



STOCKTON BOROUGH COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Date: August 18, 2025 7:00 P.M.

Held through Zoom

Mayor Aaron Lipsen., called the regular meeting of the Stockton Borough Council to order on August 18, 2025, at 7:00 P.M. Mayor Lipsen announced that this meeting is called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act. Notice of this meeting was transmitted to the Hunterdon County Democrat and the Trenton Times, was posted on the Borough Website, posted on the door at the Municipal Building and filed with the Borough Clerk.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Lipsen led those in attendance in the pledge to the nation's flag.

Mayor Lipsen cited the anniversary tomorrow of the 1955 flood.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Mayor Lipsen called for a moment of silence for William J. Soriero and Nancy Birmhauser.

ROLL CALL

Present: Councilperson William Brown, Councilperson Fisher, Councilperson Folz, Councilperson Kate Meltzer, Council President Michael Mann, Mayor Aaron Lipsen, Borough Attorney Lisa Maddox and Borough Clerk, Laurie A. Courter. Absent: Mann (Excused)

CORRESPONDENCE

DEP-Nockamixon Dam-Mayor Lipsen explained how Stockton is part of the emergency plan if there was a breach.

Odenwald Email Re: 2025 Tax Bills Frenchtown-Mayor Lipsen explained this was an email from Mr. Odenwald about tax bills in Frenchtown.

Mayor Lipsen amended the order of the agenda to bring forward Resolution 2025-69. Mayor Lipsen recused himself.

Brown took chair and asked Meltzer for an update on the grant. Meltzer explained that they do have the funds for 2024 but are waiting on the county's response. For the 2025 grant, Meltzer explained it is critical to move forward for this grant being that the deadline is August 29th. Meltzer added that council should move forward with Collier Engineers in getting the grant submitted. Attorney Maddox explained that the resolution provides generally for park improvements for items that are in the 2021 Park Master Plan.

Motion made by Hunt and seconded by Folz to approve Resolution 2025-69.

Roll call: Brown, Fisher, Folz, Hunt, Mann and Meltzer.

Ayes: 5 Nays: 0

Motion passes.

**Borough of Stockton
RESOLUTION 2025-69
Authorizing Submission of the Hunterdon County Municipal Park & Recreation Grant
Application**

WHEREAS, the Hunterdon County Open Space, Farmland & Historic Preservation Trust Fund ("County Open Space Trust Fund"), provides matching grants to municipal governments and to nonprofit organizations for assistance in the development or redevelopment of outdoor municipal recreation facilities; and,

WHEREAS, the Borough of Stockton desires to further the public interest by obtaining a matching grant of \$150,000 from the County Trust Fund to fund the following project: Stockton Borough Park Improvements; and

WHEREAS, the Borough is committed to providing a 25% cash match for the project, that is, application Deadline is August 29, 2025, at 4:30 PM.

Grant Requests Can Be Submitted Up to a Maximum of \$100,000.

Matching Requirement: Applicants must contribute 25% of the total project cost; and

WHEREAS, the Council of the Borough of Stockton, which is its governing body, has reviewed the Municipal Park and Recreation Grant Program application and instructions, and desires to make an application for such a matching grant and provide application information and furnish such documents as may be required; and,

WHEREAS, the County of Hunterdon shall determine whether the application is complete and in conformance with the scope and intent of the Municipal Park and Recreation Grant Program and the Hunterdon County Open Space Trust Fund; and,

WHEREAS, the Borough of Stockton is willing to use the County Open Space Trust Fund in accordance with such rules, regulations and applicable statutes, and is willing to enter into an agreement with the County of Hunterdon for the above named project and ensure its completion on or about the project contract expiration date.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of Borough of Stockton, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey:

1. That it is hereby authorized to submit the above completed project application to the County by the deadline of August 29, 2025, as established by the County; and,
2. That, in the event of a County Trust Fund award that may be less than the grant amount requested above, the Council of the Borough of Stockton has, or will secure, the balance of funding necessary to complete the project, or modify the project as necessary; and,

3. That the Council of the Borough of Stockton is committed to providing a 25% cash match for the project ; and,
4. That only those park improvements identified and approved in the project application, its Project contract, or other documentation will be considered eligible for reimbursement.
5. That the Council of the Borough of Stockton agrees to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations in its performance of the project; and,
6. That this resolution shall take effect immediately.

Mayor Lipsen retook the chair at this time. Hunt at this time dropped off the call due to technical issues.

OLD BUSINESS

Stockton School-Mayor Lipsen reported that he and Brown met with the architect and archeologist last week. This was a preliminary meeting, in which several engineers will be brought in for this. They started working on the preservation plan and this project is starting to move ahead.

Bridge Street Truck Signs-Mayor Lipsen reported on the accident that occurred on August 1st involving a tractor trailer truck pulling down wires and causing damage, knocking out power and damage to a fire hydrant.

