

**CITY OF PORT REPUBLIC
COUNCIL REORGANIZATION MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 7, 2025 – 6:00 pm**

Municipal Clerk Brandy M. Blevin 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.

INVOCATION:

Invocation given by Pastor Frank Brown of Port Community Church

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH OF OFFICE:

Roger Giberson, Council-at-Large, term commencing 1/1/2025, term expiring 12/31/2028
Oath of Office administered by Mayor Monica Giberson

David L. Crawford, Ward II, term commencing 1/1/2025, term expiring 12/31/2027
Oath of Office administered by Mayor Monica Giberson

COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT: David Crawford, Roger Giberson, Eugene Hawn, Jeffrey Ropiecki, Michael Turner

COUNCILMEMBERS ABSENT: Steven Allgeyer, Donna Riegel

MAYOR: Monica Giberson

MUNICIPAL CLERK: Brandy M. Blevin, RMC, Municipal Clerk

ATTORNEY: William Kaufmann, Esq.

NOMINATION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT

On the motion of Councilmember Ropiecki, seconded by Councilmember Hawn and carried to nominate Roger Giberson for Council President.

YES: Crawford, Giberson, Hawn, Ropiecki Turner

NO:

ABSENT: Allgeyer, Riegel

ABSTAIN:

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH OF OFFICE FOR COUNCIL PRESIDENT:

Oath of Office for a one-year term administered to Roger Giberson by Mayor Monica Giberson

ELECTION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE:

On the motion of Council President Giberson, seconded by Councilmember Ropiecki and carried to nominate Steven Allgeyer as Council President Pro Tempore.

YES: Crawford, Giberson, Hawn, Nass, Ropiecki, Turner

NO:

ABSENT: Allgeyer, Riegel

ABSTAIN:

MAYOR'S STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS:

State of the City Address given by Mayor Monica Giberson:

I am proud to say we made it through 2024 with lots of high points. Today we just negotiated with the Central Municipal Court to pay less than \$10,000 from what they were asking us to pay. With the revenue we receive from the courts, this enables the City to break even. When the court was in Port Republic, we lost approximately \$10,000 per year.

We have a beautiful sign in front of our building, which was 10 years in the making. Our well monitoring for the old transfer station was changed to include less chemicals being tested and fewer times per year being tested as there were no real contaminants detected. This leaves our taxpayers with a significant savings.

We passed a referendum for Port Republic School which was a huge learning curve, especially for Brandy who had to navigate a system that even the county was unsure of. The referendum was a huge help to the future of our school.

We passed the redevelopment plan and awarded the job of managing the filling of our gravel pit with clean dredgings which will start by the end of this year, once all permits are obtained. Extra revenue is always a good thing.

The rebuilding of the basketball court, tennis court and added pickleball courts was awarded and the project will begin in the spring. The financing of the project all fell into place which in the beginning seemed insurmountable. All the funding is now in place for this new recreational area.

We sold the old city garage to the Heritage Society who is in the process of raising money to refurbish this building into a place to house Port Republic artifacts and a community meeting space.

We had a milestone celebration for our volunteer fire fighters during Port Day to recognize the 30 volunteers and their commitment to keeping us safe. I am so impressed with their dedication.

Cameras have been installed to upgrade our security system with more cameras to come this year.

We completed the paving of Mill Street with grant money and received grants for the repaving of Adams and Pomona Avenues, which will be done in the upcoming year.

Our long-time City Clerk Kim Campellone retired, and our new team member Lisa Morris was hired as our new Deputy Clerk. She is now involved in the very long process of learning how to negotiate all of the ever-changing tasks. This has been a particularly hard year for Brandy, with so many changes and unknowns but she approaches each day with a smile on her face and always goes above and beyond what is expected. Thank you, Brandy. Dave and Kyle, under the direction of Bill Montag, have done an incredible job in Port which should put the county to shame.

