

**MINUTES**  
**RE-ORGANIZATION MEETING**  
**MAYOR AND COUNCIL**  
**JANUARY 8, 2024**

Mayor Chegwidden called the meeting to order and read the Open Public Meeting Statement as follows:

"This is the Annual Re-Organization Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Wharton which was advertised in the print media as required by law. A copy of the annual meeting schedule is posted in the Municipal Building."

**Swearing in of Council Members**

Mayor Chegwidden announced that the Morris County Clerk's Office has determined that at the last General Election, Vincent Binkoski and Ana Jones were duly elected to the positions of Council Members for the Borough of Wharton for a term of three years.

Mayor Chegwidden called both Council Members to the platform to be sworn in. Congratulations were offered by all in attendance.

Mayor Chegwidden invited the Council Members to address the public.

**Councilman Binkoski:** He thanked all those who voted for him and also thanked the employees of the town for their teamwork. He thanked the Police and Fire Departments for their hard work and support we need. Thanked Mayor Chegwidden and the Council for their support. He especially thanked his family, and his wife Jill, who without their support he would not be able to do this.

**Councilwoman Jones:** She thanked everyone who voted for her and hopes to live up to their expectations.

**Roll Call**

Mayor Chegwidden to request Roll Call:

Councilman Vincent Binkoski  
Councilwoman Ana Jones  
Councilman Robert Norton  
Councilwoman Paola Vasquez  
Councilwoman Nicole Wickenheisser  
Councilman Thomas Yeager

**Flag Salute**

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

**Election of Council President**

A motion was made by Councilman Binkoski and seconded by Councilwoman Wickenheisser to elect Councilman Yeager as Council President for the year 2024.

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEA: 6	NAY: 0	ABSENT: 0	ABSTAIN: 0
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**Fire Department Appointments**

The following appointments are considered to be routine and non-controversial by the Mayor and Council and were approved by one motion.

Wharton Borough Fire Chief, Jen O'Malley-Dorr, for the year 2024 - term to expire 12/31/24.

Wharton Borough Fire Department Deputy Chief, Douglas Ploth, for the year 2024-term to expire 12/31/24.

Wharton Borough Fire Department Battalion Chief, Michael Marks Jr., for the year 2024- term to expire 12/31/24.

Wharton Borough Fire Department Captains:

- Louis Ploth - Captain
- Max Meinero - Captain

Wharton Borough Fire Department Lieutenants:

- Tyler Muzzillo - Lieutenant
- Caesar Rios - Lieutenant

All one-year terms to expire 12/31/24.

A motion was made by Council President Yeager and seconded by Councilman Binkoski to confirm all appointments.

ROLL CALL VOTE: 6	NAY: 0	ABSENT: 0	ABSTAIN: 0
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Mayor Chegwiddden and Council President Yeager swore in the new Fire Department officers. Congratulations were offered by all in attendance.

