

REGULAR MEETING  
LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL  
LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
COUNCIL MEETING ROOM – UPPER LEVEL

May 17, 2022

The following are the Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Lawrence Township Council that was held on Tuesday, May 17, 2022, at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting was then opened with the Inspiration and Pledge of Allegiance, led by the Municipal Clerk.

Councilman Bobbitt asked for a moment of silence for the shooting victims in California and New York.

At the commencement of the meeting Mayor Ryan read the following statement of proper notice:

**STATEMENT OF PROPER NOTICE:** "Adequate notice of this meeting of the Lawrence Township Council being held on Tuesday, May 17, 2022, has been provided through the posting of the annual meeting schedule of said Council in accordance with Section 13 of the Open Public Meetings Act." Said Notice was forwarded to The Trentonian, The Times and The Ledger on December 22, 2021.

The roll was then called as follows:

Present: Councilmembers Bobbitt, Lewis and Powers.

Absent: Councilman Kownacki and Mayor Ryan.

Also, in attendance were Kevin Nerwinski, Municipal Manager, Esq., and David Roskos, Esq., Municipal Attorney.

---

Special Proclamations, Recognitions and Presentations

Councilman Bobbitt presented a Proclamation declaring the Month of May as Military Appreciation Month. He then asked if anyone from the Military is present to receive the Proclamation. Councilwoman Lewis stated that the Proclamation should be held for Councilman Kownacki to distribute. He then read the following Proclamation into record:

## *Proclamation*

***WHEREAS***, May is designated as National Military Appreciation Month and a time to remember and appreciate the men and women who have served and are currently serving in the United States Armed Forces; and

***WHEREAS***, our military continues to play a vital role in the global war on terrorism and disaster relief missions to secure our freedoms; and

***WHEREAS***, the sacrifices made by these members of our Armed Forces have helped to preserve the liberties that have enriched the nations; and

***WHEREAS***, Lawrence Township is steeped in the rich history of military involvement in furthering freedom and human rights dating back to the Revolutionary War; and

***WHEREAS***, Lawrence Township is the chosen home of many men and women who are currently serving, and those that have served, in the United States Armed Forces with pride, patriotism, loyalty and courage beyond compare; and

***WHEREAS***, Lawrence Township is proud to have the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs located within its borders; and

***WHEREAS***, the Richard Montgomery Green House on Main Street was the childhood home of Four Star General, and hero of "Desert Storm", H. Norman Schwarzkopf; and

***WHEREAS***, the residents of the Township wish to express their appreciation to these individuals for the sacrifices they have made;

***NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED*** by the Township Council of the Township of Lawrence, County of Mercer, State of New Jersey that it hereby designates May 2022 as

