

**BENSALEM TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
REORGANIZATION MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday
January 2nd, 2024**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ed Kisselback
Joseph Knowles
Stacey Champion
Michelle Benitez
Joseph Pilieri

SUPPORTING PERSONNEL:

Mayor Joseph DiGirolamo
Debora McBreen, Recording Secretary
Joseph Pizzo, Township Solicitor
Judge Joseph Falcone
Judge Michael Gallagher

PLEASE NOTE:

The minutes are not verbatim but rather a synopsis of what transpired during the meeting, and while I do my best to attribute remarks and questions to the correct individual, there may be mistakes or omissions because of the “back and forth” dialogue and the lack of the use of the microphone.

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING:

Mayor Joseph DiGirolamo opened the meeting with a moment of silent meditation and/or prayer, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT:

The **Mayor** indicated Public Comment would be heard at a later time during the course of the meeting and the first of two public portions was closed.

3. **ELECTION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT:**

The **Mayor** called for nominations for **Council President**, **Councilman Knowles** nominated **Ed Kisselback**, **Councilwoman Champion** seconded. The Mayor asked if there were any other nominations, hearing none, the vote carried 5-0.

Council President Kisselback introduced the Honorable Judge Falcone and the Honorable Judge Gallagher who were on hand to swear in the newly elected and/or re-elected local officials.

Edward Kisselback won the 2023 election and was re-elected to the Bensalem Township Council for a 4-year term. Mr. Kisselback was sworn in by the Honorable Joseph Falcone.

Joseph Knowles won the 2023 election and was re-elected to the Bensalem Township Council for a 4-year term. Mr. Knowles was sworn in by the Honorable Judge Gallagher.

Emmanuel Jones won the 2023 election and was re-elected to the Bensalem Township Board of Auditors for a 6-year term. Mr. Jones was sworn in by the Honorable Judge Falcone.

Dominic Webster won the 2023 election and was elected to the Bensalem Township Board of Auditors for a 6-year term. Mr. Webster was sworn in by the Honorable Judge Gallagher.

4. **ELECTION OF COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT:**

Council President Kisselback called for nominations for **Council Vice President**. **Councilwoman Champion** nominated **Councilman Knowles**, **Councilwoman Benitez** seconded. **Council President Kisselback** asked if there were any other nominations, hearing none, the vote carried 5-0.

5. **ELECTION OF TOWNSHIP SECRETARY:**

Council President Kisselback called for nominations for **Township Secretary**. **Councilwoman Benitez** nominated **Stacey Champion**, **Council Vice President Knowles** seconded. **Council President Kisselback** asked if there were any other nominations, hearing none, the vote carried 5-0.

6. **ELECTION OF THE ASSISTANT TOWNSHIP SECRETARY:**

The **Mayor** recommended **Debbie McBreen** for the **Assistant Township Secretary**, **Councilwoman Benitez** motioned to approve, **Council Vice President Knowles** seconded and the vote carried 5-0.

7. **APPOINTMENT OF MUNICIPAL CLERK:**

The **Mayor** recommended **Debbie McBreen** for **Municipal Clerk** pursuant to Section 2-26 of the Code. **Council Vice President Knowles** motioned to approve, **Councilwoman Benitez** seconded and the vote carried 5-0.

8. **APPOINTMENT OF A CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTING FIRM TO EXAMINE ALL TOWNSHIP ACCOUNTS FOR 2024:**

The **Mayor** recommended *Maillie, LLP* as the accounting firm. **Councilwoman Benitez** motioned to approve, **Council Secretary Champion** seconded and the vote carried 5-0.

9. **DESIGNATION OF AN OFFICIAL DEPOSITORY FOR TOWNSHIP FUNDS DURING 2024:**

The **Mayor** recommended *Penn Community Bank*, **Council Vice President Knowles** motioned to approve, **Council Secretary Champion** seconded and the vote carried 4-0-1.

