

**LINWOOD COMMON COUNCIL
MINUTES OF REORGANTIZAITON MEETING
January 4, 2014**

CALL TO ORDER

Councilwoman Taylor called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM, noting the meeting had been advertised in compliance with the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act.

FLAG SALUTE

Councilman Elliot Beinfest led the flag salute.

INVOCATION

Rev. Fr. Cal LaVerde, Pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows Church, performed the Invocation.

OATHS OF OFFICE

Freeholder Alexander C. Marino administered the Oath of Office to Stacy DeDomenicis as Council Member, Ward 1 of the City of Linwood.

Assemblyman Chris Brown administered the Oath of Office to Donna Taylor as Council Member, Ward 2 of the City of Linwood.

Assemblyman Chris Brown administered the Oath of Office to Darren Matik as Councilmember At-Large of the City of Linwood.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Rick DePamphilis; Councilman Elliot Beinfest; Councilwoman Stacy DeDomenicis; Councilman Todd Gordon; Councilman Darren Matik; Councilman Ralph Paolone; Councilman Tim Tighe; and Councilwoman Donna Taylor.

Absent: None

Also Present: Joseph L. Youngblood, City Solicitor; and Leigh Ann Napoli, Municipal Clerk.

ELECTION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT

The Clerk opened the floor for nominations for Council President. Councilman Paolone motioned to nominate Donna Taylor. The Clerk called for any other nominations. Hearing none, nominations were closed by motion from Councilman Matik and a second from Councilman Tighe. The 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 Clerk called for a voice vote for Donna Taylor to Council President. All members of Council were in favor. The nomination of Donna Taylor for the position of Council President was approved. Assemblyman Chris Brown administered the oath of office to Donna Taylor as Council President.

ELECTION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

Council President Taylor opened the floor for nominations for Council President Pro Tempore. Councilwoman DeDomenicis motioned to nominate Elliot Beinfest. Council President Taylor called for any other nominations. Hearing none, nominations were closed by motion from Councilman Gordon and a second from Councilman Tighe. Council President Taylor called for a voice vote to close the floor for nominations. All members of Council were in favor to close the floor for nominations. Council President Taylor called for a voice vote for Elliot Beinfest to the position of Council President Pro Tempore. All members of Council were in favor. The nomination of Elliot Beinfest for Council President Pro Tempore was approved. Assemblyman Chris Brown administered the oath of office to Elliot Beinfest as Council President Pro Tempore.

MAYOR'S STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

Mayor DePamphilis welcomed everyone in attendance and thanked them for attending the meeting. He reminded everyone how honored he is to be the Mayor. He congratulated Councilwoman DeDomenicis, Council President Taylor, and Councilman at Large Matik on their re-election. He also thanked Leigh Ann, Mary, Lynn Roesch, Anthony Strazzeri, Ed Beck, and all the staff at City Hall who continue to do a great job. The City's Tax Collector, Chris Desch, recently celebrated her 25 year with the City of Linwood. The 2013 tax collection rate was 98.66 %. The City just had a County ordered City-wide tax revaluation completed. Letters should go out to property owners with the new assessments in January and the tax rate should be finalized sometime in June.

Also this year the City's JIF Fund Commissioner, Ed Beck, was elected Secretary for the Atlantic County Joint Insurance Fund. Congratulations to Ed. In October, the City entered into the Community Rating System program. This program is designed to assist residents in receiving discounted flood insurance policies. Jim Galantino, our Construction Official, has been named as CRS Coordinator.

The Mayor commended Hank Kolakowski and his men for the job that they do on a regular basis. He knows that Council feels the same. Public Works recently removed leaves from all 234 of our streets 3 times, not to mention the bike path and all City properties. That amounts to 1,400 cubic yards or 700 tons of leaves. In 2013, Public Works lost an employee of long standing when Rick Irwin retired after 35 years of service. The Mayor and Council also recognized Joe Olden and Harold Hannum who celebrated 25 years of employment with the City.

Fire Chief Chick Kisby and the Volunteer Fire Department continue to provide the residents with quality service with little cost to the tax payers. They remain committed to community involvement and can be seen assisting at all City functions and special events. The City was sad to lose Herb Mars, who passed away last year. Mr. Mars served as a Linwood Volunteer Firefighter for 44 years.

