

## COMMISSIONERS' MEETING MINUTES

December 19, 2023

7:00 p.m.

Mayor Jakubowski called the meeting to order.

MAYOR JAKUBOWSKI READ THE FOLLOWING 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 7:00 p.m. meeting time; and that formal action may or may not be taken at all Caucus and Commissioners meetings".

Those in attendance: Mayor Jakubowski, Commissioner Lee, Commissioner Whitman, Borough Administrator David Taraschi, Solicitor Salvatore Siciliano, Municipal Clerk Danielle Ingves, Police Chief Tom Tassi

Mayor Jakubowski led the audience in the Flag Salute.

Commissioner Lee made a motion to approve meeting minutes from December 5, seconded by Commissioner Whitman. All in favor-motioned carried.

### ORDINANCES FOR ACTION:

**2023-08 Ordinance of the Board of Commissioners of the Borough of Audubon, County of Camden and State of New Jersey Amending Chapter 113, Land Development, Article VII, Zoning Regulations, Division 2, Supplemental District Regulations, Section 113-409, Signs, In the Code of The Borough of Audubon First Reading-November 21, 2023; Public Hearing/Second Reading – December 19, 2023**

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

Mayor Jakubowski summarized the ordinance stating that not much has changed except for the lawn signs. We will be limiting in number, which is one, size and location. Location will be within the structure of your house and within so many feet of the front of your house and the duration of 45 days. Content is irrelevant. Everything else stays the same.

Leslie Kirsch, 263 Maple Ave in Audubon, expressed her happiness that more people are participating in civic engagement and calls to action.

Mayor Jakubowski addressed the concerns that it took a long time, but it truly took a lot of deliberation. Leslie Kirsch asked if other towns were consulted. Per the Mayor, other towns have had similar ordinances for many years and they stood up over time. A lot of questions regarding first amendment rights took place in our conversations. He stated that he will speak only for himself when he says that he is tired of the ones being junked up on public property. Moving forward he hopes that there are enough members in each organization to put the signs on their personal property and they don't become trash on the railroad tracks and other various public areas.

Leslie Kirsch asked about the timeline for elections and signage. Mayor Jakubowski stated that it is 45 days and that coincides with the all ever popular mail in ballots. If its an ongoing issue like gun safety etc, we have been back and

forth on this and if it means it is up for 45 days and then it is taken down for a day and then back up, the clock starts over. We will never have the staff to go around all day and the the Police Chief doesn't have the manpower either. We are going to enforce it as fairly as humanly possible. We have heard from the public regarding this and it has influenced and sometimes reinforced our thinking and sometimes changed our thinking.

Per Commisisoner Lee, 12 feet from the foundation is the number we were looking for earlier.

Since there are no other comments from the public, Commissioner Lee made a motion to close the meeting to the public, seconded by Commissioner Whitman. All in favor-motion carried.

Commissioner Whitman made a motion to approve Ordinance 2023-08, seconded by Commissioner Lee. Unanimous roll call vote.

#### **RESOLUTIONS FOR ACTION:**

##### **2023-169 AUTHORIZING THE PAYMENT OF BILLS FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 2023**

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

**2023-170 AUTHORIZING THE APPROVAL OF A 50/50 RAFFLE LICENSE 08-2023 FOR PTA AVON** The foregoing resolution was approved by motion of Commissioner Lee and seconded by Commissioner Whitman. All in favor-motion carried.

##### **2023-171 AUTHORIZING THE APPROVAL OF BASKET RAFFLE LICENSE 09-2023 FOR PTA AVON**

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

**2023-172 AUTHORIZING THE APPOINTMENT OF RYAN SHEPPARD AS ALTERNATE FIRE MARSHAL FOR THE PERIOD DECEMBER 1, 2023 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2024** The foregoing resolution was approved by motion of Commissioner Lee and seconded by Commissioner Whitman. All in favor-motion carried.

**2023-173 AUTHORIZING THE APPROVAL OF CHANGE ORDER NUMBER 001 FOR THE AUDUBON SENIOR CENTER RESTROOM AND MEETING ROOM IMPROVEMENTS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,242.26 (CONTRACT INCREASE)** The foregoing resolution was approved by motion of Commissioner Lee and seconded by Commissioner Whitman. Mayor Jakubowski abstained. Unanimous roll call vote.

**2023-174 AUTHORIZING THE TRANSFER OF FUNDS IN THE 2023 MUNICIPAL BUDGET** The foregoing resolution was approved by motion of Commissioner Whitman and seconded by Commissioner Lee. Unanimous Roll Call Vote.

**2023-175 AUTHORIZING SETTLEMENT AND MUTUAL RELEASE AGREEMENT WITH LEVY CONSTRUCTION CO., INC.** The foregoing resolution was approved by motion of Commissioner Lee and seconded by Commissioner Whitman. Unanimous Roll Call Vote.

**2023-176 AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A CONTRACT BY AND BETWEEN THE BOROUGH OF AUDUBON AND RANDOPH J. CALLAWAY AS THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC WORKS FOR THE PERIOD DECEMBER 4, 2023 THRU DECEMBER 4, 2026.** The foregoing resolution was approved by motion of Mayor Jakubowski and seconded by Commissioner Whitman. Unanimous Roll Call Vote.

