

**BOROUGH OF PITMAN
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 25, 2019**

Call to Order

Time: 8:04 p.m.

Salute to the Flag/Moment of Silence

Council President Blass

Open Public Meetings Act Statement - Pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, I hereby announce that adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by adopting a schedule of regular meetings for 2019, which was posted on the Borough Hall bulletin board, sent to the "South Jersey Times" and filed with the Municipal Clerk on January 5, 2019.

Roll Call

Councilman Austin: Present
Councilman Pierpont: Present
Councilwoman Rudley: Present
Mayor Johnson: Present
Clerk O'Donnell: Present

Council President Blass: Present
Councilman Razzo: Present
Councilman Weng: Present
Borough Solicitor Krachun: Present

Proclamation Presentation

Mayor Johnson and Council President Blass presented Proclamations to Walter Foard and Humphrey Foard, who could not attend due to his obligation to the U. S. Navy, on their achievement of attaining the rank of Eagle Scout in the Boy Scouts of America.

Approval of Minutes

Work Session, Formal Meeting, and Closed Formal Meeting Minutes of November 12, 2019

Motion: Blass

Second: Austin

Roll Call:

Councilman Austin: Yes
Councilman Pierpont: Yes
Councilwoman Rudley: Yes
Mayor Johnson _____

Council President Blass: Yes
Councilman Razzo: Yes
Councilman Weng: Yes

Council Reports

Councilwoman Rudley

The Pitman Police Department received a thank you from the Gloucester County Sheriff's Department, for their continued cooperation and professionalism while processing and transporting prisoners. Specifically mentioned were Cpl. Pierson and Ptlm. Khoury for their actions during a recent difficult transport.

The Pitman Police Department is proud to announce that they will be sponsoring a K9 Seminar on May 4-6, 2020. This seminar will draw over fifty K9 handlers and K9s. All the proceeds will benefit the Pitman Police Department's K9 Unit. Special thanks to Capt. Zander and Cpl. Parker for arranging this event online.

The Pitman Police Department's School Resource Officers continue to be active in the schools, and our officers have instructed over forty classes this year in the various schools.

One brief announcement regarding the Senior Outreach Committee. At their last meeting, they decided not to meet in December due to their many family obligations at this time of year. The meetings will resume in January, and monthly thereafter on the third Thursday at 6:00 p.m. in Borough Hall.

Councilman Weng

Councilman Weng reported that at the last Planning and Zoning Board meeting, Board Members received Ethics training from P/Z Board Solicitor Chip MacDonald. Mr. MacDonald provided the training at the request of the Trico Joint Insurance Fund, and used materials provided by the JIF which included material on common ethical issues that Planning and Zoning Board members often face. Councilman Weng said that to his knowledge, this was the first time that this training was done, and that it is something that the JIF is concerned with because Planning and Zoning is an area where liability issues exist. In addition to the training, the benefits of attending the training sessions was discussed. This is the first step to having more formal classes similar to those attended by Elected Officials already, and could save the Borough from potential litigation in the future. Councilman Weng said that this was a first step, providing good training and was very helpful. He thanked Mr. MacDonald for his services.

Councilman Pierpont read the following report:

You may have noticed the holiday decorations that are going up in Ballard Park include the Edward Campbell War Memorial Mall. Some discussion was had on whether to include holiday decorations in this area. The decision was made to have a lit tree placed over the new fountain. I believe moving forward, that this area should be left out of our borough holiday decorating, and for that matter, any and all events sponsored or approved by the Borough not directly involved in remembering the veterans or sacrifices made by veterans. We lose some of the importance, or respect, for the area that remembers our fallen, when we permit uses for which it was not intended. So, moving forward, before our next holiday or sponsored event, I believe this governing body needs to discuss our intended use for this War Memorial Mall.

In lighter fare, the Greater Pitman Chamber of Commerce met on November 19, and elected new officers. Those elected at the meeting are as follows:

Patrick Bradley – President
Gwyn Glass – Vice President
Jenn Mazzola – Treasurer

Newly elected Board Members are:

Keryl Hausmann
Yvonne Taylor Jacobs
Kara Fanty Knauss
Amanda Lampkin-Porto
Albert Magonagle
Stacey Lipitz Myers

Congratulations all, and we thank them for volunteering their time and talents to the Chamber.

Councilman Razzo read the following report:

Prior to this meeting tonight, I attended a Trico JIF meeting and am proud to announce that the Borough of

Pitman is one of only eleven towns out of the total of forty towns that the JIF said met the qualifications for approval for Tier 1 and Tier 2 of the Cyber Risk Management Program.

