



STOCKTON BOROUGH COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Date: December 15, 2025 7:00 P.M.

Held through Zoom

Mayor Aaron Lipsen called the regular meeting of the Stockton Borough Council to order on December 15, 2025, 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 transmitted 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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Lipsen led those in attendance in the pledge to the nation's flag.

ROLL CALL

Present: Councilperson Brown, Councilperson Fisher, Councilperson Folz (excused), Councilperson Hunt, Councilperson Meltzer, Council President Mann, Mayor Aaron Lipsen, Borough Attorney Lisa Maddox, and Borough Clerk Laurie A. Courter.

PROCLAMATION

Mayor Lipsen presented and read in full the following Proclamations:

PROCLAMATION NO. 2025-04

WHEREAS, Peter Folz, along with his family, joined the Stockton Borough community eight years ago and immediately demonstrated a strong interest in and commitment to its civic life and well-being; and

WHEREAS, Peter Folz was elected to the Stockton Borough Council in 2022 and has conscientiously represented the citizens of Stockton Borough since January of 2023; and

WHEREAS, Councilperson Folz has participated in community events and initiatives, contributing to the shared efforts that strengthen the Borough's community connection and civic pride; and

WHEREAS, Councilperson Folz has volunteered in support of the Borough's environmental well-being and has been a model for residents through his adoption of storm drains on Bridge Street, assisting in the protection of local infrastructure and stormwater management; and

WHEREAS, Councilperson Folz has demonstrated a deep appreciation for and dedication to preserving the history and character of Stockton Borough, recognizing the importance of the Borough's heritage to its identity and future; and

WHEREAS, Councilperson Folz has been a thoughtful and accessible presence for community members, consistently offering a willing ear to residents' concerns and perspectives and responsibly bringing those matters forward for Council consideration; and

WHEREAS, Councilperson Folz has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to public service through his engagement with Borough affairs and responsiveness to community needs; and

WHEREAS, on December 31, 2025, Councilperson Peter Folz will complete his elected public service tenure.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY PROCLAIMED, by Mayor Aaron Lipsen and the entire Borough Council of Stockton, that we express our sincere appreciation to Councilperson Peter Folz for his service and commitment to our community.

PROCLAIMED AND SIGNED this, the 15th day of December 2025.

PROCLAMATION NO. 2025-05

WHEREAS, Thomas M. Hunt served the citizens of the great state of New Jersey throughout a distinguished career as Deputy Attorney General and Assistant Division Director of the Office of Consumer Finance; and

WHEREAS, Thomas M. Hunt has lived in Stockton Borough for three decades and, together with his beloved wife, , raised their two children, in Stockton Borough; and

WHEREAS, Thomas M. Hunt and his family have a century of deep roots in New Jersey in public service, the practice of law, and the arts and architecture; and

WHEREAS, Thomas M. Hunt has volunteered countless hours establishing hiking trails in the Green Acres property, coining the name “Vulture Park,” and consistently improving and promoting public access to the Borough’s prized natural areas; and

WHEREAS, Thomas M. Hunt has been a longtime volunteer and officer of the Delaware River Mill Society at Stockton and currently serves as its president; and

WHEREAS, Thomas M. Hunt was appointed to the Stockton Borough Planning Board in 2022; and

WHEREAS, Thomas M. Hunt was elected to the Stockton Borough Council in 2022 and has conscientiously represented the citizens of Stockton Borough since January of 2023, including service as Council President in 2024; and

WHEREAS, Councilperson Hunt has distinguished himself by participating in critical municipal training opportunities at the state and county levels and through the League of Municipalities; by playing a central role in Council operations through his service as a committee chair; and by assisting in the construction of pivotal governing documents, including ordinances and the Master Plan, which will have a lasting impact on the governance and well-being of the Borough and its residents; and

WHEREAS, Councilperson Hunt has demonstrated a lifelong commitment to public service on the state level and to his community; and

WHEREAS, on December 31, 2025, Councilperson Thomas M. Hunt will complete his elected public service tenure.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY PROCLAIMED, by Mayor Aaron Lipsen and the entire Borough Council of Stockton, that we express our deep gratitude to Councilperson and former Council President Thomas M. Hunt for his distinguished service to our community.

