

CAUCUS MEETING MINUTES

May 6, 2025

7:00 P.M.

Mayor Jakubowski called the meeting to order.

MAYOR'S STATEMENT: "Notice of this meeting has been provided in a legal notice published in the Courier Post and the Retrospect; and posted in accordance with Title 10 of the New Jersey Statutes Annotated, specifying a 7:00 p.m. meeting time; and that formal action may or may not be taken at all Caucus and Commissioners meetings. Please be advised that this meeting is not being videotaped tonight."

Flag Salute/Exit Designations

Roll Call: Mayor Jakubowski, Commissioner Lee and Commissioner Whitman were in attendance.

Those additionally in attendance were Danielle Ingves, Municipal Clerk, RJ Callaway, Assistant Superintendent of Public Works, Police Chief Dave Bauer, Police Captain John Gaspari, Jack Bruno, CFO, Solicitor Sal Siciliano, Borough Engineer Craig Reilly, OEM Coordinator Kurt Bicking, Brian Conte, EMS, John Dymond, Tax Assessor, Jean Phillips, Court Administrator, Akiema Buchanan, Library Director.

Commissioner Lee made a motion to approve meeting minutes from April 15, 2025, seconded by Commissioner Whitman. All in favor-motion carried.

Commissioner Whitman made a motion to approve closed meeting minutes from April 15, 2025, seconded by Commissioner Lee. All in favor-motion carried.

ORDINANCES FOR ACTION:

2025-02 CALENDAR YEAR 2025 ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK

First Reading/Introduction -- April 1, 2025 -- Second Reading/Public Hearing -- May 6, 2025

Motion to open to the public was made by Commissioner Whitman, seconded by Commissioner Lee. All in favor-motion carried.

There were no comments or questions from the public.

Motion to close the public session was made by Commissioner Lee, seconded by Commissioner Whitman. All in favor-motion carried.

Motion to Adopt the ordinance was made by Commissioner Lee, seconded by Commissioner Whitman. Unanimous Roll Call Vote.

2025-03 AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF AUDUBON, COUNTY OF CANDEN, STATE OF NEW JERSEY AMENDING CHAPTER 54 OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF AUDUBON ENTITLED "STREETS AND SIDEWALKS AND OTHER PUBLIC PLACES".

First Reading/Introduction – April 1, 2025 – Second Reading/Public Hearing – May 6, 2025

Motion to open to the public was made by Commissioner Lee, seconded by Commissioner Whitman. All in favor-motion carried.

There were no comments or questions from the public.

Motion to close the public session was made by Commissioner Whitman, seconded by Commissioner Lee. All in favor-motion carried.

Motion to Adopt the ordinance was made by Mayor Jakubowski, seconded by Commissioner Whitman. Unanimous Roll Call Vote.

RESOLUTIONS FOR ACTION:

2025-85 Authorizing the 2025 Municipal Budget to be Read by Title Only. The foregoing motion was approved by motion of Commissioner Lee and seconded by Commissioner Whitman. All in favor motion carried.

2025-86 2025 Municipal Budget

Mayor Jakubowski stated that for the record, we did have an additional open session for the public to ask questions on the budget at our in-person meeting on April 15, 2025 in which no one from the public came to ask questions.

Motion to open to the public was made by Commissioner Whitman and seconded by Commissioner Lee. All in favor motion carried.

John from The Retrospect questioned the group insurance. It was budgeted for 1.7 million which was twice as much paid than last year. What is the reasoning for that? Per Jack Bruno, CFO, the utilization of the American Rescue Fund was federal grant money from the federal government as a one-time utilization of those funds. That was for last year. 1.7 million is the more accurate number. There was a 20% increase from the State two years in a row.

Motion to close the public session was made by Commissioner Lee, seconded by Commissioner Whitman. All in favor-motion carried.

The foregoing Motion to Adopt the Municipal Budget was made by Commissioner Whitman and seconded by Commissioner Lee. Unanimous Roll Call Vote.

