

**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 20, 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-present, Giordano-present, Martin-present, Mincey-present, Rambo-present, Scarpaci-present

Invocation by Sharon Williams, Municipal Clerk.

PAYMENT OF BILLS & APPROVAL OF BILL OF BILL LIST:

Giordano questioned bill from Windsor Township, stating that it was on previous bill list.

Walker advised that it wasn’t paid, and therefore, needed to be added to the current list.

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

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION BY CONSENT:

2021-4-56 – RESOLUTION APPOINTING HUMANE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER AND TELEPHONE NUMBER TO BE PUBLICIZED

2021-4-57 – REFUND OVERPAYMENT TO WELLS FARGO

2021-4-58 – REFUND OVERPAYMENT TO NORTH AMERICAN SAVINGS BANK

2021-4-59 – GOVERNOR’S COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE FISCAL GRANT CYCLE OCTOBER 2020-JUNE 2025

2021-4-60 – RESOLUTION CERTIFYING REVIEW OF ANNUAL AUDIT

2021-4-61 – A RESOLUTION APPOINTING RICHARD RIVERA AS A CLASS II MEMBER OF THE PLANNING BOARD

2021-4-62 – RESOLUTION APPOINTING FUND COMMISSIONER

Resolution no. 2021-4-60 was tabled until next meeting.

Motion to adopt Resolution No. 2021-4-56 through 2021-4-59, 2021-4-61 adopted by consent by Giordano; second Mincey. Roll call. All ayes.

Motion to adopt Resolution No. 2021-4-62 by Mincey; second Martin. Roll call. All ayes.

FIRST READING AND INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE:

2021-10 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 387 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF PENNS GROVE – STORM WATER CONTROL

Sean Smith, Engineer, stated that the NJ DEP is revising the existing storm water management plan. Smith advised that he will provide detail changes during the May 2, 2021 meeting.

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Buildings & Grounds (Martin, Giordano, Rambo): Councilwoman Martin stated/addressed the following: Barber Avenue Park will remained closed until the necessary changes and repairs are made to the use zone by installing wood fiber or shredded rubber, replacement of swing chains, contemplating removal of the miracle unit steps and walking platform, game time unit in need of repair, and railroad ties that need to be hammered down or replaced. Business Administrator will follow up with Triad and the Engineer.

General Government/Finance/JIF/Clean Communities (Scarpaci, Martin, Giordano): Tax Collection rate increased by 1.93 percent over last year; reminded council to take the Elected Officials Seminar, which provides for \$250.00 insurance decrease for each member who participates. Attended Commissioner Orientation; forwarded Police Commands staff training to Police Director. JIF appraisal of municipal buildings for insurance purposes. Received \$3450.00 reimbursement from the Safety Program reward monies. Volunteer form added to website by Mr. Brown for Clean Communities Program. Cleanup will be held three Saturdays in May 8th, 15th and 22nd from 10:00 a.m. to noon; encouraging all to participate, providing \$250.00 mini grant to non-profit, civic groups, churches, school clubs, social clubs. Will attend annual conference on May 27th, topic relates ban on plastic bags. Picked up five 'No littering' signs placed at the Riverwalk, one at the gate to the pier, and one at the park. Spoke to Planning Board Engineer, Dina Moore Johnson, who advised that the first draft of the Master Plan will be available at the end of the month.

Housing/Zoning & Planning/Shade Tree (Giordano, Martin, Rambo): Councilman Giordano stated/addressed the following: 3 zoning application processed during the month of March; 14 Certificate of Occupancy's processed, total amount collected was \$700.00. 1 variance application to the Planning Board for 70 plus apartments, however, due to a discrepancy in application, developer will submit an amended application to be heard at the May 10th Board meeting.

Recreation/Board of Health (Carter, Mincey, Martin): Councilman Carter stated/addressed the following: Code Enforcement report from last report through; summons 6, 29 ten-day notices, 11 notices resolved. Met with Councilman Rambo and Councilwoman Martin have been given the approval to host the monthly car show at the Riverwalk; will conduct a cleanup of the area by filling in potholes for the monthly event. Expecting 50 – 60 participants; encourage all to participate. Gift cards will be awarded; hot dog stand will be present; DJ will provide music.

Public Works/Streets & Roads (Rambo, Mincey, Carter): Councilman Rambo stated/addressed the following: No report.

Public Safety (Mincey, Martin, Giordano): Council President Mincey stated/addressed the following: Spoke with Leslie Wright of the Municipal Alliance for the Prevention of Alcohol, seeking volunteers to participate in the awareness programs, and will provide a flyer to post to the Borough's website. Spoke to the David Mayer, Mayor of Gloucester and head of New Jersey American Water, regarding a water leak along Walnut Street and Deming Avenue; matter will be reviewed by the water company.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Finance Officer Report: Ericka Walker addressed/stated the following: Tax collection has increased by 2.97 percent over; 2020 45.30 percent, as of this date it's 48.27 percent.

Police Director Report: Richard Rivera addressed/stated the following: Lieutenant Jason Spera has announced his intention to retire next month; commended Spera for his service. In the process of vetting candidates. Officer Robert Frett, comes to Penns Grove with 17 years of experience and has been working with Spera for the past four months; further stated that the Resolution promoting Frett to Corporal is before Mayor and Council for consideration. The need to address shortage of personnel within the Department by hiring those with certification; exploring options to hire those without certification. Hiring of three full-time officers and a handful of part-time officers. Encouraged individuals who are interested in law enforcement to apply. Met with Chief of Detectives, Elliot Hernandez and County Prosecutor John Lenahan discussing global issues with the Department and surrounding area. Reviewing various platforms to notify the public of public safety issues. Review of Ordinances to address quality of life issues, i.e. noise. Congratulations to EMS for the delivery of a baby.

