

Florence Township Council Executive Session 1/14/26

Florence, New Jersey
January 14, 2026

The Florence Township Council held an executive meeting on the above date in the Municipal Complex, 711 Broad Street, Florence, New Jersey. The meeting was called to order by Council President Frappolli at 7:00 p.m. Council President Frappolli led the Salute to the Flag.

The Opening Statement was read by the Township Clerk: Notice was posted on the municipal bulletin board, published in the Burlington County Times, and placed on the Township website on January 11, 2026 and given to the Courier Post for information.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Upon roll call the following were found to be present:

Present: John Fratinardo, Frederick Gabriele, Gina Sullivan, Joseph Frappolli

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: Talaya Loftin

FIFTEEN (15) MINUTES OF PUBLIC COMMENT

Motion of Fratinardo, seconded by Sullivan to open public comment. Voice vote – All ayes. Seeing no one wishing to be heard, a Motion was made by Fratinardo, seconded by Sullivan to close the public comment portion. Voice vote – All ayes.

BUSINESS

A. Amendments to Shade Tree Code – Chapter 132

Administrator Sahol explained that the NJDEP wants the municipality to have established regulations for all of the trees, not just trees within rights of way or within a certain jurisdictional boundary that the town once chose. The new law regulates removal of trees on private properties and takes jurisdictional control as to what people do with regards to trees. They are going under the guise of stormwater management protection measures. The draft ordinance that they put out last year was extraordinarily burdensome on the residents and it would require a great deal of potential investment on behalf of the residents if they wanted to remove trees on their own property or if they wanted to put in a shed or a swimming pool or deck, etc. and a tree was in the way. Volunteers of the Shade Tree Commission have been weighing this for about a year and seeing what other communities were successful in doing when it came to putting forward their own ordinances. We didn't put forward their exact boilerplate language at the very onset we wanted to see what was sticking and, with the exception of the areas where it discusses the jurisdiction in going in to the private properties, there is very little new. We never had those areas before where it didn't allow for residents to do things on their own property without municipal approval. The rest of the code is almost untouched with the exception of some new definitions that are required. Ted Lovenduski will be in attendance at the next meeting to discuss the Redevelopment Block Grant and he has been involved with the Shade Tree Commission and he may know the answers to some of the questions as to how they address some areas.

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B. Utility Engineer – Mayor

Mayor Marter asked to discuss who Council would like to nominate for our engineering firm since they did not approve Remington & Vernick as the Water and Sewer Engineer at the Reorganization meeting and asked why they did not want Remington & Vernick? Council President Frappolli stated that he did not want the same firm doing both and he got the impression from Council that they felt that no one engineer should have that much authority or power. Mayor Marter asked for recommendations on who Council would like to appoint and explained that ERI is our Zoning and Planning Board planners so she would assume that would be the same situation. Alaimo has carried over from last year because a firm was not chosen last year either and T&M was actually more expensive than CME or ERI therefore she is recommending that Council appoint CME.

Council Representative Gabriele explained he was under the impression that when the vote was denied that the engineer would remain the same as the prior year. Solicitor Wright explained that legally the officer such as the engineer would serve for a period of 1 year or until their replacement is appointed. In 2024 when the term expired and there was no successor appointed, Alaimo stayed as the engineer. There was no other name put forward as an appointment but the Mayor can make other recommendations for a successor. Alaimo will continue to serve as the utility engineer until a replacement is appointed.

Mayor Marter explained that there will not be a vote tonight because there will have to be a resolution appointing a replacement. She asked Council if they want to keep the current engineer? Council Representative Gabriele stated that he thought they were the water and sewer experts. Mayor Marter stated that R&V are the Water and Sewer experts but that Council does not want them. She explained that she chose R&V because with the PFAS plant we put out RFPs and we had a number of responses and at the time Alaimo came in at \$22 Million and R&V came in at \$11 Million. In our November 12th meeting, R&V actually explained that their estimate was coming in \$1 Million less at \$10 Million. Alaimo was twice as much so we chose to have a different engineering firm for our PFAS plant. Also, we are putting in a sewer line on Tall Timber Lane and when we went to proposals Alaimo came in at \$200,000 and R&V came in at \$50,000.

Council Representative Gabriele asked if there were any other quotes received. Administrator Sahol said we could get multiple quotes but we had two engineers that were both engineers of record with the municipality at the time so it made sense. One had experience in the municipality for decades and the other has a recent experience of two years and has worked with both water and sewer disciplines of our utility so it makes sense to ask the two and not to go to someone who has never stepped foot in the community before to try and get up to speed and understand what we are trying to do here. Council Representative Gabriele stated that if you are going to shop it, you might as well go out and get three or four. Administrator Sahol explained that on much larger scale projects we owe it to the residents to do that, we will put out for professional responses. Council Representative Gabriele asked why we don't do that for these things? Administrator Sahol explained that for small projects like these one-offs, it really wouldn't make sense, there is a full set of expectations and design elements that we are seeking and performance that we are going to have to ask them to accommodate. As far as Tall Timber, it was essentially a description of X number of feet, X number of potential connections and the means by which the municipality and the staff in the utility department wanted this thing to be installed. They didn't want a gravity main; they wanted forced mains. A gravity main is very deep, very expensive and a forced main system has an easy set of parameters that could be done. But we did not formalize it into an RFP request with performance data because we had two engineers of record on a relatively small, even the number that came in was very reasonable, under our bid threshold.

