

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

Friday, January 1, 2010 – 12 Noon

The Reorganization Meeting of the Lawrence Township Council was held on Friday, January 1, 2010, at the Lawrence Township Municipal Building – Council Meeting Room at 12 Noon.

The Municipal Clerk read the following statement of proper notice:

“Adequate notice of the January 1, 2010 Reorganization Meeting of the Lawrence Township Council was forwarded to The Times, The Trentonian and The Lawrence Ledger on December 17, 2010.”

Reverend R. Vincent Gartland, Church of St. Ann, delivered the Invocation, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, led by Sean Brennan, Christopher Powers, Hunter Powers and Matthew Steever.

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

Present: Councilmen Bostock, Councilwoman Mount and Councilman Powers.  
Absent: None.

Richard S. Krawczun, Municipal Manager, and John Dember, Esq., Acting Municipal Attorney, were also present.

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The Municipal Clerk stated, “It is with great pleasure that I announce the results of the General Election held on November 3, 2009, and I would like to introduce our two Councilmembers – Mr. James S. Kownacki and Gregory J. Puliti.”

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

Senator Shirley K. Turner administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Kownacki.

Freeholder Pasquale Colavita administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Puliti.

The Municipal Clerk called for nominations for Office of Mayor for the year 2010.

Mr. Puliti nominated Michael S. Powers for the Office of Mayor, seconded by Mrs. Mount.

The Municipal Clerk asked if there were any other nominations. There being none, Ms. Norcia declared the nominations closed and asked Ms. Carter, Deputy Municipal Clerk, to call the roll for the nomination of Michael S. Powers as Mayor.

COUNCIL	AYE	NAY	PRESENT	ABSENT	ABSTAIN	MOVED	SECOND
Mr. Bostock	X						
Mr. Kownacki	X						
Mrs. Mount	X						X
Mr. Puliti	X					X	
Mayor Powers	X						

Mercer County Surrogate, Diane Gerofsky, administered the Oath of Office to Mayor Powers.

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Mayor Powers welcomed and gave special recognition to the following dignitaries: County Executive Brian Hughes, Mercer County Surrogate Diane Gerofsky, State Senator Shirley Turner, Assemblyman and Township Prosecutor, Reed Gusciora, Mercer County Clerk Paula, Sollami-Covello, Mercer County Freeholders - Anthony Carabelli, Dan Benson, Keith Hamilton and Pasquale Colavita and John Cimino, Former Mayors/Councilmembers - Robert Kusek, Joseph Cermele, Frank Nerwinski, Harold Veeren, Doris Weisberg and Thomas Wilfrid, Mercer County Counsels, Arthur Sypek and Sara Crowley, President of Rider University, Mordecai Rozanski and Princeton Borough Councilman Andrew Kootnz.

Mayor Powers further acknowledged and thanked his wife Victoria, sons Christopher and Hunter, his mother Lois, fellow members of the Knights of Columbus and a host of family, friends, co-workers that were also in attendance and asked that everyone give a big round of applause for the children who did a terrific job in leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Power advised that the Annual Colonel Hand Reenactment March is scheduled for tomorrow (January 2<sup>nd</sup>) at 10:00 a.m., and he would be remiss if he did not mention the passing of Mr. Robert Immordino, the former Township Historian, who was 94-years old and had a true passion and love for history. And, in memory of him they will be unveiling a bronze memorial plaque tomorrow at 11:30 a.m. at Notre Dame High School. He then asked that everyone join him in a moment of silence as a tribute to Mr. Immordino.

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Mayor Powers Mayoral remarks:

**"We are all in this Together"**  
**Mayor Michael Powers**  
**January 1<sup>st</sup> Reorganization Speech**

Happy New Year!

It is certainly an honor and privilege to again serve as Mayor of this great Township. I want to thank my colleagues on Council for their vote of confidence and their support and continued support in the future.

I want to thank the Administration led by our Municipal Manager, Richard Krawczun, for all their hard work on behalf of the Governing Body.

This year, 2010, marks my seventh year on the Township Council and promises to be my most challenging. Therefore, I have chosen the theme "we are all in this together" for this, my second term as Mayor.

Right now our country finds itself in less than ideal conditions. Our Nation is at war against terrorists. One only has to see the yellow ribbons tied to the tree outside Town Hall or in front of the Eggerts Crossing Armory to know this.

