THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2023, MOUNT EPHRAIM COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES MEETING HELD IN BOROUGH HALL MEETING ROOM

MEETING CALL TO ORDER/OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS STATEMENT

Mayor Tovinsky called the meeting to order at 7:00pm with the "Pledge of Allegiance". He announced that this meeting was posted in accordance with the "Open Public Meetings Act" and proper notice of this meeting was made.

ROLL CALL

The Clerk called the roll with Commissioner Gies, Commissioner Wolk and Mayor Tovinsky present. Also in attendance for the Borough were Clerk Shannon and Solicitor Justin Strausser.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Tovinsky announced that the July 25, 2023, Caucus and August 3, 2023, Commission meeting minutes were submitted for review and approval. On a motion by Commissioner Gies, second by Commissioner Wolk, the minutes were approved with all present in favor.

APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS**

Mayor Tovinsky announced that vouchers in the amount of $1,601,869.31 were submitted for approval. On a motion by Commissioner Gies, second by Commissioner Wolk, the vouchers as submitted were approved with the following poll vote: Gies-yes, Wolk-yes, Tovinsky-yes.

ORDINANCE FOR INTRODUCTION ON FIRST READING

The Clerk read the following ordinances by title:

Ord. 2023-15 Amending the Code of the Borough of Mount Ephraim to Supplement, Amend and Revise Chapter 410 Entitled "Vehicles and Traffic"
(establishes permit parking on Valley Road)

Ord. 2023-16 Bond Ordinance Authorizing the Bell Road Drainage Project in the Borough of Mount Ephraim, Camden County, NJ; Appropriating the Sum of $850,000 Therefor; Authorizing the Issuance of General Obligation Bonds or Bond Anticipation Notes of the Borough of Mount Ephraim, Camden County, NJ, in the Aggregate Principal Amount of up to $237,500, Making Certain Determinations and Covenants; and Authorizing Certain Related Actions in Connection with the Foregoing

On a motion by Commissioner Gies, second by Commissioner Wolk, ordinances 2023-15, and 2023-16 were approved on first reading d with the following poll vote: Gies-yes, Wolk-yes, Tovinsky-yes. The Clerk announced these ordinances will be considered for adoption after proper notice and a public hearing to be held during the November 2, 2023, commission meeting.

RESOLUTIONS FOR APPROVAL BY CONSENT AGENDA

The Clerk read the following Resolutions by title for approval by Consent Agenda:

23-81 Governing Body Certification of the Annual Audit
23-82 Authorizing Advertisement for RFQ's for Selection of Professionals under a Fair and Open Process
23-83 Setting the Hours for Halloween Curfew and Trick or Treating, 3pm-7pm on Halloween
23-84 Change Order No. 2, Restoration of the Intersection of Harding and Linwood Avenues and Storm Piping Repairs at the Intersection of Harding and Lowell Avenues
23-85 Authorizing Submission and Execution of a Strategic Plan and Application for Municipal Drug Alliance Funding
23-86 Appointing a Licensed Site Remediation Professional for Environmental Consulting Services

23-87 Authorizing Participation in the Contract Negotiated By and Between Camden County and Deer Carcass Removal Service, LLC

On a motion by Commissioner Gies, second by Commissioner Wolk, the resolution consent agenda was approved with the following poll vote: Gies-yes, Wolk-yes, Tovinsky-yes.

REPORTS AND COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Gies read highlights from fire department report for September reporting 35 total calls for service. Commissioner Gies read a prepared statement from Chief Frankowski stating that call volume continues to increase. On average, a member has responded to emergency calls for 21.25 hours per week. This does not include the hours spent on maintenance, administration or public events. These services are provided by 100% volunteers. If anyone is interested in becoming a member, please contact department management or stop at the station. For the August court report, they turned over $2,915.50 to the borough in fees and fines. He added that a former Mount Ephraim resident, William Stopper, is now the municipal court judge. He then read highlights from the police department report for September. They responded to 625 calls for service and he read a breakdown of the calls. They made 121 car stops and issued 93 motor vehicle summonses. They served 20 warrants and had 23 adult arrests and he read highlights of the charges.

Commissioner Wolk read the Tax Collector's report for September reporting total collections for the month were $126,116.30 and there was one lien redemptions totaling $2,197.01. The Messenger went out and we have the shredding event on October 21, 8am-11am. Lots of information is in the Messenger about everything coming up in town.

Mayor Tovinsky explained the engineer is on vacation and will have his report for the next meeting. He then read a prepared statement about the media response to the proposed redevelopment of the Sacred Heart Church properties. This is prime real estate that has been tax exempt since the church owned the properties. The only additional tax revenue is to expand the commercial corridor. That property was vacant for more than ten years. We stepped in to buy it so we could get it on the tax rolls. We have an agreement with a developer and they brought in Lidl. Lidl seemed like a good idea because we don't have a grocery store. It is always our goal to build our commercial sector and provide tax relief and we believe this is the right thing for Mount Ephraiim. He then highlights from the public works department for August reporting single stream recycling was 56,160 pounds and trash tonnage was 179 tons at a cost of $16,183.80. They collected metal, reported street light outages, took down three beaver dams in Little Timber Creek. Halloween is coming up so be safe and careful.

Commissioner Gies added that basketball sign-ups are next week at Mary Bray on Wednesday and Thursday between 6pm and 8pm.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mayor Tovinsky opened the meeting to the public and asked that residents state their name for the record.

Theresa Armbruster was present to discuss traffic on 4th Avenue. She asked if we can do painted crosswalks at Pennsylvania Avenue and New Jersey. She also suggested that we put fluorescent paint on the humps and a sign for an autistic child in lights. Mayor Tovinsky said he would discuss with Jim Beebe in Public Works. Chief Conte said he also submitted a list to Jim of all the signs in town that need to be repainted or replaced.

Stanley Witkowski asked about resolution 23-82 about the professionals. Clerk Shannon explained that we do this every year for professional appointments. Witkowski also suggested that get a microphone so we can hear better. Mayor Tovinsky said we would look into that.

Sean McBratnie was present to represent his client Lindmeier who owns the Spread and is the holder of a liquor license. His license had restrictions and upon renewal, he received one loosing of the restrictions and can now stay open until midnight. We are asking for all restrictions to be lifted, particularly regarding hours of operation. We are complying with the security requirements but they increase overhead costs and the limited hours of operations reduces income. We want to start a conversation about these restrictions. It can be done on a trial basis to see how it goes. The restrictions are placing a financial hardship on this business. Commissioner Wolk responded that we did review this and decided to wait until the next renewal to reconsider. But we can discuss it. Commissioner Gies responded that he used to be a bartender and he broke up many a fight at 2am. He thought expanding to midnight was better but we can always review it.

Sue Carney said she thought that at the land use meeting they had a microphone system. The governing body responded no, there is not system but we will look into it.

Matther Jordan asked if there is a breakdown of the taxes so we can see the general increase. Commissioner Wolk asked him to give his name and number to the Clerk and she will forward to him for response.

Seeing no further public comment, on a motion by Commissioner Gies, second by Commissioner Wolk, the public hearing was closed.

On a motion by Commissioner Gies, second by Commissioner Wolk, the meeting was adjourned at 7:27pm.

Approved: *Terry Shannon*
Terry Shannon, Borough Clerk

**Note—the amount of vouchers was incorrect was incorrect on the agenda. The correct total of vouchers submitted was $1,185,733.57. The amount that was on the agenda was from the prior month.