

LINWOOD COMMON COUNCIL
MINUTES OF REORGANIZATION MEETING
January 6, 2015

CALL TO ORDER

Councilman Tim Tighe called the meeting to order at 6:15 P.M., noting the meeting had been advertised in compliance with the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act.

FLAG SALUTE

Councilman Elliot Beinfest led the flag salute.

OATHS OF OFFICE

Judge Anthony Gibson administered the Oath of Office to Timothy W. Tighe as Council Member, Ward 1 of the City of Linwood.

Judge Donna Taylor administered the Oath of Office to Ralph A. Paolone as Council Member, Ward 2 of the City of Linwood.

Judge Nancy Ridgway administered the Oath of Office to Brian D. Heun as Council Member, Ward 2 of the City of Linwood.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Rick DePamphilis; Councilman Elliot Beinfest; Councilwoman Stacy DeDomenicis; Councilman Todd Gordon; Councilman Brian Heun; Councilman Darren Matik; Councilman Ralph Paolone; and Councilman Tim Tighe.

Absent: None

Also Present: Joseph L. Youngblood, City Solicitor; and Leigh Ann Napoli, Municipal Clerk.

ELECTION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT

The Clerk opened the floor for nominations for Council President. Councilman Paolone motioned to nominate Tim Tighe. The Clerk called for any other nominations. Hearing none, nominations were closed by motion from Councilman Matik and a second from Councilman Heun. The Clerk called for a voice vote to close the floor for nominations. All members of Council were in favor to close the floor for nominations. The Clerk called for a voice vote for Tim Tighe to Council President. All members of Council were in favor. The nomination of Tim Tighe for the position of Council President was approved. Judge Anthony Gibson administered the oath of office to Tim Tighe as Council President.

ELECTION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

Council President Tighe opened the floor for nominations for Council President Pro Tempore. Councilwoman DeDomenicis motioned to nominate Elliot Beinfest. Council President Tighe called for any other nominations. Hearing none, nominations were closed by motion from Councilman Paolone and a second from Councilman Gordon. Council President Tighe called for a voice vote to close the floor for nominations. All members of Council were in favor to close the floor for nominations. Council President Tighe called for a voice vote for Elliot Beinfest to the position of Council President Pro Tempore. All members of Council were in favor. The nomination of Elliot Beinfest for Council President Pro Tempore was approved. Judge Nancy Ridgway administered the oath of office to Elliot Beinfest as Council President Pro Tempore.

MAYOR'S STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

Mayor DePamphilis welcomed everyone in attendance and thanked them for attending the meeting. He reminded everyone how honored he is to be the Mayor. He congratulated Councilmen Tighe, Paolone and Heun on their reelection to Council. Mr. Heun was previously appointed to replace Judge Donna Taylor on Council and Mr. Tighe replaced Judge Taylor as Council President. They are both doing a great job, but as you can see that it took two men to replace one woman.

The Mayor thanked Leigh Ann Napoli and Mary Cole, Lynn Roesch, Anthony Strazzeri, Ed Beck, Adrienne Carman and all the staff at City Hall who continue to do a great job. Our tax collector, Christine Desch retired this year after twenty-five years with the City of Linwood. He welcomed her replacement Albert Stanley to the Linwood family. The City's 2014 tax collection rate as of 12/31/14 was 97.36 %.

Last year the City completed a state ordered city wide tax re-evaluation in order to bring properties more in line with true market value. The result was an increase in assessments and a decrease in the tax rate from 3.9 to 3.1.

Last year the Mayor reported that the City's JIF Fund Commissioner Ed Beck was elected Secretary for the Atlantic County Joint Insurance Fund. This year, he will be elected Chairman of the fund. The Mayor congratulated Ed Beck.

Last October the City entered into the Community Rating System Program. This program is designed to assist residents in receiving discount flood insurance policies. Three hundred Linwood properties pay over \$260,000 in flood insurance and thanks to Jim Galantino, the City's CRS coordinator, effective Oct. 1 2014 residents of Linwood qualified for a 15% discount resulting in \$40,000 in savings.

