

STRATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JUNE 11, 2024
6:30 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER: The Borough Deputy Clerk John Keenan called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

STATEMENT OF ADVERTISEMENT: The Deputy Borough Clerk read the following statement:
Notice of this meeting has been provided to the Courier Post and The Retrospect and is posted on the Borough Hall Bulletin Board stating the time and the place of the meeting.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mayor Hall led the Pledge and said an opening prayer.

ROLL CALL:

MAYOR LINDA HALL – PRESENT
COUNCIL PRESIDENT MICHAEL TOLOMEO – PRESENT
COUNCILMAN PATRICK GILLIGAN – PRESENT
COUNCILWOMAN TINA LOMANNO – PRESENT
COUNCILWOMAN DAWN MARTIN – PRESENT
COUNCILMAN STEPHEN GANDY – PRESENT
COUNCILMAN JIM KELLY – PRESENT
CHRISTOPHER NORMAN, BOROUGH SOLICITOR – PRESENT
RON MORELLO, CHIEF POLICE EXECUTIVE/OEM – PRESENT
JOHN D. KEENAN JR, BOROUGH ADMINISTRATOR/DEPUTY CLERK – PRESENT

PUBLIC PORTION FOR AGENDA ITEMS ONLY:

Councilman Gandy motioned to open the public portion on agenda items only. Councilman Kelly seconded the motion, which passed with all members present voting in favor in a voice vote.
John Gentless - 111 Union Ave. – inquired if the new Borough Clerk had their license. Mr. Keenan explained that is why the resolution names the appointee as acting clerk, since she does not have her license. Mr. Gentless inquired about the tax exemption for the self-storage, and Mr. Keenan explained it was a long-term tax exemption, and the floor was \$190,000, Mr. Gentless inquired about fire department bond funding, and Mr. Keenan explained there were funds remaining in 2022 and 2023 bonds for the 2024 items. Mr. Gentless inquired to the sewer rates, and Mr. Keenan explained the residential rate was increased by \$25, and the non-residential rate was \$28.

Councilwoman Martin motioned to close the public portion for agenda items. Councilman Tolomeo seconded the motion, which passed with all members present voting in favor in a voice vote.

REPORTS:

Councilman Gilligan presented the report for:

ORDINANCE & PROPERTY - Code Inspection Report for the month of May 2024.

Total number of properties inspected – 22

Total number of notices – 22

Total number of summonses – 5

Councilwoman Lomanno provided the April and May Finance Reports.

BOROUGH FINANCIAL REPORT – APRIL 2024

Balance as of 3-31-2024 – \$241,451.45

Total Receipts – \$1,502,385.21

Total Disbursements – \$1,480,523.35

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Balance as of 4-30-2024 – \$263,313.31
 Total in other Funds - \$2,872,087.06

BOROUGH FINANCIAL REPORT – MAY 2024

Balance as of 4-30-2024 – \$263,313.31
 Total Receipts – \$3,687,069.30
 Total Disbursements – \$2,650,289.87
 Balance as of 4-30-2024 – \$1,300,092.74
 Total in other Funds - \$2,685,037.47

Councilman Kelly presented the report for:

POLICE - The reports are as follows:

May 2024:

34 Adult arrests	0 Juvenile arrests,
0 Assaults to Police	4 Simple assaults Complaints,
3 Criminal Mischief Complaints	12 Harassment complaints,
674 Other investigations and complaints	1 Burglary
0 Robberies	11 thefts in the amount of \$33,156.00
\$7,725 in stolen property recovered	0 motor vehicle thefts,
6 D.W.I. arrests	11 Narcotics arrests,
553 Traffic summonses issued	21 Motor vehicle accidents,
11 injuries from accidents (1 bicyclist)	21 Alarm activations

With 90 Total Crime Reports Taken, and 739 Total Calls for Police Service

Councilman Tolomeo presented the Emergency Services reports:

Fire Department the report submitted is as follows:

The Stratford Fire Department responded to 43 Alarms 2 Drills in the month of May 2024.

	MONTH	YEAR TO DATE
Building Fires	3	20
Alarm Systems	14	35
Dwelling Fires	4	12
Investigations	6	21
Rescues & M.V.A.'s	7	30
Wires, Trees Down	1	14
Brush Fires	1	2
Car Fires	0	0
Assist Ambulance, Police, Public	2	29
Drills	2	12
Helicopter Standby	5	9

Stratford Ambulance: May 2024

Councilman Toloemo presented the report:

There were 95 calls for ambulance service, with a total for the year of 367.

