

## CAUCUS MEETING MINUTES

February 7, 2023

5:00 P.M.

\*\*\*MEETING WAS HELD VIA "ZOOM" APPLICATION WITH MEETING ID 349 802 0449

Mayor Jakubowski called the meeting to order.

MAYOR'S STATEMENT: "Notice of this meeting has been provided in a legal notice published in the Courier Post and the Retrospect; and posted in accordance with Title 10 of the New Jersey Statutes Annotated, specifying a 5:00 p.m. meeting time; and that formal action may or may not be taken at all Caucus and Commissioners meetings. Please be advised that this meeting is not being videotaped tonight." Those in attendance were Mayor Jakubowski, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Whitman, Borough Administrator David Taraschi, Solicitors Salvatore Siciliano & Jennifer McPeak, Borough Engineers Steve Bach & Craig Reilly, Police Chief Tom Tassi, Kurt Bicking, OEM, Jean Philips, Court Clerk, Danielle Ingves, Municipal Clerk, Rec Center Director & Library Trustee, Brian Conte, EMS and Fire Chief Pat Slemmer, John Dymond, Tax Assessor, Megan Giordano, Tax Collector.

Mayor Jakubowski led the audience in the Flag Salute.

Commissioner Lee made a motion to approve meeting minutes of January 17, 2023, seconded by Mayor Jakubowski. All in favor-motion carried.

### ORDINANCES FOR ACTION:

**2023-01** Ordinance of the Board of Commissioners of the Borough of Audubon, County of Camden and State of New Jersey Amending Chapter 2, Administration, Article IV, Department, Division 3, Police Department, Section 2-185 Extra-Duty Employment through Borough in the Code of the Borough of Audubon  
First Reading-February 7, 2023; Public Hearing/Seconding Reading-March 7, 2023. Motion to approve first reading made by Commissioner Whitman and seconded by Commissioner Lee. Unanimous roll call vote.

### RESOLUTIONS FOR ACTION:

**2023-29** Authorizing the Appointment of Christopher J. Powell of Hardenbergh Insurance Agency, Risk Manager for 2023.

The foregoing resolution was approved by motion of Commissioner Lee, seconded by Commissioner Whitman. All in favor-motion carried.

**2023-30** Authorizing the approval of the 2023 Sustainable Audubon-Green Team Members

The foregoing resolution was approved by motion of Mayor Jakubowski, seconded by Commissioner Whitman. All in favor-motion carried.

**2023-31** Refund of an Overpayment of Sewer for Block 61 Lot 4.12

The foregoing resolution was approved by motion of Commissioner Whitman, seconded by Commissioner Lee. Unanimous roll call vote.

**2023-32** Authorizing the Appointment of Sara Kucharski, Lori Conley, and Krista Briglia to the Audubon Board of Health for the year 2023.

The foregoing resolution was approved by motion of Commissioner Lee, seconded by Commissioner Whitman. All in favor-motion carried.

**2023-33** Authorizing the Re-appointment of Nichelle Bicking as Trustee of the Audubon Free Public Library.

The foregoing resolution was approved by motion of Commissioner Whitman, seconded by Commissioner Lee. All in favor-motion carried.

**2023-34 Authorizing the Borough Engineer to Design and Publicly BID the Fiscal Year 2023 NJDOT resurfacing of E. Pine – Phase III, Hampshire Ave & North Merchant Street Project**

The foregoing resolution was approved by motion of Commissioner Lee and seconded by Commissioner Whitman. Unanimous roll call vote.

**2023-35 Authorizing the Appointment Timothy S. Farrow, Esquire, Public Defender for the Audubon Municipal Court**

The foregoing resolution was approved by motion of Commissioner Whitman and seconded by Commissioner Lee. All in favor-motion carried.

**2023-36 Approving Sean T. Downing as a member of the Audubon Fire Department**

The foregoing resolution was approved by motion of Commissioner Lee and seconded by Commissioner Whitman. All in favor-motion carried.