PROCLAIMED AND SIGNED this, the 15th day of December 2025.

Statements of thanks and appreciation were expressed by the Mayor and members of the governing body.

NEW BUSINESS**Setting the Date for Re-Organization**

Mayor Lipsen announced that the re-organization meeting will be held on January 5, 2026, on the Zoom platform at 7:00 PM. Hunt asked if he needed to be there to usher in the new members before they are sworn in. Mayor Lipsen responded that, no, he would be a member of the public at that point.

NJ Climate Super Fund Act:

Mayor Lipsen gave a brief history of the bill that is going through the State House. Signature of a petition has been requested. Mayor Lipsen stated he could do it as could council members. This would be financed by a superfund paid for by the businesses so that the municipalities would have financial support in building resilience to further damage and repairing from future damage. Mann stated that he read through it and finds it reasonable to sign on and endorse it. Brown also stated his support for this. Hunt expressed his support and added that efforts of this kind are around the country, not sure if any receive financial support, but worth making the statement, but also expressed doubts of any financial support. Meltzer agreed, and stated she thinks especially since we're such a small borough, and certainly will be getting hit with consequences of climate change that impacts the infrastructure.

Codification & County Economic Development Grant**Fully digitize the ordinances and post online.**

Mayor Lipsen stated that we've talked about this before, but he put this under new business because we're getting ready to move forward on it if the Council would like to do so. We currently have ordinances on paper, and the idea would be to fully digitize them and be able to publish them online to make it easier for members of the public and local businesses to access them and have a better understanding of them. They wouldn't have to file OPRA requests, and it would take a load off of our staff. Mayor Lipsen went on to state that last year, we got a new photocopy machine, so we were able to scan in all of our ordinances. We now have them all digitized, so this is just a matter of having them double-checked by a company and making some repairs to them, and then making them accessible. They would be accessible in many different ways for people with disabilities, and to comply with 2027 ADA requirements. It is not a cheap project, and there are two different types of legal code. We have regular borough ordinances and our land use ordinances. If the Council would like to proceed, we can apply for a County Economic Development Grant to get financial assistance. Mayor Lipsen asked for any objections, none were heard. Mayor Lipsen inquired about whether to just start with the land use, and then move on to borough ordinances, or try to do all at once. Mayor Lipsen stated that his personal opinion would be to double-check with the county to see how much funding we could get and added that it would likely not be enough to both, so maybe start with the land use, and then reapply for that grant next year to see if we could do the rest of them.

Lengthy discussion amongst governing body ensued on the process and prioritizing what types of ordinances will be considered first, and a conclusion was reached to support codification of land use ordinances first.

Letter of Support-Starving Artist Café

Mann gave a brief background of a request for a letter of support from the Council for the Starving Artist Café, which is applying for a grant. He stated that they bring in a lot of music groups and they are supportive of the town. They are looking to get a grant to provide music and equipment for the Starving Artist Café from a group called Music in Action, which supports different endeavors for music and provides financial support. Discussion ensued with Attorney Maddox and the governing body regarding the organization and what impact it could have on Stockton supporting the cause. Attorney Maddox stated that they should get a little bit more information about the grant and the organization. Discussion ensued, and there was consensus to draft a letter thanking the Starving Artist Café and its owner for all of their community support addressed to the owners of the Starving Artist Café. Mann asked Mr. Hunt for assistance in writing the letter, and they agreed to collaborate. Mayor Lipsen asked Attorney Maddox to review the letter once complete.