Each year, the Mayor commends Hank Kolakowski and his men for the job that they do on a regular basis. This year is no different. The Mayor congratulated Danny Showell the 2014 Public Works Employee of the year. As of 12/31/14 Public Works has gone 954 days without a loss time accident.

Chief Chick Kisby and the Volunteer Fire Department continue to provide Linwood with quality service with little cost to the tax payer. He thanked them for all they do and for assisting at all city functions and special events.

The Police Department, which is going through a transition, continues to provide quality Police Service. The City extended the shared service agreement with Northfield with a new Chief, Colin Hickey, and also continues sharing dispatch with E.H.T. and Northfield. Chief Hickey will be retiring at the end of February. Sergeants Jim Olson and Wayne Finnegan retired, and the City and the Mayor thanked them for their service. Of course promotions followed with Sgt. John Hamilton being promoted to Lieutenant and Officers Devine, Henchy, and Norris to Sergeant. You will see some new faces patrolling our streets as four, new, fully trained and experienced police officers were hired.

The Mayor thanked Vince Polistina our City Engineer for a super first year. A year that saw a lot of activity and many projects reach completion. The repaving of Delmar and Country Club Drives was completed. S J Gas completed Phase 1 of a project to install high pressure gas mains east of Shore Road between Poplar & Arbor Court and NJ American Water completed a project to replace old cast iron water mains along Franklin and Woodlynne Boulevards

The Mayor thanked Lynn Gibson and the Linwood Board of Education who had a busy year. After an extensive search the Board hired Dr. Marianne Gaffney to replace Dr. Tom Baruffi as the new Superintendent of Schools. They very recently returned the Poplar Avenue School to the City and it is scheduled for demolition. They also purchased the Hasson property adjacent to Belhaven School and are moving forward to renovate the land into open space.

The Mayor commended Dr. Lacy and the Arboretum committee who continue to maintain our beautiful Arboretum. The Arboretum once again played host to the Christmas tree lighting ceremony.

Terri Weeks and the staffs and teachers from both schools continue to provide quality education to our children who in turn, continue to outperform other districts with similar demographics. Recently, Belhaven School was re-designated as a New Jersey and National Forum Schools to Watch.

Jim Rutala and the Planning Board were not very busy during 2014. But with the economy looking up and a couple of new commercial projects in the planning stages, the Mayor expects them to be busier in 2015. Longtime resident and planning board member, Tom Lacovara, resigned after moving out of Linwood. The Mayor thanked Tom for his years of services.

Bill Purdie and our Environmental Commission were recently honored by Sustainable Jersey for being a Bronze Certified Community once again.

The Commission is also working with Councilman Matik and the Jacques Cousteau Reserve to complete a process to make the City more resilient from future natural disasters.

The Mayor thanked Mary Todd, Maria Moss and the Library Board who continue to provide a number of valued services to our residents. There is a new computer lab with ten iMac computers and classes will be offered starting in January 2015. They now have charging stations to charge phones and other devices. They provide many activities for persons of all ages and there are volunteer opportunities available for adults and students.

The Mayor thanked Eric Food and the entire Board of Recreation for providing all the super holiday celebrations for the residents of Linwood. Longtime Park Director Patty Ogrodnik retired during the year and he thanked her for many devoted years of service. The new Park Director is Laurie Montgomery. This year's Halloween parade and Tree lighting were super events.

The Mayor recently appointed a new Blue Ribbon Committee for Recreation. They will be looking at all recreation areas with the City in order to develop a Master Plan for all fields. One that is suitable to all sports organizations and beneficial to the residents and the City. We have an opportunity because of the demolition of Poplar School to increase and improve our playing fields that are always in high demand. This may be a onetime shot and we need to ensure that we not only take advantage but that we get it right. Councilman Matik will chair the committee that is made up of City officials, residents and board members.

