

**MANCHESTER TOWNSHIP
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

November 27, 2023

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Manchester Township Council was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Roxy Conniff, Council President. The following statement was read by Teri Giercyk, Municipal Clerk:

STATEMENT

“Adequate notice of this meeting was provided in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, pursuant to P.L. 1975, Chapter 231. Said notice was advertised in the Asbury Park Press, Star Ledger and was posted in the lobby of the Municipal Building.”

FLAG SALUTE

ROLL CALL

The following roll call was taken by the Municipal Clerk.

Councilman Joseph Hankins	- present
Councilman James Vaccaro	- present
Councilman Craig Wallis	- present
Councilwoman Michele Zolezi	- present
Councilwoman Roxy Conniff	- present

The Municipal Clerk also noted for the record that also present were, Mayor Arace, Township Attorney Lauren Staiger, Business Administrator Carl Block, CMFO Diane Lapp, Auditor Andy Zabiega, DPW Director Al Yodakis, Auditor Andy Zabiega, Brian Quinn from Morgan Engineering, and Chief Dolan.

Presentation:

NJ Governor’s, We Value our Veterans Community Award. Roger Greiner of the Veterans Advisory Committee, presented to Mayor Arace. Mr. Greiner said normally he is present to receive an award, but tonight he is here to present an award to Mayor Robert Arace. The Military Community Affairs Committee honors municipalities who value and honor our military and veterans. It is a prestigious Governor’s award from NJ Governor Phillip Murphy. Each town is scored and to be eligible the minimum points are 145 based on 15 initiatives. Manchester scored 150 points.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Regular Meeting Minutes from November 13, 2023, were approved upon a motion made by Councilman Vaccaro, seconded by Councilman Hankins, and approved by the following roll call: Councilmembers Hankins, Vaccaro, Zolezi and Conniff; yea. Mr. Wallis abstained as he was absent.

SUBMISSION OF BILLS

#23-439 – Authorizing payment of bills from the Current Fund in the amount of \$1,082,093.45. Councilman Vaccaro stated he examined the bills with Councilman Hankins. Motion to approve was made by Councilman Vaccaro, seconded by Councilman Hankins, and were approved upon the following roll call: Councilmembers Hankins, Vaccaro, Wallis, Zolezi and Conniff; yea.

#23-440 – Authorizing payment of bills from the Utility Fund – ESA in the amount of \$469,313.25 was approved upon a motion made by Councilman Vaccaro, seconded by Councilman Hankins, and approved upon the following roll call: Councilmembers Hankins, Vaccaro, Wallis, Zolezi and Conniff; yea.

#23-441 – Authorizing payment of bills from the Utility Fund – WSA in the amount of \$416,083.75 was approved upon a motion made by Councilman Vaccaro, seconded by Councilman Hankins, and approved upon the following roll call: Councilmembers Hankins, Vaccaro, Wallis, Zolezi and Conniff; yea.

ORDINANCES – Second Reading, Public Hearing, and Final Action

#23-38 - AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MANCHESTER, COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AMENDING CHAPTER 326 OF THE TOWNSHIP CODE ENTITLED "RENT LEVELING"

Council President Conniff said since everyone is here for this ordinance, we will discuss first. Mayor Arace stated that he spoke with residents regarding safeguards and parameters. He wanted to mention that Pine Ridge South has given out incorrect information. First, stating a 3-1/2% rent increase before the Council approves this ordinance. Also, they are using the wrong CPI information. They are using the Metropolitan CPI region (Newark, Jersey City), but Manchester Township is in the Northeast CPI region (Ocean County) which uses much lower percentages. Lastly, they are applying the percent increases to an entire bill. Rent increase ordinance is for increase on rent portion only. They will have to apply increase to rent portion only, and then add tax back into the cost.

Councilwoman Conniff asked if any member of Council had any comments on this ordinance. Seeing no comments from Council, Councilwoman Conniff asked if there were any comments from the public.

Mark Russo -Winding Brook Way – He thanked the Mayor for all your help, but this is what we are dealing with now. Mayor explained to him the increase is only for the rent portion and the CPI region is incorrect. Lauren – we can't talk specifics, but the increase is on base rent or CPI, whichever is lower. Mark Russo – our services are going up. They sent out certified letters which cost \$2000.00 which are bogus. Can't you get on top of these guys? Mayor responded – we have a rent leveling board to look at your issues. Mark Russo – I would like to see 2% but thank you for your effort.

John – Toren Court – Inquired about our surcharges.
Mayor responded – our rent leveling board can now look to see if charges are legit.

Andrew Kerstein – Pine Ridge Blvd. – He asked for clarification on the revised ordinance. Increase base rent, calculating base rent, subtract taxes, then apply either the CPI for the region or 3.5% maximum. Then add taxes back in. Then the landlord must provide that to the rent leveling board.
Lauren – yes, that is correct.
Andrew – Thanks to the Council. He stated that everyone did a wonderful job and urged the ordinance approval.

