

**BOROUGH OF PENNS GROVE
COUNTY OF SALEM, STATE OF NEW JERSEY
MAYOR AND COUNCIL**

**MINUTES
August 3, 2022**

Meeting was 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 was also posted on the Borough Penns Grove website: www.pennsgrove-nj.org and was emailed to the official newspaper as provided by Resolution. Additionally, this August 3, 2022, meeting is 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 Williams, Municipal Clerk

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

MINUTES:

- May 17, 2022 – Executive Session

Motion to adopt by Martin; second Carter. Roll call. Carter-yes, Martin-yes, Mincey-no, Scarpaci-abstain. Mayor Thomas voted yes.

PAYMENT OF BILLS & APPROVAL OF BILL LIST:

Scarpaci addressed invoice from Parker McCay for bond issue, questioning if there are any outstanding bonds.

Labb advised that there are no outstanding bonds.

Scarpaci addressed invoice from TRIAD Associates.

Labb explained that TRIAD assists in the discharge of the Neighborhood Preservation Program home improvement grant.

Scarpaci questioned the invoice from Mr. Guzzo.

Tarver advised that Attorney Ed Hill has been consulting and working on the Designation of Rehabilitation & Redevelopment Plan.

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

PRESENTATION: Paul Forlenza, Executive Director, TRI-CO JIF, stated that the Agreement between the Joint Insurance Fund (JIF) and the Borough will expire December 31, 2022. Forlenza addressed the exposures and challenges faced by the JIF, stating costs of \$24 million dollars associated with the pandemic. Forlenza addressed the lawsuits surrounding land use as it relates to the legalization of marijuana. Forlenza addressed the regulatory changes, increasing insurance market and social inflation. Forlenza also addressed the Wellness Program, comorbidities and recovery cost, Risk Management trainings, the Safety Incentive Program, transitional duty, subrogation recoveries and the loss ratio trend. Mr. Forlenza also addressed the JIF's budget, dividends to the members, historical finances and the cyber program.

Scarpaci questioned the Borough's status as it relates to cyber security.

Forlenza stated he will provide information later.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTION(S) FOR CONSIDERATION BY CONSENT:

2022-8-112 – RESOLUTION CERTIFYING REVIEW OF ANNUAL AUDIT

Scarpaci noted a typo in the auditing year.

Motion to adopt with amendment to auditing year by Carter; second Mincey.

Roll Call. All ayes.

FIRST READING AND INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE(S):

2022-15 – A BOROUGH ORDINANCE CONCERNING PEDDLING AND SOLICITING AND REPLACING CHAPTER 340, PART II OF THE GENERAL LEGISLATION

Motion to adopt by title only by Mincey; seconded by Scarpaci. Roll call. All ayes.
Scarpaci requested a list of the fees.

SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING OF ORDINANCE(S):

2022-13 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 206 OF THE BOROUGH CODE TO UPDATE THE BOROUGH'S VACANT PROPERTY REGISTRATION PROCESS

Mayor solicited public comment.

Motion to adopt by Martin; seconded by Mincey.

Mincey expressed concern regarding the fees.

Darryl Rhone indicated that the master copy has the updated fees.

Roll call. All ayes.

2022-14 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 436 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF PENNS GROVE ENTITLED "VEHICLES, MOTORIZED RECREATIONAL"

Mayor solicited public comment.

Ron Giordano, Sack Avenue, Penns Grove, questioned the amendments made.

Tarver stated that the Ordinance amends the code to address ATV and unregistered dirt bikes on public highways. Tarver explained that the illegal use of said vehicles could cause the individual to forfeit their vehicle. Tarver further stated that it would be at the discretion of the Police Officer.

Greg Martin, Spruce Street, Penns Grove stated he is not in favor of the confiscation of the vehicle being permitted at the discretion of the Police Officer.

Councilman Carter suggested using a "Tier" based system.

Rhone stated that provisions can be put in place.

Tarver stated that the Ordinance is reflective of the state statute.

