
BOROUGH OF WASHINGTON, WARREN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

WASHINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL MINUTES

DATE: December 5, 2023

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

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

Also Present: Laurie A. Courter, Borough Clerk
Erik Peterson Attorney
Borough Manager, Brian Bond

Absent:

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.

Oath of office

Commissioner Kern administered the oath of office to Infinito.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

Mark Van Deursen, Chief of Washing Emergency Squad-recapped the year and what they are expecting for next year:

Year to date over 1500 responses and on pace to go to 1700, which is down five percent from last year. They continue to see a decrease related to traffic accidents, a lot of the tech is from cars stopping themselves. Seeing decrease of overdose emergencies, public access to medications is a big contributing factor. They are continuing to strengthen mutual agreements with other agencies. They welcomed five new career employees this year. They are working with ER nurses to bring them out into the field. Continuing to see a shift in distribution of career to volunteers. Less volunteering but more going the career path. Response policies was discussed. They purchased an automated chest device that does automated chest compressions. They are currently working on the toy drive which is specific to local residents who apply. Discussed new billing practices to maintain federal compliance. Introduced John Mitchel who will take over as Chief January 1st.

Mel Thiel, Executive Director of the BID

Ms. Thiel gave the following report:

- Recapped recent events, Hometown Holiday and Small Business Saturday was this past Saturday; 127 shopping passes were purchased.
- A survey was done to all of the businesses, which results showed it was the best small business Saturday.
- Thanked Washington Fire Department and DPW for all their assistance with the Christmas tree.
- A special thank you to Chris Infinito with the idea of a Community Christmas ornament to be hung on the tree.
- Operation Toy Train was on Sat Dec 2nd. Had over 2600 toys donated.
- Two grand openings this past Sunday. Thalia Bakery and Sports Academy and added that a few more new businesses will be opening shortly.

Candy DePhillips, Broad Street-asked if there has been any decision on Broad Street and what will happen with all these accidents. Mirrors have been knocked off on cars. Stated that her car received over \$17,000 damage to her car.

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

REPORTS

Committee Reports

Sewer

Councilman Infinito stated that next Tuesday him and the Manager will have a meeting and get back on track and moving forward.

Recreation

Councilman France reported that he has been meeting with the Manager about fees.

Streets

Councilman Brown reported that striping of the streets will begin in the Spring.

Cannabis

Councilman Brown stated that Dank Poet will have an opening on January 15th.

Ordinance

Councilwoman Gorshkov reported that she emailed about Johns law to the Attorney to look into. It's regarding a person who is a passenger in a vehicle be held partially responsible if they knowingly let a driver who is under the influence drive and an accident occurs.

VOUCHERS-Approval of Claims

Motion made by Cox and seconded by Musick to approve the vouchers and claims.

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

OLD BUSINESS

Sidewalk Sign ordinance discussions

Attorney Peterson discussed the change in the feedback he received from Manager regarding the feather signs and to increase it to 12 feet .

NEW BUSINESS

Request from Warren County Board of Commissioners: Hosting a Warren County Commissioners meeting in 2024 at borough hall. It was consensus of council to allow the Commissioners to host their meeting at a date to be determined.

Discussion: November meeting dates & times 2024. It was consensus to have the 2024 November meeting on November 12th.

RESOLUTIONS

Motion made by Cox and seconded by Gorshkov to adopt Resolution 2023-145-148

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

RESOLUTION 2023-148
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 22, 2020 to GREYMORR LLC, BMO 85, 5106 CALIFORNIA STREET, OMAHA, NE 68132, in the amount of \$8,904.61 for taxes or other municipal liens assessed for the year 2019 in the name of KASPER, HORST M as supposed owners, and in said assessment and sale were described as 70 ROUTE 31 NORTH, Block 54 Lot 5, which sale was evidenced by Certificate #20-00027 and

WHEREAS, the Collector of Taxes of said taxing district of the Borough of Washington, do certify that on 11/28/2023 and before the right to redeem was cut off, as provided by law, Hanna Kasper claiming to have an interest in said lands, did redeem said lands claimed by GREYMORR LLC by paying the Collector of Taxes of said taxing district of Washington Borough the amount of \$15,279.71 which is the amount necessary to redeem Tax Sale Certificate #20-00027.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, on this 5th day of December, 2023 by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Washington, County of Warren to authorize the Treasurer to issue a check payable to GREYMORR LLC, BMO 85, 5106 CALIFORNIA STREET, OMAHA, NE 68132 in the amount of **\$15,279.71** (This consists of \$15,279.71 Certificate Amount redeemed).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Tax Collector is authorized to cancel this lien on Block 54 Lot 5 from the tax office records.

Motion made by Cox and seconded by Musick to adopt Resolution 2023-149

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

Ayes: 7 Nays: 0

Motion passes.

