

CITY OF PORT REPUBLIC COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES SEPTEMBER 9, 2025 – 6:30 pm

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 Crawford and carried to close the workshop portion of the meeting.

COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT: David Crawford, Roger Giberson, Eugene Hawn, Donna Riegel, Jeffrey Ropiecki

COUNCILMEMBERS ABSENT: Steven Allgeyer, Michael Turner

MAYOR: Monica Giberson

MUNICIPAL CLERK: Brandy M. Blevin, RMC

ATTORNEY: William J. Kaufmann, Esq.

Council President Giberson called the meeting to order and led 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 AUGUST 12, 2025, CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES:

On the motion of Councilmember Crawford, seconded by Councilmember Hawn and carried to approve the August 12, 2025, City Council Meeting Minutes.

YES: Crawford, Giberson, Hawn, Riegel, Ropiecki

NO:

ABSENT: Allgeyer, Turner

ABSTAIN:

MOTION TO APPROVE SEPTEMBER 2025 BILL LIST:

On the motion of Councilmember Hawn, seconded by Councilmember Crawford and carried to approve the September 2025 Bill List.

YES: Crawford, Giberson, Hawn, Riegel, Ropiecki

NO:

ABSENT: Allgeyer, Turner

ABSTAIN:

MOTION TO PAY ALL SIGNED BILLS:

On the motion of Councilmember Crawford, seconded by Councilmember Ropiecki and carried to pay all signed bills.

YES: Crawford, Giberson, Hawn, Riegel, Ropiecki

NO:

ABSENT: Allgeyer, Turner

ABSTAIN:

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Police/Emergency Management:

Scott Winneberger reported that a couple speeding complaints were sent to the State Police. They remain receptive in handling our complaints.

Councilmember Riegel questioned the status of the cameras at Fireman's Pond. Scott responded that we are still awaiting approval from Atlantic City Electric. He will continue to follow up.

Administrative/Personnel:

Mayor and Council received monthly reports from the Municipal Clerk, Tax Collector and Chief Financial Officer.

The Municipal Clerk's report for August 2025 showed a total amount received of \$3,491.32.

The Tax Collector's report for August 2025 showed a total amount received of \$1,257,197.22.

The Chief Financial Officer provided a Budget to Actual Report Through August 31, 2025.

Councilmember Ropiecki reported that everything is going well, and all employees are doing a great job.

Public Works:

Mayor Giberson reported that she had a meeting this morning with the Public Works Supervisor to take care of some things and they have already been done. Everything is going well.

Recreation:

Mayor Giberson reported that there were a couple places where gaps were not closed between the old fence and the new fence at the courts. Billy Smallwood will be taking care of that with PRAF funds. We have received requests for benches and a piece of plywood at the courts, but those requests will be up to the Recreation Committee to decide.

Fire and Ambulance:

Councilmember Hawn reported that the past month was another slow month. They had a few calls, mostly false alarms. The Fire Department is still having trouble with the neighboring property. Council President Giberson shared that he spoke with the City's Construction Official and he will be looking further into the issue.

Councilmember Hawn also shared that the Fire Department acquired a new fire engine. Tuckerton Fire Department donated one of their engines to the Department.

Planning Board:

Councilmember Riegel reported that they had a meeting on September 8, 2025, to vote on the resolution regarding the variance from the month before. It was unanimously approved. She also asked the members of the Planning Board to come to her or Council if they have any ideas for the two redevelopment areas within the City.

Construction/Code Enforcement:

Construction Official Pat Naticchione submitted a report for the month of August 2025.

During the month of August, a total of 17 inspections were done, and the following permits were issued:

- 5 Alteration
- 0 Demos
- 0 New
- 0 Addition
- 2 Zoning Permits
- 0 CO Inspection / Resale
- Total of 7

The following code enforcement issues were notated:

- 291 Old New York Road – sent letter regarding grass
- 233 Main Street – has another week
- 126 Blakes Lane – deck – no permit – sent violation notice

Land Use:

Council President Giberson shared that he reached out to Scarborough Marine Group after the last City Council Meeting. He has not heard anything back from them yet.

OPEN TO PUBLIC PORTION:

On the motion of Councilmember Crawford, seconded by Councilmember Ropiecki and carried to open public portion.

Joe Martin, 5 Mill Street, stated that on Riverside Drive there is a bridge labeled “PR02” which is in need of repair. We will have our Public Works Department look into this.

Michele Viachostamatis, 216 Main Street, shared her concern regarding speeding throughout town and specifically on Main Street. Scott Winneberger will advise the State Police of the concern.

Kathy Cox, 123 Moss Mill Road, shared that she contacted Atlantic County Institute of Technology after the last City Council meeting to inquire if the City would be able to send our high school students there. She was told we are unable to do that because the school is not a traditional high school. Mrs. Cox also shared that she feels residents should apply for tax relief programs from the State to help with the tax increases. Councilmember Riegel asked about the school offering pre-k and the possible grant incentives that could come from that. Mrs. Cox responded that unfortunately the school does not have the space to allow pre-k.

Bob Haviland, 316 English Creek Road, stated that he too spoke with someone from Atlantic County Institute of Technology. He learned that the school is comparable to Mainland Regional High School, but he was also told that the students themselves need to apply to attend.

CLOSE TO PUBLIC PORTION:

Hearing nothing more from the public, on the motion of Councilmember Crawford seconded by Councilmember Ropiecki and carried to close the public portion.

CORRESPONDENCE:

- Memorandum from James Rutala Regarding the 2026 NJDEP Green Acres Grant Program – dated August 11, 2025 (*application deadline – February 2026*)

Acknowledged – if anyone is interested this can be discussed at the next City Council Meeting.

- Letter from Jim Escarge Regarding Installation of Plywood “Wall” on the New Tennis Courts – received August 29, 2025

Acknowledged – this request will be given to the Recreation Committee to decide.

- Final Report from Nicole Rein, Wildlife Biologist of the United States Department of Agriculture – dated September 5, 2025

Acknowledged

- Letter from Todd D’Anna, Port Republic School Board Secretary/Business Administrator Regarding Port Republic Resolution 73-2025 – dated September 5, 2025

Acknowledged – Council President will be setting up a Committee to specifically communicate with the School Board and reopen the lines of communication.

- Memorandum from James Rutala Regarding Ocean Wind Pro-NJ Grantor Trust Fund – Phase 2 – dated September 8, 2025 (*deadline to apply – October 31, 2025*)

Acknowledged – we will move forward with applying for this grant.

- Letter from Deborah Wahl from Polistina & Associates, LLC Recommending Payment #2 in the Amount of \$227,751.81 for the Tennis/Pickleball/Basketball Courts Project

Acknowledged

- Letter from Dennis Levinson to Atlantic County Prosecutor William Reynolds and Atlantic County Public Safety Director Michael Fedorko Regarding E-Bikes, Along with Copies of Linwood City Ordinances 6-2025 and 8-2025 Regarding Same – dated August 27, 2025

Acknowledged

RESOLUTIONS:

74-2025 Resolution Opposing the Proposed “Protecting Against Climate Threat (PACT)/Resilient Environment and Landscape (REAL) Rules

On the motion of Councilmember Riegel, seconded by Councilmember Crawford and carried to adopt Resolution 74-2025.

YES: Crawford, Giberson, Hawn, Riegel, Ropiecki

NO:

ABSENT: Allgeyer, Turner

ABSTAIN:

75-2025 Authorizing Shared Services Agreement with Atlantic County for Utilization of
LEAP Grant to Implement Eagle View GIS and Assessment Software

On the motion of Councilmember Crawford, seconded by Councilmember Riegel and carried to
adopt Resolution 75-2025.

YES: Crawford, Giberson, Hawn, Riegel, Ropiecki

NO:

ABSENT: Allgeyer, Turner

ABSTAIN:

ORDINANCES – 1ST READING/INTRODUCTION:

None

ORDINANCES – 2nd READING/ADOPTION:

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- Redevelopment Plan – 400 English Creek Road

We are still waiting for Scarborough Marine Group to get back to us. Also, Mayor Giberson sent a letter to Stockton University asking them to come up with alternative ideas for the property.

- Councilmember Riegel asked if we could schedule for the marker for the Route 610 Bridge to be put back. Mayor Giberson feels the County needs to address the ditches near the bridge prior to moving that piece back. She will contact the County.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Sunday, September 14th – Duct Tape Boat Regatta
- Saturday, September 27th – Fall Citywide Cleanup & Port Garden Area Cleanup
- Saturday, October 4th – 3rd Annual Port Republic Heritage Society Celebration

MAYOR’S REPORT/PROCLAMTIONS:

- Proclamation Recognizing October 6, 2025, as Knock Out Opioid Abuse Day

Mayor Giberson reported the following:

- Saturday, October 25th – Port Fall Fest
- At the last School Board meeting, only one other member of the public was present along with Mayor Giberson. She stated that Resolution 73-2025, passed at the last City Council meeting, must have appeased many residents’ concerns about the tax increase.
- Port School is in need of volunteers to help serve lunch. If anyone is interested, they should contact the school.

OPEN TO PUBLIC PORTION:

On the motion of Councilmember Crawford, seconded by Councilmember Hawn and carried to open the public portion.

Gary Kirschenmann, 16 Maple Branch Court, had attended the City Council Meeting held on August 12, 2025, and asked Mayor and Council to look further into why his insurance claim regarding damage to his car at the Transfer Station was denied. Attorney Kaufmann explained that the claim was denied based primarily on the NJ Tort Claims Act. There is no insurance coverage for the claim and Mr. Kirschenmann is free to bring any legal action against the City that he feels is appropriate. That being the case, Attorney Kaufmann recommended that Mayor and Council not make any comment regarding this matter until the statute of limitations expires.

Kathy Cox, 123 Moss Mill Road, asked for more information regarding the Citywide Cleanup scheduled for Saturday, September 27th. Mayor Giberson advised everyone that these events are in the latest Newsletter along with lots of other good information.

CLOSE TO PUBLIC PORTION:

Hearing nothing more from the public, Councilmember Ropiecki moved, seconded by Councilmember Crawford and carried to close the public portion.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

ES 9-2025 Authorization to Enter into Executive Session Regarding:

1. N/A

ADJOURNMENT

On the motion of Councilmember Crawford, seconded by Councilmember Riegel and carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brandy M. Blevin, RMC
Municipal Clerk