

Minutes of the Agenda Meeting of the Township Committee of the Township of Commercial held on January 13, 2025, at 6:00 P.M., at the Township Hall, 1768 Main Street, Port Norris, NJ.

Those Present:

Joseph Klaudi	Mayor
Mike Vizzard	Deputy Mayor
Ron Sutton	Committeeman
Thomas Seeley	Solicitor
Heather Miller	Township Clerk
Clint Miller	Public Works Supervisor
Rob Welch	Township OEM

Mayor Klaudi presided and called the meeting to order with the announcement that the meeting had been advertised, and it was being electronically recorded and being in full compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

Mayor Klaudi asks for reports from officials.

Barney Hollinger, Riverfront Consultant-

- BRIC Meeting was cancelled.
- Notice of funding opportunities are out and a township official needs to attend if they are willing to pursue funding.
- The Bayshore Council meeting is this Thursday.
- Concerned about wildfires in Laurel Lake. Wondering if there is any money out there for wildfire projects, like putting standpipes in or pump stations so you can run water out there to put the fires out.

Committeeman Sutton- Small Cities has something they can use for that.

Clint Miller- Mike I don't know if you want to mention the Silvi thing you are working on with Brian but the standpipe in there. There is a standpipe at Silvi, but it got damaged. They are working on that. We are trying to figure out how to get a descent well guy here to see if we can put one here as well.

Barney Hollinger- The river is an endless supply of water. If you put a pump station, there or something like that you could get here.

Rob Welch- We did try using the river the one night we had the big house fire here, and unfortunately that night we tried to use it, it was low tide. It didn't play out so well. I talked to Clint if there was a way to put a standpipe where the public wharf is, so the boat won't have damages. We could work off that. That night we had to use a floating strainer and couldn't establish a draft. We had to actually send our trucks to Port Norris and Dividing Creek Fire Hall. Unfortunately, Port Norris's pump isn't feasible to fill up a truck that fast.

Committeeman Sutton- What happened to the sand company's ponds?

Rob Welch- Which ones?

Committeeman Sutton- Any of them.

Clint Miller- Well we had the one on Ferry Road and that should have been operational, and I don't understand why it wasn't.

Rob Welch- That night we had that fire, they ended up sending them to the sand plant in Mauricetown, and they tried to hook up to that standpipe but unfortunately it was dry. So, they just send them to either Dividing Creek or Port Norris. At one point I went back to my station to get filled up and came back.

Committeeman Sutton- We have water all the way around us and all they have to do is drill every two to three months, and make sure the things are working.

Rob Welch- That's why after that fire I had gotten with Clint because I noticed in Port Norris there is an inadequate water supply compared to Laurel Lake and Mauricetown. In Mauricetown you have the ballfield and the river, in Laurel Lake you have the lake and the fire station. In Port Norris there wasn't an actual standpipe or water supply for them. They have a pump at their station, but it wasn't sufficient to fill a fire truck up quickly enough.

Mayor Klaudi- At the time of the drought though the standpipes were out of water, so there isn't much you can do there.

The Committeeman discuss where they could put a standpipe in Port Norris, and that there is water all the way around Port Norris. They all agreed at the time of that house fire it was an exceptionally low tide. Deputy Mayor Vizzard mentions the new standpipe at the end of Spring Garden Road and how he never sees anybody using that one. Committeeman Sutton said he doesn't think anybody knows it was there. Rob Welch states that they would just bypass that and go right to the ballpark because the pump there is a lot faster than the standpipe. It's a 500 gallon per minute pump.

Mayor Klaudi moved on to the Township OEM report.

Rob Welch-

- We had the Coastal Coalition meeting last week and basically, they brought up our weather app. that is on our website. They want to have a meeting with us and our web designer. I forwarded it Heather. I just saw we had our first winter storm and nothing major happened.

Mayor Klaudi moved on to the Township Engineers Report.

Nick DiCosmo-

- Miller Avenue Bridge they are complete with all of the piling and pouring the footage to the rim wall and the frame itself. No activity until the concrete is cured.

- 2022 Mill and Overlay of Main Street, we are just working on DOT close out. I will be reaching out to the county to amend the shared service agreement now that we have a final contract amount. We added some things and only added about \$12,000.00 over contract.
- Roadway and drainage improvements to Whittier Drive, we are just waiting to get the final asphalt course, and we can proceed to close out. That project came out for \$10,000.00 under contract.
- We are finishing up the design for mill and overlay of Main Street phase 2.
- The roadway and drainage improvements to Milbourne Drive and Dennis Lane, we anticipate the designs will be completed this week and we will move into our final reviews then submit to DOT for their final reviews.
- FY2025 State Aid Roadway, that proposal is on for consideration for this week's meeting, and we submitted the application for FY 2025 Local Freight Impact Fund. That was for the Miller Ave reconstruction for the tide gate. We did submit an application requesting 1.2 million dollars for the reconstruction of that tide gate and all associated design fees.
- Right now, we are the 2025 Local Recreation Grants Application, and that resolution is on the agenda for approval tonight.