2025-87 Amending 2025 Municipal Budget. The resolution was read in full by Mayor Jakubowski. The foregoing motion was made by Commissioner Lee and seconded by Commissioner Whitman. Unanimous Roll Call Vote.

2025-88 Authorizing the Separation Agreement and General Release by and between the Borough of Audubon and David Taraschi. The foregoing motion was made by Mayor Jakubowski and seconded by Commissioner Whitman. Unanimous Roll Call Vote.

2025-89 Authorizing the Municipal Clerk to receive RFP submissions for Tax Assessor. The foregoing motion was made by Commissioner Lee and seconded by Commissioner Whitman. All favor motion carried.

Department Reports:

Assistant Superintendent of Public Works – Report submitted. Work at the Village Court pump station is 100% complete. Minor road work was done at the intersection at Oak and Oakland, which was pretty beat up. Audubon Day preparation and clean up for a successful event. Kari J. Walk assistance with barricades and the only other thing is the typical day to day with trash and recycling and street sweeping. Summer help will be coming on in the next few weeks and that will be a big help.

Per Commissioner Whitman, nice job on the Village Court as it looks a lot better. Per R. Callaway, Steve Slashinski took the lead on that and he did a great job.

Chief Finance Officer – Nothing additional to report.

Borough Clerk – Municipal Election is next Tuesday, May 13. We discussed there is no early voting. The last day to request a mail in ballot by mail was today, but the last day to obtain a mail in ballot in person is at the County by 4:00 pm on Monday, May 12. The next meeting is Tuesday, May 20, at the FJW Rec & Com Center at 7:00 pm.

The Primary election is June 10, 2025. Our Caucus was moved back to June 3. The last day to register to vote in the Primary is May 20, 2025.

Tax Collector – Report submitted. Excused.

Tax Assessor – Nothing to report.

Police Chief - Report submitted. Juveniles did some damage at Green Wave Field. RJ Callaway took care of the field. Signs were ordered and should take about six weeks to get them. The cameras were down temporarily. Motorized bikes or vehicles of any sort are not allowed on that field. Additional lock and keys have been added to try to avoid this again.

I am sure many have seen on social media that a couple of cars were stolen in Audubon late Friday night/early Saturday night. One vehicle was recovered at the WAWA in Mt. Ephraim. The police happened to be in the area and the thieves got spooked. Later in the day on Saturday, the State Police notified us the other car was found in Delaware and three juveniles were arrested. It cannot be stressed enough that people should lock their car doors at night and do not leave the fob in the cars. At this time, they are only checking door handles. They have broken windows in the past, but at this time, they are just checking door handles. Do not leave anything valuable in your car. They will check door handles and see if the push button cars will start. If so, they will drive away and find the key/fob later. Do not leave keys or fobs in car. They will break windows if they see valuables. Not sure how much damage was done to the cars, but the one in Delaware was towed.

We did receive a nice letter from a resident thanking two of our offices for a job well done. Retired Steve Pacifico and Officer Knecht, helped him out. He was happy that he didn't have to receive advice from a high-powered lawyer according to the letter.

Disney continues to do well. Office Clouden and Disney have been helping with many lock ups, pulling over cars and assisting with drug arrests.

Other than that, things are running really smooth. I want to thank Chief Tassi for that. Since we have been sworn in, it says a lot as to what a great job he has done to prepare for the transition for myself, Captain Gaspari and Lieutenant Gorman.

Thank you, Commissioners Lee and Whitman, for all your support and your service to the town!

Fire Chief – Report submitted. Fire Chief attempted to log on, but had trouble.

OEM – Report submitted. The EOP is done. I will be asking for signatures soon and get that completed and sent to the state. We are starting to work on the IAP for the 4th of July festivities. Thank you to Commissioners Lee and Whitman for all you have done for the last four years.

Per Mayor Jakubowski, the parade and athletic events will be on the 4th and the fireworks will be on the 5th. K. Bicking replied that they will probably do two IAPs, but he will connect with Michelle Gurk from the Fire Police and they will get it done.

