

REGULAR MEETING  
LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL  
LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
COUNCIL MEETING IN LOWER LEVEL CONFERENCE ROOM  
AND BY TELE-CONFERENCE IN ACCORDANCE WITH  
N.J.S.A. 10:4-6, ET SEQ. AND EXECUTIVE ORDER 107

February 16, 2021

The following are the Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Lawrence Township Council that was held on Tuesday, February 16, 2021, at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting was then opened with the Inspiration and Pledge of Allegiance, led by Municipal Clerk.

At the commencement of the meeting Mayor Kownacki read the following statement of proper notice:

**STATEMENT OF PROPER NOTICE:** "Adequate notice of this meeting of the Lawrence Township Council being held on Tuesday, February 16, 2021, has been provided through the posting of the annual meeting schedule of said Council in accordance with Section 13 of the Open Public Meetings Act." Said Notice was forwarded to The Trentonian, The Times and The Princeton Packet on December 18, 2020.

The roll was then called as follows:

Present: Councilmembers Bobbitt, Powers, Lewis, Ryan and Mayor Kownacki.  
Absent: None.

Also in attendance were Kevin Nerwinski, Esq., Municipal Manager, David Roskos, Esq., Municipal Attorney, and Peter Kiriakatis, Certified Municipal Finance Officer.

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Special Proclamations, Recognitions and Presentations

Mayor Kownacki stated that Chief of Police, Brian Caloiaro and Director of Emergency, Jack Oakley, would be presenting their 2021 Budget presentations this evening. He then turned the floor over to Chief Caloiaro.

**2021 Municipal Budget Presentation**  
**Chief of Police – Brian Caloiaro**

Chief Caloiaro greeted everyone and thanked the Council for allowing him to speak this evening about the 2021 Budget which is always an honor and advised that copies of the 2020 Annual Yearend Report for the Lawrence Township Police Department were distributed to the Council for review.

Chief Caloiaro reported that in terms of the 2021 Budget he does not have a lot to report as his budget pretty much remains flat this year and everything else in the budget is pretty much the same as past years in every category except ammunition and firearms which increased in price as well as Maintenance Agreements that are a large part of the Police Department's budget (\$120,000 per year) due to the vast amount technology.

Chief Caloiaro went on to discuss the year 2020 being a very interesting, difficult and challenging year for him and he is sure for everybody else; especially, in law enforcement...starting in March, when they had to adapt to the culture change of the COVID pandemic which changed the way they did policing to keep the officers and the public safe by eliminating in-person roll calls and non-emergency responses, limiting the number of people entering into the police station and doing the police work over the telephone to limit personal contact which was a challenge for everybody.

Chief Caloiaro stated then in May they had the George Floyd incident that took place which really threw a wrench at law enforcement... a black eye so to speak as they again had to change things and secure locations after the in-custody death of George Floyd and nationwide protest that bought about a lot of good positive change. Specifically, in New Jersey where the Attorney General came up with the new Use of Force Policy which will not take effect until 2022; but is well in the works of getting done. He further indicated officers will be trained this year on use of force procedures, vehicle pursuits and training on how use of force is reported and proceeded to discuss New Jersey being at the forefront in terms of change and coming up with positive innovative ways of doing things and him being very proud of the way things are handled overall by Lawrence Township Police Department and by New Jersey law enforcement officers.

Chief Caloiaro specified it was a very trying year overall; but the Command Staff and the Officers did a good job adapting to and overcoming the obstacles related to the challenges of COVID 19 pandemic and the George Floyd incident which was not easy; but, they got through it.

Chief Caloiaro then opened his budget presentation by reviewing the following:

- ❖ **Crime Statistics** – The Police Department's crimes (arson, burglary, larceny-theft, etc.) in 2020 being down by (19%) possibly due to the Covid outbreak - UCR reported crimes decreased from 645 in 2019 to 517 crimes in 2020; Calls for Service (civil matter, DWI's, traffic stops, etc.) decreased by (16%) and Domestic Violence and Drug Overdoses increased between 2019 and 2020 which is an area of concern that the Police Department is working on. (Chief

Caloiaro noted the increase in numbers are no surprise given the circumstances of the pandemic)

