

NORRISTOWN MUNICIPALITY
COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES
JANUARY 16, 2024

The Council Work Session of Tuesday, January 16, 2024 was called to order by Council President, Thomas Lepera, at 6:30 PM in Council Chambers in Municipal Hall at Airy Street, Norristown, PA.

There was a **Moment of Silence** followed by the **Pledge of Allegiance**.

The following Council members were in attendance:

Rebecca Smith
Rashaad Bates
Lauren Hughes
William McCoy
Dustin Queenan
Thomas Lepera

Also in attendance were:

Municipal Administrator, Crandall Jones; Sean Kilkenny, Municipal Solicitor; Police Chief ; Kathy Pfister, Director of Finance; Thomas Odenigbo, Director of Public Works; Thomas O'Donnell, Norristown Fire Chief; Amrinder Singh, Codes Manager; Bri'Ana ? , Recreation Director.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilman Queenan**, to approve the Minutes of the January 2, 2024 Council Re-Organizational Meeting and the Minutes of the January 2, 2024 Council Meeting. **The motion passed 5-0.**

EXECUTIVE SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT

Council President Lepera announced that Council met in Executive Session prior to the Council Meeting to discuss litigation and personnel issues.

OATH OF OFFICE

Council Member Lauren Hughes, Fourth District

District Court Judge, Hakin Jones, conducted the swearing-in for Council Member Lauren Hughes.

PRESENTATIONS

Presentation by Jon A. Leshner, Environmental Planning Assistant Manager, with the Montgomery County Planning Commission

Mr. Leshner noted that he is available to answer questions regarding the Trailhead Improvements project following the presentation.

Haws Avenue and Chain Street Trailhead Improvement Project presentation by Landscape Principal Architect, Rosa Mannion of NV5

There was a Power Point presentation highlighting the project area for the Trailhead Improvements at Haws Avenue & Chain Street. Some of the highlights of the presentation noted that this is a community engagement project and it would include formalization of the parking lot for a new gathering place. Details of the project schedule include meetings, surveys, sharing ideas, focus groups and outdoor events in the Spring and Summer.

Mr. Leshner said this is a one-year process. Council President Lepera asked for more signage at Haws Avenue for Riverfront Park.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilman Queenan announced that a real-time Spanish translation of the Council Meetings is available. He directed anyone interested to see Mr. Sanchez in the back of the meeting room.

Council President Lepera thanked those involved in handling the storm for the Municipality.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jennie Cho, 503 Barbadoes Street – Ms. Cho had handouts and she said that there should be a “dog leash law” because the houses are too close together. She said that dogs come out of nowhere and she said there are video links showing this. She said that there are people that don’t clean up after their dog. Council President asked the Municipal Solicitor if there is already a dog leash law and he said he would look into it.

State Representative Greg Scott announced that a \$375,000 Saw Mill Repair Project grant was issued.

Mike Hayes – He said he attended the Zoning Hearing Board and they voted 5-0 for St. John’s to open as a Code Blue Shelter. He urged Council not to shut down the shelter because the need is great.

Council President provided information that the Plymouth and East Norriton Police dropped off homeless people in Norristown for the Code Blue Shelter.

APPOINTMENTS

Resolution 24-05: Appointments to various Advisory Boards, Committees and Commissions

Crandall Jones, Municipal Administrator, provided the information regarding appointments to the Zoning Hearing Board, the Design Review Board and the Historical Architectural Review Board.

PUBLIC WORKS

Resolution 24-04: This Resolution is for the Municipal Council to approve \$50 as Violations and Penalties as required under Chapter 278 (Sidewalks and Curbs Ordinance) Article II Section 278-23

Director Odenigbo explained that there are residents that attempt to fix sidewalks and curbs and do not always do it correctly or do not always finish the project. There have been litigation and insurance issues because of it.

He said that a Notice will be sent twice and if there is no response, then a fine will be issued.

There was a **motion by Councilman Bates, seconded by Councilwoman Hughes**, to approve Resolution 24-04. **The motion passed 6-0.**

FINANCE

Resolution 24-06: Adopt Act 44 procedures for Non-Union Pension Plans

Director Kathy Pfister said this is a housekeeping matter in order to comply with Act 44 of 2009 and the Auditor General's recommendation.

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilman Queenan**, to approve Resolution 24-06. **The motion passed 6-0.**

MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATOR

Motion to authorize the Solicitor to file an appeal regarding Zoning application 60-23

Crandall Jones noted the stipulations from the Zoning Hearing Board application for the Code Blue Shelter at 23 East Airy Street including the hours and the number of individuals allowed, which is 35. He added that Item #6 stipulates that they must comply with safety regulations but they did not notify the Municipality about this.

President Lepera said they should have planned it better by working it out during the nice weather instead of waiting until they have to open. He said they defied that and it is not acceptable.

There was a **motion by Council President Lepera, seconded by Councilman Bates**, to authorize the Solicitor to file an appeal regarding the Zoning application for 23 East Airy Street. **The Roll Call Vote results were:**

Councilwoman Smith	No
Councilman Bates	Yes
Councilwoman Hughes	No
Councilman McCoy	No
Council VP Queenan	Yes
Council President Lepera	Yes

There is a tie vote. The motion does not pass.

Motion for Council to approve Resolution 24-10 to enter a 3-year agreement in the amount of \$36,000 with Hough Associates to collect, analyze and prepare a County Recycling Survey and the PA DEP Recycling Performance Grant application for Norristown

Crandall Jones explained that they will gradually bring to 15%, which is on par with other communities.

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilman Queenan**, to approve Resolution 24-10. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Resolution 24-07: approve ratification of the Memorandum of Agreement between the Municipality and the Laborers' Local Union 57 and authorizing the Municipal Administrator to sign this and the revised Labor Agreement document.

Crandall Jones thanked Union 57 for successful negotiations. He said they received a \$1000 gratification payment, 3% yearly increase to 2026, include brother and sister for bereavement and \$1500 for CDL-A but must be paid back if the employee doesn't continue employment after 2 years.

There was a **motion by Councilman Queenan, seconded by Councilwoman Smith**, to approve Resolution 24-07, covering the period from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2026. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Resolution 24-08: approve ratification of the Memorandum of Agreement between the Municipality and the Fraternal Order of Police, Norristown Lodge 31 Union and authorizing the Municipal Administrator to sign this and the revised Union Agreement document.

Crandall Jones noted they were given a wage increase of 3.5% for 2024 and 2025 and they agreed to a longer agreement. He added that 9% of health insurance premiums will be paid and 9.5% for 2025 and all other items are the same.

There was a **motion by Councilman McCoy, seconded by Councilwoman Smith**, to approve Resolution 24-08, covering the period from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2025. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Resolution 24-09: adopt changes to the Municipal Management Defined Contribution Plan

Crandall Jones noted this is separate from other Pension Plans. He said it was updated in 1988 and included all department heads, then it was changed and adopted in 2021. He said it needs to be adopted in a separate Resolution according to the PA Department of the Auditor General.

There was a **motion by Councilman Bates, seconded by Councilwoman Hughes**, to approve Resolution 24-09. **The motion passed 6-0.**

ADJOURNMENT

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilman Queenan**, to adjourn the Council Work Session. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Roseann M. Santangelo