10. **DESIGNATION OF BENSLEM TOWNSHIP'S NEWS MEDIA FOR LEGAL ADVERTISING DURING 2024:**

The **Mayor** recommended the *Bucks County Courier Times*. **Councilwoman Benitez** motioned to approve and **Council Vice President Knowles** seconded, the vote carried 5-0.

11. **DESIGNATION OF MONTHLY MEETING DATES DURING 2024:**

Council President Kisselback discussed the meeting dates and suggested the second meeting date for April be the 29th. The following dates were read into the record:

January 08 th , 2024	January 22 nd , 2024
February 12 th , 2024	February 26 th , 2024
March 11 th , 2024	March 25 th , 2024
April 08 th , 2024	April 29 th , 2024
May 06 th , 2024	May 20 th , 2024
June 10 th , 2024	June 24 th , 2024
July 08 th , 2024	July 22 nd , 2024
August 12 th , 2024	August 26 th , 2024
September 09 th , 2024	September 23 rd , 2024
October 15 th , 2024*	October 28 th , 2024
November 12 th , 2024*	November 25 th , 2024

Council Vice President Knowles motioned to approve the meeting dates for 2024 as presented. **Council Secretary Champion** seconded and the vote carried 5-0.

24. **VETERANS AFFAIRS ADVISORY BOARD:**

The Mayor indicated his dear friend Dave Christian, the most decorated veteran from the Vietnam War, was in attendance this evening and was asked to say a few words.

Mr. Christian indicated that Bensalem has meant a lot to him. He has had so many friends and family live in Bensalem. When he was in the Vietnam War he was amazed that he had crossed paths in Jump School and Firefighters with someone from Bensalem. He would pitch Bensalem against any Township. Bensalem has the best Police, Firefighters, EMT, Politicians across the United States and ranks #1.

The **Mayor** recommended *Richard Clift, Joe DeFranco, Patrick Jones, Jim Pinto, Gail Riley, Bruce Siemers and Joe Slemmer* to serve a 1-year term. The Mayor asked everyone to keep Jim Pinto who went through a procedure in their prayers. **Council Vice President Knowles** motioned to approve, **Councilwoman Benitez** seconded and the vote carried 5-0. **Judge Falcone** swore in 5 members.

12. **CODE OF APPEALS BOARD:**

The Mayor recommended *Ed Davis* for a 3-year term. **Councilwoman Benitez** motioned to approve and **Council Secretary Champion** seconded, the vote carried 5-0. The member was not in attendance.

13. **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD:**

The **Mayor** recommended *Steve Aldrich, Ernesto Veneziale and Marc Winokur* for a 1-year term. **Councilwoman Benitez** motioned to approve and **Council Vice President Knowles** seconded, the vote carried 5-0. No members were in attendance.

14. **DISABLED ADVISORY BOARD:**

The Mayor recommended *Loreen Cimino, Matt Neiman, Joelle Pilieri, Nick Quattrone and James Wright* for a 1-year term. **Council Secretary Champion** motioned to approve and **Council Vice President** seconded, the vote carried 5-0. No members were in attendance.

15. **DRUG AND ALCOHOL ADVISORY BOARD:**

The Mayor recommended *Rosemarie Angle, Maura Champion, Francis Curran, Lisa Diasio, Rita D'Angelo, Mary Ann Griffin, Julianna Johnson, Jim Kane, Gary Kisselback, Bernadette Kisselback, Art Mackley and Mary Van Dyke* for a 1-year term. **Council Vice President Knowles** motioned to approve, **Councilwoman Benitez** seconded, and the vote carried 5-0. **Judge Gallagher** swore in 8 members.

16. **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION:**

The Mayor recommended for a 3-year term *Patrick Duffy, Cliff Greer, Leo Wesolowski*. **Council Secretary Champion** motioned to approve and **Councilwoman Benitez** seconded, the vote carried 5-0. No members were in attendance.

