

WORK SESSION  
TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 2024  
6:00 P.M.

The Work Session of the City Council of the City of Vineland was called to order by the President, Dr. Elizabeth A. Arthur.

The following members were present at roll call:

Councilman David Acosta (*arrived at 6:10 p.m.*)  
Councilman Ronald J. Franceschini, Jr.  
Councilman Paul F. Spinelli  
Councilman Albert Vargas  
President Dr. Elizabeth A. Arthur

Also present were:

Robert E. Dickenson, Jr., Business Administrator  
Richard P. Tonetta, Esq., City Solicitor  
Stephen Barse, Esq., Associate City Solicitor  
Edwin Alicea, Director of Public Safety  
H. James Neher, Director of Public Works  
Brian Conover, Tax Assessor

The President led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Clerk stated Public Notice of this meeting, pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, has been given on December 13, 2023 by the City Clerk, in the following manner:

1. Posting written notice on the official bulletin board in the lobby of the City Hall;
2. Providing written notice to the offices of The Daily Journal and The Press of Atlantic City; and;
3. Filing written notice in the office of the City Clerk of the City of Vineland.

#### CAVALLO DRIVE SEWER PROJECT SPECIAL ASSESSMENT HEARING

The Clerk summarized the facts of tonight's hearing: In 2021 residents of Cavallo Drive approved a public sewer extension project for Cavallo Drive. The project has been completed and property owners benefiting from the improvements are being assessed for their proportionate share of the project costs.

There are ten (10) properties benefiting from these improvements. The initial estimate was \$17,591.00 for each property. The actual cost came in lower than the estimate, and each property owner is now responsible for \$16,275.54. Property owners may pay the amount in full, or it can be paid over a ten (10) year period of time in equal quarterly installments, with interest to accrue on the unpaid balance at the rate of six (6%) percent per year.

All affected properties were sent notice via certified and regular mail, dated March 19, 2024 advising them of this hearing, and providing them with the opportunity to question or challenge the amount to be assessed. We have City Tax Assessor Brian Conover present to respond to any questions.

The President entertained a motion by Councilman Franceschini, and seconded by Councilman Spinelli, that the public hearing for the Cavallo Drive Sewer Project Special Assessment be open to public for comment.

The Clerk called the roll: YEAS: Councilman Franceschini  
Councilman Spinelli  
Councilman Vargas  
President Arthur

*\*Councilman Acosta had not yet arrived.*

The President asked if there was any one who wished to comment on the Cavallo Drive Sewer Project Special Assessment.

Rich Farside claims not to have known about the project and never voted in favor of it. He also questioned how many votes are required to advance such a project. Administrator Dickenson responded that notices about the project were sent by his office. Solicitor Tonetta stated that we need to research the file and recommended the hearing be continued. He also explained that, in these matters, the majority of the votes received dictates if the project advances.

Jan Dwyer-LoBiondo asked to see the votes, but indicated that she was in favor of the project.

Viktor Nechay also requested to see the vote totals. He claims no certified mail was sent that contained a ballot, but he does understand that such a project improves property value.

Guy Costantino explained that he had already paid to hook up to the LSA, and verified this with Mr. Tobolski at the LSA, and with Municipal Clerk Petrosky, who both assured him that he was not part of the special assessment project. He just wanted this to be on record.

Carmen Jiminez stated she was an Elder at the church and stated that a vote on the project would have to be approved by the church Elders, further claiming that the church never received the ballot, and never approved it. She also believes the 6% interest charge is extreme.

There being no one further to be heard tonight, the President entertained a motion by Councilman Acosta, and seconded by Councilman Spinelli, that the public hearing for the Cavallo Drive Sewer Project Special Assessment be continued to May 7, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

The Clerk called the roll: YEAS: Councilman Acosta  
Councilman Franceschini  
Councilman Spinelli  
Councilman Vargas  
President Arthur

President Arthur explained to those attending that the matter will be continued to the next work session on May 7, and that no final determination will be made tonight.

The Clerk read the following: *Public Comment provides an opportunity for members of the public to inform the governing body about their views. The governing body prescribes to City Council's by-laws and the NJ Statutes on Open Public Meetings when engaging during public comment. As such, each individual shall have a 5 minute limit to comment; cannot yield time to another individual; may only approach the podium once during public comment for any one topic; vulgar/offensive language is prohibited; and City Council will not engage in dialogue with the public during this time. The governing body maintains model courtesy and respect and requires members of the public to do the same.*

The President asked if there was anyone in the audience who wished to be heard.

Steve Lewis believes the description of how the vote ballot count determines if an assessment project advances is not proper. He said he doesn't feel that if only one property owner responds affirmatively, and the others do not respond, that such a project should advance with only one affirmative vote.

There being no one further to be heard, the Clerk reviewed the agenda.

Councilman Franceschini requested a financial summary on how much the new fire department building is costing. Administrator Dickenson advised that all of the change orders are noted in the attached documentation to the resolution.

The President asked if any Council members wished to be heard.

Councilman Vargas reported that work continues on the PAL summer camp and that a meeting is planned for tomorrow. He also thanked Administrator Dickenson and the city crews responsible for the improvements at Gonzalez Park, with a few more items that need attention.

Councilman Franceschini asked how we are doing with lifeguard recruitment. Administrator Dickenson responded that the two lifeguards from last year have indicated they are returning.

There being no further comments to be heard, the President entertained a motion by Councilman Acosta, and seconded by Councilman Franceschini, to adjourn the meeting.

The Clerk called the roll: YEAS: Councilman Acosta  
Councilman Franceschini  
Councilman Spinelli  
Councilman Vargas  
President Arthur

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Dr. Elizabeth A. Arthur  
President

ATTEST:

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Keith Petrosky, RMC  
Municipal Clerk