

**LINWOOD COMMON COUNCIL
MINUTES OF REORGANTIZAITON MEETING
JANUARY 2, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER

Councilwoman June Byrnes called the meeting to order at 6:03 P.M., noting the meeting had been advertised in compliance with the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act.

FLAG SALUTE

Councilwoman Blair Albright led the flag salute.

INVOCATION

Father Paul Harte delivered the Invocation.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Darren Matik; Councilwoman Blair Albright; Councilwoman June Byrnes; Councilwoman Stacy DeDomenicis; Councilman Eric Ford; Councilman Matt Levinson; Councilman Todd Michael; and Councilman Adam Walcoff.

Absent: None

Also Present: Joseph L. Youngblood, City Solicitor; Vince Polistina, City Engineer; Jen Heller, Engineer's Office; and Leigh Ann Napoli, Municipal Clerk.

OATHS OF OFFICE

Judge Donna Taylor administered the Oath of Office to Stacy DeDomenicis as Council Member, Ward 1 of the City of Linwood.

Judge Ralph Paolone administered the Oath of Office to Todd Michael as Council Member, Ward 2 of the City of Linwood.

PRESENTATION

The Mayor read and presented an honorary Resolution to Ralph Paolone for his service on City Council. The Mayor and each member of Council commended and thanked Mr. Paolone.

ELECTION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT

The City Clerk opened the floor for nominations for Council President. Councilwoman Byrnes motioned to nominate Eric Ford with a second from Councilman Michael. The City Clerk called for any other nominations. Hearing none, nominations were closed by motion from Councilman Levinson and a second from Councilwoman Albright. The City Clerk called for a voice vote to close the floor for nominations. All members of Council were in favor to close the floor for nominations. The City Clerk called for a voice vote for Eric Ford to Council President. All members of Council were in favor. The nomination of Eric Ford for the position of Council President was approved. Judge James Savio administered the oath of office to Eric Ford as Council President.

ELECTION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The City Clerk opened the floor for nominations for Council President Pro Tempore. Councilman Levinson motioned to nominate Stacy DeDomenicis with a second from Councilwoman Albright. The City Clerk called for any other nominations. Hearing none, nominations were closed by motion from Councilwoman Albright and a second from Councilman Michael. The City Clerk called for a voice vote to close the floor for nominations. All members of Council were in favor to close the floor for nominations. The City Clerk called

ELECTION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE (continued)

for a voice vote for Stacy DeDomenicis to the position of Council President Pro Tempore. All members of Council were in favor. The nomination of Stacy DeDomenicis for Council President Pro Tempore was approved. Judge Donna Taylor administered the oath of office to Stacy DeDomenicis as Council President Pro Tempore.

MAYOR'S STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

It is nice to finally be in each other's company for this reorganization of 2023 and the future is bright for the great City of Linwood. The year 2022 showed a community that was more resilient than ever, and I am honored to serve the residents of this City. I am humbled to be able to work every day with City Council, City Hall employees, Police, Fire and Public works. I am especially lucky to see and work with the numerous volunteers who give of themselves every day on various boards and within the institutions of this city. One of the most important functions of my job is working with the Police which I get to do with Councilman Michael and Chief Cunningham and this year we were successful in putting two full-time officers into Belhaven and Seaview. Our committee believed that now was the time and our kids' safety is paramount and I can say without a doubt that it has been very successful so far. Now for some highlights:

The Construction Office led by Jim Galantino our Construction Official as well as Angela Marshall who serves as TACO/Zoning Officer with her assistant Donna McBride who with their regular workload have been busy with continuing education and software training. April 1, 2022 the Construction Office implemented the SDL software system. The Office and all of City Hall employees can now check property records, run reports and issue permits and keep electronic records. This software includes tablets that give the inspectors the ability to input inspection results from the field, check permit status, check property history, access maps and take pictures from the field. Residents can access information, submit inspection requests, report concerns and monitor progress online. Starting today residents will be able to pay for permits online. Our esteemed Fire Official Tom Flynn and his Deputy Nick LaRotonda took the department to new heights completing 702 inspections for the year and raising revenue to its highest level ever. Also, a special shout out to our Hazard Mitigation team who again successfully worked on our CRS rating as well as the overall County plan which will allow us to fix some problem areas in town with grant money.

