

**Township of Mount Laurel
Regular Council Meeting
July 12, 2021
Mount Laurel Municipal Center
7:00 P.M.**

Mayor Steglik called the meeting to order.

Pledge of Allegiance & Traditional Moment of Silence

ROLL CALL

Councilwoman Karen Cohen – present, Councilwoman Fozia Janjua – present,
Councilman Nick Moustakas – present, Deputy Mayor Kareem Pritchett - present, Mayor
Stephen Steglik - present, Scott Miccio, Township Solicitor – present, Meredith
Tomczyk, Township Manager/Township Clerk - present

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

The Public Announcement, which is required by the “Open Public Meetings Act” of the
State of New Jersey and read at every meeting of the Township Council was read by the
Municipal Clerk.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to Move: Deputy Mayor Pritchett, 2nd Councilman Moustakas
Roll Call 5 yes votes

APPROVAL OF BILL LIST IN THE AMOUNT OF \$2,447,411.46

Motion to Move: Councilwoman Cohen, 2nd Deputy Mayor Pritchett
Roll Call 5 yes votes

**RESOLUTION #130-2021: APPROVING CHANGE ORDER #3 2019 ROAD
PROGRAM – PHASE I CONTRACT 2019-1**

Township Clerk read Resolution as entitled.

Motion to Move Resolution #130-2021: Councilwoman Cohen, 2nd Councilman
Moustakas
Roll Call 5 yes votes

**RESOLUTION #131-2021: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE REFUND OR
CANCELLATION OF PROPERTY TAXES BLOCK 1008.01 LOT 3**

Township Clerk read Resolution as entitled.

Motion to Move Resolution #131-2021: Councilman Moustakas, 2nd Councilwoman
Cohen
Roll Call 5 yes votes

RESOLUTION #132-2021: RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE 2021 DRIVE SOBER OR GET PULLED OVER LABOR DAY HOLIDAY CRACKDOWN AUGUST 18 – SEPTEMBER 6, 2021

Township Clerk read Resolution as entitled.
Motion to Move Resolution #132-2021: Deputy Mayor Pritchett, 2nd Councilman Moustakas
Roll Call 5 yes votes

RESOLUTION #133-2021: ANTICIPATION OF A SPECIAL ITEM OF REVENUE IN THE 2021 LOCAL MUNICIPAL BUDGET PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 40A:4-87 (CHAPTER 159)

Township Clerk read Resolution as entitled.
Motion to Move Resolution #133-2021: Deputy Mayor Pritchett, 2nd Councilman Moustakas
Roll Call 5 yes votes

RESOLUTION #134-2021: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PURCHASES TO BE MADE UNDER STATE CONTRACT

Township Clerk read Resolution as entitled.
Motion to Move Resolution #134-2021: Councilman Moustakas, 2nd Councilwoman Cohen
Roll Call 5 yes votes

RESOLUTION #135-2021: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE AWARD OF A CONTRACT FOR THE PURCHASE OF A 2022 CHEVROLET SILVERADO 2500HD THROUGH SOURCEWELL (FORMERLY NJPA), NEW JERSEY COOPERATIVE PRICING SYSTEM

Township Clerk read Resolution as entitled.
Motion to Move Resolution #135-2021: Councilman Moustakas, 2nd Councilwoman Cohen
Roll Call 5 yes votes

RESOLUTION #136-2021: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE AWARD OF A CONTRACT FOR THE REPLACEMENT AND INSTALLATION OF THE COURTROOM HVAC THROUGH THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY COOPERATIVE PURCHASING PROGRAM

Township Clerk read Resolution as entitled.
Motion to Move Resolution #136-2021: Councilman Moustakas, 2nd Councilwoman Cohen
Roll Call 5 yes votes

RESOLUTION #137-2021: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE AWARD OF A CONTRACT FOR A REMOUNT AMBULANCE THROUGH THE HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL (H-GAC)

Township Clerk read Resolution as entitled.

Motion to Move Resolution #137-2021: Councilman Moustakas, 2nd Councilwoman Cohen

Roll Call 5 yes votes

RESOLUTION #138-2021: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SIGNING OF A MEMORANDUM BETWEEN THE TOWNSHIP OF MOUNT LAUREL AND CWA, CLERICAL UNION

Township Clerk read Resolution as entitled.

Motion to Move Resolution #138-2021: Councilman Moustakas, 2nd Deputy Mayor Pritchett

Roll Call 5 yes votes

RESOLUTION #139-2021: RESOLUTION FOR APPROVAL TO SUBMIT A GRANT APPLICATION AND EXECUTE A GRANT CONTRACT WITH THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR THE HOOTON ROAD IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT

Township Clerk read Resolution as entitled.