What this means is, that as we move forward, we see our cyber liability costs go through the roof. For example, another school district yesterday opened an email containing a virus that shut down the schools' computer system, and it will not be up and running for at least three weeks. The Woodbury Police Department also had an incident recently.

I also am proud to say that the Borough of Pitman has received sixteen phishing emails which our JIF sends out, and not one of them have been opened. So we are doing a great job.

Also, the Elected Officials Training will be available online for those who do not want to go to the dinner at Auletto's on February 6, 2020. Registration is at 5:30 p.m., and the program runs from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

I also presented Administrator O'Donnell with a check for \$10,774.00 which represents reimbursement for our Safety, IT, and Wellness Programs through the JIF. Thank you to Administrator O'Donnell and all the individuals who participated in those programs within the Borough. Some of the things that we received reimbursement for was safety equipment, IT, ear protectors, and personal protection equipment. Also, under our Wellness Plan, we had fresh produce brought in weekly for our Borough employees.

On a personal note, I would like to extend from the Pitman Soccer Association, to our Pitman Police Department, and specifically to Investigator Bailey, who came out to speak with some of our Pitman soccer players about making good decisions and being leaders in the community. Thank you very much.

Council President Blass

Water and Sewer Department

- Twenty-seven water and sewer mark outs requested
- Plunged out one sewer stoppage
- Collected water samples
- Read five meters for property settlement
- Re-read meters for billing questions
- Replaced one meter body
- Upgraded six meter heads from appointments that were made
- Continued meter replacement program

Highway Department

- Eleven loads of trash collected totaling 115.01 tons
- Eight loads of recyclables collected totaling 36.09 tons
- Fifty-two yards of leaves collected
- Eight truckloads of bulk trash collected, tonnage included in trash total
- Repaired or replaced street signs in town
- Two hours spent cleaning the tops of storm drains
- Three hours patching and repairing potholes and sink holes
- Sixteen hours grinding leaves and brush for mulch

Councilman Austin read the following report:

First and foremost, before I lose my thoughts, I'd like to wish everyone a happy holiday. Second, congratulations to our newest Eagle Scout; my brother was also an Eagle, so I know of the dedication and hard work you have put in. Congratulations on this great achievement.

I'm not really sure how to start this, and don't know whether to be angry, or share this with Council in hope that you will not be caught in the same scenario, or both. For those who do not know, I have been found in violation by the Department of Community Affairs for voting for fire department equipment even though I was advised by legal counsel that it was not a conflict to be on Council and a Fire Investigator.

I've lived in Pitman all but about three years of my 67. I've served Pitman in many capacities, Little League coach, Babe Ruth coach, All Stars coach, Girls Softball coach, and many other activities totaling decades. I've been a volunteer firefighter for over thirty-five years, including over twenty years as the Fire Marshal, and more as a Fire Investigator for Pitman. During this time, at no compensation, and on my own time, I have also become internationally certified by the International Association of Arson Investigators as Certified Fire Investigator, which is the ultimate in the fire investigation services. I'm also proud to say that I began my military career as an E1 Private and rose to the rank, and retired as a full Colonel, receiving the Army's "Legion of Merit" medal upon retirement after thirty-seven years.

And what do I get for all of this service? I am rewarded with a piteous attempt to defame my character by an individual who cares not what is best for Pitman. Let me say that again, an individual who cares not what is best for Pitman, but obviously disagrees with my political views or my associations.

I honestly don't know whether to feel hatred or pity for this individual. I take this unwarranted accusation personally, as a personal vendetta on my character to defame me, and will not let it go unanswered. This individual has no backbone, is gutless, and is a poor excuse for a human being. If someone doesn't agree with me, face me like a man, and tell me. I would surely think more of you, instead of defaming me using a keyboard.

But here's my warning to Council. This investigation by the Department of Community Affairs has been wasting everyone's time since December 2014, an incredible sixty months. I still have a difficult time understanding that. I was elected to represent everyone in town, including firefighters, and have voted for what I believe the residents require and want. Whenever I voted, I relied on my past experience in finance, firefighting, and military, to assist in forming an opinion on what was best for the town. I have had to abstain from many votes during this investigation, which was a disservice to the residents of Pitman, especially the firefighters, for which I apologize. It seems very counterproductive to have an experienced individual forced to abstain in areas of his expertise, but it has happened. I can show you history, numerous examples of past and present Council people who were/are members of a fire company who voted on equipment for the town, but somehow, I was singled out. And, I did vote for fire equipment that I believed the town required, just like I voted for automatic weapons and cars for the Police Department, trucks for the Highway Department, and miscellaneous other equipment.