OEM Report

Mayor Lipsen gave the following OEM report:

The Coordinator and Deputy participated in the National Warning System Drill on November 9th. and the Deputy attended the NJ OEM Emergency Management Mapping and Information Tracking 2.0 training on November 18th. They both attended the Hunterdon County OEM meeting on November 18th, the same day. They're continuing to review the Borough's Emergency Operation Plan with each annex coordinator, and they're updating it as necessary. Mayor Lipsen thanked them for their hard work and volunteerism.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT – PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mayor Lipsen announced, before opening the floor to public comment, an addendum, and stated that any questions regarding the applications or licensing process related to cannabis shall be submitted in writing. Verbal interpretations of the RFA, or request for an application will not be given by the borough.

Mike Odenwald, stated the following:

Stated that he is going in reverse order and stated that he thinks Mr. Mann's comments are way off kilter, hypocritical, in fact. Stated that the Town Council, is up for grabs, and helping a business to stay in business. But not necessarily based on other decisions, helping new businesses get into business. Stated he is all for the Starving Artist succeeding but the criteria and the decision-making process of how good they are supportive versus the good of a detailed plan and an economic development, and a community impact, and inevitably, an application that went through, with a criteria that was misguided, and he thinks that's a problem. He stated that the Starving Artist, all well and good, they pay no taxes to the town, no hard money. Yet you support them. Mr. Odenwald went on to state that the next thing he wants to state is land use digitization, and the digitization of what we in Stockton and the mayor, you have admitted, is behind other all the other municipalities in Hunterdon County. He asked where the money will come from.

Mr. Odenwald asked how much it's going to cost, stating that he thinks that the most important thing right now is to undergo a very important benefit to the town and its generational focus beyond those on this call. Stated he thinks digitization is essential, it makes total sense. The 1986 zoning ordinance is something that I can recite to this extent. Yes, it needs to be digitized, and it's, you know, it's quite old. So, yes, I'm thinking that in order for people like Lisa Maddox, Tara St. Angelo, Monica Orlando,

John Bonanni, all these individuals that are responsible for zoning and planning, they need access to these documents. So, I do agree it needs to happen. The question is, what is the cost? My thoughts on the land use, and the writing, and the plans, and Joanne Slagle's coverage of this for two decades. My question is, why are we still hiring Ms. Slagle when, in fact, in 2024, it states specifically that nothing in the master plan and reexamination report that was done in 2014 were achieved. Ms. Slagle had laid out something for the town, nothing was done quoted by her and then we hire her again. So, my question is, why are we continuing to utilize a professional whose guidance is not being followed by the council. I find it extraordinary. As far as a local bus stop being held on the property that's currently leased by the Starving Artist. The Starving Artist has no control over that. It's actually the landowner. And the fact that we have to put it there is because we don't have a bus stop, we can't afford one. I guess the only other comment, then, is relative to what's transpired over the past two weeks since the cannabis ordinance and things that have occurred. I think it's important for everyone here in the Council to realize that there will be a thorough discovery on everything that has, been voted on. And thank you for listening so attentively. Everything that's been voted on, discussed, collaborated, debated, in executive session, in out of the executive session, it's all going to come out. Everything will come out, and it will come out in such a way that inevitably will indicate collusion, suppression, and just outright shenanigans. And Mr. Mayor, Mr. Council, Mr. Hunt, Mr. Brown, it's not going away. This will follow you.

Mayor Lipsen stated that one clarification he will make is that the bus stop, as far as he could tell, is within the borough's public right-of-way. He doesn't believe that it is owned by any private landowner. Mayor Lipsen thanked him for his support in the digitization efforts and added that they have tried to do this as efficiently and as cost-effectively as possible to the borough. Mayor Lipsen also thanked Ms. Slagle, for continuing to help move the borough forward, and stated that he thinks that our review process of cannabis was very well done, perfectly legally and otherwise.

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

RESOLUTIONS

Motion made by Brown and seconded by Hunt to approve Resolution 2025-89

Roll call: Brown, Fisher, Hunt, Mann and Meltzer.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

Stockton Borough Council

Resolution 2025-89

AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF INTERLOCAL (SHARED) SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH THE COUNTY OF HUNTERDON FOR THE PROVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 40A:65-1 et seq.

