

Florence Township Council Regular Session 8/13/25

Florence, New Jersey
August 13, 2025

The Florence Township Council held a regular meeting on the above date in the Municipal Complex, 711 Broad Street, Florence, New Jersey. The meeting was called to order by Council President Frappolli at 7:00 p.m. Council President Frappolli led the Salute to the Flag.

The Opening Statement was read by the Township Clerk: Notice was posted on the municipal bulletin board on January 3, 2025; published in the Burlington County Times on January 12, 2025, placed on the Township website and given to the Courier Post for information.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Upon roll call the following were found to be present:

Present: Frank Baldorossi, John Fratinardo, Nicholas Haas, Talaya Loftin, Joseph Frappolli

Also Present: Mayor Kristan I. Marter; Thomas A. Sahol, Township Administrator; Thomas J. Hastie, Jr., Esq., Township Solicitor; Nancy L. Erlston, Township Clerk; Jenise Silinsky, Deputy Township Clerk

Absent: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

None at this time.

FINANCIAL CORRESPONDENCE

- Township Clerk's Monthly Report for July 2025
- Court Administrator's Monthly Report for July 2025
- Tax Collector's Monthly Tax Report for July 2025
- Tax Collector's Monthly Water & Sewer Report for July 2025

Motion of Baldorossi, seconded by Haas to approve the financial correspondence. Voice vote – All ayes.

Motion of Haas, seconded by Loftin to approve the **Treasurer's Bill List**.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

- YEAS: Baldorossi, Fratinardo, Haas, Loftin, Frappolli
 - NOES: None
 - ABSENT: None
- Unanimous vote – Motion carried

REGULAR CORRESPONDENCE

None at this time.

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APPLICATIONS

- A. Off-Site 50/50 Raffle for Riverbank Charter School of Excellence on November 3, 2025 at 12:00 p.m. at 1300 Hornberger Avenue, Roebling

Motion of Baldorossi, seconded by Fratinardo to approve the application.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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| • YEAS: | Baldorossi, Fratinardo, Haas, Loftin, Frappolli | |
| • NOES: | None | |
| • ABSENT: | None | Unanimous vote – Motion carried |

PUBLIC COMMENT

Motion of Baldorossi, seconded by Haas to open the public comment portion of the meeting. Seeing no one wishing to be heard it was a Motion of Baldorossi, seconded by Fratinardo to close public comment. Voice vote – All ayes.

Review of the 2024 Audit

Township Auditor Todd Saler and Senior Manager Amy Niemeister of Bowman & Company, offered an overview of the 2024 Audit. Ms. Niemeister explained that they conducted a financial statement audit for the year ending December 31, 2024. She emphasized that this was an independent audit conducted in accordance with professional standards. They are independent and not part of management, they do not make or participate in any management decisions and their role is to evaluate whether financial statements are accurately and fairly presented. It is different than an internal audit and operation audit, those are more looking at efficiency and effectiveness. As part of the audit they also perform a procedure with compliance and with applicable state statutes which is part of their scope. The result of the audit was an unmodified, which is a cleaned opinion and they did identify one finding which is notable improvement from the five findings that were in the 2023 audit.

Mr. Saler explained that the 2023 audit was their first year doing the audit in Florence Township and they had five findings in that report. Council was required to do a formal corrective action plan approved by Council and, as a result of that corrective action plan, four of those five findings from 2023 have been corrected and not repeated in 2024. The one remaining that was also in the 2023 audit is called a repeat finding and Council will have to do a formal corrective action plan on that one finding. He explained that they do a financial statement audit and a lot of what they do is also compliance. There are many laws and regulations of the finance ordinances that were put out that relate to the financial statements and they have to perform the audit in accordance with those and determine compliance. They have judgement, but if there is a pattern of something not being in compliance, they are compelled to put that in their report. From a perspective of five findings as compared to one finding, that is improvement. But they are not weighing in on effectiveness, performance or financial standing, that is not what their audit is.

Ms. Niemeister explained the one finding that is repeated involves the Township's encumbrance system. The Township is required to have an encumbrance system where, when you order a good or service you encumber the money first, you create a purchase order and then you receive the invoice. They tested various purchase orders and they noted that there were numerous dated prior to the purchase order evidencing that the encumbrance system did not happen and did not occur. This may have been a repeat because when you have a finding like that it takes a while to implement and correct it. Mr. Saler explained that when you get to the end of the year, the ramifications of not properly following an encumbrance system could be that you don't have budgetary funds available when the invoice comes in the following year even though they occurred in the previous year. That did not happen, the Township did not overcommit. They also look at subsequent payments in the subsequent year to make sure that everything is in the right year and it was.

