

**CITY OF PORT REPUBLIC**  
**6:30 P.M. APRIL 9, 2024**  
**CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

Adequate notice of this meeting was given as required by the Open Public Meetings Act. On the motion of Council President Giberson, seconded by Councilmember Allgeyer and carried to close the workshop portion of the meeting.

**COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT:** Steven Allgeyer, Doris Bugdon, Roger Giberson, Eugene Hawn, Donna Riegel (via Zoom), Jeffrey Ropiecki (arrived at 6:35 pm), Michael Turner

**COUNCILMEMBERS ABSENT:**

**MAYOR:** Monica Giberson

**CITY CLERK:** Kimberly A. Campellone, RMC

**DEPUTY CITY CLERK:** Brandy M. Blevin, RMC

**ATTORNEY:** William Kaufmann, Esq.

Council President Giberson called the meeting to order and lead the flag salute. This is to advise the general public and to instruct that it be recorded in the minutes, in compliance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975, entitled the "Open Public Meetings Act". The Municipal Clerk of the City of Port Republic posted at City Hall, 143 Main Street, Port Republic and mailed and/or faxed to the Atlantic City Press and the Hammonton Gazette, a meeting notice setting for the time, date, and location of this meeting.

**MOTION TO APPROVE FEBRUARY 29, 2024, SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING & BUDGET WORKSHOP MINUTES:**

On the motion of Councilmember Bugdon, seconded of Councilmember Hawn and carried to approve the February 29, 2024, Special City Council Meeting & Budget Workshop Minutes.

YES: Bugdon, Giberson, Hawn, Riegel, Ropiecki, Turner

NO:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN: Allgeyer

**MOTION TO APPROVE APRIL 2024 BILL LIST:**

On the motion of Councilmember Turner, seconded of Councilmember Hawn and carried to approve the April 2024 Bill List.

YES: Allgeyer, Giberson, Hawn, Riegel, Ropiecki, Turner

NO:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN: Bugdon

**MOTION TO PAY ALL SIGNED BILLS:**

On the motion of Councilmember Bugdon, seconded of Councilmember Allgeyer and carried to pay all signed bills.

YES: Allgeyer, Giberson, Hawn, Riegel, Ropiecki, Turner

NO:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN: Bugdon

**QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION REGARDING THE SPECIAL ELECTION  
REFERENDUM ON APRIL 16, 2024**

Council President Giberson let the public know that there were informational packets made up for those who would like to take them. The information includes the projected increase in taxes a property owner would have, if the referendum were to pass. This is only the municipal increase and does not include a possible increase in taxes for the school or county.

A member of the public expressed their concern that the school would be shut down. They do not have children in the school, but it means a lot to them. Council shared that their goal is to do everything possible to keep the school open.

Joy Hooper, 138 Central Avenue, advised the public that members of the School Board are in attendance and can answer their questions.

Margaret DeFelice, 350 Cologne-Port Road, asked if the proposed tax increase includes the needed repairs to the school. Council President Giberson responded that the proposed tax increase does not include any repairs to the school. Kevin Wessler, School Board Member, shared that the necessary repairs would cost just under \$60,000.00 a year. The job would be for the roof, the boiler and anything that goes through the roof. The total would be about \$1.6 million and would be paid over a 20-year period. The State would also cover 1/3 of the debt.

Carmela Pogranicy, 29 Clarks Landing Road, questioned if the school would have to close if the referendum were to not pass. Council President Giberson responded that it does not mean that, but it would put them on a different path with their own budgeting. Mrs. Pogranicy asked if the school was to consolidate, would the children be going to Mullica Township. Mayor and Council are unable to answer that question. Mrs. Pogranicy shared with the public about the NJ State Senior Tax Freeze. Councilmember Bugdon explained the process. Mrs. Pogranicy ended by urging the public to help the school survive.

Kevin Wessler, School Board Member, commented that the school is unable to amend their budget and the money being asked for by way of the referendum is to pay tuition costs to Cedar Creek High School. If the referendum does not pass, they will have to find that money somehow. Most likely through a loan.

Attorney Kaufmann explained the process the City has had to do so far regarding the referendum and explained why the City is not allowed to give their opinion on how the residents should vote.

Leah Kaithern, owner of EcoGrit Mechanical Dredging, shared that they are here this evening to hear more about the town. Listening to what is going on with the school, they feel it is great that the town has the gravel pit because it will be a massive money maker. Ms. Kaithern asked Mayor and Council if the project will be going out to public bid. Council President Giberson responded that it will be. Attorney Kaufmann added that there will be a discussion later in the meeting, listed under ordinances.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Police/Emergency Management:**

No report

### **Administrative/Personnel:**

Council President Giberson reported that Council received monthly reports from the CFO, Tax Collector, and Municipal Clerk.

