

**BOROUGH OF PENNS GROVE
COUNTY OF SALEM, STATE OF NEW JERSEY
MAYOR AND COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING- 6:30 P.M.
COURTROOM/ VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE3 (VTC)
February 1, 2022-MINUTES**

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. and called to order by Mayor LaDaena D. Thomas

Mayor Thomas made the Open Public Meeting Statement: In accordance with section V of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231 P.L. 1975, Notice of this meeting was posted on the Borough of Penns Grove Municipal Bulletin Board designed for that purpose. Notice has also been posted on the Borough Penns Grove website: www.pennsgrove-nj.org and was emailed to the official newspaper as provided by Resolution. Additionally, in response to the state of emergency in New Jersey regarding COVID 1-19 ("Coronavirus"), this February 1, 2022 meeting was held in the Courtroom of Borough Hall, 1 State Street, Penns Grove, NJ and via "Zoom" online meeting platform.

Mayor led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Invocation by Sharon R. Williams, Municipal Clerk

ROLL CALL: Carter-present, Martin-present, Mincey-present, Rambo-present, Scarpaci-present, Worley-present.

MINUTES:

Motion to approve January 4, 2022, Reorganization Meeting minutes by Martin; second Carter. Roll call. All ayes.

Motion to approve January 18, 2022, Regular Session minutes by Carter; second Worley. Roll call. All ayes.

Motion to pay all bills and approve the Bill List by Martin; second Worley. Roll call. All ayes.

Mayor announced that discussion related to the Personnel Policy and Procedure manual will be held during the next Regular Session meeting.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:

2022-3-32 – RESOLUTION APPOINTING COMMISSIONER TO THE PENNS GROVE SEWERAGE AUTHORITY (Michael Worrel)

Motion to adopt by Carter; second Rambo.

Discussion: Expressed concern that she had no information on the candidate Worley requested tabling until further information is provided regarding the appointee.

Rambo questioned the Reorganization meeting.

Brown stated that the Sewerage Authority Reorganization meeting will be held on February 17, 2022.

Motion to table Resolution until the next regular meeting by Mincey; second Worley. Roll call. Carter-no, Martin-abstain, Mincey-yes, Rambo-(no response), Scarpaci cited N.J.A.C. 535.1.4, further voting, yes, Worley-yes.

Tarver stated his prior advice that the two members whose spouses serve on the Sewerage Authority, should abstain from vote on this Resolution.

2022-3-33 – EMERGENCY TEMPORARY BUDGET RESOLUTION

Motion to adopt by Worley; second Martin. Roll call. All ayes.

2022-3-34 – RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SIGNATURES ON THE BOROUGH OF PENNS GROVE CHECKS

Motion to adopt by Worley; second Mincey. Scarpaci suggested each committee be provided a monthly budget and checks being drawn on accounts to provide an estimated balance. Roll call. All ayes.

2022-3-35 – RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING REFUND DUPLICATE PAYMENT TO CORELOGIC

Motion to adopt by Worley; second Martin. Roll call. All ayes.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Building and Grounds (Worley, Martin, Scarpaci) Councilwoman Worley stated/addressed the following: Fire Code violations and a fine of \$5000 per violation, if not abated. Met with committee, Carolyn Zumpino and engineer, Sean Smith regarding rebid for demolition of properties, grants for new Police Station, flooding issues, and use of former Public Works building as a Police Department, and to move documents currently stored into The Closet for temporary storage. Rivera explained that he could provide information on what could be disposed of. Expressed appreciation to Mr. Rebyak for work completed at Borough Hall.

General Government (Martin, Carter, Worley) Councilwoman Martin stated/addressed the following: January 27th Committee meeting held. Discussed community newsletter, performance evaluation plan and waiting on feedback from Public Safety Committee regarding the position of Public Safety Director.

Housing/Zoning & Planning/Shade Tree (Rambo, Scarpaci, Martin) Councilman Rambo stated/addressed the following: Applicants for the position of Housing/Zoning Officer. Received one application for zoning to construct a fence. Committee meeting to be held next week. Scarpaci requested that applications be provided to the committee.

Recreation/ Board of Health (Carter, Rambo, Mincey) Councilmen Carter stated/addressed the following: Committee meeting to be held Friday at 7:00 p.m. Advised of down street sign at North Broad and Griffith Street.

Public Works/Streets & Roads (Scarpaci, Mincey, Rambo) Councilwoman Scarpaci stated/addressed the following: Ditch cleaning. Concerns regarding no recycling calendars for residents, rejected work orders; suggested Penns Grove complete needed work and deduct from the payment to Carneys Point under the Interlocal Agreement.

