

Flag Salute.

Roll Call: Bruno, (zoom), Kashwick, Padmos, Perloff, (zoom) Stentz, Traphagen (zoom), Mayor Kovach

STATEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE:

Mayor Kovach read the following statement: “Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided, indicating the time and place of the meeting and the proposed agenda, which notice was posted, made available to newspapers, and filed with the Clerk of the Town of Clinton in accordance with Section 3(d) of Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975.”

OPMA authorizes municipalities to conduct public meetings through use of streaming services and other online meeting platforms.

The Town of Clinton Council is meeting in person as well as providing an option for the public to participate via ZOOM video meetings. Please note that the option to attend is being provided as a courtesy, therefore, if Zoom becomes unavailable during the meeting and it cannot quickly be fixed, Council will continue with the remainder of the meeting.

For those joining us via Zoom, please raise your hand during designated times to be recognized for a comment. Whether you are appearing in person or via Zoom, you must provide your name to be recognized.

Please feel free going forward to email councilmeeting@clintonnj.gov with any questions or concerns between meetings. Please feel free to reach out with a note at jkovach@clintonnj.gov anytime!

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Kashwick seconded by Ms. Padmos to approve the minutes of the Council Meeting held February 14, 2024.

Vote all ayes
Motion carried

Motion made by Mr. Kashwick, seconded by Ms. Padmos to approve the budget meeting minutes of February 22, 2024 as submitted.

Vote all ayes
1 Abstention (Perloff)
Motion carried

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sean Jerzewski, an interested party, zoomed in to discuss a white ash tree he saw at the Community Center while attending the Farmer’s Market. He and his wife measured the tree after a “hug” which measured 216.5 inches in circumference. This tree is possibly the largest in New Jersey and possibly in the United States. Mr. Jerzewski said that whoever’s idea it was to start treating the tree for the ash borer deserves a high five!! Mayor Kovach said our Town Arborist, Lou Spanner of Spanner Tree Service began treating the tree eight years ago. Mr. Jerzewski suggested nominating the tree which may be between 300 and 400 years old! Councilwoman Stentz said the next Shade Tree meeting will be March 21 and has zoom in capability. Ms. Stentz will discuss the tree with NJ.Gov and also mentioned the sycamore near the South Branch. Height and circumference need be measured and Mr. Jerzewski will pass on a way to measure such a large old tree. Councilmembers Stentz and Kashwick will be in contact with Mr. Jerzewski to continue conversations on these trees.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS

1. Fire on Sunday, February 25, 2024, our community suffered a devastating loss with the fire at the Walgreens and Open Cupboard food pantry. Chief Kubinak and Chief Hedden will speak to the specifics as well as all the responding entities. I would like to take this opportunity to first remind everyone that any loss of property is devastating to the owner, the business, and the community. I am always truly grateful for our community coming together in times of need. So many of you stepped up to help and we are so appreciative. Our Fire, EMS and police were on scene through the night. Our DPW was onsite working with the FD to ensure that there was sufficient water pressure. Additional wells were turned on to keep the water flowing. If I am not mistaken from the hydrants alone the two ladder trucks were pumping more than 4000 gallons a minute. The pumper trucks from other departments were also on site to assist. A shout out and thank you to all the restaurants and individuals who provided food, water and coffee Sunday night and Monday.

With everyone working together JDs was able to re-open today and I believe Just Subs will re-open shortly. Walgreens will be working with their Whitehouse store as well as a mobile unit for prescriptions and the Food Pantry will be serving their clients from the Washington pantry.

I know that so many have asked for ways to help them, and the town sent an email from the ED with the best ways to support. A reminder that they have a board which will decide next steps for a thrift shop and food pantry location. They appreciate all the suggestions and have asked us to be patient as they re-group.

We had a call with county administrator, the pantry and other community partners to see if there was anything we could provide now and again the Executive Director asked that we give them time to organize to determine needs.

Thank you to councilmembers who came out to help Sunday night I would also like to thank my fellow mayors who reached out throughout the night to offer assistance: Mayors DeGiralamo, Lee, Mullay, and Muir as well as everyone who has reached out – thank you!!