Motion to Move Resolution #139-2021: Deputy Mayor Pritchett, 2nd Councilwoman Cohen

Roll Call 5 yes votes

ORDINANCE FOR SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING

ORDINANCE #2021-17: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE 2017-2 TO FURTHER AMEND STANDARDS FOR SENIOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Clerk read Ordinance as entitled.

Mayor closed public participation.

Motion to move Ordinance #17-2021: Deputy Mayor Pritchett, 2nd Councilman Moustakas

Roll Call 5 yes votes

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Deputy Mayor Pritchett – Discussed July 2nd incident.

Scott, Attorney for township – Read a speech, updating everyone on the event that occurred.

Stacey Gregg, 40 Sunrise Road, Rockaway, NJ – Stated that she feels intimidated by giving her name and address and does not think anyone should give addresses. She is concerned about the relationship the defendant has with the police. She believes the police should be defunded and receive new training.

Kason Little, 3602 Gramercy Way, Mt. Laurel – Spoke against Mathews and how he has made many residents feel unsafe. Demanded that new legislation be put into place and suggested that a community board be established. Believes this is an unjust system, and justice works for whites but not for color.

Haba Mohammed, Chaucer Road, Mt. Laurel – Questioned why a warrant wasn't issued immediately and why the judge would not allow him to be arrested. Stated that she feels hate speech should be a crime and officers who have several complaints issued against them should receive pay cuts.

Aliyah Robinson – Stated that her daughter was the first victim of Mathews and her car was damaged. Feels that this community is beautiful without racism, but the system has failed her daughter. Said that it should not have taken a violent video to get action and her daughter should have been protected years ago.

Jasmin Cizinski, Willow Turn, Mt. Laurel – Shared her story from 2016 to 2018 about how she was harassed. She was frustrated because no arrest was made and she was not getting solid answers. She also shared a story about a problem with her son's school and how she had to prove she lived here.

Lives in Ethel Lawrence – Stated that she is 13 years old and experienced racism since she was in fourth grade. She believes racism is taught. She shared some stories of racism she has already experienced.

Nicole Yancey, Ethel Lawrence – Questioned if she made the right decision moving here because she never experienced racism like she does here in Mount Laurel.

John Savage, Gramercy Way – Explained that racism is a problem throughout Burlington County and it is only going to get worse. Feels that we need to get creative and need more investigations and leaders in the county.

Tara Patel, South Church Street – Mentioned that she is not a victim, but she is a new resident who cares. Said that she noticed most community events are sponsored by the police and thinks it should be a priority to get police out of community events. Questioned who will be included on the diversity board. She also asked if we will move forward as policing community or progressive community.

Harriett Cohen, 10 Alderton Lane – Said that she never heard what she is hearing tonight and is so sad that neighbors had to live with this for so long. Shared a story that happened a few years ago due to her Jewish faith in a neighboring town where someone told her she should leave town and Hitler was right. Went to police and was told if they didn't threaten her, they could not help her. Feels that laws need to change and we cannot let racism define this town.

George Strand, 306 Stamford Drive – Shared a story of a domestic incident he witnessed from three years ago. Feels that if Mathews had been a black man, he would be cuffed.

David Lipshutz, 1009 B Scotswood Court – Stated that he has been a political activist and volunteer for many years. He thinks the protests are necessary. Also stated that he worked with Councilmembers last year and now that they have been elected, he has faith in this Council.

Shante Smith – Expressed disappointment in the Council, Police department, and all of the complaints that have been made about Mathews.

Colleen Leinbach, 3602 Gramercy Way – Discussed how she has spent 8 years trying to get help from the police department because of being harassed by her neighbors.

Thomas Ballard – Explained his disappointment in law enforcement during this situation, along with the police chief and his statement.

Bo Mattlack, NAACP – Stated that he feels what happened in this town is evil and he is looking to the Council for hope and an investigation.

Patrice Furchesun – Questioned the cost of black lives. She feels that all corners of the community need to be reached and taught about racism and other efforts need to be made for there to be change. Suggested a survey be done.

Giana Bird, Marlton – Explained that she didn't realize racism was out there until she moved to Mount Laurel. Told a story of a student who had her hair cut in a Mt. Laurel school by white girl. She expressed fear for her own daughter in the community.

Shelly Detory, Evesham – Spoke about how Black Lives Matter of New Jersey are on call daily, always show up for their community, and now it is time for the township Council to do the same.

Jessica Dunlap, Aberdeen Drive – Read a statement and expressed that the community needs to feel safe and the police department is lacking in transparency.

Ryan Dunlap, 3602 Gramercy – Spoke about Carol Murphy's voting record and response to the situation. He also discussed how he feels the community has been terrorized by the police and politicians need to start listening to the community.

