

The January 14, 2025 meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Pequannock, Morris County, New Jersey was called to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building Meeting Room located at 530 Newark-Pompton Turnpike; Mayor John Driesse presiding.

Township Clerk Carol Marsh read the following statement for inclusion in the meeting minutes:

"In accordance with the requirements of New Jersey's Open Public Meetings Act, notice of this meeting was included in the Annual Meeting Notice which was filed in the Office of the Township Clerk; posted on the Bulletin Board in the Municipal Building; published as legal notice in the Suburban Trends and Daily Record newspapers; and distributed to all persons requesting notice in accordance with Township policy."

Mayor Driesse led the Pledge of Allegiance, which was followed by a prayer and a moment of thanks for those individuals serving our nation.

Present:

Mayor John Driesse
Deputy Mayor Kyle Russell
Councilwoman Melissa Florance-Lynch
Councilman Vincent Siracusa

Absent:

Councilman David Kohle

Also Attending:

Adam Brewer, Township Manager
Robert Oostdyk, Esq., Township Attorney
Carol J. Marsh, Township Clerk

There were 7 members of the public in attendance.

PRESENTATIONS. There were no presentations.

REPORTS FROM VOLUNTEERS. There were no reports from volunteers.

PUBLIC COMMENT.

- Paul Mahler, stating that he was "here to honor now former Library Trustee Barbara Muzzio", criticized statements made in a recent email from the Library Board's attorney, and statements made by members of the Library Board, and requested the Township Council take steps to recognize Ms. Muzzio's many years of service as a Library Trustee.

MANAGER'S REPORT. Township Manager Adam Brewer reviewed the Manager's report for the meeting, requesting input on the schedule for Budget meetings, providing status on the Township's PFAS mitigation process, reported on the status of Historic Preservation projects at the Train Station Museum and the Martin Berry House, and noted a discussion of residency requirements for Junior Firefighters on the evening's agenda.

PUBLIC HEARINGS. There were no public hearings.

ORDINANCE INTRODUCTIONS. There were no ordinances presented for introduction.

RESOLUTIONS.

- **R2025-54**, releasing Phillips Edison and Company and Plaza 23 Station LLC (Plaza 23) from Performance Guarantee
- **R2025-55**, authorizing Tax Office refunds, overpayments or cancellations.
- **R2025-56**, approving payment of the itemized claims as set forth on the **January 9, 2025 Bill List** and 2018 FEMA Elevation Escrow list.

On a motion by Mrs. Russell, seconded by Mrs. Florance-Lynch, **Resolutions R2025-54 through R2025-56** were adopted by the following vote:

For: Mrs. Florance-Lynch, Mrs. Russell, Mr. Siracusa, Mayor Driesse

Against: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Mr. Kohle.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION.

▪ Fire Department Junior Firefighter Membership - Residency Requirements:

Mr. Brewer reviewed a recommendation of the Fire Chiefs to allow residents of adjoining municipalities to become volunteer Junior Firefighters. Members of the Council agreed with the recommendation and Mr. Brewer stated an ordinance reflecting the change would be listed for introduction on the January 28th agenda.

REPORTS AND NOTICES. There were no reports or notices.

COUNCIL REPORTS.

Mrs. Florance-Lynch:

- Reported on the involvement of the Pequannock Fire Companies in a recent Lincoln Park fire.
- Senior Citizens Advisory Committee will meet tomorrow at 10 a.m.
- Historic District Commission retained the same officers: David Wisneski Chair, Elaine Stapp Vice Chair, and Ryan Lombardi Secretary, and recommended Patricia Chiarello as liaison to the Open Space Advisory Committee. The committee will meet in the Martin Berry House or the Library when the Train Station Museum closes for renovations. The museum will be open on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month, and the Martin Berry House and the Train Station Museum will be participating in both weekends of the Pathways of History Tour. Morris County is planning a number of events commemorating the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution.
- Planning Board also retained officers from last year: Angelo Caputo Chair and John Magalla Vice Chair. Board meetings will be held once a month on the second Monday of the month. The Board considered a resolution for a subdivision and granted a request for an extension on a subdivision.
- Offered prayers for those in the California fires and requested status on a local JCP&L outage, and on the status of parking by the rail trail across from PV Park.

Mrs. Russell

- First Aid and Rescue Squad reported 170 calls 49 of which were to Cedar Crest. In 2019 the squad went to Cedar Crest 78 times in 2024 over 400 times.
- Morris County 200 Club is taking scholarship applications until the 28th.
- Library Board meets tomorrow.
- Requested the Council consider making an appointment to the vacant position on the Environmental Commission. The Commission is considering the donation of a recycled bag bench to an Eagle Scout dog park project.
- The Morris County Preservation Trust Committee is likely to put out a referendum to allow Open Space funds be used for stewardship.

Mr. Siracusa

- Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee discussed a number of issues; the committee is looking for lifeguards.
- Open Space Advisory Committee is reviewing priorities of a proposed project list.

Mayor. Driesse

- Welcomed Councilman Siracusa to his first meeting.

- Shout out to the Police and Fire department for their responsiveness and expertise.
- There is a new Eagle Scout project in town.
- Thanked the employees for their work.

PUBLIC COMMENT.

- Megan Dempsey congratulated Councilmen Siracusa and Kohle on their election and re-election, thanked the police for the support they show to the school district noting their efforts to build trust and expressed disappointment in the appointment of the liaison to the Library Board of Trustees.
- Paul Mahler requested information on an entrance to Cedar Crest which doesn't require ambulances to use Route 23 and asked if there is a way for ambulances to control the traffic light on Route 23.
- Mary Kay Schmermund thanked the Township for lowering the flag in honor of Jimmy Carter, thanked President Biden for his leadership, expressed support for the residents of California and questioned if New Jersey is taking action to mitigate potential wildfires. Ms. Schmermund expressed agreement with comments made by Ms. Dempsey and Mr. Mahler regarding the library, support for recognizing Barbara Muzzio, concern for time constraints due to the Township's Deputy Mayor's many time commitments and asked if a committee was being set up to resolve congestion near the library and schools.

Mayor Driesse commented on traffic problems near the school.

- Karen Randolph thanked Mrs. Russell for her request regarding the Environmental Commission appointment and her report on the Eagle Scout and requested information on plans for the old dog park.

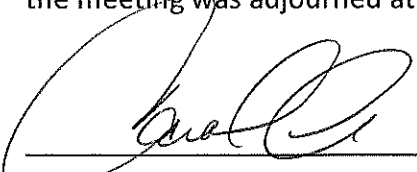
Mr. Brewer reported on plans to return the old dog park to the larger park and noted suggestions for its use are welcome.

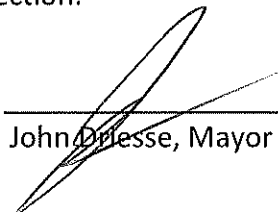
APPROVAL OF MINUTES. There were no minutes presented for approval.

EXECUTIVE (CLOSED) SESSION. There was no Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT.

There being no further business, on a motion by Mrs. Florance-Lynch, seconded by Mrs. Russell, the meeting was adjourned at 7:44 p.m. without objection.



Carol J. Marsh, Township Clerk

John Driesse, Mayor