

CITY OF PORT REPUBLIC
6:30 P.M. MARCH 12, 2024
CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Adequate notice of this meeting was given as required by the Open Public Meetings Act. On the motion of Councilmember Allgeyer, seconded by Councilmember Bugdon and carried to close the workshop portion of the meeting.

COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT: Steven Allgeyer, Doris Bugdon, Roger Giberson (via Zoom), Eugene Hawn, Donna Riegel (via Zoom), Michael Turner

COUNCILMEMBERS ABSENT: Jeffrey Ropiecki

MAYOR: Monica Giberson

CITY CLERK: Kimberly A. Campellone, RMC

DEPUTY CITY CLERK: Brandy M. Blevin, RMC

ATTORNEY: William Kaufmann, Esq.

Councilmember Allgeyer called the meeting to order and lead the flag salute. This is to advise the general public and to instruct that it be recorded in the minutes, in compliance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975, entitled the "Open Public Meetings Act". The Municipal Clerk of the City of Port Republic posted at City Hall, 143 Main Street, Port Republic and mailed and/or faxed to the Atlantic City Press and the Hammonton Gazette, a meeting notice setting for the time, date, and location of this meeting.

MOTION TO APPROVE FEBRUARY 13, CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES:

On the motion of Councilmember Bugdon, seconded of Councilmember Turner and carried to approve the February 13, 2024, City Council Meeting Minutes.

YES: Allgeyer, Bugdon, Giberson, Hawn, Riegel, Turner

NO:

ABSENT: Ropiecki

ABSTAIN:

MOTION TO APPROVE MARCH 2024 BILL LIST:

On the motion of Councilmember Bugdon, seconded of Councilmember Hawn and carried to approve the February 2024 Bill List.

YES: Allgeyer, Bugdon, Giberson, Hawn, Riegel, Turner

NO:

ABSENT: Ropiecki

ABSTAIN:

MOTION TO PAY ALL SIGNED BILLS:

On the motion of Councilmember Bugdon, seconded of Councilmember Turner and carried to pay all signed bills.

YES: Allgeyer, Bugdon, Giberson, Hawn, Riegel, Turner

NO:

ABSENT: Ropiecki

ABSTAIN:

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Police/Emergency Management:

Emergency Management Coordinator Scott Winneberger reported that the new cameras are working out very well.

Administrative/Personnel:

Councilmember Allgeyer reported that Council received monthly reports from the CFO, Tax Collector, and Municipal Clerk.

The CFO report showed an ending balance amount of \$1,453,519.71 in the current fund as of January 2024.

The Tax Collector's February 2024 report showed a total amount received of \$719,620.54.

The Municipal Clerk's report for February 2024 showed a total amount received of \$24,853.81.

Public Works:

Councilmember Allgeyer reported that everything is running smoothly. DPW placed rock and gravel around the embankment at Nacote Creek. Swenson Welding should have the welding complete on the compactor by the end of the week.

Recreation:

Councilmember Bugdon reported that she is bringing forth change with the beach badges. Season passes will be \$10.00 before Memorial Day and \$30.00 after Memorial Day. Senior passes will be \$5.00. Daily passes will be \$7.00 and weekly passes will be \$10.00. The reason for the increase is the salary increase for minimum wage. This will help defray costs for the Lifeguards and Beach Badge Attendants. The increase will need to be approved by ordinance. They also would like to have the Beach Badge Attendants work shorter periods of time. City Solicitor Bill Kauffman will work on the ordinance for introduction at the Special City Council Meeting on March 19, 2024.

Councilmember Bugdon would also like to start charging the baseball teams a fee to utilize the ballfield in her research she found that the average rate charged is \$500. The Recreation Committee determined that a fee of \$400 would be fair to charge the teams seasonally. They would like to start charging for the Fall 2024 season.

Fire and Ambulance:

Councilmember Hawn reported that everything is running smoothly in the Fire Department. They did receive a grant that will be used to purchase equipment.

