

**EAST BRUNSWICK TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 27, 2023**

Township of East Brunswick
1 Jean Walling Civic Center Dr.
East Brunswick, New Jersey



Regular Meeting: X
Special Meeting: N/A
Meeting Time: 7:30 P.M.

Council President McEvoy called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. The Governing Body and its audience proceeded with the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a Moment of Silence.

The Township Clerk, Tamar Lawful, called the roll:

Present: Councilman Behal
Councilman Wendell
Councilwoman Winston
Councilwoman Zimbicki
Council President McEvoy

Also Present: Mayor Brad Cohen
Michael Baker, Township Attorney
Joseph Criscuolo, Administrator
Tamar Lawful, Township Clerk

The Township Clerk, Tamar Lawful, read the Statement of Adequate Notice:

Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided as required under Chapter 231, P. L. 1975, by specifying the time, date, location, and to the extent known, the agenda, by posting a copy on the Bulletin Board located in the main lobby of the East Brunswick Municipal Building, providing a copy to the Home News Tribune and Sentinel newspapers, posting a copy on the Township's website and by filing a copy in the office of the Township Clerk which will be entered into the minutes.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Resolution # 23-112 Resolution Adopting Meeting Minutes – March 13, 2023

Councilman Wendell moved the adoption of Resolution #23-112 seconded by Councilman Behal. With no recommended changes to the Minutes, Council President McEvoy requested a roll call vote:

RECORDED VOTE OF COUNCIL						
Council Member	Motion	Second	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Behal		X	X			
Wendell	X		X			
Winston			X			
Zimbicki			X			
McEvoy			X			

By a unanimous Roll Call Vote, the resolution adopting the meeting Minutes was approved.

PROCLAMATIONS

A Proclamation Acknowledging Fast Break Basketball

Council President McEvoy invited Councilwoman Winston to present a proclamation recognizing the Fast Break Basketball team. Councilwoman Winston gave a speech acknowledging the Fast Break Basketball team and then proceeded to read the proclamation.

A Proclamation Honoring Larry Reiter as Fast Break Basketball President

Councilwoman Winston gave a speech to the honoree, Larry Reiter, then proceeded to read the proclamation honoring his leadership as president of the Fast Break Basketball team.

Larry Reiter thanked the Governing Body for the honor and for supporting the team. He expressed the honor and pleasure of serving the community of East Brunswick and to be supported by the community.

A Proclamation Commemorating and Celebrating the 100th Birthday of Estelle Goldsmith

Mayor Cohen came forward and gave a brief speech explaining who Estelle Goldsmith is and her contribution to the community. He then proceeded to read the proclamation honoring the 100th birthday of Estelle Goldsmith.

A Proclamation Acknowledging the Boys Bowling Team

Council President McEvoy and Councilman Wendell presented a proclamation to the Boys Bowling team. The entire team was invited to stand in front of the dais. Council President McEvoy stated a few words in recognition of the team, followed by Councilman Wendell, who proceeded to read the proclamation honoring the Boys Bowling team.

The team coach came forward and gave a brief speech, thanking everyone for the honor.

Council President McEvoy requested a brief recess to permit photo ops. The meeting resumed a few minutes after.

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSION ITEM

Presentation:

Financial Presentation

Presented by: Mayor Brad Cohen

Mayor Cohen presented on the Township's finances. In his presentation, he stated that the Township finances are strong and discussed the various factors that impact local government finances. The Township's Aa1 bond rating with Moody's demonstrates a strong ability to obtain bonds at a favorable interest rate. The township converted its bonds into Bond Anticipated Notes (BAN), yielding a lower and better interest rate of 1.16 to 1.86%. The conversion provides significant savings to the township. The township's net debt is moving in the right direction and is gradually declining. The Township's various debts were acquired through bonds and notes obtained to facilitate municipal improvement projects [such as road improvements], equipment and improvement projects for the Board of Education, and the township's Fire Districts.

Property taxes collected on a local level are distributed to the following entities: the municipality, the Board of Education, Middlesex County, Fire Districts, Open Space, and the East Brunswick Library. Fortunately, the township has an impressive 99% tax collection rate. The Township collects revenue for independent authorities, such as the Parking Utility Authority, Water & Sewer Utility, Police Department Utility, and the Township Pool.

Many of the Township independent authorities are self-liquidating. For instance, the Township's Pool Utility is self-liquidating. However, the COVID-19 pandemic created a temporary financial strain, but the Pool Utility is returning to normal. Revenue began improving in 2022, and it is anticipated to remain strong in 2023.

The Parking Utility, however, has struggled during the pandemic due to the significant reduction in people commuting and working from home. The fund balance for the parking utility was used in 2020 to ensure it remained self-liquidating, and in 2021, ARP funding facilitated its financial maintenance.

The Water and Sewer Utility is self-liquidating and operates at a profit. The Water & Sewer Utility is working on the following projects:

- Updating the water main lines on Route 18. This costly improvement will improve the township's infrastructure and significantly reduce water main breaks on Route 18.
- Replacing all water meters throughout the township.
- Additional projects were mentioned.

