

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

Monday, January 1, 2020 – 12:00 Noon

The Reorganization Meeting of the Lawrence Township Council was held on Monday, January 1, 2020, at the Lawrence Township Municipal Building – Council Meeting Room at 12:00 Noon.

The Municipal Clerk read the following statement of proper notice:

STATEMENT OF PROPER NOTICE: “Adequate notice of this Reorganization Meeting of the Lawrence Township Council, being held January 1, 2020, was forwarded to The Ledger, The Times and The Trentonian on December 19, 2019 by the Municipal Clerk.”

The Municipal Clerk gave a special thank you to the Lawrence Township Police Honor Guard for being present this afternoon and indicated the Honor Guard will lead them in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Present: Councilmembers Bobbitt and Kownacki.
Absent: None.

Also in attendance were Kevin Nerwinski, Esq. Municipal Manager, David Roskos, Esq., Township Attorney, Brian Caloiaro, Chief of Police and Superior Officers of the Lawrence Township Police Department, Senator Shirley Turner, Congresswoman Bonnie Watson-Coleman, Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson, Assemblyman Anthony S. Verrelli and a few county, state and neighboring dignitaries.

The Municipal Clerk stated, “It is my pleasure to announce the results of the November 5, 2019 General Election for the following members of Township Council for a four-year term:”

*Cathleen M. Lewis
Michael S. Powers
John T. Ryan*

The Municipal Clerk advised that the following individuals would be administering the Oath of Office to the (3) three elected officials.

- ❖ Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson administered the Oath of Office to Ms. Lewis.
- ❖ Mercer County Surrogate Diane Gerofsky administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Powers.
- ❖ Assemblyman Anthony S. Verrelli administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Ryan.

The Municipal Clerk called for nominations for Office of Mayor for a two-year term ending December 31, 2021

Mr. Bobbitt nominated James S. Kownacki for the Office of Mayor, and Ms. Lewis seconded the nomination. Councilman Powers moved to close nominations.

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

RECORD OF VOTE

| COUNCIL | AYE | NAY | PRESENT | ABSENT | ABSTAIN | MOVE | SECOND |
|--------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|------|--------|
| Mr. Bobbitt | X | | | | | X | |
| Ms. Lewis | X | | | | | | X |
| Mr. Powers | X | | | | | | |
| Mr. Ryan | X | | | | | | |
| Mr. Kownacki | X | | | | | | |

Colonel Robert E. Watson, United States Army Retired, administered the Oath of Office to Mayor Kownacki.

Mayor Kownacki' s Mayoral remarks:

“I want to wish everyone a “Happy New Year” and thanked everyone for coming out today. I want to thank my colleagues on Council for giving me the opportunity to be your chosen Mayor for the next two years. And some of the things my colleagues said about me is unbelievable. There is a lot happening here in Lawrence Township, and it is a great Township to live in... grow up in...and open up businesses. The Statement of Works previously talked about is going to take place. Lawrence is one of the best township’s you would ever want to live in. The only real thing I am looking forward to doing is, with my team, because I only

have one vote like everybody else, so with one vote I cannot do it by myself, but with the team including our Clerk, our Attorney for Council and definitely our Manager who runs the day-to-day operation here. What I look at is making Lawrence better today than it was yesterday...and everyday forward we make Lawrence a better place. And, I know we can do it as a team and that is what I look forward to...and that is all I have to say. There are items I can bring up, but everyone already knows how great Lawrence Township is and the good things we do, all the community service we have, shared services and I can go on, and on and on.

Thank you for being here, and I will move on so everyone else can talk and get some food downstairs.”

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

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Chief Kenneth Kandrac | Slackwood Fire Company |
| Chief Wayne Hannon, Jr. | Lawrence Road Fire Company |
| Chief Raymond Nagy | Lawrenceville Fire Company |

Public Participation

There was no public participation.

Resolutions

Resolution Nos. 1-20(A) through 23-20(W)) were approved by the following roll call vote:

| COUNCIL | AYE | NAY | PRESENT | ABSENT | ABSTAIN | MOVE | SECOND |
|----------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|------|--------|
| Mr. Bobbitt | X | | | | | | |
| Ms. Lewis | X | | | | | X | |
| Mr. Powers | X | | | | | | X |
| Mr. Ryan | X | | | | | | |
| Mayor Kownacki | X | | | | | | |

All adopted Resolutions are spread in its entirety in the 2020 Resolution Book.