RESOLUTION 2023-149
RESOLUTION REQUESTING APPROVAL OF ITEMS OF REVENUE AND
APPROPRIATIONS NJSA 40A: 4-87

WHEREAS, NJSA 40A: 4-87 provides that the Director of Division of Local Government Services may approve the insertion of any special item of revenue in the budget of any county or municipality when such item shall have been made available by law and the amount was not determined at the time of the adoption of the budget; and

WHEREAS, the Director may also approve the insertion of an item of appropriation for equal amount,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Governing Body of the Borough of Washington in the County of Warren State of New Jersey, hereby requests the Director of the Division of Local Government Services to approve the insertion of an item of revenue in the budget of the year 2023 in the sum of \$44,000 which is now available from the State of New Jersey

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the like sum of \$44,000 is hereby appropriated under the caption of Other Expenses – Firefighter Grant

Motion made by Cox and seconded by Music to adopt Resolution 2023-150

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

Ayes: 7 Nays: 0

Motion passes.

RESOLUTION 2023 - 150
A RESOLUTION TO VOID CHECK

WHEREAS, check #7435 was written November 22,2023 on the Washington Borough's Operating Account in the amount of \$664.29 and made payable to Postmaster U.S.P.S

WHEREAS, the Treasurer's office was made aware that the above - mentioned check was issued for the wrong amount and that a replacement check should be in the amount of \$656.20; and

WHEREAS, the above -mentioned check be voided, and a replacement check should be issued; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Washington, in the County of Warren, State of New Jersey hereby authorizes the Treasurer to void the aforementioned check.

Motion made by Cox and seconded by Gosh to adopt Resolution 2023-151
Roll call: Brown, Cox, France, Gorshkov, Infinito, Musick and Conry.
Ayes: 7 Nays: 0
Motion passes.

RESOLUTION #2023-151
A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE RELEASE OF SITE IMPROVEMENT
\$47,832 PERFORMANCE BOND FOR THE IMPROVEMENTS TO BLOCK 1, LOT 95
(TACO BELL) HELD IN TRUST BY THE BOROUGH OF WASHINGTON

WHEREAS, OZE JADE, LLC has requested the release of the Site Improvement Performance Bond issued for the site improvements to Block 1, Lot 95 (Taco Bell); and

WHEREAS, Kevin Smith, PE, PP, CME, Borough Engineer, advised that his office performed an inspection of the property and confirmed in a letter dated December 4, 2023, that the site improvement work is satisfactory; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Washington, in the County of Warren, State of New Jersey that the Borough Clerk is authorized to release Performance Bond in the amount of \$47,832.00.

Motion made by Cox and seconded by Musick to adopt Resolution 2023-152

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

RECAP

Manager Bond recapped the following:

- Call from JCPL a new initiative to pay up to 70% to change all of our fluorescent drop in lights throughout the building they will pay 70% and electric bill will be drastically reduced. This could apply to our HVAC system and will be exploring that option to save maybe 70% for the HVAC.

COUNCIL REMARKS

Councilman Brown gave the following remarks:

- Stated that the Manager is doing a great job and saving us a lot of money. Thanked all the professionals for the day in and day out.

Councilwoman Cox gave the following remarks:

- Thanked everyone for coming out and thanked Mark Van Deursen for coming out.
- Thanked Commissioner Kern for here tonight.
- Stated her concerns about keeping informed on updates with concerns with the borough and the habitability update.
- Attorney Peterson stated he has been inquiring to make sure it's been moving along. December 11th is the 90-days deadline. Had Kyle Smith go out and check on status and find out from homeowner what the status is. They took off second floor but not the first floor. Owner was told he had until the 11th, or the town will come in and finish it and charge him. Homeowner was told this he has six days or borough will take next step. Theatre issue, a summons has been issued, Its now in hands of the court. They have until January 9th to make all the repairs. Attorney Peterson stated they can on January 9th and go in on behalf of town and represent the borough at no cost, go to the municipal court and push the issue to get it done.
- Thanked everyone for coming out.

Councilman France gave the following remarks:

- Thanked Mel for the Friday night event. Thanked Washington Emergency Squad for coming out and giving an update.
- Asked if Mr. Rossi is retiring. Attorney Peterson said Kyle Smith will take Mr. Rossi's place.
- Thanked everyone.

Councilman Infinito gave the following remarks:

- Thanked everyone for coming out and for voting for him in the election.

- Attended the ribbon cutting for the two new businesses. Both fantastic ribbon cuttings. Recommends the bakery to everyone.

Councilwoman Gorshkov gave the following statements:

- Thanked everyone. Stated that the toy train was amazing. She and Louann had fun shopping for toys and pictures with Santa. Discussed that toys give kids hope, that there are good people that want to help them and a smile it gives the children.
- Thanked Mel Thiel.

Councilwoman Musick gave the following remarks:

- Thanked everyone for coming out and for staying for the whole meeting.

Mayor Conry gave the following remarks:

- Thanked everyone for coming out. Attended the grand openings. Was at the tree lighting and took pictures with Santa Claus. Rode on the fire truck with Santa.
- Thanked all of council women and men and deputy mayor for working together.
- Thanked Infinito for the sympathy card and stated that she lost another sister this year.
- Thanked everyone for coming out.
- Mayor Conry asked council how they want to move forward with the managers evaluation form received from Cathy. Consensus was to discuss in executive session with all of council at next meeting.

Executive Session 8:15 pm

Motion made by Cox and seconded by Gorshkov to pass a resolution to go into executive session, 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. 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 to return to regular session made by Cox and seconded by Gorshkov, all were in favor.

ADJOURN

Hearing no further business to come before Council, motion made by Musick and seconded by Brown to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 PM, all were in favor.

Laurie A. Courter, RMC
Borough Clerk