We are so fortunate to have Scott Winneberger as our Emergency Management Coordinator. I had gone to the Fire House when we had the missing person incident and was overwhelmed by the efficiency and organization of all the teams that came to help.

I am so grateful for the pirate ship playground that was installed on January 2nd. With the direction of Bill and Kathy Smallwood, the Port Republic Athletic Fund paid to have it built, with the City only paying for the labor to install the perimeter and the mulch. Already it is a big hit with our younger residents even in the cold weather. I hope that we will be able to add more items to play on in the coming year.

We have lots of projects already started for 2025 which I will save for the 2026 State of the City address.

I am so proud to be mayor of such a unique place. Sometimes it is overwhelming to think the decisions we make have a huge impact on our future generations. I pray for wisdom for each one of us and the realization of how fortunate we all are to be here. I can't wait to see what 2025 has in store for us.

Consent Agenda: *All matters listed under the Consent Agenda are considered to be routine by this City Council and will be enacted by one motion in the form listed. There will be no separate discussion of these items. If discussion is desired, that item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and will be considered separately.*

RESOLUTIONS

- No. 1-2025 Approving Temporary Budget for 2025
- No. 2-2025 Authorization of Cash Management Plan
- No. 3-2025 Establishing Depository Funds for 2024
- No. 4-2025 Authorization of Petty Cash Fund in the amount of \$100.00
- No. 5-2025 Establishing Charges for Municipal Public Records
- No. 6-2025 Governing Body Certification Pursuant to P.L. 2017, C. 183 of Compliance with the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's "Enforcement Guidance on the Consideration of Arrest and Conviction Records in Employment Decisions Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964"
- No. 7-2025 Resolution Indicating the Schedule of Regular City Council Meetings for the Year 2025
- No. 8-2025 Establishing Rules of Order
- No. 9-2025 Annual Appointments
- No. 10-2025 Appointment of Auditor *namely Nancy Sbrolla, CPA, RMA of Ford, Scott & Associates, LLC*
- No. 11-2025 Appointment of City Solicitor *namely William Kaufmann, Esq. of Nehmad, Davis & Goldstein, PC*
- No. 12-2025 Appointment of Conflict Municipal Attorney *namely Joseph McGroarty, Esq. of Fitzgerald McGroarty*
- No. 13-2025 Appointment of Planning Board Solicitor *namely Joseph McGroarty, Esq. of Fitzgerald McGroarty*
- No. 14-2025 Appointment of Bond Counsel *namely Joel Fleishman, Esq. of Fleishman Daniels Law Offices, LLC*
- No. 15-2025 Appointment of Risk Management Consultant *namely John D'Agostino*
- No. 16-2025 Appointing Fund Commissioner *namely Monica Giberson*
- No. 17-2025 Appointment of Public Safety Director *namely Scott Winneberger*
- No. 18-2025 Appointment of DPW Consultant & Stormwater Management Coordinator *namely Bill Montag*
- No. 19-2025 Appointment of PACO *namely Brandy M. Blevin*
- No. 20-2025 Appointment of Animal Control Company *namely A-Academy*
- No. 21-2025 Appointment of Cleaner for City Hall *namely Maria Hamill*
- No. 22-2025 Appointment of Emergency Management Coordinator *namely Scott Winneberger*
- No. 23-2025 Authorizing an Agreement with Electronic Recyclers International
- No. 24-2025 Authorization to Perform Aerial Applications for Mosquito Control

