

MINUTES FOR COUNCIL MEETING MARCH 6, 2024

The Meeting was called to order by City Clerk, Deborah Brooks at 600 P.M. The City Clerk read the Opening Prayer, all recited the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call was taken.

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

ALSO PRESENT: Deborah Brooks, City Clerk, David Kales, BA, Mayor Henry, and Kevin McManimon, Esq.

The Clerk read the Certification of Meeting Notice.

DEPARTMENT HEAD INTRODUCTION: Mr. Kales introduced the department heads or their representatives and noted that the department heads would be coming to meetings quarterly and the public and Council could direct questions to them in order to keep communications open.

Mr. Gross stated that along the lines of open communication he had the following updates: He, Mr. Kales and Mr. Conrad met and worked on the ordinance for the TNR. He has given the Clerk the latest draft and once the attorney has reviewed the Ordinance there would be meetings with some of the TNR representatives to get their input. This will take time and he cannot give a date for completion. Additionally, Administration is still working toward the updated communications plan. No one is pushing these items aside and everyone is working hard toward completion.

BUDGET INTRODUCTION:

President Gross stated that the budget was being introduced this evening, that there will be a public hearing at the April 3rd meeting before it's adoption and asked the Council if they had any comments. Mr. McLaughlin thanked Mr. Kales for doing such a good job on the budget. He had one question regarding the need for the position of Confidential Aide to the Mayor. Mayor Henry responded that the position was used as a second set of eyes for the work being completed by his office. Mr. McLaughlin noted that while the current BA was doing an excellent job, the two Prior BA's had done a poor job especially regarding the PILOT's.

RESOLUTION NO. 24-069

RESOLUTION TO WAIVE READING IN FULL OF THE BUDGET FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2024

MOVED by: Ms. Dato of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Resolution No. 24-069 is hereby approved. **SECONDED by:** Mr. McLaughlin. **ROLL CALL VOTE: Ayes:** Conrad, Dato, McLaughlin, Reilly, Gross.

RESOLUTION NO. 24-070

RESOLUTION TO INTRODUCE THE BUDGET FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2024

MOVED by: Mr. McLaughlin of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Resolution No. 24-070 is hereby approved. **SECONDED by:** Mr. Conrad. **ROLL CALL VOTE: Ayes:** Conrad, Dato, McLaughlin, Reilly, Gross.

RESOLUTION NO. 24-071

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 February 21, 2024 Council Meeting.

MOVED by: Mr. McLaughlin of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Resolution No. 24-071 is hereby approved. **SECONDED by:** Mr. Conrad **ROLL CALL VOTE: All in favor.**

RESOLUTION NO. 24-072

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 February 29, 2024, 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. 24-072 is hereby approved. **SECONDED by:** Ms. Dato. **ROLL CALL VOTE: All in favor.**

ORDINANCE

ADOPTION/SECOND READING

ORDINANCE 2024-03

AN ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK (N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14)

OPEN PUBLIC - no comment
CLOSE PUBLIC

MOVED by: Mr. Conrad, of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Ordinance #2024-03 is hereby adopted.

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

ORDINANCE 2024-04

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 -ADDITION OF 15 MINUTE PARKING SIGNS

OPEN PUBLIC - no comment
CLOSE PUBLIC

MOVED by: Mr. Conrad, of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Ordinance #2024-04 is hereby adopted.

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

COMMENTS:

Mr. Reilly:

- Thanked the first responders and food pantry volunteers for their continued service.

- Reported there will be a demonstration of the new automatic stretcher on March 12th.
- Stated that he was pleased with this years budget, noting it's cost effectiveness, increase in services and the addressing of downtown improvements and financing of the arts & crafts program.
- Reported that there will be a celebration of government week at the April 17th meeting which will include a mock trial, announcing the winners of the essay contest, honoring local volunteers as well as an open house at Independence Fire House.

