

LINWOOD COMMON COUNCIL
MINUTES OF REORGANIZATION MEETING
January 5, 2017

CALL TO ORDER

Councilman Ralph Paolone called the meeting to order at 6:05 P.M., noting the meeting had been advertised in compliance with the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act.

FLAG SALUTE

Councilman Todd Gordon led the flag salute.

INVOCATION

Sister Loretta DeDomenicis delivered the Invocation.

OATHS OF OFFICE

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

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

Freeholder Alexander C. Marino administered the Oath of Office to Brian Heun as Council Member, Ward 2 of the City of Linwood.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Rick DePamphilis; Councilman Elliot Beinfest; Councilwoman Stacy DeDomenicis; Councilman Eric Ford; Councilman Todd Gordon; Councilman Brian Heun; Councilman Darren Matik; and Councilman Ralph Paolone.

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. Councilwoman DeDomenicis motioned to nominate Ralph Paolone. The Clerk called for any other nominations. Hearing none, nominations were closed by motion from Councilman Gordon and a second from Councilman Heun. 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 Ralph Paolone to Council President. All members of Council were in favor. The nomination of Ralph Paolone for the position of Council President was approved. Judge Donna Taylor administered the oath of office to Ralph Paolone as Council President.

ELECTION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

Council President Paolone opened the floor for nominations for Council President Pro Tempore. Councilman Ford motioned to nominate Councilman Matik. Council President Paolone called for any other nominations. Hearing none, nominations were closed by motion from Councilman Heun and a second from Councilman Gordon. Council President Paolone 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 Paolone called for a voice vote for Darren Matik to the position of Council President Pro Tempore. All members of Council were in favor. The nomination of Darren Matik for Council President Pro Tempore was approved. Judge Donna Taylor administered the oath of office to Darren Matik 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. The Mayor thanked his wife, Sally, for her continued assistance and support. He congratulated Councilman Heun, Councilman Ford, and Councilwoman DeDomenicis on their re-election to Council. He is sure they will continue to do an excellent job for the residents of Linwood.

He thanked Leigh Ann and Mary, Lynn Roesch, Anthony Strazzeri, Ed Beck and all the staff at City Hall for another successful year. Kacey Johnson, the new Tax Collector, and her assistant, Danielle Kelly had a very good year. The tax collection rate for 2016 was again excellent.

Diane Hesley, the new Tax Assessor, had a very busy year. 335 tax appeals were filed in Linwood in 2016 of which 288 were successful. The total ratable assessment reduction was \$19,809,400.00 and the total dollar reduction came to \$638,258.87. That is quite a loss to have to deal with when you consider that costs remain the same. Which in turn drives up the tax rate and ensures that the desired tax relief is only temporary.

The Mayor commended Hank Kolakowski and his men in Public Works for the job that they do on a regular basis. Well this year is no different. Except for the fact that this year Hank has experienced some health problems and we all wish him well. In his absence we turned to his assistant Chip Jones who has not only done a terrific job but is also the 2016 Public Works Employee of the year. The Mayor congratulated and thanked Chip Jones.

Chief Marty Walley and the Volunteer Fire Department continue to provide Linwood with quality service with little cost to the tax payer. They are always there when you need them and assist with all city functions and holiday events. Everyone, but especially the children, love to see the Easter Bunny at our Easter celebration and Santa Claus at the Tree lighting and making his rounds on the fire truck.

Seems like every year the Mayor says that the Police Department is going through a transition and while that continued in 2016 it will soon end as we reach full strength. In August the new PBA contract was finalized and includes two years of zero salary increase which was greatly appreciated.

Chief Doug Carman and his administrative staff of John Hamilton and Jason Weber are doing a super job. The department's National Night Out this year was a huge success for the community. The PD also received grants for body worn cameras and other equipment. The Mayor also thanked the Linwood United Methodist Church for donating \$1,365.00, which was used to purchase body armor for two officers.