WHEREAS, the "Uniform Shared Services and Consolidation Act," N.J.S.A. 40A:65-1 through 40A:65-35 (the "Act"), authorizes local units of this State to enter into contracts with each other for the joint provision within their several jurisdictions of any service which any party to the agreement is empowered to render within its own jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Stockton and County of Hunterdon have previously executed a Shared Services Agreement for the provision of public health activities and services to Stockton; and

WHEREAS, at this time the parties wish to execute an Interlocal Services Agreement to furnish public health activities and services to Stockton, for a three year term, from December 1, 2025 until November 30, 2028, for consideration as set forth in the Interlocal Services Agreement; and

WHEREAS, the Chief Financial Officer has certified that sufficient funds are available for these purposes.

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

1. The Interlocal Services Agreement between the Borough of Stockton and County of Hunterdon for the provision of public health activities and services to Stockton pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:65-1 et seq. is hereby approved and authorized for a three year term, from December 1, 2025 until November 30, 2028, consistent with the foregoing "Whereas" clauses.
2. All prior actions taken by the parties from December 1, 2025 to the effective date of the Interlocal Services Agreement and in furtherance of the public health activities and services thereunder are hereby ratified and approved.
3. The Interlocal Services Agreement, resolution, and other pertinent documents shall remain on file in the office of the Municipal Clerk.

Motion made by Hunt and seconded by Mann to approve Resolution 2025-90

Roll call: Brown, Fisher, Hunt, Mann and Meltzer.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

RESOLUTION 2025-90

REQUESTING THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO MODIFY THE EXISTING SPEED LIMITS ALONG ROUTE NJ 29 (SOUTH MAIN STREET) IN THE BOROUGH OF STOCKTON AND SUPPORTING THE MODIFICATION OF SAID SPEED LIMITS

WHEREAS, the Borough of Stockton recently requested that the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) investigate the modification of the speed limits along Route NJ 29 (South Main Street) in the Borough; and

WHEREAS, NJDOT's Division of Traffic Engineering completed its investigation of the modification of the speed limits as requested, and by letter dated December 11, 2025, notified the Borough that its findings support the Borough's request to modify the existing speed limits.

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

1. The Borough hereby requests that the NJDOT issue a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) pursuant to N.J.S.A. 39:4-8.3, which governs traffic regulations on state highways under the Commissioner of Transportation's jurisdiction, to modify the speed limits along Route NJ 29 (South Main Street) in the Borough, as follows:

In the Borough of Stockton:

For both directions of traffic:

- (A) **Zone 1: 25 MPH between the southernmost Delaware Township-Stockton Borough corporate line (approx. MP 21.72) and northernmost Stockton Borough-Delaware Township corporate line (CR-519 approx. MP 23.03), except for 15 MPH when passing through the Stockton Elementary School Zone when "15 mph when flashing" signs are operating during recess or while children are going to or leaving school during opening or closing hours (approximate mileposts 22.07 to 22.48); thence**

Repealer Clause:

The Borough of Stockton concurs that any regulations in conflict with or inconsistent with the provisions of this Resolution be rescinded upon the approval of the Traffic Regulation Order.

2. A certified copy of this Resolution, bearing the raised seal of the Borough of Stockton, shall be submitted to:

Jaimie M. Oplinger
Director of Traffic Engineering
New Jersey Department of Transportation
1035 Parkway Avenue
P.O. Box 600
Trenton NJ 08625

Motion made by Hunt and seconded by Brown to approve Resolution 2025-91

Roll call: Brown, Fisher(recused) Hunt, Mann and Meltzer.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

RESOLUTION 2025-91

AUTHORIZING ISSUANCE OF REFUNDS TO LOCAL FLOWER, LLC AND HAPPY TREE FARMACY, LLC FOR ANNUAL CANNABIS LICENSE FEES

WHEREAS, by Resolution 2025-88, the Council denied the issuance of letters of support to Local Flower, LLC and Happy Tree Farmacy, LLC, the two applicants who submitted applications for cannabis retail business licenses; and