EMS – Report submitted. Audubon 100 calls with a total call for 222 calls for the month. Would like to echo everyone else and thank you Commissioners Lee and Whitman as it was a pleasure working with you all.

Municipal Court Administrator – Reports submitted. The SSA was officially signed by the Assignment Judge. As of June 1, Stratford will start working with the Oaklyn/Mt. Ephraim courts. After our last court date of May 19, we will start getting everything together to hand things off. We have been working together for a smooth transition. Thank you to Bob and Jeff as well! It was a pleasure working with you both so thank you Commissioners.

Construction Code/Zoning Report - Reports submitted.

Engineer – Report submitted. Highlights include, 2025 road program/project, intersection of Weslyn and Carlisle and Wright's Alley from West Atlantic to Oakland; we are wrapping up that design and hoping to have it out by the end of the month. Hoping to award by the second meeting in June assuming we get good bids. The second update is the Audubon Family Park playground equipment. The contractor is scheduled for next week to install. In addition to that, the NJDCA did announce their 2025 awards and the Borough of Audubon was fortunate enough and will receive \$80,000 toward improvement to the park for improving access to the park and providing additional equipment. Lastly, the DOT projects East Pine and Hampshire first phase is complete. We are finalizing the design for the second phase of Hampshire, Washington Terrace heading toward Graisbury. We are going to sit down with RJ and the Mayor to go over that design. I will reach out for availability. Thank you to Commissioners Lee and Whitman as it has been a privilege.

Mayor Jakubowski asked the status of South Davis. Per C. Reilly that is part of the 2025 Municipal Aid Project which will be following the Hampshire Project. The guestimate for that project will early fall/early spring.

Solicitor – Nothing to report. Item for closed session.

Library – Report submitted. Monthly calendar is on website and social media. Second graders for Haviland came for a field trip. Participated in a scavenger hunt and listened to a story as well as learned about the library. We have a lot of programs coming including computer classes for Senior Citizens. Every Tuesday at 1:00 pm there are classes for our seniors. Summer Reading will begin on June 11. We will have Mister Softee and tie-dye and it is open to everyone. Check our website and social media. Calendars can be found at Borough Hall as well.

Per Mayor Jakubowski, expanding on Director Buchannan's report and thanking her. There is a preschool program in the school district now. It will be growing in the fall. However, there be a much larger waitlist. I have asked Ms. Buchannan to work with the principal and to work with those families on the waiting list. Akiema did not blink. She is working with the district to create something and she is communicating with another non-profit to bring other resources to the table. So, I am grateful that is being started to help those families on the waitlist.

FJW Recreation & Community Center - YMCA registration is open. Details are on our website and social media. Camp runs June 23 through August 29. April – 4 private parties and Audubon Day. May we have scheduled five private parties and our Municipal Election.

Sustainable Audubon – Report submitted. Makers Day with the Library March 22. Selling thirty hand crafted cedar birdhouses for \$25.00 each with all the money going to the Street Tree Initiative. A member of Sustainable Audubon makes these. The flower sale delivery was on May 2 with profits going to the Street Tree Initiative as well. They participated in Audubon Day and they had the National Wildlife Refuge and NJAW join them. They are still pushing the PSEG Efficiency Program. You will receive a \$20.00 gift card from Desserts by Design and/or Audubon Hardware for anyone who has the audit performed and sends the evidence requested. House plants available for donations to the Street Tree Initiative. The goal is to get trees planted in the fall.

Per Mayor Jakubowski, we are still on hold with the federal earmark that we were given to put in 100 new trees. No new update on that.

Board of Commissioners Reports:

Commissioner Lee – Nothing to report.

Commissioner Whitman – May 1st taxes were due. So please make note. The grace period is until May 12. Thank you to everyone here for all the work you have done, especially those that are extremely short staffed. You all are the ones that really keeping things going even though we are the faces of Audubon. We cannot thank you enough for all your hard work. Rob, good luck to you and your new team!

