

REGULAR MEETING
MAYOR AND COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 9, 2024

Mayor Chegwidden called the Meeting to Order.

Mayor Chegwidden read the Open Public Meeting Statement.

Roll Call

Council President Yeager requested Roll Call:

Council President Yeager - Present
Councilman Binkoski – Present
Councilwoman Jones - Present
Councilman Norton – Present
Councilwoman Vasquez - Present
Councilwoman Wickenheisser – Present

Also in attendance were Administrator Joseph Kovalcik Jr., Attorney Roman Hirniak and Borough Clerk Gabrielle Evangelista.

Flag Salute

Mayor Chegwidden led those present in the Salute to the American Flag.

Open to the Public

Mayor Chegwidden opened the meeting to the public.

Pat Rechsteiner, 49 Ford Ave.: On behalf on the Wharton Senior Club, she thanked the Mayor and Council for their donation.

Angel Santos, 8 Lowry Ave.: Mr. Santos came to discuss some concerns about taxes. His assessment increased making his taxes go up. Mayor Chegwidden and Mr. Kovalcik then discussed taxes with him, noting that the Borough’s tax rate actually went down this year, but we collect and distribute for multiple entities. They advised they understand his concerns. It’s hard because you want the value of your home to be higher if you want to sell it, but you want it lower for taxation purposes. They thanked him for coming.

Tom Romaine, 162 S. Main St.: He advised there is a street light turning on and off and feels it is a safety issue. He should report it to JCP&L as they own the street lights, Mr. Quillinan from the DPW advised that he has reported that one to JCP&L as well and they said they should be taking care of it shortly. Mr. Romaine continued that he has safety concerns about people riding electric bikes and scooters on the sidewalks. Mayor Chegwidden advise he will let Chief Young know about this.

Jean Zaccone, 31 Park St.: Ms. Zaccone echoed Mr. Romaine’s concerns about the electric bikes and scooters. She advised that she thinks Chatham has recently passed an ordinance about them that we may want to consider looking into. She also had some questions about enforcement. Mayor Chegwidden advised that the number of tickets the Police are issuing are actually through the roof, there’s just a lot happening. In fact, there was an accident right in front of his driveway today.

No one else wishing to be heard, Mayor Chegwidden closed the meeting to the public.

Ordinance

Councilwoman Vasquez presented O-16-24, “An Ordinance Amending Chapter 297 of the Revised General Ordinances of the Borough of Wharton, County of Morris, State of New Jersey” on second reading, by title only.

Mayor Chegwidden opened the meeting to the public for questions or comments on this Ordinance only.

No one wishing to be heard, Mayor Chegwidden closed the meeting to the public.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Vasquez and was seconded by Council President Yeager to adopt O-16-24 on second and final reading.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEA: 6 NAY:0 ABSENT: 0 ABSTAIN:0
MOTION CARRIED

Ordinance

Councilman Norton introduced O-17-24, “An Ordinance to Provide for General Capital Projects Enumerated Within for the Borough of Wharton, County of Morris and to Provide for the Funding Thereof” on first reading, by title only.

A motion was made by Councilman Norton and was seconded by Councilman Binkoski to adopt O-17-24 on first reading.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEA: 6 NAY:0 ABSENT: 0 ABSTAIN:0
MOTION CARRIED

Mayor Chegwidden set the date of September 23, 2024 for second and final reading.

Consent Agenda

The following items are considered to be routine and non-controversial by the Mayor and Council and will be approved by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a council member or citizen so requests, in which case, the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered in a normal sequence on the agenda.

Approval of Bills: Approve all bills referred to the Finance Committee
Approval of Minutes: 8/12/24

R-138-24: Refund Tax Overpayment Block 1603 Lot 14
R-139-24: Refund Street Opening Escrow Deposit- 2 Wabash
R-140-24: Requesting Approval of Items of Revenue and Appropriation- NJDOT
MA-2024-Baker Avenue Phase 3 Improvements
R-141-24: Appointment of Temporary Plumbing Sub Code Official
R-142-24: Professional Services CHA Baker Ave Improvements
R-143-24: Adjusting Fixed Asset Threshold

Approve Fire Department Application Kaleen Dickinson

A motion was made by Council President Yeager and seconded by Councilwoman Wickenheisser to approve all items listed on the Consent Agenda.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEA: 6 NAY: 0 ABSENT: 0 ABSTAIN: 0
MOTION CARRIED

Correspondence

- Notice of Ordinances-Roxbury
- Letter from NJDOT
- Notice of Meeting-Morris Area Paratransit System

Council Reports

Council President Yeager: He attended an Eagle Scout Ceremony with Senator Bucco and Assemblywoman Dunn.

Councilman Binkoski: No report.

Councilwoman Jones: She attended Canal Day, which was spectacular and enjoyed watching the fireworks from her driveway.

Councilman Norton: He attended Canal Day, which was very well attended. He wanted to note that John Manna, who runs Canal Day, is retiring this year. He thanks him for his many years of hard work running that event.

Councilwoman Vasquez: She also attended Canal Day, its so nice to see families together having fun. The Canal and the Lock Tender's house look beautiful. Thank you to Mr. Manna for all of his work. She also attended the fireworks, which were great.

Councilwoman Wickenheisser: She also attended Canal Day. Thank you to the DPW for all of their hard work preparing things for it. She also thanks Mr. Manna for all of his work over the years.

Mayor Chegwidden's Report: At Canal Day, he presented Mr. Manna with a Proclamation honoring him on his retirement. John has put a ton of work over the last 18 years into making Canal Day what it is today. He also has helped us get over 4 million in grants for the restoration of the area including Lock and the Lock Tender's House. That area has truly become a destination and it's amazing how many people visit the area daily. He also wants to thank John's wife Cheryl for all of her work on Canal Day over the years. She has always been involved and has also put in a lot of work running the event every year. He is looking for a volunteer who is interested in taking over running Canal Day. Anyone interested should contact him for an interview. Over the years, John has saved over \$100,000 from Canal Day that he would like the Borough to use for a project. He is thinking we can maybe use it for seed money for another grant. He also wants to thank the DPW for the amount of work they do prior to and during Canal Day.

He attended the Planning Board meeting and our Planner explained the new rules and regulations for Affordable Housing from the State. She anticipates that we will be in good shape with the new required numbers because we thankfully have done our part throughout the years. He thanks the Council and the Planning Board for their diligence with this.

Open to the Public

Mayor Chegwidden opened the meeting to the public.

Jean Zaccone, 31 Park St.: Ms. Zaccone asked about the new Affordable Housing Regulations, what happens when there's no more buildable land? Mayor Chegwidden advised that they can attempt to force use of municipal owned properties that aren't parkland among other things.

No one else wishing to be heard, Mayor Chegwidden closed the meeting to the public.

Mayor Chegwidden wanted to note that the school has been looking for PILOT money from the town when they have a fair share of funding. They have 50 school choice students which gives them \$435,000 in additional revenue and their equalization has been steadily increasing.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Binkoski and was seconded by Council President Yeager.

September 9, 2024

BOROUGH OF WHARTON

ATTEST:

**Gabrielle Evangelista,
Borough Clerk**

**WILLIAM J. CHEGWIDDEN,
MAYOR**