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Mayor Marter asked for instances where this could happen. Administrator Sahol explained that it could happen in a lot of different scenarios. He stated that there are times when there is an immediate need where something occurs, like utility workers are operating in a trench and they realize they need an adapter that goes on a water valve and they have to go out and get it. They get the adapter from the supply company and the invoice is immediately generated. They get back to the job, do the work, finish the job, come in the next day and that invoice comes in a day late, which is a mistake. Sometimes it takes time to cure and in a case like that there are mechanisms that we can put in place, i.e. blanket POs, contractual POs, etc.

Another example he gave is that every now and then there may be damage to a vehicle, mostly a police vehicle, which goes to our designated service provider who will start the estimate to see if it is something that we want them to repair or something that we may be able to wait on. What can happen is that the repair shop may start an invoice the day they start looking at the job before we even authorize the work to be done. There have been some strange circumstances but one of the things that we started to implement last year is a fully operational requisitioning system that forces the departments to put in a requisition which automatically verifies the fund's availability. It goes through three layers of authorization before it gets turned into a PO. We didn't have that readily available to us because not all departments were on our system, we weren't integrated with the computers in the police department and elsewhere. But now we are fully cloud based in our accounting and management system. We have removed all of those excuses and all of those reasons why they wouldn't get a requisition in which can eventually generate a purchase order. Our goal is that we never see that finding again.

Township CFO Michelle Chiemiego explained that we are in the process of getting that up and running. It is a little time consuming because each user has to be set up in the accounting system with a user ID and password and then the training can begin. Administrator Sahol stated that the department heads know their spending limits, they know what their budgets are. There are very tight controls with regard to understanding the budget and now we have to take those tight controls and turn them into the requisitioning and purchase order system. The plan is to start training at the end of the month. It is operational now but it will be time consuming.

The Mr. Saler explained that they are just now communicating this and they will consider the timing when they come in next year. These improvements have already been implemented but they will do a random sample throughout the whole year looking specifically at August through December and, if there is a pattern there, even if some of the other things had slipped through the cracks in January or February, they will consider that and even though it is not corrected for the entire year they still can say it has been corrected. They do understand, as auditors that there are certain things that need to get done at certain times, like emergent purchases that just can't go through the normal process. His advice would be that anytime that happens, document it in the system so when they see that documentation, they can consider it an exception.

Council Representative Haas asked what system the Township was using? Administrator Sahol explained that the requisition system used is Edmunds, which is used by about 90% of communities in the state. Council Representative Loftin asked if only the department heads would have access to the system? CFO Chiemiego answered that department heads, or someone appointed in their department in the case of their absence, will have access to the system. They will only have access to their own department's budgets, and it can be tailored to allow or not allow access to different departments. Council Representative Haas said as an FYI on the audit Report on Page 15 there were a few misspelled words. Council Representative Loftin asked if the Edmunds system has a function that allows you to submit the description. CFO Chiemiego answered that the system has everything, the department head can upload all the attachments and quotes. The requisition can be rejected when it comes through if another quote is needed or if there isn't enough money in the budget line. Administrator Sahol explained that a department head will make a requisition, it will then come to him for authorization and then to the CFO. There are checks and balances in making sure that every step in this process is followed. There are over 2,000 purchase orders per year and it is time consuming, but it will keep us out of the spotlight for findings.

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Council Representative Loftin asked when this program would be up and running? CFO Chiemiego said that she hoped to start training everyone by the end of the month. Council Representative Loftin asked if there was a tech company that could help. CFO Chiemiego said that support from Edmunds is part of the contract that we have with them.

Council Representative Haas asked why the synopsis pages were not included in the audit report? Mr. Saler answered that the audit report is in accordance with the Division of Local Government Services. The synopsis is a separate document. It is essentially for the newspaper and the public.

RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-161

Governing Body Certification of the 2024 Annual Budget

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-162

Adopting Employment Practices Manual

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-163

Request Release of Performance Bonds Turnpike Crossing West, 1401 W. Front St.

