

The Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Freehold was held on Monday, March 5, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building.

Mayor Higgins stated that the notice of the time, date and location of the meeting had been provided pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 231 of the Laws of 1975 (Open Public Meetings Act).

Councilman DiBenedetto opened the meeting with the Salute to the Flag, followed by a moment of silence.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT	MAYOR J. NOLAN HIGGINS
PRESENT	COUNCILMAN MICHAEL DIBENEDETTO
PRESENT	COUNCILMAN RONALD GRIFFITHS
PRESENT	COUNCILMAN KEVIN KANE
PRESENT	COUNCILMAN GEORGE SCHNURR
PRESENT	COUNCILWOMAN SHARON SHUTZER
PRESENT	COUNCILMAN JAYE SIMS

Mayor Higgins read Item No. 4 on the Agenda as follows:

“Approval of Minutes: Council Meetings January 16, 2018 and February 5, 2018; Special Meeting January 29, 2018.”

Councilwoman Shutzer offered a motion to accept the minutes and was seconded by Councilman DiBenedetto:

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Kane, Schnurr and Shutzer voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain Griffiths (1/29), Sims (1/29); absent none. Mayor Higgins declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Higgins read Item No. 5 on the Agenda as follows:

“Introduction of and Authorization to Publish Bond Ordinance #2018/2 Providing for the Construction of a New Water Treatment Plant, Appropriating \$500,000 Therefor and Authorizing the Issuance of \$475,000 Bonds and Notes to Finance a Portion of the Costs Thereof, Authorized in and by the Borough of Freehold, in the County of Monmouth, New Jersey.”

Councilman Kane offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilman DiBenedetto:

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Freehold that a Bond Ordinance entitled “ORDINANCE #2018/2 PROVIDING FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW WATER TREATMENT PLANT, APPROPRIATING \$500,000 THEREFOR AND

AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$475,000 BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE A PORTION OF THE COSTS THEREOF, AUTHORIZED IN AND BY THE BOROUGH OF FREEHOLD, IN THE COUNTY OF MONMOUTH.” be, and same is hereby approved on first reading; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk be and she is hereby authorized to publish said Ordinance in the Asbury Park Press and that shall be further considered for final passage after public hearing at a meeting held on March 19, 2018 at 7:00 PM and that during the week of said meeting copies of the Ordinance shall be made available at the Clerk’s office to members of the general public who shall request same.

Councilman Sims congratulated the Finance Committee and Administrator Joseph Bellina for their efforts. He stated this is definitely a step forward in updating the water infrastructure.

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Griffiths, Kane, Schnurr, Shutzer and Sims voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; absent none. Mayor Higgins declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Higgins read Item No. 6 on the Agenda as follows:

“Introduction of and Authorization to Publish Ordinance #2018/3 of the Borough of Freehold Establishing a Restricted Parking Zone in Front of a Residence (39 Reid Way).”

Councilman Schnurr offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilwoman Shutzer:

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Freehold that a Bond Ordinance entitled “ORDINANCE #2018/3 OF THE BOROUGH OF FREEHOLD ESTABLISHING A RESTRICTED PARKING ZONE IN FRONT OF A RESIDENCE (39 REID WAY).” be, and same is hereby approved on first reading; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk be and she is hereby authorized to publish said Ordinance in the Asbury Park Press and that shall be further considered for final passage after public hearing at a meeting held on March 19, 2018 at 7:00 PM and that during the week of said meeting copies of the Ordinance shall be made available at the Clerk’s office to members of the general public who shall request same.

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Griffiths, Kane, Schnurr, Shutzer and Sims voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; absent none. Mayor Higgins declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Higgins read Item No. 7 on the Agenda as follows:

“Introduction of and Authorization to Publish Ordinance #2018/4 to Exceed the Municipal Budget Appropriation Limits and to Establish a Cap Bank (N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.14).”

