

**WOODSTOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
April 12, 2022**

Sunshine Statement:

“The regular meeting of the Borough Council of the Borough of Woodstown, County of Salem was held at 7:00 PM in the Borough Hall in accordance by noticing the South Jersey Times and the Daily Journal and posting on the Borough Website in compliance with the Sunshine Law NJSA 10:4-5 to 10:4-21.”

- **Roll Call – Bobbitt, Hackett, Hiles, Hyman, Merkle, Nixon, Mayor Dietrich**
- **Absent – NONE**
- **Others Present – Joe DiNicola Jr (Solicitor), Cynthia Dalessio (Clerk), John Hitchner (Deputy Clerk), Erik Biermann (Engineer), Ryan DeFalco (Police Chief), Jud Moore (CFO), Frank Mitchell (CPWM), Mark Blauer (Grant Writer), Wesley “Buster” Burden (Resident), George and Carol Tatnall (Residents), Thomas Glah (Resident), Eileen Morris (Resident), Casandra Polo (Resident), Bob Romanosky (Resident)**

Flag Salute:

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm and Mayor Dietrich led Council in the flag salute.

Public Comments:

The meeting was opened for public comment by Mayor Dietrich.

Mr. Thomas Glah addresses the Council. He expresses concerns about speeding and sidewalks in the Borough. He tells Council there is no safe way from Chestnut into the center of town without having to walk on the shoulder of Route 40. He comments about the flashing speed signs and their use to reduce speeding in and out of the town’s main corridors. Mr. Glah and other residents also bring up storm water runoff from the Candlelight and Woodstown Greens development and how the runoff ends up in Chestnut Run

Mayor Dietrich address some of his concerns and defers the speeding related questions to the Police Chief. The Mayor informs the public about the safe routes to school grants which the Borough has been working on completing for over 7 years. It is a federal grant. Studies were done throughout the town to determine areas most in need. The grant is set to complete about 300 ft of sidewalk in the Borough. The Mayor also lists 3 areas where flashing lights are going to be installed along with the pedestrian crosswalk by the school. The Mayor also previously discussed with NJDOT having a footbridge installed over Chestnut Run. He has been in discussion with the company expanding Friends Village concerning petitioning the State for the footbridge. Mayor Dietrich discusses the most recent changes to the State standards for storm water. He points out that the original Candlelight development met all of the State requirements for storm water and was reviewed by multiple engineers. Woodstown Greens would be held to the new standards and there should not be as much runoff as the previous development.

Engineer Biermann informs the public that we have no jurisdiction over storm water runoff which originates in Pilesgrove. He lets the public know that they may file complaints with the Cumberland/Salem Conservation District. He also informs the public that the rules governing storm water are set by the NJ DEP. Engineer Biermann also states that the number of “extreme” rainstorms has increased over the past decade which has led to more runoff and erosion.

Ms. Morris informs Council that Mr. Ott used to permit people to cross the bridge over Chestnut Run and pass through his property. His property has new owners now who do not allow the neighbors to walk through the property.

Mr. Tatnall requests that the Borough reach out to the State again to confirm when the footbridge will be addressed.

Mr. Glah discusses various properties which were sold and were not required to install sidewalks. Mrs. Dalessio informs him that there is a part of the code which grants them an exception and these properties likely qualified. She believes it is if their property is not within 150 ft of existing sidewalks and informs Mr. Glah she will look into it more specifically and get in touch with him.

Mr. Hiles makes a motion to have a letter drafted and sent to our State representatives regarding the footbridge. That motion is seconded by Mrs. Nixon and approved 6-0.

Mr. Hiles also suggests that residents reach out to their representatives. He also suggests the school system and Friends Village also be encouraged to do the same.

Residents then voiced their concerns regarding speeding in and out of town on the main corridors. There were also complaints regarding tractor trailers using jake-brakes. Mrs. Morris states that it can be very scary when she has to make a left onto Chestnut as the tractor trailers are going fast on Route 40 still. Residents discussed the use of digital speeding signs.

Chief DeFalco addresses the public's concerns. He discusses that during the Route 40 construction they had many problems with drivers ignoring the signs and driving recklessly. They gave out many tickets during this timeframe. Chief states that the speeding signs cause drivers to slow down. The signs also record data. He is able to have the signs turned off and they will continue to collect data. Chief addresses issues at the crosswalks and the accidents which have occurred even during times when a crossing guard was present. He states that drivers are more distracted than ever and it's an issue everywhere. Chief informs the public that he has 2 more of the speeding signs budgeted for this year and he will be looking to purchase them once the municipal budget is passed. He encourages his officers to utilize different locations for enforcing speeding. Sometimes those locations are not fully visible from the street.

Being as no more members of the public wished to speak, Mayor Dietrich closed the public portion.

Minutes:

Mr. Hiles made a motion to approve the 3/22/2022 regular meeting minutes. Motion was seconded by Mrs. Nixon and the motion carries with a unanimous vote; 6-0

Health, Recreation, and Open Space:

Mr. Blauer states that the grants which were applied for were approved. The Borough will be getting \$400,000 for the park and additional money for home rehab grants. Once the DCA finishes the grant agreements, the Borough will complete the paperwork in the SAGE system. Mr. Blauer suggests that if the Borough is going to pay the engineer for the project out of pocket and not out of the grant money, then the Borough would not need to solicit bids and could just give the contract to the municipal engineer. Not having to advertise for an engineer may help the Borough to have this project completed before the end of the year. Mr. Blauer suggests that the Borough solicit for more applications for the home rehab grants. He also suggests along with the Engineer that they should have bid alternates in order to keep their options open.

