational Services Commission of New Jersey-NJ State approved Co-Op#: 65MCESCCPS to Cherry Valley Tractor Sales for one Kubota Utility vehicle #RTVX1100CWL-H per quote dated February 5, 2024, in the amount of \$28,500.42.

Resolution 2024-92, Authorizing the Borough Administrator and Borough Engineer to execute documents as necessary requesting the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers assistance under the Continuing Authorities program, Section 208, Snagging and Clearing for Flood Control

Resolution 2027-93 Resolution Authorizing the Payment of February 2024 bills in the amount of \$2,347,397.58.

Mayor Tait asked for a motion to approve **Resolutions 2024-88 thru Resolution 2024-93**.

President Howard made a motion to approve **Resolutions 2024-88 thru Resolution 2024-93**. Mrs. McCann second the motion.

At the call of the roll, the vote was:

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

AGAINST: None

Motion carried. Resolutions 2024-88 thru Resolution 2024-93 were approved.

MOTION TO APPROVE TREASURERS' REPORTS

Mayor Tait requested a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report for January 2024. President Howard made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report for January 2024. Mrs. McCann second the motion.

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

PUBLIC EVENTS

Mayor Tait noted the following upcoming events:

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

The Underground Railroad presents Heros and Sheroes at Rowan College on February 23, 2024, at 6:00 pm. Mayor Tait indicated Payton I. Flournoy will be honored at that time.

Read Across America 2024, March 5, 2024, 9:00 am to 2:00 pm

Mayor Tait stated that the Easter Egg Hunt would be held at Legion Field on March 23rd, 2024, at 9:00 am. Ms. McCann also noted that on March 20th, 2024, they will be filling the eggs in the community center with the help of The PRC Lions Club and McCann stated that they are trying to put together a Easter Egg Hunt for children with special needs and additional information will follow.

Mayor Tait stated a Rabies Clinic will be held in April 13, 2024, in Chief Payton Flournoy Park at 1:00 pm

Mayor Tait noted that the Spring Townwide yard sale will be held on May 18th, 2024.

Mayor Tait also noted the Palmyra Day will be held on May 4th, 2024, and there is no rain date.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mayor Tait indicated that the public safety committee will be meeting with Lt. Murphy this week.

Mayor Tait stated the 2024 budget meeting will be held on April 6, 2024, at 8:30 am.

Mayor Tait stated that they would be planting seeds the week after Mother's Day in the Cove community garden.

Mr. Gural stated he had nothing new to report regarding the Palmyra Ambulance Squad.

Mr. Gural noted that two new ASL trash trucks are in the pipeline and things are working out well with the collection in the Riverfront. Mr. Gural confirmed with Republic that we will be taking over trash collection in Zone 1 the first week in May and the entire town by January 1, 2025.

Mr. Gural indicated the intension of hiring two more CDL Drivers for trash collection and four laborers for public works.

Mayor Tait indicated we should be receiving the smaller recycling containers soon.

ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

Mr. Gural reminded all that the 2024 Burl Co JIF Elected Officials Training seminars are all online, noting that for every council member that attends we receive a \$250.00 dollar reduction to our insurance billing.

Mr. Gural stated that Part 1 of the Wizer 2024 Cyber Awareness Training is available and needs to be completed to continue using the Borough email addresses.

Mr. Gural also noted the upcoming OEM Incident Command System Seminar scheduled for February 22, 2024, at 7:00pm in Westhampton.

Mr. Gural explained the requirement of the entire governing body and Land Use Board attending the Stormwater Management Education and Training. Mr. Gural noted he would send it out to the governing body.

Mr. Gural went over the annual Uniform Construction Code report noting the total revenue of \$396,780.00, due mostly to construction permit fees in the redevelopment area.

ONGOING REMINDER PROJECTS

Mr. Gural stated the following items are reminders for the various projects the governing body is addressing. Mr. Gural noted additional information will be forthcoming in the future.

Purchase Orders - Council signature requirement.

Sidewalk/snow & ice removal Ordinance

Sewer Lateral responsibility Ordinance and sewer bills

Parking Ordinance - additional amended code subsections required.

Accessory Structures/cargo containers - Zoning/Land Development Ordinance amendments

Mayor Tait stated she saw the Class 1 officer out on Broad Street. Lt. Murphy noted the parking enforcement on Broad Street, stating the 20-25 warnings were issued since December and today. Lt. Murphy stated that the Community Outreach program was held last week, and that program would be coming to the Light Rail in Palmyra twice a year.

Mayor Tait thanks Sgt. Luesner for diligently reporting the non-operating lights in the Borough to PSE & G so they can be repaired.

PUBLIC COMMENT

We request those wishing to have or make a public comment, 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. Ms. O'Connor the motion.

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

Mr. Toner- Washington Avenue- Mr. Toner thanked Council for allowing the Board of Education to come in and talk with Council regarding the proposed referendum March 12, 2024. Mr. Toner noted some positives going on in the School District, we currently have a fully funded by the state of pre-school program, the early College/High School Program with Rowan College, William Patterson College, Stocken University. Mr. Toner also noted that the School Board is working with PSE&G on some cost-saving improvements to the schools. Mr. Toner also noted other things that the school is trying to accomplish with the bond referendum. There was some additional discussion.

Seeing no one else wishing to make a comment, Mayor Tait asked for a motion to closed to the Public for comments President Howard made a motion to close the public portion for comments. Dr. Cloud second the motion.

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

MAYOR / COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Dr. Cloud-no comment

Mrs. McCann- no comment

Mrs. O'Connor -no comment

President Howard-no comment

Mayor Tait welcomed Ms. McCann back to Palmyra School District.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Tait asked for a motion to adjourn. President Howard made a motion to adjourn the meeting Mrs. McCann second the motion.

All voted in favor of the motion. Motion Carried

Meeting adjourned at 9:01 PM

Doretha R Jackson, RMC

Municipal Clerk

Approved: March 4th, 2024