The great news out of Tax Assessor Diane Hensley's office is that real estate prices are rising, and tax appeals are very low. We did some upgrades in our computer systems by adding a software program that integrates into our City Hall wide SDL program, thus integrating the information for all departments to see. In addition, we have scanned the majority of our historical documents into the cloud and are now able to access the archives electronically.

We had similar good news as our Tax Collector Silvia Washington and Assistant Michael Allenbaugh with our collection rate at 99.28 percent, which is always superior. We would like to remind all of our seniors that you can qualify for the Senior Tax Freeze which allows for qualifying seniors to freeze their tax amount with the state and be reimbursed for any amounts over the frozen amount.

The Public Works Department led by Chip Jones and Assistant Mike Ware took on some major projects this year. They completed installation of security cameras on the bike path between Patcong and Seaview Aves. Installed new speed limit radar signs and flashing stop signs throughout the City. They installed rope railings at Seaview docks and completely renovated the new dock on the Patcong Creek. They assisted hockey in their time of need by installing the new hockey scoreboard. These things plus their regular work; crack sealing, pothole filling and fixing, and cleaning of City roads. Also let's not forget leaf collection and helping to beautify the

MAYOR'S STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS (continued)

City for the holidays. We lost one of our most popular members of PW to retirement, Tony Hare. We then added 3 new guys to the team. We welcome Steve, Dave and Chris to the PW team. Chip and his crew are amazing, and we thank them for the little and big things they do every day for the residents.

We are lucky to have a Fire Department to call on that will come out in any kind of weather to assist residents and even sometimes non-residents who are injured on the City's roadways. The Department is led by Captain Jay Loder and Volunteer Fire Chief Marty Walley, and we thank them for their service. In 2022, they responded to 232 calls for service.

The Police Department under the new management of Chief Steve Cunningham was at its busiest but found plenty of time to spend in the community. These included many visits to Brandall Estates including Coffee with the Cops, which I had the honor to attend. Toys for Kids to families in the City, gifts to the Head Start Program, Assist the Fire Department with Santa, Pizza with students at Seaview, Shop with a Hero, DEA prescription drug take-back, HERO walk, bike and scooter helmet safety seminar at Belhaven and Seaview, handgun safety courses at Range 129, National Night Out, Career Day at Seaview, Narcan/ Opioid training for residents, Read Across America at Seaview, and the distribution of Child ID Safety Kits. The entire force also helped with the senior luncheons put on by the City's Seniors Committee. I want to commend Councilwoman Byrnes for her reinstatement and leadership of the Seniors Committee and the volunteers who serve on the committee, and Councilwoman's DeDomenicis for keeping us focused on the community and not just the business at hand.

The Leadership of Councilpersons Ford and Albright were instrumental in the completion of many projects throughout the City. Our City Engineer Jen Heller who we rely on every day allows us unfettered access to her basically 24 hours a day. We thank State Senator Vince Polistina for winning the State Senator's Office, so we get to work exclusively with Jen and enjoy the results of her great work. This year we undertook many projects throughout the entire City including the resurfacing of Franklin Boulevard from Iona Avenue to Hemlock Avenue which was funded by a grant from the NJDOT in the amount of \$300,000.00. We have completed the paving of Greenwich, Garfield, Kent, Burwick, Van Sant and Edgewood Avenues, and Country Club Drive. The project included drainage improvements, curbing, sidewalks, crosswalks, and handicap accessible ramps. In addition, new crosswalks were added at Bryant and Poplar Avenues and Kirlin and Wabash Avenues. The City was awarded a grant in the amount of \$287,800.00 from the NJDOT for the resurfacing of Franklin Boulevard from Cheltenham Avenue to Landing Lane. The construction will begin in mid 2023. We also instituted many new safety improvements including adopting an Ordinance to prohibit parking on Poplar Avenue and installed additional flashing stop signs at the bike path and Ocean Heights Avenue intersection. The City continues to work with the DOT to increase safety along Route 9. Striping and signage were installed by the DOT prohibiting left-hand turns from Oak Avenue onto Route 9. The City adopted an Ordinance prohibiting on-street parking on both sides of Poplar Avenue at the intersection of Route 9 and the intersection will be restriped and new signage will be installed by the DOT to clearly delineate the turn lanes. City Officials and the DOT have a meeting scheduled for early January to discuss the short-term improvements that are proposed on Route 9 in front of Mainland. We also continue to improve infrastructure in the City, and we completed the video inspection and cleaning of the existing sanitary sewer system in the City. We have completed surveying the manholes and locating the cleanouts in the City and are currently creating an inventory of the system. As a result of the video inspection, we identified gravity mains and laterals blocked by tree roots and in early 2023, we will be awarding a contract for chemical root treatment to clear these blockages. New Jersey American Water

