

**BOROUGH OF PENNS GROVE
COUNTY OF SALEM, STATE OF NEW JERSEY
MAYOR AND COUNCIL
WORK SESSION – 6:30 P.M.
VIA VIDEO IN-PERSON & ZOOM
APRIL 19, 2022, MINUTES**

This 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 as also posted on the Borough Penns Grove website: www.pennsgrove-nj.org and was emailed to the official newspaper as provided by Resolution. This April 19, 2022 meeting was held in the Courtroom of Borough Hall, 1 State Street, Penns Grove, NJ and via “Zoom” online meeting platform.

Mayor Thomas led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Invocation by Sharon Williams, Municipal Clerk.

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

Also present: Chief Financial Officer, Stephen Labb and Robert J. Tarver, Jr., Solicitor

PUBLIC HEARING – MUNICIPAL BUDGET CY2022

Labb listed items built into the budget. Labb stated that municipality can only anticipate 85 percent of the 2021 transitional aid award of \$550,000.00, which would result in a 6.4 cent increase on the average assessed, with an increase of approximately \$50.55 annually or \$4.21 per month.

Mayor questioned surplus.

Labb reported surplus of \$699,000.00 in 2020 with an increase to \$839,000 in 2021.

Mayor solicited public comment.

Debbie Ashcraft, Ambulance Captain addressed the need for a new chassis for the ambulance.

Labb advised that those repairs can be funded through the capital budget.

Motion to table by Mincey second Worley. Roll Call. All ayes.

INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE(S):

2022-7 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 103-1 OF THE BOROUGH CODE PROVIDING FOR THE TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT OF APPOINTED PERSONNEL

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

NEW BUSINESS:

Add On Resolution No. 2022-4-74 – RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SETTLEMENT OF TAX APPEAL LITIGATION re: SALEM DAY CARE V. PENNS GROVE BOROUGH SALEM COUNTY TAX COURT DOCKET Nos: 005960-2018; 010565-2019; 010570-2020

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

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AND DISCUSSION:

Personnel Policy and Procedure Manual – Tarver addressed the flexible work policy, stating that it covers the ‘work from home’ policy. Tarver outlined the requirements.

Scarpaci questioned the source of the policy.

Tarver explained policy is gleaned from several municipalities he’s worked with and fitted this policy to meet the need of the Borough.

Worley suggested implementation of drug testing.

Tarver explained the nuances of drug testing in government.

Scarpaci suggested discussing in parts.

Williams reminded all of the importance of adopting as required by the Joint Insurance Fund.

Tarver stated that the policy can be updated when necessary.

Worley addressed the complaint policy, suggesting outside counsel and/or JIF.

Tarver stated that complaints would begin with the chain of command, further explaining employment law.

Worley addressed the 'anti-sexual harassment', stating that both paragraphs appear to be identical.

Tarver explained the difference between the two, stating that one paragraph references employees and the other addresses non-employees.

Worley addressed the 'grievance policy', suggesting that grievances be forwarded to the JIF.

Tarver stated that JIF cannot be used to resolve grievances, stating that it removes the Borough supervisors from being able to resolve.

Mincey reminded all to register for the Elected Officials Seminar offered by the JIF.

Worley addressed page 32, stating that the position should be named, not the individual.

Financial Disclosure Statement Filing – Clerk Williams reminded all the need to file their Financial Disclosure Statement by April 30th. Williams advised of the penalties for not doing so.

Debbie Ashcraft addressed the process for bill pay as conducted by Pedricktown Ambulance department; stating that the department receives a stipend from which all ambulance bills are paid.

Tarver explained that purchasing procedure and the need to follow state requirements.

Labb stated he will research the cloud-based system in Edmonds.

Departmental Budgets – Scarpaci requested receiving budget and purchase order for each council's respective department for review and monitoring.

Noise Ordinance – Mincey addressed the complaints received regarding DiPaolo's; further stating the need to address the noise Ordinance.

Tarver stated that a strategy needs to be put in place to enforce the Ordinance.

Blackboard Presentation – Quadir explained the benefit of Blackboard and how the system operates.

Mayor suggested meeting outside of a council meeting for further discussion.

Hiring for Housing Inspectors: Mincey expressed the need to hire two Housing Inspectors to conduct the annual inspections.

2022-4-75 – 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 Relating to Litigation and Attorney-Client Privilege Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12b(7) – Resolution Authorizing Settlement of Tax Appeal Litigation Re: Salem Day Care V. Penns Grove Borough, Salem County Tax Court Docket Nos: 005960-2018; 010565-2019; 010570-2020

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; second Scarpaci. Roll call. All ayes.

REGULAR SESSION:

2022-4-74 – RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SETTLEMENT OF TAX APPEAL LITIGATION re: SALEM DAY CARE V. PENNS GROVE BOROUGH SALEM COUNTY TAX COURT DOCKET NOS: 005960-2018; 010565-2019; 010570-2020

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

PUBLIC SESSION:

John Scarpaci, Railroad Avenue, Penns Grove, questioned the consequences for an employee who falsely accuses a member of the public.

Tarver stated that the policy outlines discipline procedures for misconduct depending upon the circumstances.

Ron Giordano, Sack Avenue, Penns Grove, suggested an arbitrary board for concerns raised by Mr. Scarpaci. Mr. Giordano expressed concern regarding the individual who rides through town blasting music. Mr. Giordano suggested impounding his vehicle.

Councilman Carter stated that there are several individuals who play loud music from their vehicles. Carter stated his disfavor of impound and suggested increasing violation fees.

Debbie Ashcraft, State Street, Penns Grove, questioned if the Borough had been contacted by American Legion regarding services, and expressed her disfavor of any offer to provide services.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn by Mincey; second Worley.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon R. Williams, RMC
Municipal Clerk