One out of ten of our fellow Americans is unemployed and seeking work.

The State of New Jersey is facing a budget deficit of at least 6 to 8 billion dollars depending on to whom you speak. Our incoming Governor warns that the State could run out of money by March.

But, here in Lawrence Township I see hope. Why am I hopeful? Because the citizens of Lawrence Township realize we are all in this together. Our residents have a history of taking action and overcoming challenges large and small. I have seen our American Legion Post 414 organize pancake breakfasts to address the challenge of families struggling to get by while their National Guard family member serves overseas. I have seen the Armory overflow in support of this wonderful cause and raise \$36,000 for our troops. I have participated in fundraisers by the Eggerts Crossing Civic League, League of Women Voters and Women's Club of Lawrenceville, to help our young people achieve the dream of attending college. In the middle of this Great Recession, the War Memorial Center was filled with folks to benefit the charity care work of the Saint Lawrence Rehabilitation Center here in Lawrence. Please mark your calendars for their next Peter Nero Charity Concert on October 2<sup>nd</sup>.

During these difficult economic times, residents like Lawrence Intermediate School 4<sup>th</sup> Graders, Kayla Jackson and Norma Taylor have taken it upon themselves to respectively organize a blanket drive and prepare food baskets to the less fortunate among us.

Veteran civic organizations such as the Eggerts Crossing Civic League, Lawrenceville Main Street and newcomers – such as Sustainable Lawrence and Greater Eldridge Park Neighborhood Association have all partnered with the Township to meet the challenge of encouraging business development and improving their neighborhoods. As we are all in this together... we will continue these partnerships in 2010.

The lighting and sidewalk improvements you see on Main Street, the shade tree plantings on Johnson Avenue, the emergency access road to Heritage Park and the recent streetscape improvements on Route 206 and Eldridge Park business district are all a reflection of this collaborative effort. We truly are all in this together... This year, the Growth and Redevelopment Committee will be hard at work on an architectural design project for businesses located in the Brunswick Pike Redevelopment Zone in south Lawrence.

Therefore, let us all RESOLVE in 2010 to follow these examples of community action with our own personal actions to build upon and improve the strong sense of community we all enjoy here in Lawrence.

RESOLVE to "buy local" and support our Township businesses. Township businesses, whether large or small, provide jobs for our residents and help to offset our residential property tax burden. In these troubling economic times, now more than ever, we need to use our purchasing power to support our local business community.

And, to emphasize this buy local effort, I will be conducting a monthly "Ask the Mayor" meeting at a different local Lawrence business throughout the year. The first of these informal and open meetings will be held on Saturday, January 16<sup>th</sup> from 8 - 9 am at Michael's Diner. So... come on out, ask a question, discuss a problem or offer an idea over a cup of coffee. Where you choose to eat, shop and conduct business truly makes a difference for our Lawrence merchants!

RESOLVE to get off the couch and take advantage of our wonderful parks and preserved open space. Through a public-private partnership with Bristol Myers Squibb, ETS, Hopewell Township, Lawrenceville School, Mercer County, Brandywine Realty Trust and others, Lawrence Township has developed a wonderful bike path network. Let's get out on our bicycles and use it! In addition to the LHT bike trail, Lawrence has preserved more than 25% of the town for active and passive recreation open space. To promote the active use of our parks, I am proud to announce a partnership with St. Lawrence Rehabilitation Center for a "Tour de Lawrence" bicycle event to be held at Colonial Lake Park late this summer.

In the fall, the Township will bring back my "Dog Days of Summer" initiative to connect township pet owners with each other and to encourage the use of our dog park facility in Village Park. Besides being a lot of fun, use of our parks and events like these help to combat rising obesity rates that are contributing to the skyrocketing health care costs faced by employers such as Lawrence Township. If you rent the Disney movie Wall-e (the favorite of my son Hunter), you will see our potential future if we fail to take action now on this wellness initiative.

