
BOROUGH OF WASHINGTON, WARREN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

WASHINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL MINUTES

May 2, 2023

The regular meeting of the Borough Council of Washington, Warren County, New Jersey was held in councils chambers at 7:00 P.M.

Roll Call: Brown, Cox, France, Gorshkov, Infinito, Musick and Conry.

Also Present: Laurie A. Courter, Borough Clerk
Natasha Turchan, CFO
Erik Peterson, Attorney

Mayor Conry led everyone in the flag salute.

Mayor Conry read the following statement into record:

The requirements of the Open Public Meetings Law, P.L. 1975, Chapter 231 have been satisfied in that adequate notice of this meeting has been published in the Express-Times (Warren County Edition and Star Ledger) and posted on the Boroughs website stating the time, place and purpose of the meeting as required by law

PUBLIC COMMENT

Motion made by Cox and seconded by Gorshkov open public comment, all were in favor.

Mel Thiel, BID Exec Director, gave the following report:

Thanked Councilman Infinito for coming to Steam Punk Fair

Good crowd had a good time, a good buzz from outsiders from out of town.

Planters going out around town Sunday May 21st.

May 18th Thursday night first dance party in Veterans Park. A DJ will play all types of dance music.

May 19th Job Fair at Habitat for Humanity Community Center, there are 21 businesses signed up. Sustainable Green Arts Festival June 17th. Also, Juneteenth celebration. Bands signed up and vendors signed up.

Everything we do is on our website.

Marco Matteo, Railroad Ave, is still getting information on John Hanlos who recently passed away. Will be discussing it at Historic committee meeting on Friday and will have good information to share for a proclamation.

Discussed the finding of an inscription on an old foundation on one of the buildings in the borough that is being demolished. The construction company may be able to take the corner out and if it's still salvageable if there's anything we can do cut those pieces and find a way to reappropriate into a spot. LUB did like an idea of a marker there. Wanted to share with the council. Work together to show case it together.

Discussed an email he sent concerning ongoing maintenance issues with Washington Theatre, degrading the town. Some dysfunctions between owner of property and LUB board.

Asked if there was any update on formation of a Historic Preservation Commission.

Hearing no further public comment, motion made by Cox and seconded by Gorshkov to close the public portion all were in favor.

Minutes

Motion made by Cox and seconded by Brown to approve the minutes:

February 21, 2023 Sherry, Brown Infinito abstains

March 6, 2023

March 7, 2023

March 8, 2023 Brown, Musick, Cox abstains

March 21, 2023

March 27, 2023 Musick and Brown abstains

Roll call: Brown, Conry, Cox, France, Gorshkov, Infinito and Musick.

Ayes: 4 Nays: 0 Abstains: as indicated above.

Motion passes.

REPORTS

Ordinance: Councilwoman Gorshkov discussed the costs associated with OPRA requests being sent to the Attorney from last year.

Streets: Councilman Brown stated some roads are scheduled to be paved from the utility companies work on them.

Sewer: Councilman Infinito had a second meeting yesterday with Veolia. Set quarterly meetings with him and the locals keep everyone on the same page. Printed out information for everyone-run down what we talked about yesterday. Possibility change in permit sewer has. Regulatory levels they would need. The sewer plant is paid off now. Now we have a sewer plant a few decades old and the equipment will need to be replaced. Costs a lot of money. Also looking into the water infiltration figuring out where that is occurring.

Senior Advisory: Deputy Mayor Cox stated that she hasn't received anything from the mayor yet. Issue with information on USB not working. Lee Geller went through two flash drives. She couldn't open anything. Three years nothing was done with the Senior Advisory.

VOUCHERS AND CLAIMS

Motion made by Musick seconded by Brown to pay vouchers and claims.

Questions about IT and phone providers bills.

Library Audit

PERS

Developers Escrows

Solid Waste-garbage trucks

Roll call: Brown, Conry, Cox, France, Gorshkov, Infinito and Musick.

Ayes: 7 Nays: 0

Motion passes.

