

BOROUGH OF PENNS GROVE
COUNTY OF SALEM, STATE OF NEW JERSEY
MAYOR AND COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING – 6:30 P.M.
VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE (VTC)
August 5, 2021
MINUTES

This meeting was called to order by Mayor LaDaena D. Thomas.

Mayor led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Invocation by the Municipal Clerk, Sharon R. Williams.

Mayor 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 of 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-19 (“Coronavirus”), this August 5, 2021, meeting is held via “Zoom” online meeting platform.

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

MAYORAL COMMENTS:

Mayor Thomas addressed the Penns Grove Recovery Plan as created by the DCA and the need to adhere to the plan to continue receiving Transitional Aid. Mayor stated the plan is posted on the website. Mayor addressed the requirements of the plan, such as creating an Organization Chart, outlining the departments and whom they report to and creating job descriptions. Mayor announced new Police Officers and addressed the swearing-in ceremony. Mayor addressed the updated of the policy manual/employee handbook, mandatory staff training, self-evaluation, and performance reviews. Mayor addressed hiring procedures, improve tax collection rate, increase tax base, and sell properties. Mayor outlined the steps to sell property, review Shared Service agreements, control, and reduce spending by implementing new policies and procedures. Mayor addressed the Cannabis Commission recommendations to council. Mayor also addressed the Economic and Redevelopment Board and their two-year goals.

MINUTES:

Motion to adopt the June 1, 2021, Regular Session minutes by Scarpaci, seconded Giordano. Roll call. All ayes.

PAYMENT OF BILLS & APPROVAL OF BILL LIST:

Giordano stated he did not receive a complete list and expressed concern regarding purchase order numbered 21-00473 submitted by Darryl Rhone, stating invoice should be reviewed by the Planning Board. Giordano also expressed concern regarding purchase order numbered 21-00421, submitted by L&A Demolition, LLC., questioning the work conducted for the amount billed. Giordano suggested an investigation of both invoices prior to payment.

Tarver advised council that the work had been completed under an emergency basis; therefore, pursuant to statute the bill must be paid.

Giordano suggested approving the bill list except for Darryl Rhone’s invoice.

Rambo stated his favor of an investigation surrounding the emergent bill.

Scarpaci stated that her favor of an investigation surrounding the emergent bill.

Mincey expressed concern that the property was not thoroughly cleaned. Mincey suggested meeting among Committee to discuss in preparation for the next Borough Council meeting.

Rambo expressed concern that the property was not thoroughly cleaned.

Tarver stated that he is researching the matter.

Scarpaci expressed concern that the invoice is not descriptive of the work that was completed.

Motion to approve the bill list and pay all bills except for invoice number 21-00473, and invoice number 210-00421 by Giordano; seconded Mincey. Roll call. All ayes.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION BY CONSENT:

2021-8-88 – AN EMERGENCY TEMPORARY BUDGET RESOLUTION

2021-8-89 – A RESOLUTION APPOINTING POLICE OFFICERS

2021-8-90 – RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE ORGANIZATION CHART FOR THE BOROUGH OF PENNS GROVE

2021-8-91 – RESOLUTION TO HIRE AUDITOR

Scarpaci suggested tabling Resolution No. 2021-8-91, stating that the committee should meet, discuss, and provide a full recommendation to the Council so that all of Council is aware of the reason for the resolution.

Motion to approve resolution 2021-8-88 through 2021-8-90 by consent by Mincey; seconded Scarpaci. Roll call. Carter-abstain, Giordano-yes, Martin-yes, Martin-yes, Council President-yes, Rambo-yes, Scarpaci-yes.

Motion to table resolution 2021-8-91 by Scarpaci; seconded by Giordano. Roll call. Carter-no, Giordano-yes, Martin-yes, Council President Mincey-yes, Rambo-yes, Scarpaci-yes.

FIRST READING AND INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE(S):

2021-24 – AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING AN ORGANIZATIONAL CHART AND AMENDING THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF PENNS GROVE

Motion to adopt by title only by Giordano; seconded by Council President Mincey. Roll call. All ayes.

SECOND READING/PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION ORDINANCE(S):

2021-21 – AN ORDINANCE GOVERNING SPECIAL EVENTS IN THE BOROUGH OF PENNS GROVE

Mayor solicited public comment.

Sean Brown suggested pulling the Ordinance as it has not yet been discussed in Committee.

Motion to table until the next meeting by Council President Mincey; seconded Giordano. Roll call. All ayes.

2021-23 – AN ORDINANCE BY THE BOROUGH OF PENNS GROVE, SALEM COUNTY, NEW JERSEY PROHIBITING THE OPERATION OF ANY CLASS OF CANNABIS BUSINESSES WITHIN ITS' GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES AND AMENDING THE PENNS GROVE MUNICIPAL CODE

Mayor solicited public comment.