So, in a small town like Pitman, where 10% of the people do 90% of the work, how far do these possible conflicts go? In our town, everyone has ties to everyone, volunteering in many positions, creating many possible conflicts, so where do these possible conflicts stop? This question originated in 2014 when questions were asked by a Councilperson if I could be appointed Public Safety Liaison and be a Fire Investigator, to which our solicitor answered, he did not see a conflict. All I can say is, I have been taking copious notes, and unfortunately, I am positive that some of the votes and other activities that Council members are involved in, could surely be construed as violations, and I'm sure some would be upheld. Make no mistake about it, with this ruling, every Council member could have a complaint lodged against them at any time, and honestly, it is ridiculous.

In summary, I am dismayed that someone with no guts, couldn't face me, but instead condescended to be a keyboard warrior, and attempted to defame me. The history is there, members of Council who were fire department members have voted on equipment even for their own fire department. I did not do that. The car in question was used by the paid Fire Official and paid Inspector, and actually now has been transferred to the Police Department. Why was I targeted? Simply to defame my name, which I take extremely seriously. But I will promise one thing, I will not fade away after my decades of service to this town and be tarnished by this parasite who will be discovered. I have sought legal advice, and my next step will be to share the ending chapter, hopefully soon.

Unfinished Business

Ordinance No. 24, 2019 – An Ordinance of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Pitman, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey, Amending Ordinance No. 10, 2018, Chapter XXXV, Section 33A, “Wind and Solar Energy Systems” of the Code of the Borough of Pitman

Second Reading – Public Hearing

Motion: Weng Second: Rudley

Motion to open to the public: Razze Second: Weng
Time: 8:27 p.m.

No public comment.

Motion to close public portion: Razze Second: Weng
Time: 8:27 p.m.

Roll Call:

Councilman Austin: Yes Council President Blass: Yes
Councilman Pierpont: Yes Councilman Razze: Yes
Councilwoman Rudley: Yes Councilman Weng: Yes
Mayor Johnson _____

Ordinance No. 25, 2019 – An Ordinance of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Pitman, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey Authorizing an Agreement for Tax Abatement With Pitman Properties, LLC, Jim Brandenburger for a Property Commonly Known as 401 Tuohy Avenue and Identified on the Municipal Tax Map as Block 170 lot 1.01

Second Reading – Public Hearing

Motion: Austin Second: Blass

Motion to open to the public: Razze Second: Blass
Time: 8:28 p.m.

No public comment.

Motion to close public portion: Razze Second: Blass
Time: 8:28 p.m.

Roll Call:

Councilman Austin: Yes Council President Blass: Yes

Councilman Pierpont: Yes
Councilwoman Rudley: Yes
Mayor Johnson _____

Councilman Razzo: Yes
Councilman Weng: Yes

New Business

Resolution No. 198, 2019 – Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Pitman, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey to Authorizing Refund of Real Estate Taxes

Motion: Austin

Second: Blass

Roll Call:

Councilman Austin: Yes
Councilman Pierpont: Yes
Councilwoman Rudley: Yes
Mayor Johnson _____

Council President Blass: Yes
Councilman Razzo: Yes
Councilman Weng: Yes

Resolution No. 199, 2019 – Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Pitman, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey Authorizing the Cancellation/Refund of Real Estate Taxes Due to the Property Owner Meeting the Requirements of a 100% Disabled Veteran as Set Forth in the N.J.S.A. 54:4-3.30 and is Exempt from Paying Property Taxes

Motion: Austin

Second: Blass

Roll Call:

Councilman Austin: Yes
Councilman Pierpont: Yes
Councilwoman Rudley: Yes
Mayor Johnson _____

Council President Blass: Yes
Councilman Razzo: Yes
Councilman Weng: Yes

Resolution No. 200, 2019 – Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Pitman, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey Approving Payment #2 to Landberg Construction, LLC in the Amount of \$81,786.97 for the Resurfacing of Woodland Avenue and McClelland Avenue Project

Motion: Austin

Second: Blass

Roll Call:

Councilman Austin: Yes
Councilman Pierpont: Yes
Councilwoman Rudley: Yes
Mayor Johnson _____

Council President Blass: Yes
Councilman Razzo: Yes
Councilman Weng: Yes

Resolution No. 201, 2019 – Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Pitman, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey Awarding Contract to Pioneer Pipe Contractors, Inc. for the Resurfacing and Safety Improvements to Bellevue Avenue Project

Motion: Blass

Second: Weng

Roll Call:

Councilman Austin: Yes
Councilman Pierpont: Yes
Councilwoman Rudley: Yes
Mayor Johnson _____

