

**MINUTES**  
**OATH OF OFFICE MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL**  
**HELD VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE**  
MUNICIPAL COURT /COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
10 LAWLOR DRIVE, OAKLAND, NEW JERSEY  
WEDNESDAY JANUARY 6, 2021 7:00 PM

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: By Mayor Schwager at 7:02 pm.

MOMENT OF SILENCE:

INVOCATION: Father Lipnicki gave the Invocation.

Meeting Announcement: Mayor Schwager announced that this meeting is being held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Law, duly announced, submitted to the newspaper and advertised more than 48 hours in advance of the meeting and notice posted in the Municipal Building and on the Borough website.

**MAYOR'S MESSAGE:**

Happy New Year. We finally ended the year 2020-the year of the pandemic. It was a most difficult year and we are now looking forward to a brighter, safer, healthier year ahead. Throughout the pandemic, I recorded reverse 911 messages regularly with updates on closures, openings and positive case counts. Now I will only call with an update on the virus vaccinations. The vaccine is here but you will have to register for an appointment. The vaccine is free to everyone but insurance information must be provided. You must register to reserve your spot and you will be asked questions to determine when you are eligible for the vaccine. The website to register is [covidvaccine.nj.gov](https://covidvaccine.nj.gov).

We ended 2020 with a beautiful, colorful decorated town. Thank you to Michael Rose and Chopper Russo and team for another successful Holiday Decoration contest. We are starting the year on a high note because Oakland will be profiled in the Real Estate section of the NY Times on March 7, 2021. The Borough continued to work diligently and progressively in 2020. The Stream House was finally dismantled as promised. Councilman Biale and I have been working on a plan to replace the Stream House with a children's museum filled with County memorabilia. Oakland was the temporary County seat when the Courthouse in Hackensack was set on fire. Hence, the street named Court House Place. If anyone is interested in joining the committee to plan the future of the site, contact Councilman Biale or myself. Additionally, if you are interested in volunteering on a Board or Commission, fill out a Citizen Leadership form found on the Borough website.

During the pandemic, programs at the Senior Center continued thanks to the Senior Center Director Arielle Preciado. Our Library Director, Peter Havel, never stopped providing first-rate programs, opening the building to patrons and also providing pick up service. Recreation activities continued for our children thanks to Mike Guadagnino and the Recreation Commission. The Great Oak Park is planning the opening of the Band Shell for outdoor concerts. The Oakland Communications Commission continued to send out the Borough monthly newsletters and continued to show the meetings for viewing on tv and YouTube. Thanks to Alison Fleeson and Carol Petersen for getting a grant to open the new community garden. Thanks to the Green Team for reaching Sustainable Jersey Silver Certification. The DPW continued their hard work and recently showed us how wonderful they are when it snowed. All our volunteers, Fire Department

and First Aid members never hesitated throughout the year to help our residents. Our Police Department kept us safe. The Municipal Building has been open although some staff has had to work from home due to the necessity of quarantine. Thanks to Michael Carelli who created another townwide calendar. Thank you.

OATH OF OFFICE: Mayor Schwager introduced Assemblyman Robert Auth who administered the Oath of Office to Councilman Russell Talamini.

Councilman Talamini's Message:

I'd like to thank my friend, Assemblyman Bob Auth, for taking time out of his busy schedule to swear me in. It meant a lot to me. I'd like to thank my wife and kids for sharing me with the rest of the town. There are only so many hours in a day and sometimes I spend more time on town business than family business. So again, thank you to my wife and kids. I'd also like to thank everyone who voted in this election especially those that voted for me. While I'm thanking people, I'd like to thank my running mates, Eric and Pat. Pat did all the "heavy lifting" for this election and I'm so proud to serve with him and Eric. I am excited about the upcoming year because we learned so much this past year. We learned how to Zoom, we learned it is not so bad to slow down and we learned we can depend on one another. Everyday someone tells me a story about how they helped someone or someone helped them. It is amazing how caring people can be. At a recent meeting I mentioned that I'm tired of hearing the bad things of 2020 because so many good things happened. I know at least four kids being born. I know people who bought their first house. I know people who just got married. I know people who won their baseball championship. Go Braves! So remember, smiles are free and they are also contagious. Let's spread some smiles around and I am sure we will have a great 2021. Thank you everyone and thank you to the Mayor and Council members for all you do. Happy New Year.