**Department Reports:**

**Borough Administrator /DPW Superintendent** – Received notice from DCA regarding new regulations/requirements regarding lead testing for rentals properties in the municipalities. We need to discuss an ordinance outlining what is required, who is responsible and how it will be covered financially. Visual inspections are not enough; looking at cracks or peeling paint and/or paint chips/dust on the floor isn't adequate. We may need to enter into a contract with a reliable vendor. We will get some estimates. We will have to pass those costs onto the landlord and be mindful about the renters and not adding to their costs. Further discussion is required regarding these concerns but wanted to bring it to everyone's attention.

**Chief Finance Officer -No Report**

**Borough Clerk-** Dog and Cat licenses are due for renewal. Registration is now open. All renewals must be completed by March 31 to avoid late fees. Working with the Board of Elections as they evaluate the electrical needs for the polling places. The new machines will be used for the primary elections along with the iPad so the electrical capacity for each building is raising some concerns. OEM has been asked to have generators on site at the FJW Rec Center and be on call for election day. All Municipal Clerks will be attending a half-day training as well. Actively working with DCA regarding Daniel's Law implementation and as redactor of records for our municipality will work with Tax Assessor and each department head as needed.

**Tax Collector** -- Reports attached for December and January. It is currently taxes time as taxes were due February 1, 2023. The tax office is still working out some kinks since the installation of the new computers. The Deputy Tax Collector, Linda Smith, is working closely with PCS to resolve any on-going issues.

**Tax Assessor** -- Reports submitted to the County for January. John Dymond stated that he is an official redactor as it relates to Daniel's Law and has already redacted some information for Audubon. He will work with the Municipal Clerk to ensure a smooth process and follow all requirements.

**Construction Code/Zoning Report-**Report Attached. DCA inspector came out in January and visited with Construction Code Official, Robert Scouler. The Audubon Construction Office was found to be in compliance and with no problems. No need to re-visit in the upcoming months. It has been 10 years since their last inspection.

**Library-** Annual reorganization meeting in January. Maryann Topham, Assistant to the Director, will be retiring in February. HVAC units need to be replaced. The Library was closed for a day and ½ due to ongoing issues. Spring is the target date for the full replacement.

**The Recreation Center-** Three private parties in January. February – currently scheduled: Five private parties and one non-profit private party.

Mayor Jakubowski added that the President and Director of Audubon Civic REACH (previously Audubon Recreation Center non-profit) met with a vendor to discuss the possibility of providing summer camp options for the children of Audubon. This is in beginning stages of discussion but needs to move quickly if we want it to happen this year. If the Commissioners have any questions regarding this, reach out to discuss further. If a presentation is needed, we can certainly schedule that for the Commissioners' meeting. Com. Lee did inquire about the Audubon School District being consulted first regarding summer programming and/or their Community Education Programs. Both have been inquired about and neither is an option at this time. Therefore, a contract will be drawn up in the next week with the current vendor and we will ask the Borough's Solicitor to review and provide feedback.

**Police Chief-** Reports attached. Currently working on the computer testing for Green Wave Field for the current fob system.

**Fire Chief -**Report attached. January 2023: Alarms answered: 30, Alarms answered to-date: 30. Chief Officers to be sworn in this week.

**OEM-** Assisted with AFD for basement pump out. This becomes a problem when pipes freeze while someone is in the hospital or away from the home for any long stay. By the time the problem is discovered, there is already water coming out of the windows/doors.

Currently working with Municipal Clerk to ensure backup power for the FJW Rec Center for election day in June.

Mayor Jakubowski expressed concerns about lack of cell phone numbers since the merger from Code Red to the new mass communication system, SendIt. A new media blitz is being initiated to ask residents to make sure they are signed up for the new system. There is a link on our website and on the Borough's social media as well as OEM's social media. Dani worked with Mike Chisolm at AHS. She is now trained to transfer any new sign-ups once a week to the new system.

Also, a sincere thank you to John Carpenter for assisting our Fire Marshal's office with an elderly person in town having an issue with her heat. The resident had been using space heaters and her oven.

**EMS Report-** Report Attached. 83 calls in Audubon, 57 calls in Mt. Ephraim, 40 calls in Oaklyn, 7 calls in Gloucester, 15 calls in Bellmawr and 21 additional calls for a total of 223 calls in January.