NEW BUSINESS

Ordinances 2nd Reading

Motion made by Cox and seconded by Musick to open the public hearing for Ordinance 2023-09, all were in favor.

Hearing no public input, motion made by Musick and seconded by Gorshkov to close the public hearing, all were in favor.

Motion made by Brown and seconded by Gorshkov to adopt Ordinance 2023-09

Roll call: Brown, Conry, Cox, France, Gorshkov, Heinrich and Musick

Ayes: 7 Nays: 0

Motion passes.

ORDINANCE 2023-09
AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AS A GENERAL
IMPROVEMENT THE PURCHASE AND ACQUISITION OF VARIOUS EQUIPMENT FOR THE
BOROUGH OF WASHINGTON AND APPROPRIATING \$25,000.00 THEREFOR FROM THE
“CAPITAL FUND BALANCE” OF SAID BOROUGH

BE IT ORDAINED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Washington in Warren County,

New Jersey as follows:

Section 1. The Borough of Washington in Warren County (hereinafter referred to as “Municipality”) is hereby authorized the following Capital Improvements for the Borough of Washington:

1. Improvements to the municipal building including but not limited to the improvements to the fire bay door.

Section 2. The work and acquisitions, authorized by Section 1 of this Ordinance shall be undertaken as

a general improvement, the entire cost of which shall be contributed and borne by the municipality as a general

expense, and no part of said cost shall be specially assessed against any property. The estimated cost noted

of such project shall not exceed \$25,000.00 unless this Ordinance is amended.

Section 3. It is hereby determined and stated that the undertaking of the aforesaid projects (hereinafter

referred to as “purpose”) is not a current expense of the municipality; and that the total estimated cost of said

purpose is \$25,000.00, the estimated cost for the projects having been noted in Section 1 above.

Section 4. The sum of \$25,000.00 is hereby appropriated for said purpose from the “Capital Fund Balance” of the municipality for said purpose as required by law and now available therefore under a

budget or budgets of the municipality previously adopted.

Section 5. The Capital budget of the municipality is hereby amended to conform with the provisions of

this Ordinance to the extent of any inconsistency herewith.

Section 6. This Ordinance shall take effect upon its passage and publication as provided by law.

RESOLUTIONS

Motion made by Musick and seconded by Gorshkov to open the public hearing for Resolution 2023-62 Budget 2023

Roll call: Brown, Conry, Cox, France, Gorshkov, Heinrich and Musick

Ayes: 7 Nays: 0

Motion passes.

Motion made by Cox and seconded by Gorshkov to close the public hearing; all were in favor.

Motion made by Brown and seconded by Gorshkov to open discussions of Resolution 2023-72
Roll call: Brown, Conry, Cox, France, Gorshkov, Heinrich and Musick
Ayes: 7 Nays: 0
Motion passes.

Discussion: Budget amendment
CFO, Natasha Turchan explained the differences between the two resolutions for amending the 2023 Budget. The council will need to pick one of the amendments.

Motion made by Cox and seconded by Infinito to introduce Resolution 2023-72 Budget Amendment flat tax version with public hearing scheduled for May 16, 2023.

Roll call: Brown, Conry, Cox, France, Gorshkov, Heinrich and Musick
Ayes: 7 Nays: 0
Motion passes.

Motion made by Brown and seconded by Musick to adopt Resolution 2023-73
Brown withdraws motion, Musick seconded.
Roll call: Brown, Conry, Cox, France, Gorshkov, Heinrich and Musick
Ayes: 7 Nays: 0
Motion passes.

Motion made by Brown and seconded by Cox to adopt Resolution 2023-74
Roll call: Brown, Conry, Cox, France, Gorshkov, Heinrich and Musick
Ayes: 7 Nays: 0
Motion passes.

