

**MINUTES FOR COUNCIL MEETING APRIL 2, 2025**

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

PRESENT: Councilman Conrad, Councilwoman Dato, Councilman Lenahan, Councilman Reilly (arrived at 6:42pm) and Councilman Gross.

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Fred A. Henry, Business Administrator David Kales, Dan Balka, CFO, Deborah Brooks, City Clerk, Mark Rasimowicz, City Engineer, and Christopher Zingaro, Esq.,.

The Clerk read the Certification of Meeting Notice.

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**PRESENTATION – SWEARING IN POLICE CHIEF PATRICIA KANECKE**

Mayor Henry introduced the visiting dignitaries who were joining the celebration of the installation of Patricia Kanecke as the first woman Chief of Police in the City of South Amboy as well as the County of Middlesex. In attendance were Superintendent of Police/Director of Public Safety for Port Authority Edward Cetnar, Middlesex County Sheriff Mildred Scott, Assemblywoman Yvonne Lopez and Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin. Deputy State Director Laura Bustamante representing Senator Andy Kim was expected shortly.

Mayor Henry praised Chief Kanecke’s experience and vision noting she is a trailblazer whose leadership will inspire future generations.

Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin swore in Chief Kanecke in the presence of friends and family.

Chief Kanecke made the following statement:

Good evening, everyone.  
I stand before you tonight with tremendous gratitude and a profound sense of responsibility as I accept the honor of serving as Police Chief. This is not just a personal honor – it is a reflection of all of us. It speaks to perseverance and the power of possibility.

First and foremost, I want to thank Mayor Fred Henry, the members of the City Council, my fellow officers, and most importantly, our community for your trust and support. I am truly humbled by the number of people here tonight. A special thank you to our dear friend Speaker Craig Coughlin, as well as the dignitaries, fellow Chiefs, colleagues, community members, and my family and friends who have joined us.  
This achievement is not mine alone. It is the result of the support and encouragement from so many people. To my family – both those here today, especially my husband Jack and my sons Shaun and Ryan, and those who are no longer with us – your unwavering love and support have been the foundation of everything I’ve been able to accomplish. I am sure we all know how excited my parents specially my father would have been to witness this moment.  
To my mentors and colleagues, who have guided, challenged, and believed in me – this is as much your success as it is mine. I owe much to those who have shaped my career and will be always grateful. A special mention goes to my great friend, Danny Kudelka, who was not only the best street cop there was but also someone who taught us new officers that being a police officer was about so much more than what we could read in books. He understood the importance of connecting with people, and always doing what was right for them. Danny and many others are missed here today.

Being the first woman to hold this position in our department and our county is a historic moment that we all share. I accept this role not as a personal achievement, but as an opportunity to pave the way for others. Leadership is not about breaking barriers for oneself – it's about clearing a path for others to follow. I stand on the shoulders of the brave women and men who came before me, those who served with honor and distinction. A prime example of this is our Sheriff, Mildred Scott, whose extraordinary career has paved the way for so many. Thank you, Sheriff, for your remarkable service.

My journey here has been defined by dedication, a deep love for the job, and an unwavering commitment to our community. From my early days in the Academy, to dispatching here in South Amboy, to my time with the Sheriff's Department, and eventually returning to serve my hometown – I have learned the importance of integrity, empathy, and the need for continuous growth. These principles will be my guiding light as we move forward together.

As Chief, my vision is one of collaboration. I believe in working hand in hand with our officers, community leaders, and residents to create a safer and stronger South Amboy. Together, we will build trust, strengthen relationships, and ensure that every person in our community feels both protected and heard.

I hope this moment inspires others – particularly young women and girls – to chase their dreams without hesitation. Leadership knows no gender, and I am committed to supporting the next generation of leaders in our community.

In closing, I accept this responsibility with a deep sense of duty and optimism. The men and women of the South Amboy Police Department are unparalleled in their commitment, their sense of duty, and their passion for service. It is truly an honor to work alongside such an incredible group of professionals.

Thank you for entrusting me with this role. I am honored to serve, ready to lead, and I look forward to working alongside each and every one of you.

At 6:21 the meeting was paused for pictures and congratulations. The meeting resumed at 6:42pm.

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**BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING – GARY HIGGINS**

President Gross opened the public hearing.

Mr. Higgins reviewed the budget noting it is a great budget, lower than last year with an average household decrease in tax of \$77 and an increase in surplus. The Council were in agreement with Mr. Higgins' review and thankful for the collaborative efforts by the Business Administrator, CFO and Council Members.

Brandon Russell, 1355 Schindler Dr., commended Mr. Kales and his team on the budget but stated the gain was more of an offset given the school will have to increase its budget. He is concerned with how quickly money from the PILOTs could be funneled into school repairs, etc. and how that money could affect our Bond rating. He discussed the PILOT revenues verses what full tax rate amounts would have been. He questioned the Council on how much PILOT funds had been spent on school improvements over the last ten years. Mr. Higgins stated that the schools can only be funded once a year through a line item in the budget. He reiterated that PILOT funds only effect the tax rate, not the levy and the schools cannot be funded by the PILOT revenues.

The Public Hearing was closed.

**BUDGET AMENDMENT:**

**RESOLUTION 25-098  
RESOLUTION TO AMEND 2025 BUDGET**

**MOVED by:** Mr. Conrad of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Resolution NO. 25-098 is hereby adopted. **SECONDED by:** Ms. Dato. ROLL CALL VOTE: Ayes: Conrad, Dato, Lenahan, Reilly, Gross

**BUDGET ADOPTION:**

**RESOLUTION 25-099**  
**ADOPTION OF 2025 BUDGET**

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the City Council of the City of South Amboy, County of Middlesex that the budget hereinbefore set forth is hereby adopted and shall constitute an appropriation for the purposes stated of the sums therein set forth as appropriations, and authorization of the amount of \$23,174,709.24 for municipal purposes.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the summary of revenues and appropriations are approved as attached.