MAYOR'S STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS (continued)

Company continues to do improvements and upgrades throughout the City. Work by the utility company was done on Franklin Boulevard, Greenwich Avenue, Wabash Avenue, Kent Avenue, East Drive and Meadowview Avenue. As part of their project, the City negotiated with New Jersey American Water Company to have full width paving completed on East Drive and half width paving done on Devon Drive and Wabash Avenue. We also focused on Recreation Projects. The City was awarded a grant from the NJDOT for \$230,000.00 for the construction of the second phase of the bike path along Monroe Avenue. The proposed bike path will be constructed along Monroe, Oak and Devonshire Avenues and will connect to the City's existing bike path. The construction is anticipated to begin in Summer 2023. Following the non-binding ballot question this fall, the City is preparing a study of the playing fields at All Wars Memorial Park. The study will include drainage conditions of the park and existing conditions of the playing fields to determine the best manner of field renovations to meet the needs of our young athletes in the City. The plans and specifications for the new field house building at All Wars Memorial Park have been completed and we anticipate the project going out to bid in early 2023. Along the development front, the City created a Development Review Committee to provide feedback and guidance to residents and potential developers prior to submitting an application to the Land Use Board. The residents' feedback to this service has been extremely positive as most are confused by the process and delighted to have help before they decide to spend money on representation. The "story time" seating area was constructed this year at the Library. The project was funded by the \$55,000.00 Local Recreation Improvement grant from the DCA. The playground equipment finally will be installed in the Spring after a long wait due to supply chain issues. We also are excited to announce the opening of the new Makerspace area downstairs at the Library. I would like to thank Maria Moss for her many years of service to the Linwood Library. We again would like to thank our resident Jim Allen for his very generous donation to the Library.

The City Clerk and Financial Offices are run with utmost professionalism, and I thank CFO Anthony Strazzeri and our Deputy Clerk and Planning Board Secretary Mary Cole for the great work they do every day. Our Auditors Leon and Carol make sure we are doing everything correct and usually have a perfect score every year. City Solicitor Joe Youngblood now in his 46th year is always a guiding force on our decision making.

This brings me to our City Clerk Leigh Ann Napoli who I like to call the "Glue". She was instrumental in writing a grant for the Fire Department which was awarded for \$29,000. She also oversaw the implementation of new software for all departments, which will improve efficiency and modernize the way the City interacts with the residents. Several examples include pet licenses and parking permits, building permits, and rental registrations that are available to purchase and/or complete on-line.

This year we said goodbye to our friend and Councilman Ralph Paolone after 20 years and thank him for his service to the City. We welcome our newest member Councilman Walcoff and I am extremely proud to serve with him and I know he will be an asset to this Council.

In closing, I would like to thank all our Council Members, including Councilmen Levinson who puts in way more time than he ever thought but has delivered a zero percent budget increase on the municipal side for the last 4 years and is already working on the same for this year. Also, I would like to thank all the board members and volunteers who give so much time to the City. I also would like to thank my wife Brett and my two boys Zach and Xander for allowing me to do this job and serve the residents of this great City.

