

**BOROUGH OF PITMAN
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 13, 2017**

Call to Order

Time: 8:00 p.m.

Salute to the Flag/Invocation

Councilman Razzo

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 2017, which was posted on the Borough Hall bulletin board, sent to the "South Jersey Times" and filed with the Municipal Clerk on January 7, 2017.

Roll Call

Councilman Austin: Present
Councilwoman Higbee: Present
Councilman Razzo: Present
Mayor Johnson: Present
Clerk O'Donnell: Present

Councilman Blass: Present
Council President Pierpont: Present
Councilwoman Rudley: Present
Borough Solicitor Alice: Present

Proclamation Presentation

Borough of Pitman Fire Department Service Awards

Oath of Loyalty

Pitman Police Department Members

Corporal Jonathan Streater to the rank of Sergeant
Patrolman Christopher Leach to the rank of Corporal
Patrolman Andrew Carson to the rank of Corporal

Approval of Minutes

Formal Meeting, and Closed Formal Meeting Minutes of January 9, 2017

Motion: Blass

Second: Austin

Roll Call:

Councilman Austin: Yes
Councilwoman Higbee: Yes
Councilman Razzo: Abstain
Mayor Johnson _____

Councilman Blass: Yes
Council President Pierpont: Yes
Councilwoman Rudley: Yes

Work Session, Formal Meeting, and Closed Formal Meeting Minutes of January 23, 2017

Motion: Blass

Second: Austin

Roll Call:

Councilman Austin: Yes
Councilwoman Higbee: Yes

Councilman Blass: Yes
Council President Pierpont: Yes

Councilman Razze: Yes
Mayor Johnson _____

Councilwoman Rudley: Yes

Committee Reports

Councilman Austin read the following report:

The McCowan Memorial Library Board of Trustees met on January 24. Three new computers, purchased in December, are up and running. Ms. Furgason agreed to sponsor and organize the Halloween Parade again this year. A book was donated to the library in memory of our dear friend Harry Walker, entitled "When Swing Was the Thing: Personality Profiles of the Big Band Era".

Sgt. Streater presented an 'active shooter' presentation for the library staff on February 8.

The library had 4,710 visitors, and 151 children at story time during the month of January.

Special thanks to Ted Armstrong from the Public Works Department who changed all the lights bulbs, and cleaned up around the library.

The Combined Planning and Zoning Board will meet on February 21, at 7:00 p.m.

I also attended the Joint Insurance Fund's Annual Elected Official's meeting where we discussed risk management for local officials, and I was also invited to the Planning and Zoning Board, Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Committee's combined meeting, where we discussed keeping Broadway in the Historic District.

Councilman Blass

On February 6, Mrs. O'Donnell and I met with representatives from the Borough's engineering firm, which included an architect that specializes in historic structures. We discussed the Grove Auditorium. The firm will now type up a request for proposals to firms to submit bids to develop a plan to refurbish the building. It is hoped that any work can begin once the camp meetings end this summer.

The Historic Commission met on February 9, and approved, after some revisions, three requests.

New lighting was installed in Ballard Park as part of the Monument Lighting Program sponsored by RAB Lighting. Mr. Ed Hudson made the Borough aware of this program, Peter Lumber donated the pedestal for the lighting, and Pollard Electrical Sales provided the lighting.

Councilman Razze

Councilman Razze thanked Mayor Johnson, Councilwoman Higbee, and Councilman Austin for joining him at the Joint Insurance Fund's Elected Officials Dinner and Seminar in Woodbury.

Councilwoman Rudley said that she plans on attending the upcoming presentation in Vineland.

Councilman Razze reported that the Recreation Commission met last week and discussed the wrap up of our winter projects, and programs, this week. Also, Pitman Middle School baseball will be having try-outs this week. The season will run during April and May, playing six to eight games. We also discussed upcoming programs, such as our stag golf program, and winter indoor field hockey, which runs from February 28 to March 28. T-ball registration has already taken place. If you did not register your child for t-ball, you still may; please see Recreation Director Andy Fox here at Borough Hall. Also, we will be starting a youth running club this spring.