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-164

Canceling Taxes on Property Owned by a Totally Disabled Veteran, Parise

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-165

Canceling Taxes on Property Owned by a Totally Disabled Veteran, Pykosz

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-166

Canceling Taxes on Property Owned by a Totally Disabled Veteran, Asch

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-167

Canceling Taxes on Property Owned by a Totally Disabled Veteran, Gadus

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-168

Authorize Refund Boat Ramp Permit

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-169

Adjusting the Public Bidding Threshold Effective July 1, 2025

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-170

**Change Order No. 2 and Current Estimate No. 13 Final for Contract for
Hornberger Avenue Pump Station**

Motion of Haas, seconded by Fratinardo to approve Resolution Nos. 2025-161 through 2025-170.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

- YEAS: Baldorossi, Fratinardo, Haas, Loftin, Frappolli
 - NOES: None
 - ABSENT: None
- Unanimous vote – Motion carried

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ORDINANCES

None at this time.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND OFFICERS

None at this time.

REPORTS: ADMINISTRATION

Mayor

Mayor Marter stated that a Town Hall meeting is scheduled for August 28, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. and there will be an opportunity for residents to ask questions of the Police Chief, Public Works and Water and Sewer Utility.

Administrator

Administrator Sahol gave an update on the whirlybird and the improvements with the Turnpike Authority. He had a very productive conversation with one of their engineers as well as their government relations person who had indicated that the Turnpike has identified a couple of a million dollar project that they are going to take on to actually change the way the whirlybird is configured, and widening it in certain areas. Not the bridge itself because they can't change the bridge structure, but changing the lanes, making the lanes wider, getting rid of some of the steep slopes, taking care of some of the erosion issues, the new guardrails, etc.. One of the things he was really happy to hear was bringing it up to as close as possible to the 2023 Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). It was originally designed based on a 40-foot wheel base tractor trailer and now you have a 53-foot wheel base.

We might even be seeing this in a matter of months if all goes well but it will be very disruptive. He explained as far as notifying residents, they communicate directly with the police department first and then they get the Township involved. They are talking about having 16-hour days-worth of traffic that will be manually controlled so that they can make sure there is a constant flow of traffic. He stated that apparently there is a big multi-million dollar project planned to include the exit ramp from the Turnpike from northbound, reconfiguring the southbound exit ramp and potentially something with the bridge that goes over Route 130. They are coming back in October to do another public meeting for the bridge but that team is completely separate and will not have any details about the Route 130 or whirlybird project.

Regarding Daniel's Way, Administrator Sahol sent a message to the County engineer indicating that it is a stone's throw between the end of the road and the beginning of the other road on Daniel's Way asking where that stands and for updates with as much information as they possibly can give but he hasn't heard back at this time. Regarding Route 130 and Florence-Columbus Road, we are no further along in seeing anything happening with that. The State wants the County to design it, the County said they'll design it as long as the State designates them and they are basically arguing. Until they come to grips as to who is going to take lead and who is going to assign the other the responsibility, we sit and wait.

Administrator Sahol stated that he also sent a letter regarding Burlington-Columbus Road and Old York Road and Burlington County immediately authorized their Land Use, as well as their traffic engineers to go out to third party consultants to perform the study that is necessary in order to show warrant for a traffic signal there. They took into consideration the affordable housing potential in Springfield and they have their consultants reviewing that traffic signal.

Administrator Sahol explained that every three years Florence Township and Burlington County Landfill go into a sludge agreement. They take materials from the landfill and process it through our sewer treatment facility which is lucrative for the municipality and he recommends continuing that relationship. He had a conversation with the County and he let them know that if they want to roll that out that the Governing Body would continue that.

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He mentioned that Council Representative Haas had previously asked about Riverview and William Avenues. There is a very small area to be milled and paved. We have a shared service with Burlington County Highway Department to do sidewalks, draining, paving and other types of different work and, instead of bundling that with any big projects, he pulled that agreement and asked the County to give us a proposal to mill and pave both William Avenue as well as Riverview. They gave us an estimate of roughly \$38,000 in comparison to what a contractor would do using quantities similar to what we just put out on the street for the big paving job, this job would have been greater than \$45,000-46,000. This is so small the actual savings in this project will be far greater because we put out about 1100 tons on that big project and this is only going to be 220 to 250 tons max. This is going to be the first time we are going to have the County mill and pave one of our municipal roads. We have the bonds for the purposes of these roads and we'll be able to fund it through that bond which was a road project that we anticipated on these roads anyway.

