

**BOROUGH OF PENNS GROVE
COUNTY OF SALEM, STATE OF NEW JERSEY
MAYOR AND COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING – 6:30 P.M.
VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE (VTC)
April 6, 2021
MINUTES**

Mayor LaDaena D. Thomas led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor LaDaena D. Thomas made the open public meeting statement – 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 was also posted on the Borough of Penns Grove website: www.pennsgrove-nj.org and was emailed to the official newspaper as provided by Resolution. Additionally, stating that in response to the state of emergency in New Jersey regarding COVID-19 (“Coronavirus”), this February 16, 2021 Meeting will be held via “Zoom” online meeting platform.

Roll Call: Carter-absent, Giordano-present, Martin-present, Mincey-present, Rambo-absent, Scarpaci-present @ 6:45 p.m.

Invocation by Sharon Williams, Municipal Clerk.

PAYMENT OF BILLS & APPROVAL OF BILL OF BILL LIST:

Motion to approve payment of bills and approval of bill list by Giordano; second Martin. All in favor.

FIRST READING AND INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE(S): Public Hearing to be held on April 20, 2021

2021-9 – CALENDAR YEAR 2021 ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK

Motion to adopt by title only by Mincey; second Giordano. Roll Call. All ayes.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION BY CONSENT:

2021-4-40B – CANCEL TAX BILLED AS BOROUGH OWNED

2021-4-41 – CANCEL TAX AS BOROUGH OWNED BY RECORDED DEED

2021-4-42 – CANCEL TAX BILLED AS BOROUGH OWNED BY LIST #2

2021-4-43 – CANCEL TAX BILLED AS BOROUGH OWNED

2021-4-44 – CANCEL MUNICIPAL LIEN #18-00553

2021-4-45 – PREMIUM BID TURNOVER TO BOROUGH

2021-4-46 – A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE BOROUGH OF PENNS GROVE TAX COLLECTOR TO PREARE AND ISSUE ESTIMATED TAX BILLS FOR THIRD QUARTER 2021 PROPERTY TAXES

2021-4-47 – RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ELECTRONIC TAX SALE IN ACCORDANCE WITH N.J.S.A. 54:5-19.1

2021-4-48 – RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING MAILINGS AND ADVERTISEMENT OF 2021 TAX SALE NOTICES

2021-4-49 – CANCEL MUNICIPAL LIEN #16-00261

2021-4-50 – REFUND RECORDING FEES

2021-4-51 – EMERGENCY TEMPORARY RESOLUTION N.J.S.A. 40A:4-20

2021-4-52 – RESOLUTION TO INTRODUCE THE 2021 CALENDAR YEAR MUNICIPAL BUDGET

2021-4-53 – RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR

Motion to adopt Resolution No. 2021-4-40B through 2021-4-53 by consent by Mincey; second Martin. Roll call. All ayes.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Buildings & Grounds (Martin, Giordano, Rambo): Councilwoman Martin stated/addressed the following: Nothing to report.

General Government/Finance/JIF/Clean Communities (Scarpaci, Martin, Giordano): Councilwoman Scarpaci stated/addressed the following: Reminded all to take the Elected Official Seminar as offered by the Tri-Co Joint Insurance Fund. Expressed appreciation to Finance Officer, Auditor and State Monitor for job well done on budget. Clean Communities activities to begin in May.

Housing/Zoning & Planning/Shade Tree (Giordano, Martin, Rambo): Councilman Giordano stated/addressed the following: Nothing to report.

Recreation/Board of Health (Carter, Mincey, Martin): In Councilman Carter's absence, Council President Mincey stated/addressed the following: Board of Health report – 11 ten-day notices, 17 ten-day notices resolved and 2 upcoming court appearances. 236 Easter baskets distributed.

Public Works/Streets & Roads (Rambo, Mincey, Carter): Councilman Rambo stated/addressed the following: Lack of signage on approximately 7 roads where handicap access was installed; signs rusting and no conformity with the font. Rambo suggested replacement of all signage.

Mayor Thomas also expressed concern regarding the inability to read many of the street signs, however, it is under review.

Councilman Giordano suggested type of signage be addressed in the Master Plan.

Flooding at 17 North Virginia Avenue needs to be reviewed.

Public Safety (Mincey, Martin, Giordano): Council President Mincey stated/addressed the following: Expressed the need for all homes to be numbered with numbers at least 5" tall and cannot be of the same color of the home; the need to resolve the abandoned car issues; New Jersey American Water to conduct hydrant flushing between April 6 -18, 2021. Fish Game Warden advised no fishing for striper bass from April through May. Take precautions against COVID-19 by wearing mask, washing hands and social distancing.

Ambulance Squad responded to 81 alarms during the month of March; EMT school almost complete; new members to appoint to squad.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Finance Officer Report: Labb addressed/stated the following: Commended council for well crafted budget by including a recovery plan, improved tax collection rate renewed shared service agreement, land sales, appointment of Business Administrator and a Police Director. Working on Transitional Aid application requesting \$550,000.00. As of March 30, 2020 through March 30, 2021 tax collection rate increased by 1.92 percent.