Frank Everly- Pine Ridge @ Crestwood – Is 3.5% set in stone? Mayor explained procedures. Frank stated SS rate is 3.2% so 2% is probably too low, so 3% would be better. Mayor responded – this ordinance is a cap that protects residents. CPI is a flowing parameter. Frank asked when the case be settled.
Lauren – if passes tonight, it will be sent to judge and then signed off on.

Barbara Bielawn – Pine Ridge South – She asked if the verbiage would need to be corrected. Mayor responded – the region is Northeast region. They must use the correct region. Barbara – why are the taxes incorporated in the rent? Mayor – they are bundled but the increase is for the rent only, they must back out the taxes to calculate.

Vincent Gianotti – Pine Ridge South – He received a letter and must sign by the end of year. How do we proceed?
Lauren – I can't give legal advice but keep in contact with your community representative.

Wayne Wescot – Pine Ridge South- The percent increase is only on the rent, then they should add increase and then back in tax amount.
Lauren – yes, and it starts in January.

Bill O'Donnell – Beaver Avenue, Pine Ridge @ Crestwood – Superstorm Sandy destroyed my home and he moved to Pine Ridge in October of 2015. The average rent increase was 2% then it went to 5% last year, then

6-1/2% this year. He commended the Mayor and Council. He was at a campaign meeting, and this was raised as a major concern. You listened and acted. Thank you for all your work.

Terez Beret - She asked about the senior tax freeze and if they are eligible. Someone in the audience said there is a residency clause for a minimum of 5 years, but the Mayor said he would investigate.

Lori Greenberg representing Pine Ridge @ Crestwood. She thanked everyone and stated that her client will adhere to the ordinance.

With no more comments, Councilwoman Conniff asked for a motion to close public and approve. Councilman Vaccaro made a motion to approve, seconded by Councilman Wallis. Roll Call: Councilmembers Hankins, Vaccaro, Wallis, Zolezi, and Conniff; yea. (met with a round of applause from public)

A lot of residents left the meeting, a short break was taken.

#23-35 -AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MANCHESTER, COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, APPROVING THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR BLOCK 62, LOTS 30 AND 31.01

A presentation was given by attorney John Paul Doyle. He stated they have been working with the Renaissance Community and he knows the ordinance will not be adopted tonight due to pending comments from Pinelands Commission. He thanked everyone for their cooperation. He introduced Jeromie Lange, who stated he was raised in Manchester and his parents still reside in Holly Oaks. He showed slides and explained the area of the Stavola mine which is 224 acres total. The area borders Jackson and goes to Fremont Avenue. The area around the Stavola mine area has pine snakes and is working with the Pinelands and would preserve that area. The Pinelands recommended building on the wooded area, and they would realign Fremont Avenue, keeping the buildings away from the Renaissance. The building would be flex building with multi businesses, with four acres being donated to the Renaissance community.

John Paul Doyle – He thanked Frank Vento from the Renaissance. Stage 3 is still in site plan, and still yet to come.

Councilwoman Conniff asked if any member of Council had any comments on this ordinance. Seeing no comments from Council, Councilwoman Conniff asked if there were any comments from the public. Seeing no comments from the public, asked for a motion to close the public and carry ordinance pending Pinelands comment until the December 18th meeting. Councilman Hankins made a motion to carry, seconded by Councilman Vaccaro. Roll Call: Councilmembers Hankins, Vaccaro, Wallis, Zolezi, and Conniff; yea.

#23-42 - AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MANCHESTER, COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AUTHORIZING THE ACQUISITION OF BLOCK 50, LOT 1, FROM THE BOROUGH OF LAKEHURST IN ACCORDANCE WITH N.J.S.A. 40A:12-1 ET SEQ.

Councilwoman Conniff asked if any member of Council had any comments on this ordinance. Seeing no comments from Council, Councilwoman Conniff asked if there were any comments from the public. Seeing no comments from public, Councilman Vaccaro made a motion to approve, seconded by Councilman Hankins. Roll Call: Councilmembers Hankins, Vaccaro, Wallis, Zolezi, and Conniff; yea.

#23-43 -AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MANCHESTER, COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AMENDING AND SUPPLEMENTING CERTAIN SECTIONS OF CHAPTER 430 OF THE TOWNSHIP CODE, ENTITLED “WATER AND SEWER”

Al Yodakis – had a slideshow and gave a presentation with a rate study and recommendation for the water and sewer increase. The water and sewer are two separate systems. Eastern and western are their own entities. The

rates have not increased on the western side in 12 years, and the eastern side – 13 years. We really need to reinvest in our water and sewer systems. Costs are going up with PFOS/PFOA treatment and the aging infrastructure and keeping maintenance. We are pursuing water supply, pursuing interconnections, reinvesting to maintain existing facilities, apply for grants, funds through the joint base and raising rates. We have a 10-year capitol plan. We are looking at 95 million over the 10 years in ESA and 38-1/2 million over the 10 years in WSA. He has a slide showing the one-year capital projects: water and sewer rate, connection fees. Current rate comparison with adjacent municipalities. Estimate usage at 8100 gallons per quarter and cost comparison per consumption.