Councilman Kane offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilwoman Griffiths:

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Freehold that a Bond Ordinance entitled “ORDINANCE #2018/4 TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK (N.J.S.A. 40A:4-45.14).” be, and same is hereby approved on first reading; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk be and she is hereby authorized to publish said Ordinance in the Asbury Park Press and that shall be further considered for final passage after public hearing at a meeting held on March 19, 2018 at 7:00 PM and that during the week of said meeting copies of the Ordinance shall be made available at the Clerk’s office to members of the general public who shall request same.

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Griffiths, Kane, Schnurr, Shutzer and Sims voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; absent none. Mayor Higgins declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Higgins read Item No. 8 on the Agenda as follows:

“Proclamation of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Freehold Declaring Saturday, February 24, 2018 as West Point Cadet Glee Club Day in the Borough of Freehold.”

Councilwoman Shutzer reported the performance comprised of West Point Cadets from all over the country, was held at the First Presbyterian Church and was magnificent.

Mayor Higgins read Item No. 9 on the Agenda as follows:

“Resolutions Honoring Minna Schwartz (100), Mollie Wertheim (104), Ruth Katzenstein (102), Rae Singer (100), Ann Kierstien (100) and Bertha Lieberman (103) on the Occasion of their Birthdays.”

Councilwoman Shutzer offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilman Griffiths:

RESOLUTION HONORING MINNA SCHWARTZ (100), MOLLIE WERTHEIM (104), RUTH KATZENSTEIN (102), RAE SINGER (100), ANN KIERSTEIN (100) AND BERTHA LIEBERMAN (103) ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR BIRTHDAYS.

Councilwoman Shutzer stated the recipients were delighted and thrilled to receive the Resolutions on the day of their 100+ Birthday celebration.

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Griffiths, Kane, Schnurr, Shutzer and Sims voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; absent none. Mayor Higgins declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Higgins read Item No. 10 on the Agenda as follows:

“Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Freehold Honoring Rev. Dr. Milton J. Holmes.”

Councilwoman Shutzer offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilman DiBenedetto:

RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF FREEHOLD HONORING REV. DR. MILTON J. HOLMES.

Councilwoman Shutzer reported she, Mayor Higgins and Councilman Schnurr presented the Resolution at a celebration. She added he was one of the original Tuskegee Airmen.

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Griffiths, Kane, Schnurr, Shutzer and Sims voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; absent none. Mayor Higgins declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Higgins read Item No. 11 on the Agenda as follows:

“Resolution Authorizing a Professional Engineering Services Change Order with Abbington Engineering for the Veterans Park Improvement Project.”

Councilman DiBenedetto offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilman Griffiths:

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING SERVICES CHANGE ORDER WITH ABBINGTON ENGINEERING FOR THE VETERANS PARK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT.

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Griffiths, Kane, Schnurr, Shutzer and Sims voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; absent none. Mayor Higgins declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Higgins read Item No. 12 on the Agenda as follows:

“Resolution Authorizing Cancellation of Municipal Certificate of Sale.”

Councilman Griffiths offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilman DiBenedetto:

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CANCELLATION OF MUNICIPAL
CERTIFICATE OF SALE.**

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Griffiths, Kane, Schnurr, Shutzer and Sims voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; absent none. Mayor Higgins declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Higgins read Item No. 13 on the Agenda as follows:

“Resolution of the Borough of Freehold, County of Monmouth and State of New Jersey Cancelling Tax Charges Regarding Block 84, Lot 65.08: 81 Orchard Street, Freehold, NJ.”

Councilman DiBenedetto offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilman Sims:

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH OF FREEHOLD, COUNTY OF MONMOUTH
AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY CANCELLING TAX CHARGES REGARDING
BLOCK 84, LOT 65.08: 81 ORCHARD STREET, FREEHOLD, NJ.**

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Griffiths, Kane, Schnurr, Shutzer and Sims voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; absent none. Mayor Higgins declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Higgins read Item No. 14 on the Agenda as follows:

“Resolution Authorizing the Release of Performance Guarantees (Exquisite Caterers, LLC).”

Councilman Kane offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilman DiBenedetto:

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE RELEASE OF PERFORMANCE GUARANTEES
(EXQUISITE CATERERS, LLC).**

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Griffiths, Kane, Schnurr, Shutzer and Sims voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; absent none. Mayor Higgins declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Higgins read Item No. 15 on the Agenda as follows:

“Resolution Authorizing the Transfer of Appropriations in the Fiscal Year 2017 Budget. (Police-Salaries and Wages to Contribution to Acc. Absenses).”