The CFO report showed an ending balance amount of \$1,719,614.62 in the current fund as of February 2024.

The Tax Collector's March 2024 report showed a total amount received of \$42,846.66.

The Municipal Clerk's report for March 2024 showed a total amount received of \$14,141.22.

### **Public Works:**

Councilmember Allgeyer reported that everything is running smoothly. They are trying to work out scheduling for the Convenience Center between the two employees.

### **Recreation:**

Councilmember Bugdon reported that bids were received for the Reconstruction of the Tennis and Basketball Courts. The bids received are over the available funds the City has. Councilmember Turner explained that there are some areas that can be engineered backwards.

Councilmember Turner reported that Pete May with Precision Concrete was able to extend the boat ramp which was damaged during some very high tides. It looks great and he thinks everyone who utilizes the boat ramp will be happy.

Councilmember Bugdon added that baseball season has begun and the teams are ready to play. Councilmember Turner added that the banners have been hung up around the field.

### **Fire and Ambulance:**

Councilmember Hawn reported that everything is running smoothly at the Fire Company. The Fire Department dinner will be next month, on Saturday, May 18<sup>th</sup>. They recently purchased a new compressor.

### **Planning Board:**

No report

### **Construction/Code Enforcement:**

Construction Official Kevin Cain submitted a report for the month of March. During the month, a total of 20 inspections were done, and the following permits were issued:

- 5 Alterations
- 0 Demos
- 0 New
- 0 Additions
- 0 Zoning Permit

- 0 CO Inspection for Resale
- Total of 5

The current code enforcement issues are at 61 Clarks Landing Road (fence issue) and 203 Mill Bridge Court (water runoff issue). Both issues are ongoing.

Councilmember Turner shared that he did not feel that a water runoff issue at 203 Mill Bridge Court was the correct verbiage. Everyone has been experiencing higher than usual water tables due to the rain and this issue is directly related to someone pumping out their basement. He would like to see something done so that people are not getting in trouble for trying to get water out of their basement. Council President Giberson stated this can be looked further into.

**Senior Services:**

Councilmember Bugdon reported that she has helped several people properly fill out their PTR forms.

**Land Use:**

No report

**OPEN TO PUBLIC PORTION:**

On the motion of Councilmember Allgeyer, seconded of Councilmember Bugdon and carried to open public portion.

Greg DeFelice, 350 Cologne-Port Road, expressed his concern of speeding on his roadway. Council President Giberson stated that he would send his concerns to our Public Safety Director Scott Winneberger.

Kevin Wessler, 609 Chestnut Neck Road, stated that the Public Works Department should be keeping the stream by Mill Bridge Court clean as there were issues years ago when it had been tested. Councilmember Turner responded that they will let Public Works Director Bill Montag know his concerns.

**CLOSE TO PUBLIC PORTION:**

Hearing nothing more from the public, on the motion of Councilmember Bugdon, seconded of Councilmember Allgeyer and carried to close the public portion.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

- City Clerk Kimberly Campellone Letter of Retirement – *acknowledged*

**RESOLUTIONS:**

48-2024            Rescinding Award of Lease of Municipally Owned Property at 400 English Creek Road

On the motion of Councilmember Ropiecki, seconded of Councilmember Bugdon and carried to adopt Resolution 48-2024.

YES: Allgeyer, Bugdon, Giberson, Hawn, Riegel, Ropiecki, Turner

NO:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

49-2024          Emergency Temporary Appropriation 2024

On the motion of Councilmember Bugdon, seconded of Councilmember Turner and carried to adopt Resolution 49-2024.

YES: Allgeyer, Bugdon, Giberson, Hawn, Riegel, Ropiecki, Turner

NO:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

**ORDINANCES – 1<sup>ST</sup> READING/INTRODUCTION:**

04-2024          Adopting s Redevelopment Plan for Block 24, Lot 34 (400 English Creek Road)  
*Councilmember Allgeyer stated that he would like to have the wording “principle solar” removed from the Redevelopment Plan. Attorney Kaufmann explained that the plan had originally been created for a community solar project. It has since been revised to add language for any usage Mayor & Council sees fit. With the plan, the City can put out an RFP and negotiate an agreement with another party. Councilmember Riegel also expressed her concern with including the wording “principle solar”. Council President Giberson explained that this is only the first reading and introduction of the Ordinance tonight and Council will still be able to make amendments prior to adoption.*

On the motion of Councilmember Bugdon, seconded of Councilmember Hawn and carried.

YES: Allgeyer, Bugdon, Giberson, Hawn, Ropiecki, Turner

NO: Riegel

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

**ORDINANCES – 2<sup>nd</sup> READING/ADOPTION:**

01-2024          An Ordinance Establishing the Salaries and Wages of Certain Officials, Officers, and Employees of the City of Port Republic

On the motion of Councilmember Ropiecki, seconded by Councilmember Allgeyer and carried to open for public hearing.

Hearing nothing from the public, Councilmember Bugdon moved, seconded of Councilmember Allgeyer and carried to close the public hearing.

On the motion of Councilmember Bugdon, seconded of Councilmember Allgeyer and carried.

YES: Allgeyer, Bugdon, Giberson, Hawn, Riegel, Ropiecki, Turner

NO:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

02-2024          Calendar Year 2024 – Ordinance to Exceed the Municipal Budget Appropriation Limits and to Establish a CAP Bank (N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.14)

On the motion of Councilmember Allgeyer, seconded by Councilmember Bugdon and carried to open for public hearing.

Hearing nothing from the public, Councilmember Bugdon moved, seconded of Councilmember Allgeyer and carried to close the public hearing.

On the motion of Councilmember Allgeyer, seconded of Councilmember Bugdon and carried.

YES: Allgeyer, Bugdon, Giberson, Hawn, Riegel, Ropiecki Turner

NO:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

03-2024          An Ordinance Amending Ordinance 72-1986, as Amended and as Codified in Chapter 160, Recreation Areas, and Parks

On the motion of Councilmember Bugdon, seconded by Councilmember Allgeyer and carried to open for public hearing.

Becca Wessler, 601 Chestnut Neck Road, questioned what the ordinance is for. Clerk Campellone responded that this is for an increase in the beach badge fees.

Hearing nothing more from the public, Councilmember Bugdon moved, seconded of Councilmember Allgeyer and carried to close the public hearing.

On the motion of Councilmember Turner, seconded of Councilmember Bugdon and carried.

YES: Allgeyer, Bugdon, Giberson, Hawn, Riegel, Ropiecki, Turner

NO:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

- The Reconstruction of the Tennis & Basketball Courts at Park Avenue – bids received April 3, 2024  
*The lowest bidder for the project came in at \$650,000. Unfortunately, with the funds that the City does have, we do not have enough to award. A meeting will be set up with the Recreation Committee to cut back and rebid. We will also apply for CDBG funds to cover the ADA expenses.*

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- CDBG FY 2024 Applications due by Wednesday, May 1<sup>st</sup>  
*Acknowledged*
- Spring Community Clean Up – Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup> 10 am – 12 pm  
*Acknowledged*

**MAYORS REPORT/PROCLAMTIONS:**

Mayor Giberson reported:

- Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup> from 10 am until 3 pm will be the Earth Day celebration. There will be lots of activities for everyone.

- She recently attended a meeting with the Central Municipal Court of Atlantic County. Some municipalities are trying to leave but are not being permitted to do so. The judge does not see they have a fit exit plan at this point. They had previously had the Atlantic County Sheriff's Office in as security and had left for a huge decrease in costs. The Sheriff's Office has now come back and stated they can do it for the same price as the private company.
- On Saturday, June 1<sup>st</sup> the City will be hosting a party to celebrate Clerk Campellone. It will be at the pavilion, and everyone is invited.

**OPEN TO PUBLIC PORTION:**

On the motion of Councilmember Allgeyer, seconded by Councilmember Bugdon and carried to open the public portion.

Joe Martin, 5 Mill Street, asked for an update on the cameras the City were installing in the park area and also the bridge closure. Council President Giberson responded that the cameras are up and working and have been making a huge difference in deterring people from damaging the dirt parking area. The bridge is scheduled to reopen on Thursday, April 11th provided that the weather cooperates.

Joy Hooper, 138 Central Avenue, inquired further about the celebration planned for Clerk Campellone.

**CLOSE TO PUBLIC PORTION:**

Hearing nothing more from the public, Councilmember Allgeyer moved, seconded of Councilmember Bugdon and carried to close the public portion.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

ES 4-2024 Authorization to Enter into Executive Session Regarding:

1. N/A

**ADJOURNMENT**

On the motion of Councilmember Allgeyer, seconded of Councilmember Hawn and carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brandy M. Blevin, RMC  
Municipal Clerk