Someone questioned when will go into effect. January 1st but it's the second quarter billing period.

Hank Glen – Wycliffe Dr. – Mr. Glen inquired about his increase for his home.

Carl responded.

Hank -In Pine Lake Park – with our wells, and the building size being built now reduced, with all these septic tanks that they are putting in, does that affect our drinking water?

Al – good question. Septic tank impact is low to none, long term. PFOS and PFOA are more of a concern. The wells are deeper, and the septic tanks are not deep.

Lauren – She mentioned that building on reduced sized lots is reviewed on a case-by-case basis and approved by the appropriate boards.

Councilwoman Conniff asked if any member of Council had any comments on this ordinance. Seeing no comments from Council, Councilwoman Conniff asked if there were any other comments from the public. Seeing none, Councilman Vaccaro made a motion to approve, seconded by Councilman Hankins. Roll Call: Councilmembers Hankins, Vaccaro, Wallis, Zolezi, and Conniff; yea.

ORDINANCES – First Reading and Introduction

#23-44 – AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MANCHESTER, COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, REPEALING AND REPLACING VARIOUS SECTIONS OF THE TOWNSHIP CODE

Councilwoman Conniff asked if any member of Council had any comments on this ordinance. Seeing no comments from Council, Councilman Vaccaro made a motion to approve, seconded by Councilman Hankins. Roll Call: Councilmembers Hankins, Vaccaro, Wallis, Zolezi, and Conniff; yea.

#23-45 – AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MANCHESTER, COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AMENDING SALARY RANGES AND POSITIONS OF NON-BARGAINING UNIT EMPLOYEES

Councilwoman Conniff asked if any member of Council had any comments on this ordinance. Seeing no comments from Council, Councilman Vaccaro made a motion to approve, seconded by Councilman Hankins. Roll Call: Councilmembers Hankins, Vaccaro, Wallis, Zolezi, and Conniff; yea.

CONSENT AGENDA

The items listed below are considered to be routine by the Township of Manchester and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no formal discussion of these items. If discussion is desired, this item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and will be considered separately.

Councilwoman Conniff asked if any member of Council had any comments on any item on the consent agenda. Seeing no comments from Council, Councilwoman Conniff asked if there were any comments from the public on any items on the consent agenda.

Seeing no comments from the public, Councilwoman Conniff closed this portion of the meeting.

Resolutions #23-437, #23-442 - #23-452 were offered by one motion by Councilman Vaccaro, seconded by Councilman Hankins and approved by the following roll call: Councilmembers Hankins, Vaccaro, Wallis, Zolezi (abstained from #23-452) and Conniff, yea.

A. FINANCE

#23-442 - RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MANCHESTER, COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY AUTHORIZING THE REFUNDS REQUESTED BY THE TAX COLLECTOR

#23-443 - RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MANCHESTER, COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY AUTHORIZING THE TRANSFER OF TAX SALE PREMIUMS OVER FIVE YEARS OLD FROM THE TAX COLLECTOR REDEMPTION ACCOUNT TO THE GENERAL FUND AS REQUESTED BY THE TAX COLLECTOR

#23-444 - RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MANCHESTER, COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, PROVIDING FOR THE INSERTION OF SPECIAL ITEM OF REVENUE FOR LEAD GRANT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM GRANT

#23-445- RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MANCHESTER, COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, PROVIDING FOR THE INSERTION OF SPECIAL ITEM OF REVENUE FOR THE SUSTAINED ENFORCEMENT GRANT

#23-446 - RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MANCHESTER, COUNTY OF OCEAN, NEW JERSEY, PROVIDING FOR THE FINANCING OF A SPECIAL EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION BY THE ISSUANCE OF SPECIAL EMERGENCY NOTES OF THE TOWNSHIP

B. GRANTS

#23-447 - RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MANCHESTER, COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AUTHORIZING APPLICATION FOR NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS GRANT ENTITLED YR 2024 AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN FIREFIGHTER

C. BONDS/ESCROWS

#23-448 - RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MANCHESTER, COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, RELEASING ESCROWS POSTED BY CDS DRYWALL LLC. FOR VARIOUS PROJECTS

