

TOWN OF PHILLIPSBURG
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

September 5, 2023 — 7:00 P.M.

1. **CALL TO ORDER 7:01 pm** **By CP Wyant**
2. **OPEN PUBLIC MEETING ACT STATEMENT** **Read by CVP Clark**
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** **All**
4. **INVOCATION** **Led by Councilman Piazza**
5. **ROLL CALL – Present - Wyant, Clark, Piazza, Marino, Kennedy**
-Also in attendance: Mayor Tersigni, Business Administrator Hall, Attorney John Abromitis, Deputy Clerk Turner.
6. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – August 15, 2023 Public Session Minutes**
August 29, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes

ROLL CALL

Motion Carries 5-0

Councilmembers	First	Second	Yea	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Councilman Piazza			X			
Councilman Marino			8/15/23 minutes		8/29/23 minutes	
Councilman Kennedy	X		X			
Council VP Clark		X	X			
Council President Wyant			X			

7. BILLS LIST –

ROLL CALL

Motion Carries 5-0

Councilmembers	First	Second	Yea	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Councilman Piazza			X			
Councilman Marino			X			
Councilman Kennedy			X			
Council VP Clark	X		X			
Council President Wyant		X	X			

8. **ANNOUNCEMENTS/PRESENTATIONS – Proclamation Prostate Cancer Awareness (attached)**
9. **MAYOR’S REPORT/ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS**

MAYOR'S REPORT

First of all, I would like to comment on the pool. The pool was historic in recreation bringing families together. Recreation is at an all-time high with Cal Ripken and the transformation of the tennis courts to pickleball and a new basketball court area. With that being said, the pool brought in over \$110,000 this year. Parking revenue stands at \$84,253 currently. This represents almost 3 cents in our budget. Also, four years ago our town had around 600 abandoned buildings-today we stand at less than 50.

Progress continues on the Elks building as well as Popeyes and Arby’s which has seen construction begin on the buildings. With respect to municipal projects, I am pleased to announce that the Town will be holding a preconstruction meeting with the contractor for the asbestos and mold remediation work at Corliss avenue next week. Work will begin shortly thereafter.

I would like to remind everyone that there will be a 9/11 ceremony in Shappell Park on Monday, September 11th at 11:00 a.m. where we will remember those lost on that terrible day 22 years ago.

Finally, due to the extreme temperatures there will be a cooling station available at the Senior Center, located at 310 Firth Street all day Wednesday and Thursday with extended hours from 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. each day.

Respectfully Submitted, Todd M. Tersigni Mayor of Phillipsburg

10. PUBLIC DISCUSSION ON AGENDA ITEMS

Joe Meyner, 392 South Main Street, Phillipsburg – regarding the sidewalks at McDonald’s- \$88,000 is ridiculously high. On Marshall St, a 3 ft wide sidewalk ending in a 2 ft high retaining wall with a crosswalk across the rear entrance would give safe pedestrian passage. On Union Highway (Rt 22) there is no safe way for pedestrians to deal with the entrance and egress to and from McDonald’s. Both neighbors have or will have safe walkway to the proposed Marshall Street sidewalk. CP Wyant stated that the McDonald’s sidewalk waiver discussion has been postponed to the September 19th meeting.

Public Discussion Session closed.

11. ORDINANCES FOR 2ND READING –

O2023-13 – AN ORDINANCE FIXING OR AMENDING CERTAIN SALARY RANGES FOR THE TOWN OF PHILLIPSBURG

Public Discussion - None

Council Discussion - None

ROLL CALL

Motion Carries

5-0

Councilmembers	First	Second	Yea	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Councilman Piazza		X	X			
Councilman Marino	X		X			
Councilman Kennedy			X			
Council VP Clark			X			
Council President Wyant			X			

12. ORDINANCES FOR 1ST READING – No ordinances for first reading.

13. RESOLUTIONS ** CONSENT AGENDA **

Matters listed on the Consent Agenda Resolutions are considered routine and will be enacted by one motion of the Council and one roll call vote. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Council member requests an item to be removed for consideration

R2023-164 RESOLUTION TO ISSUE A REFUND FOR A TAX OVERPAYMENT

R2023-165 RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE INSERTION OF SPECIAL ITEM OF REVENUE IN THE BUDGET OF ANY COUNTY OR MUNICIPALITY PURSUANT TO N.J.S. 40A:4-87 (CHAPTER 159, P.L. 1948)

R2023-166 GOVERNING BODY CERTIFICATION OF THE ANNUAL AUDIT

R2023-168 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF AN AGREEMENT WITH THE MORRIS COUNTY COOPERATIVE PRICING COUNCIL TO BECOME A MEMBER FOR THE PERIOD OF OCTOBER 1, 2021 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2026

