

**MINUTES FOR COUNCIL MEETING MARCH 18, 2020**

The Meeting held electronically at South Amboy City Hall, 140 North Broadway, South Amboy, New Jersey, was called to order by Council President Gross at 7:00 P.M. The City Clerk read the Opening Prayer and all recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT: Councilwoman Dato, Councilwoman Noble, and Council President Gross.

ALSO PRESENT: Fred A. Henry, Mayor, Glenn Skarzynski, Business Administrator, Deborah Brooks, City Clerk, Francis Womack, Director of Law, OEM Director Mark Herdman, City Engineer Mark Rasimowicz, Auditor Gary Higgins, CFO Dan Balka and Mayor Fred Henry

Council President Gross read the Notice of Publication Certification and noted this meeting was being held electronically because of the current Covid19 Virus Pandemic. The public has been notified of the telephone number to call to access the teleconferenced meeting. Mr. Gross thanked all the First Responders and Council and BA for their work in keeping everyone safe and informed.

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**RESOLUTIONS:**

**RESOLUTION NO. 20-096  
APPROVING PAYMENT OF BILLS**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the City Council of the City of South Amboy does hereby receive and approve the payment of the bill list dated March 12, 2020, as presented by the Chief Financial Officer.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the bills list be appended to the official minutes.

**MOVED by:** Ms. Noble of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Resolution No. 20-096 is hereby approved. **SECONDED by:** Ms. Dato **ROLL CALL VOTE: All in favor.**

**RESOLUTION NO. 20-097  
APPROVAL AND RELEASE OF MINUTES**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the City Council of the City of South Amboy does hereby approve and release the Council Minutes of the March 4, 2020 Business Meeting.

**MOVED by:** Ms. Noble of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Resolution No. 20-097 is hereby approved. **SECONDED by** Ms. Dato **ROLL CALL VOTE: Ayes: Noble, Gross, Abstain: Dato**

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**BUDGET HEARING/ADOPTION:**

Auditor Gary Higgins gave a brief review of the 2020 Budget discussing that the DGLS had reviewed the budget and after receiving some follow up information from our CFO, approved the Budget for public hearing and adoption. He discussed appropriations, CAP Bank, the City's continued excellent collection rate and noted the budget had only increased by 1.7 cents per \$100, which ends up being an annual increase of approximately \$47 per \$250,000 home. He also noted that the City has \$105,718 in its "Storm Reserve" which can be used for costs incurred due to the health Pandemic.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**OPEN PUBLIC – Brandon Russell electronically sent in questions in regard to the budget and other items. The response by the BA and CFO was read into the record and is attached and made part of the minutes.**

**CLOSE PUBLIC**

**NO. 20-098 2020 BUDGET ADOPTION**

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the City Council of the City of South Amboy, County of Middlesex that the budget hereinbefore set forth is hereby adopted and shall constitute an appropriation for the purposes stated of the sums therein set forth as appropriations, and authorization of the amount of \$18,835,746.00 for municipal purposes.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the summary of revenues and appropriations are approved as attached.

**MOVED by:** Ms. Dato the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Resolution No. 20-098 is hereby approved. **SECONDED by:** Ms. Noble. **ROLL CALL VOTE: All in favor.**

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**CONSENT AGENDA:**

The following items are considered to be routine by the City Council and will be acted upon in one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Council member so requests. In this event, the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered in the normal sequence of the Agenda.

**MOVED by:** Ms. Noble of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Resolution #20-099 through #20-104 are hereby approved. **SECONDED by:** Ms. Dato. **ROLL CALL VOTE: All in favor.**

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NO. 20-099 RESOLUTION ACCEPTING AND ADOPTING THE CENTRAL JERSEY MUNICIPAL JOINT INSURANCE FUND'S 2020 SAFETY INCENTIVE PROGRAM

NO. 20-100 RESOLUTION RESCINDING TAX OVERPAYMENT IN RESOLUTION 20-058

NO. 20-101 A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF SOUTH AMBOY AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF A REAL ESTATE TRANSFER AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF SOUTH AMBOY AND CARL E. APPLIGATE, EXECUTOR OF THE ESTATE OF LILLIAN APPLIGATE

NO. 20-102 TAX LIEN ACCRUAL CANCELLATION, BLOCK 74, LOT 24

NO. 20-103 AMENDING RESOLUTION 20-015, ADDING REMITTANCE MAXIMUM TO PETTY CASH

NO. 20-104 AWARD OF CONTRACT - CUSTOM CARE SERVICES, INC.