Last year, the Mayor advised that the Re-Development Committee of City Council, had finalized a new agreement with Cornerstone for future development that included the purchase by the City of the entire northern buffer and the back stretch along Patcong Creek. It was a long time coming, but last week the Mayor signed the agreement of sale that will allow the City to fulfill its promise to the residents north of the Cornerstone property that the buffer would never be used or developed. The new agreement includes the installment of a new traffic signal at the entrance of the property on New Road and an additional 15,000 sq. ft. pad sight. The committee is also negotiating a re-development agreement with the owners who are looking to commercially develop the Bloom property on New Road near Seaview Ave. When these two projects are completed, the new improvements will not only add much needed commercial ratables and additional revenue directly to the City, it will also go a long way in helping Linwood to establish a better balance between residential and commercial revenue that we so desperately need.

Each year, the Mayor reminds you how hard this City Council works to keep taxes down while trying to maintain the services that our residents enjoy. That will not change, but it becomes more difficult with each passing year. The governing body will not forget what is important to the residents of Linwood. We are reminded each time we meet by the words on our City Seal. Family, Recreation and Education are not just words, they are the ideals that guide us, the traditions that we embrace and principals that we live by. This Council will never let you down.

The Mayor thanked everyone, wished everyone a Happy New Year, and God Bless America.

RESOLUTIONS

15-2015 A Resolution approving the Temporary Budget for 2015

The Clerk read Resolution No. 15 of 2015 by title only. Councilman Beinfest motioned, seconded by Councilman Gordon, to approve Resolution No. 15. A roll call vote was heard with seven in the affirmative. Motion approved.

RESOLUTIONS WITHIN CONSENT AGENDA

All matters listed under item, **Consent** Agenda, are considered to be routine by City Council, and will be enacted by one motion in the form listed. Any items requiring expenditure are supported by a Certification of Availability of Funds and any item requiring discussion will be removed from the Consent Agenda and discussed separately. All Consent Agenda items will be reflected in full in the minutes.

1-2015 A Resolution setting dates for Caucus and Regular Council Meetings

RESOLUTIONS WITHIN CONSENT AGENDA (continued)

- 2-2015** A Resolution adopting a Cash Management Plan for 2015
- 3-2015** A Resolution naming check signers
- 4-2015** A Resolution authorizing the Finance Office to maintain a Petty Cash Fund in the amount of \$100.00
- 5-2015** A Resolution setting interest rates on delinquent taxes
- 6-2015** A Resolution setting a service charge for checks returned for insufficient funds
- 7-2015** A Resolution authorizing the allowance of a grace period before charging a penalty for late payment of taxes
- 8-2015** A Resolution authorizing the imposition of a penalty on tax delinquencies in excess of \$10,000
- 9-2015** A Resolution naming the official City Newspapers, for purposes of publication, specifically, The Mainland Journal, The Press of Atlantic City, The Ocean City Sentinel-Ledger, and The Current of Northfield, Linwood and Somers Point
- 10-2015** A Resolution appointing an authorized agent for the sale of City owned land and/or property
- 11-2015** A Resolution appointing the Tax Assessor as Agent in appeals to reduce assessments for the year 2015
- 12-2015** A Resolution designating the Public Agency Compliance Officer for the City of Linwood
- 13-2015** A Resolution adopting Robert's Rules of Order
- 14-2015** A Resolution authorizing the City of Linwood to enter into a Contract with the attached list of vendors for State Contract Purchases
- 16-2015** A Resolution authorizing the canceling of small balances of tax refunds or delinquencies
- 17-2015** A Resolution authorizing the Tax Collector to substitute two mailings in lieu of advertising of the Tax Sale to be held in 2015
- 18-2015** A Resolution authorizing the award of a Non-fair and Open Contract to Joel M. Fleishman as Municipal Bond Counsel for the Year 2015 for the City of Linwood
- 19-2015** A Resolution authorizing the award of a Non-fair and Open Contract to Joseph L. Youngblood, Jr. as Municipal Legal Counsel for the Year 2015 for the City of Linwood
- 20-2015** A Resolution authorizing the award of a Non-fair and Open Contract to Michele C. Verno as Shared Municipal Prosecutor for the Year 2015 for the Cities of Linwood and Northfield
- 21-2015** A Resolution authorizing the award of a Non-fair and Open Contract to Frank J. Lentz as Shared Municipal Public Defender for the Year 2015 for the Cities of Linwood and Northfield
- 22-2015** A Resolution authorizing the award of a Non-fair and Open Contract to Vincent J. Polistina as Municipal Engineer for the City of Linwood
- 23-2015** A Resolution approving Council appointments for the year 2015
- 24-2015** A Resolution confirming Mayoral appointments for the year 2015
- 25-2015** A Resolution authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to execute an Agreement with Premier Computer Services
- 26-2015** A Resolution of support from the City of Linwood Common Council authorizing the Sustainable Jersey Grant Application
- 27-2015** A Resolution authorizing the refund of a Tax Overpayment for 1625 Somerset Boulevard
- 28-2015** A Resolution authorizing the award of a Non-fair and Open Contract to Ford Scott & Associates, LLC as Municipal Auditor for the Year 2015 for the City of Linwood
- 29-2015** A Resolution awarding the Contract to Site Enterprises for the Poplar Avenue School Demolition
- 30-2015** A Resolution authorizing the reappointment of David G. Buzby as the Uniform Fire Safety Inspector for the City of Linwood
- 31-2015** A Resolution appointing Tim Longnecker as Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator for the City of Linwood