17. **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD:**

The Mayor recommended *Don Anderson, Stacey Champion, John Chaykowski, Edward Cooper, Ken Farrall, Ron Harris, David Marshall, Bill McVey, Lance Morell, Robert Race, Robert Sponheimer and Kurt Stolzenberger* for a 1-year term. **Councilwoman Benitez** **Council Vice President Knowles** motioned to approve, seconded and the vote carried 5-0. **Judge Falcone** swore in 6 members.

18. **ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY BOARD:**

The Mayor recommended *Tony Belfied, Nina Fedorrov, Zael Fedorrov, Alkesh Desai and Thomas Colwell* for a three-year term. **Vice President Knowles** motioned to approve, **Council Secretary Champion** seconded and the vote carried 5-0. **Judge Gallagher** swore in 1 member.

19. **GAMING ADVISORY BOARD:**

The Mayor recommended *Mike Gallagher Mary Ann Griffin, David Johnson, Nandish Patel, Sunny Patel, Donna Patti and Sandra Rogers* for a 1-year term. **Councilwoman Benitez** **Council Secretary Champion** motioned to approve, seconded and the vote carried 5-0. **Judge Gallagher** swore in 5 members.

20. **IMPACT FEE ADVISORY BOARD:**

The Mayor recommended *Mary Ellen Cook, Deepak Dhawan, Wayne Lewis, Tom Nevrotski, Frank Paine and Ramesh Patel* for a 1-year term. **Council Vice President Knowles** motioned to approve, **Council Secretary Champion** seconded and the vote carried 5-0. No members were in attendance.

21. **PLANNING COMMISSION:**

The Mayor recommended *Will Walker* for a 4-year term. **Council Vice President Knowles** motioned to approve, **Councilwoman Benitez** seconded and the vote carried 5-0. **Judge Falcone** swore in 1 member.

22. **SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD:**

The **Mayor** recommended *Barbara Carter Buzz Ebner, Robert Gale, and Alice Gresko* for a 1-year term. **Councilwoman Benitez** motioned to approve, **Council Secretary Champion** seconded and the vote carried 5-0. No members were in attendance.

23. **VACANT PROPERTY ADVISORY BOARD:**

The **Mayor** recommended *William Cmorey, Jeffrey Darwak and Al Gougler* for a 1-year term. **Council Vice President Knowles** motioned to approve, **Council Secretary Champion** seconded and the vote carried 5-0. No members were in attendance.

25. **ZONING HEARING BOARD:**

The **Mayor** recommended *Tony Cascerceri* for a 5-year term. **Council Vice President Knowles** motioned to approve, **Council Secretary Champion** seconded and the vote carried 5-0. **Judge Gallagher** swore in 1 member.

Council President Kisselback thanked Judge Falcone and Judge Gallagher for their help of swearing in the Bensalem Township Board members.

26. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Council President Kisselback asked if there was anyone in the audience who would like to make a comment. Seeing no one come forward, the second of two Public Comments was closed.

27. **SUPPORT PERSONNEL:**

Council Vice President Knowles: Indicated Rosemarie Angle's husband, Roland Tex Angle passed away. Roland was a longtime volunteer with both the Cornwells and Eddington firehouses. Rosemarie is on our Drug and Alcohol Board and we send our thought and prayers to the Angle family.

Councilwoman Benitez: Indicated how wonderful the Bensalem community is with so many people volunteering on the various Boards and thanked the volunteers for their service to the community.

Solicitor Pizzo: Wished everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Mayor DiGirolamo: The Mayor thanked all of the volunteers on the various Boards. There is an incredible team of people who work together to make Bensalem a better place. Wished everyone a Happy New Year and wished it to be a better one with more peace in the world.

Council President Kisselback: God Bless all of the residents and may this year be a good year for one and all.

28. **ADJOURNMENT**

With no other business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned.

The Bensalem Township Reorganization Council Meeting of January 2nd, 2024 can be viewed in its entirety at the following websites:

www.bensalempa.gov

or

www.youtube.com

Respectfully submitted,

**Debora F. McBreen
Recording Secretary**