Motion to table until the August 16, 2022, meeting by Carter; second Martin. Roll call. Carter-yes, Martin-yes, Mincey-yes, Scarpaci-no. Motion carries.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Buildings & Grounds (Worley, Martin, Scarpaci): Scarpaci reported that a meeting was held with Bright Ideas, who is a company that partner with Atlantic City Electric, to discuss replacing fluorescent lighting with led lighting at Borough Hall, park and riverfront. Scarpaci stated that they will complete an assessment for the Borough.

General Government/Finance/Personnel (Martin, Carter, Worley): Council President Martin reported that committee met and discussed additional staff. Martin announced that an individual was interviewed to fill the Administrative Assistant position. Martin also reported the desire to hire two laborers.

Housing/Zoning & Planning (Rambo, Scarpaci, Martin): Tarver reported the Housing Inspector weekly report of 5 housing complaints and 3 Certificate of Occupancy inspections. Tarver stated that Tarver also reported that the Housing Inspector has also begun creating a list of abandoned/vacant properties, which has been forwarded to Mr. Rhone, who will begin foreclosure proceedings.

Recreation/Board of Health (Carter, Rambo, Mincey): Carter reported the Registrar report for the month of June 2022, and Code Enforcement for the month of July 2022. Carter announced Oldies Night every other Sunday and signup for youth football season, ages 5 – 14-year-old can participate in the league. Carter encouraged participation in the youth basketball league.

Public Works/Streets & Roads (Scarpaci, Mincey, Rambo): Scarpaci reported that ditch cleaning will commence in the Fall; addressed bids for gutters for the ambulance and fire hall. Scarpaci suggested meeting with Carneys Point regarding the Public Works contract.

Tarver addressed the sink hole at Poplar and Guest, stating that the sinkhole is approximately 5-foot deep. Tarver advised that Carneys Point DPW was contacted, however, outside personnel will be needed to repair.

Mayor Thomas reported sink hole along Delaware Avenue.

Carter questioned if Atlantic City Electric had been contacted regarding the debris left behind.

Tarver advised that Shawn Gray had been contacted and advised that they will remove the debris.

Public Safety (Mincey, Worley, Carter): Mincey announced the purchase of a new vehicle for the Police Department. Mincey addressed the need to have police presence at events and the need to increase the vendor fees. Mincey also addressed the need to install a handicap accessible door to the court office as required by the AOC.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Business Administrator Report: Tarver addressed meeting with State monitor and reported receipt of \$550,000.00 of transitional aid as a result of complying with the requirements set forth. Supplemental aid of \$1,750,000.00, which is designated as follows: \$300,000 for police technology, \$175,000.00 for recreation improvement, \$225,000.00 for a new ambulance, \$200,000.00 for demolition, \$100,000.00 to update the Master Plan, \$129,700.00 for waterfront pump station flood control, \$330,000 to pay off ladder truck, \$54,300.00 to pay off USDA loan, \$100,000 for two new police interceptor vehicles, \$136,000.00 to pay off the property revaluation.

Tarver requested consideration for a walk-on resolution appointing an Administrative Assistant to assist the Business Administrator, Finance Office and other offices as needed and two laborers. Tarver addressed the demolition projects on Cumberland Avenue, technology roll out and oil spillage at the former DPW building.

Mincey suggested hiring two part-time Housing Inspectors to conduct the annual inspections.

Tarver stated the need to hire a Business Administrator.

Scarpaci suggested contacting an employment service to locate a Business Administrator.

Finance Officer Report: Labb reported tax collection rate of 74.39 percent, reporting a 1.15 percent increase compared to the previous year.

Police Director Report: Richard Rivera addressed National Night Out, new vehicle, and Barber Avenue Park hours of operation, Right-To-Know and Fire Marshall inspection of the former DPW building, fire and ambulance building. Increase in burglary and increased "walk & talk" to make presence known. Rivera also reported two shootings with suspect of one being arrested.

Fire Chief Report: Rivera reported that the Police responded to 5 calls.

Ambulance/EMS Captain Report: Debbie Ashcraft reported 89 calls for the month of July 2022, 600 calls year to date. Grant received, in the amount of a little over \$3300.00, from Penns Grove-Carneys Point Rotary Club to purchase blood pressure machine and warming bags that are used to keep blankets warm. Ashcraft questioned the status of the EZ Pass.