Fire Chief Report: Adam Hartsough addressed/stated the following: Monthly report for the month of March - 1 building, 1 auto, 7 mutual aid, 2 ambulance assist, 1 gas leak, 3 alarm systems, and 2 police assist.

Rivera questioned knowledge of the constant alarm going off at 2 West Pitman Street, which rings all hours of the night.

Hartsough stated that he responded to an alarm sounding at 2 West Pitman, however, there was no code to silence nor any contact information available to silence the alarm; with a second occurrence, which was sent to the alarm company, who sent it to 911.

Rivera addressed review of the Ordinance to address these situations.

Ambulance/EMS Captain Report: On behalf of Captain Ashcraft, Council President Mincey addressed/stated the following: 842 calls of which 156 were mutual aid – 136 to Carneys Point, 13 to Pennsville, 4 to Oldman's Township and 2 to Mannington. Old Ambulance is being repaired for suspected thermostat due to overheating.

Mayoral Comment: Mayor Thomas addressed/stated the following: She and the Business Administrator, Sean Brown, met with Carney's Point officials, Mayor Brown, Committee person Bomba and Business Administrator, Casey, regarding Public Works and to strengthen the relationship between Penns Grove Borough and Carneys Point Township; discussing garbage collection, sewer drains, parks and street paving and other issues that affect both communities; tenant, homeowner, and landlords to maintain their properties.

Companies interested in operating the cannabis industry. Mayor encouraged the public to email or through Messenger with their opinion on the cannabis.

Met with Risk Management at the Barber Avenue Park, which has been out of compliance since 2017; grass around the equipment needs to be removed and replaced with mulch or rubber fiber in addition to the railroad ties.

Attorney Report: Robert Tarver, Jr., Attorney addressed/stated the following: Issue with a business operating outside of its' approved use has been resolved. Working with the Business Administrator to address policies and procedures, updating code enforcement and record retentions.

Councilman Giordano, expressed concern regarding complaints received regarding a vehicle who continuously plays extremely loud music.

Rivera stated that he spoke with the individual, who continues to operate his vehicle in said manner. Rivera stated that he is currently reviewing the Code to determine the best means to address and enforce the law.

Councilman Carter, stated that he has witnessed other motorists playing loud music, and stressed the importance of enforcement against all individuals who violate the Code.

Councilman Carter stated that he witness children near the Barber Avenue Park, and questioned if the u-lock had been installed on the gate.

Councilwoman Martin replied that she had purchased a heavy duty chain and u-lock, which has secured the gate, preventing anyone from entering.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mayor Thomas announced that the audit will be discussed during the May 4, 2021 meeting.

Mayor Thomas announced the month of May will be designated "Cleanup Penns Grove" month.

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-4-63 – AUTHORIZING THE PROMOTION OF ROBERT FRETT TO THE RANK OF CORPORAL

Motion to adopt by Giordano; second Mincey. Roll call. All ayes.

PUBLIC PORTION:

Louis Pasquale, Delaware Drive, Penns Grove, expressed concern that he couldn't hear Councilwoman Scarpaci. Mr. Pasquale questioned the status of Penn Street, Lanning Avenue and the Fire Department parking lot; expressing concern that the grant funding will be lost.

Sean Smith, Engineer, stated that he is aware of the projects through an exit meeting with the previous engineer. Mr. Smith stated the following: Penns Street Phase III Roadway Improvement Project has been extended; awaiting a callback from the DOT District 4 representative. No information on the Lanning Avenue project, however, awaiting a call back from DOT.

2 DCA Communities Grant for the Fire Department parking lot, and Broad Street and Barber Avenue drainage. Plans and specifications have not been developed; currently working on plans for Penn Street Phase III.

Mr. Pasquale questioned the status of repairing drainage at Mill Street pumping station to rebuild the chip valve and a second pump at Delaware Avenue.

Mr. Smith addressed the many issues discussed: Mill Street pump station, two tidal gates with no easement or access; Delaware avenue backup pump; stormwater control, stormwater cleanout, gravity discharge is clogged, backup generator at Straughns Lane; research into flooding issues in the area of 51 airy avenue; cost of 8000 linear feet with projection costs; working with Triad regarding funding assistance of with \$800,000 project; digital maps, maintenance and management of all pump stations and regular clean out, absence of bulk head. Spoken with Mayor regarding generation of additional income, and redevelopment planning steps to be taken, needs determination and re-examination of the Master Plan.

Jeremiah Carter, North Broad Street, Penns Grove, expressed concern regarding the storm drain is in need of cleaning. Mr. Carter questioned the street sweeper he saw along Broad Street.

Council President stated that the County may have been using the sweeper owned by Carneys Point.

Mr. Carter questioned clarification on the number of officers to be hired.

Richard Rivera stated three full-time and three part-time, and clerks as well.

Mr. Carter questioned the ticket amount for those who violate the noise ordinance; further questioning if the fine increases per offense.

Mr. Rivera stated that ticket cost, as well as speeding has been an issue; however, the matter is under review with the Borough Solicitor.

Greg Martin, Spruce Street, Penns Grove, stressed the importance of addressing all noise complaints, such as that that comes from DiPaolos.

Mr. Rivera stated that this issue is also under review.

Mr. Martin expressed his appreciation for Mr. Rivera's community relationship.

Councilman Carter questioned a means to notify the residents when street cleaning is conducted, so that vehicles can be park elsewhere.

Sean Brown stated that a communication strategy is underway between the Borough and Carneys Point Township. Mr. Brown stated that he and Mr. Rivera have discussed the reverse 911.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn by Carter; second Mincey. All ayes.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon R. Williams
Municipal Clerk

Minutes Are Not Verbatim