2. 3rd Annual Hunterdon Games are tentatively scheduled for Saturday, August 24th with a rain date of August 25th at Heritage Park in Bethlehem Twp. More info to follow soon.
3. Coffee with the Mayor thank you to Norma Kania for organizing – it was a great opportunity to talk about what is happening in town.
4. Land Use Board meeting on February 20th was opened to community members to speak about the Moebus project. There was much discussion around recent flooding, the eagles and stormwater – the next meeting is March 19th for continued public comment at the Clinton Fire Department at 7:30pm
5. Congressman Kean held a zoom with local leaders and law enforcement to give an update the PART Preventing Auto Recycling Theft Act to address the illegal movement of stolen parts and/or cars. Several mayors discussed the importance of legislation to address these thefts.
6. Sewer budget workshop was held on the 22nd – we reviewed the budget with CTSA members. The next budget workshop is Wednesday March 6th at 5PM

7. FSSP held the Parade launch party at the Hunterdon Art Museum with the reception following at the Towne Restaurant – as they celebrate the 10th anniversary of the parade the Town provided them with a Proclamation celebrating the FSSP and all they have done for our communities.
8. Attended the 7/8/22 meeting Councilwoman Padmos and I attended the 7/8/22 coalition meeting at the new REGUS facility in Union Twp.
9. NAACP presented their annual Black History Month celebration at Stag1 Stage February 24, 2024. Very well attended again thankful for the work that they do on behalf of our communities.
10. League Open House yesterday prior to the Governor’s budget address.
11. Governor’s Budget Address - Council was sent an update from the League with the highlights. Here are just a few to note:
 - **Municipal Aid:** Allocating \$1.635 billion, Municipal funding has a proposed reduction of \$134.3 million from FY2024 Energy Tax Receipts are projected at \$805 million, and the budget does not include the \$150 in Municipal Relief Aid received in FY24.
 - **Housing Initiatives:** The proposed budget allocates \$10 million to incentive municipalities to create new Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs);
 - **Property Tax Relief:** Proposes more than \$3.5 billion in direct property tax relief through the ANCHOR program and school funding;
 - **Educational Enhancements:** The budget supports the completion of the school aid formula with an additional \$908 million for K-12 education, funding for pre-K expansion

FINALLY, A BIG HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO DAVE THE RAVE ROBBINS!!!

A round of applause!

PROCLAMATION TO CLINTON PUBLIC SCHOOL BULLDOGS!

Parents, students, teachers and friends of the Clinton Public School Bulldogs Basketball Team attended the meeting to receive the proclamation of the Mayor and Council congratulating them on capturing the District Championship! Mayor Kovach read the proclamation and displayed the trophy while taking photos with the boys!! Great night! Another round of applause!

SPECIAL EVENT

A special event application received to hold Clinton’s 2nd Annual Car Show “Cruisin’ Clinton” sponsored by the Guild of Clinton, to be held on East Main Street April 28, 2024 from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The car show is raising money for unified club of Voorhees High School. Review of the application has been completed by Chief Kubinak and all is in order. A motion was made by Ms. Padmos, seconded by Mr. Kashwick to approve the event as requested.

Vote all ayes
Motion carried

RESOLUTION #56-24 – SUSTAINABLE JERSEY GRANT APPLICATION

A motion was made by Mr. Kashwick, seconded by Ms. Stentz, to adopt Resolution #56-24 as submitted:

RESOLUTION # 56-24

**Resolution Authorizing Governing Body Support of
Sustainable Jersey Grant Application**

WHEREAS, a sustainable community seeks to optimize quality of life for its residents by ensuring that its environmental, economic and social objectives are balanced and mutually supportive; and

WHEREAS, The Town of Clinton strives to save tax dollars, assure clean land, air and water, improve working and living environments; and

WHEREAS, The Town of Clinton has received bronze certification in the Sustainable Jersey Program; and

WHEREAS, one of the purposes of the Sustainable Jersey Program is to provide resources to municipalities to make progress on sustainability issues, and they have created a grant program called the Sustainable Jersey Small Grants Program;

WHEREAS, the Governing Body of the Town of Clinton has determined that the Town should apply for a grant funding the creation of a nocturnal pollinator/firefly habitat in or nearby our existing pollinator gardens.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Governing Body of the Town of Clinton, State of New Jersey, authorizes the submission of the aforementioned Sustainable Jersey Grant.

