

Florence Township Council Regular Session 05/01/24

Florence, New Jersey
May 1, 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.

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; Robert Wright, Esq., Township Solicitor; Nancy L. Erlston, Township Clerk; Jenise Silinsky, Deputy Township Clerk

Absent: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Regular Session of April 17, 2024

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

FINANCIAL CORRESPONDENCE

Motion of Haas, seconded by Frappolli 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

None at this time.

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.

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RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-106

Transfer ABC License 0315-33-013-009 from Dr. Lou’s Place LLC to Whats Next NJ LLC

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-107

Approve Current Estimate No. 4 for Contract for Hornberger Avenue Pump Station to Sub-Level Installations

Motion of Frappolli, seconded by Fratinardo to approve Resolution Nos. 2024-106 and 2024-107.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

ORDINANCES

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-05

Amending Chapter 36 Entitled “Alcoholic Beverages” to permit up to three Package Goods Liquor Stores to operate within a one mile radius” (Introduction and 1st Reading) (2nd Reading, Public Hearing and Adoption May 15, 2024)

Motion of Frappolli, seconded by Fratinardo to approve Ordinance No. 2024-05.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-06

Amending Chapter 4, Article XI “Police Department” to provide certain law enforcement training requirements are to be met in order to be exempt from Civil Service Examination Requirements (Introduction and 1st Reading) (2nd Reading, Public Hearing and Adoption May 15, 2024)

Solicitor Wright explained that this is to allow existing Special Law Enforcement Officers who work part time to be promoted and transition through without having to take the Civil Service exam. Before this ordinance an existing part time SLEO would have to take the Civil Service exam and be put in the pool with others from outside. This allows for someone who is familiar with the township and has experience to move up.

Motion of Haas, seconded by Fratinardo to approve Ordinance No. 2024-06.

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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ORDINANCE NO. 2024-07

**Fixing Compensation Ranges of Certain Officials and Employees
(Introduction and 1st Reading) (2nd Reading, Public Hearing and Adoption May 15, 2024)**

Motion of Frappolli, seconded by Haas to approve Ordinance No. 2024-07.

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 Haas had reached out to Administrator Sahol regarding the streets on Fountain Boulevard where the roads have been deteriorating. Administrator Sahol explained that if there is a still a bond on that road opening then we will be attaching that bond or acquiring the work ourselves. When possible we will do the work ourselves.

Council Representative Loftin stated that, even though the weather did not cooperate during the cleanup, she and Council Representative Frappolli were able to make significant improvements; with the help of Dave Wright and the Public Works department they were able to get a lot of things cleaned up and downtown Florence looks amazing. Council Representatives Baldorossi and Fratinardo had 12 people helping with a very successful cleanup in Roebing as well.

REPORTS: ADMINISTRATION

Mayor

Mayor Marter stated that she made the final appointment for the Planning Board and he was sworn in at the last meeting. His name is Bob Johnson and he has a long history in the construction industry.

She also mentioned that she received her water bill in the mail and she stated that there is no explanation that went out with the bills. It had been discussed that a letter would be sent but that letter didn't make it in with the bills. She took accountability for not letting the public know that the rates increased. It would be too costly to send something now so something will go out on social media and on the website to try and reach people. Administrator Sahol stated that he took responsibility for not ensuring that the explanation letter was included with the bills.

Administrator

Administrator Sahol explained that the fiscal year 2025 NJDOT grants notification has been put out and the staff has been meeting and also talking with the engineer about grant opportunities. There are four different categories. There will be a memo in the next meeting packet indicating where we think we have grant eligibility and some suggested projects. This will be a workshop item next week for conversation. It coincides with the township engineer and Ted Lovenduski being present to have a conversation about the current status of our road program and where we are with capital improvements by way of roads and sidewalks.

Administrator Sahol also explained that we had our S&P bond rating call and he thinks we did really well as far as presenting the difficulties that the community has been experiencing over the past years and the tough decisions that the Governing Body has had to make this year to tackle not only the budget but the fund balance issue. He got the sense that they want for us to do what has been promised for several years and to take on the tough task of developing a fund balance policy and a debt policy. Good fiscal management is

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where you actually will put something out as if to constrain yourself, unless there is some terrible emergency, to a certain amount of debt service and a certain amount of fund balance. Agencies like this are really starting to focus post-pandemic and with the current economy to see what is put in to place to make sure that we are not at high risk.

Administrator Sahol will present some draft policies to staff and sit down with the auditor and go over what we think some of the percentages and ratios would look like and then it will be coming back to Council sometime possibly in June. Having this in place is an important step to ensure we get good strong ratings in the future.

Council Representative Loftin asked the Administrator for an update on the cannabis ordinance and he explained that it is a workshop item for next week's meeting. He explained that there will be a conversation with regard to the ordinance and hopefully by then he can give Council an update on the professional planner's recommendations. The planner is hoping to have something to us in within the next few weeks and it will most likely be introduced in June.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Council Representative Frappolli asked about getting a meeting with our Recreation Committee about how they budget, where the money goes, where it comes from, how it is allocated, etc. Administrator Sahol explained that it will be discussed at the June workshop meeting.

Council Representative Loftin asked about the walking path and if there is a plan to complete that path with trash receptacles at some point? The Administrator explained that some plant materials have been ordered to start along the path and trash receptacles have been considered he just has to check the status of when they will be installed. And, at the far end of the path the lighting is installed but has not yet been activated.

Council Representative Frappolli voiced his concern about the end of the path by the river, stating that it can be a dangerous situation because it is incomplete and shielded from anyone seeing anything down there. Administrator Sahol explained that the end point is always going to be an attractive nuisance, kids are always going to want to go beyond the fence. The County is obligated to provide a certain amount of cleanup, restoration and capping of what was there to meet their DEP requirements but, beyond that, they are not obligated to secure the river.

NEW BUSINESS

None at this time.

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.

Jay Patel, Town Liquor 2117 Route 130, went on the record to express his concern about amending Ordinance No. 2024-05. He explained that this ordinance is partially what attracted them here ten years ago because he felt that it showed that the Township takes care of small businesses and their livelihood. He and his father own the business together and they do not have any other businesses. He stated that this came up once before in a similar type of fashion where someone wanted to open something in the area.

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His concern is that if someone opens a store 100 feet from him or across the street for instance, it is not really attracting new revenue, but splitting the revenue between existing businesses that have served this community for such a long time and will dilute those businesses. He is asking that Council at least take this into consideration.

Ricky, 744 Morris Court, expressed his disappointment in the decision of the Recreation Committee at the special meeting to uphold their original decision to only allow them a 4pm-7pm time slot on Saturdays to use the cricket field. He again asked Council for their assistance in this matter. Council agreed to put together a subcommittee to discuss this further with both teams.

Michael Muchowski, 1337 Maple Avenue, stated that basically the same conversation was had at the last meeting regarding the cricket situation. He asked how we got to the point where we had two teams sharing one facility, to this. What paper documentation do we have that our Recreation Committee decided that one team got precedence over the other? There had to be a reason that they were precluded. If they are both home based teams, it does not make sense how there wasn't some paper documentation or backup supporting the decision that was made.

Seeing no one else wishing to be heard, it was a Motion of Haas, seconded by Loftin to close public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion of Loftin, seconded by Frappolli to adjourn. Voice vote – All Ayes. Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Erlston, RMC
Township Clerk
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