Administrator Sahol explained that there is a religious Hindu ceremony called Krishna Bath Day on August 27th and 30 to 40 Hindu members will gather in the area of Nyikita field and then will walk to 4th Avenue and end up at the former Legion between 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. where they will have their religious ceremony.

He also mentioned that there is a website called Swimply where property owners can rent out their homes to host events. We have a resident who lives in a section of the community where he has a retention basin out back which he refers to as a “lake” with a beautifully landscaped yard with a swimming pool and a deck and many amenities and he is renting his property on this website. He says he can host up to 11 cars, some on his property and the rest in the street, and is willing to allow up to 15 guests to use his property for a certain dollar number per hour to swim in his pool and use his home. The neighbors are not really happy about this. It is happening in other communities in the area as well and Westampton is now working on an ordinance which basically says you cannot sublet your home for purposes of renting it out like a venue. He asked Council if this is something that they think we need to get involved in to protect the rest of the residents to restrict that ability for people to rent their homes, swimming pools and yards to others. With Council's approval, Administrator Sahol agreed to get the ordinances from the other communities to bring to Council for consideration.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Council President Frappolli mentioned that the trees on West 5th Street have still not been planted. Council Representative Loftin stated that they want to keep the same type of tree and when she last spoke to Ted Lovenduski they were going to be trying to plant them in the fall, and that there are only a certain number of trees that they get and that is why they cannot all be planted in one year.

NEW BUSINESS

Council Representative Baldorossi asked if the streets in Roebling are going to be cleaned up of the leaves and bark. Administrator Sahol stated that the sweeper has been out and he will check the sweeping schedule and see where that stands.

BOARD OF HEALTH

None at this time.

MISCELLANEOUS

None at this time.

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PUBLIC COMMENTS

Motion of Fratinardo, seconded by Haas to open the meeting up to the public at this time.

Steven Steele, 1026 Potts Mill Road, stated that the road project on Potts Mill Road changed the entire water table on his property. When the Crossroads development was built, they put a drainpipe under Archibald Lane and it ends right at his property. On his property side there is an open inlet with no grate on it and when they put it in, the bottom of the pipe was about a foot off of the ground. Ted Lovenduski came out and he said that they still have to backfill the houses and everything will get fixed but it never did. When they grated the back of the houses, they grated so all of the water runs to his property. The other end of the pipe should have been run through his property but the water comes right onto his property and into his basement and his basement is sitting on water. He got a quote of \$15,000 to have that fixed. He mentioned that there was once a ditch that ran down that road and the water would come off of that road into the ditch and would run down the road and it never entered his property. He stated that now his property is wetlands and it had never been wetlands and he is going to have to spend thousands of dollars that he does not have to get rid of the water problem at his house.

He also mentioned that the sidewalk is dangerously close to the road. He thinks the speed limit should be lowered because someone is going to get hurt. In the winter when it snows and they plow, all of the snow goes on his sidewalk because there is no grass between the sidewalk and the road. He wanted this on the record and asked that something be done about it. He is currently working with the Administrator on a solution.

Administrator Sahol explained that the property that was the old Bottlinger farm was the subject of a lawsuit that the township fought and lost so now there is a development there that the township did not want to see proceed. There were a lot of wetlands on the property that were either mitigated or moved under those old standards that the NJDEP permitted. They probably created additional wetlands in order to relocate those wetlands. There were ditches along Potts Mill Road for years and the extent of the sidewalk was to the edges of the township's right-of-way. It is not uncommon to have a sidewalk adjacent to roadways depending on speed and the width of the sidewalk but they will look at that as well. He is sure the engineer did not foul up in that regard because that would be his design standard that he would have violated.

There definitely are wet areas that are very close to Mr. Steele's property. The previous engineer was Ted Wilkinson with Collier's Engineer but he is no longer our engineer and Ted Lovenduski was the liaison between the township and the engineer on that project. Administrator Sahol stated that he would have the engineers take a look at the area and would be in touch with Mr. Steele.

Seeing no one else wishing to be heard, it was a motion of Loftin, seconded by Fratinardo to close the public comment portion of the meeting. Voice vote – All ayes.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion of Haas seconded by Loftin to adjourn. Voice vote – All ayes. Meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Erlston, RMC
Township Clerk
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