

Florence Township Council Regular Session 1/17/24

Florence, New Jersey
January 17, 2024

The Florence Township Council held a regular meeting on the above date in the Municipal Complex, 711 Broad Street, Florence, New Jersey. Members of the public were invited to attend the meeting in person or electronically via Zoom.

The meeting was called to order by Council President Baldorossi at 7:00 p.m. Council President Baldorossi 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 7, 2024; published in the Burlington County Times on January 7, 2024, placed on the Township website and given to the Trenton Times for information on January 7, 2024.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Upon roll call the following were found to be present:

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

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

Absent: None

RECOMMENDATION FROM DEMOCRATIC COUNTY COMMITTEE TO FILL VACANCY – COUNCIL MEMBER, WARD 3

It was on a Motion of Fratinardo, seconded by Loftin to nominate Joseph R. Frappolli.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

Mr. Frappolli was sworn in by Senator Troy Singleton and his wife and granddaughter held the Bible for him.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Reorganization Meeting of January 3, 2024
- Closed Session of January 10, 2024

Voice Vote – All Ayes.

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FINANCIAL CORRESPONDENCE

Motion of Haas, seconded by Fratinardo to approve the following correspondence.

- Court Administrator’s Monthly Report for December 2023
- Township Clerk’s Monthly Report for December 2023
- Tax Collector’s Monthly Tax Report for December 2023
- Tax Collector’s Monthly Water & Sewer Report for December 2023

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

Motion of Fratinardo, seconded by Haas to approve the **Treasurer’s Bill List**.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

REGULAR CORRESPONDENCE

- A. Police Chief’s Monthly Report for December 2023

Motion of Haas, seconded by Fratinardo to approve the correspondence. Voice Vote – All Ayes.

APPLICATIONS

None at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Council President Baldorossi opened the meeting to the public at this time. Seeing no one wishing to be heard, it was the Motion of Haas, seconded by Fratinardo to close the public portion of the meeting. Voice Vote – All Ayes.

RESOLUTIONS

**RESOLUTION NO. 2024-43
Authorize Refund of Housing Inspection Fee**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2024-44
Cancel Taxes of Property Owned by a Totally Disabled Veteran, B 167.06, L 24**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2024-45
Cancel Taxes on Property Owned by a Totally Disabled Veteran, B 163.05, L 1.219**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2024-46
Emergency Temporary Appropriations**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2024-47
Transferring Certain 2023 Budget Appropriations**

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**RESOLUTION NO. 2024-48
Approve Payment No.6 for Public Works Fuel Station**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2024-49
Reject all Bids for Renovation to the Temporary Police Building and Rec. Center**

Motion of Frappolli, seconded by Fratinaro to approve Resolution Nos. 2023-43 and 2023-49.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

Council Representative Haas asked for clarification on Resolution No. 2024-49 and the timeframe to rebid the project. Administrator Sahol stated that the goal is to roll some dates out within the next week and, once that is done we can convene the subcommittee with the department heads and the professionals. Then we would be coming back to the Governing Body shortly thereafter, within a month or so to discuss what they have identified and decide whether or not we are going to look at feasibility studies beyond or start to have them decide the scope of the work and maybe design it that way. We already have two designs; we have the former Public Works building which potentially is an alternate location for a stopgap and we have this one currently designed knowing the space needed. What is in play is the old emergency squad building, it's future use and whether or not we want to spend that much money on something that we may never utilize again. He would hope that within the next 30-45 days we would have some direction.

Council Representative Frappolli asked for clarification on the project and asked why it was rejected. Administrator Sahol explained that what was determined at the prior meeting is that there may be a substantial enough scope change to the project itself that to move forward right now would not be prudent. We either had to let it die, award it or reject it. The right thing to do was to reject it on the grounds that this Governing Body is determining that there may be other alternatives that might be more cost effective and actually have a better benefit in the long run for the municipality.

Council Representative Frappolli asked if there is any funding in place for these renovations. Administrative Sahol explained that, at present we have funding for one of the buildings at just a little over a half a million dollars between the combination of two different grants for reuse and that covers the recreation portion at the former Public Works building. There is no funding other than what you would do locally for the rest. He is aware of a USDA opportunity that might be out there but it has some really tight parameters that you have to meet in order to get the funding for any building expansions. We may have some constraints in that area because of the size and wealth of the community, but it can't hurt and we would never shy away from exploring that opportunity.

ORDINANCES

None at this time.