The township provides more than the mandatory contribution to the East Brunswick Public Library. Each year, the township provides \$500,000 to \$1.5 million towards programs run by the public library. The township also processes financial records, such as payroll, pension, and annual financial reports, to name a few, for the public library. It is safe to say that the township invests in the library for the best interests of the public.

All in all, the township's finances are strong. East Brunswick's bond ratings are excellent, which permits the township to obtain bonds and notes at a favorable rate. The Township uses bonds and notes to assist the Board of Education and all three (3) Fire Districts in obtaining the necessary resources at an affordable rate for various improvement projects, goods, or services as needed. The Township's independent agencies are mostly self-liquidating, some of which operate at a profit. East Brunswick has a 99% collection rate, which allows the town to continue to operate successfully. With a reliable tax collection rate, the township can further afford the resources to sponsor various programs run by the public library, improve its infrastructure, such as the water main on Route 18, and replace apparatuses, such as water meters, throughout the township.

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and her team were acknowledged for all they have done to maintain the township's finances in good standing.

AGENDA SESSION (DISCUSSION ONLY- NO VOTE)

There were none.

ORDINANCE(S) FOR SECOND READING
***** PUBLIC HEARING *****

Township Clerk, Tamar Lawful, read the following ordinance by title:

ORDINANCE # 23-09

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF EAST BRUNSWICK, COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY AMENDING CHAPTER 228 OF THE TOWNSHIP ZONING CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF EAST BRUNSWICK

Councilman Wendell moved that the ordinance be adopted on second and final reading, and that the ordinance be submitted to the Mayor for approval, and thereafter published according to law. Councilwoman Winston seconded the motion.

PUBLIC HEARING

Council President McEvoy opened the meeting to the public for discussion.

There being no members of the public wishing to be heard, Council President McEvoy closed the public hearing.

RECORDED VOTE OF COUNCIL						
Council Member	Motion	Second	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Behal			X			
Wendell	X		X			
Winston		X	X			
Zimbicki			X			
McEvoy			X			

By a unanimous Roll Call Vote, Ordinance # 23-09 was adopted on second reading.

Township Clerk, Tamar Lawful, read the following ordinance by title:

ORDINANCE # 23-10

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 209 "VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC" ARTICLE XIII "SCHEDULES," SECTION 209-62 SCHEDULE XXIII "SPEED LIMITS," OF THE CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF EAST BRUNSWICK TO ESTABLISH A SPEED LIMIT OF 35 MPH ON MAIN STREET BETWEEN THE SOUTHERLY TOWNSHIP BORDER AND TAFT PLACE

Councilman Wendell moved that the ordinance be adopted on second and final reading, and that the ordinance be submitted to the Mayor for approval, and thereafter published according to law. Councilman Behal seconded the motion.

PUBLIC HEARING

Council President McEvoy opened the meeting to the public for discussion.

There being no members of the public wishing to be heard, Council President McEvoy closed the public hearing.

RECORDED VOTE OF COUNCIL						
Council Member	Motion	Second	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Behal		X	X			
Wendell	X		X			
Winston			X			
Zimbicki			X			
McEvoy			X			

By a unanimous Roll Call Vote, Ordinance # 23-10 was adopted on second reading.

REPORTS

Brad Cohen, Mayor: Mayor Cohen reported on the Urban Land Institute (ULI), whose mission is to provide responsible leadership in land use in order to create and sustain thriving communities worldwide. The ULI presentation will be held at the East Brunswick Board of Education on Tuesday, March 28, 2023, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This program gives students the opportunity to create a fictitious town that is reflective of many average communities. The students will have the opportunity to discuss the community’s needs, including affordable housing, redevelopment, energy efficiency, and more. This program provides students with the ability to understand real-life experiences in government, community, and sustainability.

Joseph Criscuolo, Administrator: Mr. Criscuolo acknowledged Donnette “Dee” Brown, the Township’s new Information and Marketing Officer. Ms. Brown will ensure residents are aware of events and programs throughout the township.

Michael Baker, Township Attorney: Mr. Baker had nothing new to report.

Tamar Lawful, Township Clerk: Ms. Lawful reported on recent legislative changes with respect to elections. Pursuant to P.L. 2022, c.69, and N.J.S.A. 19:23-45, unaffiliated voters will not receive mail-in ballots for the upcoming 2023 Primary Election unless they declare their political party affiliation. The county has mailed notices to all registered unaffiliated voters of the change in law and enclosed a Political Affiliation Party Declaration form. Registered voters have until April 12th to complete and return this form in order to receive a mail-in ballot for the upcoming Primary Election. For those who choose not to return the form, may vote in person on election day [or during early voting]. The declaration of a party affiliation is only for the upcoming Primary Election.

Dinesh Behal, Councilman: Councilman Behal had nothing new to report.

James Wendell, Councilman: Councilman Wendell had nothing new to report.

Dana Winston, Councilwoman: Councilwoman Winston had nothing new to report.

Dana Zimbicki, Councilwoman: Councilwoman Zimbicki informed the public that branches are collected separately from the regular solid waste collection. She informed the public to contact the Recycling Office to be placed on a collection list. The branches must be tied and bundled and cannot be more than 4 feet long or weigh more than 50 pounds. Residents may also drop off unbundled branches at the Recycling Center which is open Monday-Saturday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Access to the Recycling Center is available for East Brunswick residents only with proper identification.