OATH OF OFFICE: Mayor Schwager introduced Brian Chewcaskie, Esq. who administered the Oath of Office to Councilman Pasquale Pignatelli.

Councilman Pignatelli's Message:

First I want to wish everyone a Happy and healthy New Year. Also I want to thank the residents of Oakland for returning me to the Borough Council. I especially want to thank my family, my running mates Russell Talamini & Eric Kulmala and our campaign manager Grant Van Neck. My message this year to everyone is one of Hope. As a former Public Health Officer for over 35 years I can't stress too much the importance for everyone to wear a mask and to stay socially distant. We will defeat this virus by doing all these things and by getting a vaccination. I received the vaccination 7 days ago as a member of the Oakland First Aid Squad with no adverse effects with only minor soreness in my arm Remember we can defeat this COVID virus because as a nation we are strong and can overcome all these hardships. I hope that by June we can all return to our normal lifestyle so that we can enjoy all our holidays and special occasions together. Thank you and God bless everyone.

OATH OF OFFICE: Mayor Schwager introduced Assemblyman Robert Auth who administered the Oath of Office to Councilman Eric Kulmala.

Councilman Kulmala's Message:

I would like to thank Assemblyman Auth for swearing me in. I want to recognize the Mayor and my fellow Councilmembers for all they do. I want to say Happy New Year and hopefully we can put the coronavirus behind us in 2021. I want to thank the residents for returning me to the seat and entrusting me to make the best decisions for Oakland. I find it humbling and an honor and a

privilege to serve the residents. I want to recognize my wife and kids who put up with all the meetings. There are so many meetings and it is a time consuming process. I want to recognize my running mates, Pat and Russ, and our campaign manager, Grant Van Eck. When I first ran for Council and lost, Councilwoman Coira made important statements that resonate with me today. I want to recognize Cesar Arredondo, Tom Connolly and Andrea Levy for throwing their hat into the political arena. It is not an easy thing to do because you are judged by 10,000 people. I want to acknowledge them for stepping up. The vaccine is here so let's hope we can get back to normal in the next few months. Oakland is a wonderful town. The residents are the spirit of Oakland. Every time there is a call for action, the residents step up. I am looking forward to a successful 2021.

Assemblyman Auth's message:

We've endured quite a bit of turmoil over the past year from the pandemic and various other things. I just want to make a point of letting each and every one of you know that we have worked very hard to try to ameliorate some of the problems our constituents have been enduring through these times. Many of them have worked all their lives without having to apply for unemployment. Many were forced to do so when the pandemic came and it was difficult for them. I am happy that you reached out to us and we were able to get your constituents through this. I sent out a newsletter that discussed the availability of vaccinations in New Jersey. There is a link to register to get on the list to get vaccinated. We want to make sure our constituents have access to whatever the State can offer them. I thank you for the opportunity to participate tonight. I am looking forward to working with all of you throughout the year and for a great 2021.

#### FIRE DEPARTMENT 2021 OFFICERS

CHIEF- LEWIS THURSTON

ASSISTANT CHIEF CO. 1- VINCENT DIES

ASSISTANT CHIEF CO. 2- VINCENT INCORVIA

CAPTAIN CO. 1- MATHEW SORCE

CAPTAIN CO 2- STEVEN LONGA

LIEUTENANT COMPANY 1- LAURENCE BAILLS

LIEUTENANT COMPANY -1 SEAN TORPEY

LIEUTENANT COMPANY 2- DANIEL DERISI

LIEUTENANT COMPANY 2 -BRIAN FASSETT

SECRETARY- TIM DEBLOCK

ENGINEER CO. 1- LEIGH DODD

ENGINEER CO. 2- CHRISTOPHER HOITSMA

Mayor Schwager administered the Oath of Office to the Oakland Volunteer Fire Department Officers in attendance: Chief Lewis Thurston and Secretary Tim DeBlock.

REGULAR MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

ROLL CALL: Mayor Schwager called the meeting to order and the Clerk called the roll. Present: Mayor Schwager, Councilmembers Biale, Knapp, Kulmala, Pignatelli, Talamini. Absent: Councilman Van Eck. Also Present: Lisa M. Duncan, Borough Clerk; Richard Kunze, Borough Administrator; Brian Chewcaskie, Borough Attorney.