We are in the process of repairing the alleyway wall by the tennis courts over at Shertle Park.

The commission's schedule of regular meetings has been set for the year 2017.

Councilman Razze said that he and Alcyon Park Superintendent, Jared Harmon, will be meeting with members of the Environmental Commission on Saturday morning at Alcyon Lake to discuss the future maintenance of the buffer zone.

For those who are not aware, the water level at Glen Lake was very low last week. The lake is being completely filled by run off. There appears to be nothing wrong with the lake dam, but it will be checked now that the water level is low.

We are all set for our Movie in the Park event this summer. This is presented in conjunction with Gloucester County Parks and Recreation Department. Our movie this year will be held on Wednesday, August 30, beginning at dusk at the Sunset Auditorium. Our movie will be "Sing".

Councilman Pierpont read the following report:

I would again like to remind our residents that televisions, microwave ovens, computer components, vacuums and basically anything with a power cord cannot be put in the trash, or left at the curb for pick up. These items are considered "e-waste" and can no longer be put in the regular trash stream. A container is provided for these items at our Public Works yard, and these items should be taken there for proper disposal. For more information on this, please visit our website.

The trash and recycling numbers for the period of January 23 through February 10 are as follows:

- Seventeen loads of trash for a total of 176 tons
- Sixteen loads of recycling totaling 66 tons
- Seven loads of bulk trash
- One hundred five yards of leaves and brush
- 845 yards of leaves were delivered to Duffield's Farm for composting

The Greater Pitman Chamber of Commerce would like to remind folks to Stay, Stroll, Shop and Eat Local. The next scheduled meeting of the Chamber is on February 21, at 7:00 p.m. Meetings are held at Pitman Manor.

The next Green Team meeting is scheduled for February 23, in the Borough Hall conference room. All are invited to attend.

Councilwoman Higbee

Councilwoman Higbee reported that on January 31, 2017, she attended the Municipal Joint Insurance Fund dinner. Topics of discussion were Ethics, and Land Use Matters, as they apply to Risk Management for Local Officials.

On February 7, 2017, Councilwoman Higbee attended a dinner for the Gloucester County Municipal Alliance, along with Administrator O'Donnell, Chief McAteer, Officer Osinski, Officer Leach, and Officer Streater. There were two speakers, both had been addicted to drugs, sharing their heartfelt stories.

Councilwoman Higbee said that if residents have prescription drugs to dispose of, the closest drop boxes are

Motion to close public hearing: Razze
Time: 8:58 p.m.

Second: Austin

Roll Call:

Councilman Austin: Yes

Councilwoman Higbee: Yes

Councilman Razze: Yes

Mayor Johnson _____

Councilman Blass: Yes

Council President Pierpont: Yes

Councilwoman Rudley: Yes

New Business

Resolution No. 40, 2017 – Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Pitman, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey Commemorating and Congratulating the Gloucester, Salem, and Cumberland Counties Municipal Joint Insurance Fund on 25 Years of Successful Operations

Motion: Razze

Second: Blass

Roll Call:

Councilman Austin: Yes

Councilwoman Higbee: Yes

Councilman Razze: Yes

Mayor Johnson _____

Councilman Blass: Yes

Council President Pierpont: Yes

Councilwoman Rudley: Yes

Resolution No. 41, 2017 – Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Pitman, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey Approving the Submission of a Grant Application and Execution of Contract With the New Jersey Department of Transportation for the Highland Terrace Phase II Project

Motion: Pierpont

Second: Higbee

Roll Call:

Councilman Austin: Yes

Councilwoman Higbee: Yes

Councilman Razze: Yes

Mayor Johnson _____

Councilman Blass: Yes

Council President Pierpont: Yes

Councilwoman Rudley: Yes

Resolution No. 42, 2017 – Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Pitman, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey Authorizing the Execution of a Grant Agreement With the County of Gloucester for the July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018 Municipal Alliance Grant

Motion: Higbee

Second: Rudley

Roll Call:

Councilman Austin: Yes

Councilwoman Higbee: Yes

Councilman Razze: Yes

Mayor Johnson _____

Councilman Blass: Yes

Council President Pierpont: Yes

Councilwoman Rudley: Yes

Resolution No. 43, 2017 – Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Pitman, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey Rescinding Resolution No. 7, 2017 of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Pitman, Appointing Long, Marmero & Associates as Labor Counsel for 2017

Motion: Pierpont

Second: Razze

Roll Call:

Councilman Austin: Yes

Councilwoman Higbee: Yes

Councilman Blass: Yes

Council President Pierpont: Yes

Councilman Razze: Yes
Mayor Johnson _____

Councilwoman Rudley: Yes

Resolution No. 44, 2017 – Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Pitman, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey Recognizing the Value of All People and Advocating for the Repeal of the Executive Order On Immigration

Motion: Pierpont

Second: Higbee

Discussion:

Councilman Austin – “For those individuals who were not at the Work Session; I retired from the Army after 37 years; I believe in human rights; I fought for them all my life. I believe that all people are created equal. But this resolution has no relevancy in this public domain tonight. We don’t set federal standards, we don’t set federal laws. When the past president did his thing, I may not have liked it, but I went with it. That was how I was raised. The way my Oath of Office was when beginning my commission as Lieutenant.

This original resolution was called ‘Recognizing the Value of All People and Advocating for the Repeal of the Executive Order on Immigration’. I do not go against the President of the United States. I don’t think Pitman should go against the President of the United States. Yes, it was rewritten five times, because when we saw it there was no way I would approve it. I’m embarrassed by it. So when I vote tonight, you know it’s not because I’m a discriminatory person, it’s because I will not go against the President of the United States.”

Council President Pierpont – “I was asked at the last meeting who wrote it, and why? I wrote this in response to some of the concerns and questions that I was asked as I walk around this town and meet people, and they express to me how much they would like to make it so people feel welcome, and that people don’t feel like they are accepted into our country.

So, I did some research, and I took it upon myself to read some articles, and personally, my family and I are really passionate about those who are less fortunate.

The reason why this went through five rewrites: The goal of Councilman Blass, and I thank Dr. Blass for helping with this, our goal was to make this a more humanitarian declaration than political. That is why this final version, after five rewrites, you will see no reference to the president; you will see no reference to the temporary travel ban on immigration. This is strictly an effort to make a humanitarian statement. I Googled our Congressman, Frank Lobiondo, and looked at his immigration standpoint; I could agree that immigration reform needs to happen. He also believes that those who are in the pipeline, or those who are seeking refugee status, and they don’t choose where they go, those who choose refugee status have every right to do that. So I had a little bit of background there.

Then I read an article that my friend posted. It was an article written by Scott Arbeiter, it was published by the New York Times on February 7, 2017. This gentleman describes himself as an Evangelical Christian who is prolife. He is the Pastor of the Elm Brook Church in Wisconsin, and he is the Chairman of the Board of a relief agency called World Relief, which is a church organization, serving millions of people in some of the hardest, hostile places.

He goes on to write, to examine what prolife means, and what it means to him. Basically, to him prolife meant all life, the whole life. Prolife means we must value all life from conception to death.

The discussion I had with Councilman Blass, and I also got some help from Councilwoman Rudley this morning in this final resolution, is that I am very proud and happy that we as a Governing Body came to a compromise on

this, at least some of us.

My firm belief is yes, this does belong at this level, and some people will argue that it does not. My firm belief is that it does. That regardless the size of your community, the size of your congregation, or the size of your government, your voice still needs to be heard, and it needs to be heard for those who are not able to speak for themselves. This is not a political movement, this is using my gift and my power of life sitting here to value the life of those who are seeking the same opportunities that we have.

That was my motivation for writing this, I will not pretend that it was political, frankly, if that's the way you feel about it, and you want to make sure that you convey your feelings, you have every right to do that.

I think this is a valuable tool, because how cool would it be for our Congressman to receive a simple four paragraph resolution, that says we also value life. You may not agree on everything, but we are going to agree on this.”

Councilwoman Rudley – “Someone in Work Session asked the question ‘Why will you vote on this?’ All of your opinions are very important to me, even if I disagree with them, I think about them all.