Public Safety (Mincey, Worley, Carter) Councilwoman Mincey stated/addressed the following: Broad Street is a County road; suggested contacting the County regarding a replacement street sign at Broad and Griffith Street. Installation of smoke alarms by the Red Cross, further advised that she will forward flyer to Business Administrator for website posting. COVID vaccine available on February 22nd at the Shooting Stars, 81 Walnut Street, further requested information be added to website. Met with Rivera, Ashcraft, Carter and Worley on January 21st to discuss emergency lighting, police staffing, intersection safety, commercial trucks on streets, quarterly EZ Pass for Police and EMS staff, quarterly stipends for volunteers, air paks from USDA grant, new laptop for Municipal Court.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Business Administrator Report: Sean Brown stated/addressed the following: COVID outbreaks, bereavement, need to hire additional staff, the need to address redevelopment strategies, auction process. Announced that Max Spann will host an educational session regarding the auction process.

Finance Officer Report: On behalf of the Finance Department, Brown stated/addressed the following: Annual Debt Statement, 4th Quarter Federal Tax Return 941, 4th Quarter NJ 927W and WR-30 Reports, and W-3 Transmittal of Wage & Tax Statement for 2021 have been filed. Finance Officer working with the Auditor on the Annual Financial Statements. Tax collection rate has increased by 1.30 per cent compared to January 28, 2021.

Police Director Report: Richard Rivera stated/addressed the following: Recruitment process – hiring experienced versus inexperienced, 74 credentials received, none qualified. Exploring Alternate Route Program. Discussion with individuals in the Cannabis industry to review and discuss the communication used in obtaining feedback from the residents. 2021 Annual report 796 service for calls by the Ambulance, 29 simple assaults, 22 burglaries, 100 domestic violence, 78 crashes, 4 robberies, 102 thefts. Rivera advised that “shots fired” may not always be accurate. Rivera explained that, although 50 “shots fired” is reported, it could often times be due to RING doorbell, which will report shots fired based off of noises. Year to date totals – Ambulance calls risen by 4 calls, simple assaults decreased by 300%, Burglaries decreased by 50%, domestic violence increased by 30%, DMV remains the same, shots fired decreased by 200% and deaths decreased by 30%.

Fire Chief Report: No report.

Ambulance/EMS Captain Report: On behalf of Debbie Ashcraft, Mincey stated/addressed the following: Responded to 78 calls during the month of January 2022.

Attorney Report: Tarver stated/addressed the following: Nothing to report.

Mayoral Comments: Mayor Thomas stated/addressed the following: Black History month. Expressed appreciation to council for the condolences received during the bereavement of her grandmother. Reopening of Borough Hall and resuming in-person meetings.

OLD BUSINESS:

Scarpaci requested Resolution transferring property to Habitat for Humanity.

Mincey announced discussion on the feasibility study held at the Salem Community College. Encouraged attendance at future meetings.

NEW BUSINESS:

PUBLIC SESSION:

Ron Giordano, Sack Avenue, questioned the MaryKay James removal from the Sewerage Authority.

Mayor Thomas advised that Ms. James had not expressed interest in being reappointed, further stating the need to give opportunity to others who may express interest in serving.

Mr. Giordano suggested reappointing Kenny James to the Planning Board due to his experience and knowledge. Mr. Giordano suggested not hiring an assistant for the Business Administrator. Council President stated that the Assistant will provide assistance in other departments.

Jeremiah Carter, North Broad Street, questioned what physical task has been taken to clean the storm drainage system.

Brown stated that Carneys Point has a machine to clean the storm drains.

Scarpaci stated that Carneys Point is not adhering to the contract, however, the contract is under review. Contacted the County to clean ditches, if permit application is needed, it may not get completed until the end of year; sooner if Borough is covered under the existing permit.

Mr. Carter advised that the garage located at the corner of South Broad and Walnut Street has become a dumping ground.

Brown stated that Code Enforcement is taking every step necessary, including possible partnership with DEP to handle this site as well as others within the Borough.

Councilman Carter suggested installation of a camera system.

Greg Martin, Spruce Street, suggested using inmates for road detail. Mr. Martin suggested that contract to bind new hire Police Officers regarding Borough paid training.

Brenda Fowler, Denny Avenue, announced PRAC will distribute free Covid kits on a first come, first serve basis on February 9th; vaccination clinic will be held from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. on February 16th.

John Scarpaci, Railroad Avenue, questioned the status on the proposed solar energy for the town and property for installation, which will benefit the entire town.

Tarver explained that the matter is under review.

Mr. Scarpaci expressed concern that Mary Kay James was removed from the Sewerage Authority.

Waverly Thomas, Delaware Avenue, expressed appreciation for flowers and support during the bereavement of his grandmother.

Greg Martin, Spruce Street, commented that as a member of the Sewerage Authority, Mr. Scarpaci does not represent the entire Authority. Martin also stated that the solar project would benefit the entire town.

Jesus Lopez, South Broad Street, reported an illegal dumping site on Line and Wright Street.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Carter; second Mincey. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon R. Williams, RMC
Municipal Clerk