WHEREAS, as required by the Borough's Request for Applications, both applicants submitted the annual license fee in the amount of \$10,000 each, which amount is to be refunded to applicants that are not issued a license.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stockton, Hunterdon County, New Jersey, that, in accordance with the "Whereas" clauses, the following amounts shall be paid to the following persons:

- | | | |
|----|--|----------|
| 1. | Local Flower, LLC
P.O. Box 171
Stockton, NJ 08559 | \$10,000 |
| 2. | Happy Tree Farmacy, LLC
77 Main Street
South Bound Brook, NJ 08880 | \$10,000 |

Mayor Lipsen turned the meeting over to Ms. Slagle for input for Resolution 2025-92. Joanna Slagle went into detail on the history and gave the summary of the settlement agreement. Mayor Lipsen thanked Ms. Slagle and Ms. Maddox and Brown on this matter. Brown also recognized Slagle and how it is a privilege for Stockton to have an experienced, expert planner and stated that it is a pleasure to see her work. Brown also thanked Ms. Maddox and her firm for the support they provided.

Motion made by Brown and seconded by Hunt to approve Resolution 2025-92

Roll call: Brown, Folz, Hunt, Mann and Meltzer.

Ayes:5

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

RESOLUTION 2025-92

AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT WITH FAIR SHARE HOUSING CENTER

WHEREAS, on March 20, 2024, Governor Murphy signed P.L. 2024, c.2 into law, establishing a new framework for determining and enforcing municipalities' affordable housing obligations under the New Jersey Supreme Court's Mount Laurel doctrine and the New Jersey Fair Housing Act ("FHA"), N.J.S.A. 52:27D-301, *et seq.*; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Administrative Directive #14-24 issued by the Administrative Office of the Courts on December 13, 2024, "[a] municipality seeking a certification of compliance with the [FHA] shall file an action in the form of a declaratory judgment complaint and Civil Case Information Statement (Civil CIS) in the county in which the municipality is located"; and

WHEREAS, consistent with applicable law, the Borough of Stockton (the "Borough") filed a Complaint for Declaratory Judgment ("DJ Action"), captioned *In the Matter of the Borough of Stockton, Hunterdon County*, Docket No. HNT-L-58-25 on January 24, 2025, identifying its present and prospective fair share obligation for the Fourth Round and committing to adopting and submitting a Fourth Round Housing Element and Fair Share Plan ("HEFSP") as required by the FHA; and

WHEREAS, on March 27, 2025, the Honorable William G. Mennen, J.S.C., issued an Order confirming the Borough's "Present Need" obligation of zero (0) affordable housing units and the Borough's "Prospective Need" obligation of twenty (20) affordable housing units, and authorizing the Borough to proceed with preparation and adoption of a Fourth Round HEFSP by June 30, 2025; and

WHEREAS, on June 3, 2025, the Stockton Borough Planning Board ("Planning Board") adopted a HEFSP by way of Resolution, which was endorsed by the Borough of Stockton Council ("Council") on June 19, 2025 by way of Resolution No. 2025-51; and

WHEREAS, the Borough filed its HEFSP with the Superior Court on June 5, 2025; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Administrative Directive #14-24, "Interested parties may file a challenge to the municipality's housing element and fair share plan by August 31, 2025"; and

WHEREAS, on or about August 31, 2025, Fair Share Housing Center ("FSHC") filed a challenge to the Borough's HEFSP pursuant to the standards set forth in N.J.S.A. 52:27D-304.1(f)(2)(b); and

WHEREAS, there were no other challenges to the Borough's HEFSP; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Directive #14-24, on or about September 25, 2025, the DJ Action was referred to the Affordable Housing Dispute Resolution Program (the "Program") and James Kyle, PP, was appointed as the Special Adjudicator; and