- No. 25-2025 Authorizing an Agreement with Deer Carcass Removal Service
No. 26-2025 Authorizing a Cooperative Service Agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture
No. 27-2025 Fixing the Rate of Interest to be Charged on Delinquent Taxes and Setting the Grace Period
No. 28-2025 Authorizing Cancellation of Certain Taxes with Delinquent and Credit Balances Under Five Dollars
No. 29-2025 Authorizing a Tax Sale Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 54:5-19
No. 30-2025 Authorizing Tax Assessor to Act as Agent and to File Petition(s) of Appeals to Increase Tax Assessment
No. 31-2025 Authorizing Tax Assessor to Act as Agent and to File Petition(s) of Appeals to Decrease Tax Assessment
No. 32-2025 Designation of Official Newspaper - *The Press of Atlantic City*
No. 33-2025 Designation of Secondary Newspaper - *The Hammonton Gazette*
No. 34-2025 Designation of Shelter for Stray Animals – *The Humane Society of Atlantic County*
No. 35-2025 Volunteer Tuition Credit Program
No. 36-2025 Approving Discharge of Fireworks
No. 37-2025 Establishing Bid Threshold and Authorizing Purchases, Contracts and Agreements Not Exceeding the Local Public Contracts Law Bid Threshold Without Public Advertisement

On the motion of Councilmember Ropiecki, seconded by Councilmember Hawn to adopt Consent Calendar Resolutions 1-2025 through and including 37-2025.

YES: Crawford, Giberson, Hawn, Ropiecki (all Resolutions other than #'s 2-2025, 3-2025 & 4-2025), Turner

NO:

ABSENT: Allgeyer, Riegel

ABSTAIN: Ropiecki (#'s 2-2025, 3-2025 & 4-2025)

MAYORAL APPOINTMENTS

Mayor Giberson made the following appointments:

- Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator (1 year appointment): William Montag
- City Council Liaison to the Planning Board (1 year appointment): Donna Riegel
- City Engineer (3-year appointment): Matthew Doran of Polistina & Associates

No. 38-2025 Appointment of Municipal Engineer *namely Matthew Doran of Polistina & Associates*

On the motion of Councilmember Ropiecki, seconded by Councilmember Crawford to adopt Resolution 38-2025.

YES: Crawford, Giberson, Hawn, Ropiecki

NO: Turner

ABSENT: Allgeyer, Riegel

ABSTAIN:

COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Council President Giberson stated that he will be working on committee assignments and thinks he should have them finalized by the next meeting.

Comments from Mayor and City Council:

Councilmember Hawn stated that 2024 was a trying year, but hopefully 2025 will be better.

Councilmember Ropiecki shared that 2024 was the end of his first year serving on City Council. He thanked the residents of Port Republic for giving him the honor and his fellow councilmembers for their guidance and help. He agreed with Councilmember Hawn that 2024 was a tough year and there will be tough years to come, particularly with the school. We are all in this together, and that's what makes it great. He looks forward to 2025.

Councilmember Turner stated that there are a lot of things coming down the pipeline and he is very excited to be moving forward on a lot of those items. He is glad that the town came together as a whole for the school. He is looking forward to this year.

Council President Giberson thanked Mayor Giberson and the other members of City Council. Everyone has done an awesome job, and they have all stepped up and done so much work. It has always been what is best for the community. It has been a pleasure to work with everyone and he is looking forward to 2025. He welcomed Councilmember Crawford and stated he is looking forward to having him come on board.

Councilmember Crawford thanked Council President Giberson and stated he is looking forward to 2025 as well.

OPEN TO PUBLIC PORTION

On the motion of Councilmember Crawford, seconded by Councilmember Hawn and carried to open the public portion.

Kevin Wessler, Jr., 601 Chestnut Neck Road, asked if the City Public Works Department could plow the County roadways in town. Council President Giberson responded that we can look into doing this again. Councilmember Hawn added that our city roadways looked great.

Attorney Kaufmann, on behalf of their firm, thanked Mayor and Council for his reappointment and expressing their confidence in their firm to serve as the City's solicitor. He also added that the City has an extremely conscience City Clerk. He has received emails at home at 8:30 pm because she is thinking about a resolution. Council President Giberson said they are lucky to have Clerk Blevin.

CLOSED TO THE FLOOR FOR TOPICS FOR PUBLIC PORTION:

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

ADJOURNMENT

On the motion of Councilmember Crawford, seconded of Councilmember Turner and carried to adjourn the meeting at 6:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brandy M. Blevin, RMC
Municipal Clerk