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OEM Report for May 2024

Deputy Coordinator Tim Hall had one call out in assisting police in posting and mounting no parking signs and traffic cones for the JP2 Carnival. The Coordinator attended one county meeting and one Emergency Operations Planning Meeting during the month.

PUBLIC WORKS AND LIGHTING

Councilman Gandy gave the DPW report for May 2024:

Grass cut each week during the month of May, at the Swim Club, Ambulance Hall, railroad tracks, Whitman Park, Vets Park, Saratoga Park, Coolidge Park, Laureba Park, Bryant Avenue, Mancini Field, Borough Hall, Police and Fire Departments. The chipper was out each week during the month. Removed the NJ Transit Bus Shelter in front of the hospital on East Laurel Road, due to vandalism. Changed holiday banners. String trimmed the weeds at the Whitman Avenue walking trail. Weeded flower beds at the Borough Hall, Police, Fire, War Memorial and the clock point. 329.84 tons of trash were collected, and 36.26 tons of recycling. There were 13 calls for sewer backups.

Councilwoman Martin presented the report for:

PUBLIC EVENTS – The May 2024 report is as follows:

I want to extend a heartfelt thanks to the residents, organizations, police and fire departments, Miss and Little Miss Stratford, their courts and borough council, for attending our Memorial Day ceremony. The presence of so many residents was a powerful testament to the respect and gratitude our town holds for those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our nation. Our borough's commitment to remembering and honoring our servicemen and women is truly inspiring and deeply appreciated.

On behalf of borough council, I'd like to take a moment to congratulate the students of Stratford who have graduated or will be graduating later this month.

Upcoming Events in Stratford

June 14th- Sterling graduation

June 17th- 8th grade graduation at Yellin

June 19th Tarkill in person fall registration and fundraiser at Lena's Water Ice 6:30-8:30

Stratford Senior Events:

June 12th 1:00-2:00 Craft and Cookies sponsored by Bratton Law Group

June 19th 1:00-2:00 BINGO hosted by Laurel Manor.

June 26th 1:00-3:00 Social Hour

June 28th 4:00-6:00 Senior Prom (Dinner, Dancing and Dress to Impress) Sponsored by Bratton Law Group and Glenn Yeary Photographer

If residents plan to participate, please RSVP by email StratfordSeniorCenter@Outlook.com or by phone to **(856) 783-0600**.

OLD BUSINESS:

PUBLIC HEARING & ADOPTION:

2024 BOROUGH OF STRATFORD BUDGET – PUBLIC HEARING

Motion was made to open the public hearing on the 2024 budget by Councilman Gilligan, seconded by Councilman Tolomeo with all Council voting aye by voice vote.

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Mr. Gentless from 111 Union Ave inquired to the use of surplus. Mr. Keenan stated the surplus used was about \$900,000, but did confirm the surplus used in 2023's budget came back in total, and increased by \$50,000, so the history shows the surplus being used, is replenished in total or more. Councilman Gilligan inquired if using surplus for the annual budget is a common practice. Mr. Keenan confirmed for almost every year for the Council uses surplus to help keep the tax impact minimum.

Motion was made by Councilman Kelly, seconded by Councilwoman Lomanno to close the public hearing, with all Council voting aye by voice vote.

RES.24:85 ADOPTION OF THE 2024 BOROUGH OF STRATFORD BUDGET

Motion was made by Councilman Kelly, seconded by Councilwoman Lomanno to adopt Res. 24:85 with all Council voting aye by roll call vote.

ORD. 24:07 ORDINANCE 24:07 AUTHORIZE FINANCIAL AGREEMENT – 72 BERLIN RD, B.52, L. 15

Councilman Gandy motioned to open the public hearing on Ordinance 24:07. Councilwoman Lomanno seconded the motion, which passed with all members present voting in favor in a Voice Vote.

No one from the public spoke.

Councilman Kelly motioned to close the public hearing on Ordinance 24:07. Councilwoman Lomanno seconded the motion, which passed with all members present voting in favor in a Voice Vote.

Councilman Tolomeo made a motion to adopt 24:07. Councilman Gilligan seconded the motion with all members present voting in favor by Roll Call Vote.