MS4 Stormwater Compliance-Mayor Lipsen reported that the borough so far has received \$75,000 worth of grants to bring Stockton into compliance for Tier A MS4 stormwater rules. The borough has a new stormwater advisor who is ordering parts to be installed within the week. Assessments are being conducted as well for other conditions of the stormwater system. A USDA grant the borough received was used for a company to map the system, in which he and Brown have met with.

Hunterdon County (Electrical) Cooperative Pricing System-Opt-In Authorization-Mayor Lipsen explained that this opt in is for the boroughs electrical costs within its own infrastructure. It would save the borough by opting in. Attorney Maddox explained in more detail the aspect of the program and what it means for the borough's municipal facilities benefiting by opting in to the renewable energy program.

OEM Report

Mayor Lipsen gave the August report and stated that they participated in the Emmitt Drill, a communication system for emergency responders. Mayor Lipsen also reported he attended the coordinators meeting in which the forecast was for 5-7 inches of rain. They stated that it was worthwhile notifying people that were parked along Railroad Avenue both north and south to move their cars due to the possibility of the impending storm and flooding. Mayor Lipsen thanked both the Coordinator and the Deputy for their efforts with this. Mayor Lipsen also reported that it's hurricane season and there are tips for preparation and for other different storms on the New Jersey website,

NJ.gov-NOAM. Mayor Lipsen discussed Register Ready and added that they will continue to promote this for residents to sign up to receive notifications and evacuation plans in emergency situations. Mayor Lipsen gave thanks to Sharon and Patrick for their volunteer work they do for the borough, Brown also gave thanks to Sharona and Patick and discussed all the work they do for the borough and added that the role they have is vital and important.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT – PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mayor Lipsen opened the floor for public comment.

Michael Odenwald, thanked Meltzer on the grant that was discussed earlier in the meeting. Asked if there was a possibility for a gazebo as mentioned in the plan, or a bocce ball court. Odenwald asked how much does the town need to contribute in order to receive the grant and added that it's a great use in the money.

Hearing no other members of the public speak up, Mayor Lipsen closed the floor to public comment.

RESOLUTIONS

Motion made by Brown and seconded by Meltzer to approve Resolution 2025-66.

Roll call: Brown, Fisher, Folz, and Meltzer.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

RESOLUTION 2025-66

GOVERNING BODY CERTIFICATION OF THE ANNUAL AUDIT

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:5-4 requires the governing body of every local unit to have made an annual audit of its books, accounts and financial transactions, and

WHEREAS, the Annual Report of Audit for the year (2024) has been filed by a Registered Municipal Accountant with the *Municipal Clerk* pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:5-6, and a copy has been received by each member of the governing body; and,

WHEREAS, R.S. 52:27BB-34 authorizes the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey to prescribe reports pertaining to the local fiscal affairs; and,

WHEREAS, the Local Finance Board has promulgated N.J.A.C. 5:30-6.5, a regulation requiring that the governing body of each municipality shall by resolution certify to the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey that all members of the governing body have reviewed, as a minimum, the sections of the annual audit entitled "Comments and Recommendations, and,

WHEREAS, the members of the governing body have personally reviewed as a minimum the Annual Report of Audit, and specifically the sections of the Annual Audit entitled "Comments and Recommendations, as evidenced by the group affidavit form of the governing body attached hereto; and,

WHEREAS, such resolution of certification shall be adopted by the Governing Body no later than forty-five days after the receipt of the annual audit, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:30-6.5; and,

WHEREAS, all members of the governing body have received and have familiarized themselves with, at least, the minimum requirements of the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey, as stated aforesaid and have subscribed to the affidavit, as provided by the Local Finance Board, and

WHEREAS, failure to comply with the regulations of the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey may subject the members of the local governing body to the penalty provisions of R.S. 52:27BB-52, to wit:

R.S. 52:27BB-52: A local officer or member of a local governing body who, after a date fixed for compliance, fails or refuses to obey an order of the director (Director of Local Government Services), under the provisions of this Article, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, may be fined not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) or imprisoned for not more than one year, or both, in addition shall forfeit his office.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the *Governing Body* of the *Borough of Stockton*, hereby states that it has complied with N.J.A.C. 5:30-6.5 and does hereby submit a certified copy of this resolution and the required affidavit to said Board to show evidence of said compliance.

Motion made by Brown and seconded by Meltzer to approve Resolution 2025-67.

Roll call: Brown, Fisher, Folz, and Meltzer.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

RESOLUTION 2025-67 PARK DEPOSIT REFUND

WHEREAS, funds were received for a park rental deposit in the amount of \$150.00; and

WHEREAS, funds were mistakenly deposited and now requiring a refund; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Stockton, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey, that the Chief Financial Officer be authorized to issue a refund check for \$150.00 to Sarah DiAlto, New Hope , PA.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this Resolution shall be provided to the Chief Financial Officer.

Motion made by Brown and seconded by Folz to approve Resolution 2025-68.