Councilman Griffiths offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilman Kane:

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TRANSFER OF APPROPRIATIONS IN THE FISCAL YEAR 2017 BUDGET. (POLICE-SALARIES AND WAGES TO CONTRIBUTION TO ACC. ABSENSES).

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Griffiths, Kane, Schnurr, Shutzer and Sims voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; absent none. Mayor Higgins declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Higgins read Item No. 16 on the Agenda as follows:

“Resolution Authorizing the Transfer of Appropriations in the Fiscal Year 2017 Budget. (Transfer to Accumulated Absences).”

Councilman Schnurr offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilman Kane:

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TRANSFER OF APPROPRIATIONS IN THE FISCAL YEAR 2017 BUDGET. (TRANSFER TO ACCUMULATED ABSENCES).

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Griffiths, Kane, Schnurr, Shutzer and Sims voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; absent none. Mayor Higgins declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Higgins read Item No. 17 on the Agenda as follows:

“Resolution Authorizing the Transfer of Appropriations in the Fiscal Year 2017 Budget. (Road Repair & Maintenance, S&W, Other Expenses to Reserve for Storm Recovery Trust).”

Councilman Schnurr offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilman Kane:

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TRANSFER OF APPROPRIATIONS IN THE FISCAL YEAR 2017 BUDGET. (ROAD REPAIR & MAINTENANCE, S&W, OTHER EXPENSES TO RESERVE FOR STORM RECOVERY TRUST).

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Griffiths, Kane, Schnurr, Shutzer and Sims voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; absent none. Mayor Higgins declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Higgins read Item No. 18 on the Agenda as follows:

“Resolution Terminating a Contract and Awarding a Replacement Janitorial Service.”

Councilman DiBenedetto offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilman Sims:

RESOLUTION TERMINATING A CONTRACT AND AWARDING A REPLACEMENT JANITORIAL SERVICE.

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Griffiths, Kane, Schnurr, Shutzer and Sims voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; absent none. Mayor Higgins declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Higgins read Item No. 19 on the Agenda as follows:

“Resolution Authorizing Execution of an Updated Shared Services Agreement with Freehold Township for Code Enforcement, Building Inspection and Plan Review Services.”

Councilman Kane offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilman Griffiths:

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF AN UPDATED SHARED SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH FREEHOLD TOWNSHIP FOR CODE ENFORCEMENT, BUILDING INSPECTION AND PLAN REVIEW SERVICES.

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Griffiths, Kane, Schnurr, Shutzer and Sims voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; absent none. Mayor Higgins declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Higgins read Item No. 20 on the Agenda as follows:

“Resolution Approving the Mayor’s Nomination and Appointment to the Freehold Borough Housing Authority:

- a. Ruthann Broxmyer, to fill the unexpired term of Veronica Masi, expiring on 12/31/2019.**
- b. Reginald Sims, revising term to expire on 12/31/2021.**
- c. Erika Woods, term expiring on 12/31/2021.”**

Councilwoman Shutzer offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilman Griffiths:

RESOLUTION APPROVING THE MAYOR’S NOMINATION AND APPOINTMENT TO THE FREEHOLD BOROUGH HOUSING AUTHORITY: 20A-20C.

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Griffiths, Kane, Schnurr and Shutzer voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain Sims (c); absent none. Mayor Higgins declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Higgins read Item No. 21 on the Agenda as follows:

“Resolution Confirming Personnel Appointments/Actions:

- a. Appointment of Shari Mallow as a full-time school crossing guard, effective March 6, 2018.**
- b. Appointment of Barry Warren as a part-time school crossing guard, effective March 6, 2018.**
- c. Appointment of Michael Sweetman as Engineering Aide, effective March 6, 2018.**
- d. Resignation of Alice E. Burke as a School Crossing Guard, effective March 6, 2018.”**

Councilwoman Shutzer offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilman Griffiths:

RESOLUTION CONFIRMING PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS/ACTIONS: 21A-21D.

