

**BOROUGH OF PITMAN  
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 24, 2020**

**Call to Order**

Time: 8:01 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 2020, which was posted on the Borough Hall bulletin board, sent to the "South Jersey Times" and filed with the Municipal Clerk on January 4, 2020.

**Roll Call**

Council President Blass: Present

Councilwoman James: Present

Councilwoman Rudley: Present

Mayor Razze: Present

Municipal Clerk O'Donnell: Present

Councilman Fitzpatrick: Present

Councilman Mazzola: Present

Councilman Weng: Present

Borough Solicitor Krachun: Present

**Approval of Minutes**

Work Session, Formal Meeting and Closed Formal Meeting of February 10, 2020

Budget Meeting Minutes of February 19, 2020

Motion: Blass

Second: James

Roll Call:

Council President Blass: Yes

Councilman Fitzpatrick: Yes

Councilwoman James: Yes

Councilman Mazzola: Yes

Councilwoman Rudley: Yes

Councilman Weng: Yes

Mayor Razze: \_\_\_\_\_

**Council Reports**

**Councilwoman Rudley**

No report

**Councilman Weng**

**Bureau of Fire Safety**

Inspections – January 2020

Periodic inspections	57
Re-inspections	25
Complaint inspections	1
Follow-up Inspections	0
Other inspections	0
Smoke Detector/CCO	31
Court/Training/Meeting	3
YTD Activities	117

Councilman Weng reported that the Inspection staff continue to work hard to ensure code compliance and safe housing. Staff is currently working on compliance in the business district, and the Woodbury Road corridor.

For the year 2020, staff will be working diligently to inspect rental housing. They are focusing heavily on housing containing two or more rental units. The goal is to improve the quality of living and verify code compliance in our rental housing stock.

The Fire Safety Office continues to address the issue of vacant/abandoned properties and complaints regarding sub-standard housing. Although many of our vacant properties are currently under renovation, some of the vacant/abandoned properties that remain are in very poor condition.

The following properties have been identified as Structures with Hazards by the Fire Safety Office:

Corner, Second and East Avenues  
321 West Avenue  
203 Boulevard Avenue

#### Fire Department

The Highland Chemical Engine Company is proud to announce that their new fire truck has been delivered. It has been a lengthy process from design to specification review, final inspection, and now delivery. This truck will replace a truck that has served our community for twenty-four years. It is designed to meet the changing demands of our community. The truck will carry necessary fire suppression and rescue tools to better serve Pitman. It was purchased solely with funds raised by the community, with zero impact on the tax rate. Highland Chemical Engine Company could not have purchased this new apparatus without the support received from the community, surrounding communities, and generous corporate donors. The members of Highland Chemical Engine Company thank everyone who supported, and continues to support them!

#### Pitman Police Department

The Pitman Police Department will be conducting the second round of Advanced Hands-on First Responder Initial Care/First Aid and Tourniquet Application Training on February 27. The training will be provided to all officers of the Police Department. The Department would like to thank Officer Tom McEvoy for assistance in setting up this specialized training, and for his part in the training.

Chief McAteer and Pitman School Superintendent, Dr. Pat McAleer, met on February 18 to discuss the proposed changes to the Pitman Elementary Schools and specifically, how the changes may impact traffic and pedestrian safety. The PPD will be taking an active role in the planning advisory group that will be developed by Dr. McAleer and will make recommendations for possible action. The PPD thanks Dr. McAleer and the Pitman School Board for including them in the discussions and keeping them up-to-date with these pending changes.

#### **Councilman Mazzola**

##### Public Property

Councilman Mazzola reported that Pitman's Clean Communities Program will begin scheduling dates for clean-ups in the Borough. Volunteer groups interested in performing a clean-up should contact him by emailing [adam.mazzola@pitman.org](mailto:adam.mazzola@pitman.org).

#### **Council President Blass**

##### Public Works

Council President Blass reported that the Broadway Paver Project is complete. This was a Community Development Block Grant funded project.

The Theatre Avenue Pocket Park, Hudson Avenue, and Woodland & McClelland Avenue projects each have a list of punch list items to be addressed before the projects are closed out. These items will be taken care of when the warmer weather is in place. The resurfacing of Bellevue Avenue will finally take place this spring.

**Councilwoman James**

Councilwoman James reported that the Greater Pitman Chamber of Commerce held its monthly meeting last Tuesday, February 18. The Chamber hosted guests from the SNJ Today radio station 99.9 FM, who are expanding their listening area to Gloucester County this April. The station is looking to connect with local businesses and organizations to report local news and promote events. If your organization or business is interested, please reach out to Councilwoman James or to the Chamber at [info@uptownpitman.org](mailto:info@uptownpitman.org) and they will connect you.

