



**STOCKTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Date: February 12, 2024 – 7:00 P.M.
Stockton Fire House**

Mayor Aaron Lipsen., called the regular meeting of the Stockton Borough Council to order on February 12, 2024, at 7:00 P.M. Mayor Lipsen announced that this meeting is called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Notice of this meeting was faxed to the Hunterdon County Democrat and the Trenton Times, was posted on the Borough Website, posted on the door at the Municipal Building and filed with the Borough Clerk.

ROLL CALL

Present: William Brown ,Matthew Fisher, Peter Folz, Thomas Hunt, Ken Kozuhowski, Council President Michael Mann, Mayor Aaron Lipsen, Borough Attorney Lisa Maddox and Borough Clerk, Laurie A. Courter

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Lipsen led those in attendance in the pledge to the nation’s flag and afterwards a moment of silence for Jean Anne Lesniewski, community volunteer with the Stockton Playground and was a kind soul and friend of the community.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT – PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mayor Lipsen opened the floor to public comment.

Hearing no members of the public speak up, Mayor Lipsen closed the floor to public comment.

ORDINANCES-1st Reading

Public hearing/ adoption on Ordinance 2024-01 will be held on March 18, 2024

Motion made by Mann and seconded by Hunt to approve on first reading Ordinance 2024-01.

Roll call: Brown, Fisher, Folz, Hunt, Kozuhowski, and Mann.

Ayes:

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

**BOROUGH OF STOCKTON
ORDINANCE NO. 2024-01**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF STOCKTON IN
HUNTERDON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY, AUTHORIZING AS A
GENERAL IMPROVEMENT UPGRADES TO THE WATER
UTILITY AND APPROPRIATING \$53,590.32 THEREFOR FROM
AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN GRANT FUNDS**

BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stockton in Hunterdon County, New Jersey as follows:

Section 1. The Borough of Stockton in Hunterdon County (“Borough”) is hereby authorized to undertake work in furtherance of upgrades to the Borough’s water utility, and specifically, the procurement of goods and services necessary to complete repairs to and/or replacement of water utility equipment (collectively, the “Work”) in an amount not to exceed \$53,590.32.

Section 2. The Work authorized by Section 1 of this ordinance shall be undertaken as a general improvement, the entire cost of which shall be contributed and borne by the Borough as a general expense, and no part of said cost shall be specially assessed against any property. The total cost of said Work shall not exceed \$53,590.32 unless this ordinance is amended.

Section 3. It is hereby determined and stated that the undertaking of the Work (hereinafter “Purpose”) is not a current expense of the Borough; and that the total estimated cost of said Purpose shall not exceed \$53,590.32.

Section 4. The sum of \$53,590.32 is appropriated for said Purpose from American Rescue Plan funds received by the Borough and now available therefor under a budget or budgets of the Borough previously adopted.

Section 5. The capital budget is hereby amended to conform with the provisions of this ordinance to the extent of an inconsistency therewith and the resolutions promulgated by the

Local Finance Board showing full detail of the amended capital budget and capital program as approved by the Director, Division of Local Government Services as on file with the Borough Clerk and is available for public inspection.

Section 6. This ordinance shall take upon adoption and publication as provided by law.

RESOLUTIONS

Motion made by Kozuhowski and seconded by Hunt to approve Resolution 24-32.

Roll call: Brown, Fisher, Folz, Hunt, Kozuhowski, and Mann.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

Stockton Borough Council Resolution #24-32 Authorizing Payment of Municipal Obligations

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 \$401,604.19

Motion made by Kozuhowski and seconded by Hunt to approve Resolution 24-33.

Discussion: Kozuhowski asked why the name change is necessary. Lipsen explained that it is just a title change.

Roll call: Brown, Fisher, Folz, Hunt, Kozuhowski, and Mann.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

Stockton Borough Council Resolution #24-33 Regarding Stockton School Advisory Committee

WHEREAS, the Borough of Stockton has recently taken ownership of the historic Stockton School; and

WHEREAS, prior to taking ownership, the Borough determined that it would be in its interest to create an advisory committee for purposes of providing advice and consultation to the Borough Council for the School's future use, including its maintenance needs and necessary rehabilitation efforts; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the "Stockton School Advisory Committee" shall be to investigate, on Council's behalf, options for the future use of the School, which shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Mapping overarching maintenance and rehabilitation needs;
- Identifying grant opportunities and mapping application timelines;
- Soliciting ideas from the public for uses;
- Prioritizing components of maintenance and rehabilitation work;
- Creating procurement and contract forms for Council use; and
- Such other tasks as requested by Council in furtherance of use of the School; and

WHEREAS, the Stockton School Advisory Committee shall consist of the following members: up to two Council members plus the Mayor *ex officio* and up to ten Borough residents, and in no case more than four Planning Board members; and

WHEREAS, it is Council's hope that the Stockton School Advisory Committee complete its work expeditiously and continuously, and provide periodic updates to Council as to its findings, recommendations and advice.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Stockton, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey that there hereby be established (and continued) a Stockton School Advisory Committee, constituted pursuant to the provisions of this Resolution as set forth in the "Whereas" clauses.