I’ll tell you why. We say the Pledge of Allegiance every time we come here. We don’t need to do this every time we come here; we have already agreed to pledge our allegiance. So why should we each time, this really has nothing to do with Pitman, but we are reminding ourselves that we are here, and that we value this. This is very important to me. I put a lot of work into this version that I thought was entirely humanitarian. I tried to look at it through the eyes of someone who doesn’t see the world as I do, and tried to help come to something that I hope everyone appreciates, and the version that stands does that. I don’t understand how anyone can disagree with the words, and when I vote with respect to this tonight, every single word on here is what I do agree with. Every once an awhile you have to do what is important. If it’s ceremonially, is it unnecessary to rehash things every time, maybe. But we do it anyway, just like we take the Pledge of Allegiance every single time.”

Councilman Blass – “I would not argue that the first couple of drafts had some political tone in there, but we worked very hard to take it out. When I came onboard, I thought this would be a bipartisan resolution just reaffirming what Pitman is all about. That was my whole goal, and I think we accomplished that.”

Councilwoman Higbee – “I did not have any part of writing, but when I did read this version that is before us now, it certainly represented my values.”

Councilman Razzo – “Councilman Pierpont and I had a chance to discuss this, this morning and shared our thoughts. I respected everything he said and really truly got the impression he respected my opinion as well, and it was wonderful for us to have that discussion, to still hang up the phone laughing about something else, as it should be here at this body, and as it should be here in this town. I think yes, if we lived in a bubble this resolution would be taken with an intent perhaps what it was meant to be taken, but we don’t live in a bubble, we live in a nation that 50% of the people hate the other 50%. This is the politics that we fought so hard to keep out of our little town, but it has crept in, and that’s what we need to fight. It’s not about fighting our sentiment, I shared with Jim that we had our Pastor read a letter from our Bishop at the Methodist Church sharing how he felt that the doctrine of the church was not in compliance with the administration of the U.S. Government, and I understand that, and this is something that I have strong feelings about as well, and I know Jim does too, but when we bring it here, we make it divisive. It is also nice to see all of you here, but half of you are here for one side and the other is for the other side. This is what we don’t need, this is what we need to fight to keep out.”

Mayor Johnson – “When I first opened up our agenda and saw the wording of advocating the repeal of the Executive Order on Immigration, it didn’t matter where I stood, or where anyone else stood. My opinion was that it has no room to be in these Chambers.

I did spend quite a bit of time with Councilwoman Rudley via phone today in a bipartisan effort to try to come up with wording that would be acceptable to all, which was a challenge. We probably haven’t succeeded, but again, the original resolution advocating the repeal of the Executive Order on Immigration didn’t sit well with me at all, and obviously with other people. Not because of Council President Pierpont’s opinion, or my opinion on immigration. That’s not why we were elected. Nobody in this room elected any of the seven of us to vote on immigration. I’ll never forget the time when Mayor Batten and I knocked on someone’s door and they asked us our party affiliation, and we got our heads chopped off for sending young men in to Iraq to fight in the war. That’s not what we are trying to do in this town.

I felt that this was a little bit above our pay grade for what we were elected to do in this town. I agree that the wording that is now put forth is hard to disagree with, we are all for this. When push comes to shove, I don’t see the value of why we need to bring it to these chambers. Council President Pierpont, I absolutely respect your purpose behind it, and Councilwoman Rudley, I thank you for your time today that we spent on trying to come up with some language that was acceptable to all, and I certainly respect the opinion of my fellow Republicans on this side for their opinions as well. Because we were all taken aback by the initial draft, I think that the initial one tainted the rest of us going forward. It’s certainly not a party issue as far as respecting others and advocating life, this cannot be a party issue.”

Councilman Razzo – “Your statement about respecting the opinion of those who had hands in drafting it and respecting your fellow Republicans for that; Mr. Downham hit it on the head in the Work Session meeting. When we sit up here, it’s not about (inaudible) are ours, and it’s not about who’s that person, do I trust them to lead our local government? Do I trust them to make the right decisions? It’s not about political party. This is what’s creeping in, and we have to fight to keep it out. This is something that Congress should be voting on, and having an opinion on. This does not belong here.