ROLL CALL

Motion Carries

5-0

Councilmembers	First	Second	Yea	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Councilman Piazza			X			
Councilman Marino	X		X			
Councilman Kennedy			X			
Council VP Clark		X	X			
Council President Wyant			X			

R2023-163 and R2023-167 Pulled from the Consent Agenda by Councilman Piazza

R2023-163 RESOLUTION TO RENEW MEMBERSHIP IN THE STATEWIDE INSURANCE FUND

Councilman Piazza is concerned that Statewide may drop our coverage because of 2 accidents. Were they reported to Statewide, did they receive all of the information and how were the repairs made if they were not reported. He does not remember seeing repair or towing bills on previous bill lists. CP Wyant noted that individual vehicles are not part of the resolution. Mr. Hall will gather the information.

ROLL CALL

Motion Carries

5-0

Councilmembers	First	Second	Yea	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Councilman Piazza			X			
Councilman Marino	X		X			
Councilman Kennedy			X			
Council VP Clark		X	X			
Council President Wyant			X			

R2023-167 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF TURNOUT GEAR FROM NEW JERSEY FIRE EQUIPMENT CO. UNDER STATE CONTRACT # 17-FLEET-008811

Councilman Piazza asked if reflective coats for crossing guards are included in the purchase. Mr. Hall stated this resolution is only for Fire Department turnout gear. The Police Department oversees the crossing guards, and he will check with them.

ROLL CALL

Motion Carries

5-0

Councilmembers	First	Second	Yea	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Councilman Piazza		X	X			
Councilman Marino	X		X			
Councilman Kennedy			X			
Council VP Clark			X			
Council President Wyant			X			

14. OLD BUSINESS –

McDonald’s Sidewalk waiver – postponed to the September 19, 2023 meeting.

15. NEW BUSINESS –

Elizabethtown Gas - waiver to cut into the street to provide gas service from the main line along Hillcrest Boulevard to 713 Hillcrest Blvd and 621 Hillcrest Blvd at Lincoln Ave - IR road patch and complete concrete restoration within 30 days.

ROLL CALL

Motion Carries

5-0

Councilmembers	First	Second	Yea	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Councilman Piazza			X 621 Hillcrest		X 713 Hillcrest	
Councilman Marino	X		X			
Councilman Kennedy			X			
Council VP Clark		X	X			
Council President Wyant			X			

CP Wyant asked Tim O’Brien, Township Engineer, about 675 Corliss Avenue abatement progress. Mr. O’Brien stated a pre-construction meeting is scheduled with the contractor at which a project schedule will be outlined. Discussions on structural and architectural options would best be had after the abatement is completed.

CVP Clark asked Mr. O’Brien about progress on the Center Street application. Mr. O’Brien stated DOT is reviewing it. There is no timeline/deadline for them to complete their review.

16. MOTIONS – Special Event Application – Phillipsburg Area Drug Awareness Rally

ROLL CALL

Motion Carries

5-0

Councilmembers	First	Second	Yea	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Councilman Piazza			X			
Councilman Marino	X		X			
Councilman Kennedy		X	X			
Council VP Clark			X			
Council President Wyant			X			

17. PUBLIC PETITIONS

Joan Pierce, Prospect Street, Phillipsburg – Ms. Pierce asked why Walter’s Park is the only park with cameras. Her daughter was assaulted at a playground. CP Wyant stated the intent is to have them at all the parks. Mayor Tersigni stated the money was tied up but is in the budget. Ms. Pierce said more cameras are needed in town, they are needed now, and every child should be able to go to a park or playground and be safe.

Dan Boyce, 1526 Warren St, Alpha – Mr. Boyce believes the 3 minute limit is a violation of 1st amendment rights. Through an OPRA request he discovered the Mayor’s town owned vehicle has been driven over 2000 miles since May 2023. GPS data shows the vehicle at the Municipal Building approximately 15 hours per week, below the 35 hours per week for benefits, which Mr. Boyce claims is fraud. GPS data shows the vehicle at the residence of the Democratic Committee chairperson for 4 hours on a weekday. GPS data shows the vehicle at Council candidate Fey’s home on a weekend which Mr. Boyce claims is an abuse of power. Several 911 calls were claimed to be an abuse of power. A resident on Section 8 housing is using 2 addresses on which the department head has not acted.

Donald Nowicki, 571 Memorial Parkway, Phillipsburg – The traffic, speeding and noise on Memorial Parkway is horrible. Something must be done to slow down traffic and reduce noise. It is a state owned road, but Phillipsburg Police respond to accidents that occur there. Their presence and speed enforcement could deter more speeding. CP Wyant asked Business Administrator Hall to forward the information to the Police Department.

