

MINUTES FOR COUNCIL MEETING FEBRUARY 18, 2026

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, Councilwoman Dato, Councilman Lenahan, Councilman Reilly and Councilman Gross

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Fred A. Henry, Katie Rose Walenty, Acting City Clerk, Aaron Rainone, Law Director, Mark Rasimowicz, City Engineer, Mark Herdman, OEM Director.

The Clerk read the Certification of Meeting Notice.

PROCLAMATIONS:

Councilman Thomas Reilly presented proclamations from the City of South Amboy and Speaker Coughlin’s office to St. Mary’s Church Food Pantry and First Presbyterian Church Food Pantry.

Ed O’Conner, Vice President of Friends of South Amboy, presented each food pantry with a \$500 monetary donation.

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: Mrs. Dato of the Council of the City of South Amboy, Resolution NO. 26-064 through NO. 26-070 is hereby approved. **SECONDED by:** Mr. Conrad. **ROLL CALL VOTE: Ayes: Mr. Conrad, Mrs. Dato, Mr. Lenahan, Mr. Reilly, Mr. Gross.**

NO. 26-064 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE POLICE DEPARTMENT TO USE THE EAST BRUNSWICK POLICE TRAINING FACILITY

NO. 26-065 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SUBMISSION OF A GRANT APPLICATION FOR THE MIDDLESEX COUNTY RECYCLING ENHANCMENT GRANT

NO. 26-067 RESOLUTION APPOINTING MEMBERS TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

NO. 26-068 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A ONE YEAR EXTENSION CONTRACT WITH RIVERVIEW COMPANIES NORTH JERSEY LLC FOR LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE SERVICES

NO. 26-070 RESOLUTION APPOINTING MEMBERS TO THE SOUTH AMBOY HOUSING AUTHORITY

NO. 26-066 RESOLUTION TO RESCIND CHAPTER 159’S

Gary Higgins, PFK O'Connor Davies, explained that the City was awarded 2 grants and in 2025, through the Chapter 159 process, which were both put into the 2025 Budget. The grants were in the amount of \$6,018,000.00 for a passenger ferry grant and \$4,986,492 for the Raritan Ave. pump station grant. Since, these grants are going to be spent over multiple years and to avoid possible negative impact to the City's surplus at year end, it was decided it would be in the best interest of the City to record these grants as parts of bond ordinances in the capital fund and rescind the Chapter 159's that were passed last year. These two bond ordinances (one was introduced and passed last year) and the one being introduced tonight will not authorize any additional debt for the city.

Council President opens this specific Resolution to the public for questions. There were no public comments.

NO. 26-069 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF SOUTH AMBOY AND GARDEN STATE FIREWORKS, INC

Councilman Thomas Reilly wanted to comment that it is unusual and he has not seen this before in the agreement but there are tariffs fees in the amount of 35% that is built in.

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RESOLUTION NO. 26-071
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 4, 2026 Council Meeting.

MOVED by: Mr. Conrad of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Resolution No. 26-071 is hereby approved. **SECONDED by: Mrs. Dato** **ROLL CALL VOTE: Ayes: Mr. Conrad, Mrs. Dato, Mr. Lenahan, Mr. Reilly, Mr. Gross.**

RESOLUTION NO. 26-072
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 11, 2026, 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. 26-072 is hereby approved. **SECONDED by: Mr. Lenahan.** **ROLL CALL VOTE: Ayes: Mr. Conrad, Mrs. Dato, Mr. Lenahan, Mr. Reilly, Mr. Gross.**

ORDINANCE

INTRODUCTION/FIRST READING

ORDINANCE 2026-03

ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SOUTH AMBOY, IN THE COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX, NEW JERSEY, APPROPRIATING A \$6,018,000 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION PASSENGER FERRY GRANT TO PROVIDE FOR FERRY TERMINAL SITE IMPROVEMENTS

MOVED by: Mr. Conrad , that Ordinance #2026-03 be introduced on first reading and advertised for second reading which is scheduled for the March 18, 2026 meeting.

