

**BOROUGH OF PENNS GROVE
COUNTY OF SALEM, STATE OF NEW JERSEY
MAYOR AND COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING – 6:30 P.M.
NOVEMBER 9, 2023 – MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor LaDaena D. Thomas in the courtroom of Borough Hall, 1 State Street, Penns Grove, New Jersey. Mayor 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. This November 9, 2023 meeting is being held via “Zoom” online meeting platform.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mayor LaDaena Thomas

INVOCATION: Michelle Hills, Deputy Clerk

MEETING RULES OF CONDUCT: Mayor LaDaena Thomas

ROLL CALL: Council President, Anjanette Scott – Present, Councilman Jonathan Carter – Present, Councilwoman Tracy Marinaro – Present, Councilman John Rambo – Present, Councilwoman Deborah Scott – Present, Councilwoman Sonya Worley – Absent

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- September 19, 2023 – regular session
- October 2, 2023 – regular session
- October 17, 2023 – regular session

Motion to adopt minutes by consent by Council President Scott, second D. Scott, Roll Call: All affirm, motion passed.

APPROVAL OF BILL LIST AND PAYMENT OF BILLS:

Motion to adopt by Council President Scott. Seconded Rambo. Roll Call: All affirm, motion passed.

RESOLUTION FOR INTRODUCTION AND CONSIDERATION:

2023-11-152 - A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A FAIR AND OPEN PROCESS FOR THE AWARD OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICE CONTRACTS WITH THE BOROUGH OF PENNS GROVE FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2024

2023-11-153 - RESOLUTION REQUESTING TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF COUNTY ROADS TO CONDUCT THE CHRISTMAS PARADE

2023-11-154 - RESOLUTION REGARDING THE GOVERNOR’S COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE, FISCAL GRANT CYCLE OCTOBER 2020 – JUNE 2025 FORM 1B

2023-11-155 – RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CANCELLATION OF TAXES FOR A TOTAL DISABLED VETERAN

2023-11-156 – RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CANCELLATION OF TAXES FOR BOROUGH OWNED PROPERTIES

2023-11-157 – RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PAYMENT CERTIFICATE NO. 2 FOR THE DELAWARE AVENUE PUMP STATION IMPROVEMENTS

2023-11-158 - RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SALE OF PROPERTY LOCATED AT 41 SOUTH VIRGINIA AVENUE, PENNS GROVE, NEW JERSEY, BLOCK 84 LOT 24 CURRENTLY OWNED BY THE BOROUGH OF PENNS GROVE - **REMOVED BY MR. TARVER**

2023-11-159 - A RESOLUTION OF LOCAL SUPPORT FOR UNCLE BEEZ GREENERYZ, LLC's CLASS 5 CANNABIS RETAILER LICENSE - **REMOVED BY MR. TARVER**

2023-11-160 - RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PAYMENT CERTIFICATE NO. 1 FOR THE FY2021 NJDOT TRUST FUND IMPROVEMENTS TO PENN STREET – PHASE IV

2023-11-161 - A RESOLUTION PERMITTING EXTENSION OF HOURS OF OPERATION FOR ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE ESTABLISHMENTS

2023-11-162 - RESOLUTION APPROVING PROPOSAL OF J. MCHALE & ASSOCIATES, INC REAL ESTATE APPRAISAL & CONSULTING SERVICES FOR BLOCK 57, LOTS 1,5 &6; BLOCK 59, LOT 3; & BLOCK 119, LOT 2

Motion to adopt by consent Resolutions No. 2023-11-152 through 2023-11-157 and 2023-11-160 through 2023-11-162 by Marinaro, second by Council President Scott. Roll Call: All affirm, motion passed.

APPOINTMENTS:

- Darian A. Meighan – Penns Grove Ambulance

Mayor Thomas appointed the following members to the Planning Board

- Gust Davis –Class IV
- Tyisha Adorno –Alternate

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Buildings & Grounds: Councilwoman Marinaro reported as Councilwoman Worley was absent. Council woman Marinaro stated there has been mulch and mums placed at Memorial Park and she placed flags for Veterans Day.

General Government/Finance/Personnel: Council President Scott Provided the Municipal Clerk's Report for September 2023 and October 2023. Councilman Carter thanked the volunteers for Trunk or Treat including Pat's Pizzeria, Giovanni's and House of Wright.
Council President

Housing/Zoning & Planning (Marinaro, Worley, Rambo): no report

Recreation/Board of Health (Carter, A. Scott, D. Scott): Councilman Carter Provided the Registrar's report on Vital Statistics for August 2023 and September 2023. Council President Scott added that for Thanksgiving this year there will be a catered dinner at the Elks Lodge and Door Dash will be available for those that are unable to attend on Thanksgiving Day. Flyers will be forthcoming. The Christmas parade will be December 16, 2023 starting at Middle School and making a right onto Maple, right onto Broad, right onto Main and ending at Barber Ave Park. There will be a toy give away at the park. Later a tree lighting at Memorial Park. Christmas decorating will begin in town the day after Thanksgiving if anyone would like to volunteer.

Public Works/Streets & Roads (Rambo, Marinaro, A. Scott): Councilman Rambo stated that the Seasonal Employees will be ending soon. Councilman Rambo also stated there is a pole in town that needs to be reinstalled and will be done for the Christmas decorating. He provided that 137 potholes have been filled and 15,000lbs of materials used on October 17, 2023, October 24, 2023 and November 3, 2023 along with 45 pounds of sand to go over the material to not stick to car tires. A big thanks to Brandywine Valley Services that does the Borough's trees and chipping for lending a dump trailer for the 3 days. Councilman Rambo stated they provide a service and give back to the community. Rambo addressed the many potholes to be completed. Rambo requested the residents be patient as this service was just taken over in January 2023 by the Borough. Councilman Rambo thanked Mr. White and stated that on October 22, 2023 Mayor Thomas was out with the crew and assisted filling holes and shoveling.

