

Florence Township Council Regular Session 04/17/24

Florence, New Jersey
April 17, 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

Absent: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Regular Session of April 3, 2024
- Executive Work Session of April 10, 2024

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

FINANCIAL CORRESPONDENCE

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

- Tax Collector’s Monthly Tax Report and Monthly Water & Sewer Report for March 2024
- Court Administrator’s Monthly Report for March 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. Letter from Punam Corporation (DBA Gray’s Liquor Store) requesting an amendment to the ordinance requirement that there be no more than two liquor stores within a 1 mile radius

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Administrator Sahol explained at the present time there are two licensed establishments within 1-mile of the majority of Route 130 and this gentleman is intending to try to continue to operate a licensed facility, his former business was located in Harkins Plaza. It would require a very small amendment to the Ordinance.

- B. Letter from Arbor Day Foundation Recognizing Florence Township as a “Tree City USA”
- C. Police Chief’s Monthly Report for March 2024

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

APPLICATIONS

- A. Off-Premise 50/50 for Riverbank Charter School on June 1, 2024 at 8:30 p.m. at Nyikita Field, Hornberger & 10th Avenues, Roebling, NJ 08554

Motion of Haas, seconded by Fratinaro to approve the application. Voice vote – All ayes

C

**RESOLUTION NO. 2024-101
Read Budget by Title Only**

Motion by Fratinaro, seconded by Loftin to approve Resolution No 2024-101.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION OF 2024 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Council President Baldorossi opened the Public Hearing. Seeing no one wishing to be heard, it was a Motion of Haas, seconded by Fratinaro to close the public comment portion. Voice vote – All ayes.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2024-102
Adopt Municipal Budget**

Motion of Haas, seconded by Fratinaro to approve Resolution No 2024-102.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

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 Fratinaro, seconded by Haas to close the public portion of the meeting. Voice vote – All ayes.

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RESOLUTIONS

**RESOLUTION NO. 2024-103
Authorize Refund of Construction Permit**

Motion of Haas, seconded by Frappolli to approve Resolution No. 2024-103.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

**RESOLUTION NO. 2024-104
Authorize W&S Engineer to Prepare Specifications and Solicit Bids for the Hornberger Station to
Mallard Creek Station Connection**

Administrator Sahol explained that the Hornberger Pump Station is being relocated to the property adjacent to Project Freedom. Currently that pump station directs the flow of wastewater to the Norman Avenue pump station which is an aging station, from there the wastewater flows through the balance of the community to another aging station. This resolution allows the township’s water & sewer engineer to prepare specifications and solicit bids to change the direction of the flow of wastewater. The flow will be redirected under Route 130 to the Mallard Creek Pump Station which is a workhorse that goes into the interceptor lines which are actually modern, plastic lines and not like the older lines we have in the community. This has already been funded through a bond ordinance.

Motion of Frappolli, seconded by Fratinardo to approve Resolution No. 2024-104.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

**RESOLUTION NO. 2024-105
Authorizing Sale of \$18,825,000 Principal Amount of General Obligation Bonds, Series 2024;
Consisting of \$6,055,000 General Improvement Bonds and \$12,777,000 Water/Sewer Utility Bonds;
and Authorizing the Matters Relating Thereof**

Administrator Sahol supplied Council with a memorandum with a chart attached outlining the aging of the temporary ordinances that were put in place and go back to 2015. Temporary ordinances like this can only be carried for 10 years but before we get to that 10 year mark we need to take the temporary bonds and consolidate into permanent financing. There are also some bonds that are relatively new from 2019-2023 that we have only been making interest payments on. The market seems favorable for a conversion to permanent funding at the present time. Additionally with the adoption of the budget, you are setting yourself up to get a pretty good rating call which we have to do next week. When you get rating calls, one of the things they look at is the solvency of the municipality. If you have been operating without recognizing that you need to increase your revenues even though your expenses are increasing, where you are holding the line and not making those necessary increases, the ratings may not be as favorable.