BOROUGH OF STRATFORD ORDINANCE #24-07

**ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF STRATFORD, COUNTY OF CAMDEN AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY
AUTHORIZING A FINANCIAL AGREEMENT PURSUANT TO THE LONG TERM TAX EXEMPTION LAW OF 1992, AS
AMENDED AND SUPPLEMENTED, N.J.S.A. 40A:20-1 TO – 20 (“EXEMPTION LAW” WITH STRATFORD SELF
STORAGE URBAN RENEWAL, LLC**

WHEREAS, the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1, *et seq.*, as amended and supplemented (“Redevelopment Law”), provides a process for municipalities to participate in the redevelopment and improvement of areas in need of redevelopment or rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, the Exemption Law permits a municipality to enter into a financial agreement exempting real property from tax assessment and accepting payments in lieu of taxes where the property is qualified; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Stratford Council directed the Borough Planning Board to investigate whether that certain area of the Borough commonly known as 72 Berlin Road and designated as Block 52, Lot 15 on the tax maps of the Borough, constitutes as an “area in need of redevelopment, non-condemnation” as defined in the Redevelopment Law (“Study Area”); and

WHEREAS, based upon the recommendation of the Planning Board, the Borough Council, adopted a

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Resolution to designate the Study Area as an “area in need of non-condemnation redevelopment” in accordance with the Redevelopment Law (“Redevelopment Area”); and

WHEREAS, the Borough Council designated RSG Stratford Urban Renewal, LLC as the Redeveloper pursuant to the Redevelopment Law and subsequently the Borough and Redeveloper entered into a Redevelopment Agreement for the redevelopment of the Study Area pursuant to the Redevelopment Law; and

WHEREAS, on December 12, 2023 by Ordinance 2023:12, the Borough Council adopted the Berlin Road Redevelopment Plan for the for the Study Area; and

WHEREAS, the RSG Stratford Urban Renewal, LLC has filed an application, with the Mayor of the Borough for approval of a long term tax exemption for the Improvements to the extent permitted by the Exemption Law; and

WHEREAS, in order to enhance the economic viability of and opportunity for a successful project, the Borough now enters into this Financial Agreement with RSG Stratford Urban Renewal, LLC, which Agreement shall govern payments made to the Borough in lieu of real estate taxes on the Project pursuant to the Exemption Law; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Borough Council of the Borough of Stratford now deem it to be in the best interest of the Borough to adopt an Ordinance authorizing the Borough to enter into this Financial Agreement with RSG Stratford Urban Renewal, LLC on the terms and conditions stated in the Financial Agreement, including *inter alia* the granting of a tax exemption; and

WHEREAS, the Borough approves the tax exemption requested by RSG Stratford Urban Renewal, LLC subject to the terms and conditions of a Financial Agreement, and the parties desire to set forth in detail their mutual rights and obligations with respect to the tax exemption applicable to the Residential Improvements; and

WHEREAS, RSG Stratford Urban Renewal, LLC and the Borough wish to enter into a Financial Agreement

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with respect to completion of the Project; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Borough Committee find that the relevant benefits of the rehabilitation and completion of the Project outweigh the loss, if any, of property tax revenue in granting the tax exemption and that it is in the best interest of the residents of the Borough to enter into a Financial Agreement between the Borough and RSG Stratford Urban Renewal, LLC.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Borough Council of the Borough of Stratford, County of Camden, State of New Jersey, as follows:

SECTION 1. The aforementioned recitals are incorporated herein as though fully set forth at length.

SECTION 2. The Mayor is hereby authorized to execute a Financial Agreement, pursuant to the Exemption Law, between the Borough and RSG Stratford Urban Renewal, LLC for completion of the Project Improvements on the Property.

SECTION 4. All Ordinances or parts of Ordinances inconsistent with this Ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistency.

SECTION 5. If the provisions of any section, subsection, paragraph, subdivision, or clause of this Ordinance shall be judged invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such order of judgment shall not affect or invalidate the remainder of any section, subsection, paragraph, subdivision, or clause of this Ordinance.

SECTION 6. Upon adoption of this Ordinance after public hearing thereon, the Borough Clerk is further directed to publish notice of the passage thereof and to file a copy of this Ordinance with the County Planning Board, New Jersey Department of Community Affairs and other agencies as required by law.

SECTION 7. This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon final passage and publication in accordance with law, and approval from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs.