The Mayor commended Richard Sless and the entire Linwood Board of Education who had, at the very least, an interesting year. The entire board, amongst trying times, continued to vote and act on what was truly best for the students. In November a majority of residents voted to change the school board from an appointed board to an elected board. In doing so removing the Mayoral appointment of school board members and also City Council's only opportunity to interact with the Board through the Board of School estimates. We have a great school system with excellent teachers, a quality administration and an experienced school board and the Mayor is confident that they will continue to maintain the quality education that Linwood has become famous for. Plus, the Mayor is sure that City Council will like the fact that residents can no longer come to City Council meetings to complain about the school taxes.

The Mayor thanked Vince Polistina, the City Engineer, for all his hard work and expertise. And for the great assistance he has been to our Solicitor, Planning Board and Engineering committee.

The Planning Board under the direction of the new Chairman Roger Steedle and Junetta Dix's Zoning Board continue their excellent work. The Mayor has a feeling that both boards are going to get much busier very soon.

The Mayor thanked Mary Todd, Maria Moss and the Library Board who continue to provide a number of valued services to the residents. They now have three adult book clubs, sewing classes and home delivery to shut-in residents. They also provide scholarships to deserving students and Mainland and Belhaven Schools at graduation.

I would like to thank Tim Longnecker and the entire Board of Recreation for their great work with the sports programs and Memorial field. And for providing all the super holiday celebrations for the residents and children of Linwood. Our Park Director, Laurie Montgomery, continues to provide new and exciting holiday celebrations for our residents to enjoy.

Since I spoke last year we finally have a few good things happening. We have a new Italian Restaurant called Casaldi's Cucina in Central Square where Luke Paladino's was. Gerald Bird's project on New Road near Linwood Commons is nearing completion and we will soon have a new Food Court with a liquor license. Not to mention a much needed tax ratable. A new developer has just purchased the Bloom property on New Road near West Ave. This is in our Re-development zone and we will meet with them in the near future.

Early in December, after years of waiting, the City finalized the purchase of the property at the Cornerstone Commerce Center. The entire northern buffer and the rear section along Patcong Creek now belong to Linwood to remain as open space. This fulfills City Council's promise to the surrounding residents that those parcels would not be developed.

A good friend of ours recently reminded me to thank all of our volunteers who tirelessly and selflessly donate their time, expertise and compassion to our Community. The dozens of residents that are willing to serve on our Boards, clubs and committees. Men and women from our Linwood family, too numerous to name them all, but not too many to say thank you, we appreciate your service.

City Council remains intact and will continue to work hard to provide the services our residents have become accustomed to. They are constantly looking for new ways to save the taxpayers. I have said many times that Linwood does things that other town's just talk about. I will keep reminding residents of this until everyone understands how hard they work, the hours they put in and just how talented and dedicated they truly are.

All things considered, 2016 was a very exciting year. We experienced democracy in action not only locally but to the National level as well. Proving once again that the power is with the people, that your vote does count and that we truly do live in the best little town in the greatest country in the world.

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

RESOLUTIONS

15-2017 A Resolution approving the Temporary Budget for 2017

The Clerk read Resolution No. 15 of 2017 by title only. Councilman Beinfest motioned, seconded by Councilman Gordon, 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.

1-2017 A Resolution setting dates for Caucus and Regular Council Meetings

2-2017 A Resolution adopting a Cash Management Plan for 2017

3-2017 A Resolution naming check signers

4-2017 A Resolution authorizing the Finance Office to maintain a Petty Cash Fund in the amount of \$100.00

5-2017 A Resolution setting interest rates on delinquent taxes

6-2017 A Resolution setting a service charge for checks returned for insufficient funds

RESOLUTIONS WITHIN CONSENT AGENDA (continued)