Council President Blass: Yes
Councilman Razzo: Yes
Councilman Weng: Yes

Resolution No. 202, 2019 – Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Pitman, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey Authorizing 2019 Budget Transfers

Motion: Austin

Second: Blass

Roll Call:

Councilman Austin: Abstain

Council President Blass: Yes

Councilman Pierpont: Yes

Councilman Razzo: Yes

Councilwoman Rudley: Yes

Councilman Weng: Yes

Mayor Johnson _____

Resolution No. 203, 2019 – Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Pitman, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey Approving a 2.0% Salary Increase for All Non-Contractual Employees of the Borough of Pitman, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey

Motion: Austin

Second: Blass

Roll Call:

Councilman Austin: Abstain

Council President Blass: Yes

Councilman Pierpont: Yes

Councilman Razzo: Yes

Councilwoman Rudley: Yes

Councilman Weng: Yes

Mayor Johnson _____

Resolution No. 204, 2019 – Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Pitman, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey Approving a Resolution Calling for a Study Commission to Review the Open Public Records Act

Motion: Austin

Second: Blass

Roll Call:

Councilman Austin: Abstain

Council President Blass: Yes

Councilman Pierpont: Yes

Councilman Razzo: Yes

Councilwoman Rudley: Yes

Councilman Weng: Yes

Mayor Johnson _____

Payment of Bills

Motion: Austin

Second: Blass

Roll Call:

Councilman Austin: Yes

Council President Blass: Yes

Councilman Pierpont: Yes

Councilman Razzo: Abstain to #38285; Yes, to approve all other bills

Councilwoman Rudley: Yes

Councilman Weng: Yes

Mayor Johnson _____

Event Permit/License Application

Event: Live Music on Theatre Avenue

Sponsor: Greater Pitman Chamber of Commerce

Contact Person: John Fitzpatrick

Date & Time: Saturday, November 30, 2019 – December 7, 14, 21, 2019; 6pm – 7:30pm

Location: Theatre Avenue

Motion: Razzo

Second: Blass

Roll Call:

Councilman Austin: Yes

Council President Blass: Yes

Councilman Pierpont: Yes
Councilwoman Rudley: Yes
Mayor Johnson _____

Councilman Razze: Yes
Councilman Weng: Yes

Approved contingent upon providing the Borough with a Certificate of Liability Insurance naming the Borough of Pitman as Additional Insured.

Bingo License Application

Organization: Kindle HSA
Contact Person: Allison Massimini
Date & Time: March 13, 2020; 6pm – 9pm
Location: Highland Chemical Engine Company

Motion: Razze
Roll Call:

Councilman Austin: Abstain
Councilman Pierpont: Abstain
Councilwoman Rudley: Yes
Mayor Johnson _____

Second: Blass
Council President Blass: Yes
Councilman Razze: Yes
Councilman Weng: Yes

Public Portion

Motion to open to the public: Razze
Time: 8:41 p.m.

Second: Blass

Daniel McAteer, Chief of Police, 462 West Avenue and 110 S. Broadway - I would like to comment on the OPRA request resolution. I would like thank Administrator O'Donnell for all that she does with this, because I know how much time she spends. We are also inundated with requests.

As a taxpayer, I would like to thank Mayor and Council for your hard work. Sometimes I sit here and listen, and I'm in awe sometimes with your passion and commitment. And tonight, Councilman Pierpont got to me, with his rendition about the War Memorial Park, and then Councilman Austin; two military people who definitely have passion about this issue. But I want to say thank you to all Mayor and Council, for all that you do, and the times you get so passionate, and the times that you do the things that are best for this community. I know that 100% of the time that is how you vote. I would like to say to Councilman Austin that I don't think that what the review board found will tarnish your reputation, you work very hard for this community and if anybody knows you, they know it comes from your heart.

Bruce Scott, 717 W. Jersey Avenue - I am here to support Kevin Austin tonight. As I sit here and watch the dedication that every Councilperson, including Mayor and Judy, gives to this town, it is second to none.

This ethics violation is total crap, and it infuriates me that it has happened to him, or to any of you because you all vote with the best interest of the town. I would like to see Council put a letter together denouncing this ethics violation because as I listen tonight, everyone is in violation tonight. Mr. Blass and Mr. Weng you are both associated with the schools, but yet voted on giving them a million dollars of the taxpayers' money. Is it a violation? You are all volunteers and you have to vote on things. This is not a big city, this in a small town with a big heart, and for this to happen is a travesty. I would like to see Council denounce this by sending a letter.

I'm not sure if I will be here anymore this year, so I want to say thank you to Mayor Johnson and Councilman Austin for their dedication and service for all these years.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judith O'Donnell
Borough Clerk/Administrator