Committeeman Sutton- Did you find any money for Buckshutem Road yet?

Nick DiCosmo- No I have not.

Committeeman Sutton- Have you been looking?

Nick DiCosmo- No, I haven't seen anything that would fit that.

Mayor Klaudi moved on to the Discussion Item.

Discussion Item: Proposal for FY 2025 NJDOT Municipal Aid Project. Reconstruction of Magnolia Drive.

- Does the Committee agree to raise \$27,000.00 in the 2025 budget for this Project.
 - o Decision: Talk to Pam and put it on for Thursday's meeting.
- If agreed, the CFO would like to certify funds in February.
- If all agreed, roll call vote. All agreed.

The Committeeman discuss the Engineering fees and proposal. Committeeman Sutton asked if the Engineers could cut their fees because they have done it in the past. Nick DiCosmo states he could look into reducing the scope more, and he has taken a second look at proposals. Nick said he would look at it again. Clint Miller said they should wait until they talk to Pam, and the Committeeman agreed.

Mayor Klaudi moved on to Correspondence.

- The Environmental Commission has submitted their 2024 Annual Report for the Committees to review.

Mayor Klaudi- I have read through their report, and they had a lot of accomplishments last year so kudos to them.

- Correspondence for NJDEP. The property owner of block 198, lot 6, North Avenue. The area which is 3.68 acres approached the state Green Acres program to see if they had an interest in the property. They are not. Green Acres has forwarded the offer to the Township. Does the Township have an interest in acquiring this property.
 - o No, remove it from the agenda.

Mayor Klaudi moved on to Resolutions.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. Resolution 2025-21 | Resolution of the Township Committee of Township of Commercial Approving the Filing of An Application for Community Facilities Direct Loans and Grant Funding to the US Department of Agriculture-Rural Development (USDA-RD) |
| 2. Resolution 2025-22 | A Resolution Authorizing the Submission of a Grant Application and the Execution of a Grant Contract with the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Under the Fiscal Year 2025 Local Recreation Improvements Grant Program for the Battle Lane Park Improvements. |
| 3. Resolution 2025-23 | Authorizing Employee to Carry Unused Vacation and Personal Time to 2025. |
| 4. Resolution 2025-24 | Change Order #2-Final for FY 2024 State Aid Roadway and Drainage Improvements to Whittier Drive. |
| 5. Resolution 2025-25 | Budget Line-Item Transfer |

Mayor Klaudi moved onto Ordinances for Introduction.

ORDINANCES 2025-639
CALDENDER YEAR 2025
ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET
APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK
(N.J.S.A. 40a: 4-45.14)

Second Reading and Public Hearing will be February 20, 2025

Township of Commercial
ORDINANCE 2024-637
Salary Ordinance Scale for 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028.

Township of Commercial
ORDINANCE 2024-638
Stormwater Control Ordinance

Mayor Klaudi moved onto Public Portion.

Mayor Klaudi asked for a motion to open to the public. A motion was made by Committeeman Sutton and seconded by Deputy Mayor Vizzard.

Barney Hollinger- Things that are not a reflection on you guys, but I think there are things that need to be looked at. Last time I brought up some of these buildings that are around, and I was told that there was nothing we could do with them. I checked with Maurice River Township, and they have ordinances for abandoned and vacant buildings. That requires registration of all the buildings, and it starts around \$500.00 and \$1,000.00 each year. It looks at properties that don't have electricity to them, and they are considered abandoned.

Tom Seeley- I think one of the problems is that it is found unconstitutional to but the liens on the properties.

Barney Hollinger- There are no liens. They are required to register with them and pay. If they don't pay you will issue a ticket to them and take them to court. If the courts are a problem. Then you take it to the prosecutor and the judge, and you need to change your ordinances.

Tom Seeley- We do have that in ordinances because we have previously.

Committeeman Sutton- The only thing we have is the registration fee once a year for vacant and abandoned.

Heather Miller- It's only been enforced in bank owned.

Barney Hollinger- Yeah, bank owned. Right off the top of my head I can count to ten in this township. Some have holes in the roofs, and boarded up for years, and aren't being used. If you read your ordinances, it is based on trying to get these buildings back into the community. The amount might be able to come into the township.

Tom Seeley- We were collecting a substantial amount.

