

Florence Township Council Regular Session 9/4/24

Florence, New Jersey
September 4, 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, Administrator, Robert Wright, Esq., Township Solicitor; Nancy L. Erlston, Township Clerk; Jenise Silinsky, Deputy Township Clerk

Absent: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Regular Session of August 7, 2024

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

FINANCIAL CORRESPONDENCE

Motion of Loftin, seconded by Frappolli to receive and file the following correspondence. Voice vote – All ayes.

- Tax Collector's Monthly Tax Report for July 2024
- Township Clerk's Monthly Report for July 2024
- Court Administrator's Monthly Report for July 2024
- Tax Collector's Monthly Water & Sewer Report for July 2024

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

A. Police Chief's Monthly Report for July 2024

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

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APPLICATIONS

- A. On-Premise Merchandise Raffle for the Florence Township Memorial HS Parent Organization at 7:00 p.m. on October 25, 2024 at 1050 Cedar Lane, Burlington, NJ 08016

Motion of Fratinardo, seconded by Frappolli to approve the applications. Voice vote – All ayes.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Council President Baldorossi opened the meeting to the public at this time.

Ohm Patel, 21 Berkeley Place, East Windsor, NJ, explained that he spoke to Clerk Erlston and inquired about the ordinance regarding the liquor stores and he was told that there was no movement from the Planning Board or Council at this time and he wanted to readdress this concern with Council. He stated that after attending multiple Planning Board meetings, the Board sent a report to Council that this is not inconsistent with the Master Plan but the Board would like to discuss it further regarding the land use aspect. He asked Council to readdress this situation and bring it back to life and stated that the majority of towns nearby do not have anything this extensive.

Administrator Sahol stated that the ordinance went back to the Planning Board and they concluded that it is not inconsistent with the Master Plan which means Council has the ability act on it but he is unaware if it lost traction or if they are still anticipating something with more detail. Mayor Marter explained that it had gone to the planner to determine where it fits in land use because of the fact that we are trying to control where businesses go and stated that it is a conversation that needs to be had with our attorney as to whether it is going to stay a part of land use or whether it is going to come back to Council as just an ordinance.

The Administrator advised Council that if they wanted to discuss this at a future meeting as to whether or not to exercise the police power portion of the ordinance or insert it in the land use position they can do so. It is up to the Governing Body to send it back to the Planning Board and to determine where it is actually going to be finalized. He agreed to follow up with the Planning Board attorney to be sure there is at least a topic at the next meeting for discussion.

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

REVIEW OF 2023 AUDIT

Administrator Sahol explained that he met with members of the Governing Body and reviewed the audit document. In 2023 it complied with regulations involving government purchasing and budgeting procedures. The auditor does not give a financial picture to let you know where you stand, the auditor simply looks at the operations and makes sure they are in compliance with the law and that the books balance. Obviously, the books did balance at the end of the year but there were five findings, one of which was a correction.

Earlier this year the Governing Body was asked to adopt a resolution to correct an over expenditure to an account that was under funded in 2023. By doing this, it basically allows for an under appropriated account to be funded by utilization of transferred funds in the prior year so that those expenses were not incurred in 2024 in the new budget. This finding alone states that the governing body did not add sufficient funding in 2023 to cover the principle on the interest on some notes that were due to the utility.

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The second finding was that 13 out of the 25 purchase orders pulled were for an invoice that predated a purchase order. When that purchase order is created it creates an encumbrance against the account which basically shows that those funds are encumbered against a future purchase. The best and proper way to make sure not to overspend is to implement a requisitioning system that is built into our software that will require people to make sure that they ask for a purchase order and the purchase order has to predate the authorization to purchase. That purchase order will encumber the funds out of the proper account so that when the item arrives it does not have to get a purchase order assigned to it or the invoice arrives and it will help us to better run our departments.

The third finding was the way we control our fixed assets. Fixed assets are anything that has a life of more than five years or \$5,000. Fixed assets are accounted for in two different ways, there are utility fixed assets and current fixed assets. At one point in time the municipality combined the fixed assets into a single spreadsheet of fixed asset ownership. Our fixed assets have to be accounted for separately like our budgets and a correction has to be made in one area. We didn't sell anything; we didn't lose anything and we didn't buy anything we just had to recount for the way we got them.