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Mayor Marter stated that in each case that we have put anything out to bid, Alaimo has been the most expensive and that is why she was looking to utilize R&V. They already have experience with us, they are already working on the PFAS plant and they are very familiar with the town. And she put up CME just because of the cost of all of the RFPs that we have gotten from Alaimo. Council Representative Sullivan asked if we have used CME in the past? Administrator Sahol stated that Alaimo is the only engineer we used for 30+ years and Mayor Marter stated that it may be time for a change.

Council President Frappolli asked the Solicitor what the next step would be. Solicitor Wright explained that the Mayor and the Clerk would prepare a resolution outlining the Mayor's appointment to be approved at the next meeting. Mayor Marter explained that she chose CME because of cost alone, and her initial recommendation of R&V was because of experience and cost but that was not Council's pleasure.

ACTION

A. FINANCIAL CORRESPONDENCE

Township Clerk's Monthly Report for December 2025

Court Administrator's Monthly Report for December 2025

Motion by Fratinardo, seconded by Gabriele to receive and file. Voice vote – All ayes.

B. MINUTES

Executive Session of December 10, 2025

Regular Session of December 17, 2025

Solicitor Wright made Council aware that there is not a quorum of three current members that were present at the Executive Session so it was a Motion of Fratinardo, seconded by Sullivan to Table the Executive Session meeting minutes from December 10, 2025 until the January 21st meeting. Voice vote – All ayes.

Motion of Fratinardo, seconded by Sullivan to approve the Regular Session meeting minutes of December 17, 2025. Voice vote – All ayes.

C. RESOLUTIONS

2026-47, Appointment of Building Inspector

Motion of Fratinardo, seconded by Gabriele to approve Resolution No. 2026-47.

Upon roll call, the Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Fratinardo, Gabriele, Sullivan, Frappolli

NOES: None

ABSENT: Loftin

Unanimous vote – Motion carried

2026-48, Award Contract for Sewer Department SOP Development

Motion of Fratinardo, seconded by Sullivan to approve Resolution No 2026-48.

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Upon roll call, the Council voted as follows:

YEAS:	Fratinardo, Gabriele, Sullivan, Frappolli
NOES:	None
ABSENT:	Loftin

Unanimous vote – Motion carried

2026-49, Award Engineering Contract for Phase III Broad Street Reconstruction

Administrator Sahol explained that Phase I of this Broad Street project was from Ninth to Fifth Street, Phase II is from Fifth with the hopes to get past Third to roughly Second Street. Working with our engineer we applied for a grant for Phase II which we received. In Phase II we are doing pedestrian safety and traffic calming measures and the island in the middle of Broad Street similar to the one on Second and Hornberger Avenues. There will be a divider island and an area of refuge available at the ends of those islands for people who are crossing Broad Street. Residents have said that by the time they get halfway across people are zipping by or they don't have anywhere that they feel comfortable or safe standing. It will start roughly at the alley across the street from Quick Stop to Fourth Street and break at Fourth. It will start again at Fourth in front of the Broad Street stores and stop at Third and then pick up again at Third from the alley just prior to the church. There has to be a break at the alleys because those are crossover alleys for the waste collection system.

For Phase III, which is essentially Third Street to Front Street, we received a grant for just over \$200,000. The engineer will administer this project through SAGE (System for Administering Grants Electronically) through the State of New Jersey. We don't have that expertise nor do we have the expertise to prepare the plans and specifications to put it out to bid. This is a "not to exceed" and if we were to exceed that amount that is issued, then he has to come back to Council with some justification as to why. That happened once with PFAS, it came in at \$600,000 and he had to come to Council and explain that we were approaching that point where we were not getting the breakthrough of the chemical agents through the media so it made sense for us to do an additional thirty day test period on the media so that we could determine how long that media was going to last for the cleaning of the water and we did that additional thirty day test period on an authorization by Council as an amendment to that contract.

Council Representative Sullivan asked if part of the Phase III engineering was included in Phase II? The Administrator explained that some survey work was done in Phase II and that is why a survey is not included in this scope of work that is being proposed. Council Representative Sullivan asked what the expense for engineering was for Phase III to get a more accurate view of the engineering costs that phase. The Administrator agreed to ask them to break out Phase II survey work and to outline what portion or portions was to the Phase III area.