The Committeeman discuss the Ordinance and how they were made to stop. Tom Seeley asked how Maurice River Township is doing making money off that, and Barney Hollinger didn't have an answer. Tom Seeley suggested the Township revisit the Ordinance. Mayor Klaudi also suggests getting in touch with Maurice River Township to see how they are making out as well. Barney Hollinger also suggests if this court isn't doing anything, then go to Vineland Courts. Maurice River Township does deal with Vineland Court.

The Committeeman discuss the issues they have had with CS Regional Court.

Barney Hollinger- The next thing I have is, I know it's been two months when I brought it up here about the fork lift repair services on North Avenue. They are going strong, and now they are bringing in generators. I've told you twice now.

Deputy Mayor Vizzard- Yeah, I called this morning to talk to Bill about it, but he was in some kind of class today.

The Committeeman discuss the house and the work they are doing they are doing there as well as burning a barrel.

Barney Hollinger- I just don't understand it because I said something to Bill about that and he said, "don't know what you're talking about." I said you ride by it coming into this town. I can count a number of things that are just going on in North Avenue that nothing is being done with. What are they doing just around with their blinders on not seeing anything?

Clint Miller- I don't want to interrupt you, but I want to stick up for the employee part of things. When we had Dave Dean here, we were very fortunate. We had the courts here; we had Dave Dean here. We have part-time inspectors, and they come and go as they are needed because these small towns can't afford a Dave Dean. We were so fortunate because he did all of that, and he was there full-time.

Barney Hollinger- If they were doing their job, you could afford to have full time.

Clint Miller- I don't want to say he isn't doing his job. I do agree some work could be done; I just don't know how much time he spends here. I don't know what his hours are, or if we can afford to increase them. I don't disagree with you Barney there are things that need to be done but our hands are tied with the amount of employees we have. If we could add time to them or something?

Committeeman Sutton- For the amount of money he is making he should be able to do the job. He is making a high wage.

Barney Hollinger- The other thing, I got thinking about this, I have taken a lot of classes I have to do conflict of interests and sexual harassment, all that stuff for all the councils that I sit on for the state. One of the things that keeps and always comes up is, one of these where you are

supervising your employees. Where you are supervising your employees there cannot be conflict of interest. Mike, I think you are doing a good job, but you have construction, right?

Deputy Mayor Vizzard- Yes.

Barney Hollinger- and you are doing electrical business in the Township, right?

Deputy Mayor Vizzard- Yes.

Barney Hollinger- So you are supervising the people that are writing your permits, the guy that is checking your electrical work, and everything else. You need to step off of that because that is a direct conflict of interest.

Deputy Mayor Vizzard- I never really thought of that.

Clint Miller- Yeah but if that is conflict doesn't somebody come from another town to that?

Deputy Mayor Vizzard- Yeah, they do.

Barney Hollinger- Yeah, but if he is supervising all of the employees. It is still direct supervision, and I think it looks bad. It doesn't look good.

Clint Miller- I'm sorry, but that is bullshit. This man has spent more money in this town, and residents in this township. I can name you 20 people in Port Norris alone that he has gone and fixed things for free, and you're going to pick on him?

Barney Hollinger- It has nothing to do with that Clint.

Clint Miller and Barney Hollinger discuss conflict of interest. Clint Miller asked that if it is inspected by another town how it is conflict of interest, and that Mike Vizzard is a good man.

Barney Hollinger said it is a liability to the township.

Tom Seeley- I think that his point is taken as an appearance of impropriety is what they call it. It may not be a direct conflict, but it an appearance of impropriety. If he sees it as that, that it ways a question.

Barney Hollinger- It is right in there if you do the stuff, they make us do anymore. It's one of the questions.

Tom Seeley- The question is do you want to have the appearance of that if someone questions it, but technically if you use other municipalities inspectors that's basically why they did that. You could say that he as Mayor is not able to do work at all in the Township even if he isn't the head of that? I mean you could go further if you really push it.

Debbie Hollinger- Yeah but when you get a permit, Bill has to get that piece of paper and Bill looks at it and approves it before you get the permit. Maybe Bill being supervised by him is what he is trying to say. Oh its Mike, I don't have a problem. If somebody else has a problem.

Tom Seeley- I don't see a direct conflict, but it is perceived. I'm not arguing with Barney, but technically speaking if it came down to it, it can be defended. Possibly Mike doesn't even want to be put in that position.

Deputy Mayor Vizzard- Well I never hurt anybody, and I don't want to ever hurt anybody but if it is presumed that I could that I will not put myself in that position.

