

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5, 2024, MOUNT EPHRAIM COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
MEETING HELD IN BOROUGH HALL MEETING ROOM**

MEETING CALL TO ORDER/OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS STATEMENT

Mayor Carney called the meeting to order at 7:03pm with the “Pledge of Allegiance”. She announced that this meeting was posted in accordance with the “Open Public Meetings Act” and proper notice of this meeting was made. Mayor Carney also asked for a moment of silence in honor of CFO Paul Thomas, who recently lost his wife.

ROLL CALL

The Clerk called the roll with Mayor Carney, Commissioner Marrone and Commissioner Wolk all present. Also in attendance for the Borough were Clerk Shannon, Solicitor Stuart Platt and Engineer Greg Fusco.

PRESENTATION

Present was Harry Delgado from the NJ State Association of Chiefs of Police who presented a certificate to Chief Conte for the police department successfully completing the accreditation program. Mr. Delgado explained this is one of the biggest accomplishments a police department can achieve and identifies them as a top tier police department and puts them in an exclusive group of police agencies in the state.

PROCLAMATION

A proclamation was presented to JEM Paving for the award they received from the NJ Asphalt Paving Association for the great paving job they did on Lake Street.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Carney announced that the May 1, 2024, commission meeting minutes and the March 27, 2024, special meeting minutes were submitted for review and approval. On a motion by Commissioner Marrone, second by Commissioner Wolk, the minutes were approved with all in favor.

APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS

Mayor Carney announced that vouchers in the amount of \$1,028,824.00 were submitted for approval. On a motion by Commissioner Marrone, second by Commissioner Wolk, the vouchers as submitted were approved with the following poll vote: Carney-yes; Marrone-yes, Wolk-yes

ORDINANCE FOR PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION

The Clerk read the following ordinance by title:

Ord. 2024-06 Amending the Zoning Code with Regard to the Permitted and Conditional Uses in the Commercial District

Mayor Carney opened the public hearing on this ordinance. Seeing no public comment, on a motion by Commissioner Marrone, second by Commissioner Wolk, the public hearing was closed.

On a motion by Commissioner Marrone, second by Commissioner Wolk, Ordinance 2024-06 was approved with the following poll vote: Carney-yes; Marrone-yes; Wolk-yes.

ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION ON FIRST READING

Ord. 2024-07 Amending, Supplementing and Revising the Code of the Borough of Mount Ephraim to Establish Chapter 412 Entitled, “Yard Sales”

Ord. 2024-08 Amending Chapter 512, Adopting Revised Stormwater Management Control Regulations for the Borough of Mount Ephraim in Accordance with the Tier A Municipal Stormwater Permit Requirements

Mayor Carney announced that these ordinances will be considered for adoption following proper notice and a public hearing to be held during the July 3 commission meeting.

On a motion by Commissioner Marrone, second by Commissioner Wolk, the first reading of the ordinances was approved with the following poll vote: Carney-yes; Marrone-yes; Wolk-yes.

RESOLUTIONS FOR APPROVAL BY CONSENT AGENDA

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

- 24-64 Resolution to Renew Liquor Licenses for the 2024-25 Term
- 24-65 Resolution to Renew Lindmeier Liquor License and Remove Restrictions
- 24-66 Resolution Appointing Robert Medlar as Property Maintenance Officer
- 24-67 Resolution Authorizing Submission of an Application for NJDOT Municipal Aid
- 24-68 Resolution to Release the Performance Bond Posted by McDonald's Corp.

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

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE 2024 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Mayor Carney announced that the budget was introduced at the April 3 commission meeting and was tabled at the May 1 commission meeting so it could be further reviewed by the Governing Body. During the public hearing, we realized there may have been a couple of mistakes in the original budget. After a detailed review, we went through every single line item and were able to reduce the budget by \$125,000. That reduced the average tax increase from \$88 per year to just over \$21 per year—a reduction of 75%. We hope you can appreciate the hard work we put into this and we understand that we are all struggling. It is important to remember that we collect the municipal tax, the school tax and the county tax. We have no control over those other areas—we can only control the municipal portion.

Mayor Carney then opened the public hearing on the budget.

Stan Witkowski said he came here tonight expecting to complain about the budget but is pleasantly surprised they were able to come to this reduction. He asked about the total valuation of ratables included in the budget message. Paul Thomas explained that number was incorrect. Stan added that as new ratables open, hopefully it will help with future budgets. It is good to see new businesses opening in Mount Ephraim. Mayor Carney added that the cannabis business will be opening soon and we will get 2% tax on gross sales.

Terry Armbruster said that to hear intelligent people explain this and work together on this budget is very hopeful. She thanked everyone for the job they did on this. Mount Ephraim is on the right track.

Chief Conte asked when he will be able to replace Officer Severance. Mayor Carney responded that we did leave his salary in the budget if it is determined it is necessary. You and I will sit down and discuss this and then we will discuss with the governing body.