Roll call: Brown, Fisher, Folz, and Meltzer.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

**RESOLUTION 2025-68
RESOLUTION APPOINTING DEVON ROBERTS FOR THE BOROUGH OF
STOCKTON HUNTERDON COUNTY, STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

WHEREAS, there is a need to appoint an Office Assistant for various projects within the borough administrative offices,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Borough of Stockton Governing Body appoints Devon Roberts as an Office Assistant in the amount of \$3,500 and term ending December 31, 2025.

Motion made by Brown and seconded by Folz to approve Resolution 2025-70.

Roll call: Brown, Fisher, Folz, and Meltzer.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

**Borough of Stockton
Resolution 2025-70
Meter Installation**

WHEREAS, there exists a need to replace water meter for Stockton Borough Water/Sewer Utility; and

WHEREAS, the wage for the installation of each meter is \$100.00; and

WHEREAS, the Stockton Borough Council recommends Michael Schneider and Steve Cottone for the job.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Stockton, County of Hunterdon and State of New Jersey that Michael Schneider and Steve Cottone is hereby hired to replace water meters for the Stockton Borough Water/Sewer Utility effective immediately at \$100/meter.

Motion made by Brown and seconded by Meltzer to approve Resolution 2025-71. (CO-OP Energy - Need resolution)

Roll call: Brown, Fisher, Folz, and Meltzer.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

Mayor Lipsen at this time announced the Cannabis Review committee consisting of himself, Brown and Hunt and asked for a motion to approve. Motion made by Folz and seconded by Meltzer to approve the committee, all were in favor except for Fisher being recused.

PAYMENT OF BILLS AND VOUCHERS

Motion made by Folz and seconded by Meltzer to approve Resolution 2025-72.

Roll call: Brown, Fisher, Folz, and Meltzer.

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Motion passes.

Stockton Borough Council Resolution 2025-72

Authorizing Payment of Municipal Obligations

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stockton find and declare that certain municipal obligations have come due and are now payable; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stockton further find and declare that said obligations have been itemized on the annexed schedules, which are hereby attached and deemed part of this Resolution.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stockton, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey does hereby authorize payment of said municipal obligations, in accordance with the recommendations of the Chief Financial Officer and the Treasurer in the amount of \$288,505.27.

Discussions of the motion of the cannabis review committee being voted ensued. It was realized there was not a quorum to properly vote. At this time Hunt rejoined the meeting.

Motion made by Folz and seconded by Meltzer to approve the cannabis committee consisting of Lipsen, Hunt and Brown, all were in favor except for Fisher being recused.
At this time Hunt left the meeting.

MAYORS REPORT, BOROUGH COUNCIL COMMENTS & COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mayors Report-Lipsen reported that he attended the ribbon cutting for the new South Hunterdon Regional Middle School. He stated that it is a great facility and a huge jump into the future.

Mayor Lipsen reported that construction is going to be taking place on a water line on South Main Street across from St. Agnes Catholic Church and the Stockton School. There will be one lane of traffic with flaggers. Mayor Lipsen gave thanks to the employees and Brown for their work and time into this project that was very complex with regards to permitting. Brown thanked Mr. Ent for his input in making this not as expensive as it could have been. Mayor Lisen gave thanks for the re-installment of the fire hydrant after the accident on Bridge Street.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Mayor Lipsen opened the floor to public comment.

Micheal Odenwald, stated that it would be worthwhile to mention that he believes he is the only applicant for the cannabis committee, and how he has written a check for \$15,000 which he doesn't expect to ever see again and stated he hopes to be clear of his 200 page response that he provided is his full commitment to the town and the positive value it brings. Asked that the committee arrive at an answer fast after 18 to 20 months of this. Asked that he be told in September if it's a yes and to go forward due to stormwater management and other things he would need to invest in. Mr. Odenwald added that the sooner he can have approval the sooner he can work with the DRCC and the municipality and invest tens of thousands of dollars in stormwater management.

Hearing no other members of the public speak up, Mayor Lipsen closed the floor to public comment.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion by Brown, seconded by Folz to approve a resolution to go into executive session, all were in favor.

RESOLUTION TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975, permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, this governing body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of Stockton Borough, County of Hunterdon, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The public shall be excluded from discussion of and action upon the hereinafter specified subject matter.

2. The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows:
 - Contractual-Snow Plow Bids
 - Worman Road Attorney -Contractual
 - Personnel

The discussion is anticipated to take approximately 30 minutes. Action may be taken.

3. It is intended at this time that the above-stated subject matter will be made public when the matter has been resolved.
4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

A motion by Brown and seconded by Meltzer to return to regular session was unanimously approved by voice vote.

The council was in Executive Session until 8:36 PM.

ACTION ON ITEMS FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

No action is being taken.

NEXT MEETING

September 15, 2025

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Folz and seconded by Brown to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:36 PM.

Laurie A. Courter

Laurie A. Courter, Borough Clerk