Council Representative Gabriele asked if it is too late to get another quote for this project? The Administrator explained that this is the engineer of record for the project and they are also the grant applicant of record, they got us the grant. He has never had need when we have an engineer appointed, to seek proposals on Township Engineer's sides. It has only become customary as of late with the utility side based upon a request through the executive branch of the government. If Council wanted this to go back out and ask three additional engineers we would have to get them to turn over the work product and start the process of the design which is already contemplated based on the preliminary that was done as part of the grant application. And then get caught up to speed as to where this engineering firm is and the cost related to that.

Motion of Fratinardo, seconded by Sullivan to approve Resolution No. 2026-49.

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Upon roll call, the Council voted as follows:

YEAS: Fratinardo, Gabriele, Sullivan, Frappolli

NOES: None

ABSENT: Loftin

Unanimous vote – Motion carried

PUBLIC COMMENT

Motion of Fratinardo, seconded by Sullivan to open the meeting to the public at this time.

Adam Jackson – 238 E. Fifth Street, Vice President of baseball asked about having a structured fence installed at the baseball field behind the Legion joining with the softball field and add two teams to that field. They are interested in doing a 50/70 field and softball could keep their field and only the bags would change when needed.

Council President Frappolli said that this came up at the last recreation meeting of 2025 and again in the January meeting. The new President and group coming up are also planning to replace all of the netting on the batting cages through fundraising, they are looking to rent some toilets and they have developed a relationship with softball. Marty Eckert indicated at the Recreation meeting that there may be some fencing that could be used and he was going to look into it. They would like to have tournaments and, when you have a tournament, you need multiple fields and right now we are sort of locked with one field and that would help softball too.

Administrator Sahol explained that there is a limited supply of fence that had been taken down from somewhere else, they are just unsure of how much there is and, if it is not enough, how much is needed? Whatever is missing will obviously need to be made up. Recreation normally takes up improvements and then it comes to Council with the recommendation of the need and they recommend the improvement. That has historically been the case and it vets through out of respect for that Recreation Committee. He asked if the Recreation Committee has agreed and who is going to pay for the difference of what we have and what we need because we have not budgeted for that, it will have to be put it into the 2026 budget.

Council President Frappolli acknowledged Tony Pastore and his hard work and time with the Recreation Committee and the Cricket group and helping in getting that resolved. He stated that he had presented Tony with an award at the Recreation meeting.

Adam Jackson also mentioned that on behalf of softball they want to enclose the batting cages. The Administrator explained that had been a request for many years but it is a 4 inch slab with no footing so to enclose it, we would have to dig that all up and start over. He said that everything is an attractive nuisance today with kids and the softball league had locked it and they got it open again. If we were to fabricate and properly secure those gates they would not be getting in there. But at the same time, closing it would mean that someone would have to open it, you wouldn't be able to just go there and have a pitching practice with your son or daughter. So you are getting to a point where you have to decide which you want, completely close it off with the proper gates or leave it as is, wide open. Council Representative Gabriele asked if there are any cameras or fake cameras. The Administrator said that we don't really prosecute. Council Representative Sullivan said maybe we consider putting a camera there because then you could show the footage. Council President Frappolli stated that they will try to come up with some solutions.

Seeing no one else wishing to be heard, a Motion was made by Gabriele, seconded by Fratinardo to close the public comment portion. Voice vote – All ayes.

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Council President Frappolli announced that on Thursday, January 22nd at 5:00 p.m. there will be a wrestling match at the high school, which is the first time since the 1970s and the first wrestling match ever at this high school. The Florence and Bordentown team will host Hamilton West and he invited all to attend.

Administrator Sahol asked Council to look at their calendars to see what their Saturdays in February look like for the first budget meeting. Mayor Marter explained that in the meeting the department heads come in and we go through their particular department and discuss their budget specifically. It is an in depth meeting that lasted at least six hours last year. Council agreed.

Council President Frappolli asked to have the CFO and Township Auditor come in and go over the situation as to bonding and our bonding ability, etc. The Administrator stated that we have to wait for the auditor to finish the Annual Debt Statement which will probably be started next week and he hopes they will finish the second week of February and once we get those, then we can have an informed conversation.

Council Representative Sullivan shared a program that Senator Singleton posted on his social media page regarding the Historic Property Reinvestment Program and explained that it may be something that we can take advantage of. We could possibly use it in the historic district of Roebling and it would give tax credit awards of 45-60% of eligible costs. Mayor Marter explained that government does not get tax credits because we don't pay taxes but if it is something that we can take advantage of for buildings that we own, or whether it has to be a resident that wants to do a renovation, then they can get that information out to the public. The Administrator agreed to read through it to see if there are any possible projects that we might have and then it can be discussed.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion of Gabriele seconded by Fratinardo to Adjourn. Voice vote – All ayes. Meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Erlston, RMC
Township Clerk
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