

REORGANIZATION MEETING – LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL  
LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
COUNCIL MEETING ROOM

Monday, January 1, 2022 – 12:00 Noon

The Reorganization Meeting of the Lawrence Township Council was held on Saturday, January 1, 2022, at the Lawrence Township Municipal Building – Council Meeting Room at 12:00 Noon.

The Municipal Clerk read the following statement of proper notice:

STATEMENT OF PROPER NOTICE: “Adequate notice of this Reorganization Meeting of the Lawrence Township Council, being held January 1, 2022, was forwarded to The Times, The Trentonian and The Lawrence Ledger on December 22, 2021 by the Municipal Clerk.”

The Municipal Clerk welcomed everyone and gave a special thank you to the Lawrence Township Police Honor Guard and Bagpiper Matt Gordon for being present this afternoon.

The Municipal Clerk stated that the Pledge of Allegiance will be led by Asher & Elijah Brenner, and the National Anthem will be performed by Gianna Oakley.

The Municipal Clerk further stated that Pastor Carl Clark of St. Peter Church, Paterson, NJ and Higher Ground Ministries, Newark, NJ will give the Invocation.

The roll call for continuing Council members was then called as follows:

Present: Councilmembers Lewis, Powers and Ryan.  
Absent: None.

*Also in attendance were Kevin Nerwinski, Esq. Municipal Manager, David Roskos, Esq., Township Attorney, Brian Caloiaro, Chief of Police and Superior Officers of the Lawrence Township Police Department, Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson, Assemblyman Anthony S. Verrelli, County Clerk Paula Sollami-Covello, Mercer County Surrogate Diane Gerofsky and a few county, state and neighboring dignitaries.*

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The Municipal Clerk stated, “It is my pleasure to announce the results of the November 2, 2021 General Election for the following members of Township Council for a four-year term:”

*Christopher B. Bobbitt*  
*James S. Kownacki*

The Municipal Clerk advised that the following individuals would be administering the Oath of Office to the (3) three elected officials.

- ❖ Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Bobbitt.
- ❖ Municipal Manager Kevin P. Nerwinski, Esq. will administer the Oath of Office to Mr. Kownacki.

The Municipal Clerk called for nominations for Office of Mayor for a two-year term ending December 31, 2023.

Ms. Lewis nominated John Ryan for the Office of Mayor, and Mr. Bobbitt seconded the nomination. Councilman Powers moved to close nominations.

The Municipal Clerk asked if there were any other nominations. There being none, Ms. Norcia declared the nominations closed and asked Deputy Clerk Tonya Carter to call the roll for the nomination of John Ryan as Mayor.

**RECORD OF VOTE**

<b>COUNCIL</b>	<b>AYE</b>	<b>NAY</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>	<b>MOVE</b>	<b>SECOND</b>
<b>Mr. Bobbitt</b>	X						X
<b>Mr. Kownacki</b>	X						
<b>Ms. Lewis</b>	X					X	
<b>Mr. Powers</b>	X						
<b>Mr. Ryan</b>	X						

Assemblyman Anthony Verrelli administered the Oath of Office to Mayor Ryan.

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**Mayor Ryan' s Mayoral remarks:**

“Thank you for coming out today, and Happy New Year! I would like to start by thanking former Mayor Jim Kownacki and the rest of Council, along with the Municipal Manager, Kevin Nerwinski, and our Township Clerk, Kathy Norcia, and the Municipal Attorney, David Roskos. It is

and honor and a privilege to serve Lawrence Township, as your new Mayor, and I look forward to working with each and every one of you.”

Two years ago, Mayor Kownacki stated that we are a team. This could not be truer during these trying times. However, I would like to add that it is more like family...we laugh, we disagree... and we may argue. But, in the end, we come together for the good of the Township.

I would also like to thank Peter Kiriakatis, Chief Financial Officer, and his entire staff, the Township Manager, Kevin Nerwinski, along with the Town Council for improving our Moody's Rating to Aa1, meaning we have been fiscally responsible and in excellent shape during these difficult times, and where we need to be. And, I look forward to working with everyone here keeping Lawrence moving in the right direction.