Barney Hollinger- Look, I've heard people say that he's here doing this and up here doing that so that's a presumption somebody had. Clint even said he's heard it out there. I'm trying to protect this Township as a liability, which then protects me as a taxpayer that costs us money.

Deputy Mayor Vizzard- Understood.

Barney Hollinger- The other thing I have is congratulations Joe. You have some big shoes to fill Ronnie. He has saved us almost a million dollars that he found, and everybody missed. So, taxes should be coming down, and he's getting the bulkhead on Mauricetown park with the solar stuff coming in. I understand how politics works up there and we are going to rotate the mayorship, and I think it's a good thing. The other thing I heard is that Mike, you are taking on land use board.

Committeeman Sutton- I've discussed it with him before, and he has agreed to let me have it.

Barney Hollinger- Alright I'm glad to hear that. The number of years he has spent there and a lot of experience. You have problems on that Land Use Board. You have misinformed people, and I don't think the attorneys are good at making decisions. I think this is a travesty over here at this Pops Auction and how that went down. That was not right and was wrong from the beginning. They pushed it through. He never had to provide a site plan, or where the parking was going to be, none of that. Again, it's a liability issue that is going to come back and bite the township. From what I knew how Land Use Board used to work; it doesn't work anywhere legally. We used to go through all of these problems getting this Land Use Board to where it should be when we were in the office. From where I see it continually went downhill. Something needs to be done. It is not running efficiently.

Committeeman Sutton- This is why I made the recommendation at the beginning of the year because he has done things. He lets the committee vote when they should vote. I think we should see what else is out there because we are not getting our bang for our buck with him. The particular place he is talking about, you two guys voting on that and if you didn't vote it wouldn't have gone. If you didn't vote, it wouldn't have gone but you let you do it. Not saying you did wrong, he let you do wrong. That is what scares me.

Mayor Klaudi- I think for the most part he does a pretty good job.

Tom Seeley- Yeah, I'll stand up for Nathan. I haven't seen him here but, in my dealings, he is a pretty good a attorney.

Committeeman Sutton- All I know is from land use board and I see him struggling for the answer.

Mayor Klaudi- I've never seen that. He has always had the answers.

Debbie Hollinger- Nathan didn't even want to open the meeting to the public when they came. I had to tell him from the ordinance, and he said oh I forgot. He isn't here to get a break.

The Committeeman discuss the Land Use Board.

Mayor Klaudi asked for a motion to close to the public. Committeeman Sutton made a motion and Deputy Mayor Vizzard seconded.

Mayor Klaudi moved onto reports from Officials.

Deputy Mayor Vizzard asked if Committeeman Sutton if he wanted the Construction office in leu of what Barney brought up tonight. Committeeman Sutton declined but Mayor Klaudi accepted. Committeeman Sutton said that he doesn't have the backing in the Construction Office from the Committee, and Deputy Mayor Vizzard disagreed.

Deputy Mayor Vizzard- I was going to mention Clints crew, but Clint left. His crew did a very good job clearing the roads this go around, and the County did a good job too. That's all I have for tonight.

Committeeman Sutton- I want to say three things, I got texts people in the lake complaining about the roads and the firehouse. I think they did a tremendous job. They were hollering about the salt and doing our job, but it would take trailers to salt all those roads. I think they did a good job on them, and I was taking the heat. They wouldn't say their name or phone number and said that they will throw it at my house. I'd like to say that they did a good job. If anyone comes to the meeting, I will tell them that they were pretty ignorant on my end. Another thing, New Years Eve I'm heading home from the hall at 9:30-10am in the morning, and you'll never guess who went through the Haleyville Corner and never stopped, two big Atlantic City Electric trucks. Never slowed down, heading to Port Norris. I could not believe my eyes. They were big trucks and could have killed someone. I think we should send a letter to ACE. I would say have Heather write a letter saying we have a new stop street there and has been there for months. Say that it happened on New Years Eve at this time and they should be able to look at their roster to where these trucks were heading to Port Norris and see who was driving. The other thing is two and half months ago roughly we had the improvement authority here about the police barracks and we haven't heard a word from them. They are ignoring us.

Mayor Klaudi- I thought we resolved it that night.

Committeeman Sutton- Not to my knowledge as of yet, you haven't received anything yet Heather?

Heather Miller- I emailed the attorney that was here asking for an update and haven't received anything and that it was before our last meeting.

The Committeeman agreed to send both companies a letter.

Mayor Klaudi said that our roads were the clearest out of any roads he was on, and we have a great crew. Everyone agreed. The Committeeman discuss the Social Media posts about the crew.

Mayor Klaudi asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Deputy Mayor Vizzard and seconded by Committeeman Sutton.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Gabrielle Horseman, Deputy Clerk