Finding number four is maintaining a subsidiary ledger regarding police and vendor outside employment. It is in the town's best interest and it is required now that we maintain an escrow account from outside vendors (outside vendors include Public Service, Verizon, a local plumber, Comcast, etc.). They need to be able to fund an escrow account that we remove the dollar amount that it costs to have a patrol officer assigned for traffic control. We were billing after the fact but in order to make sure that we don't get stood up by any of our vendors and take the chance that we may have a vendor that is in failure to respond, we will be setting up an escrow account or going through a third party company which is what a lot of the governing bodies are starting to do. The outside company schedules the officer, they collect everything, make the disbursements, and maintain all of the accounting. The nice thing about the third party companies is that they integrate directly with our payroll and accounting and employee management software and it is a seamless process.

Finding number five speaks to the way in which we do payroll. The Township CFO was able to have a conversation with the bank about what is basically a washing account. This account has zero dollars in it and is going to be a demand account. Every time a payroll check comes in, it becomes a demand and as soon as it is honored with a zero balance they are flushing the account from the cash account that we maintain and pulling that exact dollar amount into the flushing account and paying it. That guarantees that we have a zero balance payroll at the end of each month. The nice thing is that we are keeping more money in the cash account which is an interest bearing account.

He stated that by approving Resolution No. 2024-168 and acknowledging that they understand the findings and they received the audit, essentially that is what the law requires.

RESOLUTIONS

**RESOLUTION NO. 2024-168
Certification of 2023 Audit**

Motion of Loftin, seconded by Fratinaro to approve Resolution No. 2024-168.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

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RESOLUTION NO. 2024-169

Approve Current Estimate No. 7 for Hornberger Ave. Pump Station

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-170

Authorize Refund of Overpayment Water and Sewer Department

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-171

Cancel Taxes on Property Owned by a Totally Disabled Veteran, Block 156.06, Lot 7

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-172

Cancel Taxes on Property Owned by a Totally Disabled Veteran, Block 36, Lot 1

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-173

Cancel Taxes on Property Owned by a Totally Disabled Veteran, Block 155.42, Lot C4201

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-174

Authorize Short-Term Lease with PSEG for 2063 Bustleton Road

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-175

Cancel 2023 Water & Sewer Balances

Motion of Fratinardo, seconded by Frappolli to approve Resolution Nos. 2024-169 through 2024-175.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

ORDINANCES

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-11

**An Ordinance Amending the Township’s Code to Repeal Chapter 79; to Adopt a New Chapter 79; to Adopt Flood Hazard Maps; to Designate a Floodplain Administrator; and Providing for Severability and an Effective Date
(2nd Reading, Public Hearing & Adoption)**

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

Motion of Frappolli, seconded by Haas to adopt Ordinance No. 2024-11.

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. 2024-12

**Amending Chapter 91 “Land Development” to Incorporate Stormwater Control Measures
Required by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
(2nd Reading, Public Hearing & Adoption)**

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

Motion of Frappolli, seconded by Loftin to adopt Ordinance No. 2024-12.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-13

**Repealing and Replacing Chapter 130 of the Township Code Entitled
“Towing and Storage of Motor Vehicles”
(Intro & 1st Read) (2nd Reading, Public Hearing & Adoption 10/2//24)**

Motion of Fratinaro, seconded by Haas to approve Ordinance No. 2024-13.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-14

**Amending Ordinance 2014-10 and Chapter 60 of the Township Code Entitled “Cannabis”
(Intro & 1st Read) (2nd Reading, Public Hearing & Adoption 10/2//24)**

Motion of Fratinaro, seconded by Loftin to approve Ordinance No. 2024-14.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-15

**Amending Bond Ordinance 2019-17 to Increase Section 20 Authorization
(Intro & 1st Read) (2nd Reading, Public Hearing & Adoption 10/2//24)**

Motion of Haas, seconded by Loftin to approve Ordinance No. 2024-15.

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Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND OFFICERS

Council Representative Haas thanked Mitsubishi and Amazon, there were several events where they provided back to school supplies for the school children. He also stated that the Economic Development Committee will have a draft letter for the vacant properties going out soon.

Council Representative Frappolli explained that some residents inquired about why we still continue to have garbage collected in alleys in Florence due to the conditions of some of the alleys. He stated that Administrator Sahol indicated that it has come up at other times and might be something that we hold off on until an executive meeting where there can be an open discussion about the pros and cons.

