

**CITY OF PORT REPUBLIC
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 12, 2024 – 6:30 pm**

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

COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT: Steven Allgeyer, Doris Bugdon, Roger Giberson, Eugene Hawn, Donna Riegel, Jeffrey Ropiecki, Michael Turner

COUNCILMEMBERS ABSENT:

MAYOR: Monica Giberson

MUNICIPAL CLERK: Brandy M. Blevin, RMC

ATTORNEY: William J. Kaufmann, Esq.

Council President Giberson 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 OCTOBER 8, 2024, CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES:

On the motion of Councilmember Bugdon, seconded of Councilmember Allgeyer and carried to approve the October 8, 2024, City Council Meeting Minutes.

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

NO:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

MOTION TO APPROVE NOVEMBER 2024 BILL LIST:

On the motion of Councilmember Ropiecki, seconded of Councilmember Allgeyer and carried to approve the November 2024 Bill List.

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

NO:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

MOTION TO PAY ALL SIGNED BILLS:

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

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

NO:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Police/Emergency Management:

Scott Winneberger reported that the Emergency Operation Plan for the City is in its final stages and should be approved and ready to submit within a week or two. The cameras at the public works yard have been installed and the project should be completed soon.

Administrative/Personnel:

Council President Giberson reported that Council received monthly reports from the Municipal Clerk, Tax Collector and Chief Financial Officer.

The Municipal Clerk's report for October 2024 showed a total amount received of \$8,698.46.

The Tax Collector's October 2024 report showed a total amount received of \$211,790.17.

The Chief Financial Officer provided a report showing the budgeted amounts to actual amounts expended through October 31, 2024.

Council President Giberson stated that everything is running smoothly, and that Clerk Blevin and Deputy City Clerk Morris are doing a great job.

Public Works:

Councilmember Allgeyer reported that the department completed the retaining wall and fence at the beach. The storm drains have been cleaned for the Fall. They are placing the millings behind the brush pile and will move the brush pile back later. They have painted the swing sets, the railings, swings and chairs as part of the punch list provided by Statewide Insurance. They are starting to put rocks around the bank and will be going back to cutting trees. Everything else is running great.

Recreation:

Councilmember Bugdon reported that the Tree Lighting Event will be on Thursday, December 5th at 6 pm. The Fire Department will be bringing Santa Claus to the park and Port School will be providing the music. Councilmember Turner added that the tree looks great.

Fire and Ambulance:

Councilmember Hawn reported that everything is running smoothly at the fire house. This past month has been busier. They sold out at their October dinner by 6 pm. They are starting to plan for taking Santa around town on the fire trucks and will be picking a date soon. He thanked Councilmember Bugdon for donating the candy canes.

Planning Board:

No report

Construction/Code Enforcement:

No report

Senior Services:

Councilmember Bugdon reported that she has not received any requests. She is working on sharing information from Atlantic County for services that are available to seniors.

Land Use:

Council President Giberson reported that the Committee met with both companies that submitted RFPs for the Redevelopment of 400 English Creek Road and this will be discussed during Executive Session.

OPEN TO PUBLIC PORTION:

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

John Yochim, 462 Chestnut Neck Road, questioned if there would be an insurance requirement for the redevelopment site. Attorney Kaufmann responded that there is an insurance requirement.

Joe Martin, 5 Mill Street, asked Scott Winneberger to elaborate on the cameras he was discussing earlier. Scott responded that cameras have been placed at the Transfer Station and Public Works yard. Mr. Martin asked if a camera would be placed at Fireman's Pond. Scott responded that a camera there was not a part of the original plan, but it can be looked into. He did add that a lot of Fireman's Pond can be seen now from existing cameras. Mr. Martin added that it would be good to have a camera added to the beach.

Leah Kaithern from EcoGrit Mechanical Dredging, one of the companies that submitted a proposal for the Redevelopment of 400 English Creek Road, wanted to speak in a public forum to advise that last year in dredging operations their company moved over 250,000 cubic yards of sediment with much more in the pipeline for the coming years. If they are chosen for the redevelopment, that volume will be directed to the site. They are eager to work with the City and are excited about their proposal.

Dean Duncan, 286 Old New York Road, spoke about the County not cutting along Old New York Road and other areas. Mayor Giberson responded that the County has been notified. Mr. Duncan also questioned why water is being wasted on putting it on the road into the Transfer Station. It sticks to your vehicle, and we are also in the middle of a drought. He says that anyone he has asked about it does not like it. Council President Giberson responded that it is being done because when the Transfer Station was being designed and built, we were only allowed to put down a dirt roadway. But he said that they will try to do something to alleviate this issue in the near future. Mr. Martin stated he seconded Mr. Duncan's complaint.