**Municipal Court-** Report attached. Public Defender was appointed tonight.

**Engineer-**Report attached. NJDCA Local Recreation Improvement Grant; application submitted to continue efforts to improve Audubon Family Park with the replacing of playground equipment.

Three quotes were solicited for completing additional improvements to maximize the CDBG grant funding. The quotes were over the remaining available grant funds. Therefore, their office is coordinating with the low quote contractor and the Borough Administrator to complete the additional improvements with the available funding.

Meeting with Bellmawr tomorrow regarding the pending shared service agreement for the resurfacing at the Audubon Family Park.

Discussion was had for the Phase II; Sound Continuation Project: A proposal will be submitted for consideration to add additional sound panels to the FJW Rec & Com Center.

**Solicitor**-Nothing for open or closed.

**Sustainable Audubon**- Next meeting is Wednesday, March 1, at 7:00 p.m. at the Senior Center. They meet on the first Wednesday of every month and their meetings are always open to the public. They will be partnering with the Audubon Library for an event on Earth Day, April 22, 2023. Please look for more details coming soon. They are continuing with their tree initiative. They are surveying residents/specific streets to see if people want trees. Three out of 20 said yes. This will be a team effort between Sustainable, the Arborist and DPW moving forward.

**Discussion:** The Mayor and Commissioners had a discussion regarding our current sign ordinance and if it is outdated. Some issues of concerns were time frames, all year vs a window of time around elections, free speech infringements, location on the property, election signs vs call to action signs, flags, size, quantity, holiday decorations, size of certain decorations year round and vulgarity.

It was agreed that this is a balancing act regarding government overreach, people's right to express themselves, opinion, aesthetic, advertising and consistency with enforcement not to mention commercial vs. residential properties. Focusing on location, size and the quantity of signs was agreed to be a good starting point. Our Solicitor has agreed to take a look at our current ordinance vs other models and prepare and present an alternative option that will meet the needs of as many people as possible. He will share that at an upcoming meeting for further discussion and/or action.

Commissioner Lee made a motion to open the meeting to the public; seconded by Commissioner Whitman. All in favor; motion carried.

Carl Blundi, 33 Valley Road, Mt. Ephraim spoke for a full five minutes regarding his concerns regarding WAWA's proposal for the Joint Land Use Board in Mt. Ephraim; the addition of a second driveway off Valley Road, and shared concerns from other residents as well of the new traffic pattern that could result in a disaster or at least more than a mild annoyance. He wanted to reach out to Audubon residents and ask that they attend the meeting as well. The meeting is currently scheduled for March 13. He had concerns that Audubon residents were not properly notified and that the meeting date might have been changed without notification. Our engineer and solicitor talked him through the process. He was encouraged by our officials and professionals to attend the meeting in his town to express his concerns. He was wished good luck.

Commissioner Whitman made a motion to close the meeting to the public; seconded by Commissioner Lee -All in favor; motion carried.

### **Board of Commissioners Reports:**

**Commissioner Whitman** – The deadline for the Anchor Program is February 28, 2023. If you haven't applied yet, please do so. The link is on our website and the State's website.

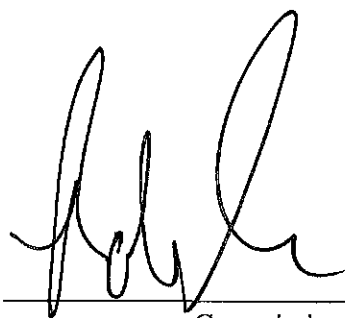
**Commissioner Lee** – No need for closed session for contracts.

**Mayor Jakubowski** – Thank you to the police for their assistance with all the road work with NJAW. Thank you to DPW for all their hard work. Thank goodness for a quiet winter thus far. Thank you to all the staff at Borough Hall for all your hard work daily.

Commissioner Whitman made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Lee. All in favor; motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:11 P.M.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Jakubowski

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Commissioner Lee

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Commissioner Whitman

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Danielle Ingves, Municipal Clerk

DATE APPROVED :

2/21/2023