McCowan Memorial Library

There are some new activities available for children at McCowan Memorial Library, including Art Club for kids, ages 8-14 and Youth Yoga for kids, ages 6-12. Check out the calendar on their website [www.mccowan-pitman.org](http://www.mccowan-pitman.org) for dates and times, as well as a full list of activities.

**Councilman Fitzpatrick**

Combined Planning and Zoning Board

Councilman Fitzpatrick reported that at a recent meeting of the Combined Planning and Zoning Board, the Board members approved a resolution for the amendment of the Redevelopment Plan for Merryman’s Pub. This action will help to get them open as soon as possible.

Registrar’s Office

In January, the Registrar’s Office collected \$363.00 in fees for applications and copies of Vital Records.

New Business

**Ordinance No. 2, 2020 – Ordinance of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Pitman, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey Amending Chapter II Entitled “Administration” Section 2-44 Entitled “Division of Police Department” of the Code of the Borough of Pitman**

First Reading

Motion: Weng

Second: Rudley

Roll Call:

Council President Blass: Yes

Councilman Fitzpatrick: Yes

Councilwoman James: Yes

Councilman Mazzola: Yes

Councilwoman Rudley: Yes

Councilman Weng: Yes

Mayor Razze: \_\_\_\_\_

**Resolution No. 46, 2020 – Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Pitman, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey Authorizing Refund of Real Estate Taxes**

Motion: James

Second: Blass

Roll Call:

Council President Blass: Yes

Councilman Fitzpatrick: Yes

Councilwoman James: Yes

Councilman Mazzola: Yes

Councilwoman Rudley: Yes

Councilman Weng: Yes

Mayor Razze: \_\_\_\_\_

**Resolution No. 47, 2020 – Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Pitman, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey Authorizing the Acceptance and Approval of the Memorandum of Agreement With International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local 676 and Authorizing the Mayor to Execute the January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2024 Collective Bargaining Agreement**

Motion: Blass

Second: Fitzpatrick

Roll Call:

Council President Blass: Yes

Councilman Fitzpatrick: Yes

Councilwoman James: Yes

Councilman Mazzola: Yes

Councilwoman Rudley: Yes

Councilman Weng: Yes

Mayor Razzo: \_\_\_\_\_

**Resolution No. 48, 2020 – Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Pitman, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey Confirming the Report of the Tax Collector in the Matter of the Performance of Board-up Services for 215 Boulevard Avenue, Block 27 Lot 11 on the Tax Map of the Borough of Pitman, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey**

Motion: James

Second: Fitzpatrick

Roll Call:

Council President Blass: Yes

Councilman Fitzpatrick: Yes

Councilwoman James: Yes

Councilman Mazzola: Yes

Councilwoman Rudley: Yes

Councilman Weng: Yes

Mayor Razzo: \_\_\_\_\_

**Resolution No. 49, 2020 – Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Pitman, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey Confirming the Report of the Tax Collector in the Matter of the Performance of Board-up Services for 78 West Avenue, Block 188 Lot 3 on the Tax Map of the Borough of Pitman, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey**

Motion: James

Second: Blass

Roll Call:

Council President Blass: Yes

Councilman Fitzpatrick: Yes

Councilwoman James: Yes

Councilman Mazzola: Yes

Councilwoman Rudley: Yes

Councilman Weng: Yes

Mayor Razzo: \_\_\_\_\_

**Resolution No. 50, 2020 – Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Pitman, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey Authorizing the Refund of a Firearms Permit Application Fee Collected by the Borough of Pitman Police Department from Dianna Mathews**

Motion: James

Second: Fitzpatrick

Roll Call:

Council President Blass: Yes

Councilman Fitzpatrick: Yes

Councilwoman James: Yes

Councilman Mazzola: Yes

Councilwoman Rudley: Yes

Councilman Weng: Yes

Mayor Razzo: \_\_\_\_\_

**Resolution No. 51, 2020 – 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 at said meeting will be:

**Contract Negotiations: Borough of Pitman and AFSCME NJ Local 63**

Action may be taken upon returning to an open meeting.