Mayor Higgins asked for discussion. There was none.

On Roll Call:

Councilman DiBenedetto stated “I will be voting no on “C”. My reasoning’s are since October this job has been vacant. I sat on the Personnel Committee in 2017 to the end of 2017 until January 1st. In that time I did not see any resumes, there were interviews being done that I was unaware of and until tonight was the first time I heard what we were paying this individual. I think that this job could be with Certs, shared services and the job that it involves can be shared out throughout and given out to different employees. Or maybe even hire a part-timer. So I think that should have been researched. I will be voting no on “C”. Thank you.”

Councilman Griffiths voted yes.

Councilman Kane voted yes.

Councilman Schnurr stated “I too will be voting no on “C” but yes on all the other ones. I agree 100% with Councilman DiBenedetto. Furthermore I think we need to move away from the business model and time honored tradition of hiring friends of Councilwoman Shutzer.”

Councilwoman Shutzer stated “I thought that I could not be more stunned than I was in the room over here when Councilman Schnurr for the second time since we have been

Council Persons together called me a liar. But now I am even more stunned. I don't even know what to say. Mike Sweetman is not a friend of mine. I know him. I am stunned. I will be voting yes for this because I represent the people of Freehold Borough and I think that this is in the best interest, this position is in the best interest of Freehold Borough and of the applicants that we received, one of whom was Mr. DiBenedetto and one of whom was Mr. Sims' brother, I truly thought that in fact that Mr. Sweetman was the best choice. He has the knowledge, we had some excellent applicants. He has the knowledge to do the job; the expertise in many of the areas where other people would have to be trained, he already has benefits, we would not have to pay benefits to him. He had the most impressive resume of all and I am, um, I hope my record speaks for me, I am voting for what is best for Freehold Borough. I don't have a pony in this race and I will deal with accusations that were made here tonight on my professional character. I am voting yes."

Councilman Sims stated "I am also going to be voting no. I'd like to see us go back to the drawing board and perhaps see what we can do as far as farming out some of the services that under the job description of this position."

Mayor Higgins stated "We have unanimous on A, B and D. And we have a tie on C."

Municipal Clerk DiBenedetto answered "Correct."

Mayor Higgins stated "I am voting yes on "C". Mr. Sweetman brings a great deal of knowledge. I have worked with him closely on a lot of important matters when he was with the police department, he brings a great skill set and I look forward to his work in Borough Hall. I think his service to the residents of this community will be appreciated going forward from this evening. So my vote is yes."

Councilman Kane asked for further discussion and stated "This is a little ridiculous, these accusations being thrown at Councilwoman Shutzer. This process was done the same way we hire all other individuals. There is an interview process; you submit the applications, you're interviewed and according to the people that interview they select the best candidate. In this case it was Mike Sweetman. The fact that he is a retired Borough cop has no bearing. He was the best candidate of those selected. And to say this position isn't necessary or may be worked with shared services, there was a tremendous amount of interest amongst the people that we all know that wanted this position. The fact that Mike Sweetman was selected I think this is a little ridiculous to play this out in public like it has. But unfortunately it has and we will move forward. I look forward to working with Mike Sweetman and I think he is going to do an excellent job as the Engineering Aide in Freehold Borough.

Councilman DiBenedetto stated "Mr. Mayor, I would like to defend myself since I wasn't given that opportunity when somebody slung my name into this conversation."

Councilman DiBenedetto continued, "I am sorry Mr. Mayor. I want to represent myself. This is American isn't it?"

Mayor Higgins stated "I said go ahead."

Councilman DiBenedetto stated "Thank you. I did have a resume and I did put in for the job. But my resume was taken out, well before I was asked to do an interview from two individuals that were doing the interviewing. Once I took it out, I did believe that this could be talked out and maybe done into a shared services and part-timer. But, I am friends with Mike Sweetman, maybe not after tonight, but I think I am doing the right thing for the Borough of Freehold and the people of Freehold. And that is why I am thinking this way. And, as someone on the governing body said, I was treated like everybody else. Thank you."