The City's Police Department, under the direction of Chief Robert James, continues to provide quality Police Service. The Governing Body extended the Shared Service Agreement with Northfield and Chief Robert James, and continues to share dispatch with Egg Harbor Township. In August, the Police Department, for the first time, held its own, National Night Out at Memorial Field. This is an event aimed at increasing community- police awareness. It was very well attended and a very successful community event. The Department did a super job putting the event together and he looks forward to this years' event.

The Mayor thanked Dixon & Associates, the City Engineers, and specifically Kevin Dixon and Steve Mazur. They assisted greatly with obtaining grants and completing many improvement projects that are scheduled for 2014. They also lend their expertise in assisting the Planning Board and the Redevelopment Committee.

The Mayor thanked Lynn Gibson and the Linwood Board of Education. They have dedicated themselves to reducing the economic footprint on the City despite being faced with very constrictive economical and contractual issues. The Board very recently approved a Resolution to return the Poplar Avenue School over to the City and also entered an Agreement to purchase the Hasson property adjacent to Belhaven School.

The Mayor commended Dr. Allen Lacy and the Arboretum Committee who continue to maintain the beautiful Arboretum. He also congratulated Dr. Lacy for being honored as Linwood's 2013 Citizen of the Year.

Dr. Baruffi, Teri Weeks, and the staffs and teachers from both schools continue to provide quality education to the children who in turn, continue to score well above the state average on all tests. When compared to other districts of equal socio-economic status, the children in Linwood, on average, scored 15 to 20% higher in both Language Arts and Math at every grade level.

Jim Rutala and the Planning Board were very busy this year. They initiated the adoption of code changes that provided for new flood standards, design guidelines for solar and wind systems, and regulations of storm water management for new construction. They were influential in gaining compliance with FEMAs Community Rating System which will result in flood insurance discounts for many of the residents. The City was sad to lose Jeff Vasser who moved from the area after serving 10 years on the Planning Board.

Bill Purdie and the Environmental Commission continue to play a major role in the City. In 2013, the City received a grant from the Association of N.J. Environmental Commissions that paid for a planning consultant who drafted code changes for the City.

The Mayor thanked Mary Todd, Maria Moss, and the Library Board who continue to provide a number of valued services to the residents. In 2014, electrical service to the Senior Citizen Room and the All Purpose Room were upgraded to allow for a stronger wireless connectivity. A large screen TV and computer equipment have been purchased and will soon be installed.

The Mayor thanked Dianne Robbins and the entire Board of Recreation, especially Patty Ogrodnek for providing all the super holiday celebrations for the residents of Linwood. This year's Halloween Parade and Easter Egg Hunt had the largest crowds he has seen. The Tree Lighting unfortunately was chased inside by the weather but everyone still had a great time.

In last year's message, the Mayor spoke a lot about storms and the weather. Not so much this year but that does not mean officials were not thinking about it. He made some changes in the Office of Emergency Management in order to upgrade the response to City emergencies and improve the coordination of effort. First, they established Linwood City Hall as a shelter during emergencies for Linwood residents who lose power. Second, he appointed Councilman Darren Matik as Emergency Management Coordinator and Chief Chick Kisby and Captain Dave Buzby as Deputy Coordinators. Councilman Matik established an Emergency Management Office within City Hall and updated the Emergency Operations Plan and improved the City's ability to communicate with Police and Fire during emergencies. The City also continues to use Nixle, a community wide electronic notification system for public safety messages via text and email.

2013 saw this City Council continue to be pro active in looking for ways to save the taxpayers of Linwood. They once again added to the long list of shared services by entering into an agreement with Atlantic County Utilities Authority to assume trash collection for the City.

The Mayor advised that the Re-Development Committee of City Council, after months of negotiations, finalized a new agreement with Cornerstone for future development that included the purchase by the City of the entire northern buffer and the back stretch along Patcong Creek. This will allow the City to fulfill its promise to the residents north of Cornerstone that the buffer would never be used or developed.

The Mayor has said many times that Linwood and this City Council has done things that most other towns just talk about. However, there are many variables that affect the budget, taxes, schools, and the quality of life. The Governing Body can never rest. They must continue to work hard, be aggressive, and think outside the box. This is the only way to ensure they maintain the services that the residents enjoy, that they keep the streets safe, and that they continue to provide the highest quality of education for the children. It is a constant struggle, but the Mayor knows that this Council is not afraid to make tough decisions or do the right thing for the residents of this great City.