- ❖ **Personnel** – The Department has 61 sworn officers with 1 to retire in March which will leave the Department with 60 sworn officers, 2 Armed Court Attendants, 3 Special Law Enforcement Officers, 1 Administrative Clerk, 2 Account Clerks with one being part-time, 1 Confidential Clerk and 1 Records Support Technician that the Chief noted does a phenomenal job managing the Police Property and Evidence function for the Police Department.
- ❖ **Retirements** – The Department has 24 Officers eligible to retire within the next 5 years, 3 Officers eligible to retire at any time, 4 Officers eligible to retire as of February 2023; 7 people will retire next year. The Chief noted it takes approximately one year (11 to 12 months) to hire and train a new officer and he has been working with the Municipal Manager in trying to hire ahead when they definitely know someone is going to retire so that they have a person coming out of the academy by the time that officer retires.
- ❖ **Firearms Applications** – The Department has 1 part-time officer that works four hours per day processing the Firearm Permits for issuance which in 2020 was an overall increase of 148 % as they went from issuing 431 in 2018 to 1,243 Permits in 2020. Chief Caloiaro noted that the Officer really has his hands full and does a phenomenal job in the getting the applications and permits out as soon as he can with the limited amount of time he has to work on the permits and the backlog from the State Police.
- ❖ **Donations** – The Police Department received a very generous donation from an anonymous Donor that allowed the Police Department to purchase 4 drones to assist in missing person searches, crime scene photography from the area, traffic reconstruction from the accidents, warrant services and special events for the citizens. The donation further allowed 8 operators to become certified by the FAA and any of the Department Heads within the Township usage of the drones such as the Engineering Department to do specs and the Recreation Department for special events. **Second Donation** – Chief Caloiaro noted yearend the same Donor made another generous donation utilized towards the purchase of 2 BMW motorcycles; an innovative and beneficial purchase for the Township that could be used for everything from traffic details, community and policing events as an outreach to people in communities on weekends by driving into communities and talking to people, college and unemployment fairs, parades and funeral details and proceeded to discuss five officers that will be trained by the Philadelphia Highway Patrol; a benefit of that donation.
- ❖ **Accreditation Program** – Lawrence Township Police Department was re-accredited in March 2020 through the New Jersey Association of Chiefs of Police Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission. This being the Department's second time as they were first accredited in 2017. A representative from the State Police will be presenting the Accreditation Certificate to the Council at a later date due to the pandemic and the shutdown of the State Police.
- ❖ **Purchasing** – The budgetary pre-planning by Peter Kiriakatis, CFO, allowed the Police Department to purchase new radios that were outdated for police officers.

- ❖ **Social Media** – The Police Department engaging more with the community through the usage of social media – Facebook and Twitter.
- ❖ **New Legislation** – New upcoming legalization of marijuana legislation posing problems and future challenges for law enforcement communities in terms of their lack of drug recognition experts and not being ready to enforce driving while intoxicated by use of marijuana which they will have to adapt to and have mutual aid with other police departments to help each other overcome the challenges of enforcement.

Chief Caloiaro thanked the Township Council for their support that makes the jobs in the Police Department much easier and stated they hear horrible stories from law enforcement throughout the State so they feel extremely lucky to be able to work well with members of Council on a daily basis. And, the same thing goes for the Municipal Manager in terms of support as it is a honor and a privilege to have a boss as good as Mr. Nerwinski who is always there to support the police and is probably one of the best bosses he ever had as he really appreciates his daily conversations and him helping the police get back on track when necessary and they greatly appreciate his mentorship as well as his leadership.

In closing, Chief Caloiaro stated he also is really proud to be part to Lawrence Township because during this time of COVID 19 he really saw how well people came together in terms of the Department Heads; especially, Carol Chamberlain, working long hours and the Public Works and Recreation Departments having to change the way they do things and conduct business and he could go over every department who did the same; but those Department Heads really rose to the occasion and he is really proud to say he is part of Lawrence Township organization. He then thanked the Council for its time.

Councilman Powers thanked Chief Caloiaro on his handling of the Black Lives Matter issues that rose from the killing of George Floyd as he was very proactive. He then proceeded to discuss the proactive Directives implemented by the Attorney General in New Jersey which put New Jersey ahead of the curve given a police officer in New Jersey can just scan a suspect's driver's license and go pick the person the next morning instead of pursuing them on a high speed chase such as the one that took place in California and how they have limited use of force shootings and incidents across the State and in Lawrence which is a credit to Chief Caloiaro as the Chief of Police, his officers and leadership. He then thanked the Chief for the great job he and his officers do for Lawrence Township.

A general discussion ensued relative to the new recruits and how they endured the COVID situation in terms of being in and out of the academy, their ability to do practical exercises at the academy and getting in the appropriate field training time as well as the increase in domestic violence cases; especially, in local hotels and motels. Chief Caloiaro advised of the federally funded Volunteer of America Program he was invited to join; an organization that provides trained professionals for 40 hours per week to help the Township with domestic violence cases, drug abuse, family problems,

juvenile problems, homeless problems, social problems, etc., at no cost. The Township only need to provide office space and starting March 1<sup>st</sup> the people will be in the Police Department to provide assistance with job placement and provide money for rent as needed along with the other services which will be a win for everybody and another great thing for Lawrence Police Department.

