

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

Monday, January 1, 2018 – 12:00 Noon

The Reorganization Meeting of the Lawrence Township Council was held on Monday, January 1, 2018, 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, 2018, was forwarded to The Times and The Trentonian on December 26, 2017 by the Municipal Clerk.”

The Municipal Clerk stated that the Frances Bobbitt and Henry Bobbitt will lead them in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Present: Councilmembers Lewis and Powers.

Absent: Councilmember Maffei.

Also in attendance were Kevin Nerwinski, Esq. Municipal Manager, David Roskos, Esq., Township Attorney, Honorable Lewis J. Korngut, Municipal Court Judge, Mark Ubry, Chief of Police and Superior Officers of the Lawrence Township Police Department.

The Municipal Clerk stated, “It is my pleasure to announce the results of the November 7, 2017 General Election for the following members of Township Council for a four-year term:”

*Christopher Bobbitt
James S. Kownacki*

The Municipal Clerk advised that the following individuals would be administering the Oath of Office to the (2) two elected officials.

- ❖ Senator Shirley Turner administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Bobbitt.
- ❖ Judge Lewis J. Korngut administered 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, 2019.

Ms. Lewis nominated Christopher Bobbitt for the Office of Mayor, and Mr. 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 Christopher Bobbitt as Mayor.

RECORD OF VOTE

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

State Senator Shirley Turner administered the Oath of Office to Mayor Bobbitt.

Prior to his mayoral remarks, Mayor Bobbitt welcomed and thanked Senator Turner for administering the Oath of Office this afternoon and indicated her services are an inspiration to him. He also thanked all the dignitaries from the County, State and neighboring municipalities for being present today, his colleagues for having faith in him, former members of Council who served and former Mayors in the audience for their wisdom and helpful words over the years and all the people who braved the cold to come out on this New Year's Day.

In closing, Mayor Bobbitt thanked his family as he could not have done this without all of their sacrifices, his mother and father for their support and wisdom, his son, Henry, and daughter, Frances for their understanding when he is unable to hang out with them to attend a meeting. Finally, he thanked the love of his life for over 25 years, his wife, Tiffany, for her continued support through thick and thin and stated how he would never be able to repay her for the things that she has done.

Mayor Bobbitt's Mayoral remarks:

"I am happy to join with you on this cold winter's day to celebrate the continuation of our common journey that started over 321 years ago with the founding of our community as Maidenhead Township in Burlington County. Since that time many we have changed our name to Lawrence Township to honor Captain James Lawrence and are now a part of Mercer County named to honor General Hugh Mercer.

Over the years, Lawrence residents have worked to renew the township while keeping our common heritage alive. Economically, we have evolved from an agricultural community to a diverse one of research, education, commerce, and industry while retaining a strong farming community. Politically, for most of our history we were governed under a Committee form of government. Almost 50 years ago, Lawrence residents realized that the Township was changing, and our form of government needed to change as well. Residents commissioned a study and then took to the ballot to move to a "modern up-to-date governmental structure" of a Council and Manager form of government. Since 1970, we have had mayors, councilpersons, managers, and clerks that have worked to bring a "better, more efficient and more economical form of government" to the residents of Lawrence.

The Lawrence Township of today is a result of similar decisions that have been made over time in response to varying challenges. From preserving our open space and natural resources to enhancing our local business districts, Council must continue to keep future generations in mind. We must continue to be good financial stewards when looking at adding services, staff, or negotiating contracts. When facing difficult decisions Council, Manager, Clerk, and staff will work to follow a guiding principle that we all share and that is "How does this decision maintain Lawrence Township as a wonderful place to live and work?"

This question was in the forefront of Council's discussions over the past year. During our meetings, we realized that our township is maturing. The amount of open land available for development is shrinking. Staff in every department continues to work tirelessly to be as efficient as possible. Our municipal tax rate has been flat for the past four years. The Township's financial future looks bright with new ratables and our continued focus on ensuring that we spend within our means. Yet, there are pressures to expand and provide additional services or restore those that had been cut in the past due to financial considerations. We as a community are reaching a moment in which we cannot simply continue to do things as they have been done in the past but instead evolve to meet the challenges of the future. The question becomes, how do we evaluate our decisions to renew the township while retaining our common heritage?

To start with, a common theme that each member of Council has spoken about in their own speeches upon becoming mayor has been the importance of residents getting involved in the volunteer committees and boards created to advise Council on various aspects of our community. These monthly meetings are a valuable resource for

each one of us, giving us insight into the issues on the ground as well as feedback on how Council's decisions are faring in the real world. To address the challenges of the future, our committees that share common issues should break out of their silos and talk with one another to develop creative solutions to the increasingly complex issues we face today.

In evaluating the information and solutions we gather from our volunteer committees as well as from our friends, neighbors, residents, and businesses, Council would do well to take a page from the environmental movement and look towards evaluating our decisions through a framework of social, environmental, and financial factors. This triple bottom line framework looks to evaluate our performance on the three Ps: people, planet, and profits.