Mayor Higgins asked for any further comment.

Councilman Griffiths stated "I just simply would like to say I remain true to my philosophy on all hiring and that is the best person for the job. And I think Mike Sweetman is and that is the way I voted."

Mayor Higgins read Item No. 22 on the Agenda as follows:

"Resolution Approving the Following Applications:

- a. **Memorialize Raffle License #8-18, BPOE #1454 Freehold Lodge, 50/50, 3/11/18, 73 East Main Street.**
- b. **Raffle License #11-18, Park Avenue Elementary PTO, Basket Raffle, 4/21/18, 280 Park Avenue.**
- c. **Raffle License #12-18, Park Avenue Elementary PTO, 50/50 Raffle, 4/21/18, 280 Park Avenue.**
- d. **Amusement Game Machine License, Pool Table, American Legion Post 54, 63 West Main Street.**
- e. **Vendor License, Maria Sacramento, Jazmin Ice Cream, Sunday through Saturday, 10:00 AM - 9:00 PM.**
- f. **Taxi Owner License, Marcos Taxi.**
- g. **Taxi Owner License, Regional Taxi.**
- h. **Taxi Owner Licenses (2), Eagle Taxi.**
- i. **Taxi Owner License, Gonzalez Taxi.**
- j. **Temporary Taxi Driver License, Jacqueline Koleshnick, Freehold.**
- k. **Temporary Taxi Driver License, Hector Tello, Freehold.**
- l. **Temporary Taxi Driver License, Miguel Pantoja, Freehold.**
- m. **Temporary Taxi Driver License, Angela Cruz, Freehold.**
- n. **Temporary Taxi Driver License, Olga Trujillo, Jackson.**
- o. **Temporary Taxi Driver License, Michael Nwachukwu.**
- p. **Temporary Taxi Driver License, Orlando Otiniono.**
- q. **Temporary Taxi Driver License, Jahswill Obinna**
- r. **Permanent Taxi Driver License, Michael Beierschmitt, Freehold.**
- s. **Permanent Taxi Driver License, Angel Cruz, Freehold.**
- t. **Permanent Taxi Driver License, Bernabe Galvan, Howell.**
- u. **Permanent Taxi Driver License, Marco Moscoso Castaneda, Freehold."**

Councilwoman Shutzer offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilman Griffiths:

RESOLUTION APPROVING APPLICATIONS: 22A – 22U.

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Griffiths, Kane, Schnurr, Shutzer and Sims voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; absent none. Mayor Higgins declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Higgins read Item No. 23 on the Agenda as follows:

“Approval of Bills.”

Councilman Kane offered the following Resolution and moved its adoption, seconded by Councilman Griffiths:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Freehold that the bills on the attached lists in the amount of; February 20th - \$1,128,419.23 and March 5th - \$2,929,537.93 be paid as presented.

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Griffiths, Kane, Schnurr, Shutzer and Sims voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; absent none. Mayor Higgins declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Higgins read Item No. 24 on the Agenda as follows:

“Clerk – Late Communications.”

There were none.

Mayor Higgins read Item No. 25 on the Agenda as follows:

“Public Comments”

Mr. Greg Clark, Historic Preservation Commission Chairman. Mr. Clark asked if he could speak on behalf of the HPC Commission. He was not sure that should be done during Public Comments.

Attorney Kerry Higgins stated “Public comments means you are free to speak. I do not know if you can speak on behalf of HPC because I don’t know if you have the authority to do so. I am not answering that part of your question.”

Councilman DiBenedetto stated “Madam Counselor, I believe at the HPC they did give you permission and their minutes should reflect that. I don’t know, we don’t have the minutes in front of us, that he can represent the HPC but they did give permission in their minutes.”

Ms. Higgins stated "I wasn't speaking on that. I take his representation that he can but I am not, you know. You asked if it's public comment so you can go ahead."

Mr. Clark asked if it's public question.

Ms. Higgins confirmed it's public comment.

Mr. Clark stated "That's even better."

Mayor Higgins asked if the comment was going to be directed toward the Christopher House.

Mr. Clark confirmed it is.

