

MINUTES
REORGANIZATION MEETING
MUNICIPAL COUNCIL - CITY OF RAHWAY, NEW JERSEY
JANUARY 3, 2011
7:00 P. M.

City Clerk Jean D. Kuc called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and called the roll:

PRESENT: Councilmembers Baker, Brown, Cox, Mione, Rachlin, Saliga, Scaturro, Steinman, Wenson Maier

The City Clerk announced the meeting had been advertised and posted in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act of the State of New Jersey.

This meeting of January 3, 2011 was included in a list of meetings notice sent to the *Star-Ledger*, *Home News Tribune*, *Union County Local Source* and the *Rahway News-Record*, posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building on January 2, 2011 and has remained continuously posted as the required notices under the Statute. In addition, a copy of this notice is and has been available to the public and is on file in the office of the Municipal Clerk.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

In the absence of a member of the Clergy, Councilmember Mione offered an invocation.

ELECTION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

City Clerk Kuc stated that the first order of business was the election of the Council President and Vice President for the year 2011 and asked for nominations.

Motion made by Councilmember Scaturro to elect Councilmember Brown as Council President for the year 2011.

The motion was seconded by Councilmember Saliga.

The City Clerk asked if there were any other nominations. Hearing none, nominations were closed.

Roll Call on the Nomination of Councilmember Brown for Council President:

YES: Councilmembers Baker, Brown, Cox, Mione, Rachlin, Saliga, Scaturro, Steinman, Wenson Maier

The City Clerk declared that Councilmember Brown had been duly elected Council President for the year 2011.

Motion made by Councilmember Brown to elect Councilmember Cox as Council Vice President for the year 2011.

The motion was seconded by Councilmember Saliga.

The City Clerk asked if there were any other nominations. Hearing none, nominations were closed.

Roll Call on the Nomination of Councilmember Cox for Council Vice President:

YES: Councilmembers Baker, Brown, Cox, Mione, Rachlin, Saliga, Scaturro, Steinman, Wenson Maier

The City Clerk declared that Councilmember Cox had been duly elected Council Vice President for the year 2011.

Council President Brown proceeded with the next order of business on the Agenda by introducing the Mayor and stated the Mayor would give the State of the City Address at this time.

***2011 State of the City Address
Mayor Rick Proctor
January 3, 2011***

Thank you all for attending my first State of The City Address. I sincerely appreciate your support and your presence here tonight is fantastic – thank you.

For two decades, everyone who knows and loves Rahway has witnessed Mayor Jim Kennedy speak to you about the challenges and opportunities facing the City during his State of the City address. There is no doubt Jim Kennedy guided Rahway into a new millennium to an era of smart growth, fiscal responsibility and optimism for the future. His tenure as Mayor has set a benchmark for future mayors, not only in Rahway but all of NJ. I'm proud to have Jim as a friend, I admire his accomplishments and I look forward to a continued working relationship. Thank you Jim for your support and thank you for all you've done over the last 20 years as the Mayor of Rahway.

My decision to run for Mayor came in March 2010 and almost immediately I was faced with the decision to select council members who would support me along with my initiatives. I needed individuals who are capable of making tough decisions with one purpose in mind – the City of Rahway. As Democratic Chairman, Union County Freeholder and as an Employee of the City of Rahway – the choice was clear, experience and dedication was paramount. I am glad that Nancy Saliga, Sal Mione and Jim Baker agreed to remain on the ticket. I believe in each Council member sitting behind me. With their help we will continue the record of accomplishments and on our path toward livability and sustainability in Rahway. A productive partnership between the Administration and each Council member is necessary to keep our promise to move Rahway Forward.

Our message could not have reached the voters had it not been for the many campaign volunteers (and you know who you are) who dedicated their time working to bring us to victory - Thank you.

I reserve my greatest appreciation for the voters of Rahway – your overwhelming support lead to the widest margin of victory in memory. You sent a message and I promise – I won't let you down. I heard your concerns as I walked through your neighborhoods and my highest priority is to ensure that Rahway is the most attractive place to live while providing the best essential services and keeping your tax dollars controlled.

As a life-long resident of Rahway – I too have witnessed and understand that the global economic trends that have battered and bruised the nation have impacted Rahway as well. Across the state many homes are for sale, numerous foreclosures, businesses fearful to invest and residents witnessing essential services being removed because it just simply could not be afforded. Threats from abroad are now replaced with fears of economic uncertainty.

Rahway was not immune to these problems. The redevelopment boom that took off in Rahway during the second half of the past decade slowed down significantly – everywhere. Projects were halted; citizens became worried that our bright future may dim. Although the economy has been slow to recover, Rahway has seen the opening of 2 new restaurants (Patria and The Rail House) and another to be opened this spring (Station Grill).

New surface parking lots will be constructed in 2011 (Main Street & East Cherry). Rahway is more secure than most municipalities and when the economy revives we will be in a good position.

However, we can't sit back in a wait and see attitude. We will begin actively marketing the City to support our business district and attract visitors to the city. We will shape our economic future on the arts and its many related industries.

If we do not grow our ratable base over the long run, costs will never be kept under control. We will remove barriers to development as a means to stimulate our revitalization and recruit new business and redevelopment projects as a source of long-term property tax stabilization. Redevelopment is key.