CLOSE TO PUBLIC PORTION:

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

CORRESPONDENCE:

- Memorandum from James M. Rutala Associates, LLC Regarding 2025 NJDEP Green Acres Grant Program (*deadline to apply – February 5, 2025*)

Acknowledged

- Memorandum from James M. Rutala Associates, LLC Regarding Grant Opportunity – FY2025 Local Recreation Improvement Grant (*deadline to apply – January 31, 2025*)

Acknowledged – Mayor Giberson stated she feels we need to apply for this grant again. We have applied for it twice and have received funding which will be used for the Tennis/Basketball/Pickleball Court Project.

RESOLUTIONS:

91-2024 Resolution of the City of Port Republic, County of Atlantic, State of New Jersey Confirming the Review & Completion of the CY2023/SFY2024 Best Practices Inventory

On the motion of Councilmember Allgeyer, seconded of Councilmember Bugdon and carried to adopt Resolution 91-2024.

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

NO:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

ORDINANCES – 1ST READING/INTRODUCTION:

None

ORDINANCES – 2nd READING/ADOPTION:

08-2024 Establishing Office of City Engineer

On the motion of Councilmember Allgeyer, seconded by Councilmember Riegel and carried to open for public hearing.

Attorney Kaufmann explained that there is a statute that indicates that in every municipality the governing body by ordinance shall provide for the appointment of a municipal engineer.

Research was done and we could not find an ordinance on file for the City so this is a cleanup.

This position will be a three-year term.

Hearing nothing from the public, Councilmember Allgeyer moved, seconded of Councilmember Bugdon and carried to close the public hearing.

On the motion of Councilmember Bugdon, seconded of Councilmember Allgeyer and carried to adopt Ordinance 08-2024.

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

NO:

ABSENT:
ABSTAIN:

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- Reconstruction of the Tennis, Pickleball & Basketball Courts at Park Avenue Rebid

Councilmember Turner reviewed the updated bid for the project and it looked good to him. The project will be readvertised, and the bids will be opened on December 5th. Council President Giberson stated that it is time to start the demolition work on the courts by our Department of Public Works. Councilmember Allgeyer will speak with DPW Director Bill Montag.

- Coronavirus State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (*funds must be obligated/encumbered by December 31, 2024*)

Council President Giberson asked Council to send ideas on what they would like the funds to be used for to Clerk Blevin and she will work with the CFO and Auditor to see if they are allowable uses. Councilmember Allgeyer added that there is work that needs to be done on City Hall.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Playground Inspection Report from Statewide Insurance Company

The Department of Public Works is working on the deficiencies cited in the report.

- Tree Lighting Event – Thursday, December 5th at 6:00 pm
- City Holiday Party – Tuesday, December 10th following City Council Meeting

MAYORS REPORT/PROCLAMTIONS:

Mayor Giberson reported:

- The Fall Festival went really well and it was a beautiful night. A food truck came for the first time and they had over 400 orders. Can-man from the ACUA was in attendance along with Regal Movie Theatres to hand out popcorn for the movie. Mayor Giberson suggested that at next year's trunk-or-treat all councilmembers should have a trunk and hand out candy.
- A tree that was donated by Howard and Roberta Little was planted in Frank Liard's memory.
- Bill Smallwood of the Port Republic Athletic Fund would like to purchase a pirate ship playground. We checked with the insurance company and there will be no additional cost to the City. Mr. Smallwood is asking that the City pay to mulch or surface the playground area. She will ask Bill Montag to look into this.
- She wrote a letter to the County regarding the drainage issue by the new bridge. They responded that the job will be included in their 2025 budget.

OPEN TO PUBLIC PORTION:

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

Stewart Farrell, former resident of Port Republic, spoke to Mayor and Council regarding an issue he has incurred when selling his property. There is some confusion on the existence of a right of way which is referred to in his survey as Clarks Mill Pond Road. The right of way does not exist on City records. Council President Giberson instructed Mr. Farrell to send his most recent survey to Clerk Blevin and she will send the document to Attorney Kaufmann to review and investigate further.

Tom Van Syckle, 52 Adams Avenue, wanted to reiterate the issue of the County not mowing their roadways throughout town. Mayor Giberson will reach out to the County again regarding this issue.

CLOSE TO PUBLIC PORTION:

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

ES 11-2024 Authorization to Enter into Executive Session Regarding:

1. Proposals for the Redevelopment of the 400 English Creek (Block 24, Lot 34) Redevelopment Area

Attorney Kaufmann informed the public that at the close of executive session there is a possibility that official action may be taken.

On the motion of Councilmember Turner, seconded of Councilmember Allgeyer and carried to adopt Resolution ES 11-2024.

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

NO:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

On the motion of Councilmember Bugdon, seconded by Councilmember Allgeyer and carried to close executive session.

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

NO:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

ADJOURNMENT

On the motion of Councilmember Riegel, seconded of Councilmember Allgeyer and carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brandy M. Blevin, RMC
Municipal Clerk