Dave Santini, 604 John Mitchell Avenue, Phillipsburg – He will be replacing an oil furnace with a gas furnace and Elizabethtown Gas told him he needs Council’s approval to open the street to run a gas line to his residence because of a 5 year moratorium ending in 2025. A water line had been installed. He is requesting a hardship exemption to the moratorium to re-open the water line site for a new gas line Motion to approve a waiver of the 5 year moratorium for Elizabethtown Gas to open the street and run a gas line to 604 John Mitchell Avenue.

ROLL CALL

Motion Carries

5-0

Councilmembers	First	Second	Yea	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Councilman Piazza		X	X			
Councilman Marino	X		X			
Councilman Kennedy			X			
Council VP Clark			X			
Council President Wyant			X			

Joe Meyner, 392 South Main Street, Phillipsburg – The Memorial Parkway problem is partly due to so many business entrances and egresses and sideroads. Better speed enforcement over the course of several

weeks would help. The speeding along Route 22 is more evidence that a sidewalk along Route 22 is dangerous.

Public Petitions closed.

18. COUNCIL OPEN TIME

Councilman Marino – Had several questions which he asked Mr. Hall to respond to in the upcoming weeks. Were proper maintenance records kept for the DPW Garbage truck that caught fire and did the town claim a loss on it? Has there been any litigation or personal injury resulting from town owned vehicle accidents? How can the Mayor put 2000 miles on a vehicle in a small town? He requested a copy of a \$44.10 invoice from a garage in East Stroudsburg, PA for the Mayor’s vehicle and asked why it was in that area. Is there a remedial driving program for municipal employees involved in an accident? Every government has such a program.

Councilman Piazza – Regarding Memorial Parkway, a meeting was held with the County Commissioners and Police chiefs with weight restricted county roads in their municipalities. A unifying resolution was sent out that allows all municipalities to enforce overweight vehicles. He does not remember seeing that resolution before this council. Anything over 4 ton gross vehicle weight can incur a fine. It could be enforced along Lincoln Road. Mr. Hall will look into it.

Council Vice President Clark – Striping was done along South Main Street to create new parking spaces. He acknowledged the good job DPW did and thanked the Police Department for sending out notices to residents. The 2nd Annual Railroad Festival will take place September 23rd.

Councilman Kennedy – Recognized Recreation Director Matt Noel for the outstanding job he did with the pool. He had a very limited time to get the pool ready, hire staff and set prices. The first season was a great success. The Phillipsburg High School football team won against Sayerville. They will play a home game this Friday.

Council President Wyant – The new parking lines and signs along Main Street are long overdue. CP Wyant asked Tim O’Brien if there are plans to go further in the business district. Mr. O’Brien stated metered parking areas along South Main Street will be striped. Additional signs, including handicapped parking, will be installed. The 2024 budget includes funds for more striping.

19. EXECUTIVE SESSION IF REQUIRED – No Executive Session

20. ADJOURNMENT – 7:46 PM

Council VP Clark moved to adjourn. Seconded by Councilman Kennedy.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Absent: 0

Motion passed.

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
STATE OF NEW JERSEY
TOWN OF PHILLIPSBURG

PROCLAMATION

Proclaiming the month of September 2023 as Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.

Whereas, This year, approximately 288,300 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in the United States alone – one man every 2 minutes, and roughly 34,700 will die this year from the disease, about 3,500 more than 2020 – which is one man every 15 minutes; and

Whereas, In New Jersey, an estimated 9,460 new cases of prostate cancer will be diagnosed and an estimated 730 deaths will occur in 2023; and

Whereas, Men with relatives – father, brother, son – with a history of prostate cancer are twice as likely to develop the disease; and

Whereas, Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in American Men and the third leading cause of cancer death behind lung and colon cancer; and

Whereas, 1 in 8 men are diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime and 1 in 6 African American men will develop prostate cancer in their lifetime. Overall, African American men are 1.7 times more likely to be diagnosed with - and 2.1 times more likely to die from - prostate cancer than white men; and

Whereas, Veterans who were exposed to herbicides like Agent Orange are at increased risk for developing prostate cancer, and are more likely to have an aggressive form of the disease; and

Whereas, Education regarding prostate cancer and early detection strategies is critical to saving lives, preserving, and protecting our families. As well as the economic and social burden of prostate cancer is huge on families; and

Whereas, If caught early prostate cancer has a five-year survival rate of nearly 100%. However, for late stage prostate cancer the five-year survival rate is 31%; and

Whereas, Many more men will be diagnosed in 2023 at a later stage because of delayed screenings and treatment due to Covid-19 and

Whereas, All men are at risk for prostate cancer and we encourage the citizens of Phillipsburg to increase the importance of prostate awareness and screenings.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED; The Mayor and Governing Body do hereby proclaim the month of September 2023 to be PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS MONTH in Phillipsburg.