Rahway has received a bronze certification for sustainability from Sustainable NJ. Sustainability is about making decisions that protect the long term environmental, social and economic integrity of our community. To make sure that “sustainability” is not just a new buzzword in City Hall we will begin some green initiatives. We will explore the feasibility and cost of using alternate fuels for municipal vehicles and purchasing hybrid vehicles when possible. We will reduce solid waste disposal costs by improving our recycling rate. And since this building was the first solar powered municipal building in NJ we will look into replacement installation of solar electric panels.

While these troubling economic times have lead to the contraction of government services they have also increased the need for certain services. Here in Union County the majority of these services are provided by non profit organizations under contract to the county. I will cause a review of recreational and social service utilization and needs for seniors and kids in Rahway. Together with the schools, civic organizations and faith based groups, we will assess unmet needs and under utilized services in order to enhance and improve service offerings and access to existing services.

The 2011 city budget that will be adopted by the Council next week increases by only 1.3% which is below the state mandated budget cap and the current tax levy cap. Cuts in state aid, diminished income and escalating insurance and personnel costs have put a strain on our budget this year. And in six months the 2011 budget will be faced with all of these challenges and a 2% cap on tax levy. That's why before the ink is dry on the adoption of the 2010 budget; I will begin my first 2011 budget review process.

These new challenges are new opportunities to improve our processes and streamline our services. As Mayor, I challenge the Administration and each Department Head to cut spending over the next six months; to evaluate each expenditure and defer unnecessary purchasing. My goal is to reduce operating expenses \$300,000 this year. Working together we need to identify innovative ways to increase revenues without straining the taxpayers. Over the years I have worked with all current department heads and I know your dedication and commitment as well. As Health Officer, I increased income dramatically (by 500%) by increasing interlocal agreements for public health shared services. The Health Department has consistently provided the best services with one mission in mind – protect the health & safety of those who work, reside and do business here. I have worked directly with all essential services being provided in the city and I'm confident we do our best. I know the Building Department works constantly to assure the highest building standards are enforced as a means to protect the safety of all. The Department of Public Works collects our solid waste, repairs our streets and sewers and maintains our public properties, all vital services. I can continue with the accolades of each department – especially the tremendous job of police and fire – but the message is this – no matter how good we think we are – we must discontinue a business as usual mindset. We are operating in a new environment and we will need new approaches to doing business if we are to survive.

The recent snowstorm illustrated the dilemma facing municipal governments in this state. Municipalities that failed to adjust to this new environment and relied on traditional solutions by cutting services, forced layoffs and reduced capacity without evaluating their processes; were hammered by the elements and were unable to respond. I ask all employees to engage in the cost cutting process, to streamline work processes and help us make the city more economical and more user friendly. I know it can be done. I'm taking on a new role as mayor – one I am ready for – but you are and should be ready to take on a new role as municipal entrepreneurs. It's the only way we can change the business as usual mindset – we need to change together!

Access to the Mayor by you is critical in local government and I will institute a series of town meetings at various locations throughout the city to allow you to express your views and offer your suggestions for improving services. I will also have regular office hours during the week for the express purpose of meeting with you to discuss your concerns. In addition, beginning in February, I propose to open City Hall until 7pm every Monday Council meeting night for your convenience. This will allow residents to conduct business with the city without needing to take time off from work.

On behalf of my family and my new colleagues here at the City of Rahway, I would like to wish all of you a very happy and healthy New Year and again, thank you for your support and your encouragement.

RESOLUTIONS

AR-1-11 Councilmember Scaturo presented and moved A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING LEGAL NEWSPAPERS.

The motion was seconded by Councilmember Saliga.

YES: Councilmembers Baker, Cox, Mione, Rachlin, Saliga, Scaturo, Steinman, Wenson Maier, Brown

Council President Brown declared the motion carried.

AR-2-11 Councilmember Baker presented and moved A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING LEGAL DEPOSITORIES FOR PUBLIC MONIES.

The motion was seconded by Councilmember Rachlin.

YES: Councilmembers Baker, Cox, Mione, Rachlin, Saliga, Scaturo, Steinman, Wenson Maier, Brown

Council President Brown declared the motion carried.

AR-3-11 Councilmember Mione presented and moved A RESOLUTION CONFIRMING THE MAYOR'S APPOINTMENT OF PETER H. PELISSIER AS BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR/DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION.

The motion was seconded by Councilmember Brown.

YES: Councilmembers Baker, Cox, Mione, Rachlin, Saliga, Scaturo, Steinman, Wenson Maier, Brown

Council President Brown declared the motion carried.

AR-4-11 Councilmember Steinman presented and moved A RESOLUTION CONFIRMING THE MAYOR'S APPOINTMENT OF LOUIS N. RAINONE AS DIRECTOR OF LAW.

The motion was seconded by Councilmember Cox.

YES: Councilmembers Baker, Cox, Mione, Rachlin, Saliga, Scaturo, Steinman, Wenson Maier, Brown

Council President Brown declared the motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS - Hearing of Citizens

Seeing no one appearing, Council President Cox closed the Public Hearing.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Councilmember Mione, seconded by Councilmember Scaturo to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

YES: Councilmembers Baker, Cox, Mione, Rachlin, Saliga, Scaturo, Steinman, Wenson Maier, Brown

Council President Brown declared the motion carried.