### ***LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP MILITARY APPRECIATION MONTH***

and call upon the residents to join the Township Council in honoring the men and women who unselfishly have dedicated their lives to preserving our American Way of Life.

~~~

Councilman Bobbitt stated they also have a Proclamation declaring June 11<sup>th</sup> as David Brearley Day. He then asked if anyone would like to say a few words about David Brearley before he reads the Proclamation.

On behalf of the Junior Historians, Nathaniel Kunkel spoke about David Brearley being a strong founding member of the Lawrence community, and he and his family being very influential in the area, and most of the land in the northern Main Street areas (currently Route 206) was owned by the Brearley's. Mr. Brearley had a very important role in the Supreme Court of New Jersey. He was someone to be remembered.

Mr. Fred Vereen noted that David Brearley is buried at the Church he attends in Trenton, St. Michael's Episcopal Church, and indicated people always leave that out of his biography. Councilman Bobbitt then read the following Proclamation into record:

## *Proclamation*

***WHEREAS***, Lawrence Township is a community with historical significance dating back to the pre-Revolutionary War era; and

***WHEREAS***, many of its founding residents were supporters of the movement for independence from the United Kingdom; and

***WHEREAS***, foremost amongst that group of individuals was David Brearley, born in what was then Maidenhead Township on June 11, 1745; and

***WHEREAS***, although educated as an attorney, he felt duty-bound to enlist as a soldier in the Continental Army, where he served valiantly and attained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel; and

***WHEREAS***, the New Jersey Legislature elected David Brearley Chief Justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court and opened Court in Freehold on July 22, 1778; and

***WHEREAS***, Chief Justice Brearley is best known for his decision made in the case of *Holmes v Walton* wherein he declared the State law providing for trials by a jury of six men in violation of 'the laws of the land' which required twelve men on a jury which was the origin of the principle of judicial review which continues to be an important part of our system of government; and

***WHEREAS***, Chief Justice Brearley was a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1787 and worked on its passage, was one of its signers, returned to New Jersey and advocated for its ratification by New Jersey which took place on December 11, 1787; and

***WHEREAS***, all delegates voted to unanimously to ratify the Constitution on December 18, 1787; and

***WHEREAS***, Judge Brearley was chosen as a Presidential Elector and cast his vote for George Washington as President of the United States the following year; and

***WHEREAS***, in 1789 when the Federal Court System was established President Washington named David Brearley as the first Federal Judge in the District of New Jersey.

***NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED*** by the Township Council of the Township of Lawrence, County of Mercer, State of New Jersey that it hereby proclaims June 11, 2022 as

## ***DAVID BREARLEY DAY***

In the Township of Lawrence and encourages its residents to take a moment to honor this most important and historically significant figure in the birth of our Nation.

---

## Public Participation

Mr. Jeff Vamos, 2688 Main Street, stated that he is the Pastor of The Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville and he is present tonight in an effort to support a state-wide action to create a task force on reparations. He hopes there will be a Resolution of Support that will come before the Council at a future council meeting. This effort is led by the Reverend William Howard, Fred Vereen and numerous other people here supporting this effort.

Pastor Vamos then stated that the church is also looking at the effects that slavery has had on their congregation, as should our town, and certainly as the state should do as well. Reparations have been given a bad reputation since people think this is about giving cash to individuals, which it is not. It is an attempt to repair damage that we might call "the original sin of America" which was slavery. Reparations is about repairing some of this damage that still lingers in this State and in this Country. We are simply asking the Town Council to support this effort to create a New Jersey State Task Force.

Mr. Steven Lestition, 38 Pine Knoll Drive, also in attendance, spoke in support of the creation of the New Jersey Reparations Task Force and the need for the Task Force to aid the New Jersey public in learning more about their state's history. He further urged the New Jersey Legislatures to focus on understanding what needs to be repaired to help change the foundational circumstances that a large segment of the Black community still face.

Ms. Robin Bridges-Johnson, 282 Glenn Avenue, greeted the Council and requested that they kindly place on the agenda, and vote their support of, the Senate Bill 322, Assembly Bill A711 NJ Reparations Task Force, which is currently before the Legislation.

Ms. Bridges pleaded to the Council, due to the many tragic racial events that have occurred, the time is now to be on the right side of history, and to approve the resolution supporting the NJ Reparation Task Force Act. And, not to send it to the DEI Committee where it could take a long time. She then asked that the Resolution be sent to the State, to show our support for research. Let us study, lets discuss, lets have a meaningful dialogue on the State level about this urgent issue. We owe it to our ancestors and to our future generations. Councilman Bobbitt thanked Ms. Bridges-Johnson for her very powerful speech and said that she should share and forward it to the three Legislators in the 15<sup>th</sup> District.