Mayor Jakubowski – Audubon Day was a real success! The committee did a great job. They had to move the date. The weather was much better on the day they chose. As you all heard, July 4 will be a two-day event. The parade and athletic events will be on July 4th and the fireworks on the July 5. We will work hard to get fireworks back on the 4th, but it is tough. We are a small town competing with much larger towns and much larger budgets. The new park equipment will be installed next week. Other things to look forward to is the install of Historical Signs that are being completed and have been funded by many grants over the years.

After questioning, Nicholson Road should be completed and paved after school is over per Chief Bauer. There is a meeting coming up to discuss this time line.

Thank you, Commissioner Lee and Commissioner Whitman. We hope you can join us on the 20th so that we can thank you in person.

Open Session: Commissioner Lee made a motion to open the meeting to the public; seconded by Commissioner Whitman. All in favor; motion carried.

John from The Retrospect asked about unused paid time by Dave Taraschi. Is he still on the payroll and what is the situation there. Per Mayor Jakubowski and confirmed by Commissioner Whitman and Solicitor Siciliano, he has unused time that we will be paying out until December. It is a combination of unused time over the years of sick and vacation time. The CAP doesn't apply to him as he is grandfathered in. The CAP only applies to a check at the end, but it doesn't apply to this situation as any money left will not be significant.

Question for Chief Bauer, were the cars stolen from Audubon residents and were the criminals Audubon residents? Per the Chief, yes, they were stolen from Audubon residents, but the three juveniles were from Delaware and it was the same trio from both stolen cars.

Asked for a copy of the Amendment Resolution as well from the Clerk via email.

Commissioner Whitman made a motion to close the meeting to the public; seconded by Commissioner Lee. All in favor motion carried.

Resolution 2025-90 to go into Closed Session for matters of Personnel. The foregoing motion was made by Commissioner Lee and seconded by Commissioner Whitman was made at 5:39 pm.

Motion was made to come out of closed session by Commissioner Lee and seconded by Commissioner Whitman. All in favor motion carried.

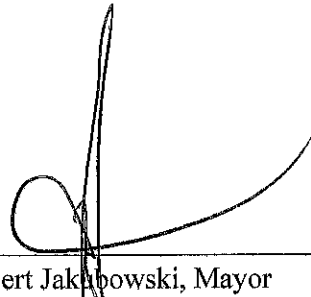
There is no one waiting in the waiting room.

2025-91 Authorizing the Appointment of Robert Allen as Provisional Construction Code Official for the Borough of Audubon from May 7 through July 6, 2025. The foregoing resolution was made by Commissioner Lee and seconded by Commissioner Whitman.

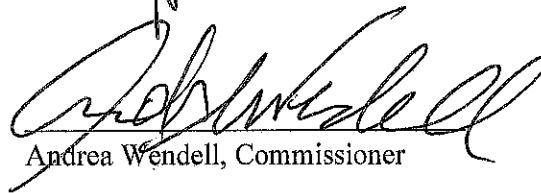
2025-92 Authorizing the Appointment of Michael DePalma as Provisional Subcode Official and Inspector for Mechanical and Plumbing and as Subcode Inspector for Building for the Borough of Audubon. The foregoing resolution was made by Commissioner Whitman and seconded by Commissioner Lee.

Commissioner Lee made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Whitman. All in favor motion carried.

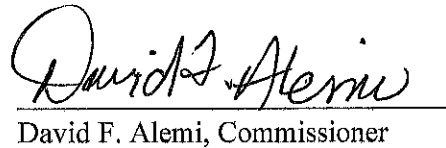
Meeting Adjourned at 5:55 pm.



Robert Jakubowski, Mayor



Andrea Wendell, Commissioner

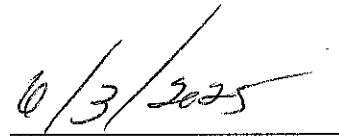


David F. Alemi, Commissioner

ATTEST:



Danielle Ingves, Municipal Clerk



Date