

MINUTES FOR COUNCIL MEETING JANUARY 3, 2024

The Meeting was called to order by City Clerk, Deborah Brooks at 6:00 P.M. The City Clerk read the Opening Prayer, all recited the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call was taken.

PRESENT: Councilwoman Dato, Councilman Reilly, Councilman McLaughlin, Councilwoman Noble, and Council President Gross.

ALSO PRESENT: Fred A. Henry, Mayor, David Kales, Business Administrator, Dan Balka, CFO, Deborah Brooks, City Clerk and Francis Womack, Director of Law

The Clerk read the Certification of Meeting Notice and entertained a motion to nominate the temporary Council President. On motion of Mr. Gross, seconded by Mr. Conrad and approved unanimously, Ms. Dato was appointed Temporary Council President. Ms. Dato then called for a motion to nominate the Council President. On motion by Mr. Conrad, seconded by Mr. Reilly and with no further nominees, Mr. Gross was appointed Council President (Ayes: Conrad, Dato, Gross, Reilly - Nays: McLaughlin) Mr. Gross entertained motions to appoint the Vice President. On motion by Mr. Conrad, seconded by Ms. Dato, Ms. Dato was appointed Council Vice President. (Ayes: Conrad, Dato Reilly Gross – Nay: McLaughlin)

President Gross welcomed County Commissioner Charles Tomaro and Auditor Gary Higgins to the meeting.

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.

On motion by Mr. McLaughlin, seconded by Mr. Conrad and passed unanimously, Resolutions 24-043 and 24-047 were pulled from the consent agenda.

MOVED by: Mr. Conrad of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Resolution #24-001 through #24-042, and 24-044, 24-045, 24-046 are hereby approved retroactive to January 1, 2024. **SECONDED by:** Ms. Dato **ROLL CALL VOTE: All in favor.**

- Resolution 24-001 Resolution Authorizing Temporary Budget Appropriations for the 2024 Calendar Year
- Resolution 24-002 Resolution Adopting 2024 Cash Management Plan
- Resolution 24-003 Resolution establishing 2024 Meeting Dates
- Resolution 24-004 Resolution Adopting 2024 Holiday Schedule
- Resolution 24-005 Designating Official Newspapers
- Resolution 24-006 Designating Official Depositories
- Resolution 24-007 Resolution Filing Signature with Secretary of State
- Resolution 24-008 Appointment to Emergency Management Council
- Resolution 24-009 Appointment of Public Agency Compliance Officer
- Resolution 24-010 Appointment of Crossing Guards
- Resolution 24-011 Appointment Deputy Records Custodians
- Resolution 24-012 Approval of Towing City Tow Service Operators