Mayor Higgins stated he has a conflict and was stepping down and passed the meeting to Council President Shutzer. Councilman DiBenedetto announced he would also be stepping down due to conflict.

Mr. Clark stated "Basically I am not sure of the status of the approval of the demolition approval for the Christopher House. I just wanted to put forth on behalf of the HPC, our opinion that this should be heard according to the ordinance and I cite a specific ordinance stating that this particular decision needs to go in front of the Zoning Board. The Freehold Center Core Redevelopment Ordinance 2.134.100 appeals states that if the HPC actually recommends against a particular decision, then it does need to either go in front of the Planning or Zoning Board or the combined board as we now have. Specifically for items mentioning demolition, Page 32 The Criteria for Demolition states that if necessary the application standards set forth in the codes of the Freehold Borough should be considered all applications to demolish any structure deemed of import to the Freehold Center Core. Now I would maintain that this particular structure, which is an Antebellum, Pre Civil War structure and the only remaining example of Greek Temple front architecture for a residential building, in our opinion it's of import. I think we need to have a public forum basically determining the fate of it. For the record, that is what the HPC puts forth. I will keep it brief. I don't know whether we want to discuss it, I just wanted to have it on record. Thank you."

Ms. Higgins stated this is just public comments. Mr. Clark understood.

Mayor Higgins and Councilman DiBenedetto returned to the dais. Mayor Higgins asked if there were any further public comments.

Councilwoman Shutzer made a motion to close Public Comments, seconded by Councilman Griffiths.

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Griffiths, Kane, Schnurr, Shutzer and Sims voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; absent none. Mayor Higgins declared the motion adopted.

Mayor Higgins read Item No. 26 on the Agenda as follows:

“Council Comments.”

Councilman Sims stated “The only thing I have tonight, I’d like to publicly send our condolences out to the Sheehan family. Rita Sheehan recently passed away. She was the wife of former Borough Superintendent of Roads, Ray Sheehan and her sons Ray, Jr. and Steven are members of the fire department. Steven is our Second Assistant Chief. Recently she was buried and I’d like to pass on our condolences to their family. That is all I have for tonight.”

Councilman DiBenedetto stated “My prayers and thoughts go out the Sheehan family also. At this time I’d like to call up Jeff Friedman. I don’t want to take all the glory, I know he dressed for the occasion tonight, putting together our Downtown Irish Fest and all the activities that are coming up and I don’t want to miss anything. Jeff dressed for the part so I’d like to give him the honor and he did all the hard work, so.”

Mr. Jeff Friedman, Downtown Freehold stated “Hi everyone, Jeff Friedman – Downtown Freehold and the Arts Council. I just want to let everyone know it’s Day Light Savings Time this Sunday, so turn your clocks forward this Sunday. You loose an hour of sleep and that’s very important because you have to be at the parade. We assemble at 12:00 on Sunday morning and the parade kicks off at 1:00 PM. I’ve got flyers here for all of you, so we are very excited about that. We’ve got a great week of events. We have our Dine Around on Tuesday and Wednesday, then we’ve got our Pub Crawl and Scotch Crawl on Thursday and then four nights; Monday – Thursday we’ve got bagpipers downtown. It’s going to be provided by the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the local Freehold Chapter; a bunch of those guys are going to be doing the bagpiping so instead of hiring outside people, we’ve got local people doing the bagpiping. We are really excited about that. And that is the kick off to our great event season. With that in mind, I also want to give everyone one of these. Downtown Freehold received word, we just got this in the mail last week, that Downtown Freehold was voted the best venue for musical entertainment here in Monmouth County. We tied with the Stone Pony. So to tie with the Stone Pony is really good stuff, so when people think outdoor entertainment and things going on, they are thinking the Stone Pony and Downtown Freehold. So that is really exciting to us. And to that regard, I was at a meeting this morning at the old Bell Labs building and it was a meeting of arts leaders in the county and three places kept coming up time and time again about places that they are going to be focused on over the next five years because of what has happened in three separate communities. Three towns they kept mentioning were; Red Bank, Asbury Park and Freehold. So we have made a notice to the community in a wider area and hopefully that is going to spur on a lot of great stuff for Freehold Borough and Downtown Freehold. So I want to thank you, thank the police, thank everyone for your continued support for what we do downtown. Thank you Mike DiBenedetto for being our liaison as well. See you all Sunday and hope you can all come.”