Roll Call:

Councilman Austin: Abstain
Councilwoman Higbee: Yes
Councilman Razzo: Abstain
Mayor Johnson _____

Councilman Blass: Yes
Council President Pierpont: Yes
Councilwoman Rudley: Yes

Resolution No. 45, 2017 – Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Pitman, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey Authorizing a Closed Meeting

The general nature of the subjects to be discussed shall be:

Pending Litigation

Contract Negotiations for PT Public Works Employees

Action may be taken upon returning to an open meeting.

Motion: Rudley

Second: Higbee

Roll Call:

Councilman Austin: Yes
Councilwoman Higbee: Yes
Councilman Razzo: Yes
Mayor Johnson _____

Councilman Blass: Yes
Council President Pierpont: Yes
Councilwoman Rudley: Yes

Resolution No. 46, 2017 – Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Pitman, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey Supporting February 2017 as American Heart Month

Motion: Higbee

Second: Pierpont

Roll Call:

Councilman Austin: Yes

Councilman Blass: Yes

Councilwoman Higbee: Yes

Council President Pierpont: Yes

Councilman Razze: Yes

Councilwoman Rudley: Yes

Mayor Johnson _____

Resolution No. 47, 2017 – Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Pitman, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey Authorizing the Borough of Pitman to Enter Into a Cooperative Pricing System and Approving the Execution of the Cooperative Pricing Agreement

Motion: Pierpont

Second: Higbee

Roll Call:

Councilman Austin: Yes

Councilman Blass: Yes

Councilwoman Higbee: Yes

Council President Pierpont: Yes

Councilman Razze: Yes

Councilwoman Rudley: Yes

Mayor Johnson _____

Payment of Bills

Motion: Higbee

Second: Rudley

Roll Call:

Councilman Austin: Yes

Councilman Blass: Yes

Councilwoman Higbee: Yes, Abstains to #33310

Council President Pierpont: Yes, Abstains to #33368 and #14684

Councilman Razze: Yes

Councilwoman Rudley: Yes

Mayor Johnson _____

Event Permit Applications/Signage

Applicant: Pitman High School Drama Club

Signage: A-frame sign in front of McCowan Memorial Library

Time: February 17, 2017 - February 26, 2017 and March 9, 2017 – March 20, 2017

Location: In front of McCowan Memorial Library, on lawn

Contact Person: Judy Walker

Motion: Razze

Second: Blass

Roll Call:

Councilman Austin: Yes

Councilman Blass: Yes

Councilwoman Higbee: Yes

Council President Pierpont: Yes

Councilman Razze: Yes

Councilwoman Rudley: Yes

Mayor Johnson _____

*Approved contingent upon obtaining a Certificate of Liability Insurance and adherence to the conditions set by the Borough of Pitman Zoning Officer.

Applicant: Pitman Little League (Registration)

Date & Time: February 25, 2017; 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Location: Borough Hall, Council Chambers
Contact Person: Russ Johnson
Motion: Razze
Roll Call:
Councilman Austin: Yes
Councilwoman Higbee: Yes
Councilman Razze: Abstain
Mayor Johnson _____

Second: Blass
Councilman Blass: Yes
Council President Pierpont: Yes
Councilwoman Rudley: Yes

Application for Social Affair Permit

Event: Beef & Beer for Scholarship

Date & Time: March 24, 2017; 7 p.m. – 11 p.m.

Location: Broadway Theatre

Contact Person: John Fitzpatrick/Chamber of Commerce

Motion: Razze

Second: Blass

Roll Call:

Councilman Austin: Yes

Councilman Blass: Yes

Councilwoman Higbee: Yes

Council President Pierpont: Yes

Councilman Razze: Yes

Councilwoman Rudley: Yes

Mayor Johnson _____

Public Portion

Motion to open to the public: Pierpont

Second: Razze

Time: 9:34 p.m.

Bruce Scott, Pitman Fire Chief, 717 W. Jersey Avenue – Chief Scott addressed a Facebook post that appeared earlier today stating that the Washington Township Fire District was taking over the Pitman Fire Department. Chief Scott said that this was a false statement made by two men who are running for office in the Washington Township Fire District. He said that at no time has this been discussed by Mayor and Council, the Pitman Fire Department, or Pitman’s Board of Fire Engineers.

