

**MINUTES**  
HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP  
**TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE**  
December 21, 2023

**Start Time:** 6:30 p.m.

The **Sunshine Statement** was read into the record by Mayor Paul Ritter  
The **Flag Salute** was led by Mayor Paul Ritter

**Roll Call:** Vice Mayor Robin Freitag, Tom Tedesco, David Miller, Kelsey Bayzick, Mayor Paul Ritter  
Also Present: John Hitchner, Admin; Jeannette Pace, Acting Clerk; Solicitor Matt Ritter, Esquire

**PRESENTATIONS:**

The Township joined in with the Bridgeton Area Chamber of Commerce's presentation of the Francis Sharp Lifetime Achievement Award to Randi Galan, Pamela and Wade Sjogren and Edward "Skip" Bowman and presented each of them with a Proclamation from the Township. Jeffrey Cassidy was also presented with a Proclamation for his dedication and contributions to the Township.

Tony Stanzione of the Bridgeton Area Chamber of Commerce addressed the Committee on how the Chamber works and its benefit to local municipalities. Former Mayor Hankins commented that being a member of the Chamber is invaluable and gives the mayors from all the surrounding districts an outlet to bounce ideas. Mayor Skip Bowman concurred with this comment. Mayor Paul Ritter recognized the value of being a member of the CDC.

Township CFO/Treasurer, Neil Young, addressed the Committee to present year-end budget discussion. Neil went through some various expenditures and expenses as well as provided insight as to what is coming in 2024.

At 7:08 p.m. Mayor Ritter entered into the Redevelopment Authority portion of the meeting per the agenda. Minutes for the Redevelopment Authority are prepared separately from these minutes for record keeping purposes. At 7:20 p.m. a Motion was made by Bayzick and seconded by Freitag with a Voice Vote all in favor to enter back into the Township Committee portion of the meeting.

• **Approval of Minutes**

Approval of the November 9, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes  
Motion to approve by Bayzick; Seconded by Tedesco. Voice Vote: All in favor.

Approval of the November 9, 2023 Executive Meeting Minutes  
Motion to approve by Freitag; Seconded by Miller. Voice Vote: All in favor.

- **Approval of Department Reports**

Motion to approve by Freitag; Seconded by Miller. Voice Vote: All in favor.

- **Treasurer's Report and Approval of Bills**

Approval of December 2023 bills as well as additional separate bills itemized on agenda.

Motion to approve by Freitag Seconded by Miller. Voice Vote all in favor.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Motion to Open to Public by Bayzick; Seconded by Tedesco. Voice Vote: All in favor.

Former Mayor Bruce Hankins thanked Mayor Ritter for his years of dedicated service. Fire Chief Ken Mayhew congratulated Mayor Ritter on his retirement and also thanked him. Former Mayor Joe Shoemaker addressed the Committee and advised that he moved to Hopewell Township in 1974 and it's been a great place to live, work and raise a family. He congratulated Mayor Ritter on his retirement and on behalf of himself and his wife, Betty, thanked him and the rest of the Committee for their service. Jeff Shimp congratulated Mayor Ritter on his retirement and commented he was looking forward to working on the Committee in January. Wendy Ritter spoke and advised that Mayor Ritter enjoyed his time working on the Committee and she knows he's going to miss it.

Mayor Ritter addressed the room. He went through a list of various things he and the committee have accomplished over the years. He thanked previous mayors and current committee members and personnel. The Mayor said it was a privilege and honor for the last 21 years to work for the Township Committee and its residents.

Seeing no one else, a Motion to close the public portion was made by Bayzick; Seconded by Tedesco. Voice Vote: All in favor.

**ORDINANCES for Adoption on Second Reading:**

**#2023-21: Ordinance of the Township of Hopewell amending section 289-8 of the Township Code, "User Charges", for 2024**

Discussion:

Tedesco questioned raising the rate versus bonding. CFO Young confirmed the need for capital for the generator project and discussed raising the rate versus borrowing money and/or bonding. Freitag pointed out the small percentage of people that use the sewer that will have to pay the new rate versus borrowing where all residents would have to pay. Bayzick commented that the township has been band-aiding the repairs as they come and feels we need to get the generator this year to prevent subsequent expenses long term.

Motion to open the public portion was made by Bayzick; Seconded by Freitag with a Voice Vote all in favor.

Former Mayor Hankins commented that the increase in sewer fees is needed because the previous committee didn't raise the fees for six or seven years which has now resulted in the current severe need.

Motion to close the public portion was made by Tedesco; Seconded by Freitag with a Voice Vote all in favor.

Discussion: The general consensus of the Committee is that a letter would be sent with the sewer bills which Tedesco and Miller will sign which will point out the prior increase or lack thereof versus inflation and the need now.

Motion to approve made by Bayzick; Seconded by Freitag.

	MOVED	SECONDED	AYES	NAYS	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Kelsey Bayzick			X			
Robin Freitag		X	X			
David Miller	X		X			
Tom Tedesco			X			
Paul J. Ritter, III			X			

**#2023-22: Ordinance of the Township of Hopewell amending section 220-48 of the Township Code: Fences and Walls**

Discussion:

Hitchner explained the old ordinance versus the language in the new ordinance.