<p><u>Consent Agenda</u></p> <p>The following items are considered to be routine and non-controversial by the Mayor and Council and will be approved by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Council Member or citizen so requests, in which case, the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered in a normal sequence on the agenda.</p> <p>Resolutions: R-01-24: Meeting Schedule R-02-24: Temporary Budget for 2024 R-03-24: Temporary Capital Budget R-04-24: Cash Management Plan for 2024 R-05-24: Professionals Resolution- Competitive Contracting R-06-24: Professionals Resolution- Discretionary R-07-24: Authorizing Mayor to Execute Agreement for Risk Management Consultant Services for the Year 2024 R-08-24: Approve Agreement Health Benefits Producer R-09-24: Fixing Interest Rate on Delinquent Taxes for 2024 R-10-24: Authorizing the Tax Collector and Utility Collector to Cancel Any Balances under \$10.00 as Deemed Necessary R-11-24: Authorizing Returned Check Fee R-12-24: Designating Public Agency Compliance Officer R-13-24: Authorizing Personnel to Sign and Approve Purchase Orders in the Event the Administrator/CFO is not Available R-14-24: Setting Hourly Fee for Independent Attorneys R-15-24: Liability Search Officer for 2024 R-16-24: Tax Search Officer for 2024 R-17-24: Authorizing Certain Payments Outside of Scheduled Council Meetings R-18-24: Authorizing Re-Establishment of Petty Cash Funds R-19-24: Designating Official Newspapers for 2024 R-20-24: Authorizing Signatures on Borough Checks R-21-24: Establish Bid Threshold R-22-24: Authorizing Mayor, Administrator and Borough Clerk to Execute and Submit Grant Applications if Due Date is Outside of Scheduled Council Meetings</p>
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R-24-24: Appointment of 2024 Local Emergency Planning Committee  
R-24-24: Authorizing Required Notice of Tort Claims  
R-25-24: Volunteer Appreciation Program for 2024  
R-26-24: Authorizing Participation in the Morris County Co-Operative Purchasing Program  
R-27-24: Authorizing Participation in the State Co-Operative Purchasing Program  
R-28-24: Authorizing Participation in the Somerset County Co-Operative Purchasing Program  
R-29-24: Authorizing Participation in the Bergen County Co-Operative Purchasing Program  
R-30-24: Authorizing Participation in the Cranford Police Co-Operative Purchasing Program  
R-31-24: Authorize Participation in the Sourcewell Co-Operative Purchasing Program  
R-32-24: Authorizing Participation in the Educational Services Commission of NJ Co-Operative Purchasing Program  
R-33-24: Authorize Participation in OMNIA Co-Operative Purchasing Program  
R-34-24: Authorize Participation in NJ Edge Co-Operative Purchasing Program  
R-35-24: Authorize Participation in Keystone Purchasing Network  
R-36-24: Appoint Records Custodians  
R-37-24: Appointment of Judge, Public Defender and Prosecutor

Mayor's Appointments that Require Council Consent

Alternate School Crossing Guards- Christina Dorr, James Winston Jr., and Melissa Phelan one-year terms to expire 12/31/24

Assistant Administrator- Gabrielle Evangelista, one-year term to expire 12/31/24

Assistant Director of Public Works- Thomas Quillinan, one-year term to expire 12/31/24

Assistant to Construction Official- Desinez Ruffo, one-year term to expire 12/31/24

Board of Health Member- Leonor Vasquez, three-year term to expire 12/31/25

Board of Health Secretary- Desinez Ruffo, one-year term to expire 12/31/24

Board of Health Secretary for Licensing- Cheryl Muzzillo, one-year term to expire 12/31/24

Certifying Payroll Officers- Diana Fernandez, Joseph Kovalcik Jr., and Yolanda Dykes one-year terms to expire 12/31/24

Clean Communities Coordinator- Scott Hutchins, one-year term to expire 12/31/24

Community Affairs Coordinator- Cheryl Muzzillo, one-year term to expire 12/31/24

Deputy Borough Clerk- Cheryl Muzzillo and Desinez Ruffo, one-year terms to expire 12/31/24

Deputy Emergency Management Coordinators- David Young and Leon Stickle, one-year terms to expire 12/31/24

Deputy Fire Official- John Webber, one-year term to expire 12/31/24

Deputy Housing and Zoning Officials- Patrick Lavery and Leon Stickle, one-year terms to expire 12/31/24

Deputy Tax Collector- Sandi Critchlaw, one-year term to expire 12/31/24

Deputy Water/Sewer Collector- Diana Fernandez, one-year term to expire 12/31/24

Director of Public Works- Scott Hutchins, one-year term to expire 12/31/24

Electrical Inspector- Gregory Chontow, four-year term to expire 12/31/26

Emergency Management Coordinator- Eugene Caulfield, three-year term to expire 12/31/26.

