

## COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – February 18, 2026

The meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Lower, County of Cape May, State of New Jersey was held on Wednesday, February 18, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. in the meeting room of Township Hall, 2600 Bayshore Road, Villas, New Jersey.

The Clerk announced that the meeting was being held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act and that adequate notice of the meeting had been provided according to law.

The following members of Council were present for roll call taken by the Clerk:

Councilmember Thomas Conrad  
Councilmember Joseph Wareham  
Councilmember Roland Roy, Jr. - via phone  
Deputy Mayor Kevin Coombs  
Mayor Frank Sippel - via phone

Also present: Michael Laffey, Township Manager, Robert Belasco, Township Solicitor and Karen Fournier, Deputy Township Clerk

### Work Session

Certificate – Harrison Bitting

Councilmember Conrad shared a history of Harrison "Pete" Bitting's service in the community.

Deputy Mayor Coombs, on behalf of Council, presented a certificate of appreciation honoring "Pete's" long time service and dedication to the Township.

Steve Blankenship, LTMUA Executive Director, shared "Pete's 25-year history on the LTMUA board.

Jim Ridgway, LTMUA Chair, presented a certificate of appreciation to "Pete Biting" for his years of faithful service to the LTMUA board.

### Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes – February 2, 2026

- Res. #2026-92 Authorization for the Payment of Vouchers \$ 526,296.28
- Res. #2026-93 A Resolution Appointing James Craft as Chief Financial Officer for the Township of Lower
- Res. #2026-94 Authorization for Refund of Taxes
- Res. #2026-95 Transfer of 2025 Appropriations
- Res. #2026-96 Identifying Small Cities Fair Housing Officer (Township Manager)
- Res. #2026-97 A Resolution Appointing Robert Osborn as the Qualified Purchasing Agent for the Township of Lower Pursuant to N.J.S.A.40A:11-9
- Res. #2026-98 A Resolution Amending Resolution #2026-35; Authorizing the Qualified Purchasing Agent of the Township of Lower to Award Contracts Exceeding \$17,500 and Under the Current Bid Threshold Establishing Quote Requirements and Confirming Related Purchasing Authority
- Res. #2026-99 A Resolution Amending Resolution #2026-44 to Designate a Public Agency Compliance Officer for the Township of Lower
- Res. #2026-100 Re-appointment to the Recreation Advisory Board (E.Collins)
- Res. #2026-101 Contract Award to RAVE Mobile Safety for Alerts for Public Safety
- Res. #2026-102 Renewal of Trailer Park Licenses for the Year 2026
- Res. #2026-103 Authorizing Payout of Terminal Leave (D.Sherno)
- Res. #2026-104 Appointments to the Zoning Board of Adjustments
- Res. #2026-105 Bid Acceptance and Contract Award for Public Works Building Replacement (Aliano Bros \$3,538,860.00)
- Res. #2026-106 Approving a Professional Service Contract with DeBlasio & Associates for Construction Phase Services of the Lower Township Public Works Building Project (LT-C-048.01)
- Res. #2026-107 Bid Acceptance and Contract Award for Construction and Zoning Building Roof Replacement and HVAC Improvements
- Res. #2026-108 Approving a Professional Service Contract with Remington & Vernick Engineers for the Construction Management Phase of the Roofing Replacement Project at the Township of Lower Construction & Zoning Building
- Res. #2026-109 A Resolution Authorizing a Loan Application to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the New Jersey Infrastructure Bank, to Fund Improvements to the Township's Sanitary Sewer System and Roadway Restoration Projects

- Ord #2026-03 Bond Ordinance Providing for Various Sewer Improvements by and in the Township of Lower, in the County of Cape May, State of New Jersey; Appropriating \$2,500,000.00 Therefore and Authorizing the Issuance of \$2,500,000.00 Bonds or Notes of the Township to Finance Part of the Cost thereof.
- Ord #2026-04 An Ordinance Amending Chapter 7, Traffic, of the Code of the Township of Lower to Enact Article IV, Paid Parking Zones/Parking Meters, to Establish Paid Parking Areas and Regulations Governing Operation and Enforcement.  
This is the first reading of Ordinances 2026-03 and 2026-04. The second reading and public hearing has been scheduled for March 16, 2026

	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	RECUSE	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
CONRAD	X		X				
WAREHAM		X	X				
ROY			X				
COOMBS			X				
SIPPEL			X				

**Engineer Report**

Andrew McTague, DeBlasio & Assoc., gave Council a briefing on the Capital Projects being worked on throughout the Township, including: Rotary Community Park Renovations, Bay Outfall Extensions, Reconstruction of Ridgewood Ave, Stormwater GIS Mapping Services, David Douglass Sr. Memorial Park Renovations, Public Works Building Design, Municipal Pool Building, Reconstruction of Beach Ave, Resurfacing of Cardinal Ave, Bayshore Road Pickleball Courts, Clem Mulligan Storm Sewer Pump Station, Lincoln Blvd Storm Sewer Replacement, Arctic Ave Storm Sewer Replacement, Resurfacing of Various Street in Diamond Beach, and Diamond Beach Parking Analysis.

**Administrative Reports**

Clerk, Construction, Dog, Tax, Vital

**Public Comment** - None

**Council Comments**

Councilmember Conrad acknowledged Harrison "Pete" Bitting's longtime commitment to the community. He also pointed out the numerous Capital Improvement Projects and stated Council's intent for a zero tax increase.

Councilmember Wareham voiced appreciation for "Pete" Bitting and his longtime service to the community.


Councilmember Roy echoed favorable comments about "Pete" Bitting's contributions to the community.

Mayor Sippel – no comments

Deputy Mayor Coombs acknowledged the 32<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of David Douglass's shooting and pointed out that Douglass's grandson is competing in the South Jersey wrestling championship with LCMR. Go Tigers!

**Adjournment**

There being no further business to address, motion to adjourn moved by Councilmember Conrad, seconded by Councilmember Wareham. Motion to adjourn was unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 5:17 p.m.

  
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Frank Sippel, Mayor

  
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Township Clerk

Approved: *March 2, 2026*