Vote all ayes
Motion carried

RESOLUTION #57-24 – INTERCONNECTION OF WATER LINE

A motion was made by Ms. Padmos, seconded by Mr. Kashwick, to adopt Resolution #57-24 as submitted:

RESOLUTION # 57-24

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF AN INTERCONNECTION AGREEMENT
BETWEEN NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
(EDNA MAHAN CORRECTIONAL FACILITY FOR WOMEN)
AND THE TOWN OF CLINTON**

WHEREAS, the Town of Clinton (hereinafter “Town”) operates a water company which serves customers within and without its jurisdictional limits; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Department of Corrections (“NJDOC”) operates the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility (the “Facility”) located in Union Township; and

WHEREAS, the Facility requires an Interconnect Agreement with the Town for the purpose of receiving potable water from the Town during emergency situations; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:19-6. 9(g), a written agreement between interconnected systems, specifying the conditions for use of each interconnection of six inches or more in diameter is required; and

WHEREAS, the Town and the NJDOC have set forth their agreement in writing substantially in the form attached hereto as Schedule A;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Town of Clinton, Hunterdon County, New Jersey, that the Mayor and Clerk are hereby authorized to execute the Interconnection Agreement between the Town and NJDOC, which shall be substantially in the form attached hereto as Schedule A.

Vote all ayes
Motion carried

BANNER REQUESTS

A motion was made by Ms. Stentz, seconded by Mr. Kashwick to approve the banner requests as submitted:

Immaculate Conception Festival	June 10-17, 2024
HAM IT UP!	April 8 – 15, 2024
HAM Exhibitions Opening Reception	May 13-20, 2024
HAM Vintage Clothing Sale	June 3 – 10, 2024
HAM Artful Sundays	June 17 – 21, 2024

Vote all ayes
Motion carried

CORRESPONDENCE

1. Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce hosting the 9th Annual Hunterdon County Community Day, Saturday, June 8, 2024 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
2. Meals on Wheels in Hunterdon is inviting everyone to participate in this year's campaign by delivering meals to senior clients during Community Champions Week, March 18 through 21, 2024. If interested, information with Town Clerk.

REPORTS OF COUNCIL

Chief Kubinak Chief Kubinak referenced the fire that took place Sunday night, February 25, 2024 at the Walgreens and Open Cupboard Pantry. Chief invited Fire Chief Jeff Hedden to give details on the fire and submitted the following report:

STRUCTURE FIRE: 37 Old Highway 22, Town of Clinton, Hunterdon County, NJ At approximately 2039 hrs on Sunday, February 25, 2024, Clinton Fire Department was dispatched to a reported commercial structure fire at 37 Old Highway 22, Clinton, NJ. The initial dispatch activated the Clinton Fire Department and mutual aid from Quakertown Fire Company, Lebanon Borough Fire Company, High Bridge Fire Department, Annandale Hose Company, Califon Fire Company, EMS and Rescue units from South Branch Emergency Services, and the Town of Clinton Police Department.

As initial responders arrived on location, the incident was quickly upgraded to a 2nd alarm working fire. The 2nd alarm activated additional mutual aid from across Hunterdon and Warren Counties. Employees of the business were evacuated with no injuries. Due to the heavy fire and building construction a defensive attack was initiated. Truck and Ladder companies flowed water and contained the fire to the units of origin. The east side of the structure remained intact with minimal damage. Engine companies established water

supply from fire hydrants and draft sites. The Hunterdon County Tender Task Force was activated to bring in water tankers to assist with shuttling water to the fire.

One firefighter was evaluated for minor injuries on scene and was transported to Hunterdon Medical Center in stable condition.

Clinton Fire Department units remained on scene overhauling the fire to confirm complete extinguishment into the early afternoon hours of Monday February 26, 2024. Units cleared the scene just after 1300 hrs.

The cause of the fire remains under investigation by the Town of Clinton Fire Marshal's Office and the Town of Clinton Police Department.