Mayor Kownacki asked Council for their closing remarks:

Councilmember Powers' remarks:

“Thank you, Mayor. Happy 2020 everybody! Let me begin by congratulating Jim on his selection as Mayor, echoing the comments earlier by Councilwoman Lewis and Councilman Bobbit. Jim speaks from the heart, and Jim is a Marine that believes in military time so we are going to start exactly on time and finish on time. So, I look forward to that. Jim, this is not your first rodeo and I know you will do a fantastic job as the Mayor. I would also like to recognize and publicly thank Councilman Bobbitt for his two years of service as Mayor of Lawrence Township. Chris is a strong advocate of sustainable practices and during Chris' term as Mayor we received Silver Certification from Sustainable Jersey and that was in no small part due to Chris' leadership. So, Chris, thank you for your two years of service there. I would like to congratulate my two running mates, Councilwoman Lewis and Councilman Ryan on their re-election and election to Council. And, I am looking forward to working with Cathleen, John, Chris and Mayor Kownacki as a team together in moving Lawrence forward. I want to thank the hardest working surrogate in the State of New Jersey, Diane Gerofsky, for swearing me in. Thank you, Diane, for doing that. I want to acknowledge my family, my wife Nancy, my twin sons Christopher and Hunter, my mother Lois, my nephews, Zachary and Kyle. Thank you guys all for coming out. And, thank you to all of you for coming out to celebrate our Reorganization. Thank you!”

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**Councilmember Lewis' remarks:**

“And, I appreciate Mayor Kownacki for being so brief that gives us more time to talk. First, ‘Happy New Year’ to everyone, thank you all for starting your New Year with us today...it means a lot. First, I want to thank the residents of Lawrence for their faith in me. I always said that I run because I want to make our town stronger and better and I believe that we continue to have much untapped potential and it is my hope together that we can find ways to strengthen each other in our community. I would like to thank Mayor Bobbitt for his leadership over the last two years, for helping the Township reach that potential. And, to Mayor Kownacki congratulations and I offer you my full support and assistance in finding those new ways to continue to make Lawrence stronger. I want to thank my family for their support and for understanding why it is important to invest in public service. Someone remarked on how old my children look. I was remembering the first time I was sworn in Abby was 9 months old and sat up here with me because she would not stop crying otherwise. She has come a long way and is sitting nice and patiently or standing nice and patiently.

As I said many time we decided to raise our family in Lawrence because we valued the diversity we found here...diversity in economics, diversity in land use, diversity of thought, of religion, of sexual orientation and of race. And, today, we value those things more than ever. I am going to start briefly with land use and economics

because I want to continue to work and grow our local businesses and to protect our resources. This Council has done a wonderful job of that over the last few years and I know that we can continue to do that. Lawrence is a place that has seen several projects come to completion and I know that will continue to support our local economy. But, today I want to focus briefly on all those other diverse aspects. Too many times over the last year we have had to declare that “hate has no home here”. I know that in this room and in this community that there is support, and that there is love. And, I know together we can value our differences and standup for our leaders. So, today I am recommitting myself, not just to respecting and encouraging diversity but to finding ways to understand my neighbor’s perspectives and I am asking each of you to join me to have a community conversation, to better understand the struggles and impact that stereotypes, microcosms, historic perspectives and personal experiences have on our neighbors. To talk candidly and to ask the tough questions so that we can combat not just hate speech... but hate itself. I am proud of the strides we have made but I also know we must go further.

Just a few weeks ago I spoke to my daughter’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade class about being an elected official and about the responsibilities of citizenship. I told them the most important part of either job was to listen, to act in the best interest of the whole not just yourself and be honest with each other. As I start my 3<sup>rd</sup> term I promise to each of you and to all the rest of the residents of this township to listen, to find common ground and to be open and transparent with our residents. As a citizen I commit to the same and hope you all will join me. Thank you!”

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Councilmember Ryan’s remarks:

“Welcome everyone, and Happy New Year! I like to thank Assemblyman Verrelli for swearing me in today. And, how ironic it is; who would have thought just months ago while on the campaign trail Anthony was swearing at me and now he is swearing me in. Also, Assemblywoman Verlina Jackson, “congratulations” on your win, to you both. I would also like to thank all the dignitaries who took their time out for New Year’s Day to attend the ceremony. I would also like to thank the Mayor, Council, Municipal Manager Mr. Kevin Nerwinski, our Clerk, Kathy Norcia, Ms. Tonya, and last but not least our Attorney, Dave Roskos. A special thanks to our Police Chief, Brian Caloiaro, and our fine officers... the Honor Guard. Thank you so much for that. Also, our firefighters, EMT’s, and municipal employees; they all do a great job in moving our town forward. I would be remised if I did not recognize my wife, Linda, my three daughters, Becca, Megan and Hannah, along with our two grandsons, Asher (hey buddy) and Elijah in the back. And, my stepmother, Phyllis Godley, also is here. And, I am pleased to have my sibling here along with my neighbors and friends. My brother Frank, my sister Helen and brother-in-law, my niece Jackie...I could just go on; but, I really appreciate it. I appreciate all the support.