RESOLUTIONS

15-2023 A Resolution approving the Temporary Budget for 2023
The Clerk read Resolution No. 15 of 2023 by title only. Councilwoman DeDomenicis motioned, seconded by Councilwoman Albright, to approve Resolution No. 15. A roll call vote was heard with seven in the affirmative. Motion approved.

RESOLUTIONS WITHIN CONSENT AGENDA

All matters listed under item, **Consent** Agenda, are considered to be routine by City Council, and will be enacted by one motion in the form listed. Any items requiring expenditure are supported by a Certification of Availability of Funds and any item requiring discussion will be removed from the Consent Agenda and discussed separately. All Consent Agenda items will be reflected in full in the minutes.

- 1-2023** A Resolution setting dates for Caucus and Regular Council Meetings
- 2-2023** A Resolution adopting a Cash Management Plan for 2023
- 3-2023** A Resolution naming check signers
- 4-2023** A Resolution authorizing the Finance Office to maintain a Petty Cash Fund in the amount of \$100.00
- 5-2023** A Resolution setting interest rates on delinquent taxes
- 6-2023** A Resolution setting a service charge for checks returned for insufficient funds
- 7-2023** A Resolution authorizing the allowance of a grace period before charging a penalty for late payment of taxes
- 8-2023** A Resolution authorizing the imposition of a penalty on tax delinquencies in excess of \$10,000
- 9-2023** A Resolution naming the official City Newspapers, for purposes of publication, specifically, The Mainland Journal, The Press of Atlantic City, The Ocean City Sentinel-Ledger, and The Current of Northfield, Linwood and Somers Point
- 10-2023** A Resolution appointing an authorized agent for the sale of City owned land and/or property
- 11-2023** A Resolution appointing the Tax Assessor as Agent in appeals to reduce assessments for the year 2023
- 12-2023** A Resolution designating the Public Agency Compliance Officer for the City of Linwood
- 13-2023** A Resolution adopting Robert's Rules of Order and establishing rule of order and conduct for all City Council, Caucus, and Special Meetings in the City of Linwood
- 14-2023** A Resolution authorizing the City of Linwood to enter into a Contract with the attached list of vendors for State Contract Purchases
- 16-2023** A Resolution authorizing the canceling of small balances of tax refunds or delinquencies
- 17-2023** A Resolution authorizing the Tax Collector to substitute two mailings in lieu of advertising of the Tax Sale to be held in 2023
- 18-2023** A Resolution confirming Mayoral appointments for the year 2023
- 19-2023** A Resolution appointing Steve Cunningham and reappointing Tim Longnecker as Deputy Emergency Management Coordinators for the City of Linwood

RESOLUTIONS WITHIN CONSENT AGENDA (continued)

- 20-2023** A Resolution authorizing the award of a Non-Fair and Open Contract to Joel M. Fleishman as Municipal Bond Counsel for the Year 2023 for the City of Linwood
- 21-2023** A Resolution authorizing the award of a Non-Fair and Open Contract to Ford Scott & Associates, LLC as Municipal Auditor for the Year 2023 for the City of Linwood
- 22-2023** A Resolution authorizing the award of a Non-Fair and Open Contract to Joseph L. Youngblood, Jr. as Municipal Legal Counsel for the Year 2023 for the City of Linwood
- 23-2023** A Resolution authorizing the appointment of Glenn Insurance as the Risk Management Consultant for the Atlantic County Municipal Joint Insurance Fund
- 24-2023** A Resolution authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to execute and Agreement with Premier Computer Services
- 25-2023** A Resolution authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to execute an Agreement with Animal Control of South Jersey
- 26-2023** A Resolution approving a Contract with the City of Linwood Blue Collar Workers through its representative, Teamsters Local #331
- 27-2023** A Resolution authorizing submission of a Local Recreation Improvement Fiscal Year 2023 Grant Application to the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs

The City Clerk read the Consent Agenda by title only. Council President Ford asked if any member wanted any items removed from the Consent Agenda. No items were removed. Councilwoman Albright motioned, seconded by Councilwoman Byrnes, to approve Resolutions 1-14, 16-27 of 2023. All members of Council were in favor. Motion approved.