Motion to open the public portion was made by Bayzick; Seconded by Tedesco with a Voice Vote all in favor.

Discussion:

A question arose regarding barbed-wire fencing in the D5 zone. Solicitor Ritter suggested re-wording that section to exempt affected properties. Ken Mayhew questioned the fencing setbacks from the property line. Gary Van Meter expressed his concerns on the issue as well. Mayor Ritter suggested tabling the ordinance for Solicitor Ritter to revise and then bring it back before the Committee in the near year. Tedesco spoke as to the excessive costs to the residents should a permit be required. Tedesco and Solicitor Ritter suggested passing the ordinance with the intention to add more verbiage after discussions with the zoning officer.

Motion to close the public portion was made by Freitag; Seconded by Tedesco with a Voice Vote all in favor.

Discussion: The general consensus of the Committee was that the ordinance should be tabled until additional clarifications can be done and revisions made.

Motion to table was made by Bayzick; Seconded by Miller with a Roll Call Vote as follows:

MOTION TO TABLE	MOVED	SECONDED	AYES	NAYS	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Kelsey Bayzick	X		X			
Robin Freitag			X			
David Miller		X	X			
Tom Tedesco				X		
Paul J. Ritter, III			X			

**RESOLUTIONS:**

**#2023-113 Resolution Authorizing the Signing of a Discharge of Mortgage for Paul Zoyac, Block 35.03, Lot 5, 185 Homestead Place.**

Discussion: None

Motion to Approve by Freitag; Seconded by Miller. Voice Vote: All in favor.

**#2023-114 Resolution Authorizing Change Order #1 for the Oak Drive Resurfacing Project**

Discussion: Tedesco mentioned the 5% return per the contract and asked Hitchner to speak with Fralinger Engineering to ascertain whether or not the Township is entitled to the return on this project.

Motion to Approve by Tedesco; Seconded by Freitag. Voice Vote: All in favor.

**#2023-115 Resolution Authorizing Contract with Fralinger Engineering for 2024 NJDOT Project – Woodlawn Avenue/Pineview Terrace Resurfacing**

Discussion: Grant paperwork differed from amount on Resolution. Revision to be made to the proposed resolution to coincide with the grant paperwork.

Motion to Approve by Tedesco with revision to amount as discussed.; Seconded by Miller. Voice Vote: All in favor.

**#2023-116 Resolution Authorizing the 2025 Planning Incentive Grant (PIG) Application for Farmland Preservation.**

Discussion: None

Motion to Approve by Freitag; Seconded by Miller. Voice Vote: All in favor.

**#2023-118 Resolution Authorizing Cancellation of Appropriations**

Discussion: None

Motion to Approve by Miller; Seconded by Bayzick. Voice Vote: All in favor.

**#2023-119 Resolution Authorizing Transfer of Funds**

Discussion: None

Motion to Approve by Bayzick; Seconded by Tedesco. Voice Vote: All in favor.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

- Convenience Center Update: Tedesco gave an update on the status of the convenience center. Hitchner questioned whether or not residents would need to sign waivers to have employees handle their trash. Bayzick would like the employees to be able to assist

without asking for the waivers. Solicitor Ritter discussed the liability issues. Freitag suggested Hitchner discuss the issue with JIF.

- Manor Sewer Billing: Hitchner advised since the Manor has been privately owned since 2013, the CCUA would bill the Township for usage and we would bill the private owner. There have been months when no payments were received. Hitchner suggested getting the Manor into the Township's regular billing system so they are billed like any other commercial business with an annual mailing and quarterly payments so it can be tracked and charged interest like a commercial entity. Bayzick and Freitag agreed with this.
- Hitchner gave an update on the farmland lease agreements.
- Hitchner and Pace gave an update as to the status of the website.
- Bridgeton Triathlon – Requesting use of roads on 6/22/2024. Committee discussed and agrees to allow this. Additional information will follow.
- Hitchner gave an update on the Farmland Preservation Municipal Funding.
- Pace advised the Rabies Clinic in Hopewell Township is scheduled for March 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Hitchner gave an update on the RFQs status.

**SOLICITOR'S REPORT:** Solicitor Ritter advised that he has a meeting scheduled with the County and Chief Mayhew regarding usage of the drone.

**RESOLUTION #2023-111 AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed involved Potential Litigation.

Motion to Enter into Executive Session by Bayzick; Seconded by Tedesco.

Time: 8:40 p.m. Voice Vote: All in favor.

Motion to Return to Public Session by Bayzick; Seconded by Freitag

Time: 9:50 p.m. Voice Vote: All in favor.

Action Taken: None

**MOTION TO ADJOURN:**

As it was his final meeting as the Hopewell Township Mayor, Paul Ritter made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Freitag. Voice Vote: All in favor.

**End Time:** 8:55 p.m.

**Next Meeting Date:** Re-Org January 2, 2024 @ 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeannette Pace, Acting Clerk

cc: Township Administrator, Committee and Counsel