Emily Crowley, Pitman – Explained that action needs to be taken immediately and urged the Council to start planning tonight.

Germile – Discussed a few suggestions that he had for the Council going forward in regards to the diversity board so that they are actually reaching the people.

Jordan Salan, Willingboro, NJ – Explained that he is an activist and made calls to the Mayor but the calls were not returned. Questioned what happened to the hot line meeting, why a warrant was not issued to the defendant, and why the township building was closed to the public.

Rebecca Catarus, Greenwich Lane, Mount Laurel – Expressed that there is more racism in the area than just Mathews and the real disturbances were the police blocking the roads, not the protestors.

Lebron Brown – Stated that his family were victims of Mathews. He mentioned that he is the president of the HOA Board. Explained that this has been going on for years and no one should have to go through what they went through.

Secretary of HOA – Explained that she called 911 on Mathews, but the police never came to her house. That is why she went to the police station and filed her own report, but nothing was done until the video went viral.

Denise Brown – Stated that she is the wife of the victim and she hopes that Mathews does not get out of jail.

Brandon Tantum – Expressed that he believes in justice and what happened to him in the video felt surreal. He wonders what would have happened if he was not there to defend the family.

Adrienne Lewis, Essex Lane, Mount Laurel – Stated that she has lived in Mount Laurel for 18 years and has seen many issues in the school system.

Jordan Salan – Spoke about how the officers in the room are acting uninterested and they are being paid to be here.

Stacy Gregg, Rockaway Township – Called the Township Council to action and demanded they make changes in the state in regards to the police and justice system.

Kason Little – Spoke on the hatred and racism that he feels is deeply rooted in Mt. Laurel. Asked the Council to take what he said to heart and really think about it.

Ryan Dunlap – Stated that the protestors did nothing wrong and he wants to see the footage.

Emily Crowley, Pitman – Spoke about mental health, how people are set off by racism, and how mental illness affects the community.

Mandy, Hainesport-Mount Laurel Road, Mount Laurel – Expressed that with a newly diverse Council, she believes the community will see change. She feels that more people need to be the voice and promote change.

Harriett Cohen – Explained that she has heard many other complaints about the town, but not the problem of racism. Said that she would like to hear what the Council has to say.

Jordan Salan – Said he wants answers by Wednesday or there will be another protest.

Edward Kersey, Magnolia Court – Mentioned that he knows some Councilmembers personally and thinks everyone should give them a chance.

Owen McCancy, Fair Share – Stated that he is standing in solidarity with the victims. Let the Council know that they have the ability to restore this town.

Tyler, NAACP – Believes the victims deserve compensation.

Aaliyah – Stated she feels that she cannot protect her daughter, but she does have hope that there will be change; people need to have compassion and take action.

Kason Little – Questioned what the Council will do to remedy the pain of the community.

Shante Smith - Stated that this is a movement of the people and they are not going anywhere until the Council does their job.

COMMENTS BY COUNCIL

Deputy Mayor Pritchett – Said that he appreciates everyone coming and he hears what everyone had to say. Believes there are no excuses for this behavior, but the Council needs a chance to do their jobs since this is the first they are hearing about Mr. Mathews.

Councilwoman Cohen – Welcomes all comments and wants everyone involved. Urged everyone in the room to apply for boards because the Council needs their voices.

Councilman Moustakas – Said that he is appalled at what he saw in the video. Applauded everyone who came out to speak and wants to see people's lives improve. Thanked everyone for coming and said that Council will do everything in their power to help.

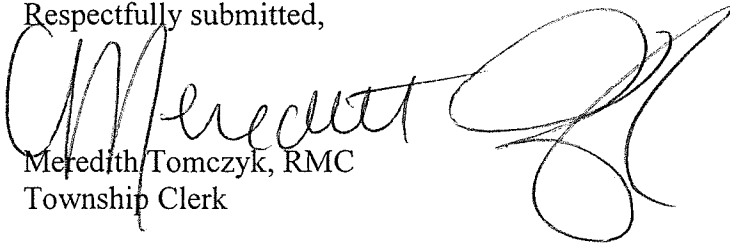
Councilwoman Janjua – Explained that she is overwhelmed by what she heard, and she wants everyone to work together to heal from this. Thanked everyone who came out to make changes and make things better.

Mayor Steglik – Gave a speech about the rage he feels for Mathews and how he wants to do anything he can to heal the community. Stated that he believes this Council is well equipped to tackle this issue.

Motion to adjourn: Councilwoman Cohen, 2nd Deputy Mayor Pritchett

All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Meredith Tomczyk". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "M" and a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Meredith Tomczyk, RMC
Township Clerk