The Clerk read the Consent Agenda by title only. Councilman Paolone motioned, seconded by Councilman Gordon, to approve Resolutions 1-14, 16-31 of 2015. All members of Council were in favor. Motion approved.

APPROVAL OF BILL LIST: \$302,638.74

Councilman Paolone motioned, seconded by Councilwoman DeDomenicis, to approve the bills for payment. A roll call vote was heard with seven in the affirmative. Motion approved. (The bill list is attached as Exhibit A)

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Council President Tighe opened the floor to the public for discussion on any topic.

Seeing and hearing no members from the public wishing to be heard, Council President Tighe closed the floor.

FINAL REMARKS BY COUNCIL

Councilman Beinfest – Councilman Beinfest wished everyone a Happy New Year and thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He congratulated Councilmen Tighe, Paolone, and Heun on their re-election and reminded everyone what a hardworking group of elected officials they have. He discussed how New Jersey is an expensive State to live in. Linwood is not an exception. In our City, almost sixty cents of every dollar in real estate taxes supports education. The good news is the cost per student is below the state average. While our results on standardized tests are superior with some of the highest scores in South Jersey. He thanked Mrs. Napoli for making Council's job easier. She keeps us informed and on task. He thanked all the City Hall employees. Councilman Beinfest thanked the Board of Recreation and welcomed their new members. They do a lot of events for the City and are doing a great job. The City also has a new Park Director with plans for new and improved events this year. He thanked the City Historian Carolyn Patterson and Catherin Evinski, the President of the Historical Society for all their efforts. They recently renovated the storage building behind their main building that used to be the City's old police station. Councilman Beinfest thanked his wife Adrienne for her continued support.

Councilwoman DeDomenicis – Councilwoman DeDomenicis thanked everyone for attending the first Council meeting in 2015 on a chilly Tuesday, which happens to be her bowling night so she is hoping her better half is knocking down some extra pins for her team since they are in first place. She thanked Mayor DePamphilis for his annual remarks, noting that he is the guiding light for this City. She recognized Councilman Tighe on his outstanding job as Council President last year. He took on many time consuming projects and communicated weekly, sometimes daily with council, which often took him away from his family and business. Although the Public Works department has had a few changes with personnel and job duties the last few years, what hasn't changed is their diligence and commitment to the City. Hank Kolakowski and his department continue to assist, participate and work hard whenever needed and have done a great job keeping the roads and city properties in pristine order. Councilwoman DeDomenicis once called Linwood a Magical Place. It is a special community made up of leaders, employees, volunteers and residents, who in the happy times unite and stand next to one another. We celebrate and we cheer. But in those sad times we unite, we hug one another and we cry together. We are Linwood Strong. She believes the City's forefathers are very proud that we continue to represent our Seal – Family, Education, and Recreation. She wished everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year!