STRUCTURE FIRE: 37 Old Highway 22, Town of Clinton, Hunterdon County, NJ

RESPONDING UNITS

Fire Departments

Clinton Fire Department
Annandale Hose Company (Clinton Twp Division of Fire)
Quakertown Fire Company
High Bridge Fire Department
Lebanon Boro Fire Company
Califon Fire Department (RIC)
Lebanon Twp Fire Department
Whitehouse Fire Company
Milford Fire Department
Pattensburg Fire Department
Hampton Fire Company
Sergeantsville Fire Company
Holland Twp Fire Company
Oldwick Fire Department
Three Bridges Fire Company
East Amwell Fire Company
Stockton Fire Company
Kingwood Fire Company
Raritan Twp Fire Company
Fairmount Fire Department (Morris County)
New Jersey Division of Fire Safety

Tender Strike Team (Warren County)

Allamuchy Twp
Washington Twp
Stewartsville
Harmony
Mansfield Twp

EMS Units

South Branch Emergency Services
Pattensburg Rescue Squad
Lebanon Township FD EMS

Flemington – Raritan Rescue Squad
Hunterdon County EMS 2
Hunterdon County EMS 3

Police

Clinton Police Department
High Bridge Police Department
Clinton Twp Police Department
New Jersey State Police
Hunterdon County Prosecutors Office

Other Entities

Clinton Water Department
Clinton Road Department
Clinton Fire Marshall
Hunterdon County Dept of Public Safety
Hunterdon County Communications
Hunterdon County Fire Coordinators
Hunterdon County EMS Coordinators
Warren County Fire Coordinator
Clinton Twp CERT
New Jersey Dept. of Transportation

Councilman Kashwick

Insurance meeting was held and two changes were made in different tiers, recommending \$5,000 from \$10,000 on medical payments for tier A vendors and to now refer facility use requests, as well as special event requests, where a waiver is requested to come to the insurance committee. Committee is now going to review what other waiver requests come before the committee and if they see a pattern, more tweaks to the policy will be made.

Green Team – following the adoption of the foregoing resolution, the grant application has been filed. The presentation made last year on fireflies and night skies will be featured in an upcoming newsletter of Sustainable Jersey! Group is looking for ways to find additional points to go for silver certification, Councilman Kashwick talked with Chief Kubinak regarding safe routes to school and possibly doing an energy audit.

Clinton Conservancy will be working on April 27 for the first time this year, 10 a.m. to 12 noon at Hunts Mill Park.

Environmental Commission – River Clean up is April 20, 2024 from 9 a.m. to 12 noon with Raritan Headwaters. Several organizations have volunteered to help out. Commission may be applying for a \$1,500 grant through ANJEC.

The Green Fair and EV Car Show with Clinton Township will be Saturday, September 28, 2024. Continuing with the Rutgers Environmental Stewards program. Completed two more courses: Solid Waste Management and Recycling and Climate Change. Platinum Club doing a hike at the Lansdown Trail next Wednesday morning with the County Seniors group.

Water Committee met last week to discuss the interconnection to Edna Mahan which was voted on earlier this evening. A long term infrastructure improvement plan was also discussed.

Mayor Kovach has appointed Councilman Kashwick to the County SWAC Committee (Solid Waste Advisory Council).

Councilwoman Padmos

Economic Development Committee – discussed with Guild electronic parking for cars on Main Street. Get your tickets for three days with the Friendly Son’s of St. Patrick! March 8, 9, and 10th! Tickets available at JD’s Wines and Spirits.

The Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce holding informational programs for all businesses.

Councilwoman Stentz

Shade Tree – Arbor Day is planned for Friday, April 26, 2024. White pine saplings have been ordered for the school children attending. The tree will be planted and dedicated to Father Christmas, Ron Lomerson.

Councilman Traphagen

Historic Commission – the new Welcome to Clinton signs have been printed and waiting for better weather to begin installing the new signs. A recent grant will help with getting the home designation signs, looking at vendors and hoping to the Spring to purchase.

Councilman Bruno

Councilman Bruno commended Chief Hedden and the all volunteer fire departments for their amazing response to the fire on Old Highway 22 as reported on earlier.

Councilman Perloff

Councilman Perloff also gave his appreciation to the fire department for their professionalism at Sunday’s fire.

Recreation – March 22 is the flashlight egg hunt, March 23, 2024 is the Clinton Guild Easter event. Summer recreation was sold out very quickly this year, in a matter of 48 hours!!

Insurance Committee – Councilman Perloff encouraged Councilman Kashwick and Councilwoman Stentz to look at the special events for the Guild, and the facility requests for the Community Center that do not meet the requirements.