Fire Official- Richard Cloughley, one-year term to expire, 12/31/24

Grant Coordinator– John Manna, one-year term to expire 12/31/24

Matrons- Alice Doblosky, Jen O'Malley-Dorr, Vicky Santana-Stickle, and Bonnie Sullivan, one-year terms to expire 12/31/24

Morris County Open Space and Farmland Preservation Representative- John Manna, one-year term to expire 12/31/24

Municipal Housing Liaison for COAH- Patrick Lavery, one-year term to expire 12/31/24

Personnel Administrator- Gabrielle Evangelista, one-year term to expire 12/31/24

Planning Board Secretary- Desinez Ruffo, one-year term to expire 12/31/24

Plumbing Inspector- James Gonroski, four-year term to expire 12/31/26

Police Chaplain- James Gottshall, one-year term to expire 12/31/24

Recreation Director- Cheryl Muzzillo, one-year term to expire 12/31/24

Recycling Coordinator- Scott Hutchins, one-year term to expire 12/31/24

RVRSR Representative- Glenn Corbett, five-year term to expire 12/31/27

School Crossing Guards- Kathleena Jackson, Jackie Kelly, Deborah Kline, Maureen Macalalag, Stephanie Mertz, Clifford Rollins, and Robert Thrower, one-year terms to expire 12/31/24

Treasurer- Yolanda Dykes, one-year term to expire 12/31/24

Water/Sewer Clerk- Sandi Critchlaw, one-year term to expire 12/31/24

Water/Sewer Operator- Nicholas DeRosa, one-year term to expire 12/31/24

Zoning/Housing Enforcement Official/Road Opening Official – Kevin Lewthwaite, one- year term to expire 12/31/24

*Committee Appointments*

Alternate Members to Finance Committee - #1 - Councilwoman Wickenheisser and #2 –Councilman Norton

Community Relations- (includes Recreation Committee, Celebration Public Events, Regionalization Committee- Shared Services, Senior Citizen Association) – Councilwoman Wickenheisser

Environmental Commission- Consists of Mayor and Council Members

Finance- (includes Insurance, Budget, Personnel, CFO, Street Lighting, Tax Assessor, Tax Collector, Community Development) – Councilman Binkoski

Finance Committee- Councilman Binkoski (Chair), Councilwoman Vasquez, and Councilman Yeager

Health/Welfare- (includes Board of Health, Public Assistance, Library) – Councilwoman Jones

Personnel Committee- Councilman Binkoski (Chair), Councilwoman Vasquez and Councilman Yeager

Public Affairs- (includes Building Inspector, Housing Inspector, Planning Board, Licenses, Zoning Officer, School Sub-Committee) – Councilwoman Vasquez

Public Safety- (includes Police Department, Fire Department, First Aid Squad, Municipal Court, Emergency Management, Elections) - Councilman Yeager

Public Works- (includes Parks, Building/Grounds, Sanitation, Maintenance Shop, Engineering, Streets and Roads, Water and Sewer) – Councilman Norton

Council Appointments in Accordance with State Statutes:

Council Representative to the Morris County Community Development Revenue Sharing Committee- John Manna, one-year term to expire 12/31/24.

Mayor's Appointments

Alternate Member to the Community Development Revenue Sharing Committee- Vince Binkoski/Joseph Kovalcik, Jr., one-year term to expire 12/31/24

Board of Health- Bonnie Lavoie, three-year term to expire 12/31/26

Mayor Representative to the Morris County Community Development Revenue Sharing Committee- Paola Vasquez, one-year term to expire 12/31/24

Planning Board Alternate- Lawrence Biehler, serving the remainder of the two-year term to expire 12/31/24

Planning Board Class 3 Member- Councilwoman Vasquez, one-year term to expire 12/31/24

Planning Board Class 4 Members- Ken Loury, Christopher Fleischman and Marc Harris, four-year term to expire 12/31/27

A motion was made by Council President Yeager and was seconded by Councilman Binkoski to approve all of the items on the Consent Agenda.

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

Correspondence

- Letter from Assemblywoman Dunn

Council Remarks:

Council President Yeager: He thanked everyone for a great year. Congratulations to Councilman Binkoski and Councilwoman Jones on their elections. He is looking forward to working with them.

Councilman Binkoski: He had the opportunity to go to the DPW with the Mayor before Christmas to have bagels and coffee with the guys. He thanked the DPW and Police Dept. for the great job handling the last snow event.

Councilwoman Jones: No report.

**Councilman Norton:** Congratulated everyone who was sworn in this evening. He also thanked the DPW and Fire Departments, stating there's "none better".