REPORTS OF COMMITEES, BOARDS AND OFFICERS

Council Representative Haas asked about Comcast and Verizon in town. He stated that there is an online debate and asked for clarification on why we have one over the other. Administrator Sahol explained that it is not one versus the other. Once a provider of a service is located in the community, especially a utility like this, you have to enter into a Franchise Agreement. Florence Township entered into a Franchise

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Agreement many years ago with Garden State Cable and then it became Comcast. It is not an exclusive Franchise Agreement, any of the providers that would like to co-locate or to be in the community can do so. Florence did not close the door on any other opportunities, that was a decision made at the corporate level with Verizon regarding Fios in particular as to how they would expand their footprint. When they expanded their Fios footprint they indicated that they were finding the easiest routes to get from the South to the North at the time. The little bump that Florence would have been coming off of Route 130 and the other infrastructure that runs up Route 206 they didn't see it as lucrative in order to extend all of the fiberoptic cables into the community, they didn't see the subscribership potential at the time. Administrator Sahol said that he would contact the government affairs representatives at Verizon and see if they will give us another statement as to their policy and if they want to expand their network, if at all. The last time we made a request they had indicated that they were no longer looking for the physical infrastructure, they were moving in the direction of their wireless infrastructure and they were going to be putting modems in people's homes and essentially still cellular systems so that they didn't have to maintain the wire infrastructure. But what people have said is a misassumption and reading between too many lines saying that Florence was in cahoots with Comcast and none of that is the case.

REPORTS: ADMINISTRATION

Mayor

Mayor Marter announced her appointments to the Planning Board. Fred Gabrielle was appointed as the Class 4 member. She explained that she chose him for his background as an electrician and he has owned his own company and understands architectural drawings, permitting and business so she thought he was a good fit. She also appointed Bernard Isaacson as a Class 2 member of the Board. He is on the Shade Tree Commission and has worked with the NJDEP and the USDA and is involved with the Department of Forestry and the environment and she thinks he is also a good fit for our Planning Board. There is one position left on the Planning Board that she is still working on and that is a 2-year appointment for the Alternate #1 position.

Administrator

Administrator Sahol mentioned that Mr. Maio had indicated his concern about street and park lights being out at the last Council meeting and they had a good conversation the following day. He went out and verified the locations of Mr. Maio's concern and he let him know that he can always call upon us and that he didn't have to take it upon himself to do those things. There is a procedure in place and if our officers see any lights out they do report those.

He also stated that with regards to the Old York Road speed study, he sent a memorandum to the County requesting the study be performed and they will be coordinating that with the Police Department. There is a certain way in which they do such a thing and that will follow whatever the County availability is to assign the traffic engineers the time that it takes to do the speed study for the entire length of Old York Road.

Lastly, he mentioned that he had a good conversation with our government liaison with the NJDOT with regard to the request for not only the "do not block the boxes" at Delaware and Florence-Columbus Road as you approach the highway, but also reestablishing the stop bars, getting the double left turn lanes reestablished for northbound and potentially examining the double left turn lane onto Route 130 southbound. The liaison has indicated to him that she is going to get the project manager and an engineer involved and they are going to have a conversation. If it looks favorable then she will help him articulate that request so it gets a little further along and if it doesn't, she is going to be very frank with us and let us know that it may not happen. But we have their attention and they are going to do what they can to help us out at that intersection.

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Division of Engineering

- Engineer’s Project Update dated December 18, 2023

Council Representative Haas asked if the transition meetings have started. Administrator Sahol explained that they had a transition meeting for about an hour and a half and several parties from both sides were in the room. They divided the work that made the most sense that shifted over to Remington & Vernick Engineers. Some work is going to be retained by Colliers Engineering because it is at that point where it will take longer for R&V to come up to speed than it would be for Colliers to close it. The meeting was very productive and both parties know exactly what has to happen and they had conversations again today and they already started their exchange of information. He also mentioned that the engineer will be at the workshop meeting in February so he can start giving updates on what they have learned and where they stand on different things.

Division of W&S Utilities

- W&S Engineer’s Status Report dated December 22, 2023

Motion of Fratinardo, seconded by Frappolli to receive and file the engineering and water and sewer reports.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Recreation League Operating Agreement submitted by the Florence Township Recreation Committee – Requesting Council’s review and comment approval

Motion of Fratinardo, seconded by Haas to approve the agreement.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

BOARD OF HEALTH

None at this time.

MISCELLANEOUS

None at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Council President Baldorossi opened the meeting to the public at this time. Seeing no one 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.

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ADJOURNMENT

Motion of Haas seconded by Frappolli to Adjourn. Voice Vote – All Ayes. Meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Erlston, RMC
Township Clerk
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