

MINUTES FOR COUNCIL MEETING MARCH 19, 2025

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY COUNCIL PRESIDENT AT 6:30 PM AND THE COUNCIL WENT INTO CLOSED SESSION

CLOSED SESSION

RESOLUTION NO. 25-097

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b) (1-9) permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances;

WHEREAS, the Council is of the opinion that such circumstances exist.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the City of South Amboy, County of Middlesex and State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The public shall be excluded from discussion of, action on, and reading of the minutes of Closed Session of May 26, 2020.
2. The general nature of the subject matters to be discussed is as follows:

Litigation: Personnel
3. It is anticipated at this time that the above stated subject matters will be made public when the matters are concluded or as soon thereafter as it is deemed to be in the public interest to do so.
4. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

MOVED by: Mr. Conrad, of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Resolution 25-097 is hereby adopted and the public session of the meeting is adjourned.

SECONDED by: Mr. Lenahan, ROLL CALL VOTE: All in favor (present: Conrad, Dato (arrived at 6:32), Lenahan, Gross) Absent: Reilly (arrived at 6:56pm)

PUBLIC PORTION OF THE MEETING STARTED AT 7PM

OPENING PRAYER AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG

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

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

CERTIFICATION OF MEETING BY CITY CLERK

PRESENTATION BY JCP&L

Tina Early and Glen Huntley from JCP&L spoke at length about the new pole installation project which is happening from the Main Street power station down to Aberdeen. Mr. Huntley began by accepting responsibility for there being a failure in the notification process to the City and it's residents. He gave a Power Point presentation which discussed the new technology on the poles, their size and the new capacity and safety features. He emphasized these are NOT high

tension wires, but are taller due to the new MAD (minimum access distance) requirements for the safety of the pole workers.

The Council then proceeded to question Mr. Huntley expressing disappointment with the lack of communication from JCP&L, no notice of approval processes, improper permitting, and a general lack of customer service within the City in regards to replacing broken light fixtures/poles. The Council, Mayor and Business Administrator reiterated that they had been unaware of the project until it had already begun.

Several members of the public, including Nancy Orlowski, Robert Orlowski, Cathy O’Grady, Alex Seno (sp), Molly Mana (sp), Ken Feeley (sp), Mitchell Hall and Brandon Russell and others, then had an opportunity to voice their concerns and anger with JCP&L over the non-noticing issues, the vast increase in height of the poles as well as concern with decreasing property values due to a hindered view from the large poles. They also voiced concerns about the removal of the old poles and were not happy when a deadline for the other utilities to remove themselves from the poles could not be given. The Council, Mayor and Business Administrator stressed they would be closely following the project and would follow through with JCP&L to contact the other utilities to get the old poles removed in a timely fashion. Multiple people voiced concern over the potential decrease in their property values due to the loss of their view. One member of the public stated he did not believe that the Council and Mayor had been unaware of the project until it actually started and felt that the Council and Mayor had let down the residents of the City. City Engineer Mark Rasimowicz reiterated that all sidewalk opening permits would have to be completed and the replacements would go from seam to seam, not just a patch job. In general, although the public appreciated that Ms. Early and Mr. Huntley taking responsibility for dropping the ball, they were unhappy with the execution of the project with no consideration for the residents and their property values as well as consistently being unhappy with the customer service.

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 NO. 25-090 through NO. 25-094 are hereby approved. **SECONDED by:** Mr. Conrad. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** All in favor.

- NO. 25-090 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXEMPT OF VETERAN TAX – JOHN RUSSO
- NO. 25-091 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING APPLICATION OF GRANT FROM THE NEW JERSEY DCA FOR THE ACQUISITION AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE SOUTH AMBOY BROADWAY BUSINESS PARKING LOT
- NO. 25-092 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING APPLICATION OF GRANT FROM THE NEW JERSEY DCA FOR THE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE SOUTH AMBOY VETERANS MEMORIAL PLAZA
- NO. 25-093 A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF SOUTH AMBOY AUTHORIZING AWARD OF A CONTRACT TO RIVERVIEW COMPANIES NORTH JERSEY LLC FOR LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE SERVICES

NO. 25-094 RESOLUTION APPROVING AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE MIDDLESEX COUNTY IMPROVEMENT AUTHORITY AND THE CITY OF SOUTH AMBOY, PROVIDING FOR THE YARD WASTE RECYCLING COLLECTION AND MARKETING SERVICES OF DESIGNATED RECYCLABLES.

RESOLUTIONS:

RESOLUTION NO. 25-095
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 5, 2025 Council Meeting.

MOVED by: Mr. Reilly of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Resolution No. 25-095 is hereby approved. **SECONDED by:** Mr. Conrad **ROLL CALL VOTE:** All in favor.

RESOLUTION NO. 25-096
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 March13, 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. 25-096 is hereby approved. **SECONDED by:** Ms. Dato. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** All in favor.

ORDINANCES:

INTRODUCTION/FIRST READING

ORDINANCE 2025-09

ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SOUTH AMBOY, IN THE COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX, NEW JERSEY, APPROPRIATING \$4,986,492 RECEIVED AS A GRANT FROM THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE TO SUPPLEMENT THE \$1,000,000 APPROPRIATED BY BOND ORDINANCE #2021-11, FINALLY ADOPTED JULY 14, 2021, TO PROVIDE FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF THE RARITAN STREET PUMP STATION

MOVED by: Mr. Conrad, that Ordinance #2025-09 be introduced on first reading and advertised for second reading which is scheduled for the April 16, 2025 meeting.