Councilwoman Lewis thanked Chief Caloiaro and all the other Officers as they know it has been a very difficult year for law enforcement and to add to Councilman Powers' comments, when they all sat down to talk about the George Floyd incident it was not just them talking about the protocols that were already in place by the Police Department; but the Chief and the other Officers willingness to go into the communities and to continue to find ways to adapt which she feels was very important; particularly, in COVID when they cannot see it. So, she thinks that deserves additional recognition as the men and women in the Police Department have gone above and beyond in some of those cases.

Councilwoman Lewis then raised the question concerning the 5 new police recruits and them not reflecting diversity in the Lawrence Police Department and asked Chief Caloiaro to explain the reasoning for that. Chief Caloiaro explained that Lawrence Township is a Civil Service Township with restrictive rules allowing them to choose only from the top 3 candidates from the list with veterans having preference. Chief Caloiaro noted they have been trying to recruit more and advertise more through schools with the recruitment of School Resource Officers and recruitment at college fairs to recruit people with diverse background; and, advised of new legislation that was recently passed that now allows Police Departments to start taking certified police officers from other towns that has both pros and cons and needs further discussion and proceeded to voice his opinion on the matter. Additional discussion took place relative to other outreach programs the Police Department has done such as the Junior Police Officer Program and the Detective Camp Program sponsored by the Lawrence Police Department geared towards making a positive impression on the students while they are young; COVID and police safety protocol as it relates to officers wearing a mask while on duty and when riding together in the vehicles; calls related to people not wearing mask in public places which Chief Caloiaro stated are not too many and how marijuana cases have been treated by police since the November election legalizing recreational use of marijuana which Chief Caloiaro advised is the same protocol until legislation is passed.

Councilman Ryan greeted the Police Chief and the Command Staff and stated he appreciates everything they have been doing as it has been a really tough year getting everything together; but, with all the departments working together things are coming around although it will be a little bit of a tough time until things get lifted a bit more. Mr. Ryan then questioned if the new recruits got trained on the new standards that are coming in 2022 or will they need to be retrained again. Chief Caloiaro replied 'no' as the new training is not out as of yet for law enforcement officers. But, probably in the spring there will be two online trainings for law enforcement and then two full days for in-person training towards the end of the summer or fall when things lighten up. He

then proceeded to discuss the new statewide Use of Force portal that is in play with the State of New Jersey to track use of forces incidents that did not exist prior to the OPRA request submitted a few years ago by New Jersey Advance Media about use of force in the State that brought the matter to the attention of the Attorney General as to the need for a statewide reporting system that is standardized that was rolled out and that Lawrence Township was a test site for. They have since gone live where every officer in the State of New Jersey reports the same way in the Use of Force Policy portal. Mr. Ryan then asked if the new recruits were on the road yet and was advised by Chief Caloiaro that two are on vacation and three are on their first day on the road. Councilman Ryan expressed his appreciation again to the Chief and his officers and asked that they keep up the good work.

Councilman Bobbitt indicated that respect is a two-way thing and he gets the type of respect from Council because of what he does and the Police Department as a whole as he has heard it many times while out in the community about the great job they have done; especially, with all the community programs that they do from the Easter Egg Hunt to National Night Out which he has heard from a distinguished visitor that Lawrence is one of the better ones and he cannot wait for them to be able to do it again soon; something he really appreciates. Mr. Bobbitt questioned if he was reading the report correctly with regards to the 29,000 service calls received last year and out of those calls there were only 16 Use of Force incidents in Lawrence Township which is pretty impressive. Chief Caloiaro replied 'yes' as they like to deescalate situations as much as possible and to his surprise (being they are in a text era) the young officers seem to be very good at communicating with suspects and he thinks the body cameras have helped keep officers and people in check as well.

Mr. Bobbitt further inquired about the duties and position of the School Law Enforcement Officers (SLEO) and School Resource Officers (SRO) in terms of them working in the schools. Chief Caloiaro explained that SLEO's are basically retired officers and they have one at each of the Elementary Schools, Intermediate School and the High School and they are more for safety and security purposes; however, they do educational outreach; but, their primary function is safety and security of the schools as that is how the law is written. As they may have heard, the SLEO's go above and beyond their job description and have really touched the students' lives in a positive way and the School Resource Officer (SRO) gets down with the kids in terms of teaching and counseling them and it is a program that has been around for a longtime that works very well and proceeded to briefly tell a story of a recent incident involving a young man that passed away from a car accident and the girlfriend later calling in with a heart wrenching message about the serious impact Officer Girard, SRO, had on the young man's life as it relates to him thinking the world of her prior to his passing which is a perfect example of one of many of the positive impacts those officers have on students' lives.