RESOLVE to volunteer. Lawrence Township has always relied on volunteers to keep our town running. Township Council depends on our statutory Planning and Zoning Boards as well as numerous advisory committees to accomplish the business of governing. Although, we will be filling the 2010 vacancies for these Boards and Committees next week, it is never too early to investigate what's out there. Visit the Township's website at [lawrencetwp.com](http://lawrencetwp.com) and see where you would like to get involved. In a few moments, I will be swearing in the new Chiefs of our three volunteer fire departments. I am quite certain the Chiefs could use a few more able bodied men and women around their respective firehouses. Consider volunteering for the American Cancer Society's "Relay for Life" happening at the Lawrence High School track on May 21<sup>st</sup> or other Lawrence based charities such as HomeFront.

RESOLVE to be counted. A new decade means a new US Census. As Mayor, I will be organizing a Complete Count Committee to make sure every Township resident is counted in April. Please contact the Clerk or myself if you would like to participate on the committee. Since grant funding, particularly for our schools is often based on population, it is very important that all Township residents are counted. And, since the Census Bureau considers students to be residents of where they reside in April, I have formed a "Town and Gown" working group with Rider University and The Lawrenceville School to make sure these students are included in our count.

Many changes have occurred in our Township since the last census was taken in 2000. One such change has been the growth of our senior population. Since 2000, nine age restricted over 55 developments have been built in Lawrence Township. As a result of this growth, it has become necessary to expand the Lawrence Senior Center this year. This project will result in a 700 square foot addition to the Center and better utilization of the existing interior space for our seniors. Look for the work to get started later this spring and be completed by the end of the year. I am happy to report to our seniors that the Center will remain open during the construction phase of this project. I also want to personally thank our County Executive Brian Hughes and the Freeholder Board for providing a matching Grant that will reduce the Township portion of this cost to \$365,950.

We are also becoming a more diverse community. The School Board advises that for the first time ever minorities compose the majority of the entering kindergarten population. We need to embrace this diversity. As Mayor in 2006, I was pleased to announce the Township's first ever Cultural & Diversity Day celebration. I am now pleased to report that the Human Relations Committee has designated Sunday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Senior Center, for the fifth annual version of this event. Since we are all in this together, the Human Relations Committee is asking everyone who attends Diversity Day this year to bring a canned good donation for HomeFront. Each year the Human Relations Committee selects a different group to be the featured speaker at the event. One year Rabbi Yitzchak Goldenberg from Young Israel spoke about his organization's activities. Last year representatives from the Sikh Sabha Temple discussed some common misconceptions about their faith. This year Connie Mercer of HomeFront will give a presentation of her group's work in Lawrence.

Last, but certainly not least, the Council will address the 2010 Municipal Budget. In 2009, the Township narrowly avoided painful cuts through outside the box thinking and the one time sale of a retail distribution liquor license. Based on the preliminary financial data received to date from the Manager, I do not see us being as fortunate this year. Difficult decisions will be required to be made. But, before any reductions in services are made, it is important that our citizens have a full understanding of our municipal budget, its limitations, and the budget process itself. To facilitate this understanding, I am announcing a special Budget Summit conversation to be held on the evening of February 25<sup>th</sup> at Town Hall. The event will be an opportunity for residents to ask questions about the Manager's proposed 2010 Budget and any proposed reductions in services. As we are all in this together... please mark your calendars for this and plan to attend.

Thank you and Happy New Year!

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

Chief Mark Lenarski  
Chief John Britton  
Chief Ray Nagy

Slackwood Fire Company  
Lawrence Road Fire Company  
Lawrenceville Fire Company

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Resolutions

Resolution Nos. 1-10 thru 21-10 was approved by the following roll call vote:

COUNCIL	AYE	NAY	PRESENT	ABSENT	ABSTAIN	MOVED	SECOND
Mr. Bostock	X						X
Mr. Kownacki	X						
Mrs. Mount	X						
Mr. Puliti	X					X	
Mayor Powers	X						

All adopted Resolutions are spread in their entirety in 2010 Resolution Book.

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Mayor Powers invited members of Council to address those in attendance if they so desired.

**Councilman Bostock**

Mr. Bostock thanked the Mayor and wished everyone a Happy New Year! He then congratulated his fellow colleagues Mr. Puliti and Mr. Kownacki on their election and advised that he has had a chance to sit down and exchange dialogue with each of the members, to discuss how they could work together on some shared goals and initiatives and that he is looking forward to working with the both of them.