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Mayor Marter added that we are in a situation right now which they call an inverted yield curve where long term money is actually less expensive than short term money. Usually, it is in a reverse so that is why our financial advisors are suggesting we do this now. We are going to be able to continue to make the same payments we have been making however we are going to be able to hit more of our debt and pay down our debt faster. It is really to our benefit to move forward with this.

Administrator Sahol said that there will be stability in understanding what the debt service payments are now for the term so it can get built into future budgets. There is certainty, which is very important when you are trying to do your budget. And it starts to reduce the principal, you are not just paying on interest because that gets us nowhere. Taking the action now, not only is it required, but it is prudent.

Motion of Frappolli, seconded by Fratinardo to approve Resolution No. 2024-105.

Upon roll call, Council voted as follows:

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

ORDINANCES

None at this time.

REPORTS OF COMMITEES, BOARDS AND OFFICERS

Council Representative Frappolli stated that Ted Lovenduski attended the Library Association meeting and the association greatly appreciated his feedback regarding some of the questions and issues that they have. Council Representative Baldorossi asked Council Representative Frappolli if they are going to memorialize past members of the Library Association with a plaque or something of that nature. Mr. Frappolli agreed that is great idea and he will bring it up at the next meeting.

REPORTS: ADMINISTRATION

Mayor

Mayor Marter stated that she was really pleased with the amount of people that came out to the listening meeting and the ideas that people came with, as well as concerns, issues and questions. There were eight department heads in attendance and she got emails afterwards thanking her for putting it together stating that people felt like they had an opportunity not only to just talk with us but to talk with each other too. She mentioned that Administrator Sahol kept notes and she has 36 different items written down so everyone can get together and figure out what we can do. There were some questions and answers and many people had questions about PFAS. Our department heads for water and for sewer were in attendance to discuss what is going on with that. She thinks that was the most eye opening part of the meeting when Jeff Smith was telling them about the steps that they have to go through in order to be able to test a well. Every single time they come out to do a test, they can't have washed their hair, they can't have taken a shower for a period of time, they can't wear clothes that have been washed within the last 10 days, etc. Everything that they wear has to be bagged because everything we have that we wear, our makeup, our shampoos, our soaps all have PFAS in them and it can affect the result.

There were questions about how we know what is in any of these warehouses and if there is anything toxic in any of them? Jim Hoey, the head for our Building Department was able to explain that they are inspected and they know exactly what is in each one of those buildings and was able to put their mind at ease. There were also questions for the Police Chief about the yield signs in Roebling instead of stop signs. We have a long list of things to go through together and see what can be done to not just fix the things that are problems,

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but take into consideration some of the ideas because we all live here and we all want it better for everyone. Council asked for the information on what the concerns and discussions were about and Mayor Marter once the issues are discussed a detailed report will be given to Council.

Mayor Marter mentioned that Patriotic Day is coming and Judy King of the Florence Historical Society will be our Grand Marshal this year. She also reminded everyone that the town wide cleanup day is Saturday, April 20th.

Administrator

Council Representative Haas asked the Administrator for an update on the Police Department and he explained that he does not have any updates at this time but agreed to have something in writing to Council before the next meeting.

Council Representative Loftin asked about the playground and if there is a completion date. Administrator Sahol stated the contractor and our landscape architect have a dispute over the compaction of the topsoil. The contractor has estimated that the playground will be complete by the second week in May. Administrator Sahol said that this date was unreasonable and we are pushing to have the park safely opened in the near future.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

Administrator Sahol discussed the letter from Punam Corporation requesting an amendment to the ordinance requirement that there be no more than two liquor stores within a 1-mile radius. This would change the two to three liquor stores. Council Representative Loftin asked if this would negatively impact the other liquor store and take business away? Administrator Sahol stated that anytime you introduce competition there is a possibility of that. The location would be on the northbound side of Route 130 whereas the current liquor store is located on the southbound side. Council is in agreement to introduce the ordinance at the next meeting.

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

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ADJOURNMENT

Motion of Frappolli, seconded by Fratinardo to adjourn. Voice vote – All Ayes. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy L. Erlston, RMC
Township Clerk
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