- Resolution 24-013 Change Fund – Tax Collector
 Resolution 24-014 Change Fund – City Clerk
 Resolution 24-015 Petty Cash Fund – Administration
 Resolution 24-016 Change Fund – Municipal Court Administrator
 Resolution 24-017 Approving Municipal Public Defender
 Resolution 24-018 Establishing Interest Rate on Delinquent Taxes
 Resolution 24-019 Appointing JIF Commissioner and Alternate Commissioner
 Resolution 24-020 SARA Appointment - Forshner
 Resolution 24-021 Establishing Interest Rate on Delinquent Sewer Use Fees
 Resolution 24-022 Authorizing Prepayment of Middlesex County Taxes
 Resolution 24-023 Appointing Planning Board members
 Resolution 24-024 Appointing Registrar – J. Katko
 Resolution 24-025 Resolution Authorizing Tax Assessor to act as agent for the City of South Amboy for the purpose of filing and settling tax appeals on behalf of the taxing district for the tax year 2024
- Resolution 24-026 Approving Municipal Prosecutor
 Resolution 24-027 Authorizing Disbursement of Hospitalization and state Health Benefits
 Resolution 24-028 Authorizing 2024 Pay Schedule and Pension Benefits
 Resolution 24-029 Authorizing the CFO to Wire Transfer Funds
 Resolution 24-030 Payroll Agreement with Sadie/Pope/Dowdell Library
 Resolution 24-031 Payroll Agreement with SARA
 Resolution 24-032 Authorizing the Award of a Contract for Labor Counsel
 Resolution 24-033 Authorizing the Award of a Contract for Appraisal, Consulting and Expert Witness Services
- Resolution 24-034 Authorizing the Award of a Contract for IT Services – Vertilocity
 Resolution 24-035 Authorizing the Award of a Contract for Planning Board Planner/Engineer
 Resolution 24-036 Authorizing the Award of a Contract for Consulting Engineer Services
 Resolution 24-037 Authorizing qualifying professionals for Special Services Engineer And Environmental Engineer
- Resolution 24-038 Authorizing the Award for Architectural Services
 Resolution 24-039 Authorizing the Award of a Contract for Special Tax Counsel
 Resolution 24-040 Authorizing the Award of a Contract for Planning Board Attorney
 Resolution 24-041 Authorizing the Award of a Contract for Risk Management Consultant/Liability Insurance Broker of Record
- Resolution 24-042 Authorizing the Award of a Contract for Auditor
 Resolution 24-044 Authorizing the Award of Contract for General Counsel
 Resolution 24-045 Authorizing the Award of Contract for Grant Writer
 Resolution 24-046 Appointing Sustainable Green Team members
- Resolution 24-043 Authorizing the Award of a Contract for Bond Counsel – on motion of Ms. Dato, seconded by Mr. Conrad, Resolution 24-043 was approved. (Ayes: Conrad, Dato, Gross – Nays: McLaughlin, Reilly)
- Resolution 24-047 Library Board Appointment Removal – on motion of Mr. Conrad, Seconded by Mr. McLaughlin, Resolution 24-047 was approved. (Ayes: Conrad, Dato, Gross – Nays: McLaughlin – Abstain: Reilly)

END REORGANIZATION MEETING/BEGIN REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

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. Dato of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Resolution #24-048 through #24-051 are hereby approved. **SECONDED by:** Mr. Conrad. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** All in favor.

- NO. 24-048 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SEWER OVERPAYMENT REFUND – WILLIAMS
- NO. 24-049 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING RENEWAL OF RETAIL CONSUMPTION LICENSE 122-33-011-006 PURSUANT TO 12:39 RELIEF
- NO. 24-050 RESOLUTION REJECTING ALL BIDS SUBMITTED IN RESPONSE TO THE BID SPECIFICATIONS AND GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR NJ TRANSIT VILLAGE GRANT FY2022
- NO. 24-051 RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOUTH AMBOY REQUESTING THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (NJDOT) FOR AN EXTENSION OF TIME FOR THE AWARD OF A CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT FOR THE CITY OF SOUTH AMBOY, SHARED BIKE LANES PROJECT

RESOLUTIONS:

RESOLUTION NO. 24-052
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 December 13, 2023 Council Meeting.

MOVED by: Mr. Reilly of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Resolution No. 24-052 is hereby approved. **SECONDED by:** Mr. Conrad **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Ayes: Conrad, Dato, Reilly, Gross – Abstain: McLaughlin)

RESOLUTION NO. 24-053
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 December 28, 2023, as presented by the Chief Financial Officer.

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

MOVED by: Mr. Conrad of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Resolution No. 24-053 is hereby approved. **SECONDED by:** Ms. Dato. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** All in favor.

COMMENTS

Mr. Conrad:

- Wished a Happy New Year to his colleagues, the professionals and everyone in attendance at tonight's meeting.
- Thanked the Fire Department and First Aid volunteers and their families.
- Congratulated this year's new Fire Chiefs, Timothy Gay, Rafael Albarran and Mike Kelly and thanked outgoing Chief John Dragotta for all his efforts.
- Stated he is looking forward to the City making improvements in services, smart growth and oversight and to continue moving in the right direction.