Economic Development Committee – Councilwoman Padmos stated there was some feedback from that businesses were not happy with Councilman Perloff’s approach on the business registry. The idea is taken off the table for now.

STANDBY AND OVERTIME

A motion was made by Mr. Kashwick, seconded by Ms. Padmos, to approve the standby and overtime attached to these minutes for the period of February 2, 2024 through February 15, 2024.

ROLL CALL: Bruno, Kashwick, Padmos, Perloff, Stentz, Traphagen, Mayor Kovach

Vote all ayes
Motion carried

PAYMENT OF BILLS

A motion was made by Mr. Kashwick seconded by Ms. Padmos to approve the voucher list attached to these minutes.

ROLL CALL: Bruno, Kashwick, Padmos, Perloff, Stentz, Traphagen, Mayor Kovach

Vote all ayes
Motion carried

RESOLUTION #58-24 - EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Ms. Padmos seconded by Ms. Stentz to enter into executive session at 7:41 P.M.

RESOLUTION # 58-24

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE SESSION

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act; *N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq.*, declares it to be the public policy of the State to ensure the right of citizens to have adequate advance notice of and the right to attend meetings of public bodies at which business affecting the public is discussed or acted upon; and

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act also recognizes exceptions to the right of the public to attend portions of such meetings; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council find it necessary to conduct an executive session closed to the public as permitted by the *N.J.S.A. 40:4-12*; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council will reconvene in public session at the conclusion of the executive session;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Town of Clinton, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey that they will conduct an executive session to discuss the following topic(s) as permitted by *N.J.S.A. 40:4-12*:

A matter which Federal Law, State Statute or Rule of Court requires be kept confidential or excluded from discussion in public (Provision relied upon _____);

_____A matter where the release of information would impair a right to receive funds from the federal government;

_____A matter whose disclosure would constitute an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy;

_____A collective bargaining agreement, or the terms and conditions thereof (Specify contract:

_____A matter involving the purpose, lease or acquisition of real property with public funds, the setting of bank rates or investment of public funds where it could adversely affect the public interest if discussion of such matters were disclosed;

_____Tactics and techniques utilized in protecting the safety and property of the public provided that their disclosure could impair such protection;

_____Investigations of violations or possible violations of the law;

_____ Pending or anticipated litigation or contract negotiation in which the public body is or may become a party; (the general nature of the litigation or contract negotiations is:

_____ OR _____ the public disclosure of such information at this time would have a potentially negative impact on the municipality's position in the litigation or negotiation; therefore this information will be withheld until such time as the matter is concluded or the potential for negative impact no longer exists.)

_____ Matters falling within the attorney-client privilege, to the extent that

confidentiality is required in order for the attorney to exercise his or her ethical duties as a lawyer; (The general nature of the matter is _____

OR _____ the public

disclosure of such information at this time would have a potentially negative impact on the municipality's position with respect to the matter being discussed; therefore this information will be withheld until such time as the matter is concluded or the potential for negative impact no longer exists);

_____ Matters involving the employment, appointment, termination of employment, terms and conditions of employment, evaluation of the performance, promotion or disciplining of any specific prospective or current public officer or employee of the public body, where all individual employees or appointees whose rights could be adversely affected have not requested in writing that the matter(s) be discussed at a public meeting; (The employee(s) and/or general nature of discussion is _____

OR _____ the public disclosure of such information at this time would violate the employee(s) privacy rights; therefore this information will be withheld until such time as the matter is concluded or the threat to privacy rights no longer exists.;

_____ Deliberation occurring after a public hearing that may result in the imposition of a specific civil penalty or loss of a license or permit;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council hereby declare that their discussion of the subject(s) identified above may be made public at a time when the Town Attorney advises them that the disclosure of the discussion will not detrimentally affect any right, interest or duty of the Town or any other entity with

respect to said discussion. That time is currently estimated to be: _____

(estimated length of time) OR upon the occurrence of _____

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council, for the reasons set forth above, hereby declare that the public is excluded from the portion of the meeting during which the above discussion shall take place.

Vote all ayes
Motion carried

ADJOURNMENT

Upon returning from Executive Session and there being no further business, a motion was made by Ms. Stentz, seconded by Mr. Perloff to adjourn the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

Cecilia Covino, RMC/CMC
Municipal Clerk

Janice Kovach, Mayor