WHEREAS, through the Program, the Borough and FSHC engaged in good faith negotiations in an effort to resolve the issues and claims raised by FSHC regarding the Borough's compliance with its Fourth Round affordable housing obligations; and

WHEREAS, settlement of the claims brought by FSHC provides certainty regarding the Borough's ability to satisfy its affordable housing obligations, and will avoid further litigation costs associated with further proceedings; and

WHEREAS, the terms of the settlement reached between the Borough and FSHC have been memorialized in a Mediation Agreement ("Mediation Agreement"), the terms of which the Borough and FSHC agree are fair and reasonable to low- and moderate-income households and satisfies the Borough's Fourth Round affordable housing obligations; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Administrative Directive #14-24, upon reaching a settlement agreement, the DJ Action will be referred to the Mount Laurel Judge, "for review and entry of [a] certification of Compliance]";

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

1. The foregoing "WHEREAS" clauses are hereby incorporated herein as if fully restated.
2. The Borough of Stockton is hereby authorized to enter into the Mediation Agreement in resolution of the DJ Action referenced above.
3. The Mayor and Clerk are hereby authorized and directed to sign the above-referenced Mediation Agreement on behalf of the Borough of Stockton, or such other substantially similar agreement, the terms and form of which shall have been reviewed and approved by the Municipal Attorney in consultation with the Borough Council.
4. The Municipal Attorney, Municipal Planner, and such other municipal officials as may be necessary or required, are hereby authorized and directed to prepare and execute any and all such other documents and undertake any and all such further acts as may be necessary or required to effectuate the above-referenced Mediation Agreement.
5. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

Motion made by Mann and seconded by Hunt to approve Resolution 2025-93

Roll call: Brown, Fisher, Hunt, Mann and Meltzer.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

RESOLUTION 2025-93

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:4-58 allows for the transference of funds between current year appropriations, should it be deemed necessary, in the last two months of the fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, due to several appropriations having insufficient balances to meet demands for the remainder of the fiscal year, it has been deemed necessary to make several transfers at this time.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 40A:4-58, that the Chief Financial Officer is hereby authorized to make the transfers listed below:

CURRENT				
From:	Amount		To:	Amount
ENGINEERING O/E	\$4,900.00		GOVERNING BODY O/E	1,400.00
			STREET LIGHTING	2,000.00
			AFFORDABLE HOUSING O/E	1,500.00
Total	4,900.00		TOTAL	4,900.00

Motion made by Hunt and seconded by Mann to approve Resolution 2025-94

Roll call: Brown, Fisher, Hunt, Mann and Meltzer.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

Borough Of Stockton

Resolution 2025-94

Authorizing Cancellation of Stale Checks

WHEREAS, the following checks have been outstanding and considered lost and outdated by the Stockton Borough Treasurer; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Governing Body of the Borough of Stockton to cancel the stale checks in a timely manner; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Borough Council of the Borough of Stockton, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey that the following checks are hereby s be cancelled and that the finance officer's records be adjusted to reflect the same.:

Water/Sewer Utility:	
#2567	\$41.19
#2956	\$200.00
#2916	\$3,159.00
#2953	\$163.05
#1876	\$170.00
#1564	\$1,400.00
#3087	\$71.25
#2117	\$573.80
#2271	\$104.27
#2314	\$65.90
#2271	\$104.27

Motion made by Hunt and seconded by Mann to approve Resolution 2025-95

Roll call: Brown, Fisher, Hunt, Mann and Meltzer.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

Borough Of Stockton

Resolution 2025-95

Authorizing Cancellation of Stale Checks

WHEREAS, the following checks have been outstanding and considered lost and outdated by the Delaware Township Treasurer; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Governing Body of the Borough of Stockton to cancel the stale checks in a timely manner; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Borough Council of the Borough of Stockton, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey that the following checks are hereby s be cancelled and that the finance officer's records be adjusted to reflect the same.:

CURRENT ACCOUNT:	
#4152	\$1,100.00
#4443	\$448.00
#4711	\$12.60
#4880	\$105.00
#4935	\$6.00

PAYMENT OF BILLS AND VOUCHERS

Motion made by Hunt and seconded by Mann to approve Resolution 2025-96

Roll call: Brown, Fisher, Hunt, Mann and Meltzer.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

**Stockton Borough Council
Resolution 2025-96
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 \$250,540.49

MAYORS REPORT, BOROUGH COUNCIL COMMENTS & COMMITTEE REPORTS

Infrastructure Committee

Mayor Lipsen gave the following report:

They have been working very, very hard on the Water Department and thinks they are putting in some good protocols, and we'll discuss more on the water department probably at the next meeting.

Also, they have made great strides with the new Tier-A MS4 state stormwater requirements, Stormwater mapping. At first, when this was started, this process back in 2023, they were behind other towns. Our previous engineer did not file the paperwork on time, but now the Borough has caught up and then some. This is a great benefit to the borough. We have had the mapping done free of charge through USDA grants. The processes is pretty much complete. The DEP has looked it over. They have just very, very minor revisions about moving the mapping of a pipe or two. We're ahead of most of the other municipalities in Hunterdon County on the mapping. We've replaced many storm drains and storm heads. We've been cleaning out storm drains, we have a whole new system in place,

so we'll have even more upgrades for 2026. So, I feel like it's almost unbelievable, the progress that we've made in just these, these couple of years.

Thank you to our new employees and contractors who did great work for us. I think it's great news. It was a big pressure to have that on our shoulders, and then it's moving along nicely.

Mayor Lipsen asked Brown if he had anything more to add to the Infrastructure Committee report. Brown stated that the work they are doing in the Water Department will yield great benefits. He thinks it's on the right track now, and when it's finalized, people will be pleased with it. Mayor Lipsen added that it has been a lot of work and a labor of love, and he is proud of us, especially Councilperson Brown on this matter.

Mayor Lipsen stated that the other issue he wanted to mention is they have talked about the Hunterdon County Energy Aggregate which will save residents money on energy costs. We have sent two different mailers out from the borough. The company also sent out a mailer, and just within the last 2 weeks, you should have received a letter in the mail from Concord Energy. You have been opted in, unless you opted out or were not eligible, so you should have received a letter from Concord Energy telling you that you are now a part of this new energy program that's going to give you cost savings. If you want to opt out, you still have the opportunity. It tells you that right in the letter, but if you stay in, you will get cost savings. You can also switch to a green energy option, which will still give you cost savings, but at a reduced level for supporting the environment. So, take a look at that letter and if you call that number you can opt out and rejoin JCP&L at a higher rate. If for some reason this company can't do better, they will cancel the program, and you'll go back into JCP&L. Bill Brown added that the only one note is any complaints about power outages and stuff like that all that stuff still goes through JCP&L.

Community Outreach

Mann stated that he doesn't have any report, per se, but thinks they should thank Bob and Kevin Liana, and Mike Nokar and Charlie McDaniel for getting up the holiday Christmas decorations in a timely fashion.

Grounds Committee-

Meltzer reported she had mentioned this in a previous meeting, but they have been awarded a grant for 2025. They applied and submitted for 2026. We found out within the past couple of months that we were awarded more funding, and so, our committee is continuing to work with Collier's to pull together an initial master plan that we can review. That'll be early in the first couple months of the year.

Cannabis Committee

Hunt thanked everyone involved in the thought process and the deliberative process. It was done very well, and they didn't know what the outcome would be. Stated that he thinks the borough is on solid ground if the council wishes to revive the process in the future.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Mayor Lipsen opened the floor to public comment.

Christine Slack thanked the council for its hard work on moving forward in changing the speed limit and making traffic safety on highway 29. Stated that this is not an easy task and is very happy the borough heard the voices and took it forward. Brown thanked Christine for doing a great job.