**COMMISSIONER LEE:** Wishing everyone a Happy Holidays and it has been a good year.

**COMMISSIONER WHITMAN:** Happy Holidays and bring on 2024.

**MAYOR JAKUBOWSKI:** Public Works did a good job with leaves again this year. The truck will not be coming around to get your leaves. You can still put them out, but you have to bag them. It is important that new equipment be brought out for the winter. It was a great season that they had this year. Heads' up for the Commissioners and for the public. We have a grant from Board of Public Utilities, and we have been working on a strategic plan for energy, renewable energy. We have a task force working on that. They have a draft that they are prepared to bring to the public. The grant requires two public hearings. The first will be held at the monthly Sustainable Audubon meeting on January 3 at 7:00 pm and the second will be held at the Commissioners' meeting on January 16 at 7:00 pm. They did great work, and they are ahead of schedule and that is very intentional. The understanding is that there are grant funds coming out any day now that will allow them to implement some of these strategies and our chances are improved if we have an approved strategic plan. We are waiting for members' feedback, but I will make sure that both Commissioners have a copy soon. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. It was a great year to be in Audubon and Audubon is a great town to live in and next year will be even better.

**OPEN SESSION:**

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

Leslie Kirsch, 263 Maple Ave, Audubon announced that she will be the community outreach person for Moms Demand Action for Camden County for 2024. As I became more fluent on how gun violence has exponentially increased and who is doing the work, my goal is to have top to bottom access for people on fire and police websites and working with BeSmartforkids.org and Onethingyoucando.org for extreme protective orders.

For those stating they are taking their guns away, when we issued temporary extreme risk protective orders in NJ, there was approximately 1200 where an individual goes to court after having a wellness check and they go before the courts and the judge decides if those guns and ammunition should continue to stay with law enforcement. The individual gets to go at any time to revisit that. Approximately 300 of those 1200 were FURBOS and doing the math, 900 of those people got their guns back. In our culture, we have a real problem with gun violence. It is the number one killer of the children in this country. How many mass shootings have we had to date was presented to the Commissioners. The FBI considers a mass shooting as 3-4 or more people with an intention to kill people. 567 mass shootings back in November. We are headed toward 700 at this point.

She also works with suicide prevention for law enforcement and veterans. Even though we have good gun sense legislation with permitting etc. in NJ, nationally, suicide by gun has gone up by 300-500% among our veterans. It depends upon the state, and you can go to Everytown.org and look at the stats and see the interesting correlation between no gun laws in Maine and Kentucky and their increase in suicide and homicide.

I will leave with you that and think on an emotional level. When we say John F. Kennedy was assassinated, as children we felt like if someone like that could be killed, so can we. One of the emotional things that we are seeing among children is that the suicide rates between children ages 11-18 has gone up over 65% just in the last five years. They are starting to realize that they are living through one mass shooting only to be subjected to yet another shooting at the same college or another one. They are being brought up to believe that the adults that they are supposed to be protecting them either cannot protect or they do not care to protect them. Requesting that those two websites be put

on the Borough's website and the PTA's website. Haddon Heights just had two suicides of a tween and a teen, and it devastated the families and now they are gun violence survivors. We want to provide access and if people do not want to read about safe gun storage etc., that is fine. But they might want that access. They may have a domestic violence situation and need that information. People have commented to her that had they known we had a red flag law and that it did not involve a criminal record, I would have called the police about a loved one because they were at risk of harming themselves or others. She then thanked the Commissioners for their time and wished everyone a Happy New Year!

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

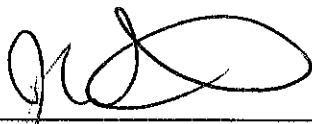
**2023-177 RESOLUTION TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION FOR LITIGATION AND PERSONNEL**

The foregoing resolution was approved by motion of Commissioner Whitman and seconded by Commissioner Lee. All in favor-motion carried at 7:24 pm.

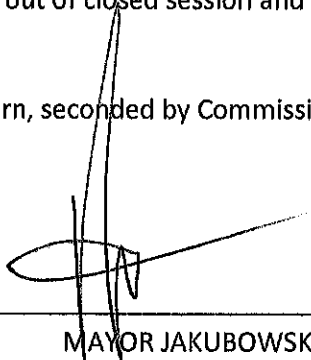
Commissioner Lee made a motion to come out of closed session and seconded by Commissioner Whitman. All in favor-motion carried at 8:18 pm.

Mayor Jakubowski made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Lee.

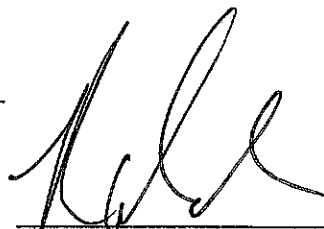
Meeting adjourned at 8:19 P.M.



COMMISSIONER WHITMAN



MAYOR JAKUBOWSKI



COMMISSIONER LEE

ATTEST:



DANIELLE INGVES, MUNICIPAL CLERK

DATE APPROVED:

