



## STOCKTON BOROUGH COUNCIL Regular Meeting Minutes

August 15, 2023 – 7:00 PM

Stockton Fire Company, 9 Mill Street, Stockton, NJ

---

Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by a notice mailed to the Hunterdon County Democrat and The Trenton Times, posted on the Borough Website, on the window of Borough Hall, and filed with the Borough Clerk as required by law.

Meeting Called to order at 7:10 PM by Mayor Lipsen.

### **ROLL CALL:**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Lipsen, Council President Mann, Councilperson Hunt, Councilperson Folz, Councilperson Brown, Councilperson Kozuhowski

**ABSENT:** Councilperson Hendricks

**ALSO PRESENT:** Borough Atty. Michael Butler, Special Deputy Clerk Michele Bobrowski

### **FLAG SALUTE:**

Mayor Lipsen led the flag salute.

### **APPOINTMENT:**

- **APPOINTMENT OF SPECIAL DEPUTY CLERK-RESOLUTION 23-72**

Council President Mann made a motion, seconded by Councilperson Hunt to approve Resolution 2023-72.

**Roll Call: Aye: Folz, Brown, Hunt, Mann, Kozuhowski**

**Nay: None**

**Abstain: None**

**Motion Carried**

**WHEREAS,** the Borough Clerk Monica Orlando resigned; and

**WHEREAS,** the Borough Deputy Clerk Tiffany Crivelli is not available for the August 15, 2023, Stockton Borough Council meeting; and

**WHEREAS,** there is a need to continue business as usual for the Borough Council Meeting.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stockton that Michele Bobrowski, RMC, shall serve as the Special Deputy Borough Clerk for the August 15, 2023, Stockton Borough Council Meeting; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Michele Bobrowski is responsible for taking minutes in connection with the Open Public Session and Executive Session; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Michele Bobrowski will be paid at \$30 per hour for the meeting and for the time it takes to complete the minutes; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this resolution shall take effect immediately.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

- **To Enter into Executive Session -Resolution 2023-073**

Councilperson Hunt made a motion, seconded by Councilperson Folz to approve Resolution 2023-73 to Enter into Executive Session to discuss Real Estate (*Entered Executive Session at 7:12 PM*).

**Roll Call: Aye: Folz, Brown, Hunt, Mann, Kozuhowski**

**Nay: None**

**Abstain: None**

**Motion Carried**

**WHEREAS**, Section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975, permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

**WHEREAS**, this governing body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist,

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Council of Stockton Borough, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The public shall be excluded from discussion of and action upon the hereinafter specified subject matter.
2. The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows:
  - a. Real Estate
3. The discussion is anticipated to take approximately 30 Mins. Action may be taken.
4. It is intended at this time that the above-stated subject matter will be made public when the matter has been resolved.
5. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

Councilperson Hunt made a motion, seconded by Councilperson Folz, to return to Public Session. **(Returned to Public Session at 7:28 PM.)**

**Roll Call: Aye: Folz, Brown, Hunt, Mann, Kozuhowski**

**Nay: None**

**Abstain: None**

**Motion Carried**

**POTENTIAL ACTION ON ITEMS FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

No Action from Executive Session

**DISCUSSION ON WATER / SEWER RATES AND UTILITIES:**

Mayor Lipsen noted that Borough residents can find a FAQ sheet pertaining to water/sewer rates and water/sewer information on the Borough website. All Borough residents own the water system including members of Council, the Water Supervisor, and Utility Collector who are also Borough residents. There are approximately 227 Borough residents who are users and repairs are divided among everyone. This year, everyone is charged a \$400.00 yearly flat fee and \$3.85 per one thousand gallons of water usage. These fees are comparable with other water companies. Sewer usage is determined by how much is sent to Lambertville for processing and then is divided by all users and that determines the rate. As for salaries for the employees, based on the 2022 numbers, Stockton Borough is paying approximately \$40,000.00 a year for water/sewer salaries, which is very low. The system was installed in 1909 and is checked seven days a week along with employees being on call 24 hours a day since 1909 by the Ent family, which spans four generations of this family being there to oversee the system. Employees use their personal vehicles, don't submit for mileage, and sometimes don't charge for items needed. Mr. Greg Ent wants to retire, and the Borough is preparing for this change by speaking with private companies and individuals. The Borough has hired Mike Schneider, and he has begun training and has hired Brian Hewitt. Both gentlemen were present at the meeting and introduced and welcomed by Mayor Lipsen who thanked them for coming onboard. The Borough is seeking additional candidates to fill additional roles along with management spots to ensure environmental compliance. It will be inevitable that labor costs will rise. The Borough is looking at a three-part plan:

- 1.) Early next year combining finances of the water/sewer utility for more financial flexibility.
- 2.) Smart Infrastructure Investment such as meter upgrades that automatically read the meters and check leaks to target problems, along with looking into different ways to purchase chemical supplies needed and look into purchasing different chemicals. By investing in building upgrades these can save on labor and chemical costs as well.
- 3.) Grant Funding-Looking into State and Federal funding opportunities through agencies such as the NJ Department of Transportation who is looking to repave Route 29 in 2028 and the NJ Department of Environmental Protection who has a water plan coming. The USDA and Hunterdon County are also interested in investing in Stockton Borough. The Borough is in need of a grant writer so if any residents have experience in applying for grants, please contact Councilperson Brown or Mayor Lipsen.

Councilperson Brown noted that with grant money there are ancillary costs associated with them such as engineering, but the benefits outweigh these costs.

**OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA:**

Torkelson-Before moving here decades ago, took water quality reports from neighboring towns and Stockton Borough's water was the best. Mr. Torkelson hears all the traffic where he lives and has a radar gun. Traffic needs to slow down on Route 29. Stockton Borough is a mecca for people who bike and want to visit and don't want to be hit by a car. Mr. Torkelson will be moving at the end of the month and between him and his wife they have 75 years of public service, between them serving the community.

Daley-Asked if all the homes in Stockton Borough are hooked up to the water and sewer system. Was advised that the majority are but not all due to the location of properties that are difficult to reach due to terrain.

Slack-Thanked the Borough Council for all the hard work they put in and will miss the Torkelsons.

Torkelson-Asked Borough Council to get a handle on the inventory of rental units so the Borough can get the income.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

- a. February 22, 2023 Regular Session – TABLED to a Later Date To be Determined
- b. March 20, 2023 Regular and Executive Session Minutes- Executive Session TABLED until 9/18/23
- c. April 17, 2023 Regular Session Minutes – TABLED until 9/18/23
- d. May 15, 2023 Regular and Executive Session Minutes -Executive Session TABLED until 9/18/23
- e. June 19, 2023 Regular and Executive Session Minutes – TABLED until 9/18/23
- f. July 17, 2023 Regular Minutes

Councilperson Hunt made a motion, seconded by Councilperson Folz to approve the Regular Session Minutes of March 20, 2023; May 15, 2023; and July 17, 2023.

**Roll Call: Aye: Folz, Brown, Hunt, Mann, Kozuhowski**

**Nay: None**

**Abstain: None**

**Motion Carried**

**ORDINANCES:**

- **Ordinance 23-04:** Authorizing the Acquisition of Real Property Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40a:12-5

Councilperson Kozuhowski made a motion, seconded by Councilperson Hunt, to open Public Comment for Ordinance 23-04.

**Roll Call: Aye: Folz, Brown, Hunt, Mann, Kozuhowski**

**Nay: None**

**Abstain: None**

**Motion Carried**

**Council Reports:**

Councilperson Hunt (Finance)- Provided copies of a draft schedule that included estimated costs and professional services to members of Council to review and discuss. All costs on the draft schedule of carrying costs, minor repairs, and costs of construction of the former Stockton School Building and Grounds are estimates. Carrying costs and minor repairs are generally paid from the Borough budget. Professional services and major construction should be timed so capital costs and perhaps professional service costs are covered by grants and/or donations. Councilperson Hunt advised that raising taxes by one cent equates to \$11,000.00. Draft Estimates proposed were as follows:

Year 1 (Remainder of CY/FY 2023) Costs of \$ \$7,800.00	Total Costs \$ 7,800.00
Year 2 (CY/FY 2024) Costs of \$ 38,700.00/Grants \$125,000.00	Total Costs \$163,700.00
Year 3 (CY/FY 2025) Costs of \$ 17,200.00/Grants \$283,000.00	Total Costs \$300,200.00
Year 4 (CY/FY 2026) Costs of \$ 15,200.00/Grants \$67,000.00	Total Costs \$82,200.00

Councilperson Brown (Finance)-Sat with professionals but costs for services need to be obtained still. There is an option to sell Borough Hall, but an appraisal will be needed. To qualify for a bond, need a usefulness of more than 5 years to purchase a building. For a Note, the Borough can get a 10-year variable rate and the USDA offers low interest rate loans that the Borough could obtain. If the Borough were to obtain a Note, then the Borough would not be able to rent either the school or Borough Hall for profit as an option. Can the Borough absorb carrying costs while doing repairs? The Borough can hold a referendum to go over cap if approved by the voters.

Mayor Lipsen-When speaking with a mold remediation company, quote estimates obtained were as follows: a.) a Cadillac remediation plan would cost over \$100,000.00 and b.) a cheap version would cost \$36,000.00. The Borough met with the Borough Engineer and very rough cost estimates for drainage repairs would likely be approximately \$50,000.00. ADA access will be a challenge with the required ramp being out of spec. The only option would be a lift due to not having enough space for the ramp needed. The Borough has received historical grants in the past and so has the school. Selling the existing Borough Hall would require an appraisal and maybe the Borough could look at offsite office space for Borough Hall offices.

Councilperson Kozuhowski-Has raised his family in Stockton Borough and has done the tour of the school. The fiscal side is very concerning to him. Understands the school can be sold and there are a lot of ifs, but he needs to do his due diligence as a Councilperson and needs to put his emotions to the side.

Council President Mann- Carrying costs are in place for Borough Hall so Council needs to weigh in the carrying costs for both buildings.

Councilperson Brown- Borough Hall needs to be sold and space needs to be sought in the interim for Borough Hall offices and meetings. The school would be a better option, but Borough Hall would need to be sold because the Borough can't keep both.

Mayor Lipsen- The school doesn't have to be used for a new Borough Hall but could be used for private use.

Councilperson Brown-The Borough will need widespread support.

Councilperson Hunt- The Ordinance before Council authorizes acquisition but doesn't establish a timeline. Borough Hall can be used for the first year while grants are being applied for and the Borough should not go out for a Note and use taxpayer dollars. If grant monies don't pan out, then the school can be sold even if not the popular opinion.

**Public Comment:**

Bertrand-The school is an important building, and the Borough will have control of the building if purchased. If nothing happens at all, at least the Borough has control. Operating costs are relatively small. Historic Preservation grants can accommodate fifty percent of the costs. Residents would be willing to contribute their time and financially support this sale. Mr. Bertrand volunteers his expertise with historic preservation towards this endeavor.

Gilinger- Borough Council is treating this purchase like an old car. What are the costs going to be in the next 5, 10, 15, 20 years? Need to look at the initial cost and the long-term costs. The reality is the cost is this much and the longer the repairs are delayed, costs rise. Borough Council needs a better plan for costs, use, reason to buy, etc.

Giocondo-Has served as a former Mayor and Councilman and understands the complexity of the issue before the Borough Council. Reiterates the option to sell Borough Hall and to get historical designation of the building prior to selling it in order to keep its infrastructure and history. Read the following letter from Constance Bassett to the Borough Council:

*We know the river towns along both sides of the Delaware River are under pressure to change and accommodate development and special interests. In large part due to its size, Stockton has remained a small commercial and residential community that has at its center the Stockton Inn, multiple restaurants a few markets, shops, two gas stations, three churches, a firehouse, a Borough Hall, and an empty schoolhouse. A classic storybook town, we all have or would like to have read about, growing up. So how do we protect and provide for this town so it can successfully negotiate the pressures it faces. We can start by looking at what those pressures are and then roll up our sleeves and make the best choices. It was made clear at the July 20th Firehouse Council meeting that the present Borough Hall has multiple Fire Marshall issues, ADA accessibility as well as the general maintenance which is in arrears. Cost estimates can be collected if they haven't been already. Important to note that even when these maintenance projects are accomplished with volunteer, professional labor and public money, the building will not provide the space to publicly conduct Borough business. Because of the limited space and ADA accessibility the present Borough Hall will not be able to meet conveniently or efficiently with the public to discuss business, opportunities or manage a natural disaster which we can expect to be more frequent and severe. A viable alternative for Borough Hall is being offered to the town by the South Hunterdon Regional School System. They recognize the building belongs to the town and all the many generations of parents of families that supported and cared for the school for 136 years. They recognize the significant role this building has played in the history of the town. The building's past is part of the town's history. The repairs and updating of the schoolhouse are not insignificant but they are known and doable. There will be opportunities in the future for leasing unneeded space in the schoolhouse which will provide income for maintenance and continued updates. The schoolhouse is at a higher elevation than the*

*present Borough Hall and I understand is the designated shelter during emergencies for the Office of Emergency Management of Stockton Borough. If the building were to be sold there would not be a public space to manage events outside the flood plain and there would not be an opportunity for Borough Hall to expand to the town's future needs once the Borough school is sold, all these discussions would then be too late. Accepting the gift of the school property, the town has invested in for more than 135 years is the long view/big picture choice for keeping the town whole. All architecture requires maintenance and periodic updates. The schoolhouse offers many of the things that the Borough Hall will need to manage the future, not the least of which is a place the town can meet.*

Mayor Lipsen-The school is historically protected. Borough Hall has failed a fire inspection. The Borough Council cannot meet there indefinitely but could possibly still use it for offices and could find another place for meetings.

Torkelson- Bassett's letter sums it up. Another column should be included when determining finances for Borough Hall. If tonight's meeting was at Borough Hall, he would not have been able to attend or if he fell, the Borough would be liable. For \$1.00, the Borough will have two great buildings and the Borough needs to focus on the most viable.

Mayor Lipsen- Borough Hall's roof leaks, needs stone repair outside, insulation in stairwell in basement, etc.

Reynolds- Purchasing the school is not a good idea. Concerned about high taxes and what do taxpayers get for their money? Can't bank on volunteering of residents to help if it's needed. The Mayor's time can be spent better than hanging fire extinguishers. If the Borough borrows money for the building what happens if there is an emergency, and the Borough needs to borrow money then?

Hunt-Read the following letter she wrote and sent to Council:

I would like to express my support for the town's purchase of the Stockton School. I have outlined my reasoning and ideas below. Thank you for your hard work over the past months and for all the information you have made available on this subject. Argument for the expedient purchase of the school:

- ❖ RISK-FREE: First and foremost, the purchase of the school for \$1 is virtually risk-free; if necessary, the town can sell the school for...more than \$1 certainly. And we'd have time to plan for and change the property's zoning restrictions.
- ❖ URGENCY: School Board Representative Jim Gallagher has been able to help line up this opportunity for the town with the good faith of his twenty years of service on the board, and we shouldn't take his hard work for granted. If we delay the purchase further, the school district has no obligation to continue waiting and because the property continues to cost them money, they could decide to sell the property to the highest bidder.
- ❖ AGENCY: Purchasing the school doesn't immediately commit the municipality to major expenditures - the purchase simply gives the town and our residents agency in deciding what happens to the property. Once it is purchased, we can take our time and do our due diligence in weighing our options.
- ❖ REFERENDUM: To make the decision about the school more democratic, the town could hold a referendum after securing the purchase of the school. The residents could then vote on whether to keep the school as a public property or sell it.

❖ **COMMUNITY DECISION:** To the concerns that this is a “bad business decision,” I argue that this municipality is not a business, it is a community. It is a public good. Unlike a business, its decisions should not be based on profitability, but on the best interests and wellbeing of our residents and our town’s future.

❖ **FUNDRAISING:** There is a sizable group of people (myself included) who are ready and willing to form a “Friends of the Stockton School” organization to fundraise for the school’s repairs and maintenance (beginning with the carrying costs between the purchase and a potential referendum). We have already begun brainstorming fundraising ideas, such as reviving the annual Rummage Sale and/or Spaghetti and Art auctions, holding concerts in the park, doing a 5k run/walk, and so forth. Many people are also willing to volunteer time and labor in helping to fix and maintain parts of the building. Others are willing to help with preparing grant applications for major repairs.

Benefits of purchasing & utilizing the school:

❖ **COMMUNITY CENTER:** It could create a great community center for residents to gather in and connect in. Since the closure of the school and the farmers market, our town hasn’t had a gathering place to foster a sense of community and culture. With the involvement of a “Friends of Stockton School” organization, we could create:

- A small arts center, where workshops and shows are organized on a regular basis.
- A lending library of books and tools. Or even a free section of used clothes and household items, depending on how much space we want to use. This would make resources available to the community, but also promote sustainable methods of re-use and recycling.
- Meeting space that could be reserved by local groups, from non-profits to book clubs to yoga classes.

❖ **BETTER PUBLIC MEETING SPACE:** It would be a bigger public meeting space with multiple restrooms, and even have space for municipal offices. The ample parking lot would also make public meetings more accessible to more people.

❖ **EMERGENCY SHELTER:** The school can continue to be in our emergency response plan and serve as a resource center and refuge in times of crisis, such as floods. With the climate crisis only becoming more disruptive, we will be experiencing more frequent and more serious flooding. It is in our best interest to prepare for that reality and ensure that we have large enough spaces to serve our community members who will be displaced.

❖ **HISTORY & CULTURE:** It would preserve our town’s history. Our area’s value comes primarily from the generations of residents who have dedicated their time and efforts to preserving our nature and history. That culture is what makes the river towns unique and beautiful. It’s now our turn to carry on that effort to protect the charm and character of our town for future generations to enjoy and appreciate.

This is the opportunity of the century. We shouldn’t look a gift horse in the mouth and jeopardize this chance to create a community hub, upgrade our public meeting space, secure our emergency shelter site, and preserve our history. I urge the council to vote yes to authorize town officials to purchase the Stockton School for \$1. Then we can take our time to figure out the rest as a community.

Giffin- Concerned about taking on the financial responsibility of purchasing the school. Thanked Councilperson Hunt for preparing the draft estimate of costs.



Levine-Is a big procrastinator and supports the purchase of the school for \$1.00. Then look at the upkeep and upgrades of Borough Hall along with potential income if sold. No one is going to know the financial unknowns. Spend the \$1.00 now and procrastinate down the road figuring everything out.

Giocondo- Urges the Borough Council to pass the Ordinance and supports the acquisition of the school.

Fahey- Agrees with Councilperson Hunt. There is nothing to lose by passing the Ordinance tonight. He purchased a home built in the 1840s and fourteen years later is still working on his home. He pays a lot of money in taxes and his appraisal is \$400,000.00 more than what he bought it for. Urges the Borough Council to take the first step. Hope the Ordinance passes tonight.

Slack-Amazing points have been brought up. Maybe a time frame should be set for the project. It looks foolish to allow the school district to sell the school to someone else. Purchase the school and keep it for a profit. It's a small investment upfront for the ability to do something for the Borough.

Foley-Vote tonight! The school has so many opportunities if the Borough is the owner. It's \$1.00 and it's the right thing to do!

Mayor Lipsen-Reminded everyone in attendance that the school cannot be demolished as it's a protected structure.

**Council Comments:**

Councilperson Kozuhowski-He initially had cold feet but with public input and since he is also a procrastinator he has changed his opinion.

Councilperson Hunt made a motion, seconded by Councilperson Folz to close Public Comment for Ordinance 23-04.

**Roll Call: Aye: Folz, Brown, Hunt, Mann, Kozuhowski**

**Nay: None**

**Abstain: None**

**Motion Carried**

Council President Mann made a motion, seconded by Councilperson Hunt to approve Ordinance 23-04.

**Roll Call: Aye: Folz, Brown, Hunt, Mann, Kozuhowski**

**Nay: None**

**Abstain: None**

**Motion Carried**

**BOROUGH OF STOCKTON**

**ORDINANCE 23-04**

**AUTHORIZING THE ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 40A:12-5**

**WHEREAS**, the South Hunterdon Regional School District (the “School District”) is the record owner of real property located at 19 South Main Street in the Borough of Stockton, which property is more particularly identified as Lot 27, Block 7 of the Stockton Borough Tax Map (the “Property”); and

**WHEREAS**, the Property is presently improved with a vacant building, playground, and various accessory structures, which collectively were formerly used as a school facility; and

**WHEREAS**, the School District no longer has any beneficial use for the Property and desires to transfer title of the Property to the Borough; and

**WHEREAS**, the Borough desires to take title to the Property; and

**WHEREAS**, the Borough is required, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12-5, to authorize the acquisition of real property via ordinance.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED** by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stockton that:

1. The Borough is authorized to acquire from the School District the real property located at 19 South Main Street, Stockton Borough, Hunterdon County, New Jersey, being known as Lot 27, Block 7 on the Stockton Borough Tax Map, together with any and all buildings, structures, and personal property locate thereon.
2. The Mayor, the Borough Clerk, the Borough Deputy Clerk, the Borough Chief Financial Officer, and the Borough attorney are authorized to execute and/or witness any documentation required to effectuate the acquisition of the Property.
3. All ordinances, or provisions thereof, conflicting, or inconsistent with the provisions of this ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict or inconsistency.
4. If any section or provision of this ordinance shall be adjudged invalid, such determination shall not affect the remaining provisions hereof, which shall remain in full force and effect.
5. This ordinance shall take effect after adoption and final publication in accordance with the law.

**RESOLUTIONS:**

- **Resolution 23-74:** Supporting the Lower Delaware River Management Plan and endorses designation of Wickecheoke Creek into the Lower Delaware River Wild and Scenic River System

Councilperson Hunt made a motion, seconded by Councilperson Brown to approve Resolution 2023-74.

**Roll Call: Aye: Folz, Brown, Hunt, Mann, Kozuhowski**

**Nay: None**

**Abstain: None**

**Motion Carried**

**WHEREAS**, The Borough of Stockton, Hunterdon County, New Jersey recognizes that the Delaware River and Wickecheoke Creek provide outstanding remarkable natural, cultural, historical, recreational and scenic resource values that are important for the quality of life and economic health of our community; and

**WHEREAS**, The Borough of Stockton recognizes the Lower Delaware River Management Plan provides a mechanism to enhance protection of the Lower Delaware River and its' tributaries, primarily through local action while recognizing the rights of property owners; and

**WHEREAS**, Congressional designation as a Wild and Scenic River and its' tributaries does not include any federal acquisition or management of lands; public access on private lands; no changes in land use regulations unless approved by each community; nor any financial obligation on the watershed Community; and

**WHEREAS** The Borough of Stockton recognizes the benefit of forming a partnership with other municipalities and interested parties along the Lower Delaware River in protection of the Delaware River and its' tributaries; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2000 the United States Congress designated the Lower Delaware River and three tributaries, the Tinicum, the Tohickon and the Paunacussing Creeks as part of the Wild and Scenic River system our community, under the direction of the National Park Service, has studied Wickecheoke Creek and proposes it be designated part of the Lower Delaware River Wild and Scenic River system within the River's Management Plan.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Borough of Stockton supports the Lower Delaware River Management Plan and will take action as appropriate to implement the goals of the plan and endorses designation of Wickecheoke Creek into the Lower Delaware River Wild and Scenic River System.

- **Resolution 23-75:** Providing Support For New Jersey Department of Transportation Concept Plans for Improvements to Mid-Block Crosswalks on Main Street & Risler Street (NJ Route 29 Mileposts 22.13, 22.24, 22.83, 22.62)

Borough Resident Bertland asked that the Borough Council review the plans for this project before they are approved, paying attention to the details and design. A previous maintenance project didn't go through historic preservation review or consideration and was constructed with very modern designs and features.

Councilperson Hunt made a motion, seconded by Councilperson Folz to table Resolution 2023-75.

**Roll Call: Aye: Folz, Brown, Hunt, Mann**

**Nay: Kozuhowski**

**Abstain: None**

**Motion Carried**

**WHEREAS**, the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) conducted a pedestrian road safety audit at existing mid-block crosswalks on Risler Street and Main Street (Route 29 Milepost 22.13, 22.24, 22.83, 22.62); and

**WHEREAS**, NJDOT has initiated a Limited Scope Concept Development (LSCD) study to address the pedestrian safety concerns at these mid-block crosswalks; and

**WHEREAS**, NJDOT is seeking municipal support for the proposed concept plans included with this resolution; and

**WHEREAS**, the concept plans to improve pedestrian safety and increase visibility of mid-block crosswalk to motorists include:

- Milepost 22.13, installation of new pedestrian scale street lighting, high visibility crosswalk markings, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) upgrades, and new signage; and
- Milepost 22.23, installation of new pedestrian scale street lighting, high visibility crosswalk markings, Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs), ADA upgrades, and new signage; and
- Milepost 22.83, installation of new pedestrian scale street lighting, high visibility crosswalk markings, RRFBs, upgrades to existing advance flashing beacon, ADA upgrades, and new signage; and
- Milepost 22.62, installation of new pedestrian scale street lighting, high visibility crosswalk markings, RRFBs, ADA upgrades, and new signage; and

**WHEREAS**, on July 19, 2023, NJDOT presented concept plans to the Borough of Stockton to solicit feedback; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Council support the design concepts presented to the Borough of Stockton and support NJDOT's efforts to make pedestrian safety improvements within the Borough of Stockton.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Mayor and City Council of Borough of Stockton do hereby support NJDOT's Midblock Crosswalk Improvements, Central limited scope concept development study design concepts for pedestrian safety improvements at existing mid-block crosswalks within the Borough of Stockton included in the resolution.

- **Resolution 23-76:** 2023 Tax Reductions Granted by the Hunterdon County Board of Taxation

Councilperson Hunt made a motion, seconded by Councilperson Kozuhowski to approve Resolution 2023-76.

**Roll Call: Aye: Folz, Brown, Hunt, Mann, Kozuhowski**

**Nay: None**

**Abstain: None**

**Motion Carried**

**WHEREAS**, the Tax Collector of the Borough of Stockton has determined that action is required as a result of a 2023 tax reduction granted by the Hunterdon County Board of Taxation; and

**WHEREAS**, the Tax Collector has certified to the foregoing as well as to the amount of the tax cancellations, which are set forth along with the name and address of the taxpayer.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Borough Council of the Borough of Stockton that the required tax cancellations be made:

**2023 Tax Reductions Granted by the Hunterdon County Board of Taxation**

<u>Block</u>	<u>Lot</u>	<u>Owner &amp; Location</u>	<u>Tax Cancellation</u>
		Load Master #1 LLC 12 Raspberry Trail Warren, NJ 07059	

- **Resolution 23-77:** Appointment of Water / Sewer Assistant

Council President Mann made a motion, seconded by Councilperson Brown to approve Resolution 2023-77.

**Roll Call: Aye: Folz, Brown, Hunt, Mann, Kozuhowski**

**Nay: None**

**Abstain: None**

**Motion Carried**

**WHEREAS**, the Borough Council of the Borough of Stockton, Hunterdon County, New Jersey acknowledges a need for Water and Sewer Assistant.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Stockton Borough Council that the salary for the position of the Water and Sewer Assistant is established as follows:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>	<u>Salary</u>
Brian Hewitt	June 20, 2023	\$20 per hour

- **Resolution 23-78:** Authorizing Payment of Municipal Obligation

Councilperson Hunt made a motion, seconded by Councilperson Kozuhowski to approve Resolution 2023-78.

**Roll Call: Aye: Folz, Brown, Hunt, Mann, Kozuhowski**

**Nay: None**

**Abstain: None**

**Motion Carried**

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stockton find and declare that certain municipal obligations have come due and are now payable; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stockton further find and declare that said obligations have been itemized on the annexed schedules, which are hereby attached and deemed part of this Resolution.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stockton, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey does hereby authorize payment of said municipal obligations, in accordance with the recommendations of the Chief Financial Officer and the Treasurer in the amount of \$ \$172,964.89.

- **Resolution 23-79:** 2022 Borough Audit

Councilperson Hunt made a motion, seconded by Council President Mann to approve Resolution 2023-79.

**Roll Call: Aye: Folz, Brown, Hunt, Mann, Kozuhowski**

**Nay: None**

**Abstain: None**

**Motion Carried**

**WHEREAS**, N.J.S.A. 40A:5-4 requires the governing body of every local unit to have made an annual audit of its books, accounts and financial transactions; and

**WHEREAS**, the Annual Report of Audit for the year 2022 has been filed by a Registered Municipal Accountant with the Municipal Clerk as per the requirements of N.J.S. 40A-5-6, and a copy has been received by each member of the governing body; and

**WHEREAS**, the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey is authorized to prescribe reports pertaining to the local fiscal affairs, as per R.S. 52:27BB-34; and

**WHEREAS**, the Local Finance Board has promulgated a regulation requiring that the governing body of each municipality shall by resolution certify to the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey that all members of the governing body have reviewed, as a minimum, the sections of the annual audit entitled:

General Comments  
Recommendations

and;

**WHEREAS**, the members of the Stockton Borough have personally reviewed as a minimum the Annual Report of Audit, and specifically the sections of the Annual Audit entitled:

General Comments  
Recommendations

as evidenced by the group affidavit form of the Borough Council; and

**WHEREAS**, such resolution of certification shall be adopted by the Borough Council no later than forty-five days after the receipt of the annual audit, as per the regulations of the Local Finance Board; and

**WHEREAS**, all members of the Borough Council have received and familiarized themselves with, at least, the minimum requirements of the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey as stated aforesaid and have subscribed to the affidavit as provided by the Local Finance Board; and

**WHEREAS**, failure to comply with the promulgation of the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey may subject the members of the Borough Council to the penalty provisions of R.S. 52:27BB-52 to wit:

R.S. 52:27BB-52 - "A local officer or member of a local governing body who, after a date fixed for compliance, fails or refuses to obey an order of the Director of Local Government Services, under the provisions of this Article, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, may be fined not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) or imprisoned for not more than one year, or both, and in addition shall forfeit his office."

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Borough Council of the Borough of Stockton, County of Hunterdon and State of New Jersey hereby states that it has complied with the promulgation of the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey dated July 30, 1968, and does hereby submit a certified copy of this resolution and the required affidavit to said Board to show evidence of said compliance.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

a. Discussion / Update on Stormwater Management

Tier A- All municipalities have been reassigned to Tier A and are being required by the NJ Department of Environment Protection to adopt a series of Ordinances by the end of the year to be eligible for additional stormwater grant money. Councilperson Kozuhowski noted that penalties should be minimal as the Borough is not looking to penalize residents on something being forced upon the Borough. The Borough will need to determine who will be responsible for the enforcement of the Ordinances. They have received sample Ordinances approved by Alexandria Township who will have either the State Police or the Zoning Officer responsible for their enforcement. The eight ordinances that need to be adopted by the end of 2023 are:

1. Pet waste
2. Animal feeding
3. Storage of Garbage
4. Tree Removal (Removal approved by Municipal Official) Will have to replace trees 1-5 endorsed or forbidden trees
5. Litter
6. De-Icing salt storage
7. Illicit hook up
8. Private storm drain retrofitting

Met with the Borough Engineer and looked at drainage issues on Glenwood Lane. There will be no action on Glenwood Lane at this time due to cost and lack of effective options and a lack of evidence of public responsibility.

Additional requirements that the Borough will need to comply with pertaining to the new stormwater regulations are to clean out the grates on Bridge Street four times a year and map out all the detention basins throughout the Borough.

The Delaware Township Stormwater Committee has applied for a NRCS (USDA) grant to be reimbursed 75% or more of the costs for the Route 523 pathway which is a shared impact pertaining to stormwater management between Delaware Township and Stockton Borough. There was a meeting last night with the Delaware Township Stormwater Committee and Stockton Borough asked for a letter of support to request funding along with sharing strategies and actions. The Hunterdon County Administration seems supportive of the project as well.