Councilman Bobbitt thanked Chief Caloiaro for the story as he feels it is important for people to hear that the job is not just about policing the kids and law enforcement; it is about community relations and pride in their community and how

Lawrence Township carry themselves. Chief Caloiaro noted that the parents are important in their decision-making; but they also have to factor in the input of students as to how well the program works and their interaction with the School Resource Officer (SRO). Councilman Bobbitt further noted appreciates the Police Chief staying ahead of the curve in terms of the pending retirements and the hiring of new officers and urged him to not forget about needed equipment being the pandemic has shown they need the right the equipment when they go out every day. He then thanked Chief Caloiaro, his command staff and all the officers for all that they do for the community.

Mayor Kownacki greeted the Police Chief and stated that his colleagues covered a lot of what he was going to ask so all he would like to say is thank you for being a great leader of the Police Department and for his excellent command staff that is present this evening and proceeded to echo the sentiments of his colleagues with regards to it being a tough year for law enforcement in terms of the pandemic and racial tensions; but, the Chief and his officers stood firm with the Township from the beginning to present day helping them get through everything and he cannot thank him and his officers enough for their dedicated service to Lawrence Township.

In closing, Chief Caloiaro stated he would be remised if he did not point out the great job Jack Oakley, Director of Emergency Management, has done with the EMS and the Firefighters and indicated when the police were not going out to calls Mr. Oakley's crew suited up in their Tyvek Suits and took care of business which is a credit to emergency services here in Lawrence Township and the dedication they have to the people; which is nice to be part of.

Mr. Nerwinski reminded everyone watching virtually that there is a link on the Township's website to the Police Department's report and presentation that was presented this evening and there is a written report on the website that they can refer to if they would like.

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**2021 Municipal Budget Presentation**  
**Director of Emergency Management, Jack Oakley**

Mr. Oakley greeted the Council and thanked them for affording him the opportunity to speak before them this evening. He then distributed a handout relative to the 2021 Budget presentation and stated as for the Operating Budget there is no request for any additional increases that includes EMS, Fire Division, Emergency Management which is a testament to the work that men and women of the Emergency Services do in terms of performing their jobs at a high level without asking for additional equipment which is pretty amazing; especially, given what they are facing now with COVID and indicated he would be addressing the EMS, Fire Staffs and touching base on the Fire Study that was performed by the Rodgers Group in 2020.

Prior to the opening of his presentation, Mr. Oakley imparted that he has been working over at the Police Department close to 15 years and the professionalism and type of people that make up the Command Staff who have been previously acknowledged are second to none and they are a very, very, proud group, easy to work with and it is a privilege and an honor to be around men and women like that.

Mr. Oakley opened his budget presentation by reviewing the following:

- ❖ **Career Fire Staff** – comprised of 5 career firefighters, who presently operate from the Lawrenceville Fire Company using the Telesquirt 23 as their primary response vehicle; decrease in calls for service for both their career and volunteer firefighters and emergency assignments due to the impact of the pandemic; fewer fire alarm activations (nuisance calls) due to fewer commercial buildings being occupied; modifications made to first responders protocols in an effort to minimize the potential COVID 19 exposure to their firefighters which resulted in fewer EMS dispatches for the Career Staff and career firefighters only responding to the most serious, life-threatening medical emergencies; during 2020 the Career Staff responded to (490) total emergency assignments in comparison to 571 emergency assignments in 2019, 621 emergency assignments in 2018, 556 assignments in 2017, 535 assignments in 2016, 474 assignments in 2015 and 343 assignment in 2014 (Mr. Oakley noted the Career Staff continues to be an asset for the Township which they can see by the number of emergency responses in past year and proceeded to discuss the benefit of having a career staff as it related to availability, response time and help to the volunteer staff.)

Mr. Oakley noted in addition to responding to all emergencies in the Township requiring a fire department response as well as responding to a variety of emergencies in support of the EMS Division, the career firefighters' duties include the regular running and inspecting of fire apparatus including exercising pumps and aerial ladders; exercising and fueling powered equipment such as saws, fans, and rescue tools; maintaining breathing apparatus components and oxygen cylinders; mounting equipment and hose on apparatus and making minor repairs to apparatus and equipment in effort to assist the Public Works Department.