Mr. Brent Ferguson, 15 Carson Road, stated he simply wished to add not in quality, but in quantity, the multiplicity of the voices that have been raised today to emphasize that power concedes nothing without demand; it never has, and it never will. It is important to bring pressure, power, and a compelling story to the conversation. This is what we as citizens hope to do. We trust the Council to do the same, for the State is watching Lawrence Township.

Mr. Ferguson further stated he wants to put his exclamation point on that the time to act is now, to take this seriously, to take a leadership role from a position of strength and to study what it is they can do. This would be the boldest recommendation that he could make to the Council to take it seriously enough to look further into the matter and send it to the State. We asked that the Township Council be a witness to those in the County and the State.

---

#### Review and Revisions of Agenda

There was no review or revisions to the agenda.

---

#### Adoption of Minutes

On a motion by Ms. Lewis, seconded by Mr. Powers, the Minutes of the Closed Session of May 3, 2022 were approved without corrections on the following roll call vote:

Same was carried on the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Councilmembers Bobbitt, Lewis and Powers.  
Absent: Councilman Kownacki and Mayor Ryan.  
Abstain: None.

---

#### Awarding or Rejecting of Bids

There was no award or rejection of bids.

---

#### Introduction of Ordinances

There is no introduction of ordinances.

---

Adoption of Ordinances

Councilman Bobbitt read by title, an ordinance entitled, "ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR VARIOUS ROAD IMPROVEMENTS (MILL AND OVERLAY INCLUDING ALL WORK AND MATERIALS) IN AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF LAWRENCE, IN THE COUNTY OF MERCER, NEW JERSEY, APPROPRIATING \$1,697,462.28 (Project No. NJ1107. 2022.Road) IN STATE AND LOCAL FISCAL RECOVERY FUNDS (SLFRF) TRANCHE 1 REVENUE REPLACEMENT AND APPROPRIATING AN ADDITIONAL \$460,000 IN CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS FUNDS FOR A TOTAL OF \$2,157,462.28"

Ordinance No. 2426-22

ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR VARIOUS ROAD IMPROVEMENTS (MILL AND OVERLAY INCLUDING ALL WORK AND MATERIALS) IN AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF LAWRENCE, IN THE COUNTY OF MERCER, NEW JERSEY, APPROPRIATING \$1,697,462.28 (Project No. NJ1107. 2022.Road) IN STATE AND LOCAL FISCAL RECOVERY FUNDS (SLFRF) TRANCHE 1 REVENUE REPLACEMENT AND APPROPRIATING AN ADDITIONAL \$460,000 IN CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUNDS FOR A TOTAL OF \$2,157,462.28

BE IT ORDAINED by the Township Council of the Township of Lawrence, in the County of Mercer, State of New as follows:

Section 1. The improvement described in Section 3 of this ordinance is hereby authorized to be undertaken by the Township of Lawrence, in the County of Mercer, New Jersey as Maintenance of Roads under the SLFRF Tranche 1 Revenue Replacement, and for the improvement or purpose described in Section 3, there is hereby appropriated the sum of \$1,697,462.28 (Project No. NJ1107.2022.Road).

Section 2. In addition to the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds described in Section 1, there is hereby appropriated \$460,000 in Capital Improvement Funds for the improvement described in Section 3 of this ordinance to be undertaken by the Township of Lawrence, in the County of Mercer, New Jersey as Road Maintenance or Building of New Roads.

Section 3. The purpose for which the funds are provided is (1) the 2022 Road improvement program consisting of mill and overlay on and along Cold Soil Road, Teak Lane, Bergen Street, Blackwell Road, Province Line Road, Smithfield Avenue, Devon Avenue, Irwin Place, Fairfield Avenue, Skillman Avenue, and the Townhall Parking Lot, and other streets identified in the Road Improvement Program maintained by the

Township Engineer, including Road Striping; (2) Concrete Improvements incidental to overlay and all work and materials necessary therefore or incidental thereto; and (3) Guiderails incidental to the overlay.

Section 4. The capital budget of the Township of Lawrence is hereby amended to conform with the provisions of this ordinance to the extent of any inconsistency herewith. The resolution in the form promulgated by the Local Finance Board showing full detail of the amended capital budget and capital program as approved by the Director of the Division of Local Government Services is on file with the Clerk and is available there for public inspection.

Section 5. The following additional matters are hereby determined, declared, recited and stated:

(a) The purposes described in Section 3 of this ordinance are not current expenses. They are all improvements that may be lawfully undertaken as general improvements, and no part of the costs thereof has been or shall be specially assessed on property specially benefited thereby.

(b) An aggregate amount not exceeding \$37,500 for items of expense listed in and permitted under N.J.S.A. 40A:2-20 is included in the estimated costs indicated herein for the purpose of improvements.

Section 6. This ordinance shall take effect twenty (20) days after the first publication thereof after final adoption, as provided by law.

Adopted: May 17, 2022

The Ordinance was adopted after the public hearing thereon, on the following roll call vote:

| COUNCIL      | AYE | NAY | PRESENT | ABSENT | ABSTAIN | MOVE | SECOND |
|--------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|------|--------|
| Mr. Bobbitt  | X   |     |         |        |         |      |        |
| Mr. Kownacki |     |     |         | X      |         |      |        |
| Ms. Lewis    | X   |     |         |        |         | X    |        |
| Mr. Powers   | X   |     |         |        |         |      | X      |
| Mayor Ryan   |     |     |         | x      |         |      |        |