The NJ Water Supply Authority has begun canal bank repairs, which should take three to six months to complete.

b. Discussion / Update on NJDOT

Borough Officials met with members of the NJ Department of Transportation:

- Canal bridge project on Bridge Street: At the request of the Stockton Borough Council, the NJ DOT has agreed fix sidewalks and parapets, which were not originally scheduled for repair.
- Mid-Block Crosswalks & Route 29 Paving-NJ DOT appreciated feedback from the Borough.
- Submitted maintenance request for cutting back brush, cleaning swales, dredging, and repaint crosswalks.
- Shared traffic request petition to lower the speed limit, additionally requested improved signage, immediate action with traffic safety for Route 29 & Route 523.
- Discussed a Betterment Request to get DOT to assist in financing Borough owned waterlines under Rt. 29.

c. Discussion / Update on Garbage Company Bids

Need to go out to bid and determine how many times garbage and recycling should be picked up, size of containers, etc. Councilperson Hunt noted that the Borough should seek the input of the residents.



d. Discussion / Update on Worman Road

Engineer indicated that work will start in the fall, but major construction won't start until the Spring of 2024.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

a. Discussion / Approval of Bike MS: Country Challenge on 9/9/2023

The Borough received a letter from the National Multiple Sclerosis Society of New Jersey regarding their annual charity bicycling event-Bike MS: Country Challenge to pass through Stockton Borough on Saturday, September 9<sup>th</sup> with approximately 100 bicyclists passing through between 10 AM and 1 PM. The letter advises of the route being taken and along what roads. The event does not require road closures but wanting to know if any forms need to be filled out to ensure riders have safe passage through the Borough. Mayor Lipsen will send a letter to the organizers to advise them that there is nothing needed by Stockton Borough and that the State Police will be notified of the event.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

g. Letter from Constance Bassett regarding the Stockton School

Borough Council was provided with a letter from Constance Bassett regarding her support of the Borough to purchase Stockton School that was read during the public comment portion of Ordinance 23-04 on the agenda tonight.

**MAYOR'S REPORT, BOROUGH COUNCIL COMMENTS, & COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Council Person Mann-Dance for the Cure for Breast Cancer will be on Sunday, October 8<sup>th</sup> from 1 PM-3PM. Will meet at Canal Music Studios on Bridge Street. Wear Pink! You can donate and decorate your homes. There will be entertainment provided by the Rivertown Vintage Jazz Band at 9 Bridge Street. More information will be on Facebook.

Councilperson Hunt- No report

Mayor Lipsen-Infrastructure: Any wires seen down, please reach out to Council so the issue can be addressed. Met with the Borough's JCP&L Representative who is great! She has been very helpful. She spoke about financial assistance with light bulbs on Bridge Street. Acknowledged better communication is needed and discussed details about the 24-hour power outage along with the process on restoration of the power.

**OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA:**

Bertland-As to the required Tree Ordinance from the NJDEP, look into controls about diseased trees on someone's property. Asked about stormwater management on the tributary towards Prallsville was looked into. Mayor Lipsen advised that yes the area toward Prallsville Mills is part of the NRCS letter, and that they also asked about the Wickecheoke Creek and Brookville Hollow, but the NRCS said that those areas were too large for consideration and that the Route 523 area affected most people.

Fahey-Concerned about the tree ordinance that NJ DEP is going to require the Borough to adopt and what he will be obligated to adhere to once the ordinance is adopted.

Slack-Asked how much the Borough will spend on the work for Worman Road? Mayor Lipsen noted that 90% percent of the work was paid for by FEMA.

Daley-Concerned about the towpath work. There are a lot of trucks carrying equipment, dump trucks with stone and is concerned about the street getting ruined by the heavy trucks on it for the next six to nine months. Can the road sustain the traffic and the weight?

As for the garbage bid-it's nice to go out to bid once in a while. Can the Borough take into consideration accounts set up for bulk pick-ups and residents able to pay the vendor by credit card. Another concern she addressed was that she has gone to Borough Hall, and no one is there and is the Building Department in Delaware Township because no one is returning her phone calls? Mayor Lipsen advised Ms. Daley the Borough is going through some personnel issues and if she has concerns or questions, she can always reach out to the Mayor or members of Council anytime. As to Ms. Daley's concerns about the towpath work, Mayor Lipsen encourages her to take photos of any damage she may see, and he will ensure the company who is doing the work out there will fix any damage that is done. Mayor Lipsen has the email contacts of the company representatives.

Slack-Asked where Councilperson Hendricks has been. Mayor Lipsen advised Ms. Slack that Councilperson Hendricks will be back.

Councilperson Kozuhowski thanked Mayor Lipsen for all the undying work he has done for the Borough. Mayor Lipsen thanked Council for helping him as well and thanked Special Deputy Clerk Bobrowski for assisting Stockton Borough the last two meetings which have probably been some of the longest meetings in the history of Stockton Borough, but they are very important meetings for the Borough.

**NEXT MEETING** – Monday, September 18, 2023, 7:00 pm Regular Meeting at Borough Hall, 2 S Main Street

Councilperson Hunt made a motion, seconded by Councilperson Folz to adjourn **(10:03 PM)**.

**Roll Call: Aye: Folz, Hunt, Brown, Mann, Kozuhowski**

**Nay: None**

**Abstain: None**

**Motion Carried**

Meeting Adjourned at 10:03 PM.

**Respectfully Submitted:**

**Michele Bobrowski, MMC/RMC**