I am a retired Teamster with Local 177, with their support, Bob Charny, the President, even though I retired 3 years ago, UPS, I still talk to them weekly and go out to lunch. When you have a union brother or sister you have a friend for life you can call up...I am in pain and in need and they are there...it is great. Also, John Sweeney, AFL-CIO. I want to thank them, also, my running mates, Cathleen Lewis and Michael Powers, special thanks. Also, please raise your hand, Eric Puliti, for his tireless work and our treasurer, Charlie Lavine, please raise your hand. Thank you for all the work you have done. Ed Wiznitzer, please raise your hand, and former mayor, Greg Puliti.

I am here today due to many of the residents who voted for me and I say "thank you" it is an honor and a privilege to serve on Council and I promise to do my very best. I look forward to working with the Mayor, newly appointed Jim Kownacki, Council, Municipal Manager, Clerk, and Attorney. I think it is really going to be a great 2020, and we are moving in the right direction. I am very proud to be part of the Save the Colonial Lake effort we were very persistent in preserving the beauty of the lake and the hard work really paid off. In fact that is where I started almost two years ago, going to meetings, showing up - planning boards, zonings and got interested. So, it was not just put my name on the ballot. So, it has been a lot of hard work going to every meeting and it was like what are you doing here then it was like Hi John. So, it was a lot of hard work involved in that.

I will not go into receiving our Silver Certification rating because Michael, Councilman Powers, already brought that up which is really good. What are we...one of 51 municipalities that received the Silver which is really good on that and if you look outside you will see all the solar 80 to 90 percent of the building being powered by solar which is a big accomplishment on that. I want to thank everyone again for the vote of confidence and I promise that I will work hard for all for all the residents of Lawrence. Once again, "Have a Happy and Healthy New Year". And, here is to the beginning on a new decade. Thank you so much!"

Councilmember Lewis' remarks:

"I failed in trying to get through that, I got distracted and I failed to thank folks, the elected folks in the audience and Assemblywoman Verlina Jackson for swearing me in, and for my running mates for their work and all of our staff. So, thank you so much... and our police officers. Thank you!"

Councilmember Bobbitt's remarks:

"I think for me the last 24 hours have been really informative sort of about my path in life. I just took a redeye back from San Francisco so that I would not miss this amazing event. I had a wonderful time in San Francisco but it also reminded me...well let me back up and say I always know I am having a really great vacation when it comes to a point where I say to myself I really want to go home...because I miss it. And, Lawrence Township is a place I miss...this is my home now. I am just looking out at this group of people; I think to myself 15 years ago I did not know any of you...not a one. Maybe, even 5 years ago I did not know most of you but we somehow forged a bond. I look at our Police Chief, I swore you in Brian, and we went through some tough times this past year. But, one of the things that kept me going through those tough times is that I know you and the police force do an amazing job. That you are fair and just, much like our Mayor you call it like you see it, you do not embellish, you do not play into certain things...you just do the job and get it done. So, I appreciate that you made my life easier. And, there are a lot of people here, municipal employees, who again do the job that make Lawrence Township better and I appreciate that. I appreciate the elected officials that are outside of Lawrence, our Assembly people, our Surrogate, I believe I saw our State Senator and our Congresswoman...I appreciate all that you do...I appreciate all the support you have given me over the years that makes my job easier. So, I just want to conclude before I sort of fall to sleep, having not really slept on the plane, I look forward to working with the four of you. I think one of the things I find really special about this Council is our collegiality; but, at the same time we all have different perspectives and I think it is that sort of multitude of perspectives that is going to make us and help us to do some amazing things this year and the next couple of years...so I am looking forward to it. Let's get to work..."

Mayor Kownacki's closing comments:

In closing, Mayor Kownacki stated he would like to thank all the elected officials who showed up today, and indicated he knows that they have other obligations they have to get to and other swearings in they have to be at. He then thanked them for all of their support and he looks forward to working with them. He thanked his family, his two sisters that are present, his daughter, son-in-law, his brother-in-law, nephew, cousin, for being present today. He gave a special thank you to his wife, his backbone of all of this, and indicated she has her own battle that she is dealing with but she is always there to get him through. And, he would like to extend a very special thank you to the little one who puts a smile on his face when he sees her... she gives him a hard time when they are doing their math after work...but always makes him happy.

Mayor Kownacki stated he would also like to thank Lawrence Township Democratic Club for providing the refreshments, their president, Greg Puliti, for being here today and setting it up and announced immediately following the meeting all are invited to the reception and refreshments in the Lower Level Conference room sponsored by the Lawrence Township Democratic Club.

There being no further business to come before Council, the meeting adjourned at 12:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Kathleen S. Norcia, Municipal Clerk

Attest:

James S. Kownacki, Mayor