Mayor Thomas introduced Police Director Richard Rivera. Mr. Rivera stated that he is a retired Police Officer, who for the past 12 years has served as a Police Practice Consultant. Mr. Rivera stated his goal is to bridge the gap between the Police Department and the community; developing a strategic plan to combat crime and improving the quality of life.

Officer in Charge: Lieutenant Spera addressed/stated the following: From March 17th – April 5th, responded to 491 calls for service, used 8 motor vehicle summons, 5 Borough Ordinances, 11 arrests, and performed 37 business/property checks. Officers continue with increased patrols in the areas of Penn Towers, East & West Pitman Street and Penn Street. Department operating at a staffing level of 69 percent due to one officer who retired, 2 officers on long-term disability, 2 officers who resigned, which has resulted in 202 hours of overtime. Several applications have been received and forwarded to the Police Director for hiring recommendations. Reminded all to be mindful to keep vehicles locked as theft of vehicles are ongoing. Rico Colon of Delaware was arrested and charged with attempted murder, weapons offenses and kidnapping.

Fire Chief Report: Adam Hartsough addressed/stated the following: Reminded all to be safe when using bon-fires and fire pits.

Ambulance/EMS Captain Report: On behalf of Captain Ashcraft, Council President Mincey addressed/stated the following:

Mayoral Comment: Mayor Thomas addressed/stated the following: Salem County vaccination locations at Salem Medical Center, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Saturday/Sunday from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. by appointment by calling 856-469-8555. For those 65 years of age and older and with internet access contact Salem County Department of Health at <https://health.salemcountynj.gov> or email scseniors.ooa@salemcountynj.gov. For those 65 years and older, without internet access, dial 856-935-7510, ext. 8406 on Monday, Tuesday and Thursdays from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

236 Easter baskets were given out on April 3rd.

Met with engineer, Business Administrator and Attorney to research flooding issues; pumps are being monitored, grants for drainage issues, updating/creating digital maps, new backup generator. Leadership team met with State Monitor regarding the Transitional Aid application and a Recovery Plan, which requires the adoption of a Mission Statement, organizational chart, update job descriptions, create an Economic Redevelopment Team, control spending, development of a personnel system, update of shared service agreements, update of the Master Plan and to improve the tax collection rate. Working to resolve code enforcement issues and the complaint process; the hiring of an additional Code Enforcement Officer.

Sean Brown, Business Administrator, expressed appreciation to Mayor and Council for his appointment. Mr. Brown addressed the various needs and complaints regarding the Borough, advising that they will be resolved systematically. Mr. Brown addressed drug addiction and the need to help individuals resolve their addictions.

Attorney Report: Robert Tarver, Jr., Attorney addressed/stated the following: Commitment from insurance for reimbursement of \$75,000.00 as it relates to settlement. Review of Shared Service Agreements to determine if they meet the Borough's needs. Aggressive code enforcement to insure merchants and residents properties are in compliance.

APPOINTMENTS:

Maryanne MacKay to the Penns Grove Planning Board.
Councilwoman Irene Scarpaci as the Fund Commissioner for the Joint Insurance Fund.

Motion to group and appoint by Martin; second Mincey. Roll Call. All ayes.

NEW BUSINESS:

Add on Resolution No. 2021-4-54 – RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN EMERGENT USE FUND FOR THE BOROUGH ADMINISTRATOR.

Add on Resolution No. 2021-4-55 – RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SETTLEMENT OF TAX APPEAL LITIGATION RE: RITE AID OF NEW JERSEY #01318-02 VS PENNS GROVE BOROUGH SALEM COUNTY TAX COURT DOCKET Nos: 005663-2018; 003056-2019; 001068-2020

Motion to adopt Resolution No. 2021-4-54 and Resolution No. 2021-4-55 by consent by Martin; second Giordano. Roll call. All ayes.

Councilwoman Scarpaci questioned explanation of Resolution No. 2021-4-55.
Mr. Tarver explained that after the litigation, the settlement decreased from 1.8 million to \$1,423,550.00 based on land assessment of \$309,600.00 and improvement assessment of \$1,113,950.00.

Motion to approve Tracy Thompson compensation for the website by Martin; second Mincey. Roll Call. All in favor.
Labb stated waiver has been approved.

Councilman Rambo addressed the "car crusin" to be held on May 5, 2021 at the riverfront from 4:00 p.m. until dark, during the months of May to October. Possibly having a vendor with hot dogs, etc., and a D.J. Clerk Williams advised that the Borough is not the owner of the riverfront property. Mayor suggested discussion during committee meetings.

Councilwoman Scarpaci announced the Planning Board meeting, which will be held on April 12, 2021 at 7:00 p.m., further stating that the applicant proposes to build 36 apartments on scattered sites throughout the Borough.

Sean Brown announced the Payment Protection Program and the NJEDA, which provides monetary support to small businesses with five employees or less. Mr. Brown advised that the application deadline is May 31, 2021.

Councilman Rambo questioned how the funds are to be applied.
Mr. Brown stated it can be used to pay the proprietor and employee.
Mr. Brown stated he plans to reach out to the local businesses to advise them of the grant.

Mayor stated announced that anyone wanting to start a business may reach out to Mr. Brown for guidance.

PUBLIC PORTION:

None.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn by Mincey; second Scarpaci. Roll call. All ayes.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon R. Williams
Municipal Clerk

Minutes Are Not Verbatim