

JANUARY 23, 2012

PAULSBORO, N.J.

6:00 P.M.

SPECIAL MEETING

Council Chamber:

Mayor Hamilton presided at the Special Meeting of Council held on the above date and place.

Mayor Hamilton called the meeting to order to hold the candidate interviews for the vacant Council seat.

Borough Clerk VanScoy read the opening statement regarding the Open Public Meetings Act.

Members present were: Giovannitti, Haynes, Kidd, Morina. Absent: Tedeski (excused).

Mayor Hamilton opened the floor to the public.

Loretta Winters, former Councilwoman in Monroe Township, New Jersey, read a statement into the record as follows:

“Dear Honorable Mayor Hamilton and Township Council:

As a former vice-president of council of Monroe Township, NJ, I understand the challenges and obstacles that face a progressive town such as Paulsboro. The heavy lifting that this mayor and council board must undertake in this uncertain economic climate is an enormous task. One of the most urgent tasks includes filling the vacant seat of the unexpired term of council left by Mayor W. Jeffery Hamilton.

I have read numerous accounts of candidates seeking office and applaud all for stepping up to the plate. I am sure that Paulsboro is seeking an individual to be an outstanding contributor to the community. The ability to unselfishly help others is a rare quality. As I searched through the fine candidates, in my opinion, the one that stands out with clarity of talent and commitment to the Paulsboro community family is Mr. Richard Gatewood. His exceptional track record alone should serve as a prelude to the type of person that will fit council, serve the Borough, and represent the people well.

As you know these appointments can be very critical to the harmony of the council team and can be far reaching while shaping surrounding communities and our state also. Therefore, I enthusiastically stand before you to recommend that Mr. Richard Gatewood be

appointed as councilman for the unexpired term left vacant by Mayor Jeff Hamilton.

Thank you for allowing me to speak before council and if there is anything that I can do to assist Paulsboro in any of her endeavors please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours in service,
Loretta Winters, Concerned Citizen”

LaTanya Nelson, Gloucester County NAACP, Political Action Chair, also read a statement into the record as follows:

“To: Paulsboro Mayor and Council

Re: Appointment of Unexpired Council Seat Vacated by Mayor Hamilton

Good evening, my name is LaTanya Nelson, former resident of Paulsboro, currently residing in Woodbury, NJ.

As a member of the Gloucester County NAACP Executive Board, Chairperson for the Political Action Committee, and a member of the State of NJ NAACP Political Action Committee, I would like to express our views about your impending decision tonight.

We understand that the Paulsboro Democrat Executive Committee has submitted three candidates for the council position vacated by Mayor Hamilton. It is the mission of the GC NAACP to help all people protect their civil rights and encourage minorities to strive for equal representation within their communities and the governing bodies.

We are please to see that two of the persons submitted by your Executive Committee are African Americans. We feel it is very important that one of the two African Americans be selected to complete the term vacated by Mayor Hamilton. Paulsboro is a very diverse community and the council members should equally reflect that diversity.

Paulsboro is a true reflection of the way democracy works in our county. By electing Mayor Hamilton to serve as only the second African American Mayor of this town, demonstrates how important the people in this community feel about their elected officials.

Paulsboro needs to continue to make strides toward keeping the governing representation diverse, and that begins with you tonight, by making the right choice for council.

Your Executive Committee understands how important that is by giving you the opportunity to select an African American to complete the unexpired term of Mayor Hamilton.

What we have often been told, when asked about the lack of African Americans in public service, is that, “NO ONE APPLIED FOR THE JOB!”. Well tonight you have not one but two qualified African American applicants that are applying for the JOB!

Please do the right thing by the people of your community when making your choice for council tonight.

Thankfully submitted,
LaTanya Nelson, Gloucester County NAACP, Political Action Chair”

Giovannitti moved and Haynes seconded to close the floor to the public. All were in favor of the motion.

Mayor Hamilton gave each candidate a chance to speak which is as follows:

Candidate #1 – Jennifer Turner, 233 West Buck Street, District 2, stated she will commit her dedication to the vacant seat and it is a privilege to be here. She has mentored for the youth and she will be a fresh face without the politics. She has worked with the Senior Citizens and the children. She will engage the residents, hold absentee landlords and tenants responsible, implement summer recreation programs, and bring jobs. Her newest initiative is fund raising for breast cancer survivors.

Candidate #2 – Gary C. Stevenson, 230 East Jefferson Street, District 3, thanked Mayor and Council for this opportunity. He is a lifelong resident of Paulsboro and has two children. He wanted to be clear that this is an important job. He has a track record of walking around town; he has been in the Volunteer Fire Department for 28 years and ½ of those years as Fire Chief. He is well aware of the issues facing Paulsboro. Paulsboro needs people who are going to work hard for the residents. He is always out in the town and he sees a lot of people. He has been at the Port many times, been to meetings regarding the Plaza; he has the experience and the work attitude. He again thanked Mayor and Council for considering him for this position.

Candidate #3 – Richard E. Gatewood, 305 Cook Avenue, P.O. Box 118, District 1, stated he is the committee person of District 1 and Mayor and Council know him just like they know Mr. Stevenson. He will bring a financial background and help in solving some problems in the town. He is born and raised here and built a house. He has been dealing with Senior Citizens and the kids for 40 years. He is here everyday and will bring balance as well as “bring us together”. He does have the educational background and has been a member of the Gloucester County Democrat Club. He thinks with his extensive background he can serve on the board.

Mayor Hamilton stated there are three (3) very good candidates. The selection will be made by Council and the term ends at the end of the year. He recommends a representative from District 1 but it is not his decision.

Council President Giovannitti thanked everyone, the candidates and Jeanne Giampola. The process before did not include anyone and he wanted to invite everyone in the process. He felt it was a better process.

Councilman Morina stated it was a good thing there were three (3) candidates and the ones that were not selected can still help out.

Councilman Kidd stated when he was appointed, he had to go before the Executive Committee and express why he wanted to serve. He stated to the candidates that he hoped they would have enough time to serve the Board.

Councilman Haynes thanked all three (3) candidates for stepping forward and hoped whoever is selected will become part of the team. He further asked all those not selected to stay involved.

Mayor Hamilton stated Council has heard from the candidates, themselves and thanked the audience and Jeanne Giampola. He asked whoever was selected to come aboard and have an open mind.

Giovannitti moved and Morina seconded to select Gary C. Stevenson to serve the unexpired term on Council. Roll call: Ayes: Giovannitti, Haynes, Morina. Nays: Kidd.
Motion carried.

Mayor and Council recessed at 6:30 p.m. in order for Mr. Stevenson's wife to be present for his swearing in.

Mayor and Council reconvened at 6:37 p.m.

Solicitor Angelini gave the Oath of Office to Gary C. Stevenson.

There wasn't any further Special Meeting business.

Giovannitti moved and Haynes seconded to adjourn the Special Meeting at 6:39 p.m. All were in favor of the motion.

This is a brief summary of the Special Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Paulsboro held on January 23, 2012 and should not be considered a verbatim transcript of the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy A. VanScoy, RMC/CMC
Borough Clerk

W. Jeffery Hamilton, Mayor