- ❖ **Volunteer Staff** – Mr. Oakley stated that the Volunteer Staff continues to do an outstanding job and the Administration and members of Council knows the burdens of putting together a paid fire department so the volunteer are doing a great job with what they have. And indicated the days of having 30 to 40 members in a volunteer Fire Company does not exist anymore and the core of people they do have that continue to response – nighttime, weekends, holidays – is a credit to that volunteer staff and should be commended for their efforts.



Mr. Oakley noted that they conducted twenty-seven 27 background investigations for the new Applicants in the fire departments which included EMS and Fire Services and 12 to 15 of the investigations were just for the volunteer staff. And, of the 12 to 15 that were done, the retention is about 40 to 50 percent after the first year in the organization being they find out it is something that they do not want to do...so they drop out. Mr. Oakley continued to elaborate on recruitment being a very important part of fire services; especially, in Lawrence Township with the combination of both career and volunteer.

- ❖ **EMS Division** – Mr. Oakley stated that EMS is at the tip of the sword, administrators of health and safety to anybody who picks up the telephone and requests their assistance. He further indicated the pandemic has created a fear amongst the community; but, not fear in the people that are working for the community - Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT's) who work day in and day out at great risk to themselves. Therefore, the Township provides them with a lot of personal protective equipment that is probably second to none. In close proximity situations as they are now and he has not seen anybody do what the Municipal Manager or CFO have done at their discretion to make sure the EMT's were outfitted with the proper safety equipment which in some cases required the technicians to wear full-face respirators, complete Tyvek suits, gloves, boots and provide them with the safest decontamination products.

In addition, the EMT's have the responsibility of having to decontaminate the ambulance after each patient (as well as themselves) once they return to the firehouse; some having to change clothes and take showers several times a day in order to not bring the virus home to their families. He also indicated that they have suffered a few instances where the EMT's contracted the virus; but, thankfully they and their families are okay. However, it is still a very, very stressful and a difficult situation for them to be in and it is not going to get any better in the near future. So, they have to protect them and make sure they have the proper equipment being EMT's are definitely the frontrunners who put themselves on the line.

Mr. Oakley went on to discuss the heightened concern for the EMT's safety as well as the patients as the virus began to spread and the need for the crew to protect themselves in terms of their response to different calls in situation they had been trained to "fix" when someone called for an ambulance; but, found they could no longer be assessed or treated in the traditional ways as they could not do face-to-face with people and hands-on at times and they needed to triage people when they responded to a home for a call for service which was an extremely difficult situation for those that provide medical care as a frontline responder given that was not how they were trained to do the job. And, indicated EMS saw a 400% rise in cardiac arrest cases which means some people they were lucky enough to save; but, by and large, most they were not able to because of their reaction to the pandemic and proceeded to discuss EMT's

having to triage people to reduce exposure to hospitals for patients with non-critical symptoms.

Mr. Oakley advised that Lawrence Township EMS received over 2,911 calls, ranging from stable to severely critical and the notable responses in Lawrence during 2020 included – 74 cardiac arrests, 1125 general medical calls, 359 fall victims, 148 cardiac/stroke emergencies, 282 non-COVID; 19 respiratory emergencies, 78 overdoses, 170 traumatic injuries, 271, 77 motor vehicle crashes with 20 of them requiring rescue of trapped patients, 8 gunshot or stabbing, 19 maternity/childbirth, 72 psychiatric emergencies, 26 assists to fire and police and 105 assists to citizens or others. Mr. Oakley further advised the most notable is the 78 drug overdoses that they responded to that Chief Caloiaro previously spoke about which were not all in Lawrence; but, they provided mutual aid ambulance for in the City of Trenton and Ewing Township. In closing, Mr. Oakley noted that everything is treated as a COVID case and the majority of the calls the EMT's go out on are COVID 19 related whether it is a suspected COVID case or an actual case of COVID 19.

- ❖ **Fire Study** – Mr. Oakley advised that the Township contracted with an outside agency to do a Fire Study and they received the fire service review in November of last year. The Survey was conducted by a team of professionals from the Rodgers Group and resulted in an amazing evaluation of Lawrence Township Fire Services and proceeded to discuss the Report being a very comprehensive document that addressed historical, operational, and situational modules of the services and recommendations to improve upon and fine tune fire services.