Motion made by Mann and seconded by Hunt to approve Resolution 24-34.

Roll call: Brown, Fisher, Folz, Hunt, Kozuhowski, and Mann.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

**Stockton Borough Council
RESOLUTION 2024-34
Budget Transfer**

WHEREAS, various 2023 bills have been presented for payment this year, which bills represent obligations of the prior fiscal year, and were not covered at the time of transfers between the 2023 budget in the last two months of 2023; and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:4-59 provides that all unexpended balances carried forward after close of the fiscal year are available, until lapsed at the close of the succeeding year, to meet specific claims, commitments or contracts incurred during the preceding fiscal year, and all transfers to be made from unexpended balances to those which are expected to be insufficient during the first three months of the succeeding year:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stockton, County of Hunterdon, and State of New Jersey that the transfer in the amount of \$10,005.33 be made between the 2023 Budget Appropriation and that the 2023 budget transfer is retro-active to 12/31/2023 as follows:

Description	Category	From	To
General Government:			
Public Building & Grounds		\$10,005.33	
Clerk S/W			\$10,005.33

MINUTES

Motion made by Mann and seconded by Hunt to approve the following minutes:

Roll call: Brown, Fisher, Folz, Hunt, Kozuhowski, and Mann.

Ayes:

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

February 22, 2023

August 15, 2023

*September 18, 2023 (added)

December 18, 2023

January 3, 2024

January 17, 2024

OLD BUSINESS

Worman Road- Mayor Lipsen stated that Boswell engineering met with NJDEP to iron out remaining details and will be making some final tweaks and we hope to have DEP approval and to be notifying neighboring properties soon.

Parking-Mayor Lipsen reported that the Planning Board held discussions related to parking ordinances and our professionals will be gathering ordinances to share from other small towns in similar situations.

School -Mayor Lipsen reported that the Borough attorney will be reviewing the agreement with the Diocese of Metuchen to share the use of the parking lot next to the Stockton school.

School Committee- Mann reported that there are eight residents participating on the committee. Mann reported on current issues that will be dealt with reasonably. The goal is to utilize the school as soon as possible for council business. Discussion of having the current municipal building appraised ensued. Mayor Lipsen stated that the Council will have to decide soon on future use. It could be used as a Borough meeting space and lease out extra areas to non-profits or lease out the entire building. Mayor Lipsen stated that he and Mike Mann met with the architect who prepared the grant for the school district in the 2000s and asked if the Borough Council would like us to meet with another candidate. Kozuhowski replied that he would like to see a second opinion in regard to what are we buying and see from another architect's perspective. Having a second person come in is to be fiscally prudent for residents to see what the best value is for the dollar. Councilman Mann reported that he has second person to come in available on the 20th and they are scheduled to come in at 3:30 and asked if anyone else would like to be there Feb 19th at 3:30 pm.

Mayor Lipsen stated that the historic planning grant would need to be submitted by this April. This would engage an architect and engineers. Their report would help us prepare for improvement grants in April of 2025. These grants would require a 3-1 match. We will prepare a resolution at the next meeting. Mayor Lipsen explained that we will not be able to use the upstairs until we deal with water issues and add ADA access. This would require a lift, elevator, or a ramp over 100 ft long. We could use the downstairs for the offices or meeting room, but the space is small, and we would need to make significant ADA upgrades. Mayor Lipsen stated that we are considering an Open Space Grant for drainage mitigation & mold remediation. Mayor Lipsen asked if there were any objections to using the open space grant to stop moisture problem, none noted.

Meter Quote-Mayor Lipsen reported that they received a quote using our new discounted CoOp pricing for 20 residential meters and 5 commercial meters along remote meter reading equipment and software. This system allows automatic reading of meters and automatic populating of bills. Mayor Lipsen asked if the Council would like to move toward phasing in these new meters or would they like us to explore more traditional meters. We do have some pressing needs for new meters. Hunt stated he hasn't seen the proposal but asked if this is for all the meters in town. Mayor Lipsen responded that this is only for 20 residential meters and five meters for commercial properties. Lengthy discussions of cost and doing it in phases ensued.

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Lipsen announced the appointment of Kathy Brown as Alternate #2 to the Planning Board (2-year appointment).

MAYORS REPORT, BOROUGH COUNCIL COMMENTS & COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee Reports

Community Outreach Committee-Mann reported that they have a good group that has met a couple of times. They are planning an upcoming blood drive which is scheduled for June 29th from 7:30-am until 2pm. If anyone is interested in helping that would be great. The location is at the Delaware Township school.

