

**LINWOOD COMMON COUNCIL
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
March 11, 2015**

FLAG SALUTE:

Councilman Darren Matik led the flag salute.

CALL TO ORDER

Council President Tighe called the meeting to order at 6:28 P.M., noting that the meeting had been advertised in compliance with the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Rick DePamphilis; Councilman Elliot Beinfest; Councilwoman Stacy DeDomenicis; Councilman Todd Gordon; Councilman Brian Heun; Councilman Darren Matik; Councilman Ralph Paolone; and Council President Tim Tighe.

Absent: None.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES WITHOUT FORMAL READING

Councilman Beinfest motioned, seconded by Councilwoman DeDomenicis, to approve the minutes of the February 25, 2015 Regular meeting without formal reading. All members of Council were in favor. Motion was approved.

PRESENTATION

Representatives from Linwood Public Schools: Teri Weeks, Business Administrator; Dr. Marianne Gaffney, Superintendent; Board Members: Diana Rutala, Joann Scannell, and Dr. Shelley Meyers. Mrs. Weeks presented and discussed worksheets on the 2015-2016 proposed school budget. (Attached as Exhibit B) Dr. Gaffney discussed the budget planning process and explained that they began with a seven cent increase and are now down to four and a half. Councilman Matik asked if the schools can move to a calendar year budget like the City. Mrs. Weeks will look into that. Councilman Matik asked how much it cost to prepare for the PARCC testing. Mrs. Weeks indicated that she would have to gather that information. Councilman Matik indicated that the school pays a lot of money for electric and asked if they have looked at other options. Mrs. Weeks and Mrs. Rutala indicated that they looked into solar before having the new roof installed and explained that the cost wasn't feasible because the old roof could not support it. They will look at it again now that the roof is completed. Councilman Matik indicated that he believes it could have been feasible. Councilman Matik advised that some parents are concerned about the changes in Spanish and math. Dr. Gaffney explained that they do not want to reduce math time. Councilman Paolone asked what programs are being cut and if wrestling is included. Mrs. Weeks advised that all assistant coaches and assistant band director are included. The wrestling program is being looked at to cut because it is shared with Northfield and Somers Point and the numbers are very low. Councilman Paolone is not in favor of cutting wrestling or any assistant coaches or assistant band director. He asked if the schools looked into getting volunteers to coach. Mrs. Weeks responded that they have not but will do so. Dr. Gaffney explained that this is a working budget. Council President Tighe discussed the raises the teachers have gotten from 1996 to now as well as the increase costs in health benefits. The teachers have gotten raises every year. He indicated that not everyone that lives in Linwood gets a raise every year. The administrator's contracts are now under review. He hopes that the administrators step up and take zero increases to set an example. He would like the culture and mind set to change. Councilman Matik sits on the Board of School Estimates. Councilman Matik discussed the school aid and how the City has less commercial ratables. They are trying to balance the budget. When the teachers negotiated their contract they were told that cuts would have to be made if they received salary increases. He is hoping to get help from the Library. Councilman Matik indicated that they sit on a considerable amount of taxpayer money and he would like them to help. Council President Tighe opened the floor to the public for discussion on the school budget. Amy Ojserkis, 1905 Franklin Boulevard, Linwood – Mrs. Ojserkis read and presented a letter to City Council. (Attached as Exhibit C) Seeing and hearing no other members from the public wishing to be heard, Council President Tighe closed the floor.

ORDINANCES

- 3 OF 2015** AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE 20, 2004 AN ORDINANCE DECLARING THE PRUDENTIAL AND BLOOM SITES IN NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT AND APPROVING A REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THOSE AREAS AND REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES HERETOFORE ADOPTED THE PROVISIONS OF WHICH ARE INCONSISTENT HEREWITH.

The Clerk read Ordinance No. 3 of 2015 by title only. Councilman Heun motioned, seconded by Councilman Paolone to approve Ordinance No. 3 for final reading. Council President Tighe opened the floor for discussion on Ordinance No. 3. Jim Rutala, 717 River Drive, Linwood – Mr. Rutala is Chairman of the Planning Board. The law requires amendments to the Redevelopment Plan to be referred to the Planning Board. The Board can only make suggestions on the project. They have four concerns. The four issues are: the parking standards do not meet the City's requirements; the signage is not consistent with the City's Master Plan; there are ambiguities with the review process; and they would like two of the uses removed. Mr. Rutala would also like to see a schedule for completion included in the ordinance. Councilman Tighe advised that the Ordinance being considered deals with the Bloom Site only. He indicated that the Master Plan was adopted in 2002 and reviewed in 2008. There have been significant technological developments in lighting and signage subsequent to that time and further since. Council has determined that the nature and type of signs, including lighting, that have been proposed, will be aesthetically pleasing and consistent with the high standards set by the City of Linwood. The developer has agreed to change the parking to the City's requirements. The review process is compliant and the ordinance does include a schedule with time restrictions for development. Councilman Heun advised that he has been involved in the negotiations with the developer. The project is something the City can be proud of and the City needs the ratables. Councilman Gordon thanked Council President Tighe for educating Council on this process. It appears that most of the Planning Board's concerns have been addressed. Councilman Beinfest indicated that this property has been vacant for decades. He is glad the developer is willing to work with the City. The Mayor advised that he has been saying that Linwood needs a better balance of commercial ratables and residential properties. This project will help that balance. He believes this project will go a long way, just as the Cornerstone project. Seeing and hearing no other members of the public wishing to be heard, Council President Tighe closed the floor. A roll call vote was heard with seven in the affirmative. Motion was approved.

