

## Florence Township Council Regular Session 3/20/24

Florence, New Jersey  
March 20, 2024

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 Baldorossi at 7:00 p.m. Council President Baldorossi led the Salute to the Flag.

Council held a brief moment of silence for lifelong resident and former Council Member John Hofflinger who had passed on March 18<sup>th</sup>.

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

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

- Regular Session of March 6, 2024

Motion of Haas, seconded by Fratinardo to approve the Minutes. Voice vote – All ayes.

### FINANCIAL CORRESPONDENCE

Motion of Loftin, seconded by Fratinardo to approve the following correspondence. Voice vote – All ayes.

- Township Clerk's Monthly Report for February 2024

Motion of Haas, seconded by Loftin 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 February 2024

Motion of Haas, seconded by Fratinardo to approve and file the correspondence. Voice vote – All ayes.

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**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 Frappolli to close the public portion of the meeting. Voice vote – All ayes.

**RESOLUTIONS**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2024-81  
Certification of Compliance with EEOC’s Enforcement Guidance on  
the Consideration of Arrested and Conviction Records in Employment Decisions**

Motion of Haas, seconded by Frappolli to approve Resolution No. 2024-81.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

**RESOLUTION NO. 2024-82  
Temporary Capital Budget for 2024**

Administrator Sahol explained that this resolution is creating a temporary capital budget because we have to make a downpayment towards a debt that we are going to incur. We have a temporary budget we are operating on in 2024 but we didn’t anticipate doing anything right away as far as having to put the 5% downpayment on any bonds or temporary financing. In January the Governing Body created a temporary budget and, in doing so they would not have known how much they may have needed for capital expenditures. This is adding \$28,000 to the possibility of a capital expenditure which Council has already authorized, so that you can have a 5% down payment for the debt service that you are going to incur for the police vehicles, body worn cameras and in-car video systems. That is all this is doing right now. This is not a transfer of any kind, it is just amending the temporary budget and it will remain in the permanent budget because the temporary becomes permanent upon adoption.

Council Representative Frappolli asked if this is being introduced in the budget? Administrator Sahol stated that it will contain the capital expenditure line that will cover this, but because we are operating in the temporary state it is very small percentages of what the total would be until it is adopted. You start out with around 26% of the prior year’s budget in the new year.

For the record, Council Representative Frappolli asked why transfers generally occur. Administrator Sahol explained that generally, when you get to November you are authorized to do transfers between accounts that may not have been expended to what you had anticipated. There may have been some areas you were not able to get to or to expand a service or make a purchase or whatever the case may be, and you have funds available to you that can cover things where you may have made the opposite decision or budget development where you came short in an account. That is what transfers do, they allow you to correct any overages in any areas that you had underutilized. It is an accounting mechanism that only occurs after November and you are literally just working from within your budget.

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Motion of Haas, seconded by Fratinardo to approve Resolution No. 2024-82.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

**RESOLUTION NO. 2024-83  
Emergency Temporary Appropriation**

Administrator Sahol explained that until such time you have a budget, you are continuing to add to the accounts that are getting close to being insufficient. Once the budget is passed, the accounts will be fully funded based upon what the budget development process revealed that you would need for the year.

Motion of Frappolli, seconded by Loftin to approve Resolution No. 2024-83.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

**RESOLUTION NO. 2024-84  
Introduce Municipal Budget 2024**

Motion of Loftin, seconded by Fratinardo to approve Resolution No. 2024-84.

Council Representative Frappolli stated that we have moved ahead with a water and sewer rate increase and now we are going to increase the taxes by \$0.06 which he stated is a “heck of a lot for people to chew.” He stated that he looks at this as something that is necessary in order for us to function so that we have a working budget and we can move ahead. However, on the other hand, he feels used by previous administrations in a way at how they handled things to bring us to this point in time. There were hardly any rate increases for 10-12 years and then all of the sudden, in order to right the ship, we have to come out with this increase which is pretty harsh in his opinion. He stated that the Township Administrator shared the fund balance and they had used 93% of the surplus balance that we had. He stated that he has had some sleepless nights over this and that he is not here on a popularity contest, he is here to make right decisions. The auditors and our financial people have instructed that these are the things that we need to do to get our budget back in order and, if we don’t do these things, there could possibly be loss of employment for a number of people. Also, no matter what we do, it is his understanding that we are still not out of the woods because we still have to prepare for 2025. We have some real challenging times ahead.

Council Representative Fratinardo asked if we are doing everything we should be doing and asked if we have job descriptions for each and every employee along with a rating system in place? If not, we should have that set up or the future so we can see that things are being done right.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

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**RESOLUTION NO. 2024-85  
Authorize Amendment to lease Agreement with AT&T Wireless**

Administrator Sahol explained that this is the tower on Florence-Columbus Road and there is a very small area currently in the lease agreement and this allows for a little extension for that so that they can put in an emergency standby generator. The Township realizes a terrific benefit in leasing space to the cellular providers and we would hate to lose any of these revenue streams from these cellular companies. Working with them is in our best interest and does not interfere with our operations.