Infrastructure Committee Brown-reported on the initial set of quotes for the shut off valve and piping for well #4 to the water tank. With ARP money we will need to work through technical requirements. Brown reported on the SAGE portal regarding application requirements and issuing bids. Brown commented that he thinks the borough can handle it with ARP money. Project is complicated which involves putting out notices to the residents to conserve water for about two to three days maximum. Brown commended that Bob Ent was guiding the process and stated that he is practical genius, and he knows so much about the system. He is very thoughtful and a deep thinker, just a joy to know him.

Lipsen asked the council if they wanted to do an a appreciation for the Ent family with a taxpayer donation or a private donation. It was the consensus to do a private donation.

Mayor Lipsen reported that he and Councilperson Brown shared an engineering priority list with the engineer and plan to meet soon. There is a water leak on Risler which should be repaired this Thursday.

Mayor Lipsen spoke with Go Hunterdon and will be preparing an email letter to NJDOT to allow for the Borough to conduct its own speed study on Rt. 29 to target speed enforcement and look to improve driver and pedestrian safety.

Public Safety Committee -Kozuhowski reported on his discussions he had with the Chief of Police with Delaware Township to get additional patrols for speeding. For targeted enforcement he asks the public to contact him through his email. Give a four-hour block when the highest rate of

violating speeders is. Once he receives information, he will present that to the Chief. Kozuhowski also reported that he will make a drive to the Kingwood State Police barracks to speak with them and hopefully have both departments patrolling, State and Delaware Township.

Mayors Report- Mayor Lipsen reported that they will be interviewing for an OEM Coordinator soon. A resolution for the next meeting will be added regarding applying for a grant to help with the merger of the two fire companies. Mayor Lipsen stated his apologies for the mailer delay. To be cost effective, Lipsen stated that we are awaiting more information to be added to it. The recycling schedule has been posted on the website. Mayor Lipsen thanked T&T Tree Service for removing Christmas trees from the Firehouse. Mayor Lipsen also stated that they are looking for a Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic Delegate. The borough will soon be hiring a Deputy Clerk & Recycling Coordinator. Mayor Lipsen stated that he has been contacted by a historic researcher from the University of Kitakyushu, Japan related to a poet, named Kenneth Fearing who stayed with friends in Stockton in the 1930s. He was associated with Egil and Nadya Olyanova, Kenneth Doolittle, and Alice Neel. Mayor Lipsen reported that the Planning Board has a new Chair, John Bonanni, and Vice Chair Kate Meltzer. Bridge Street light bulb replacement and roadside clearing projects have been approved and will be completed soon.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Mayor Lipsen opened the floor to public comment.

Nina Aasman, 6 Church Street-inquired about meters and the maintenance cost of smart meters.

Mike Odenwald ,19 Risler-commented that speeding is an issue and its continuous and added that he is open to do anything he can to help soften the speeds. Heard a lot of ways regarding the town going for grant which can be very laborious and is concerned to hear open space money would be used for the mold at the school. Mr. Odenwald stated that he is looking closely for zoning within town and discussed the zoning for the school and what is allowed, which includes a medical clinic. and looking for a tenant and a medical tenant would be a rational approach for the school. Mr. Odenwald discussed options of the current municipal building on how it is zoned and having it appraised based on its current designation of zoning.

Michele Purcell - 7 Bridge Street, discussed the speeding issues on Risler and Bridge Streets, and asked if there are signs that would let the speeder aware of how fast they are going. Mayor Lipsen responded that Go Hunterdon has provided a sign like that, which was installed in front of school years ago. Lengthy discussions ensued regarding speeding and targeted speeders and what options there are.

Mike Odenwald-asked if Delaware Township would generate income from tickets. Mayor Lipsen responded yes and stated that it is an agreement in which they enforce but they get ticket revenue. Folz added that the police may want to look at the times from now until midnight on Bridge Street for speeding.

Hearing no other members of the public speak up, Mayor Lipsen closed the floor to public comment.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion by Mann seconded by Hunt to approve the following resolution to enter into executive session, all were in favor.

**RESOLUTION NO. 23 – 100
TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION**

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:
Attorney client privilege

The discussion is anticipated to take approximately 15 minutes. Action may be taken.

3. It is intended at this time that the above-stated subject matter will be made public when the matter has been resolved.
4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

A motion by Mann and seconded by Kozuhowski to exit the executive session was unanimously approved by voice vote.

The council was in Executive Session from 8:30 PM–845 PM.

ACTION ON ITEMS FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

No action is being taken.

NEXT MEETING

Monday March 18, 2024 at 7:00 PM Regular Meeting

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mann and seconded by Kozuhowski to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 PM.

Laurie A. Courter

Laurie A. Courter, Borough Clerk