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

COMMENTS:

Mr. Conrad:

- Thanked the Policed Department for the great job in keeping everyone safe during the St. Patrick’s parade. He appreciates all their hard work.
- Thanked the Parade Committee for doing an excellent job – the parade is a logistical nightmare and takes almost an entire year to plan. The Parade puts the City in a very good light.

- Noted March is Women's History Month – we should all take a moment to honor the women in our lives and their many accomplishments and contributions.

Mayor Henry:

- Reported Mr. Kales and he had met with Dr. Williams and Ms. Navario to discuss moving forward with meeting the needs of the schools.

Ms. Dato:

- Noted the St. Pat's Parade was fantastic and gets better every year and it couldn't happen without the efforts of the Fire Department, Police Department, 1st Aid and OEM. Especially the efforts of Mickey Gross and Jay Elliott. She also called attention to the little known fact that the Parade Committee also gives money to various causes in the community.
- Reported the Art Gallery had a successful event last Saturday featuring the art of local artist, Jenny Ma.
- Reported another successful Lunch & Learn event featuring Dr. George (Jorges Gonzalez-Gomes) discussing nursing care and rehabilitation facilities.
- Reiterated that contrary to what Mr. Feeley said neither the Mayor nor Council or Business Administrator had knowledge of the JCP&L pole project until shortly before it started. She noted that the Council works very hard to represent the people and it is JCP&L who is the villain, not the Mayor and Council.

Mr. Reilly:

- Thanked the first responders and food pantry volunteers noting the monthly donations were increasing.
- Reminded everyone that Government Week will be celebrated at the April 16th meeting with the Mock Council at 6pm, the open house at Independence Fire House from 4 to 7pm, Essay contest winners announced and volunteers acknowledged.
- Noted he had spoken with the Board of Education and spoke about not allowing any more PILOT programs in the City, and the need for more rateables.

Mr. Lenahan:

- Thanked everyone who came to this evening's "interesting" meeting and voiced their opinions on the JCP&L matter.
- Thanked the first responders and volunteers.
- Congratulated the DPW on doing a great job on the parade, noting the clean up afterward occurred very quickly.
- Reported this Saturday the Historical Society is doing a presentation on Lindbergh.
- Station Bay is hosting a small business event this Saturday from 3 to 6pm.
- Noted Little League Opening Day is April 12th.
- Reported the Middlesex County State of the County speech will be on April 8th.

Mr. Gross:

- Thanked the OEM, Fire Department, Police Department, Mr. Kales and his administration and Mayor Henry for all their hard work on this year's parade. He congratulated Mr. Herdman for being this year's Grand Marshal and noted Mr. John Dragotta will be next year's honoree as Grand Marshal. He noted the first parade committee meeting for next year's parade is next Monday at the Knight's of Columbus at 7pm. Come out and be heard.
- Stated the Council will have to stay on the back of JCP&L to ensure the old poles are removed in a timely fashion and he meant it when he said he expected better customer response in the future.
- Noted the Budget hearing will be at the April 2nd meeting – come early it is sure to be crowded as we swear in the new Chief of Police, Patricia Kanecke.

Mayor Henry:

- Noted he was pleased with the JCP&L presenters as well as the public's questions and comments. He noted Mr. Kales and Mr. Rasimowicz did a great job in taking action on the sidewalk opening permits as soon as they were made aware of the project starting.
- Stated the Parade was a lovely day and thanked the Police Department and Department of Public Works for their hard work.
- Reported the Historical Society is having a presentation on Saturday at the Senior Center from 10am to noon.

Mr. Kales:

- Voiced his appreciation to the various department heads and their teams for the work on the Parade.
- Reiterated the Budget Hearing is at the April 2nd meeting agenda and at that meeting we will be swearing in the new Chief of Police, Patricia Kanecke.

Mr. Womack – no comment

Mr. Rasimowicz noted the Broadway reconstruction project will start soon covering Main St. to Augusta Ave. There will be some detours and closures so drive carefully.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Christie Marino, John St., spoke about an issue she was having with the Superintendent of Schools regarding an accommodation for her second grade daughter. Her daughter had been in an active shooting event with a group of cheerleaders and as a result requested an accommodation of a 5 minute notice to all fire drills, etc. After many interactions with Mr. Williams and Principal Dunphy and going to the Board of Education her requests have been denied. All of the other cheerleaders schools immediately made the accommodation and she does not understand why her daughter is being denied. Mr. Kales asked her to give her information to Capt. Kelly after the meeting and they would follow up.

Brandon Russell, 1355 Schindler, congratulated everyone on a successful Parade and is looking forward to attending the upcoming planning meeting. He also pressed the Council to move forward in a timely manner in helping finance the school's immediate needs since the referendum did not pass.

Chris Smiga, 144 Second St., noted that one of the paintings that had been rehung in the Council room was actually his.

Mitchell Hall, Pupek Drive, requested the tennis courts on Sixth Street be refurbished and that the Board of Education should prioritize a better educational environment and student/teacher satisfaction before funding is given to them.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Mr. Conrad, seconded by Mr. Lenahan and passed unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 9:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Brooks
Municipal Clerk
Approved 4-2-2025