

MINUTES FOR BUSINESS MEETING APRIL 21, 2021

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, Councilman McLaughlin, Councilwoman Noble, and Council President Gross.

ALSO PRESENT: Fred A. Henry, Mayor, Glenn Skarzynski, Business Administrator, Francis Womack, Director of Law, and Mark Rasimowicz, City Engineer

The City Clerk read the notice of publication statement.

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 #21-095 through #21-102 are hereby approved as amended. **SECONDED by:** Ms. Dato. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Ayes: Dato, McLaughlin, Noble, Gross Absent: Reilly

- NO. 21-095 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PLANNING BOARD TO AMEND THE MASTER PLAN BY ADDING INDEPENDENCE FIRE COMPANY FIREHOUSE TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN ELEMENT.
- NO. 21-096 RESOLUTION APPROVING VETERAN PROPERTY TAX DEDUCTION - LAWRENCE
- NO. 21-097 RESOLUTION APPROVING VETERAN PROPERTY TAX DEDUCTION - DEAK
- NO. 21-098 RESOLUTION APPROVING VETERAN PROPERTY TAX DEDUCTION -IDYK
- NO. 21-099 RESOLUTION APPROVING VETERAN WIDOW PROPERTY TAX DEDUCTION - GASIEWSKI
- NO. 21-100 RESOLUTION CERTIFYING ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP WITH SOUTH AMBOY FIRE DEPARTMENT FOR NEW JERSEY STATE FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION ELIGIBILITY – MICHAEL KEATING AND BRUCE MILLER
- NO. 21-101 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A CONTRACT WITHOUT PUBLIC ADVERTISING DUE TO AN EMERGENCY SEWER REPAIR AT CITY HALL
- NO. 21-102 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SEWER REFUND - TARALLO

RESOLUTIONS:

RESOLUTION NO. 21-103
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 April 7, 2021 Business Meeting.

MOVED by: Mr. McLaughlin of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Resolution No. 21-103 is hereby approved. **SECONDED by:** Ms. Noble. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Abstain: Dato Ayes: McLaughlin, Noble, Gross Absent: Reilly

RESOLUTION NO. 21-104
APPROVAL OF BILL LIST

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 April 15, 2021, as presented by the Chief Financial Officer.

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

MOVED by: Ms. Dato of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Resolution No. 21-104 is hereby approved. **SECONDED by:** Ms. Noble. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Ayes: Dato, McLaughlin, Noble Gross Absent: Reilly

COMMENTS:

Ms. Dato:

- Noted the significance of establishing the Independence Fire House as the first on the City of South Amboy’s Historical Preservation list.
- Noted that the City is looking beautiful – the trees on Broadway and the waterfront area in particular and we are lucky to live here.

Ms. Noble:

- Agree with Ms. Dato that the City was looking beautiful.
- Noted the SAYAA had a great opening day and is looking forward to a good year under odd circumstances.

Mr. McLaughlin:

- Reminded everyone that families are still hurting, please donate to the food pantries.
- Thanked First Responders, OEM, Fire Department and Police Department for their continued good works.
- Reported he heard SAYAA was ready to go and hoped all had a good season.
- Received confirmation that DPW would sandblast a US mail box and paint it so it can be a receptacle for retired flags.
- Reminded everyone that COVID is still out there – please be careful!

Pres. Gross:

- Get vaccinated!!!!

Mayor Henry:

- Thanked First Presbyterian and St. Mary’s and the volunteers for their continued excellent work at the food pantries.
- At the last council meeting the topic of PILOTS came up with a comparison to Jersey City and how PILOTS hurt the city. But the problem in Jersey City arose because Jersey City failed to audit their PILOTS for a few years and their lack of oversight led to a shortfall. For the record Jersey City has 178 active PILOTS-we have 4. And we have them audited every year.

It's also implied that the tax payers will be overburdened when the PILOT runs out. When the PILOT ends that's when the regular taxes start and they pay their fair

share like everyone else.

The state passed a law allowing municipalities to negotiate PILOTS with prospective developers to help develop unusable or contaminated land. The property at the end of Augusta Street, Sun Oil property, is a perfect example. The cost to remediate that property is estimated at \$10-11 million. Up to this point no developer wants to touch it because of the cost and South Amboy certainly can't afford that. That's where the PILOT comes in. But we will only negotiate a PILOT which is beneficial to the city. And after the time period is up, they will pay taxes like everyone else. But the property needs to be developed first. So, you ask, do you want to keep that contaminated and eyesore property or do you bring in a developer who will clean up the property on his dime and build something which will benefit South Amboy.

Longtime residents remember what was on the property where Bayshore Cove, the "Y", and Venetian Health Care now stand. Without a PILOT these places would not exist. Would you keep the eyesore that was there or keep what we now have.

As for Jersey City, Mayor Fulop is not against PILOTS. As he said in an interview in February 2020 "PILOTS need to be a tool used selectively and not in the same way that previous mayors had given them to nearly all projects."

The state created the PILOT concept for a reason-to do something constructive with contaminated or run-down properties.

My administration will only agree to a PILOT with a developer if it benefits South Amboy.

Councilman McLaughlin noted Jersey City has managed to make environmentally brown properties into recreational spaces and feels PILOTS once complete will place a tax burden on the residents.

Councilwoman Dato noted Woodbridge has effectively used PILOTS and feels that if the City is cautious and careful it can do the same, this way taking environmentally brown sites and making them useful.

Mr. Skarzynski:

- Wanted to acknowledge the excellent work of the administrative staff on National Administrative Professionals Day. The staff at City Hall and the Senior Center has done amazing work even under the duress of the COVID restrictions.

Mr. Womack:

- Reported he will have Ordinances for discussion regarding the manufacturing, growing and sales of cannabis as well as an amendment of our ordinance regarding invasive species.

Mr. Rasimowicz:

- Noted the bid opening for the South Broadway project is next week and the job should be awarded at the May 5th meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mary Szaro, 370 Fifth St., thanked the Council for authorizing the Planning Board to amend the Master Plan and add Independence Fire House to the Historical Preservation list. Reminded the Mayor that there had been a previous discussion regarding using the firehouse as a museum. The Mayor noted that right now the fire houses did not want to combine so it is unlikely that Independence Fire House will be empty and available to become a museum.

Councilman McLaughlin noted that moving ahead a better space for the OEM would need to be found.

Bill DeMasi, 146 John St., requested the City Parks be given a sprucing up. BA Skarzysnki will discuss this with him off line to get feed back about relocating some of the park areas.

Brandon Russell, 327 Fourth St., received confirmation that the PILOTS are covered in the annual audit, noted he had not received answers from the Mayor's email of three weeks ago and requested the City post its meeting on multiple media platforms.

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING: On motion by Ms. Dato, seconded by Mr. McLaughlin and carried unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Brooks, RMC
City Clerk
Approved May 5, 2021