- 7-2017** A Resolution authorizing the allowance of a grace period before charging a penalty for late payment of taxes
- 8-2017** A Resolution authorizing the imposition of a penalty on tax delinquencies in excess of \$10,000
- 9-2017** 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
- 10-2017** A Resolution appointing an authorized agent for the sale of City owned land and/or property
- 11-2017** A Resolution appointing the Tax Assessor as Agent in appeals to reduce assessments for the year 2017
- 12-2017** A Resolution designating the Public Agency Compliance Officer for the City of Linwood
- 13-2017** A Resolution adopting Robert's Rules of Order
- 14-2017** A Resolution authorizing the City of Linwood to enter into a Contract with the attached list of vendors for State Contract Purchases
- 16-2017** A Resolution authorizing the canceling of small balances of tax refunds or delinquencies
- 17-2017** A Resolution authorizing the Tax Collector to substitute two mailings in lieu of advertising of the Tax Sale to be held in 2017
- 18-2017** A Resolution reappointing Tim Longnecker as Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator for the City of Linwood
- 19-2017** A Resolution awarding a Contract to Joseph L. Youngblood, Jr. as Municipal Legal Counsel for the Year 2017 for the City of Linwood
- 20-2017** A Resolution awarding a Contract to Ford Scott & Associates, LLC as Municipal Auditor for the Year 2017 for the City of Linwood
- 21-2017** A Resolution awarding a Contract to Joel M. Fleishman as Municipal Bond Counsel for the Year 2017 for the City of Linwood
- 22-2017** A Resolution approving Council appointments for the year 2017
- 23-2017** A Resolution confirming Mayoral appointments for the year 2017
- 24-2017** A Resolution authorizing the reappointment of David G. Buzby as the Uniform Fire Safety Inspector for the City of Linwood
- 25-2017** A Resolution awarding Non-Competitive Contracts for Professional Services to the following: Thomas R. Thornton as Zoning Board of Adjustment Engineer; and Michael J. Fitzgerald as Zoning Board of Adjustment Solicitor
- 26-2017** A Resolution authorizing the refund of unused Escrow Funds posted as part of a Dumpster Permit Application
- 27-2017** A Resolution approving Change Order No. 1-Final with AE Stone, Inc with regard to the Eastside Paving Project in the City of Linwood
- 28-2017** A Resolution approving Change Order No. 2-Final with Kline Construction, Inc. with regard to the Miscellaneous Sewer/Stormwater repairs in 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, 16-28 of 2017. All members of Council were in favor. Motion approved.

APPROVAL OF BILL LIST: \$270,277.29

Councilman Ford motioned, seconded by Councilman Matik, 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 Paolone 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 Paolone closed the floor.

FINAL REMARKS BY COUNCIL

Councilman Beinfest – Councilman Beinfest wished everyone Happy New Year and thanked them for attending the meeting. He congratulated Councilwoman DeDomenicis, Councilman Ford, and Councilman Heun on their re-elections and noted how hard working each member of Council is. He thanked Leigh Ann, Mary and the team of employees at City Hall. He complimented Leigh Ann on being very resourceful. He thanked the Recreation Board Members and Laurie Montgomery for all the City events. He thanked Carolyn Patterson, the City Historian, and Catherine Evinski, the President of the Historical Society for all the very important work they do in the City. All the employees do an excellent job and deserve praise. He also thanked the volunteers who make Linwood great. Councilman Beinfest thanked his wife, Adrienne, for all her support.

Councilwoman DeDomenicis – Councilwoman DeDomenicis thanked everyone for attending the meeting. She thanked Judge Donna Taylor for swearing her in and being a good friend. She thanked the Mayor and Council. She is honored to work with all of them. They all have the same goal and support the values on the City Seal; Education, Family, and Recreation. She thanked Hank Kolakowski, Chip Jones, and all the employees in Public Works. They have achieved 1677 days without any loss time accidents. She thanked them for all their hard work. Linwood, like other municipalities, is facing challenges. However, Linwood is a community of positives. The community comes out in full force whether it's an event for our schools, sports teams, Holiday function, champion parades or supporting a family in their darkest hour, your neighbors and friends are there, We volunteer and work hard to do good for one another. This is the charm of Linwood and why it is special to live. Councilwoman DeDomenicis stated she loves where she lives, [#DOLINWOOD](#).