Mr. Oakley noted that the Municipal Manager and he meet on a regular basis to discuss those recommendations and they are in the process of trying to get a workable project in place. They are prioritizing those recommendations and they have already covered quite a bit of ground since November in some of the recommendations they posed - such as the Table of Organization and revising an Ordinance that addresses the Division of Fire overall for the Township with the components of both the career and the volunteer staff. So, there are a lot of things he and the Municipal Manager are trying to do to make the Fire Services operation a lot more efficient and to make it safe, and continue to be safe, for the people that participate in it. He indicated one of the things the Municipal Manager has done for them with moving forward with the Fire Study is assigned an Administrative Assistant. That, in and of itself, is a pot of gold; because they have a lot of things that they have to accomplish and a lot of ground work they have to put together with Standard Operating Procedures, data entry and things along those lines and the Assistant will help them tremendously accomplish those tasks. In fact, she prepared the presentation for tonight's meeting and she did a fantastic job which they are very thankful for.

In closing, Mr. Oakley advised that the Emergency Services of Lawrence Township has always provided a level of performance that is second to none and he can promise the Council that tradition will continue; and, they will not lose that edge they have here in both the fire and medical services.

Mr. Nerwinski further advised that he and Mr. Oakley met twice a week to go through the recommendations of the Fire Study and they went through all 38 recommendations and all but 6 were deemed unrealistic to do at this time. So, they have taken a great majority of the recommendations to implement. And, one thing he feels is really important as it relates to the Administrative Assistant position for the Fire Division was to raise the level of the identity of the Fire Division within Lawrence Township organizational structure and indicated a few years ago he asked the consensus of the Council about moving the Fire Division from under the Police Department, to which they agreed, and now that has come to fruition with the recommendation from the Fire Study. They felt it was important to distinguish the Fire Division as a stand-alone like the other departments, so an Administrative Assistant made sense. So, they decided that the Municipal Court, who has had a reduction in work due to COVID 19 and AOC guidelines, did not need 4 court clerks and they decided to move one of the Clerks to the Fire Division to fill the Administrative Assistant position which was a perfectly seamless thing to do that they are excited about. Also, Mr. Oakley and he will soon be providing them with an Ordinance that will provide a single unified Division of Fire for the Council's review and consideration to be implemented as recommended as a result of the Fire Study.

Mr. Nerwinski went on to state how grateful he is working with the Police Chief, the Command Staff and Mr. Oakley as it makes his job easier and he respects each and every one of them completely. They seem to be on the same page on everything, they have mutual respect for each other and he enjoys coming to work every single day because of their dedication and knowing they are all operating for the same thing with regards to what is best for the community.

Councilman Ryan stated that he appreciates everything that he has done in terms of working with the Municipal Manager, Police Chief and all the Command Staff and indicated when he gets the information to the Municipal Manager it is relayed to the Council and they really appreciate it; because it gives them a real insight on what is going on and indicated he did read the complete Fire Study that had some great recommendations. He then thanked Mr. Oakley and his staff for the great job they have done serving the community.

Councilman Bobbitt thanked Mr. Oakley and his staff as well for all that they do, have done and continue to do and for doing the most with what the Council provides to them (budget wise) as he knows it is a challenge. But, at the same time, they have to balance everyone's needs in the Township and he appreciates that the Municipal Manager and the CFO have allowed him to have the proper tools because he thinks at the end of the day the most important thing is to take care of the staff at this very challenging time. He then inquired as to how the Fire Study is being received from both

the career and volunteer members in terms of the recommendations. Mr. Oakley replied that both sides realize that they need to move forward in the process and they need to develop a little better approach as to how they deliver the fire services in town and he really has not heard any negative comments about the Fire Study that has been advertised and published and reviewed by a lot of different people.

Councilman Bobbitt stated he knows there is a pandemic right now but once it lifts is there an opportunity to reach out to school age children and others in terms of a Volunteer Firefighter Corp and indicated he knows times are different and difficult; but, it just strikes him as one of the things that makes Lawrence great is having the 3 firehouses and having the volunteers. Mr. Oakley replied that it is a great recommendation; but, unfortunately, it is something that has to be on the back burner for them because of the times but he will tell them the success with the Junior Police Academy that the Police Department had has sparked a big interest with the fire service; especially, with him because he sees how successful they are with what they do and thinks that is something that they are definitely going to pursue from their end and proceeded to discuss Lawrence Township having the Cadet Program and the Junior Firefighter Program which are great learning areas for 14 to 16 years old and 16 to 18 years old before they get involved in the volunteer services and those are the core people they want to try and target along with the lower age children to give them an idea as to where they might want to channel themselves at some point.