Motion of Frappolli, seconded by Fratinardo to approve Resolution No. 2024-85.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

**ORDINANCES**

**ORDINANCE NO. 2024-02  
Bond Ordinance Providing for the Acquisition of Police Vehicles  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Reading, Public Hearing & Adoption)**

Motion of Haas, seconded by Frappolli to open up the Public Hearing. Seeing no one wishing to be heard it was a Motion of Haas, seconded by Frappolli to close the Public Hearing.

Motion of Frappolli, seconded by Fratinardo to adopt Ordinance No. 2024-02.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

**ORDINANCE NO. 2024-03  
Bond Ordinance Providing for the Acquisition of Police Equipment  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Reading, Public Hearing & Adoption)**

Administrator Sahol explained that this is to replace police body worn cameras as well as in-car video systems that are greater than a decade old, have met their useful life and the parts are no longer available to the extent that we unfortunately are having to buy them from second party vendors like eBay. This new system is capable of being moved between vehicles much easier than the prior systems, it is much more user friendly, it is something that our own in-house staff can train on, it is state of the art and it can be upgraded for many years to come and is actually a recognized standard in New Jersey. It is going to be cloud based so we are not going to have to maintain the space intense infrastructure that we once had to have.

Motion of Haas, seconded by Frappolli to open up the Public Hearing. Seeing no one wishing to be heard it was a Motion of Frappolli, seconded by Haas to close the Public Hearing.

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Motion of Frappolli, seconded by Haas to adopt Ordinance No. 2024-03.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

**ORDINANCE NO. 2024-04**

**Exceed the Municipal Budget Appropriation Limits and Establish a Cap Bank  
(Intro. & 1<sup>st</sup> Reading) (2<sup>nd</sup> Reading, Public Hearing & Adoption April 3, 2024)**

Motion of Haas, seconded by Frappolli to adopt Ordinance No. 2024-04.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

**REPORTS OF COMMITEES, BOARDS AND OFFICERS**

Council Representative Fratinardo stated that he called the BPU to find out if they have any grants for wind power and explained that he feels that if we got a grant from them then whatever we would get would help our utility and would help here. They haven't actually said that they have any grants right now but what they did say is that they have grants for developers that can come in and they have to tell you the amount and guarantee that amount. He believes we need to investigate this.

Council Representative Loftin asked about the Cannabis ordinance. Administrator Sahol explained that the first stage is for the Township Planner to review the draft ordinance from another community that would fit pretty well in Florence as well as our zones to determine where some of those type licenses could be best placed because there are certain places you wouldn't want to put certain types of licenses. It is currently with the planner and his hope is that he will be prepared to come back to Council within the next couple of weeks with his recommendations and where we can place some of these types of licenses.

**REPORTS: ADMINISTRATION**

**Mayor**

Mayor Marter stated that on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Burlington County Engineers will be coming in to present the design and the idea for the Rite Aid intersection. She hopes that they will also be discussing the bypass connecting River Road out to John Galt Way and to Route 130 as well.

The Mayor mentioned that we are receiving a public works facilities grant from the Murphy Administration for \$500,000 that can be used in regards to anything with public works. She stated that she also received a request from Troy Singleton's office for us to present 1-3 projects because they have a grant opportunity for \$350,000. They can not guarantee exactly how much will be available to us but they want to make sure we get on a list and Administrator Sahol is looking for different projects that might be worthwhile to use for that.

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We are looking at other opportunities to bring additional revenue in as well. One thing that the Administrator has been doing is to try to identify other customers for our sewage department tonnage. Administrator Sahol explained that there is an opportunity that may present itself with regard to sludge from a company located in the community which we are very well suited to handle with the new screw press. It is running fine at our utility and that is something that we will continue to work on and sometime in the future if we can bring it to fruition then Council will see a resolution with a recommendation from staff wishing to enter into an agreement with this company.

Mayor Marter stated that B&H Photo had their Employee Appreciation Day and she was lucky enough to be able to attend stating that it was a really nice event to bring the community together.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None at this time.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

None at this time.

### **BOARD OF HEALTH**

None at this time.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

Council Representative Loftin asked to possibly get a community cleanup type event together for Earth Day on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Council Representative Baldorossi explained that they can set up at different locations within the town and clean up with the help of different organizations or groups. Administrator Sahol explained that it shouldn't be a big ask to coordinate an effort like that and get the volunteers. And as far as the purchase of equipment, it can be billed through clean communities. Council agreed that the Earth Day event on Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup> was a good idea.

Administrator Sahol also explained that Amazon reached out because they are interested in doing something for the community to benefit Earth Day and one of the things that was discussed was the possibility of planting fruit bearing trees.

### **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 Haas, seconded by Loftin to close public comment.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion of Frappolli, seconded by Haas to adjourn. Voice vote – All Ayes. Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Erlston, RMC  
Township Clerk  
/js