Councilman Gordon – Councilman Gordon welcomed and thanked everyone for attending. He thanked his wife and kids for their support and patience. He congratulated Councilwoman DeDomenicis, Councilman Ford, and Councilman Heun on their re-elections. He is looking forward to working with all of them. Councilman Gordon thanked Sister DeDomenicis for her blessings. He also thanked Leigh Ann and all the employees, all the departments, and volunteers. He thanked Vince Polistina for his hard work and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Councilman Ford – Councilman Ford echoed what everyone said. He thanked all the voters in Linwood for electing him. He is excited for 2017. There is a lot of synergy with the members of Council. He congratulated Chip Jones on his award. Councilman Ford worked with the Zoning Board and commended June Dix on doing a fantastic job and Chair of the Board. He also commended Tim Longnecker for doing a fantastic job as President of the Recreation Board. The City events keep getting better and better each year. He thanked Freeholder Marino for swearing him in. Councilman Ford thanked his wife and family for all their support.

Councilman Matik – Councilman Matik thanked the members of Council for electing him as Council President Pro Tem. He congratulated Councilwoman DeDomenicis, Councilman Ford, and Councilman Heun on their re-elections. He Chairs the Revenue & Finance Committee and noted budget preparations have begun. He discussed the \$638,258.87 loss of revenue which causes the budget process to begin in a hole. They will work for a budget that is least impactful to the taxpayers. Councilman Matik thanked all the employees and volunteers. Without the volunteers, Linwood would not thrive. Kacey and Diane are doing a great job in the Tax Office as are Danielle and Lynn in the Construction Office. As the Emergency Management Coordinator for Linwood, Councilman Matik thanked the Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator, Tim Longnecker, for his efforts. He thanked and commended Leigh Ann for her efforts, noting they would be lost without her. He thanked Judge Taylor for swearing him in. Councilman Matik thanked his wife and kids for their support. He will continue to look for shared services that will provide benefits to the community and save money. He wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Councilman Heun – Councilman Heun thanked his wife and kids for their support. He thanked everyone for attending tonight and thanked the voters of Linwood. He thanked Hank Kolakowski for attending and thanked Chip Jones for his efforts. He thanked Chief Carman and his department. The Chief is doing an outstanding job at moving forward. The morale is good. They just renewed a shared dispatch service with EHT. Councilman Heun acknowledged Linwood is facing challenges but confirmed they will rise to meet them. He wished everyone a Happy New Year.

FINAL REMARKS BY COUNCIL (continued)

Council President Paolone – Council President Paolone announced that the next Council meeting in January is scheduled for January 25. The meetings will then resume to the second and fourth Wednesday of the month. He also announced that a reception will be held immediately following tonight's meeting at Gregory's Restaurant & Bar. Council President Paolone indicated that he has been on Council during good times and bad financial times. It is never easy. He has had a lot of feedback from the public. He thanked Assemblyman Chris Brown for working hard for the residents and helping to defeat gaming in north Jersey. That would have had a devastating effect on South Jersey and Linwood. Council President Paolone also thanked everyone in attendance. He thanked all the Department Heads, who work to do more with less. He thanked Gerry Bird for his new project, noting that it will be a great addition to Linwood. He welcomed Scarborough Properties who purchased the Bloom Site. He looks forward to working with them to increase ratables. Council President Paolone would like to recognize the great athletes in Linwood. He recognized Alyssa Aldridge for having an outstanding Cross Country season. He recognized John Napoli the Mainland Boys Soccer Coach and Press Coach of the Year and the outstanding season the soccer team had this past fall. They won their first south Jersey title in the school's history. He also recognized the Holy Spirit wrestling team and wished them good luck. Council President Paolone thanked his wife and kids for their continued support.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to be addressed by Council, Councilman Heun motioned, seconded by Councilwoman DeDomenicis, to adjourn at 6:55 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Leigh Ann Napoli, RMC
Municipal Clerk