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ORDINANCE 24-08
BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR VARIOUS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS OF THE
BOROUGH OF STRATFORD, IN THE COUNTY OF CAMDEN, NEW JERSEY,
APPROPRIATING THE AGGREGATE AMOUNT OF \$415,900.00 THEREFORE AND
AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$395,105.00 BONDS OR NOTES OF THE BOROUGH
TO FINANCE PART OF THE COST THERE OF

BE IT ORDAINED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Stratford, County of Camden, State of New Jersey (not less than two-thirds of all members thereof affirmatively concurring) as follows:

SECTION 1. The improvements described in Section 3 of this Bond Ordinance are hereby respectively authorized to be undertaken by the Borough of Stratford, New Jersey as a general improvement. For the improvement or purpose described in Section 3, there are hereby appropriated the respective sums of money therein stated as the appropriations made for the improvements or purposes, such sums amounting in the aggregate to \$415,900.00 including the aggregate sum of \$20,795.00 as the down payment for the improvements or purposes required by the Local Bond Law. The down payments have been made available by virtue of provisions for down payment or for capital improvement purposes in one or more previously adopted budgets.

SECTION 2. In order to finance the cost of improvement or purpose not covered by application of the several down payments, negotiable Bonds are hereby authorized to be issued in the principal amount of \$395,105.00 pursuant to the Local Bond Law. In anticipation of the issuance of the Bonds, negotiable Bond Anticipation Notes are hereby authorized to be issued pursuant to and within the limitations prescribed by the Local Bond Law.

SECTION 3. The improvement hereby authorized and the purpose for which the Bonds are to be issued, the estimated cost for each improvement and the appropriation therefore, the estimated maximum amount of Bonds or Notes to be issued for each improvement and the period of usefulness for each improvement are respectively as follows:

PURPOSE	APPROPRIATION & ESTIMATED COST	ESTIMATED MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF BONDS OR NOTES	PERIOD OF AVERAGE USEFULNESS
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SEE SCHEDULE "A" ATTACHED

The excess of the appropriation made for each of the improvements or purposes aforesaid over the estimated maximum amount of Bonds or Notes to be issued therefore, as above stated, it is amount of the down payment for each purpose.

SECTION 4. All Bond Anticipation Notes issued hereunder shall mature at such times as may be determined by the Chief Financial Officer; provided that no Note shall mature alter than one year from its date. The Notes shall bear interest at such rate or rates and be in such form as many be determined by the

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Chief Financial Officer. The Chief Financial Officer shall determine all matters in connection with notes issued pursuant to this Ordinance, and the Chief Financial Officer's signature upon the Notes shall be conclusive evidence as to all such determinations. All Notes issued hereunder may be renewed from time to time subject to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 40A:2-8 (a). The Chief Financial Officer is hereby authorized to sell part or all of the Notes from time to time at public or private sale and to deliver them to the purchasers thereof upon receipt of payment of the purchase price plus accrued interest from their dates to the date of delivery thereof. The Chief Financial Officer is directed to report in writing to the governing body at the meeting next succeeding the date when any sale or delivery of the Notes pursuant to this ordinance is made. Such report must include the amount, the description, the interest rate and the maturity schedule of the Notes sold, the price obtained and the name of the purchaser.

SECTION 5. The following additional matters are hereby determined, declared, recited and state:

- (a) The purposes described in Section 3 of this Bond Ordinance are not current expenses. They are improvements, and no part of the costs thereof have been or shall be specifically assessed on property specially benefited thereby.
- (b) The average period of usefulness, computed on the basis of the respective amounts of Obligations authorized for each purpose and the reasonable lives thereof within the limitations of the Local Bond Law, is five (5) years or more.
- (c) The Supplemental Debt Statement required by the Local Bond Law has been duly Prepared and filed in the office of the Clerk, and a complete executed duplicate thereof has been filed in the office of the Director of the Division of the Local Government Services in the Department of Community Affairs of the State of New Jersey. Such statement shows that the Gross debt of the Borough as defined by the Local Bond Law is increased by the authorization of the Bonds and Notes provided in this Bond Ordinance by \$415,900.00 and the obligations authorized herein will be within all debt limitations prescribed by the Local Bond Law.
- (d) \$75,000.00 of expenses listed in and permitted under N.J.S.A. 40A:2-20 are included in the estimated cost herein for the purposes of improvements.

SECTION 6. Any grant moneys received for the purposes described in Section 3 hereof shall be applied either to direct payment of the costs of the improvements or to payment of the obligations issued pursuant to this Ordinance. The amount of obligations authorized by not issued hereunder shall be reduced to the extent that such that such funds are so used.

SECTION 7. The full faith and credit of the Borough are hereby pledged to the punctual payment of the principal of and the interest on the obligations authorized by this Bond Ordinance. The obligations shall be direct, unlimited obligations of the Borough, and the Borough is obligated to levy ad valorem taxes upon all the taxable real property within the Borough for the payment of obligations and the interest thereon without limitation of rate or amount.