Councilman Schnurr stated “First of all, thank you Jeff for your leadership and your enthusiasm for the Freehold Center Partnership. You are doing a great job down there. My condolences to the Sheehan family as well. I’d like to, I think we need to make a couple of

changes up here. And what I am going to do is, I am going to open up some old wounds that need to be opened up. Back in 2012, we had this thing, actually we have it every year, it's called the Best Practices. And the Best Practices is like a report card for our municipality and in the 3rd year of our assessment was 2012 and it's basically an initiative to encourage municipalities to consider, embrace and implement a wide range of procedures that would help as a municipality. Well, back in 2012, we had a little bit of problem and we have been very good since then. But, in 2012 only 7 towns in the state of New Jersey were being docked state aid. In other words, if you get below a certain amount, you get docked state aid. Freehold Borough received a score of 82% and 80% would have docked us. So we missed it by, thank goodness, by one question. Now this is old news, we have gone through this before. The part that we didn't go through was there's various sections. There's Finance, Insurance, Budget Preparation, Purchasing. All of those areas received a score of 96. So if all of those areas received a score of 96, what brought us down to 82? The answer is Personnel. We got a score of 60, a D. And so that's the thing that almost sunk the boat. Now I want to go back to 2015. 2015 there was an effort made to get a police director. Another layer of government between the governing body and the police department. And very much like what we saw tonight, where we actually interviewed different people, one of the people that we interviewed was the ex Tinton Falls Mayor, who denies whistle blower charges. So there were all sorts of problems with him. The other guy that we interviewed actually had quite an extensive resume, but one of the things we found out, or should I say I found out, was when you googled his name, when he was in charge of the Philadelphia Airport, the security at the airport, he was hiring strippers from a club he used to frequent as TSA Agents. I went in and googled the guy's name. That's what you're supposed to do right? Google the guy's name, see what comes up. And these were things not in blogs, these were things in newspapers. OK? The Philadelphia Inquirer. Now, so we have the Best Practices problem that was caused by Personnel, we have a hiring, where we were going to hire a police chief, I'm sorry a police director and this was going to be end result and we wound up not doing that. And now tonight we have another blow up in personnel. You know, the thing is, when the house burns down and the smoke clears and the dust settles, what you wind up seeing is Councilwoman Shutzer holding the matchbook. She is in charge of personnel. She is in charge of all these blowups and it happens every few years and I am tired of it. So tonight, I'm asking Councilwoman Shutzer to resign her position from the Personnel Committee because nothing good has ever come from it since I have been on the Council. That's the end of my comments."

Councilman Kane stated "That is flat out ridiculous. Anyway, I won't digress from that. We will talk later. Thank you everyone for coming out tonight; we appreciate you coming out. Unfortunately you had to sit through one of the worst council meetings I've attended since I have been on council honestly. You know the comments that were made tonight, totally uncalled for in my opinion. Comments made trying to discredit the mayor's administration, our Administrator Joe Bellina, the insinuations about hiring practices and interview processes. I'm telling you what, Joe Bellina is one of the most respected Business Administrators in the entire State of New Jersey. You go the Municipal Managers Association, the League of Municipalities and you ask about Joe Bellina, every single person to the person will tell you he is one of the best in the business throughout the state. The Mayor does a great job. This is just totally ridiculous and to discredit Sharon Shutzer. Sharon

