

MINUTES FOR COUNCIL MEETING FEBRUARY 19, 2025

The Meeting was called to order by Council President Gross at 7:00 P.M. The City Clerk read the Opening Prayer, all recited the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call was taken.

PRESENT: Councilman Conrad, Councilman Lenahan, Councilman Reilly and Councilman Gross. Absent: Councilwoman Dato

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Fred A. Henry, Dan Balka, CFO, Deborah Brooks, City Clerk, Mark Rasimowicz, City Engineer, Francis Womack, Esq., and BA Kales.

The Clerk read the Certification of Meeting Notice.

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: Mr. Conrad of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Resolution NO. 25-071 through NO. 25-077 are hereby approved. **SECONDED by:** Mr. Lenahan. **ROLL CALL VOTE: All in favor. Absent: Dato**

NO. 25-071 GOVERNOR’S COUNCIL ON SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER, FISCAL GRANT CYCLE OCTOBER 2020 – JUNE 2026

NO. 25-072 RESOLUTION CERTIFYING ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP WITH SOUTH AMBOY FIRE DEPARTMENT FOR NEW JERSEY STATE FIREMEN’S ASSOCIATION ELIGIBILITY – NICHOLAS ALBARRAN

NO. 25-073 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING BUDGET TRANSFERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH N.J.S.A. 40A:4-59

NO. 25-074 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING REFUND OF VETERAN TAX DEDUCTION-FELICIANO

NO. 25-075 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING REFUND OF VETERAN TAX DEDUCTION – FUCHS

NO. 25-076 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING INSTALLATION OF RACK BODY AND LIFTGATE FOR FORD F450 THROUGH STATE CONTRACT ESCNJ #65MCECCPS

NO> 25-077 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PURCHASE OF UTILITY BODY FOR FORD F250 THROUGH STATE CONTRACT 23-FLEET-34922

RESOLUTION NO. 25-078
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 5, 2025 Council Meeting.

MOVED by: Mr. Conrad of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Resolution No. 25-078 is hereby approved. **SECONDED by:** Mr. Lenahan **ROLL CALL VOTE: All in favor. Absent: Dato**

RESOLUTION NO. 25-079
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 13, 2025, 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. 25-079 is hereby approved. **SECONDED by:** Mr. Lenahan. **ROLL CALL VOTE: All in favor. Absent: Dato**

ORDINANCE

ADOPTION/SECOND READING

ORDINANCE 2025-01

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 -ADD 113 AUGUSTA STREET - LAMOT

OPEN PUBLIC – No comment
CLOSE PUBLIC

MOVED by Mr. Conrad, **of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Ordinance NO. 2025-01 is hereby adopted.**
SECONDED by: Mr. Lenahan **ROLL CALL VOTE: All in favor. Absent: Dato**

ORDINANCE 2025-02

AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED AN ORDINANCE TO FIX NON-UNION MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM SALARIES

OPEN PUBLIC – No comment
CLOSE PUBLIC

MOVED by Mr. Lenahan, **of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Ordinance NO. 2025-02 is hereby adopted.**
SECONDED by: Mr. Conrad **ROLL CALL VOTE: All in favor. Absent: Dato**

ORDINANCE 2025-03

AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED AN ORDINANCE TO FIX UNION SALARIES

OPEN PUBLIC – No comment
CLOSE PUBLIC

MOVED by: Mr. Lenahan, **of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Ordinance NO. 2025-03 is hereby adopted.**
SECONDED: Mr. Conrad **ROLL CALL VOTE: All in favor. Absent: Dato**

COMMENTS:

Mr. Reilly:

- Thanked the food pantry and first responder volunteers for their continued efforts.
- Reported the AOH dinner dance had been a great success.
- Reported that he was working on Bill 8551 which would protect seniors from signing contracts and asked for support for the Bill.
- Reminded everyone to shop local.
- Read the following statement: As an elected official I took an oath as other council members did to uphold the constitution of the US. One thing I prided myself on was having a transparent government one in which I solicited the ideas , questions and comments from the citizens. Freedom of speech is not merely the right to express our opinions; it is the right to participate in the marketplace of ideas, to challenge the status quo, and to hold those in power accountable. It's the right to dissent, to question, to debate, and to create a society where diverse voices are heard and respected. Unfortunately I have now experienced two occasions that it has failed. At last month's council meeting a resolution which I brought to this council was voted on and passed by a 3-2 vote. I dissented only because I had questions on a resolution that was presented to me in one form and then subsequently changed without notification. When I asked to comment (which has occurred at every council meeting I have attended) I was silenced. No one knew what I wanted to say. If I was able to speak would it have changed the mind of other council members? Would the vote have changed? That is unfair. It's unfair to this council and to the citizens of this town. Robert's rules of order state To introduce a new piece of business or propose a decision or action, a motion must be made. A second motion must then also be made. After discussion the group then votes on the motion. This was not done.