Mr. Reilly:

- Thanked the first responders and food pantry volunteers for their continued work.
- Reported the FOSA fundraising event was a big success and thanked everyone who had helped put the event together, especially the Board of Education for providing the facilities and the many donations from local businesses.
- Reminded everyone that in April we would be celebrating Government Week and would repeat the events of last year including the mock trial, civic essay contest and Independence Fire House open house.
- Requested a Proclamation for Jamie Norek at the February 7th meeting.
- Asked Clerk Brooks to distribute a flyer to the small businesses list – the next step in supporting the local businesses.

Ms. Dato:

- Congratulated the incoming and outgoing Fire Chiefs for their dedication.
- Thanked all the volunteers in their many capacities.
- Congratulated Mr. Gross on being elected Council President once again and is looking forward to another outstanding year.
- Wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Mr. McLaughlin:

- Noted having missed the December meeting – he is wishing everyone Happy Holidays.
- Congratulated the new Fire Chiefs and new Fire and Police Department Line Officers.
- Noted the Ferry project is going well.
- Announced he will be running for a third term as Council Member.

Mr. Gross:

- Congratulated Mr. Kales and Mr. Reilly on a successful FOSA fundraising event.
- Thanked outgoing Chief Dragotta and welcomed in the new Chiefs, Gay, Albarran and Kelly.

Mayor Henry:

- Congratulated Mr. Gross and Ms. Dato on their nominations as Council President and Vice President respectively and is looking forward to continuing to do good work with them.
- Noted he was honored to give the Oaths of Office to the incoming Fire Chiefs Gay, Albarran and Kelly and thanked outgoing Chief Dragotta.
- Congratulated Mary Szaro on her retirement.
- Wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Mr. Kales:

- Congratulated the incoming Fire Chiefs and thanked John Dragotta for his service.
- Discussed how when he was first hired the PILOTS were a hot topic and with the help of his staff and the professionals there has been much improvement in the auditing system, all the monies that had been invoiced have been paid and moving forward there is a new system in place to keep things running smoothly. He noted that some of the money received from the PILOT programs will be going toward the

establishment of a summer arts and crafts program. He stated how much he appreciated that Mayor Henry had his back during these tumultuous times.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mary Szaro noted that this is a good time of year to regroup and move forward in setting new goals for the City. She suggested that one area of improvement that could be made would be an increase in regular reports from the Council members on items of interest to the public such as SARA and Planning Board upcoming projects as well as Green Team goals, etc. She thanked Mr. Reilly for raising the Veteran's plaque issues for the Memorial Park and appreciated Mayor Henry's proposed future dedication of the Veterans. She thanked Mr. Kales for his updates on key issues and is looking forward to getting Ordinance updates from Mr. Womack and project updates from Mr. Rasimowicz. She requested Mr. Balka start to regularly update the public on the payment receipts for the PILOT programs.

Chris Smiga, 144 Second St., questioned Mr. Kales about the amount of money the City has taken in from the Ferry Project so far. Mr. Kales noted that the City would not start receiving funds until the Ferry Terminal was complete as per the contract. He questioned the location of the bike path that is going to be installed under the NJ Transit Grant and confirmed the Roosevelt basketball Court and tot lot are going to be moved. He confirmed that there is some money in the budget for the last ball field to be renovated, but no grant money has yet been obtained. He asked about the announcement of a 2.2 million dollar project at the waterfront park, no one on the Council had heard anything about it. He noted most of these projects should be looked at by the shade tree committee, or environmental committee or the open space committee, none of which the City has currently.

Brandon Russell, 327 Fourth St., appreciated the PILOT updates but noted there has been no accountability from the Mayor who has been the Mayor during many of these PILOT program inceptions. He requested more public engagement in any future PILOT discussions and hoped the City would get better terms in any upcoming contract. He received confirmation that as of now, there will be no hybrid meetings and the Council is still investigating the ability to live stream the meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Mr. McLaughlin, seconded by Mr. Reilly and passed unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 6:42 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Brooks
Municipal Clerk
Approved January 17, 2024