A big thank you to Chief Caloiaro, his lieutenants, sergeants, and the men and women of Lawrence Township Police Department, along with our impressive Honor Guard. I appreciate you. In addition, I would like to thank the Lawrence Township Emergency Services, including Fire Engine Nos. 21, 22, 23, and the Emergency Medical Services. Also, our fabulous Recreation Department headed by Nancy Bergen and her amazing staff... the Jolly Trolley... to the lights... to you name it. Then, we have Public Works headed by Greg Whitehead, and his amazing staff and department called 'one call does it all'. I appreciate all that they do in the Township...everything from the streets, to the parks...you name it. And, then we have Jack Oakley, Chief of Emergency Services, and Emergency Management Coordinator. I appreciate all that he does. I also want to give a 'shout out' to all of our Township employees who are behind the scenes that you may not see, the ones in the cubical in the offices in the back. They are the ones that keep the Township moving and greased. I thank you and appreciate you.

The Fighting 15<sup>th</sup>, Senator Shirley Turner, Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson, Assemblyman Anthony Verrelli, and all the elected officials who are present today.

I would be remiss if I did not thank my family for all their love and support. My wife, Linda, daughters, Becca, Megan, Hannah, and my son-in-law, Charles. I am especially thankful for my two grandsons, Asher and Elijah... my pride a joy. Thank you to my sister, Helen (or sis) and her husband Ron. By the way it is their anniversary, Happy Anniversary and Happy Birthday, Ron, whose birthday just past. I also would like to thank my sister-in-law, Lynne, and my brother-in-law, Paul, my niece, Jacqueline, and her husband, Joe, and their kids for being present. My mother-in-law, Phyllis, and my brother, Frank, unfortunately, could not be here. Love them both. And, my younger brother, Jimmy, Mom and Dad... we love you and we really miss you.

Thank you to the Godley's watching down in North Carolina, you would think they would come up here; but...no, I guess they thought the delivering a baby was more important. Also, I would like to give a 'shout out' to Mike and Colleen Valenzano, please stand up, we are going on 60 years of friendship, and they both just retired on Thursday. I love you guys, thank you for coming. And, my apology for those I missed.

I have a few goals I would like to accomplish along with my colleagues:

- 1.) I would like to see South Lawrence street scape started after being sideline these past few years. We just received grant money and those monies will be a great asset to our town.
- 2.) I would like to continue reducing our carbon footprint. So far, we are rated Silver, but would like to strive for Gold. We installed Solar panels throughout the Township buildings – police station, public works, and added two electric vehicles. With more grant monies, I know we can do better. With the Manager’s help and Council...we can accomplish anything!

I wish you Peace and Happiness. Have a Happy and Healthy New Year!

Thank you for coming today.”

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Public Participation

There was no public participation.

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Resolutions

Resolution Nos. 1-22 through 34-22 were approved by the following roll call vote:

<b>COUNCIL</b>	<b>AYE</b>	<b>NAY</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>	<b>MOVE</b>	<b>SECOND</b>
<b>Mr. Bobbitt</b>	<b>X</b>						
<b>Mr. Kownacki</b>	<b>X</b>					<b>X</b>	
<b>Ms. Lewis</b>	<b>X</b>						<b>X</b>
<b>Mr. Powers</b>	<b>X</b>						
<b>Mayor Ryan</b>	<b>X</b>						

All adopted Resolutions are spread in its entirety in the 2022 Resolution Book.

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Public Participation

There was no public participation.

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Mayor Ryan asked Council for their closing remarks:

**Councilmember Kownacki's remarks:**

"Happy New Year to everybody! Thank you for being here. I want to thank my colleagues, my Township Manager, Clerk and Police for the past two years of being here through the rough times we had here. When we pulled together, we got through it, and to me today is a new beginning, as John-Boy Ryan now is the Mayor. And, with that...

Thank you very much."

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**Councilmember Bobbitt's remarks:**

"First, I would like to thank the residents of Lawrence for trusting me for another 4-year term. It is a great honor to serve the Township; a township I have come to know and love over the years. As my wife would joke with me, we sort of had this 5-year plan of returning to the West Coast and this is kind of throwing it off... with where they live... it is the place where 'nature smiles for 22 miles'.

I would like to thank the Manager, Clerk, Township Attorney, as well as, the Township Staff; some whom are in the audience today for making this job a lot easier when I put in a call or question and it gets taken care of. Sometimes, it gets taken care of before I even put in the call or question. So, I appreciate all the work that you do for this township. To Councilmembers, Mike and Cathleen, I want to say thank you for your friendship, for your guidance, over the years in making me a better Councilperson. Thank you to Mayor Ryan, you have already used up two of your three mistakes this year. So, I am wishing you the best for the rest of 2022. But, as you know, we will support you, just as everyone supported me when I was mayor. So, rest assured... we will have your back.