REPORTS: ADMINISTRATION

Mayor

Mayor Marter announced that on Friday September 27th the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) will host the 51st Environmental Congress at Rowan College in Burlington County which will feature a series of workshops, presentations and discussions on the wide range of environmental conservation topics. She stated that, each year ANJEC recognizes outstanding contributions from environmental conservation by presenting environmental achievement awards and municipal achievement awards to individuals and groups making a significant impact on New Jersey. This year our very own Councilwoman Talaya Loftin has been nominated for exemplary leadership within the Environmental Commission in her tireless efforts to promote the Florence Township Green Team through community outreach. ANJEC has confirmed that Councilwoman Loftin will be honored at this year's conference, a well-deserved recognition of her dedication and hard work. She extended heartfelt congratulations to Councilwoman Loftin on her prestigious honor and expressed gratitude to ANJEC for this acknowledgement and stated that she eagerly looks forward to participating in upcoming sessions. Council congratulated Council Representative Loftin.

Mayor Marter also explained that we received \$2 Million toward the Rite Aid intersection improvement project and that the Curtis Thompson signs throughout town will be changed to read that he is now a 2-time Olympian.

Administrator

Administrator Sahol thanked Council for moving the audit resolution and the towing ordinance. He also mentioned that we have a shared service with Bordentown Township for Animal Control. Their Animal Control program is going to be ceasing and will no longer be handled in house and they will be contracting with a third party so he will be coming to council during the budget process and discussing the way in which we provide for animal control services going forward.

Council Representative Loftin asked the Administrator for an update on the Township website and mentioned that she would like to see an Environmental Commission page. Administrator Sahol explained that there are some changes that are coming internally from staff and that he would need people from the Environmental Commission who understand that committee and its function and how it should present itself to help develop that content.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

A. 2025 Calendar Dates for Review and Approval

Clerk Erlston explained that these are the dates that she provides for the calendar to be included for next year and that the dates of the meetings mirror the dates for 2024 and asked Council to let her know if there are any dates that need to be changed, added or taken away. Council reviewed and approved the dates with no changes.

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.

Melissa Bond, 14 Amboy Avenue, explained that construction started on Hornberger Avenue and asked why residents were not made aware and/or signs not posted? She stated that the exit from Railroad, which is a one-way from Amboy around to Railroad was blocked so cars were not able to exit there. Administrator Sahol explained that construction activity notices are generally given to people that front on the construction location and this work did not touch on any frontage of any homes. If there was a notification requirement in our contract and it was not followed he apologized for that and stated that we will do better to make sure the residents are aware.

Ms. Bond also asked if the sidewalks on Hornberger Avenue are being replaced and when the sidewalks on Amboy and Railroad will be improved. Administrator Sahol explained that it is a short distance on Hornberger right now but the road program that is being designed at present will address sidewalks on Amboy and Railroad that will tie into the Hornberger Avenue sidewalk. In order for us to put in all of the new sidewalk infrastructure to repair the curbs and all of the things that need to go along the front of those homes, it is going to be a lot of no parking on one side and a lot of inconvenience but it is short term for a long lived improvement and the residents will be made well aware of the timing of those improvements.

Council Representative Loftin asked if a construction update is posted somewhere so residents would be aware? Administrator Sahol stated that there has never been anything like that in place and made a note to see if we can post updates in respect to any construction that is going on in town.

Seeing no one else wishing to be heard, it was a Motion of Haas, seconded by Frappolli to close public comment. Voice vote – All ayes.

ENTER INTO CLOSED SESSION

Resolution 2024-176 Resolution Authorizing the Mayor, Township Council and Support Staff to meet on Closed Session and Authorizing the Exclusion of the Public from that Portion of the Meeting Dealing with Specific Issues Requiring Non-Public Discussions:

- Weiss Development and COAH
- Personnel matters

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It was a Motion of Loftin, seconded by Frappolli to adjourn to Closed Session at 8:02 p.m. where no action will be taken.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

ADJOURNMENT

Council returned to the Regular meeting at 8:50 p.m. on a Motion of Haas seconded by Fratinaro. Voice vote – All ayes. No action was taken. Motion of Fratinaro seconded by Haas to adjourn. Voice vote – All ayes. Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Erlston, RMC
Township Clerk
/js