**Councilwoman Vasquez:** Congratulated Councilman Binkoski and Councilwoman Jones and extended an offer to help with anything she can. She reported on some of the Library's accomplishments last year. They were able to get the solar tables, expand the parking lot, and they received a grant allowing them to give 500 computers and 600 hotspots to our residents. This gave many families and children who didn't have a computer the opportunity to have a computer. The Library also hired a full-time Director last year which was very helpful. They are working to get the approval for the roof and windows project and that is happening this year.

Mr. Kovalcik confirmed the roof and window project was approved by the County.

She thanked everyone for their support.

**Councilwoman Wickenheisser:** Congratulated Councilman Binkoski and Councilwoman Jones. She also congratulated everyone sworn in tonight. Thanked the DPW for another fantastic job all year, every year, and thanked our Police & Fire Departments, who are the best around.

*Mayor Chegwiddden's Remarks*

He let everyone know Assemblywoman Dunn could not be here and he put into record the letter she sent. Steve Shaw, Heather Darling and Doug Cabana also sent regrets they couldn't be here. Congratulated Councilman Binkoski and Councilwoman Jones.

Mayor Chegwiddden outlined some of the Borough's accomplishments from 2023:

- Road projects completed:
  - Lafayette Street (Grant from the NJDOT)
  - New Irondale and Old Irondale
  - Deszo Avenue
  - Ross Street
- Development of Orchard Mine Park
- Completion of Irondale Trails Phase III (Grant of \$130,000)
- Purchase of a new Street Sweeper
- Installation of a bypass for Sterling Street Water tank
- Sent design for realignment of Dewey Avenue and Route 15 to the State
- Completed Host Community Agreement with Ascend
- Purchase of 5 new Police vehicles
- Refurbishment of crosswalks on Main Street
- Entered into a contract to purchase 262 West Dewey Avenue
- Additional \$319,000 recieved for the Morris Canal project
- Construction of Wharton Woods and Irondale Commons
- Construction of Pillar Care, a non-profit, on West Thomas Street
- C.O. for 10 North Main Street and the group home at 22 Sterling Street
- Many trips for our senior citizens

He then discussed some things on the horizon for 2024:

- Road Projects to be completed:
  - Robert Street (\$271,000 Grant)
  - Washington Street (\$648,000 Grant)
  - Baker Avenue - Phase I (\$150,000 Grant) & Phase II (\$234,000 Grant)
- New Dog Park
- Rehabilitation of Sterling Street Water tank
- Development of fields at Orchard Mine
- Overhaul of Columbia Street Park (\$76,000 Grant)
- Completion of the Morris County Canal Lock 2East project.
- Replacement of Library windows (PY CDBG Funds of \$80,000) and roof (CDBG Funds of \$49,000).

- New Sanitation Receptacles

He reported the ratable base has gone up \$70 million and we are now just under \$1 billion in ratables. He continued that Wharton continues to be fiscally sound. Our books are in the process of being closed for the year and he has been informed by our CFO that we ended the year on a positive note. He would like to thank all of the employees and volunteers for their team efforts to do what's best for Wharton. He is looking forward to working with this Council and he's looking forward to another great year.

Public Portion

Mayor Chegwidden opened the meeting to the public.

Mike Bezney, 1 Bartek Lane: Mr. Bezney congratulated the members who were sworn in and thanked Mayor Chegwidden and the members of the Council for stepping up to the plate and being our representatives. He inquired whether curbs and storm drains would be installed by the developer. It was explained that would be up to the Engineer. He expressed his need to know when his road would be paved so he can install a sewer line. He was advised by Mr. Quillinan and Mr. Hutchins that he should install his sewer line because we know the road is going to be paved.

Mayor Chegwidden closed the meeting to the public.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Council President Yeager and was seconded by Councilwoman Wickenheisser.

January 8, 2024

ATTEST:

BOROUGH OF WHARTON

\_\_\_\_\_  
WILLIAM J. CHEGWIDDEN,  
MAYOR

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Cheryl Muzzillo,  
Deputy Borough Clerk