Mr. Bostock stated that Mr. Puliti and he have been sharing the dais for the past year, and it has become very clear to him that Mr. Puliti is someone who puts the best interest of the Township first and is willing to work across the aisle and he appreciates that very much. Further, he is really looking forward to working with Mr. Kownacki who brings a solid dose of common sense and a no nonsense approach to the Council, and he knows he is also someone who is willing to work together and congratulated him again on his appointment.

Mr. Bostock congratulated Mayor Powers on his second term as Mayor and wished him a very successful and productive year and proceeded to discuss the current economic condition which offers both a challenge and an opportunity for local government to review procedures.

Mr. Bostock stated the challenge will be to provide the same basic essential services while holding the line on taxes which is not going to be easy being last year’s budget was comprised of more than \$9.5M in State aid and this year more than likely that number will decrease and if they are lucky the amount might stay the same. And, advised that his prediction is not just for this year, but probably going forward, as well.

Mr. Bostock proceeded to discuss several items of concern with respect to the municipal budget and the Township's ability to raise revenue – such as the decrease in tax rates, the increase in tax appeals - particularly for commercial properties - and the inevitable cost of living increase.

Mr. Bostock stated they cannot pass this cost increase of a runaway government onto the local taxpayers. Instead, they are going to have to work really hard on finding ways to save and make the government more efficient. They are going to have to set priorities and take a comprehensive look at everything the town does from top to bottom to figure out what they have to do and what they like to do in terms of programs, projects, services, etc., to include a reevaluation of the current form of government under which they operate.

Mr. Bostock indicated they need to see whether or not the form of government they are currently operating under is best suited to meet the needs of the Township in 2010 and moving forward and proceeded to discuss some of the changes that have taken place since the Township adopted its current form of government back in 1970, to include a comprehensive comparison of the municipal budget, employment level, population, property taxes and the ceremonial post of the Mayor.

Mr. Bostock stated he questions whether or not it still makes sense to rotate the Office of Mayor each year given the current need for state aid and shared services, and that the Township might be better served by having a person with longer continuity serve in that office as it would help that person establish a long-range Agenda instead of just preparing an agenda for one year and an opportunity to get a greater depth of understanding of the issues and challenges confronting the Township which is very important. Further, the elected person could build and maintain a relation with other elected officials, to include career officials in the State, County and other local government offices.

Mr. Bostock suggested during the Township's review of procedures that Council evaluate the current structure of the Advisory Committees, as some of the committees are overlapping and might be able to be consolidated which would free up time for those employees who work with the committees and improve efficiency.

In closing, Mr. Bostock stated he is looking forward to working with the Mayor and his colleagues and he knows that they will have to make some tough decisions in the year ahead. But, he also knows they are all ready to make those decisions and in the end when they come out next year they will find that they not only have weathered the storm, but have managed it with skill and commitment. And, hopefully, they will be in a better position to face the challenges of 2011.

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**Councilman Puliti**

Mr. Puliti introduced his mom, Patricia Puliti, and thanked his family for enduring another election and proceeded to state how humbled he is by the support he received in the last election and how nice it feels to know that the people of Lawrence still entrust him to make decisions for them. And, what is even nicer about the situation is that he has been in this position many times before and the citizens of Lawrence still ask him to do the job - how humbling.

Mr. Puliti stated he does not want to keep reiterating the challenges that Lawrence faces in the year ahead. Instead, he would like to talk about the consistency in terms of how Lawrence Township government is operated and how Lawrence is way ahead of the curve on fiscal responsibility compared to other municipalities in New Jersey.

Mr. Puliti stated it is unfortunate that other towns are just starting to explore shared services – when Lawrence already has 21 shared services, and while some towns are finally waking up to the fact that four percent (4%) or higher raises for its employees was and is not respectful to the taxpayers - Lawrence will need to find even greater ways to save tax dollars. And, as they move forward and attempt new ideas he asked the residents of Lawrence to keep informed of not only how the Municipal dollars are spent, but how the School Board, County and State tax dollars are spent, as well.

In closing, Mr. Puliti requested that the residents of Lawrence stay mindful of their government and let their elected officials know their concerns, so they can do a better job. He then thanked everyone for coming out and wished them a Happy New Year!