~~~

Councilman Bobbitt read by title, an ordinance entitled, "ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$2,150,000 FROM THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND FOR VARIOUS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS IN AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF LAWRENCE, IN THE COUNTY OF MERCER, NEW JERSEY"

## Ordinance No. 2427-22

ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$2,150,000 FROM THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND FOR VARIOUS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS IN AND BY THE TOWNSHIP OF LAWRENCE, IN THE COUNTY OF MERCER, NEW JERSEY

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LAWRENCE, IN THE COUNTY OF MERCER, NEW JERSEY AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. \$2,150,000 is hereby appropriated from the Capital Improvement Fund for various capital improvements in and by the Township of Lawrence, in the County of Mercer, New Jersey (the "Township") as set forth below:

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Appropriation and Estimated Cost</b>
A. Various Computer and Office Equipment consisting of but not limited to: Finance Computer Equipment and Software, Police Computer Equipment and Software, Police Copy Machine, Police Interview Room Audio/Visual System	\$145,000
B. Improvements to Municipal Buildings: Various Municipal Building Improvements, Police Mobile Shelving System	\$1,235,000
C. Acquisition of Fire/Rescue Equipment: SCBA's, Brush Truck (1 of 2)	\$150,000
D. Acquisition of Various Communication Equipment: Police Mobile and Fixed Radios	\$20,000
E. Acquisition of Various Public Works Equipment: Pickup with Plow and Sander	\$100,000
F. Various Park and Recreational Facility Improvements	\$500,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,150,000</b>

Section 2. The Township hereby certifies that it has adopted a capital budget or a temporary capital budget, as applicable. The capital or temporary capital budget of the Township is hereby amended to conform with the provisions of this ordinance to the extent of any inconsistency herewith. To the extent that the purposes authorized herein are inconsistent with the adopted capital or temporary capital budget, a revised capital or temporary capital budget has been filed with the Division of Local Government Services.

Section 3. This ordinance shall take effect 20 days after the first publication thereof after final adoption, as provided by law.

Adopted: May 17, 2022

The Ordinance was adopted after the public hearing thereon, on the following roll call vote:

COUNCIL	AYE	NAY	PRESENT	ABSENT	ABSTAIN	MOVE	SECOND
Mr. Bobbitt	X						
Mr. Kownacki				X			
Ms. Lewis	X					X	
Mr. Powers	X						X
Mayor Ryan				x			

---

**Manager’s Report –**

Mr. Nerwinski submitted invoice listings for the month May 2022 in the amount of \$4, 078,791.77.

There was no Manager’s report.

---

**Attorney’s Report –**

Mr. Roskos commended Ken Pacera, Tax Assessor, for doing a very fine job on settling the Tax Claims this year. And, for assisting those who filed Tax Appeals, to rethink their position and to withdraw those appeals. He further applauded the Tax Assessor for explaining the Tax System to certain taxpayers who may have been confused. Because of the excellent job Mr. Pacera did, Lawrence Township was not required to appear before the County Board this year.

---

**Clerk’s Report –**

There was no Clerk’s report.

---

**Unfinished Business –**

There was no unfinished business.

---

**New Business –**

Councilman Bobbitt stated the words we have heard tonight have been very powerful giving the Council a lot to discuss.

Councilwoman Lewis reported on a update regarding the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, that prior to first meeting of the month, she had texted the Chair of the DEI Committee asking him to look into the Township participating in the witness stone project. This is a project that provides education and stones to identify places where there have been slaves, such as at the Brearley House. Other matters were also discussed such as this resolution which has been put on the agenda. Councilwoman Lewis stated that the question is not just whether this is a good bill, but whether or not this is the right action, and what other actions should be taken to make sure these are not just words. So this is the discussion the DEI committee will be having on Thursday. It is important when we create a committee that we say we want to hear their voices, and give them the opportunity to hear their voices.