**MOVED by:** Mr. Reilly of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Resolution NO. 25-099 is hereby adopted. **SECONDED by:** Mr. Conrad. ROLL CALL VOTE: Ayes: Conrad, Dato, Lenahan, Reilly, Gross

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**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. 25-100 through NO. 25-103 are hereby approved. **SECONDED by:** Mr. Reilly. **ROLL CALL VOTE: All in favor.**

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- NO. 25-100                    RESOLUTION OF THE SOUTH AMBOY CITY COUNCIL IN SUPPORT OF SUSTAINABLE LAND USE POLICIES
- NO. 25-101                    RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PURCHASE OF GARAGE DOORS FOR THE SOUTH AMBOY FIRE DEPARTMENT
- NO. 25-102                    RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE RELEASE OF THE CASH BOND TO ACE PLUMBING & HEATING – SAROP 24-110
- NO. 25-103                    RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SHARED SERVICES AGREEMENT BETWEEN TOWNSHIP OF WOODBRIDGE AND CITY OF SOUTH AMBOY FOR MUTUAL AID EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

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**RESOLUTIONS:**

**RESOLUTION NO. 25-104**  
**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 19, 2025 Council Meeting.

**MOVED by:** Mr. Conrad of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Resolution No. 25-104 is hereby approved. **SECONDED by:** Ms. Dato **ROLL CALL VOTE:** All in favor.

**RESOLUTION NO. 25-105**  
**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 March 27, 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. 25-105 is hereby approved. **SECONDED by:** Mr. Reilly. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** All in favor.

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**ORDINANCES:**

**ADOPTION/SECOND READING**

**ORDINANCE 2025-08**

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 251 DAVID STREET

**OPEN PUBLIC – no comments**  
**CLOSE PUBLIC**

**MOVED by Mr. Conrad, of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Ordinance NO. 2025-08 is hereby adopted.**  
**SECONDED by Ms. Dato. ROLL CALL VOTE: All in favor.**

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**COMMENTS:**

Mr. Reilly:

- Congratulated Chief Kanecke.
- Thanked the first responders and food pantry volunteers.
- Noted Government week would be celebrated at the April 16<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- Stated the new first aid truck looks great.

Mr. Lenahan:

- Congratulated Chief Kanecke.
- Thanked the first responders and volunteers.
- Reported there is a Middlesex County Community Needs On-line survey available – this will help decide where Health and Human Services funding should be directed.
- Reported that April 26<sup>th</sup> , 11am at the Senior Center is the State of the City Address. Please RSVP by the 11<sup>th</sup>.
- Reminded everyone that Little League Opening Day is April 12<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Conrad:

- Congratulated Chief Kanecke as well as noting South Amboy deserves recognition for promoting a woman to the position of Chief.

- Thanked the first responders and fire department volunteers, noting the budget would look very different than it does if the City had to fund a fire department.
- Reported the food pantry has shown a demonstrable need as it provided 2800 pounds/month of food in 2024. Please support them if you can.
- Stated, in regards to the budget, it is important to recognize the cooperative effort, good prioritization including safety & security, improvements of senior services, increased youth programs and putting funds toward downtown revitalization.

Ms. Dato:

- Noted the budget is outstanding and commended Mr. Kales, Mayor Henry and Mr. Balka for allowing the Council an opportunity to voice their thoughts on the budget.
- Stated it is heartwarming and fabulous that South Amboy promoted Chief Kanecke – she is making history. She still has to work twice as hard as the men as it is still a “man’s world”. She added it is important to remember that women still fall into the category of “minority” and in this case DEI stands for definitely earned it!

Mr. Gross:

- Stated it is a great budget.
- Congratulated Chief Kanecke.
- Reported South Amboy Day will be September 27th.

Mayor Henry:

- Stated it is a great budget. and thanked Mr. Kales, Mr. Balka, Mr. Higgins and the Council for their work.
- Stated he is happy to see the new first aid ambulance – it was a long time in coming.

Mr. Kales:

- Stated that women, in general, may be a minority but in his office he is surrounded by strong women including Ms. Brooks, Ms. Kudelka and Ms. Wolff.
- Congratulated Chief Kanecke noting this is quite a milestone and reminding everyone there will be additional upcoming promotions on April 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- Informed Mr. Russell that although he and Mayor Henry had so far only met once with Nicole Navarria, he himself is in constant contact with her.

Mr. Zingaro:

- Congratulated Chief Kanecke

Mr. Rasimowicz:

- Congratulated Chief Kanecke and stated he is looking forward to working with her.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Tim Walczak, 423 Portia St., stated the budget offered tax stability and was a great job. He is happy to finally see the arrival of the new ambulance, a project in the works since August of 2022. The power lift will be very useful and he thinks the new shower facilities at the first aid center will be much appreciated.

Chris Smiga, 144 Second St., vehemently questioned the Council about the schedule for replacing the trees and the type of trees to be planted for the Broadway paving project. Mr. Rasimowicz noted the trees will be replaced with the same or similar variety as soon as the concrete work has been completed. He asked for a funding update on the CDBG grants and received confirmation from Mr. Kales that at this moment there is no funding for the ferry terminal building.

Joe Szaro, 320 Fifth St., requested the 6<sup>th</sup> Street park retaining wall be repaired.

**ADJOURNMENT**

On motion by Mr. Conrad, seconded by Mr. Lenahan and passed unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 7:29 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Brooks  
Municipal Clerk  
Approved April 16, 2025