Councilman Carter added that all the lights are currently out at the Riverwalk and suggested checking the lights at Barber Ave Park as well.

Public Safety (D. Scott, Rambo, Carter): Councilwoman Scott thanked the officers for the work they do and being at the schools in the mornings.

Councilman Carter added thanks to the Police for attending the Trunk or Treat.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Business Administrator Report: Jack Surrency addressed the following: thanked Councilman Rambo, Qawaun White and the Public Works crew for the pothole work. Mr. Surrency will be meeting with the Assistant to the CFO to order new mats for the doors at the front and side of the building. Will have estimates done for the bathroom at the Public Works building. Preconstruction meeting for Penn St Phase IV. Saving the millings to use and request Councilman Rambo's assistance in locating a place to store. Surrency stated that the work is expected to be completed in two days. The schools, police, bus companies and residents will receive notice 48 hours prior. The sidewalk work has been completed. Planning in process for branches and leaves, with estimate for vacuum truck expected. Qawaun has had the crew cleaning the storm drains daily. Nathan Dunn has completed the online complaint to the water company regarding the sinkhole on Denning Avenue. Discussion regarding shelters for Code Blue and finding a location or setting up a meeting with Carneys Point and Pennsville who currently have facilities in place. Mr. Surrency mentioned the passing of Derrel Spence's grandmother, Tina Spence and that he attended the service on behalf of the Borough and Mayor and Council.

Finance Officer Report: Provided by Erica Walker, Assistant to the CFO, who addressed that the legal line budget is overbudget. Currently working on attorney budgets; Stated Stephan Labb, CFO is working budget transfers between accounts.

Ambulance/EMS Captain Report: Captain Debbie Ashcraft questioned if a new roof is coming to the ambulance hall. Ashcraft expressed concern regarding mold in the front room and the need for a heater. Discussed painting of the firehouse.

Deputy Clerk, Michelle Hills thanked Debbie Ashcraft for going above and beyond to assist with the set up and break down for Election Day.

Attorney Report: Robert Tarver, Jr. stated that are no serious lawsuits. Tarver stated there were discussion of the negotiations regarding a supermarket and that a letter of intent has been received. Tarver stated that the process is not easy as we are in a food desert and there is a need to bridge the gap as the stores are for profit entity. Tarver stated there is a food desert grant that can assist with feasibility study and make attractive for serious businesses to come to town. Demolitions have went to bid and are higher than the past and will need to pick and choose which properties to utilize the money from the state. Foreclosures are still in moratorium for every municipality and full value of property per Supreme Court fair market value plus taxes owed.

Mayoral Comments: Mayor Thomas thanked everyone that volunteered for the Trunk or Treat. Thanked the Public Works Team for all their hard work and it is appreciated. Congratulations to Jonathan Carter and Deborah Scott on reelection to council. Mr. Surrency provided thanks to Mayor Thomas, Council President Scott and Councilman Rambo on Wawa and inground tanks will be placed and gas tanks installed November 17, 2023.

NEW BUSINESS: Councilwoman Marinaro provided information on Ben Griffin, Gifted and Talented Teacher for students in K-8, that painted two murals in town and hopeful in the spring painting a mural at Borough Hall and Ambulance Hall/Fire Hall.

PUBLIC SESSION:

Councilman Carter thanked the residents for going out to the polls and voting.

Joyce Martin, Franklin Street asked if the properties across the street at 32 Franklin are obtaining permits and certificate of occupancies. Mr. Tarver advised it is being worked on.

Mrs. Martin stated 51 Penn Street has trailers without tags on Denning side and a car on the sidewalk on Penn Street side. Mr. Rivera states he will investigate and if the tags are expired can have the car towed.

Mr. Rivera added that the Blue Buick has been found and has Public Works marked on it. Also stated two of three of the new police vehicles are being outfitted and there will be cars for township use by the end of the year.

Greg Martin questioned if there is a list of homes and apartments that are rentals properties because of the deplorable conditions of some homes. He feels the residents are helpless and that they should receive an extreme fine and it is unacceptable. Mr. Tarver informed that Erin Mauer, the Housing Inspector, is very good at tracking the properties and there is a ten percent increase per state on tenant versus owner occupied.

Mr. Martin mentioned a family that paid 10,000 for a house next to Rambo's Shop for 5 family home and a citation to owner. Councilwoman D. Scott told Mr. Martin there is a need for more people like him and that there are slumlords but also good landlords.

Ron Giordano, Sack Ave, stated that the meeting is productive. Giordano commented Mr. Tarver and Council President Scott and that there is a housing dilemma and asked about yearly inspections for certificate of occupancies. Giordano suggested exploring having a Board of Health Committee and mentioned Mrs. Martin had been on it when the Borough previously had one.

Carol Mincey, Penn St – expressed concern that her sidewalk id not being replaced/ Mincey expressed concern that her OPRA request has not been answered. Dena Moore Johnson provided an answer regarding the sidewalks and that a survey was completed to identify the areas that had a trip hazard. The DOT then reviewed since State Grant money was being utilized for the project.

Qawaun White, Penns Grove – Questioned the Wawa vs Zawa and was informed that Zawa owns the ground.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn by consent by Council President Scott, second Rambo.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Hills, Deputy Clerk

MINUTES ARE NOT VERBATIM