Mr. Lenahan:

- Thanked those that had come out for this evening's meeting.
- Thanked the first responder and volunteers for their continued commitment.
- Reminded everyone to do their homework before the March 11th Referendum vote.
- Addressed the concerns he had received from some residents regarding the installation of very tall utility poles being installed by JCP&L. He had spoken to someone at the State Board of Utilities and had been told that parts of the grid are questionable and needed an upgrade. Mr. Rasimowicz added that the upgrade runs from the Main Street power station down to Aberdeen to support an increase in power for Aberdeen. The poles are very tall.

Mr. Conrad:

- Thanked the first responders and fire department volunteers and their families – you have our gratitude.
- Reported there will be a Black History Month presentation at the Arts Alliance on February 27 at 6:30pm.

Mr. Gross:

- Reported the tentative date for South Amboy day is September 27th. Anthony Conrad and Jay Elliot will co-chair the event.
- Asked that everyone research the upcoming referendum and get out and vote. There is a Q&A on March 4th.

- Acknowledged Mark Herdman as the Grand Marshall of the upcoming St. Pat's Day Parade on March 16th, noting the Committee is ready to go and have a safe, good parade day.

Mayor Henry:

- Reported that the upgrades at the Senior Center had been completed and the Center will re-open on Monday.
- Reported March 28th the Historical Society will host an Open House on the Lindburg Kidnapping.
- Reported that a Zillow report ranked South Amboy as #1 in the "Affordable Coastal Market", an exemplar of strong market dynamics. He noted we must be doing something right.

Mr. Kales:

- Reported the first Veteran free waiver had been given for a raffle license application from the American Legion.
- Reported the Budget will be introduced at the March 5th meeting.
- Reported he had met with the TNR Committee and the Ordinance is moving forward to the final stages.
- Reiterated the Senior Center will re-open on Monday.

Mr. Womack had no comments.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Robert Orlowski, 528 Lefferts Street, spoke at length about his concern with the installation of the very tall utility poles on Feltus St. He had spoken to the State Board of Public Utilities and had been told that although JCP&L should have gone through the BPU it appears they have just moved forward with the installation. He feels strongly that the Council should move quickly to stop the project (this has been done in other cases) and that the installation of the poles is hurting property values, ruining the view and putting the residents in danger. It is destroying the character of the City and needs to be stopped.

Mitch Hall, seconded the opinion of Mr. Orlowski regarding the utility poles, noting no notice had been given by the utility company. He hopes the Council is able to stop the project. He also suggested the Council look into putting grant money into securing a grocery store for the City, proposed a community garden on the Main Street triangle property and suggested the City begin E-waste and re-usable bag recycling programs.

Nancy Orlowski, 536 Lefferts Street, agreed with the two previous speakers regarding the utility pole situation. She thanked the Mayor, Business Administrator and Clerk for being helpful when she spoke to them about this issue. She is very concerned about her loss of view, her property value decreasing and potential health hazards. She would like to see the project halted. Additionally, she would like to see the long-standing problem of not replacing streetlights that go out be addressed as well.

Brandon Russell, 1355 Schindler Ave., received updates from Mr. Womack on the Venetian litigation and spoke about the continued need for hybrid meetings. Mr. Gross noted he had misspoken earlier and the Council is considering live-streaming, not hybrid meetings and that Mr. Kales is working on the budget. Mr. Kales noted that while working on the budget the amount being considered would include the capability of having hybrid meetings. Mr. Russell said he appreciated the correction by Mr. Gross but thought it would be unwise to invest another large chunk of money into a new system without having the capability of hybrid meetings. Mr. Kales confirmed that the budget amount being discussed would cover the capability of hybrid meetings.

Greg Babilak asked the Mayor what he planned to do if the referendum failed. Mayor Henry noted they are working on some contingency plans. Mr. Babilak noted the utility poles are very tall and ugly and confirmed with Mr. Rasimowicz that the project was pulling power from the Main St. station and moving it to Aberdeen. Mr. Babilak asked for a correction in the previous minutes noting it was Mr. Reilly not the Mayor who had checked in on he and his family weekly.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Mr. Conrad, seconded by Mr. Lenahan and passed unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 7:42 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Brooks
Municipal Clerk
Approved March 5, 2025