The Mayor thanked everyone, wished everyone a Happy New Year, and God Bless America.

RESOLUTIONS

15-2014 A Resolution approving the Temporary Budget for 2014

The Clerk read Resolution No. 15 of 2014 by title only. Councilman Gordon motioned, seconded by Councilman Tighe, 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.

1-2014 A Resolution setting dates for Caucus and Regular Council Meetings

RESOLUTIONS WITHIN CONSENT AGENDA (continued)

- 2-2014** A Resolution adopting a Cash Management Plan for 2014
- 3-2014** A Resolution naming check signers
- 4-2014** A Resolution authorizing the Finance Office to maintain a Petty Cash Fund in the amount of \$100.00
- 5-2014** A Resolution setting interest rates on delinquent taxes
- 6-2014** A Resolution setting a service charge for checks returned for insufficient funds
- 7-2014** A Resolution authorizing the allowance of a grace period before charging a penalty for late payment of taxes
- 8-2014** A Resolution authorizing the imposition of a penalty on tax delinquencies in excess of \$10,000
- 9-2014** 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
- 10-2014** A Resolution appointing an authorized agent for the sale of City owned land and/or property
- 11-2014** A Resolution appointing the Tax Assessor as Agent in appeals to reduce assessments for the year 2014
- 12-2014** A Resolution designating the Public Agency Compliance Officer for the City of Linwood
- 13-2014** A Resolution adopting Robert's Rules of Order
- 14-2014** A Resolution authorizing the City of Linwood to enter into a Contract with the attached list of vendors for State Contract Purchases
- 16-2014** A Resolution awarding a Contract to Ford Scott & Associates, LLC as Municipal Auditor for the Year 2014 for the City of Linwood
- 17-2014** A Resolution awarding a Contract to Joel M. Fleishman as Municipal Bond Counsel for the Year 2014 for the City of Linwood
- 18-2014** A Resolution awarding a Contract to Michele C. Verno as Shared Municipal Prosecutor for the Year 2014 for the Cities of Linwood and Northfield
- 19-2014** A Resolution awarding a Contract to Frank J. Lentz as Shared Municipal Public Defender for the Year 2014 for the Cities of Linwood and Northfield
- 20-2014** A Resolution awarding a Contract to Joseph L. Youngblood, Jr. as Municipal Legal Counsel for the Year 2014 for the City of Linwood
- 21-2014** A Resolution awarding a Non-Competitive Contract for Professional Services to Brian D. Heun as Conflict Solicitor for the City of Linwood
- 22-2014** A Resolution awarding the Contract to Cobra Enterprises LLC for the Demolition, Removal, and Final Cleaning Up of 23 Elm Avenue in the City of Linwood
- 23-2014** A Resolution authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to execute an Agreement with Premier Computer Services
- 24-2014** A Resolution authorizing the Issuance of a Bingo License, #2014-01, to Our Lady of Sorrows Church
- 25-2014** A Resolution authorizing the Issuance of a Raffle License, #2014-01, to Our Lady of Sorrows Church
- 26-2014** A Resolution authorizing the Cancellation of property taxes for Block 150, Lot 8.02, located at 625 Lexington Court, in the City of Linwood
- 27-2014** A Resolution authorizing a refund of overpaid property taxes due to an Atlantic County Tax Board Judgment for Block 79, Lot 4, located at 218 East Devonshire Avenue, in the City of Linwood
- 28-2014** A Resolution authorizing the release of Engineering Escrow Funds with regard to Block 14, Lots 6 & 7, and Block 15, Lot 9 (East Royal Avenue) Royal Meadows in the City of Linwood
- 29-2014** A Resolution authorizing the City of Linwood to release unused Escrow Fees with regard to a street vacation request on Cheltenham Avenue

RESOLUTIONS WITHIN CONSENT AGENDA (continued)