RESOLUTIONS

- 54-2015** A Resolution extending the budget adoption date and approving the temporary budget for 2015

The Clerk read Resolution No. 54 of 2015 by title only. Councilman Paolone motioned, seconded by Councilman Gordon to approve Resolution No. 54. A roll call vote was heard with seven in the affirmative. Motion was approved.

- 57-2015** A Resolution authorizing the use of the average percentage of collection in calculating the reserve for uncollected taxes in the 2015 local municipal budget

The Clerk read Resolution No. 57 of 2015 by title only. Councilman Matik motioned, seconded by Councilwoman DeDomenicis to approve Resolution No. 57. A roll call vote was heard with seven in the affirmative. Motion was 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.

- 55-2015** A Resolution authorizing an Intergovernmental Agreement between the City of Linwood and the Atlantic County Improvement Authority with regard to the 2012, 2013 and 2014 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program

- 56-2015** A Resolution authorizing the issuance of a Raffle License, #2015-05, to Auxiliary to the Betty Bacharach Rehabilitation Hospital
- 58-2015** A Resolution authorizing an amendatory Contract with Site Enterprises Inc. for the Poplar Avenue School Demolition
- 59-2015** A Resolution authorizing a Sub-Grant Agreement between the City of Linwood and the State of New Jersey Office of Emergency Management for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program
- 60-2015** A Resolution approving the Certification of qualified volunteers for LOSAP
- 61-2015** A Resolution awarding a Contract to Everbridge (Nixle) for an emergency communications system for the City of Linwood
- 62-2015** A Resolution honoring Joseph & Allison Molineaux
- 63-2015** A Resolution honoring Jean Matro

Council President Tighe asked if any member of Council would like to remove any items from consent. Resolution No. 59 was removed. Councilman Paolone motioned, seconded by Councilman Gordon, to approve Resolutions No. 55-56, 58, 60-63 of 2015. All members of Council were in favor. Motion was approved.

The Clerk read Resolution No. 59 of 2015 by title only. Councilman Matik motioned, seconded by Councilman Gordon to approve Resolution No. 59. All members of Council were in favor. Motion was approved. Councilman Matik advised that the approved grant agreement is for the purchase of two generators for the pump stations. One is portable and one is permanent for the Poplar Avenue pump station.

APPROVAL OF BILL LIST: \$1,955,959.37

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

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Council President Tighe 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 Tighe closed the floor.

FINAL REMARKS BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Councilwoman DeDomenicis – Councilwoman DeDomenicis thanked the members of the Board of School Estimates for their work on the school budget. She is confident everyone will continue to work together for a positive outcome.

Councilman Gordon – Councilman Gordon noted that this is a difficult budget time. There is pressure at the county and city level. It will take everyone to work together for an amicable outcome. He would like to see the budget whole and keep the taxpayers in mind.

Councilman Paolone – Councilman Paolone is raising his family in Linwood for the schools. This is a difficult time and he does think education is important. He would like to see the legislation changed at the state level for the funding formulas. He would like to keep all the programs the schools currently have to offer, especially wrestling. He congratulated Pat D’Arcy on winning the NJ state wrestling title and for going to Princeton.

Councilman Matik – Councilman Matik believes there was a perception that there wasn’t enough transparency in the supervisory part of the budget process. However, it is much better now. They will keep moving forward to tweak the budget and hope to save programs. He does hope to find money to help. Councilman Matik noted that the Police do not usually get many accolades. He read a letter of appreciation he received from a resident that was very grateful for the professionalism and courtesy of the police during a call on December 16, 2014.

Councilman Heun – Councilman Heun shared accolades he received from a realtor who recently worked with Chick Kisby and Lynn Roesch. The realtor was very grateful for their help and professionalism.

Council President Tighe – Council President Tighe agrees with Councilmen Gordon and Paolone’s comments. He would like to see everyone come together to work out the budget. He, too, does not want to see any programs cut.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to be addressed by Council, Councilman Matik motioned, seconded by Councilman Gordon, to adjourn at 7:34 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Leigh Ann Napoli, RMC
Municipal Clerk