Rivera stated in the process of working with Finance to open an account with EZ Pass.

Attorney Report: Mr. Rhone stated matters for executive session. Mr. Rhone also addressed the auction of properties stating that some buyers have rescinded their offer.

Mayoral Comments: Mayor Thomas requested a moment of silence in recognition of the death of Ronnie "Buff" Brown. Mayor stated she is working with High School science teacher, Vicky Palienaus for grant opportunities from New Jersey Sustainable for bike lanes, electric charging stations and ebikes. Mayor expressed appreciation to all employees for a job well done. Mayor also expressed appreciation to Council. Mayor encouraged all to attend the "Oldies" night at the riverfront.

OLD BUSINESS:

American Recovery Money – Tarver addressed the budget account of the funds. Labb reported a balance of \$109,372.27. Labb stated the benefit funds have been to municipalities and outlined charges against funds.

Auction of Borough Properties – Tarver announced that \$392,000.00 has been secured as of this date. Tarver stated that he has been contacted by those who did not have the opportunity to participate in the auction but would like to purchase property. Tarver suggested developing a process to handle properties not sold at auction.

Carter expressed concern that a property located on Virginia Avenue was sold.

Mincey advised that it was considered a Willis Avenue property based on historical information.

NEW BUSINESS:

2022-8-114 – A RESOLUTION EXTENDING THE APPOINTMENT OF ROBERT L. TARVER, JR. AS INTERIM BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR FOR A PERIOD OF SIXTY (60) DAYS

Tarver addressed the various options regarding the hire of Business Administrator.

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

2022-8-115 – A RESOLUTION EXTENDING OFFICERS OF EMPLOYMENT

Scarpaci requested to see copy of resumes.

Rivera indicated that Mr. Barrett is a hard worker.

2022-8-116 – A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PAYMENT

Tarver explained that no payment will be made until the work has been certified by the engineer.

Scarpaci suggested tabling until next meeting.

Tarver advises that resolution authorizes partial payment only, and only after the work has been certified by the engineer.

Motion to table until the next meeting by Scarpaci.

Motion dies for lack of a second.

Motion to adopt by Mincey; second Carter. Roll call. Carter-yes, Martin-yes, Mincey-yes, Scarpaci-no. Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

2022-8-113 – RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE SESSION

WHEREAS, the Borough Council has determined that it is necessary to go into a closed session to discuss certain matters relating to the items as permitted by N.J.S.A. 10:4-12b;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Penns Grove will go into closed session to discuss the following, in accordance with the aforesaid provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, after which it will reconvene in the public:

- I. Matters Relating to Litigation and Attorney-Client Privilege Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12b(7) – Discussion regarding Borough of Penns Grove vs. Flameworks.
- II. Matters regarding contract negotiations pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12b(7) – Discussion of contract between the Borough of Penns Grove and Smithco Engineering Group, Inc.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the minutes of the closed session will be made available to the public when the need for privacy no longer exists.

Motion to adopt by Martin, seconded Carter. Roll call. All ayes.

2022-8-117 – A RESOLUTION TO HIRE MUNICIPAL ENGINEER

Whereas, Remington & Viereck have satisfy the criteria necessary to fulfil the position of Borough engineer;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Borough Council of the Borough of Penns Grove that Remington & Vernick is hereby appointed as municipal engineer for the Borough of Penns Grove.

Motion to adopt by Scarpaci, seconded Martin. Roll call. All ayes.

PUBLIC SESSION: Motion to enter public session by Carter; seconded Martin. All in favor.

Lisa LaMorte, South Riverwalk, Penns Grove, described the flooding damage to her home during hurricane season. Ms. LaMorte expressed concern regarding the repairs needed to the seawall.

Ms. LaMorte questioned when the seawall will be repaired.

Tarver stated he will research the matter.

Scarpaci advised that the ditches will be cleaned, which may help.

Mayor advised that the Borough is diligently searching for grants.

Ron Giordano, Sack Avenue, Penns Grove, commended council for supplemental aid award. Mr. Giordano questioned the timecard submitted by the engineer's staff member; further suggesting that it be reviewed.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn by Scarpaci; seconded Martin. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon R. Williams, RMC
Municipal Clerk