Motion to adopt by Giordano; seconded by Council President Mincey. Roll call. All ayes.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Buildings & Grounds (Martin, Giordano, Rambo): Martin stated that the Committee met with BA Brown and discussed funds available to make repairs to the roof, water pump, and carpet removal and flooring replacement and other cosmetic issues at the Borough Hall. Martin stated they discussed the park and additional lighting at the riverfront. Martin also stated that a list of needed repairs at the ambulance hall was received today, which the Committee will review and advise on the necessary repairs.

General Government/Clean Communities (Scarpaci, Martin, Giordano): Scarpaci stated that the Committee met with the Solicitor to discuss the PILOT Agreement with Penns Grove Gardens. Scarpaci stated that it is anticipated to receive more funds than in the past. Scarpaci addressed the TRI-CO JIF retreat, where the topic of discussion was recreational marijuana and employees, reducing workman comp claims through safety training, how to encourage wellness for your employees, law enforcement initiatives, reducing cyber risk, and reviewing the OPRA process. Scarpaci stated that she learned how to obtain a reduction in our insurance rate, which she will share with the Committee.

Housing/Zoning & Planning (Giordano, Martin, Rambo): Giordano stated that he compiled a list of Borough owned properties that may need to be demolished or rehabilitated that he researched and provided a report to BA Brown.

Public Works/Streets & Roads (Rambo, Mincey, Carter): Rambo stated nothing to report.

Public Safety (Mincey, Martin, Giordano): Council President Mincey stated Committee met with Police Department to determine their needs. Mincey stated that the Committee is in the process of reviewing Ordinances that may need updating. Mincey stated that she is researching a Vaccine clinic to bring to the Borough.

Recreation/Board of Health (Carter, Mincey, Martin): Carter stated will meet on the 27th at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom.

Martin stated that the "Oldies Night" at the riverfront went very well and encouraged attendance at the August 15th and 29th "Oldies Night".

Mayor expressed appreciation to all those who participate and those who maintain the riverfront.

Rambo stated "Car Cruz" is held on the first Wednesday of the month and was a success. Rambo expressed appreciation to those who participated and attended. Rambo encouraged all to attend. Rambo expressed appreciation to the residents who help to maintain the cleanliness of the riverfront.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Business Administrator Report: Sean Brown addressed the updates to the Borough website. Brown addressed the desire to obtain grants for various needs. Brown addressed the Special Events Ordinance, stating the need to further review to cover all event issues.

Finance Officer Report: Stephen Labb addressed the need for Resolution 2022-8-88. Labb addressed the Transitional Aid and the need to amend the budget and the adoption of the budget. Labb stated the tax collection rate of has increased by 2.37 percent between August 4, 2020, and August 4, 2021.

Police Director Report: Richard Rivera stated that the Penns Grove Police Department, Carneys Point Police in conjunction with the County Prosecutor's Office made four arrests relating to gun offenses. Expressed appreciation to all Police Officers. Rivera stated that he and the Committee met and discussed the needs of the department. Rivera announced meeting with Salem Coalition for Safe Communities to work with the youth from six to sixteen and the programs to be offered. Rivera announced that the department will partner with the Student Leadership program at the High School.

Fire Chief Report: Adam Hartsough reported the calls for service for July 2021 as 5 mutual aids, 5 ambulance assists, 1 fire, 1 alarm, 1 C/O activation, 1 MVA, 1 drill and 1 investigation.

Ambulance/EMS Captain Report: Council President Mincey reported a total of 83 calls during the month of July; 569 to date.

Attorney Report: Robert J. Tarver, Jr. stated matters for executive session.

APPOINTMENT(S):

Motion to appoint Hanna G. Gibbs to the Penns Grove Ambulance by Mincey; seconded Scarpaci. Roll call. All ayes.

NEW BUSINESS:

Add On Resolution No. 2021-8-92 – A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING APPOINTMENT TO THE ECONOMIC REDEVELOPMENT BOARD

Motion to table by Scarpaci; seconded Mincey. Roll call. All ayes.

PUBLIC PORTION:

Jennifer Webb, Helms Cove Lane, Penns Grove, questioned the ability to assist the homeless. Mayor stated the need to research services, advising that BA Brown will reach out to her later.

Mayor expressed appreciation for Penns Grove Police, Carneys Point and MAPSA for a successful "National Night Out".

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

2021-8-93 – RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE SESSION

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 regarding litigation and Attorney-Client Privilege Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12b(7) – Discussion regarding litigation between the Borough of Penns Grove and Frameworks.

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 Scarpaci; seconded by Council President Mincey. Roll call. All ayes.

REGULAR SESSION:

ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn by Carter; seconded Council President Mincey. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon R. Williams
Municipal Clerk