Matthew Weng, 202 W. Holly Avenue – Mr. Weng said that many people here tonight support and are proud of the members of Council who voted yes to Resolution No. 44, 2017. He also said that all members of Council have set an example how to disagree without being disagreeable.

Mr. Weng also asked for additional information on the running club being formed by the Recreation Department. Councilman Razze said that it is in the planning stages at this time, but that when ready, information will go out through the schools, and all the normal channels.

Lisa Reichtenstein – Ms. Reichtenstein explained that she is trying to buy the property located at 102 First Avenue in the Grove. She asked if the Borough has received any information on the new deed, which adds a portion of Borough owned property to the rear of the lot known as 102 First Avenue.

Administrator O’Donnell stated that she has met with the owner of the property, Nelson Palmer, and his real estate agent, Robert Dick, and explained to them that the subdivision paperwork must be submitted to the Planning and Zoning Board before a new deed can be drawn up and filed with the County. Ms. O’Donnell said that she will contact Mr. Palmer tomorrow to see where they are in the process.

Eric Mollenhauer, 309 Roosevelt Avenue – Mr. Mollenhauer stated that the Constitution is clear on personal rights for all. He said that the ban on immigrants is unconstitutional, and that Council had a chance to model respect by approving Resolution No. 44, 2017. Mr. Mollenhauer thanked members of Council who voted their approval of the resolution.

Jason James, 91 Circle Avenue – Mr. James said that he agreed with Councilman Razzo who stated that we do not live in a bubble, that we are part of a larger country, and a much larger world. He continued by referring to the book Night by Elie Wiesel, and stated that we have a responsibility not to remain silent. Mr. James concluded by saying that he is very proud that Council voted for human life.

Lori Marquis, 4 Webb Avenue – Ms. Marquis said that she was very happy with tonight's resolution as presented; that she was opposed to the original draft. She asked Council for more compassion toward local issues, and said that Council should focus on the Borough.

Jeff Kraechen, 111 Circle Avenue – Mr. Kraechen agreed with the updated version of the resolution, and stated that he is very impressed with how this Council meeting was run, and that he has respect for all members of Council.

Megan Meyers, 148 S. Broadway, Human Village Brewery – Ms. Meyers said that she is glad that the resolution passed; that the issue is not about Democrats or Republicans. Ms. Meyers quoted Psalm 133 about unity, and said that in her experience she has found that Pitman embraces all people.

Mike Shaw, 502 Cedar Avenue – Mr. Shaw said that he is a new resident, and when looking for a new home, he and his wife kept coming back to Pitman. He said that he is very proud that Pitman likes everyone.

Vanessa James, 91 Circle Avenue – Ms. James thanked Council President Pierpont and Councilman Blass for their efforts in writing Resolution No. 44, 2017, and said that she is proud to be a resident of Pitman.

Bill Roth, 312 Snyder Avenue – Mr. Roth came out in support of Resolution No. 44, 2017.

Sam Flamma, 600 Pitman Avenue – Mr. Flamma said that he does not think that we need a resolution to state the obvious, that there were five drafts for this one resolution, and now the wording is beautiful. Mr. Flamma questioned the timing of the resolution, and said that because of the timing, it is an attack on the President of the United States. He further stated that if this resolution was introduced six months before now, or even six months from now, that it would have had much more support. He said that by its' nature, it is political and divisive, and that it should not be so.

Patti Kelley, 125 Pitman Avenue – Ms. Kelley said that in regard to bulk trash and e-waste, that there seems to be abuse again around town that needs to be addressed.

Council President Pierpont said that the Borough does a very good job of enforcing what is written, but that he feels that there has to be better follow-up to enforcement after the red tag is issued to the resident. He said that he will be talking to Mr. Rodi, our Public Works Manager, about this issue very soon.

Jim Fortney, 502 Carew Avenue – Mr. Fortney noted the time, and stated that this time spent tonight discussing national problems would have been better spent on Pitman problems such as drug use, and vacant properties.