Councilwoman Lewis stated birthday parties in the Fire Department with little kids being able to see the firehouses is a great way to start that program and is also a great way to help bring in some additional revenues to the fire stations. She then echoed the sentiments of members of Council with regards to the wonderful job Mr. Oakley and his staff has done during the pandemic. Thereafter, she questioned if the EMS and Fire squads have been afforded the opportunity to get a vaccine. Mr. Oakley replied 'yes' both the career and the volunteer staff have been given the opportunity to schedule an appointment to get the vaccine...and all of the career staff for EMS and Fire are vaccinated and approximately 35% of the Volunteer Staff, as some chose not to. He then proceeded to discuss there being some apprehension early on in the vaccination process and now that more people have received it with no no issues some of the volunteers may have gotten vaccinated on their own including himself.

Councilwoman Lewis asked if Mr. Oakley had seen a reduction in core volunteers or firefighters not wanting to participate or go out to a call due to the pandemic and their risk of exposure. Mr. Oakley replied 'yes' they have some who chose not participate, others who did not skip a beat and they had some exposures which drove the point home as well but to combat the problem the Municipal Manager invoked an Emergency Call Only appearance at the station as a level of safety and proceeded to explain the procedure that was put in place to reduce exposure.

Councilwoman Lewis stated the Council is always grateful for the work Fire Services does and the fact that they put their lives at risk every day when they go out; but, she also has to say thank you to the fire department in this last year who have

redoubled some of their efforts in continuing community events even when they had to change the way they looked, which brought a nice bit of normalcy to the community...so she thanks them for that.

Councilman Powers thanked Mr. Oakley for his daily updates that the Municipal Manager forwards to the Council which is very informative in helping them inform the residents when they receive a call as to what is going on Statewide in terms of the pandemic and echoed the sentiment of the other members of the Council with regards to the exemplary work he and his staff have done during this pandemic and continue to do. He then stated as a follow up to Councilwoman Lewis' question relative to the core volunteers, how many do they have now that are active? Mr. Oakley replied about 50 to 60 active members across the 3 firehouse and levels of activities and participation varies depending on availability of the home and work life. Hardcore members turning out for every call is about half of the 50 to 60 active members which is not just a Lawrence Township issue but a national issue due to family obligations. A general discussion ensued relative to incentives to increase volunteerism which the Municipal Manager advised they are working and on to strengthen their membership with the volunteers and have a combine staff.

Councilman Powers stated with regards to the out of service fire hydrants situation they had, what are they doing proactively to make sure that problem does not reoccur? Mr. Oakley replied that the weather they are experiencing now with the freezing temperatures has corralled the project that he had given to the Career Staff during the daytime; but, they are going to start going out neighborhood to neighborhood to check the hydrants for flow pressure. They will do a particular area or a particular amount of hydrants every single day, 5 days a week, which would allow them to cover most of the Township within a couple of months; but, they have abide by the weather.

Councilman Powers gave an emotional testimony to the excellent quality of service the EMS staff provided to his mother who was in cardiac arrest and imparted because of their expedited response time they saved his mother's life as she would not be alive if it was not for their exemplary performance in giving her the care and getting her to the hospital in timely manner. Mr. Oakley stated he will pass the compliment along and it is just another example of the level of service Emergency Services provides to residents of Lawrence and he is glad they were able to help his mother which is a win-win situation for everyone.

Mayor Kownacki thanked Mr. Oakley and his staff for all that they do and stated that he is glad he is the leader for the Township at this time when they have gone through a lot and they are still going through it and thanked him and his staff again for everything.

Mr. Nerwinski stated for the record they speak about the Volunteer Fire Companies but both he and Mr. Oakley are committed to continue to try and find ways to support the Career Firefighters and Career EMT's as they need them to know that

they support them and that they are critical to Lawrence Township's success and they want to make sure that they can support them as well.

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#### Public Participation

There was no public participation.

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#### Review and Revisions of Agenda

The Municipal Clerk requested that the Agenda be amended to include Resolution No. 93-21 (18-H.2), Authorizing the Transfer of 2020 Current Fund Appropriations; Resolution No. 94-21 (18-H.3), Authorizing the Mayor and Municipal Clerk to Execute an Escrow Agreement in the Amount of \$25,000 with Beechlawn Property Management, LLC known as 40 Enterprise Avenue; Resolution No. 95-21 (18-H.4), Authorizing the Disposal of Items not Appropriate for Auction and Resolution No. 90-21 (18-F.5), Authorizing a Professional Services Agreement for Acoustical Consultant to the Planning Board (Do Not Have the Required Business Entity Disclosure Forms). Councilwoman Lewis further requested the removal of Resolution No. 88-21 (18-F.3), Authorizing a Professional Services Agreement for Planning Consultant for the Planning Board for further review.

On a motion by Ms. Lewis, seconded by Mr. Powers, the Agenda was amended to include the above revision.