Councilman Gordon – Councilman Gordon is honored to serve on City Council and work with all of them. It has been a challenging year. A lot was accomplished. It was a challenge to balance costs and maintain services. Council did a great job. He thanked the Police, Fire, and Public Works for their dedicated service as well as all the volunteers. Without the volunteers, the City's wouldn't have the great events it does. The people make up the fabric and strength of Linwood. It is great to have the opportunity to serve. Councilman Gordon thanked Mrs. Off who donated the wreath for Memorial Park. He also thanked Mrs. Napoli for her hard work. Councilman Gordon thanked Mr. Polistina for his efforts this past year, noting that they had some challenging projects. He wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Councilman Paolone – Councilman Paolone noted that this is the beginning of his fourth term on Council. This past year he transitioned from Chair of the Public Safety Committee to Chair of the Revenue & Finance Committee. It was not easy. He thanked Mr. Strazzeri for all his help. He appreciates working with this Council. They are always looking at innovative ways to save money. Councilman Paolone loves Linwood and loves raising his kids here. He wants to keep Linwood as great as it is. He acknowledged Judge Gibson, noting that he was the first one to swear him in on Council. He also recognized Judges Taylor and Ridgway, noting how special it was to have

Judge Taylor swear him in. Councilman Paolone thanked Dr. Lacy and the volunteers for their efforts at the Arboretum. They are now looking to expand the Arboretum, which has been featured in the New York Times several times. Councilman Paolone displayed the book Gardens of the Garden State, which has a chapter on the Linwood Arboretum. Councilman Paolone thanked his wife and kids for their continued support.

Councilman Matik – Councilman Matik advised that he is Chair of Public Safety. He thanked the outgoing Fire Chief Chick Kisby, and welcomed the new Chief, Marty Walley. He also thanked Tim Longnecker for agreeing to be his Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator. Councilman Matik welcomed the new Linwood Superintendent, Dr. Gaffney. He also welcomed back Councilmen Tighe, Paolone, and Heun. He thanked all the members of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Recreation and is looking forward to developing a good plan for the City.

Councilman Heun – Councilman Heun thanked everyone for attending. He has been a resident of Linwood for thirty-seven years. It is surreal and humbling for him to serve on Council. He knows how hard all the members on Council work, as well as all the previous members that served. He thanked all the employees of Linwood, including Mrs. Napoli, Mr. Kolakowski, and Mr. Strazzeri. They work very hard to make Council's job easier. Councilman Heun also thanked Mr. Polistina for his work on all the projects and thanked Mr. Youngblood for his efforts. Councilman Heun thanked his wife, family, and parents for attending the meeting and for their continued support.

Council President Tighe – Council President Tighe announced that the next Council meeting is January 28. The meetings will then resume to the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month. He indicated how everyone has said how hard this Council works and how much the job takes away from your home. No one on Council could do any of this without the support of their spouses. Council President Tighe thanked his wife for her continued support. He also thanked the City Hall employees, who are very smart and well qualified. He thanked all the volunteers that serve on the boards including the Planning, Zoning, and Recreation. He also thanked all the coaches that coach the youth teams in Linwood. Councilman Tighe thanked and commended his colleagues on Council.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to be addressed by Council, Councilwoman DeDomenicis motioned, seconded by Councilman Heun, to adjourn at 7:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Leigh Ann Napoli, RMC
Municipal Clerk