Kevin McEvoy, Council President: Council President McEvoy had nothing new to report.

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

The Township Clerk read the following statement:

PUBLIC COMMENT STATEMENT

The public comment portion of our meeting is to allow the public to bring to the Council’s attention their concerns or comments. In accordance with N.J.S.A. 10: 4-12(a) and the East Brunswick Rules of Council, the Council asks the public to limit their comments to **five (5) minutes or less**. At the conclusion of the statements or questions from a member of the public, the Council President, at his or her discretion, may choose to respond, or not respond, or to ask the Administration to respond.

Council President McEvoy opened the meeting to the public.

Thomas Ingrisani – 58 Deerfield Drive

Mr. Ingrisani expressed concerns about a slanted light pole in front of Irwin School. He further commented on tax increases in the school budget and inflation.

END OF PUBLIC SESSION

There being no further members of the public wishing to be heard, Council President McEvoy closed the Public Session of the meeting.

RESOLUTION(S) [Requiring a separate vote]

INTRODUCTION OF THE 2023 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Resolution # 23-113 Resolution Authorizing the Introduction of the Municipal Budget of the Township of East Brunswick for the Year 2023
[Majority of full membership required]

Councilman Wendell moved the adoption of Resolution # 23-113, seconded by Councilman Behal.

RECORDED VOTE OF COUNCIL						
Council Member	Motion	Second	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Behal		X	X			
Wendell	X		X			
Winston			X			
Zimbicki			X			
McEvoy			X			

By a unanimous Roll Call Vote, the Resolution # 23-113 was approved.

*****CONSENT AGENDA*****

Resolution # 23-114 through Resolution # 23-121

The following items are considered to be routine and non-controversial items by the Township Council and will be enacted upon by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Council Member so request, in which event, the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda to be discussed, and voted on, following the approval of the remaining items listed on the Consent Agenda.

- Resolution # 23-114 A Resolution Authorizing an Increase from \$103,960.00 to \$133,240.00 in the Purchasing Agreement with Creative Bus Sales, Inc. for the Purchase of a Twelve (12) Passenger Wheelchair Accessible StarCraft Allstar Coach Bus, Purchased Through the Houston-Galveston Area Council National Co-Op
- Resolution # 23-115 Resolution Approving and Authorizing Execution of Shared Services Agreements for Customer Data Sharing and Services for the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program with the State of New Jersey, Department of Community Affairs
- Resolution # 23-116 Resolution Authorizing the Award of Contract to W.E. Timmerman Company for the Purchase of a Three-Wheel Mechanical Street Sweeper through the Sourcewell National Cooperative Pricing System in the Amount Not to Exceed \$302,207.98
- Resolution # 23-117 Resolution Authorizing the Award of Contract to Houston Freightliner, Inc. for the Purchase of a Chassis Mounted Asphalt Pothole Patcher through the HGAC Buy National Cooperative Pricing System, in the Amount Not to Exceed \$222,283.00
- Resolution # 23-118 Resolution of the Township of East Brunswick Authorizing the Tax Collector to Refund Tax/Utility Overpayments
- Resolution # 23-119 Resolution Authorizing Refunds to be Issued Related to Tax Title Lien Redemptions
- Resolution # 23-120 Resolution Authorizing the Extension of Contract to Starfire Corporation for Fireworks Display for the 2023 4th of July Celebration in the Amount Not to Exceed \$34,000.00
- Resolution # 23-121 Resolution to Approve the Bill List

CONSENT AGENDA VOTE

Councilwoman Zimbicki moved the adoption of the resolutions listed on the Consent Agenda, Resolution # 23-114 through Resolution # 23-121. Councilman Wendell seconded the motion.

RECORDED VOTE OF COUNCIL						
Council Member	Motion	Second	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Behal			X			
Wendell		X	X			
Winston			X			
Zimbicki	X		X			
McEvoy			X			

By a unanimous Roll Call Vote, the resolutions listed on the Consent Agenda were approved.

**RESOLUTION[S] REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA
FOR DISCUSSION AND VOTE**

There were none.

ORDINANCE(S) FOR INTRODUCTION Scheduled Public Hearing Date: N/A
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There were none.

ADD-ON RESOLUTION

There were none.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS

There were none.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE CAUSE

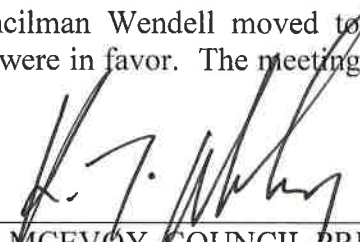
Dana Winston, Councilwoman: Councilwoman Winston commented on how pleased she is to see the Senior Center active and thriving.

CLOSED SESSION

There are none.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no other business to conduct, Councilman Wendell moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilman Behal seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:41 p.m.



KEVIN MCEVOY, COUNCIL PRESIDENT

ATTEST:



TAMAR LAWFUL, MUNICIPAL CLERK