- 30-2014** A Resolution authorizing the City of Linwood to release unused Planning Board Application Fees with regard to Block 150, Lot 14.01 (Linwood Central Square) in the City of Linwood
- 31-2014** A Resolution authorizing the City of Linwood to release the Maintenance Bond with regard to the improvements at Brandall Estates, Block 150, Lot 13, in the City of Linwood
- 32-2014** A Resolution approving Council appointments for the year 2014
- 33-2014** A Resolution confirming Mayoral appointments for the year 2014
- 34-2014** A Resolution establishing a date for imposing penalties for late payment of taxes
- 35-2014** A Resolution authorizing the reappointment of Charles E. Kisby, III as Fire Official for the City of Linwood
- 36-2014** A Resolution authorizing the reappointment of David G. Buzby as the Uniform Fire Safety Inspector for the City of Linwood

The Clerk read the Consent Agenda by title only. Councilman Beinfest motioned, seconded by Councilwoman DeDomenicis, to approve Resolutions 1-14, 16-36 of 2014. All members of Council were in favor. Motion approved.

APPROVAL OF BILL LIST: \$225,810.54

Councilman Paolone motioned, seconded by Councilwoman DeDomenicis, 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 Taylor 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 Taylor closed the floor.

FINAL REMARKS BY COUNCIL

Councilman Beinfest – Councilman Beinfest welcomed everyone in attendance. He congratulated Donna, Stacy, and Darren. He expressed his condolences for the family of Ambrose O'Donnell who served on the Linwood Board of Education for eighteen years. Mr. O'Donnell was a very successful engineer, dedicated volunteer, and will surely be missed. Councilman Beinfest thanked Carolyn Patterson as the City Historian. She provides a wealth of information on many topics. He also thanked Catherine Evinski and the Historical Society for their efforts. Councilman Beinfest thanked the Recreation Board and advised that they are working on plans to improve their events and fields. He also thanked Patty Ogradnek for her efforts. Councilman Beinfest extended a special thanks to the City Hall employees, who are asked to do more with less. He also thanked Leigh Ann for keeping Council together and well informed. Councilman Beinfest thanked his wife Adrienne for her continued support.

Councilwoman DeDomenicis – Councilwoman DeDomenicis welcomed everyone in attendance and wished them all a Happy New Year. She extended a special thanks to Hank Kolakowski and all the Public Works employees for their efforts and especially for making sure City Hall was clear of snow and ice for today's meeting as well as clearing the streets yesterday.

Councilman Gordon – Councilman Gordon welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He thanked Hank and his employees for keeping the streets clear. He thanked all the volunteer boards for their efforts. Councilman Gordon thanked the staff at City Hall for keeping things running and thanked Leigh Ann for keeping Council on track. He congratulated Donna, Stacy, and Darren on their re-elections and congratulated Donna as President and Elliot as President Pro Tempore. Councilman Gordon is honored to serve on Council and is looking forward to working with them all. He thanked his wife and kids for their continued support and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Councilman Paolone – Councilman Paolone wished everyone a Happy New Year and thanked everyone for attending the meeting. This past year was his first year Chairing the Finance Committee. It is a difficult task during these times and he is proud of Council for all their hard work on the budget. Councilman Paolone discussed the continued shared services and continued efforts to reduce costs. He is very proud to service on Council. Councilman Paolone thanked his wife and kids for their continued support.

Councilman Matik – Councilman Matik thanked his wife and kids for their continued support. He also thanked Assemblyman Brown, Keith Davis, Nick Menus, Freeholders Formica and Marino, and everyone for attending. Councilman Matik thanked Chief Kisby and Deputy Chief Buzby for all their help with emergency management. He also thanked Chief James for maintaining a very effective Police Department.

Councilman Tighe – Councilman Tighe congratulated Stacy, Donna, and Darren. He thanked Donna for her efforts as Council President. Councilman Tighe thanked the City employees, especially Leigh Ann for keeping Council informed on the issues. He thanked Hank, Chief James, and Chief Kisby for their efforts. He thanked Jim Rutala, June Dix and all the volunteer board members. The volunteers really make the City great. Councilman Tighe thanked his family for their support.

Council President Taylor – Council President Taylor thanked the residents for re-electing her to City Council. She is honored to serve. This Council is very passionate, hard working, and dedicated. She thanked the City Hall employees, noting that they make a great team. The next Council meeting is January 22, 2014. In February, the meeting schedule resumes to the second and fourth Wednesday of the month.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to be addressed by Council, Councilman Paolone motioned, seconded by Councilman Tighe, to adjourn at 10:38 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Leigh Ann Napoli, RMC
Municipal Clerk