RESOLUTION 2023-74

A RESOLUTION FOR REDEMPTION OF TAX CERTIFICATE
As per N.J.S.A.54:5

KNOW ALL PERSONS BY THESE PRESENTS THAT, WHEREAS, lands in the taxing district of Washington Borough, County of Warren, State of New Jersey, were sold on October 7, 2021 to BALA PARTNERS LLC, P.O. Box 303, Pottersville, NJ 07979, in the amount of \$276.56 for taxes or other municipal liens assessed for the year 2020 in the name of COELLO, JUAN as supposed owners, and in said assessment and sale were described as 66 LENAPE TRAIL, Block 101 Lot 15.11, which sale was evidenced by Certificate #21-00047 and

WHEREAS, the Collector of Taxes of said taxing district of the Borough of Washington, do certify that on 3/30/2023 and before the right to redeem was cut off, as provided by law, CORELOGIC claiming

to have an interest in said lands, did redeem said lands claimed by BALA PARTNERS LLC by paying the Collector of Taxes of said taxing district of Washington Borough the amount of \$1,925.96 which is the amount necessary to redeem Tax Sale Certificate #21-00047.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, on this 2nd day of May, 2023 by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Washington, County of Warren to authorize the Treasurer to issue a check payable to BALA PARTNERS LLC, P.O. Box 303, Pottersville, NJ 07979 in the amount of **\$3,125.96** (This consists of \$1,925.96 Certificate Amount redeemed + \$1,200.00 Premium).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Tax Collector is authorized to cancel this lien on Block 101 Lot 15.11 from the tax office records.

COUNCIL REMARKS

Councilman Brown gave the following remarks:

- When cannabis store up and running there will be revenue stream coming in.
- Giving life cycles comparisons.
- Flabbergasted on abstention votes on people coming on his committee from members of council.
- We should evolve and transcend ways of thinking.
- Will have a lot more volunteers and hope you don't abstain.

Councilwoman Cox gave the following remarks:

- Nice that people are coming out. Addressed audience on comments that were made during meeting. Stated that she asked a simple question three years ago and was labeled the biggest racist.
- Give people a chance to say what they have to say.
- Appreciate everyone who comes out. Appreciate the comments made. We are all different, we all bleed red. All the same put together person.
- Agree with Ed, we do not get the full answer. Have never gotten a full answer since taking this seat. Been stonewalled. Voted for no tax lowering. Nice for people to not have a raise. Nest egg needs to be monitored. Problem with spending in this borough. In prior years the whole council agreed on it. If we know where money goes, we all have the same information, not one person having more information.
- Thanked Mr. Peterson for input for voice of reason.
- Appreciated that Laurie stayed on longer than for what was anticipated.

Councilman France gave the following remarks:

- CFO stated that garbage with other towns going up 25-40% maybe speculative need to see more data on that.
- Working together with budget. Disappointed in whole process. A lot of information is not available. Ten years ago, the state ran the budget. Slowly getting keys back.
- Appreciate working with everyone. Information given up front very thoroughly. I can't make a good decision unless I know.

Councilman Infinito gave the following remarks:

- Good discussions today with communication.
- Very happy with the budget version.
- Excited to see how the budget is implemented throughout the year. Look into starting earlier next year with the budget.

Councilwoman Gorshkov gave the following statements:

- Trying my best to save money for the taxpayers. Thanked everyone for coming out.
- The only debt I have is my mortgage. We cannot take out loans for things we cannot afford.

Councilwoman Musick gave the following remarks:

- Thanked everyone for coming out tonight and bearing with us and for staying the night.

Mayor Conry gave the following remarks:

- Thank everyone for coming out tonight.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion made by Cox and seconded by Gorshkov to go into executive session for the purpose of contract negotiation and litigation all were in favor:

RESOLUTION **AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE SESSION**

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act, P.L. 975, Chapter 231 permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist; and

WHEREAS, the Governing Body wishes to discuss Contractual and Litigation. Minutes will be kept and once the matter involving the confidentiality of the above no longer requires that confidentiality, then the minutes can be made public.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the public be excluded from this meeting.

Motion made by Musick and seconded by Brown to return to regular session at 10:35 p.m., all were in favor.

ADJOURN

Hearing no further business to come before Council, motion made by Cox and seconded by Gorshkov to adjourn the meeting at 10:36 PM, all were in favor.

Laurie A. Courter, RMC
Borough Clerk