Mr. McLaughlin:

- Thanked those that had attended this evening's meeting.
- Stated his appreciation of the department heads showing up this evening noting a lot of changes had been made since Mr. Kales has been the administrator and thanked Mr. Kales for his work on the budget.
- Thanked the volunteers and urged everyone to come out to the Parade next Sunday.

Mr. Conrad:

- Thanked the first responders and fire department volunteers and their families for their service.
- Thanked the department heads for their service and thanked Mr. Kales for making them available at this evening's meeting.
- Reported the February 29th Black History Month "America in the Arts" program at the high school was well done.
- Noted March is Women's History Month and that we should celebrate women's achievements and the force they have played in moving the world forward.
- Noted March 11th was the beginning of Ramadan.
- Congratulated Mr. Gross on being the Grand Marshall of the upcoming St. Pat's Parade and urged everyone to come out for the event.
- Stated while he would reserve his comments on the budget until the budget hearing he did note it keeps faith with the priorities of the citizens and was an open and collaborative process and thanked the Mayor, CFO and BA for all the hard work put into the process.

Ms. Dato:

- Reported she had attended the tribute dinner for Chief John Dragotta and thanked him and all the volunteers for their service.
- Sent kudos to the people putting together the Historical Society author event – well done!
- Noted the high school's Black History Month presentation was outstanding and she hoped to see an increased representation of the diverse ethnicities in the City in the future.
- Reported the Art Alliance is having a Paint & Sip event this Friday, 7-9 pm, and that Joan Conway notified her that there will be upcoming auditions for the theatre group – the production will be the Wedding Singer.
- Stated the Budget was very good and noted it takes many people and hours to get it into place.
- Thanked the department heads for coming to the meeting.

Mr. Gross:

- Thanked the Mayor, Mr. Kales, and the Department Heads for their hard work on putting together such a good budget.
- Noted the kids did a great job on the Black History Month event at the high school.
- Reiterated the Council is working on the TNR Ordinance as well as the upgrade to the sound system/live stream project.

Mayor Henry:

- Reiterated the other Councilman's comments regarding the Black History Month presentation, the Arts Alliance and the Historical Society and urged people to get involved.
- Congratulated Mr. Gross on being the Grand Marshall for the Parade this year.
- Noted the bid for the demolition of the newly purchased Broadway property should be going out soon.
- Reported he had just received word that the City has been awarded a one million dollar grant for a new fire truck.

Mr. Kales:

- Thanked his department heads for their support over the last year.
- Noted he is proud of the budget process this year which began in October and will be posted on-line tomorrow morning.
- Reported the purchase of 131 S. Broadway is set to close on the 29th and that they will begin working with NJ Transit to increase parking, noting that it takes time for these things to come to fruition – government moves slowly.
- Thanked the Council for their support of the budget.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Greta Grasso, 413 David St, representing the South Amboy TNR and concerned citizens thanked the Council President for his update on the work being done to move forward with the TNR Ordinance and let the Council know she was there if they had any questions.

Karen Walzak-Housman, Robert Noble Manor, stated her concern that the cats would be removed from the area around her home and noted many of the neighbors are emotionally attached to these cats.

Ann Steel, 214 Catherine St., raised concerns about speeding on her street as well as illegal right hand turns. Mr. Kales directed her to speak with Capt. McCabe at the end of the meeting.

Greg Babilak, 125 Henry St., sent a message of thanks from his mother-in-law Margaret Gorczyca, to the Council, for their concern for her wellbeing. Received confirmation from Mr. Gross that there is no timeline for the TNR ordinance completion and Mr. Babilak wondered why it has taken so long for the City to address the issue.

Chris Smiga, 144 Second St., thanked Mr. Kales for explaining the budget process and pushed Mr. Gross for a timeline on the TNR Ordinance.

Amy Dundee, 18 Pupek, spoke in support of the forward movement of the TNR Ordinance noting that she has been involved in this sort of thing before and that Mr. Kales is correct when he stated that Government moves slowly and to trust the process.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Mr. Conrad, seconded by Mr. McLaughlin and passed unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 6:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Brooks
Municipal Clerk
Approved 3-20-24