

LINWOOD COMMON COUNCIL
CAUCUS MINUTES
October 23, 2024

Council President Eric Ford called the meeting to order at 6:04 P.M., noting that the meeting had been advertised in compliance with the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act.

1. Roll Call

Present: Councilwoman Blair Albright; Councilman Ken Kelly; Councilman Matt Levinson; Councilman Todd Michael; and Councilman Adam Walcoff; and Council President Eric Ford.

Absent: Mayor Darren Matik; and Councilwoman Stacy DeDomenicis.

Also Present: Joseph L. Youngblood, Jr., City Solicitor; Jen Heller, Engineer's Office; Anthony Strazzeri, CFO; Chief Steve Cunningham, Police Department; Captain Frank Gabriel, Fire Department; Sean Gormley, Brown & Brown; and Leigh Ann Napoli, City Administrator/Municipal Clerk.

2. Approval of Minutes Without Formal Reading

Councilwoman Albright, motioned, seconded by Councilman Kelly, to approve the minutes of the October 9, 2024 Caucus meeting without formal reading. All present members of Council were in favor. Motion was approved.

3. Councilwoman Albright

A. Planning, Engineering, and Development

1. Councilwoman Albright discussed an Ordinance on the agenda for final reading to amend Chapter 119 of the City Code for construction fees. This is for compliance with State regulations.
2. Councilwoman Albright advised of a Resolution authorizing temporary signage for the MRHS After Prom Turkey Trot. This is a fundraiser for the after prom.
3. Councilwoman Albright advised of a Resolution on the agenda authorizing the release of the performance bond for 901 Maple LLC. This was for sidewalk installation which has been completed, inspected, and approved by the City Engineer.
4. Councilwoman Albright advised of a Resolution authorizing a reduction in the performance bond for Charter Tech Annex, LLC. The site work has been completed.

4. Councilman Levinson

A. Revenue & Finance

1. Councilman Levinson advised of a Resolution authorizing the cancellation of taxes for 1418 Shore Road due to tax exempt status for a disabled veteran.
2. Councilman Levinson reviewed a Resolution authorizing the refund of various tax overpayments.
3. Councilman Levinson explained that the City has spent a few years looking for ways to get out of the State Health Benefits Plan due the 60% rise in cost. This year they are proposing another almost 17% rate increase. The City has shopped out for benefits and received an offer from AmeriHealth. Their rate increase is only 8%. The plan is "equal to or better" than the state plan. This will be a significant savings for the taxpayers. The Finance Committee reviewed the financials of the program and believe this is the best for the City. In order to get the employees on the AmeriHealth plan effective January 1, 2025, the City would need to terminate participation with the state by December 31, 2024. In order to terminate, the state requires sixty days notice. Councilman Walcoff discussed the timing and proper notice to employees. He would have liked to give the employees more notice. Mr. Youngblood will notice the Unions. Councilman Kelly and Mr. Gormley explained the timing of the rates being released in August, obtaining the City's claims experience from the State, and shopping out for benefits. Councilman Levinson explained that his committee discussed this issue with Council at the last City Council meeting and would like to move forward so the new plan is in place by January 1, 2025.

5. Councilman Walcoff
 - A. Shared Services
 - B. Councilman Walcoff discussed the changes made to the City's Nuisance Ordinance over the years and how it was amended specifically for a commercial establishment with outside entertainment that sells alcohol. A Judge recently ruled that the language is not enforceable. The Administration Committee met to discuss options and looked at the Department of Environmental Protection's model noise ordinance. This ordinance allows for the measurement of sound with a decibel reader. Members of the City's Police Department will become certified on the device. Mrs. Napoli submitted a draft Noise Ordinance for the City to the DEP for review. They have concluded that once it is passed by Council they will approve it.

6. Council President Ford
 - A. Administration
 1. Council President Ford advised of an Ordinance on the agenda for final reading amending Chapter 263 of the City Code for parking permit fees at the City's landings.
 2. Council President Ford discussed a Resolution authorizing the appointment of William R. Miller, IV to the positions of Construction Official/Building Subcode Official and Building Inspector for the City. The position is vacant due to a retirement effective October 1. The position was advertised, interviews were held, and a recommendation has been made to hire Mr. Miller.

At 6:27 P.M., Council President Ford called a recess.

Respectfully submitted,

Leigh Ann Napoli, RMC
Municipal Clerk