Mike Odenwald stated that number one, it's really important for, first of all, for Ms. Slack, Christine Slack, I think it's great. I didn't see any petition, I would have certainly signed it, and I think it's wonderful that there were other people participating, outside of this council, publicly, that that are willing to speak up for the benefit of the town, aside from this council I want to recommend that we expire Ms. Slagle's contract at its earliest opportunity, citing that over the past decade plus that Ms. Slagle has run our master plan reexamination that none of the suggestions that were documented in her, master plan or reexam were followed. None of the 2014 suggestions were met. How is that possible? So yes, I do recommend that, aside from Ms. Slagle's great intentions as a professional. I think that they have fallen short here in Stockton. So, I recommend that we look at that, and my question to the town is, when does that expire, and what is the process for looking for a new town planner? With respect to affordable housing, there's been new construction on Church Street, there's been a firehouse for sale. But none of this seems to have been considered as available land, and I'm curious as to how that can possibly happen with land coming up for sale, and the town not inquiring about how to fulfill its 73 projected needs. The highest in any county, in any town in Hunterdon County. With respect to the zoning officer, for the record, for those who don't know, I have been asked to cease and desist a club donation and organization here in the town. Ms. Maddox, I'm not sure why this came from you, but it should have come from the planning board, because it's a zoning matter issue. But nonetheless, I'm looking to issue an open burn permit, so that I can burn the trees and, eliminate any more concerns, in light of the zoning officer letter that says, cease and desist, and the letter stating that its not a commercial property and I can't sell anything. Despite me being a club asking for donations for trees. So, if the town wants to take me to municipal court, we'll see you there, and we'll talk about this. Mr. Odenwald went on to state that he thinks with respect to just the cannabis committee and everything that was done. This is far from over and stated that you need to understand, Mr. Hunt, Mr. Brown, Mayor Lipsen, Ms. Maddox, that the facts and Mr. Fisher. The facts that follow the storyboard. Over the past year are so incriminating to the people on this call, Specifically, Mr. Mann. That it's important for you to realize that this is far from over, and the fact that the town and this council is looking to spend as much time on the Starving Artist and the ability to issue a grant, or to help with a grant, versus taking in municipal tax dollars is, again, a clear example that the town was never really interested in issuing an application, and a resolution of support to someone.

Mayor Lipsen instructed Mr. Odenwald to address the chair and not an individual.

Odenwald stated to Mayor Lipsen that the council president has incriminated himself so much that this cannabis committee, along with the decisions that it's made, the people that it's hired, the fact that, five people in this town, all on this call, plus a consultant, have impacted generations here. Based on five people and no public participation, it's incredible. Thank you very much.

Mayor Lipsen thanked Ms. Slagle, for her great planning skills, and stated that they are very appreciative to have her working for the borough, and we hope to renew her contract next year. Mayor Lipsen added that it's not the role of the planner to pass ordinances, it's the role of the planner to assist the town in creating a plan and the wheels of government do move slowly. It's expensive and

time-consuming to get ordinances right, and we look forward to following some of her suggestions in the coming years. Mayor Lipsen stated that we do our best to serve the community.

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

NEXT MEETING

Mayor Lipsen announced the next meeting will be the reorganization meeting on Zoom on January 5, 2026, at 7:00 PM.

Mayor Lipsen made the following remarks.

Gave thanks to everyone for all the great work this year, all the hard work and all the efforts we put into this. It's a challenge, but a lot of the time, a rewarding challenge to work together. Mayor Lipsen addressed Mr. Hunt and stated it's been one of the great honors of his life to work with him these last three years on the Council and stated that he is looking forward to continuing their conversations, not on Zoom, but as friends and neighbors.

At this time Mayor Lipsen turned the chair and meeting over to Mr. Hunt.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business to come before council, Mr. Hunt called for a motion to adjourn.

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:32 PM.

Laurie A. Courter

Laurie A. Courter, Borough Clerk