Planning Board:

No report

Construction/Code Enforcement:

Construction Official Kevin Cain submitted a report for the month of February. During the month of February 2024, a total of 19 inspections were done, and the following permits were issued:

- 8 Alterations
- 0 Demos

- 0 New
- 0 Additions
- 1 Zoning Permit
- 0 CO Inspection for Resale
- Total of 9

There are currently no code enforcement issues.

Senior Services:

No report

Land Use:

City Solicitor William Kaufmann shared that Mayor Giberson, Council President Giberson, Councilmember Turner, Councilmember Hawn, Engineer Doran, Mr. Scarborough, along with himself and Attorney Ridgway met on March 1, 2024. Mr. Ridgway and Mr. Scarborough presented the revisions they wished to make to the lease which was included in the bid package. Most of the changes could not be made since this was a project which was bid publicly. They did however agree to change to security deposit to an escrow account in the amount of \$10,000. Mr. Scarborough had stated that their engineer would develop a fill plan and present that to Council. Attorney Kaufmann was going to make a revision to the paragraph in the lease regarding the bond so that the bond would be the same amount but would only be applicable to areas of disturbance. Since the meeting, Mr. Ridgway reached out to Attorney Kaufmann and told him that Mr. Scarborough would like to know if the City would be interested in including an option to purchase the property at the end of the term. He took this suggestion to Mayor and Council President, and both gave a resounding no. He relayed the message to Mr. Ridgway and told him that the lease must be signed no later than the City Council's next meeting which will be on March 19th. Furthermore, Mr. Ridgway and Attorney Kaufmann discussed the term of the lease. The current term is 5 years with a 2-year option. They are looking to have the ability to be there for 15 years. If this is something Council is considering, they would need to rebid the project.

Councilmember Riegel stated that the lease needs to stay exactly as it was bid. She feels that making any changes could be a liability to the City. She also questioned when the deadline to sign the lease was changed to the 19th. She thought the date given was today. Attorney Kaufmann agreed, but he was on vacation and was unable to get things done.

Councilmember Turner stated that he attended the meeting, and his main takeaway was that Mr. Scarborough told them that the reason he wants to extend the lease is because he does not do enough volume to get the City the numbers we are really interested in. He feels the way it was bid does not benefit the bidder of the City as well as it could. He strongly recommended that Council rescind the award of the bid and rebid the project with verbiage that benefits the bidders and the City. If Council chooses to rebid the project, he thinks that the option for shared services should be included. This is a huge benefit for both the bidder and the City.

Council President Giberson expressed that he feels that Council should at least allow Attorney Kaufmann to respond back to Mr. Ridgway and Mr. Scarborough and give them until the 19th to see where they come in at. Council can make an informed decision then.

Councilmember Riegel questioned if they originally had a 14-day window in December once the bid was awarded to sign the lease. Attorney Kaufmann and Council President Giberson responded that they did have that time frame.

On the motion of Councilmember Turner, seconded of Councilmember Riegel to rescind the awarded bid and to rebid the project.

YES: Allgeyer, Bugdon, Riegel, Turner

NO: Giberson, Hawn

ABSENT: Ropiecki

ABSTAIN:

Attorney Kaufmann will have a resolution drafted to rescind the bid for the next City Council Meeting. He will also work on drafting the lease for the rebid. The bid will include a minimum price of the material and also the option of a shared service.

OPEN TO PUBLIC PORTION:

On the motion of Councilmember Bugdon, seconded of Councilmember Turner and carried to open public portion.

Bob Haviland, 316 English Creek Road, discussed how it is difficult for the audience to hear when Mayor and Council are speaking. He suggested they look into getting a sound system in Council Chambers. Councilmember Bugdon agreed.

John Yochim, Assistant Chief of Port Republic Volunteer Fire Company, spoke regarding the situation of the neighboring property installing a fence which is encroaching the fire department's property. Attorney Kaufmann will draft a letter to the property owner on behalf of the fire department. Assistant Chief Yochim also questioned who would be responsible for the maintenance of the gravel mine property once bid again. Councilmember Turner responded that maintenance would be the responsibility of the awarded bidder.