Councilman Powers stated that there has to be continuing discussion on this matter; this not a “one and done” situation. A call for action has been made and you will get action from this Council.

---

**Public Participation (3-minute limitation per speaker) –**

Ms. Jasmine Surti, 270 Fieldboro Drive, stated that as a volunteer member of the DEI Committee, she is very interested in seeing action taken on establishing a task force in New Jersey. She also wanted to inform the Council that although she is grateful for participating on the DEI committee, they are not elected and have no special expertise other than their interest and willingness as volunteers. She truly wants to make this happen as soon as possible without delay.

Martha Friend, 976 Lawrenceville Road, inquired if the recording of this meeting and all the powerful statements will be shared with Mayor Ryan and Councilman Kownacki who were absent. Councilman Bobbitt replied that the minutes are always available for the Council to review especially if there is a vote on the agenda. Ms. Friend then imparted that she was concerned with some of the comments of whether this is the right action to take, when all that is asked of the Council is to act now and support this Bill.

Nicole Selan, 2617 Main Street, stated that although the Council's concern is appreciated regarding backing the resolution once it is passed, all that is asked now is to take the first step and say this the first thing we are doing and then figure out what is the next step to do after that.

Moses Howard, 10 Paddock Drive, stated that he has lived in Lawrence for fifty years and has sat for a long time listening to all the speeches with nothing new to add. Mr. Howard continued to say that as an old man he has seen many resolutions collect dust in the past, but he stands now to show his support to the DEI committee and for the passing of this resolution.

Lindsay Martin, 2 Hedge Row Court, stated that he agrees with previous speakers in regards to passing this resolution, and also has same concerns regarding no action being done after bill is passed. Mr. Martin also stated that they are all willing to sign up as supporters for the DEI committee to work on actions that should be put in place immediately instead of just talking about it.

Nick Kunkel, 129 Review Avenue, stated that he and a friend started the Junior Historians at the Brearley House because they were interested in learning about the history of the township. Mr. Kunkel feels there should be more community involvement by creating a local task force first to learn about our own history and what the community can do now to stand behind this bill from within.

Greg Johnson, 282 Glenn Avenue, stated that as a member of the Lawrence Township Board of Education, he is always encouraged by the opportunity to learn more about our history, and feels more should be taught about slavery where there is volumes of information for all to learn. One example was Rider University Magazine who covered a part of Lawrence Township History on this subject in a article done Fall of 2020. Mr. Johnson applauded Rider University for doing the research and publishing this historical record. He then conveyed that we need to learn more about each other so we can appreciate the value that each of us have in forming and making this nation great.

Councilman Bobbitt stated he was glad to see Lawrence Township School Board members in attendance and hopes they bring these words back to the Board meetings and the Superintendent so they can continue fulfilling the legal requirements of the Armstead Act in teaching Afro-American history to our township residents.

Councilman Bobbitt thanked everyone and hopes they will share this passion with the Elected Officials at the State House, Senator Shirley Turner who is one of the sponsors of the Senate Bill as well as Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson who sponsors the Assembly Bill.

---

Resolutions

Resolution Nos. 189-22 (18-A.1) through 201-22 (18-H.4) were approved by the following roll call vote:

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

Cited Resolutions are spread in their entirety in the Resolution Books of the Township of Lawrence.

---

**Council Initiatives/Liaison Reports –**

Councilwoman Lewis reported the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee has put out their first post recognizing this month as Asian Pacific Islander Month. Also recognizing Pride Month and Juneteenth with colored lights at Town Hall. She further reported that the Trails, Open Space and Stewardship Advisory Committee is continuing their work on highlighting all of the trails.

Councilman Powers reported that the Shade Tree Advisory meeting is at the end of the month and the Historic Preservation Committee did not meet this month.

Councilman Bobbitt reported that he is still guiding the Growth and Redevelopment Committee in their development. Also, the Environmental and Green Advisory Committee had a good conversation in which one of the Resolutions about stormwater was taken from their work.

---

**Written Communications –**

There was no written communication.

---

There being no further business to come before this Council, the meeting adjourned.

7:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kathleen S. Norcia, Municipal Clerk

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Christopher Bobbitt, Councilman