People. When looking at what's best for our Township, we would do well to start our evaluation with our residents. From Slackwood to Lawrenceville, and from Eggerts Crossing Village to Lawrence Square Village, Lawrence Township continues to be a diverse community. As members of Council, we need to remember that we have been elected to serve all residents and our decision making should reflect that. In addition, when it comes to our evaluation of services or the negotiation of contracts, we should ensure that staff is not over worked and underpaid but instead have the necessary resources while making a fair living wage.

Planet. Township residents have been more environmentally aware than they sometimes give themselves credit for. As a town that has preserved nearly a quarter of its area for open space and has been recognized by Sustainable Jersey as a Silver municipality, we have much to be proud of, but the work is not done. We can do even more to reduce our impact on the environment and increase the efficiency of our municipal buildings, vehicles, and equipment. We can continue to review our land uses, encourage walking and biking in addition to auto travel, and look towards reducing our waste stream by increasing our recycling.

Profits. While the first two Ps are important factors, without a strong financial base, they cannot be fully addressed. Municipal government isn't like a business in that our income must match our expenses every year. Our income comes primarily from property taxes, so it is critically important to have a strong ratable base to allow us to provide the necessary services that residents have grown accustomed to. That is why it is important to continue to have proper and desired growth in the right parts of town to strengthen our local business districts and neighborhoods.

These ideas of how Council can answer the call to meet the challenges of the future will not solve every disagreement, and that's okay. Part of being one member of a Council of five is that each one of us has a different background that guides how we represent the residents of Lawrence. We will have different perspectives and thoughts on how to move forward. It is that robust debates of ideas that will help Council, in the end, come to a decision that is best for Lawrence Township.

I would like to finish with the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoken almost 50 years ago and two months before his assassination. In a speech titled "A Proper Sense of Priorities", Dr. King ended with a story about a reporter asking him why he was taking a controversial stand against the Vietnam War. His response is a challenge to all of us that serve, "Ultimately a genuine leader is not a searcher of consensus but a molder of consensus. On some positions cowardice asks the question, is it safe? Expediency asks the question, is it politic? Vanity asks the question, is it popular? But conscience asks the question, is it right? And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular but he must take it because conscience tells him it is right.

Thank you very much."

Mayor Bobbitt administered the Oaths of Office to the Chiefs of the Fire Companies as follows:

Chief Christopher Pangaldi	Slackwood Fire Company
Chief Ryan Dlabik	Lawrence Road Fire Company
Chief Michael Filandro	Lawrenceville Fire Company

Public Participation

There was no public participation.

Resolutions

Resolution Nos. 1-18(A) through 25-18(Y)) were approved by the following roll call vote:

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

All adopted Resolutions are spread in its entirety in the 2018 Resolution Book.

Mayor Bobbitt asked Council for their closing remarks:

Councilmember Kownacki's remarks:

“Thanked everyone for coming out in this cold weather today. Happy New Year's to you. Chris, congratulations! I look forward to working with you for the next two years... won't beat you up as bad...but, I am still going to beat you up. And, I want to send a special 'thank you' out there to my wife that could not be here today because of being sick...but it was she who got me where I am at today.”

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**Councilmember Lewis' remarks:**

“First up, I want to say 'Happy New Year' to everyone out there who did truly brave the cold, and to thank all the dignitaries that are here today to congratulate Jim and Chris on their re-election as well as to congratulate our Mayor. I am very excited, and I think some of the things you spelled out are a good example of why the next two years will be wonderful for this Township. You truly represent this Township well. Your desire to serve, your passion to innovate and to make our Township better will help to lead us to those positive changes...so, I am excited to see what it is we can work together on in the next two years. I think that for the community, I think that these next two years are going to be critical. We have had many residents that have come to us with lots of projects that are all well deserving and all cost lots of money. I am excited for the fact that we will have Mayor Bobbitt to lead us because I know that he will utilize our town's best assets and capitalize on them and not sit and wait for progress to happen but will be proactive in it. And, so...I think we are well served and I am excited for the next two years. So, Happy New Year's to all. And, to my family thank you very much - Abigail and Bridget who I see grow every couple of years in these pictures and to my husband, Paul.

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Councilmember Powers' remarks:

“Thank you Mayor Bobbitt. First of all 'congratulations' Chris, I look forward to working with you on your agenda and supporting you over the next two years. I would also like to recognize and congratulate Dr. Maffei on his two years of service as Mayor. Unfortunately, Dave had to go the hospital and has pneumonia and is at home in bed today; otherwise, he would be here on the dais with us today, for today. I would also like to congratulate our Township Manager, Kevin Nerwinski. Kevin is sort of new too, he started in May and he has been doing an outstanding job, and I am sure he will continue to support Mayor Bobbitt in his agenda as well. And, he wants to wish everybody a “Happy New Year”, and he would like to recognize his family in the back, his wife, Nancy, his son, Hunter and his son Christopher...Happy New Year's guys. Thank you, Mayor.”

Mayor Bobbitt's closing comments:

Mayor Bobbitt announced that immediately following the meeting all are invited to reception and refreshments in the Lower Level Conference room sponsored by the Lawrence Township Democratic Club.

There being no further business to come before Council, the meeting adjourned at 12:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Kathleen S. Norcia, Municipal Clerk

Attest:

Christopher Bobbitt, Mayor