OPENED FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:

On motion of Councilman Biale, seconded by Councilman Kulmala, this portion of the meeting be opened for public comment.

ROLL CALL: All yeas, Councilmembers Biale, Knapp, Kulmala, Pignatelli, Talamini, Van Eck.

No comments made.

CLOSED FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:

On motion of Councilman Knapp, seconded by Councilman Pignatelli, this portion of the meeting be closed to public comment.

ROLL CALL: All yeas, Councilmembers Biale, Knapp, Kulmala, Pignatelli, Talamini, Van Eck.

ADOPT 2021 MEETING SCHEDULE

On motion of Councilman Knapp, seconded by Councilman Pignatelli, the following meeting schedule be adopted for 2021:

*2021  
SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS  
BOROUGH OF OAKLAND  
MAYOR AND COUNCIL*

BUSINESS MAY BE CONDUCTED AT EACH MEETING. EXECUTIVE SESSIONS WILL BE HELD AT 6:30 PM TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE LITIGATION, NEGOTIATIONS, AND PERSONNEL MATTERS. ALL REGULAR BUSINESS MEETINGS, WHICH ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, WILL COMMENCE AT 7:30 PM.

**ALL MEETINGS WILL BE HELD IN THE MUNICIPAL COURT/COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 10 LAWLOR DRIVE, OAKLAND, NEW JERSEY.**

**OATH OF OFFICE CEREMONY WILL BE HELD ON JANUARY 6, 2021 AT 7:00 PM AND THE RE-ORGANIZATION MEETING WILL BE HELD AT 7:30 PM ON JANUARY 13, 2021 AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 10 LAWLOR DRIVE.**

January	6	Oath of Office
	13	Re-Organization
	27	Regular Meeting
February	10	Regular Meeting
	24	Regular Meeting
March	10	Regular Meeting

	24	Regular Meeting
April	14	Regular Meeting
	28	Regular Meeting
May	12	Regular Meeting
	26	Regular Meeting
June	9	Regular Meeting
	23	Regular Meeting
July	14	Regular Meeting
	28	Regular Meeting
August	11	Regular Meeting
	25	Regular Meeting
Sept	14 Tuesday	Regular Meeting
	29	Regular Meeting
Oct	13	Regular Meeting
	27	Regular Meeting
November	10	Regular Meeting
	23 Tuesday	Regular Meeting
December	8	Regular Meeting
	20 Monday	Regular Meeting

ROLL CALL: All yeas, Councilmembers Biale, Knapp, Kulmala, Pignatelli, Talamini.  
Van Eck.

#### ADOPT OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER

On motion of Councilman Pignatelli, seconded by Councilman Kulmala, The Record be the official newspaper of 2021.

ROLL CALL: All yeas, Councilmembers Biale, Knapp, Kulmala, Pignatelli, Talamini.  
Van Eck.

#### APPOINT COUNCIL PRESIDENT

On motion of Councilman Talamini, seconded by Councilman Pignatelli, Eric Kulmala be Council President for 2021.

Discussion ensued. Councilman Knapp was unaware that Councilman Kulmala was interested in the position because no one reached out to advise him of such. Councilman Knapp feels everyone on the Council has already had a chance to be Council President except for Councilman Van Eck. He made a motion and Councilman Biale seconded. Mr. Chewcaskie stated the two nominees should be asked if they want the position. Councilman Kulmala responded he was interested. Councilman Van Eck advised he is humbled at the support but at this time, he would have to decline.

ROLL CALL: All Yeas, Councilmembers Biale, Knapp, Kulmala, Pignatelli, Talamini, Van Eck.

BENEDICTION: Father Lipnicki gave the Benediction.

MEETING ADJOURNED:

On motion of Councilman Talamini, seconded by Councilman Kulmala, the meeting be adjourned at 7:48 pm.

ROLL CALL: All yeas, Councilmembers Biale, Knapp, Kulmala, Pignatelli, Talamini, Van Eck.

*Lisa M. Duncan*

---

Lisa M. Duncan, Borough Clerk

January 27, 2021

---

Date Adopted

*Linda H. Schwager*

---

Linda H. Schwager, Mayor