#23-449 - RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MANCHESTER, COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, RELEASING AN ESCROW POSTED BY JEFFREY JERMAN, FOR A PROJECT LOCATED AT BLOCK 1.15 LOT 16 (2130 FIRST AVENUE)

D. CONTRACTS/AGREEMENTS

#23-437 - RESOLUTION OF THE MANCHESTER TOWNSHIP, COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AUTHORIZING A SETTLEMENT OF LITIGATIONS

#23-450 – RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MANCHESTER, COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF AN SHARED SERVICE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TOWNSHIP OF MANCHESTER AND THE COUNTY OF OCEAN FOR FY 2023/2024 FOR “MOVE OVER” LAW ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM

#23-451 - RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MANCHESTER, COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF AN AGREEMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL

SERVICES BETWEEN THE TOWNSHIP OF MANCHESTER AND THE PHOENIX AUTOMATED PROPERTY RECORDING SYSTEM (PAPR) BY PRO PHOENIX INC.

#23-452 - RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MANCHESTER, COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF A TERMINATION AGREEMENT WITH PREMIER MEDIA LLC

REPORTS:

Councilman Hankins – He testified today at the Senate hearing for S281, townhouse fire safety act. Sen. Connors has a bill for volunteer assistant program which is a grant for local fire companies. Sen. Cruz Perez is working on S2407.

Councilman Vaccaro – Mr. Vaccaro stated that hope everyone enjoyed their Thanksgiving. On 11/6 he attended the planning board meeting. 11/14 – he attended the senior advisory meeting. Discussed was a need for future senior center in Manchester Township and grants. In January, a new chairperson will be elected. 11/16 – zoning board meeting. 11/21 – Councilwoman Conniff and he attend the bi-weekly, which you know prepares agenda for tonight's meeting. On Friday, 11/24 myself and Councilman Hankins and he reviewed the bills. Today, Councilman Hankins and he attended MCC meeting at Crestwood village 5. Jeffrey Moran, OC surrogate was the speaker. He encouraged the residents to shop locally. He also encouraged the Council to waive fees to start up new businesses. Mr. Vaccaro encouraged the Township to seek federal funding for a lifesaving dialysis program for transporting patients. It can be operated out of senior services. We need to market Manchester Township, the Gemstone of the Jersey Shore.

Councilman Wallis – Mr. Wallis thanked Roger Genier. Over the past two years, has always helped us out. He goes out of his way to help the Veterans and mobile unit.

Councilwoman Zolezi – Ms. Zolezi mimicked Councilman Wallis's sentiments. It was an honor to receive an award supporting the Veterans and I am proud to be a part of this community. Tree lighting is this Friday at 7 p.m. She thanked the police department and the Chief for No Shave November and all that they do. Safe holidays.

Council President Conniff – Mrs. Conniff stated that she hoped all had a good Thanksgiving. She wants to recognize senior services for delivering meals. Tree lighting is Friday at 7 p.m. and the 9th is Christmas in the Pines. Have a safe and happy holiday season.

Mayor Arace – No report.

Chief Dolan – He stated that this is the last week of No Shave November so everyone will be shaving soon.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Gail Apgar – Columbus Blvd. – She inquired about the building next to the Dollar General. Mrs. Conniff responded that she believes it will be a tobacco store. Thank you, people are worried about warehouses being built. The last presentation was good, and she asked if there are other locations for storage areas in the future. Mayor responded that he can't say much because of an executive session presentation, but we hear the residents' concerns.

Joe Markowski – Eleanor Rd. – He asked if the water and sewer presentation available to the public. Teri responded that she would email it to him tomorrow morning. At the last meeting, it was said that the Best Practices would be on the website but when I went to look, the last Best Practices was 2018. Carl – I will follow up on that. Mr. Markowski stated that the website is a history of the Township, but nothing has been updated since 1970 or so. He asked if that could be updated as well.

With no other comments, a motion to close public portion was made by Councilman Hankins, seconded by Councilman Vaccaro, and approved by the following roll call: Councilmembers Hankins, Vaccaro, Wallis, Zolezi, and Conniff; yea.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

#23-453 – RESOLUTION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MANCHESTER, COUNTY OF OCEAN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 2 OF THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT, CHAPTER 231, PUBLIC LAWS OF 1975

A motion was made by Councilman Hankins, seconded by Councilman Vaccaro to go into executive session, with the following roll call: Councilmembers Hankins, Vaccaro, Wallis, Zolezi and Conniff; yea.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to close executive session, reconvene to public session, and adjourn the meeting at 8:42 pm was made by Councilman Vaccaro, seconded by Councilman Wallis, and approved by the following roll call: Councilmembers Hankins, Vaccaro, Wallis, Zolezi, and Conniff; yea.

James A. Vaccaro, Sr.
Council Vice President

Teri Giercyk, RMC/CMC
Municipal Clerk

12/18/2023
Date Approved