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**Councilwoman Mount**

Mrs. Mount wished everyone a “Happy New Year” and stated how appreciative she is to be moving from 2009 the last decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century into 2010 and that the year 2009 had great highs and lows - locally, nationally, statewide and worldwide all of which impacted Lawrence Township in one way or another. And, indicated some of things they have very little control over, but there are some things they can tackle. But, all in all, Lawrence Township faired well in 2009, as their government is still stable. And, the citizens of Lawrence stepped up more than ever by redeveloping and fostering communications in their neighborhoods and the non-profits stepped up by helping more citizens and families.

Mrs. Mount stated she was honored to serve as Mayor for 2009, and is looking forward to working with Mayor Powers and her fellow colleagues, as well as, the terrific and dedicated staff at Town Hall under the able direction of the Township Manager, Richard Krawczun.

Mrs. Mount advised that there will be many challenges and opportunities and in light of that she has prepared a long list of New Year's and New Decade resolutions but she will only discuss the top three and proceeded to discuss her first Resolution with regards to the continuance of work on sustainability and Lawrence Township's "great" accomplishment of being 1 of 32 towns to achieve that Sustainable Certification through the State of New Jersey. She further advised that Lawrence Township was also one of the first towns in New Jersey to receive the Affordable Housing Certification which was a huge accomplishment for the Township.

Mr. Mount stated her second Resolution regards homes and buildings becoming more energy efficient and urged everyone to take advantage of statewide programs of energy audits and energy efficiency grants to preserve the vibrancy in their neighborhoods and the redevelopment of the Town.

Mr. Mount advised that her third Resolution is to work with local businesses by bringing recognition of how valuable they are to Lawrence's future stability and local economy, as those businesses pay a lot of taxes. And, indicated that Lawrence is very fortunate to have a wide range of businesses and jobs and most of their residents are able to work close to home and enjoy services and recreation right from their own neighborhoods.

Mrs. Mount briefly discussed the Sustainable Element of the Master Plan, a project they are working on to encourage green building, alternative energy, safe walking, bikeways and public transportation to local businesses and recreational areas and advised that they have formed a Business Task Force to advertise businesses, help bring businesses together and work on ways to promote "buy local", so that the new and old businesses can all prosper.

Mrs. Mount stated although she agrees that some of the Boards and Committees can be combined she would like to point out one really important thing concerning Lawrence Township government which is the transparent way they run things and how a lot of things are filtered and get done by the people that volunteer their services to help work on the projects that the residents want to see come to fruition. And, because of their commitment to the town Lawrence does not have hire outside consultants to do the work. So, she wants to thank all of those who volunteer their time to help make Lawrence Township government work more efficiently and economically.

In closing, Mrs. Mount indicated she is a proud grandmother of six and she feels a sense of urgency to protect their future, as clean air and water is not just a right – it is a necessity, and that each person is part of the solution to protect the future and they can do that by working together and making sure that their New Year's resolution actually happens. And, in the end she wants the same thing that every grandmother wants for their grandchildren, to grow up happy, safe and have a good long life. Happy New Year!

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### **Councilman Kownacki**

Mr. Kownacki opened his speech with a special thank you to Senator Turner for coming back from her vacation early to swear him in today and proceed to thank his wife, Phyllis, who is his backbone and soul mate and who has been there through it all with all of her love and support and asked that she never change.

Mr. Kownacki proceeded to thank his mother, his brothers and sisters for all their support and all the campaign workers, to include his union brothers, neighbors and other family members who showed their support and helped out during his campaign. Additionally, he thanked his stepson Robert Reali and his wife Patty for coming from Virginia with his grandkids, Bryan and Teresa to show their support.

Mr. Kownacki advised that the kindness and support he received both during the campaign and on Election Day meant so much to him, and that he found the entire experience to be thoroughly enjoyable and enlightening – especially by listening to the concerns of the people of Lawrence Township. And, he will work diligently to keep the trust and support and will perform his duties as Councilman to the utmost of his abilities and always with the best interest of the residents of Lawrence Township in mind. He then wished everyone a safe and Happy New Year!

**Mayor Powers's closing comments:**

Mayor Powers advised the audience that a reception and refreshments would be served downstairs after the prayer and asked Reverend Vincent Gartland for the closing prayer.

On motion Mr. Puliti, seconded by Mr. Bostock, the meeting was adjourned.

12:58 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kathleen S. Norcia  
Municipal Clerk

Attest:

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Michael S. Powers, Mayor