Shutzer out works every single person up here on this dais, every single person. She is at every single thing that happens in this town and it's because of a lot of the efforts that Sharon Shutzer does, a lot of this stuff gets done in this town and makes this town so great. So it is total crap that you guys are taking shots at Sharon here in public. Totally ridiculous! Oh man. My condolences to the Sheehan and Pullen family on their losses. Thanks Jeff O'Friedman for your presentation on the St. Paddy's Day parade. As a member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, we had trial run this past Sunday in Belmar. We marched in the Belmar St. Paddy's Day parade. We were told at that parade there is a pipe band coming to lead our parade. So when Jeff mentioned we are going to assemble at 12:00 and it's going to kick off at 1:00; it is going to start right at 1:00 because this band has to be in Somerset by 2:30. So we were going to start right at 1:00. Jeff used to bill it as a small St. Patrick's Day parade in the state. We can't say that any more because we've extended it. It's going to start at Freehold Savings on McLean Street, go all the way down Main Street to the point at the Elks and all the festivities will be at the Elks. At the end there is going to be a reviewing stand, a stage set up with dancers and pipers. It's going to be a great day. It's going to be a great kick off to Irish Week here in the Borough. So thanks for your work on that Jeff. He mentioned some of our Hibernian members are going to be bagpiping throughout Irish Week in the different restaurants; they are great, come out. It's going to be some great Irish culture. Probably a few beverages tossed around here and there, but it's going to be a fun week in the Borough for sure. Come out. The parade will start exactly at 1:00. This pipe band is going to kick it off. It's going to be great. In closing, Sharon I am sorry that you had to go through this today. She is one of the most respected, oldest serving Council Members in Monmouth County and did not deserve what she received by our fellow council members up here. Totally ridiculous again. And this point going back six years on a Best Practices, what were the numbers since then? I mean it's ridiculous. I'm done. Thank you for coming out and sorry you all had to endure this."

Councilman Griffiths stated "Thank you Mayor. I can echo Kevin's sentiments. The general accusations, unsupported by facts, have no place in making character assassinations of a person whose character is above and beyond anyone else on this dais. She has served this town well for a long time and I have never found her to be in favor of something like nepotism, that she was accused of or basically friendship appointments and she is not the arsonist that starts the fires in Freehold Borough. She is the person who is the top vote getter every time she runs and that is because the people of the town respect her, whether George does or not. Enough said on that because there is no one that can defend Sharon Shutzer better than Sharon Shutzer, so I will stop my brief speech. I'd just like to tell people, my condolences to the Sheehan and Pullen family. If you get a chance look on line, Participatory Budgeting is back this year and the projects from last year are well on their way to being seen, shovels in the ground. But there is a survey on the website and if anyone wishes to go on there and take a survey about last year's Participatory Budget and give us ideas how we can make it better, we'd greatly appreciate it. Thank you."

Council President Shutzer stated "I too would like to offer my condolences to the Sheehan and Pullen families. I did not know about the Pullen family loss until I heard it tonight. Rita Sheehan was a lovely, lovely woman and my condolences to that family. In my own defense, I would just like to say I am absolutely guilty of one thing and you call me a

witch, you can call me anything you want to call me, I taught 8th Grade for long time, name calling doesn't really effect me. But I will tell you of what I am guilty. I am guilty of being a strong woman with the audacity to stand up against bullies. I am guilty of the fact that I am so entrenched in doing what's right for this Borough and the residents that when I see something not being done according to how I think it should be done in the best interest of our residents, I speak up. I don't give in to bullies. I'm not ever gonna give in to bullies. If that makes me a liar, if that makes me standing up for what I think the best character is being friendly or whatever I was charged with than so be it. I'm going to continue to be that audacious, tenacious woman who is not intimidated by bullies and I will not ever be intimidated by bullies. If the Borough; if the people in this town do not appreciate that and do not want that then end my service. Thank you."

Mayor Higgins stated "I am so taken back tonight I don't even know where to begin. Comments were made that were uncalled for, unprofessional. Sharon you have nothing but my support and gratitude for your service to this community. Your service is motivated by nothing other than what is best for our residents. I've had the pleasure to sit here for seven years with you and I have that experience with you and you have my full respect and faith and I am sorry you had to sit through this. If there is no other comment, we will entertain a motion to adjourn."

Councilman Griffiths made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Kane.

On roll call Council Members DiBenedetto, Griffiths, Kane, Schnurr, Shutzer and Sims voted its adoption; opposed none; abstain none; absent none. Mayor Higgins declared the motion adopted.

Meeting adjourned at 7:44 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



TRACI L. DIBENEDETTO, RMC
BOROUGH CLERK

TLD:lc