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**ORDINANCES:**

**SECOND READING/ADOPTION**

**ORD. 03-2020** AN ORDINANCE CONCERNING FEES TO THE CITY OF SOUTH AMBOY

**OPEN PUBLIC - No public comment**  
**CLOSE PUBLIC**

**MOVED by:** Ms. Noble, of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Ordinance #03-2020 hereby adopted.  
**SECONDED by:** Ms. Dato, **ROLL CALL VOTE: All in favor.**

**ORD. 04-2020** AN ORDINANCE AMENDING AND SUPPLEMENTING ORDINANCE NO. 1036 ENTITLED "PARKING AND TRAFFIC REGULATIONS FOR THE CITY OF SOUTH AMBOY" IN THE COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY - 215 CATHERINE - OSTRANDER

**OPEN PUBLIC - No public comment.**

**CLOSE PUBLIC**

**MOVED by:** Ms. Dato, of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Ordinance #04-2020 hereby adopted.

**SECONDED by:** Ms. Noble, **ROLL CALL VOTE: All in favor.**

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**COMMENTS:**

- Mr. Gross stated he knew that the community will get through this pandemic together and come out the other side. He is available at all times to answer any questions.
- Ms. Dato thanked everyone for getting tonight's teleconference meeting together in such a short time, reminded everyone to safely check on neighbors and the elderly, don't incite fear, but check facts and remember to complete your Census and be counted!
- Mayor Henry thanked everyone for working together in these trying times and for passing the budget
- Mr. Skarzynski thanked the following professional staff at City Hall for their work in this trying time: Police Chief LaVigne, OEM Dir. Herdman, Mr. Rasimowicz, Mr. Womack and CFO Balka.
- Mr. Womack thanked the staff for getting the teleconference ready in such a short time, noted we may be using this style of meeting for some time and affirmed he and the BA had checked the front door to make sure any public that had wanted to attend would be given the telephone number to connect to the meeting and that the meeting had been properly noticed.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Mr. Russell's comments and responses are attached and made part of the minutes.

**ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING:**

On motion by Ms. Dato, seconded by Ms. Noble and carried unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 7:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Brooks  
Municipal Clerk  
Approved April 1, 2020

## Deborah Brooks

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**From:** Brandon Russell <berussell19@outlook.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 18, 2020 1:12 PM  
**To:** Deborah Brooks  
**Subject:** Questions to be read aloud during 3/18 Council Meeting

Good afternoon Deborah,

I saw that the City was conducting tonight's meeting via teleconference and would be accepting questions via email. I apologize in advance for the absurd number of questions but I'm really interested in learning more about city government and how it operates. I understand there may not be time to read them all tonight but I am hoping the questions under 2-4 can be addressed on the call since all or most of the council will be present.

Either way, I am hoping you can pass them along to the right people and I am looking forward to seeing the answers. If city leadership wants to answer them on a document and publish on their website, that works for me!

### 1. In regards to the ferry project:

- a. When is the projected launch date?

### 2. In regards to the 2020 budget:

- a. What is the City's total remaining debt as of December 31, 2019?
- b. On Sheet 10, it is noted that the anticipated PILOT for Woodmont in 2019 was \$435,575. Realized cash in hand for 2019 was \$254,975, creating a loss of nearly \$200,000.
  - I'm also seeing the anticipated revenue for 2020 is lower than 2019, is Woodmont having trouble keeping tenants and should we expect payments to drop even further?
- c. On Sheet 15, I'm seeing a roughly \$300,000 increase in Appropriations but no increases for our Volunteer Fire and First Aid responders.
  - With an incoming wave of new citizens coming town, when does the City plan on increasing the appropriations for our unpaid first responders?
- d. On Sheet 39, the numbers shows that the surplus balance as \$2,103,448 as of December 31, 2019. The current anticipated 2020 surplus shows as \$1,130,000 but the surplus balance remaining shows as \$973,448.
  - I could be reading this incorrectly but shouldn't the first two numbers be added together, creating a surplus balance of \$3.2 million at the end of 2020?
- e. Will there be a tax increase, decrease, or no change at all?