SECTION 8. This Bond Ordinance shall take effect 20 days after the first publication thereof after final adoption as provided by the Local Bond Law.

NEW BUSINESS:

ORD. 24:09 AMEND SEWER RATE 2024

Motion was made by Councilwoman Martin, seconded by Councilwoman Lomanno to introduce this Ordinance, with all Council voting aye by roll call vote. Public Hearing will be held on July 09, 2024.

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ORD. 24:10 2024 SALARY ORDINANCE

Motion was made by Councilman Gandy, seconded by Councilwoman Martin, to introduce this Ordinance, with all Council voting aye by roll call vote. Public Hearing will be held on July 09, 2024.

RESOLUTIONS:

Mr. Keenan reviewed the proposed resolutions. Councilman Gilligan asked for Resolution 24:90 be removed from the consent agenda and be voted on by itself

The remaining Resolutions 24:86 through 24:92, without Resolution 24:90 were approved as a consent agenda. Motion was made by Councilman Gilligan, seconded by Councilwoman Tolomeo with all members present voting aye by Roll Call Vote.

- RES. 24:86 APPOINT FIRE DUTY CREW – DYLAN PIERCE
- RES. 24:87 AUTHORIZE RENEWAL ABC LICENSE – LA MARTINIQUE BOWLING ACADEMY, INC.
- RES. 24:88 AUTHORIZE RENEWAL ABC LICENSE – RIDHIR, INC.
- RES. 24:89 APPOINT ALICIA SIMS – BOROUGH DEPUTY REGISTRAR
- RES. 24:91 AUTHORIZE NJDOT MUNICIPAL AID FUNDING APPLICATION
- RES. 24:92 APPOINT SEWER COLLECTION SYSTEM OPERATOR

Motion was made by Councilman Tolomeo, seconded by Councilman Gandy to adopt Resolution 2024:91 with all Council voting aye by roll call vote, with the exception of Councilman Gilligan abstaining.

RES. 24:90 APPOINT ACTING MUNICIPAL CLERK

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Wire checks	501695	through	501705		
Payroll checks	59530	through	59677	and	
Automated checks	38624	through	38712		
Various electronic transfers and potential interim payments to Atlantic City Electric, Constellation Energy, PSE&G, and South Jersey Gas					

Councilwoman Martin motioned to approve the payment of the bills. Councilwoman Lomanno seconded the motion, with all members present voted in favor in a Roll Call Vote, with the exception of Councilwoman Martin abstaining from Check # 38679 made out to herself.

See detailed bill list attached to the end of the minutes.

COUNCIL COMMENTS:

- Councilman Tolomeo – Thanked EMS, Fire, OEM, Police and the office staff and DPW and Sewer for their work.
- Councilman Gilligan – Nothing to report.
- Councilwoman Lomanno – Welcomed Chris Osciak to the team in July as the new Clerk.
- Councilwoman Martin – Noting to report.
- Councilman Gandy – Thanked all the departments and staff and welcomed Chris Osciak to the staff. He also thanked the primary election workers for a long tiring day of work. He informed residents to be careful now that school students are on summer recess.
- Councilman Kelly – Thanked the Fire, EMS, Police and to keep in your thoughts the police officer who was assaulted this past month.

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- Mayor Hall stated preparation for July 4th parade and festivities have begun. If any organization wants to participate to reach out to Councilwoman Martin.

GOOD AND WELFARE:

Councilwoman Martin motioned to open the meeting to the public for Good and Welfare. Councilman Gandy seconded the motion, which passed with all members present voting in favor in a voice vote.

Mr. Gentless of 111 Union Ave made a recommendation for an Eagle Scout Project to clean the War Memorial Stones, and pavers. Mayor Hall stated she would review with the scouts.

Lauren Laino of 3 Oak Court was concerned with people using Saratoga Park as a dog park. It was explained signage is posted at all the parks. The Mayor recommended to eblast and facebook info regarding this to the public.

Councilman Gilligan made a motion to close the public session, with Councilman Tolomeo making a second, with all Council voting aye by voice vote.

ADJOURN:

Councilman Kelly motioned to adjourn the meeting at approx. 6:59 PM. Councilwoman Lomanno seconded the motion and all members present voted in favor in a voice vote.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

John D. Keenan, Jr, RMC
Borough Administrator
Borough Deputy Clerk