Motion: Blass  
Roll Call:  
Council President Blass: Yes  
Councilwoman James: Yes  
Councilwoman Rudley: Yes  
Mayor Razzo: \_\_\_\_\_

Second: James  
Councilman Fitzpatrick: Yes  
Councilman Mazzola: Yes  
Councilman Weng: Yes

**Payment of Bills**

Motion: James  
Roll Call:  
Council President Blass: Yes  
Councilman Fitzpatrick: Abstain to # 38674; Votes to approve all other items  
Councilwoman James: Yes  
Councilman Mazzola: Yes  
Councilwoman Rudley: Yes  
Councilman Weng: Yes  
Mayor Razzo: \_\_\_\_\_

Second: Fitzpatrick

**Event Permit Applications**

**Event:** Tree Planting  
**Sponsor:** Pitman Environmental Commission  
**Contact Person:** Patrice Sheehan  
**Date & Time:** April 4, 2020; 8:00 am  
**Location:** Alcyon Park pathways  
Motion: Rudley  
Roll Call:  
Council President Blass: Yes  
Councilwoman James: Yes  
Councilwoman Rudley: Yes  
Mayor Razzo: \_\_\_\_\_

Second: Weng  
Councilman Fitzpatrick: Yes  
Councilman Mazzola: Yes  
Councilman Weng: Yes

**Public Portion**

Motion to open to the public: James  
Time: 8:15 p.m.

Second: Fitzpatrick

**Statement from Kevin Austin, 562 Florence Avenue**

I stated previously in January that I would come back and give an update on my dilemma. I want to give everyone a word of caution as I get involved with Discovery and OPRA; that this could happen to anyone who sits on this Board. My hearing will be this Friday. I asked the Borough of Pitman to represent me, give me some legal advice, or go with me to my hearing on Friday. I was turned down; it was through our insurance policy. I feel abandoned because of this. I gave six years of service to this Board and I'm very surprised that I cannot get any legal advice. This complaint basically may have been instigated by a question from a member of Council to our Solicitor back in 2013. Again, my question is, why am I not getting any legal representation for this hurdle I have to go through?

Mayor Razzo: It is my understanding that when your request was submitted to the Joint Insurance Fund, the belief was that perhaps this would be covered by Elected Officials Liability Insurance. This is not covered by the Borough's TRICO insurance.

Councilwoman Rudley: All I know is that you had a complaint filed against you from Local Finance Board and that there was a \$100.00 fine that was waived. What are you doing now?

Councilman Weng: This is an appeal?

Keven Austin: Yes, I appealed it. I will be using Safe Harbor Defense. They waived my fine because the Solicitor had basically said that I was okay to vote. So how am I in violation if they waived my fine?

Councilwoman Rudley: If we were to vote on representation, this is not enough information for me to vote on. If someone was to make a motion, I would not be able to vote on this. If you want to present something to us, I would review it and consider it.

Mayor Razzo: Someone with less integrity, I would not want to provide them with counsel, and I would hate to set that precedent by taking steps otherwise, but without any paperwork - I don't know how we could respond by this Friday anyway.

Councilman Weng: Do you have any attorney?

Kevin Austin: No, I am representing myself.

Councilman Weng: Safe Harbor should apply anywhere. I am happy to consider any presentation that Councilman Austin wants to make as far as providing him with defense indemnification. But going forward, the Borough needs a defense indemnification ordinance. With one, the Borough could assign an attorney, reimburse for legal fees if successful, etc.

Kevin Austin: I will go through the preliminary appeal on Friday. Contingent on what the Judge says, I will come back with documentation for your review. It feels like a witch hunt.

Councilwoman James: I will need more information. Perhaps ask for a postponement until an attorney can be decided on by Council.

Motion to close the public portion: James  
Time: 8:32 pm

Second: Fitzpatrick

**Closed Meeting**

Motion to enter into a closed meeting: Blass  
Time: 8:32 p.m.

Second: Rudley

Motion to return to an open meeting: Blass  
Time: 8:42 p.m.

Second: James

**Miscellaneous**

As a result of discussion in the closed meeting, the following action was taken by Council upon returning to an open meeting.

**Resolution No. 53, 2020 – Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Pitman, County of Gloucester, State of New Jersey Authorizing the Acceptance and Approval of the Memorandum of**

**Agreement with the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees New Jersey Council  
63 (AFSCME)**

Motion: Blass

Second: James

Roll Call:

Council President Blass: Yes

Councilman Fitzpatrick: Yes

Councilwoman James: Yes

Councilman Mazzola: Yes

Councilwoman Rudley: Yes

Councilman Weng: Yes

Mayor Razze: \_\_\_\_\_

**Adjournment**

Motion: Mazzola

Second: Weng

Time: 8:44 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judith O'Donnell  
Borough Clerk/Administrator