### 3. In regards to the Manhattan Beach Project:

- a. I understand that the dog park on this property will only be available to residents of the property, but does this mean the entire property will be off-limits to non-residents?
- b. When are Phases 1 and 2 projected to be completed and is the property owner paying taxes on the land in the meantime?
- c. Has Mac Womack connected with his predecessor about the legal reasoning for why the Special Council Meeting on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018 was moved to a closed session at the last minute?

### 4. In regards to appreciating our city officials:

- a. Most citizens don't know about the work our elected officials do behind the scenes on a daily basis. I wanted to offer everyone on the Council the chance to answer the following question however they want:

- What is your proudest contribution as an elected official?

**5. In regards to general ideas:**

- a. Would the City be interested in working with me to establish a dog park?
- As an avid dog walker, I see firsthand just how many citizens have dogs and could get use out of an official dog park. It could be a useful way to bring in more potential consumers to our lovely city.
- b. Would the City be interested in working with me to set up city-owned and operated businesses?
- I understand there will be legal liabilities associated with this but it could be a useful way to avoid tax increases while increasing South Amboy's value to potential consumers.
- c. Would the City be interested in funding an AV club at the high school that would be responsible for videotaping all public meetings, events, and miscellaneous activities?
- This could save the City money and increase transparency while giving students the opportunity to earn community service hours while increasing civic engagement and transparency.

## Deborah Brooks

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**From:** Business Administrator  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 18, 2020 2:22 PM  
**To:** berussell19@outlook.com; Deborah Brooks  
**Subject:** Council questions for teleconference

Since the balance of these would be directed to the CFO and I at the meeting please review the following. Clerk will read them in to the record as required during the teleconference.

- 1) Ferry. Cannot provide a launch date at this time. Current status is awaiting approval of Department of Environmental Protection waterfront development permits. We are prepared to move forward with bidding the project and the operatory once that occurs. I have no way to determine when DEP will approve permits or if they will have additional requirements prior to approval. We hope to have some direction from them by the end of April but we have no sway on their internal process.
- 2) 2020 Budget
  - a. Total remaining debt as of December 31, 2019
    - i. Bond principal 15,850,000
    - ii. Interest 3,683,400
    - iii. Loan Principal and interest 65,195
  - b. Total payments have not dropped. In last year's budget document land tax, which is paid separately from the PILOT was included in their calculations. Bookkeeping correction. Total remains the same.
  - c. We are currently providing the maximum amount of funding for Fire and First Aid allowed by law. Budget does provide for significant capital expenditures for the Fire Department including two new trucks and rescue equipment.
  - d. No, the numbers should not be added. The first number [Surplus balance December 31, 2019] reflects total surplus on hand at that date. The second number [Current surplus anticipated in 2020 budget] reflects the monies from surplus being used in the 2020 budget. It is anticipated on projections that the end of year surplus number for 2020 will meet or exceed the 2019 balance.
  - e. Taxes will increase by 1.7 cents. This will result in an average in yearly increase of \$46.43 on an average assessed house valued at \$273,106. NB: had there not been a 100% increase in recycling and tipping fee costs the increase would have only been .7 cents.
- 3)
  - a. Manhattan Beach is a private community in terms of the amenities offered on their site. The roadways will be accessible to the public. Persons visiting residents of Manhattan Beach would be welcome in a manner similar to visiting any other residence in the City.
  - b. Completion of phases 1&2 should be completed in 1 ½ to 2 years. Yes, the property owner is paying land taxes in the meantime.
  - c. Mr. Womack will have to speak to that matter.
- 4) Will ask Council to share their opinions
- 5)
  - a. A dog park has been discussed from time to time. Dog parks, while a nice public amenity, require adequate space and are very expensive to insure. Currently, this type of project is not being considered in view of projects with higher priority.

- b. The City staff is always available to work with any potential business owner to encourage new businesses. However, we are limited in what we can provide outside of assistance in navigating the required processes for licensing, zoning, construction, etc.
- c. The City, in cooperation with the Board of Education and the South Amboy Arts Council has funded and will be providing equipment and staff for an AV club at the high school. Grant funding has been acquired to provide a person with expertise in video production to mentor the program. Moving forward it is anticipated that the club would be making efforts to record and post produce meetings and events. Please bear in mind this project is in its infancy and it will take some time to get them to the level of performance

Best regards,

Glenn R. Skarzynski, MPA  
Business Administrator

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