And, to Jim, I warned my colleague Councilman Kownacki that I was going to say some nice things about him today. Jim is my running mate, he is also...I consider him sort of my older brother. He is there for both guidance, for a stern word every once in a while; but, most of the time we have fun together. We joke and laugh when we have been on the campaign trail, it has always been fun. I appreciate our friendship, and I appreciate everything that you have done. Our last term together was a challenging one. Both for me, as Mayor, and you, as Mayor, and I am glad we got through it. And, I am glad we are up here to serve the residents of Lawrence Township for another four years.

To, Frances and Henry, my two children, thank you for keeping me grounded. No matter what happened over the years, you always treated me as a dad, and I appreciate that. And, to Tiffany, my wife, thank you so much for supporting me through thick and thin. For being there that year when things were going tough.

I just want to say ‘thank you all, stay involved’. If it is one thing I learned over the last year, we honored two amazing people, Harold Vereen and Anne Demarais; people who both within the Township, and outside of the Township, worked their darnedest just to make the Township better. So, get off of Facebook, Social Media and get out there and do some work. Thanks!”

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**Councilmember Lewis’ remarks:**

“Happy New Year! And, Congratulations... to my Councilmates, and to our new Mayor. I know that we are in good hands, despite the last five minutes. And, if you cannot tell, the Mayor was correct, we are family; because, otherwise, I would not be seated up here and teasing him about it. When, I sat here two years ago, newly re-elected, I am pretty sure that myself and no one up here, and no one in this audience, could have imagined what this last two years would have brought. So, I want to thank our staff, and our residents for their continued ability to adapt, to support each other and persevere.

I can say ‘ditto’ to all of the callouts that my Councilmates have already done; but, I will not repeat them. But, each of the Staff that has been mentioned have worked above and beyond over the last two years. So, as we embark on the next two years, I thought that Amanda Gorman’s words from her ‘New Day’s Lyrics’ that was released yesterday seemed appropriate. ‘We must always pave a way forward. This hope is our door, our portal. Even if we never get back to normal, someday we can venture beyond it. To leave the known and take the first steps. So, let us not return to what is normal... but reach towards what is next.’ So, I hope that we will all reach towards what is next together. And, I wish everyone a Happy, Healthy 2022.”

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**Councilmember Powers’ remarks:**

“It is always tough to go last, but to just echo what my Councilmembers have said. First of all, Happy 2022! Congratulations, Chris and Jim, on your re-election; we are going to have a good four years together with you guys. Congratulations, John on your selection, as Mayor. I know you will do an excellent job, and you have my full support on that.

It has been said, the Staff here... it is amazing what we have. We are truly blessed as Township residents to have a wonderful working group. Our leadership, with Manager Nerwinski, our Clerk Kathy Norcia, and I am going to get in trouble if I do not mention Mr. Roskos and everybody else... but, we are really truly blessed to have such a wonderful community.

My fellow councilmembers - Cathleen, John, Chris, Jimmy. Jimmy, I embarrassed you at the December meeting with what you did. As Cathleen said, when you were sworn

in two years ago, we did not know about what we were going to anticipate in terms of this pandemic. And, you did a fantastic job for your leadership... and we appreciate it.

Last but not least, I want to acknowledge my wife, Nancy, who is here, and my son, Christopher, who just got accepted (early decision) at Colgate University. So, the college tours have come to an end. Thank God! But, last but not least, in all seriousness some of you guys know my day job is in the life science industry and I can assure you all the vaccines are safe and effective. For those of you who have not gotten vaccinated...please get vaccinated. And, for those who have already had your vaccinations, please get your boosters. It really upgrades your resistance to this pandemic that we are going through.

Thank you, Mayor.”

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**Mayor Ryan’s closing comments:**

Mayor Ryan stated he would also like to thank Lawrence Township Democratic Club for providing the light refreshments being served in the hall.

There being no further business to come before Council, the meeting adjourned at 12:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

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Kathleen S. Norcia, Municipal Clerk

Attest:

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John T. Ryan, Mayor