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

On a motion by Commissioner Marrone, second by Commissioner Wolk, Resolution 24-69, to Amend the 2024 Municipal Budget, was adopted with the following poll vote: Carney-yes; Marrone-yes; Wolk-yes.

On a motion by Commissioner Marrone, second by Commissioner Wolk, Resolution 24-70, to Adopt the 2024 Municipal Budget as Amended, was adopted with the following poll vote: Carney-yes; Marrone-yes; Wolk-yes. The budget was adopted.

REPORTS AND COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Marrone read highlights from the May monthly report from the Construction Office reporting they had five building inspections, three resale CO inspections, six electrical inspections, ten plumbing inspections and five fire inspections. For Public Works, they collected 70,380 pounds of recycling and 207.36 tons of trash for a cost of \$19,077.42. They collected metal, had the air conditioner replaced in this room and Robert Medlar is our new property maintenance officer. He explained that property maintenance should be a pro-active position, so problems are quickly identified so neighbors don't have to call. We want to stay on top of vacant properties, so they do not become a problem. This is not a new position—it is just now being done by a new individual.

Commissioner Wolk read the Tax Collector's report for May reporting total collections for the month were \$2,819,074.09 and \$16,240.76 in lien redemptions.

Engineer Greg Fusco reported Landberg Construction will be starting work on Adams Avenue this week.

Mayor Carney reported the Town Wide Yard Sale hosted by the Celebrations Committee is this Saturday and over 50 houses are registered. Congratulations to the Mount Ephraim High School students who participated in the 2024 veteran's memorial—it was a beautiful service and is the 30th year they have hosted this. I do a meet with the mayor the first Monday and Thursday of the month but this Thursday I have a conflict so it will be next month. We met with Lou Cappelli, Director of the Camden County Commissioners, along with representatives from Camden County Public Works, and discussed a multitude of issues. We are looking for help with a redevelopment plan for the north end of the Black Horse Pike. Some exciting possibilities were discussed. We also discussed a possible solar field at the end of Cleveland Avenue but more investigation is needed. We also talked about issues down by the park and the ballfields. Chief Conte will reach out to discuss the possibility of motion lights. We were officially told we were approved for \$55,000 for the Dougherty Senior Center. \$35,000 is for improvements and \$20,00 for senior programs. She then read highlights from the fire department report for May along with highlights from the police department report for May.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

Lil Eggers said Commissioner Marrone pretty much explained about property maintenance regarding boarded up properties and grass but what about power washing and paint? Commissioner Marrone explained we are reviewing our ordinance to see what can be enforced and what we need to change.

Donna Walker from Thompson Avenue said she has been complaining about 33 Thompson Avenue and there has been no improvement. There is so much trash out there it is ridiculous. Commissioner Marrone said the health department was notified and we will notify them again. She

then asked if people are allowed to work on vehicles in the street for long times. Chief Conte said he will look into it.

Tom Crehan from Gaskill Avenue said he is a member of Rotary and he thanked the police, fire departments and the Celebrations Committee for the town events. We always try to participate. Recently, there was an incident at a public event in Gloucester Township involving youth who were disruptive and the police had to get involved. It concerned us because these things are happening because of social media and outside youth coming in just to be disruptive. Chief Conte responded that we will take the action necessary if we think there is a potential problem when we do our pre-planning.

Stan Witkowski expressed kudos on the property maintenance officer. Hopefully he will come up with a strategy to address blighted properties. He then asked for an update on Sacred Heart. Mayor Carney responded we are still under the redevelopment agreement and will be reaching out to the developers for an update. Solicitor Platt added we are in the process of setting up a meeting. Stan asked if we can have access to the agreement and Platt told him to file an OPRA request.

Terry Armbruster from Fourth Avenue asked if there is a new traffic study available. The last one indicated 5000 cars per month are going down their street and she still believes there is speeding. She would like to know if rumble strips would be a possibility. We get a lot of cut-through traffic in the summer. She then asked who the prior property maintenance officer and Commissioner Marrone responded it was Steve Beach. Terry asked if that was the guy who was here last month and was so rude—his behavior was unbelievable. Commissioner Marrone asked Greg Fusco if he has installed rumble strips anywhere and Greg said we can discuss. It is important to remember they are very noisy and are usually used on turnpikes and highways.

Rick March from George Street asked about the possibility of hiring the ninth officer. He said if it is to help cover vacations, can't we get assistance from the county police force? Chief Conte responded it doesn't work like that. March said since we are paying county taxes, we should be able to get a county officer to help.

Clerk Shannon, municipal clerk, said she has been in this business for 24 years and for a police department to get accreditation is a huge deal and means they are the cream of the crop and she wanted to say congratulations to Chief Conte.

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

On a motion by Commissioner Marrone, second by Commissioner Wolk, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

Approved: Terry Shannon
Terry Shannon, Borough Clerk