Same was carried on the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Councilmembers Bobbitt, Lewis, Powers, Ryan and Mayor Kownacki.  
Absent: None.  
Abstain: None

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#### Adoption of Minutes

On a motion by Ms. Lewis, seconded by Mr. Powers, the Minutes of Regular Meeting of January 5, 2021 were approved without corrections on the following roll call vote:

Same was carried on the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Councilmembers Bobbitt, Lewis, Powers, Ryan and Mayor Kownacki.

Absent: None.  
Abstain: None.

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Awarding or Rejecting of Bids

On a motion by Ms. Lewis, seconded by Mr. Powers, Resolution (9-A), Authorizing a Contract for the Rehabilitation of 30 Royal Oak Road, was presented for adoption.

Resolution No. 85-21

WHEREAS, on December 4, 2020, bids were received and publically opened for the rehabilitation of 30 Royal Oak Road; and

WHEREAS, four (4) bids were received and reviewed by the appropriate Township Officials; and

WHEREAS, the lowest responsible bidder was Silvio Nedelcu Painting & Remodeling, Inc. submitted a bid in the amount of \$23,900.00 to perform the tasks required in the rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:50-14, a Certificate of Availability of Funds has been provided and the account to be charged is 1-19-56-853-299 (Lawrence Township Unit Rehabilitation); and

WHEREAS, Silvio Nedelcu Painting & Remodeling, Inc. has performed satisfactorily;

WHEREAS, the owner of 30 Royal Oak Road, Kyle Ann Davis and Eric Kyle Davis has been deemed eligible to participate in the rehabilitation program;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Township Council of the Township of Lawrence, County of Mercer, State of New Jersey, that pursuant to the recommendations of the Municipal Manager, the Mayor and the Municipal Clerk hereby authorize the acceptance of the bid and the execution of a contract with Silvio Nedelcu Painting & Remodeling, Inc, 4475 Route 27, Princeton NJ 08540 for the purposes of rehabilitating 30 Royal Oak Road;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Municipal Manager is hereby authorized to draft the necessary agreement, subject to the approval of the Municipal Attorney as to form and content thereof.

Same was carried on the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Councilmembers Bobbitt, Lewis, Powers, Ryan and Mayor Kownacki.  
Absent: None.  
Abstain: None.

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Introduction of Ordinances

There was no introduction of ordinances.

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Adoption of Ordinances

There was no adoption of ordinances.

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**Manager’s Report –**

Mr. Nerwinski reported that the Township’s new website is two weeks away from going live as they are fine tuning some things; but it looks great and he is really happy with it and they are looking forward to the rollout.

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**Attorney’s Report –**

Mr. Roskos stated he reported last meeting that the Mount Laurel Builders in Hopewell was suing Ewing-Lawrence Sewage Authority, a case Lawrence Township is familiar with and essentially asked not to be involved in being they are not seeking any affirmative relief against the Township; but the Builders asked Lawrence Township to sign a Consent Order acknowledging certain things if they are not going to participate in the case. And, after review of the Consent Order he needs to recuse himself due to a conflict of interest and recommended that the Council seek other counsel that have expertise in sewer authority law in New Jersey.

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**Clerk’s Report –**

There was no Clerk’s report.

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**Unfinished Business –**

There was no unfinished business.

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**New Business –**

Mr. Powers stated speaking of young people as previously discussed by Councilwoman Lewis and Councilman Bobbitt a Township resident brought to his attention that 2021 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Twenty-sixth Amendment that lowered the voting age from 21 to 18 which was a surprise to him as he did not realize during the 60s when there was protests on college campuses that those students were not able to vote until 1971 after Congress enacted the Voting Rights Act of 1970 lowering the voting age to 18. He then proceeded to discuss a draft Resolution provided to him by the resident for Council’s consideration and the Twenty-sixth Amendment being adopted by New Jersey on April 3, 1971, and indicated he would like to propose giving something in support of that to the Clerk for a Resolution. Mayor Kownacki stated they could look into that.

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**Public Participation (3-minute limitation per speaker) –**

There was no public participation.

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**Resolutions**

Resolution Nos. 86-21 (18-D.1) through 95-21 (18-H.5) with was 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						

Cited Resolutions are spread in their entirety in the Resolution Books of the Township of Lawrence.

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**Council Initiatives/Liaison Reports –**

There were no Liaison reports.

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**Written Communications –**

There was no written communications.

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There being no further business to come before this Council, the meeting adjourned at Council went into Closed Session.

8:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kathleen S. Norcia, Municipal Clerk

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
James S. Kownacki, Mayor