Mayor Dietrich asks Mr. Blauer if lighting or security cameras are able to be installed with the grant money. Mr. Blauer discusses the restrictions on the funding. He explains that lighting would be eligible, but security cameras would not. The Mayor suggests adding the lighting to the bid package now rather than later. Engineer Biermann says this is doable.

Council discusses recent revelations regarding the property purchased with Green Acres funding. It was recently inspected by the State and some issues had arose. There is fencing on the property, horses and dogs. The public is entitled to access to property and the fence and the gate restrict that. There is also an adjoining property located in Piles Grove which only has access by passing through the Green Acres property. It is determined that certified letters should be sent explaining that the fencing and animals need to be removed. The property can also not be used as access to private property. The State should be informed of the circumstances and the steps we are taking to get into compliance. A response to the State inspector's report is due by May 9th.

[Ms. Bobbitt excuses herself]

Public Safety:

Mr. Merkle makes a motion to approve the membership application of Taylor Hodson for Fire Company. Motion is seconded by Mrs. Hyman and approved 4-0 with Mr. Hiles abstaining.

Chief DeFalco reviews his report with Council.

[Ms. Bobbitt returns]

Chief DeFalco notes that ticket numbers are lower than average for the month due to some of the larger violations consuming the time of the officers. He informs Council that he will discuss the resident concerns about speeding with the officers.

Utilities:

RESOLUTION 2022-46

Mr. Hackett makes a motion to approve Resolution 2022-46 petitioning the State and our State representatives with regards to mandates towards lead pipes and the lack of funding for the new mandates. Motion is seconded by Mr. Hiles and approve 6-0 with a roll call vote.

Council discusses a letter requesting a reduction for the water bill of 2 Richmond Street. A series of extenuating circumstances and hospitalizations led to an exorbitant bill.

Mr. Hackett makes a motion to reduce the water bill for 2 Richman Street. Motion is seconded by Mr. Merkle and approved 5-1 with Mr. Hiles voting against.

Council reviews the report from the water superintendent.

Streets and Roads:

RESOLUTION 2022-47

Mrs. Hyman makes a motion to approve Resolution 2022-47 releasing the South State performance bond for Liberty and Spring Garden. Motion is seconded by Ms. Bobbitt and approved with a 6-0 roll call vote.

Engineer Biermann informs Council that the bids for paving Dickinson Street and Wilson Ave are in. Engineer Biermann reached out to South Jersey Gas and they repaired the pothole on Wilson Avenue. He discusses the sidewalk repair which is needed on East Ave. He is in talks with NJ DOT as the sidewalk which was installed should not have failed so quickly. The Howard Ave drainage study is complete. He is in discussions with Public Works to assess.

One of the neighbors along Cedar Way agreed to take over the property. The Borough would have the right to vacate the Right of Way which is located there.

The sidewalk between Lincoln and Wilson was breaking. The DOT needs to replace.

Finance:

RESOLUTION 2022-48

Mr. Hiles makes a motion to approve Resolution 2022-48 acknowledging the Borough is in compliance with Civil Rights regulations. Motion is seconded by Mr. Merkle and approved with a 6-0 roll call vote.

RESOLUTION 2022-49

Mr. Hiles makes a motion to approve Resolution 2022-49 introducing the 2022 municipal budget. Motion is seconded by Mr. Hackett and approved with a 6-0 roll call vote.

Council reviews the tax collector's report.

Mr. Hiles makes a motion to approve the bills totaling \$577,000.64. Motion is seconded by Mr. Merkle and approved 6-0.

Council requests that the Home Rehab Grant information be placed on the website.

The finance committee requests a meeting with the CFO.

General Government:

Council discusses purchasing emails for Borough employees to get into compliance with records retention, for better administrative controls, and for succession planning. Seventeen emails are requested at a cost not to exceed \$306.

Mrs. Nixon makes a motion to approve the purchase. Motion is seconded by Ms. Bobbitt and approved 6-0.

ORDINANCE 2022-04

Mrs. Nixon makes a motion to approve Ordinance 2022-04 on first reading amending the checklist for Planning Board applications. Motion is seconded by Mr. Hiles and approved with a 6-0 roll call vote.

RESOLUTION 2022-50

Mr. Hiles makes a motion to approve Resolution 2022-50 entering into executive session. Motion is seconded by Mr. Merkle and approved with a 6-0 roll call vote.

[Council enters into executive session at 9:00 pm]

[Council exits executive session at 9:20 pm]

General Discussion:

Mr. Hackett makes a motion to have the solicitor work on an RFP with regards to the selling of the water utility. Mr. Merkle seconds the motion and it is approved with a 6-0 roll call vote.

Motion to Adjourn:

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Merkle at 9:25 pm. Motion is seconded by Mrs. Hyman and approved 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

John H. Hitchner III, Borough Deputy Clerk