SECONDED by: Mr. Lenahan, **ROLL CALL VOTE: Ayes: Mr. Conrad, Mrs. Dato, Mr. Lenahan, Mr. Reilly, Mr. Gross.**

ADOPTION/SECOND READING

ORDINANCE 2026-01

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 325 DAVID STREET - CONROY

MOVED by: Mrs. Dato, of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Ordinance #2026-01 is hereby adopted. **SECONDED by:** Mr. Conrad, **ROLL CALL VOTE: Ayes: Mr. Conrad, Mrs. Dato, Mr. Lenahan, Mr. Reilly, Mr. Gross.**

ADOPTION/SECOND READING

ORDINANCE 2026-02

AN ORDINANCE CREATING CHAPTER 167, "VEHICLES, ELECTRONIC SCOOTERS" OF THE CITY CODE TO REGULATE CERTAIN ELECTRIC SCOOTERS.

MOVED by: Mrs. Dato, of the Council of the City of South Amboy, that Ordinance #2026-02 is hereby adopted. **SECONDED by:** Mr. Conrad **ROLL CALL VOTE: Ayes: Mr. Conrad, Mrs. Dato, Mr. Lenahan, Mr. Reilly, Mr. Gross.**

Mr. Rainone explained that this Ordinance was introduced for first reading and council amended this Ordinance. The changes are now reflected in Section 167-5. Section A. Only one person can operate, with no passengers and high visible reflective wear is required.

INTRODUCTION/FIRST READING

ORDINANCE 2026-04

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SOUTH AMBOY, IN THE COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX, NEW JERSEY, ESTABLISHING AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND ADOPTING REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE ADMINISTRATION OF VERY LOW-, LOW-, AND MODERATE-INCOME HOUSING UNITS

MOVED by:Mr. Conrad, that Ordinance #2026-04 be introduced on first reading and advertised for second reading which is scheduled for the March 4, 2026 meeting.

SECONDED by:Mrs. Dato , **ROLL CALL VOTE: Ayes: Mr. Conrad, Mrs. Dato, Mr. Lenahan, Mr. Reilly, Mr. Gross.**

Mr. Kales explained this Ordinance is from the DCA which arrived on Friday the 13th. Each municipality in the State is required to adopt this ordinance. This ordinance needs to be adopted by March 15th. On February 25th the Planning Board will review and then on March 4th we can adopt this.

Mr. Reilly questions the Master Plan and how does it impact our obligation to our low-income housing. Mr. Reilly asked if the Planning Board approves and has recommendations, do we need to implement them and have them before the final adoption or can we commit to doing them afterwards. These questions will be directed to Mr. McManimon.

COMMENTS:

Mr. Reilly

- Thank you, first responders and food pantry volunteers.
- March 18th we are going to have the Boys Basketball team to recognize them for winning the Division.
- DCA partnered with the Department of the Military and Veterans Affairs and announced a program called Bringing Veteran's Home. Their goal is to place any homeless veteran within 30 days.
- Thank you to our City Clerk, Katie Rose.

Mr. Lenahan

- Thank you, all volunteers and first responders.
- Condolences to the Tooker family.
- Please help the city help us with snow that is coming. Try and tuck away all your belongings in your driveway and make space.

Mr. Conrad

- Exceedingly proud of our volunteerism that runs through this community. Thank you to our food pantries. There is always a need for more volunteers.
- Thank you to Friends of South Amboy.
- Thank you, Councilman Reilly, for making that recognition to our Food Pantry tonight.
- Fire Department, First Aid, to you and your families. Thank you for your service.
- Black History Month, we lost Reverend Jesse Jackson. We thank him for his service.

Mrs. Dato

- Food pantries and their volunteers are incredible.
- Friends of South Amboy is also an incredible group and generous.
- Pleased about the e-scooter ordinance that was passed and this will help to keep our community safe.
- Senior Center had another informative Lunch and Learn program.
- Ash Wednesday, solemn time for reflection and reminder to kick off our Parade and our fish fries will be starting. Council President mentioned that Knights of Columbus starting with pasta and soup and Elks are doing a fish fry.