Paul Smisek, 111 Moss Mill Road, asked for clarification for the bid that Council voted to rescind. He questioned if the contractor was to sign the lease between now and next week would it still be rescinded. Attorney Kaufmann responded that they are no longer giving them the opportunity to sign the lease and it is being rescinded as of tonight. A resolution will be listed on the next City Council Meeting agenda.

CLOSE TO PUBLIC PORTION

Hearing nothing more from the public, on the motion of Councilmember Bugdon, seconded of Councilmember Turner and carried to close the public portion.

CORRESPONDENCE:

None

RESOLUTIONS:

43-2024 Resolution Adding Depository Funds - 2024

On the motion of Councilmember Bugdon, seconded of Councilmember Turner and carried to adopt Resolution 43-2024.

YES: Allgeyer, Bugdon, Giberson, Hawn, Riegel, Turner
NO:
ABSENT: Ropiecki
ABSTAIN:

ORDINANCES:

01-2024 An Ordinance Establishing the Salaries and Wages of Certain Officials, Officers, and Employees of the City of Port Republic

On the motion of Councilmember Bugdon, seconded of Councilmember Turner and carried.

YES: Allgeyer, Bugdon, Giberson, Hawn, Riegel, Turner
NO:
ABSENT: Ropiecki
ABSTAIN:

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

- CDBG FY2024 Kickoff Meeting to be held virtually on March 19, 2024, at 10 am
Acknowledged
- 2024 Jersey Genesis Triathlon will be held on Saturday, June 8, 2024
Acknowledged
- 2024 Community Day will be on Saturday, June 15, 2024, with a rain date of Saturday June 22nd
Acknowledged

MAYORS REPORT/PROCLAMTIONS:

Mayor Giberson reported:

- Earth Day will be April 27th. This will be done with the Port Green Team and various crafters in town.
- On Saturday, March 16th at 2 pm there will be a yoga class held at City Hall. This is part of the Mayor's lifelong learning initiative.
- In the future they will be hosting a finance meeting called a lunch and learn.
- The School Board held a meeting the night before (March 11th) and has been working hard to get the word out about what is going on with the budget.
- They tapped the maple trees here and received 6 tbsp of syrup. She will be making a treat using this syrup at the next Mayor's Walking Club.

OPEN TO PUBLIC PORTION:

On the motion of Councilmember Bugdon, seconded by Councilmember Turner and carried to open the public portion.

Paul Smisek, 111 Moss Mill Road, explained an issue he has been having with a dead tree that he is certain is in the right-of-way. He has contacted the County but he has gotten nowhere in dealing with

them. Clerk Campellone responded that she will contact the County on Mr. Smisek's behalf to see if she can get any answers for him.

Jill Yochim, 456 Chestnut Neck Road, stated that she received a call today that the referendum was approved and questioned what the process will be now for the City. Attorney Kaufmann responded that the referendum has not been approved, but rather the State has responded to the City that they are not objecting to the referendum moving forward if Council decides that they would like to do so. The next step will be for City Council to adopt a resolution authorizing the referendum to proceed on April 16th. The resolution will include the public question and the explanatory statement. The Division of Local Government Services needs to approve both the public question and the explanatory statement. He has drafted both and sent them to the State. We are waiting on their response.

Kevin Wessler, 609 Chestnut Neck Road, asked if a second reading would be needed on the referendum resolution. Attorney Kaufmann responded that no second reading is needed as it is a resolution and not an ordinance.

Eric Stevenson, 345 Upper Pomona Avenue, questioned what the fees for the usage of the baseball fields would be used for. Councilmember Bugdon responded that the funds would be used to maintain the area. Councilmember Turner added that they would like to make upgrades such as the fence and to fertilize the field. These funds would help supplement the costs of those projects.

CLOSE TO PUBLIC PORTION:

Hearing nothing more from the public, Councilmember Bugdon moved, seconded of Councilmember Turner and carried to close the public portion.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

ES 3-2024 Authorization to Enter into Executive Session Regarding:

1. N/A

ADJOURNMENT

On the motion of Councilmember Bugdon, seconded of Councilmember Turner and carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly A. Campellone, RMC
Municipal Clerk