ORDINANCES

- 1 OF 2023** AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR AND ESTABLISHING SALARIES, COMPENSATION AND SALARY RANGES OF OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE CITY OF LINWOOD, AND REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES HERETOFORE ADOPTED, THE PROVISIONS OF WHICH ARE INCONSISTENT HEREWITH.

FIRST READING: *January 2, 2023*
PUBLICATION: *January 9, 2023*
PASSAGE: *January 25, 2023*

The City Clerk read Ordinance No. 1 of 2023 by title only. Councilwoman Albright motioned, seconded by Councilman Levinson, to approve Ordinance No. 1. A roll call vote was heard with seven in the affirmative. Motion approved.

APPROVAL OF BILL LIST: \$229,520.50

Councilwoman DeDomenicis motioned, seconded by Councilwoman Albright, to approve the bills for payment. A roll call vote was heard with seven in the affirmative. Motion approved. (The bill list is attached as Exhibit A)

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Council President Ford opened the floor to the public for discussion on any topic. Seeing and hearing no members from the public wishing to be heard, Council President Ford closed the floor.

FINAL REMARKS BY COUNCIL

Councilwoman Albright – Councilwoman Albright thanked everyone for attending and congratulated Council President Ford and Council President Pro Tempore DeDomenicis. She is honored to represent the residents on City Council and honored to serve with the other members of Council and proud to live in the City of Linwood. 2023 is an exciting year ahead as Council will continue to work hard and always put the residents first. She wished everyone Happy New Year.

Councilwoman Byrnes – Councilwoman Byrnes thanked the Park Director Tim Donovan for all he does and the Board of Recreation. Thank thanked Maria Moss for all her work and for making the Library a true community center. She thanked the members of the Senior Committee for the events that were held and thanked the Police Department for their help. The Historical Society will celebrate the 150th year of the Historical Society Building. She also thanked Father Harte for attending tonight and delivering the Invocation. She is proud to represent the citizens of Linwood.

Councilwoman DeDomenicis – Councilwoman DeDomenicis thanked Judge Donna Taylor for swearing her in. Councilwoman DeDomenicis is now the longest serving woman on City Council. She is truly honored to serve. She welcomed Councilman Walcoff. She is Chair of the Public Works Committee. They continue to improve and beautify the City. She thanked the Police Department led by Chief Cunningham. The Department's community outreach is noticed and commendable. She is confident Council will continue to improve the quality of life for the residents and referred to the values on the City seal.

Councilman Walcoff – Councilman Walcoff congratulated Council President Ford. He thanked everyone for welcoming him. He looks forward to continuing the good work of City Council and reinvesting in the City. They will continue to provide the City Departments with the tools they need to deliver quality services to the community.

Councilman Levinson – Councilman Levinson congratulated the Council President and Council President Pro Tempore. He looks forward to working with them. He commended and thanked the Police, Fire, and Public Works Departments. He also commended the work of Tim Donovan. He thanked Father Harte and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Councilman Michael – Councilman Michael thanked everyone for attending the meeting and congratulated the Council President and Council President Pro Tempore. He looks forward to working with them. He is proud to serve on City Council and of all the accomplishments that have been completed last year. As Chair of Public Safety, he has been working with the new Chief of Police and accomplished hiring new Class III Officers, purchasing electric bikes, and implementing the community policing agenda. He is also working with Captain Jay Loder and Chief Walley on the Fire Department. Councilman Michael is looking forward to more accomplishments in the new year.

Council President Ford – Council President Ford thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He believes everyone on Council and the Mayor share the same passion for Linwood. They all try to make Linwood a better place. He thanked everyone on Council for electing him as President and congratulated Councilwoman DeDomenicis as President Pro Tempore.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to be addressed by Council, Councilwoman DeDomenicis motioned, seconded by Councilwoman Albright, to adjourn at 6:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Leigh Ann Napoli, RMC
Municipal Clerk