Mr. Gross

- Thank you to all of our volunteers.
- Parade is March 15th

Mayor Fred Henry

- Thank all our volunteers for all their dedication.
- Condolences to the Strzykalski and Tooker family.
- If you have a fire hydrant near your home, please try and clear it out to help our fireman.
- February 19th is referred to as a day of remembrance. Learn from our history.

Mr. Kales

- Comments on the snowstorm procedure. Explains that 4 days before the storm we had a plan. Within 24 hours every road had access to all emergency services, next

phase was crosswalks the next day so kids could get to school. Wednesday, our Police Department had to identify mountains and sight visions so they could be cleared. The following week we cleared Broadway, Stevens, Pine, Feltus and kept working to clear the schools. We got a permit from the EPA to store the snow in Vet's field.

- Retired Detective Robert McKeon took his own personal machine and volunteered his own time to help our DPW to clear the snow.

Mr. Rainone

- Wonderful to see the food pantry volunteers to be recognized and wonderful group of people. It inspires me to be a better person tomorrow.

Mr. Rasimowicz

- No comments

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Joseph Szaro, South Amboy, NJ

Commented on the Bringing Veterans Home website, phone number, to help a veteran apply. He is working with Councilman Reilly to work with the businesses to offer all veterans and first responders 10% off. Mr. Szaro thanked Councilman Gross, who is always supporting the veterans. Councilwoman Dato mentioned the County Clerk's offers to record their DD-214 and issue a veteran's service card, and this can be used in the businesses in town to prove their ID.

Chris Smiga, South Amboy, NJ

Mr. Smiga commented about the YMCA closing the pool due to its inability to make repairs and upkeep maintenance. Mr. Smiga mentioned the redevelopment authority owns that building and he asked for the numbers and was told the BA requested the City Engineer to create a concept plan. He asked what the concept is for. He believes people should know what's going on. Mr. Smiga commented on Council President's involvement with the startup of the swimming classes and the County. Councilman Gross responded whether the YMCA closes or not that he is trying his hardest to make sure every kid learns how to swim. Mrs. Dato says we are heartbroken at the Y, that it was a financial decision, and it loses money every year. Mrs. Dato says they are looking into other possibilities for a water safety program.

Brian McLaughlin, South Amboy, NJ

He asked about the property behind Pupek Road, looking to see what the update is. Council President says there has been no movement after the initial conversation. Mr. Kales explained that the developer approached them with the 1st option, which was not going to happen and then came over 10 months ago with a 2nd option to do what is authorized there, which is residential single-family homes, with no variances, and they have not been back. Mr. McLaughlin says he hopes the Council is not entertaining residential.

Mr. McLaughlin addressed Mr. Conrad about the trades and having a career fair. Mr.

McLaughlin said this was never done during his time before. Mr. Rainone commented that questions need to be addressed to the Council President. Mr. Conrad decided to respond to Mr. McLaughlin and said he did discuss possibilities to provide the residents with opportunities in trade. Mr. McLaughlin asked if we have more developments that include PILOTS or are we done. Mr. Kales explained the PILOT is in place regarding Rosewell Street and it is being renegotiated which will be presented at the March 4 meeting.

Mr. McLaughlin wished the South Amboy Dems good luck. Mr. McLaughlin questioned Mr. Conrad's residency and being a lifelong resident.

Sarah, South Amboy, NJ

Council President Gross thanked her for getting a JROTC to come to the Parade. She thanked the Council for all they do. Commented as a member of the reserves, helping our veterans is a big issue. Having the housing initiative brought into South Amboy is important and wants the Council to support that project, Joe Szaro and the American Legion.

Richard Hall, South Amboy, NJ

Commented on the discussion of swimming lessons. He was a boy scout and had swimming lessons at Frog Hollow. He said it is a good option to have some sort of partnership with them. Also, consider subsidizing the cost of what it could be to parents to help convince them to get their kids to learn to how swim. Council President Gross responded he wants this to be included in the budget, and it is important to him.

Mr. Joseph Szaro, wanted to clarify that we are moving forward with our American Legion building.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Mr. Conrad, seconded by Mrs. Dato and passed unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 6:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Rose Walenty
Acting Municipal Clerk
Approved March 4, 2026