

BOROUGH OF SOUTHMONT
148 WONDER STREET
JOHNSTOWN, PA 15905

MINUTES FOR JUNE 17, 2024

The pledge of allegiance was conducted, and the scheduled June 17, 2024, council meeting was called to order by President Beri at 4:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Anthony Keiper, Council Members Doug Beri, Sheree Speicher, Robert Morgan, Richard Burkert, Eugene Kupchella, Matthew McVicker, Herb Ewald, Borough Manager Amanda Layton; Street Commissioner Sam McAdams, Sgt. William “B.J.” Newman, Fire Asst. Chief James Carbaugh, Engineer Todd Banks, and Asst. Sec Debra Riek.

Visitors: John A. Klanchar (104 Dahlia Street), Lary Koval (336 Orchard Street). Michael Harchick (121 Palliser Street), Robert Walker (312 State Street)

Public Comments:

Mr. Koval stated that the drainage issue at the intersection of Olive Street and Orchard Street has been resolved and thanked the borough workers for taking care of it. Mr. Koval stated there is still an issue with vehicles running the stop signs at the intersection of Olive Street and Orchard Street and requested a stop bar also be painted at the stop sign on Orchard Street.

Mr. Harchick stated he is concerned about a vacant house at 125 Palliser Street, which has been empty for almost three years noting there is high grass, the house is falling apart and in bad condition and there are groundhogs. Mr. Harchick stated the borough workers along with him and other neighbors have been cutting the grass and reported he had seen someone knocking the lock off the property and removing items into a dumpster noting the person he approached said they were from a company that was taking over the property. Mr. Harchick stated he was aware the borough’s hands were tied since the property owner is deceased, but he was hoping that something could be done soon.

Mr. Klanchar stated that after the May 20th council meeting, Mr. Ewald complemented him on how great his grass appeared noting at last month’s meeting council had discussed a list of properties that council was basically harassing through Laurel Municipal Inspection Agency and previously Mark Walker. Mr. Klanchar stated that a contractor doing work at Mr. Ewald’s home had their truck and trailer parked on Mr. Klanchar’s grass noting that he contacted West Hills Regional Police and charges were filed against the contractor. Mr. Klanchar stated that he replied to Mr. Ewald after the May 20th meeting that he would hold him personally accountable if he received a citation from the Magistrate and that he would sit in jail instead of paying the fine. Mr. Klanchar stated he hopes council would request that Mr. Ewald resigns from council.

Correspondence

Mr. Beri acknowledged the resignation of Edward Burkett from Southmont Volunteer Fire Company, correspondence from Lawrence O’Reilly regarding stormwater issues at 511 Edward Street, and an email to Mayor Keiper from Michael Harchick regarding the vacant property at 125 Palliser Street.

June 17,2024 Minutes – Page 2 of 4

Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Burkert to approve the special meeting minutes of April 24, 2024. Motion seconded by Mrs. Speicher. All in favor, motion carried (7-0).

A motion was made by Mrs. Speicher to approve the council meeting minutes of May 20, 2024. Motion seconded by Mr. Kupchella. All in favor, motion carried (7-0).

Police Report

Chief Newman stated there were 419 calls in the month of May noting 106 of the calls were for Southmont Borough with 31 traffic citations issued, 8 warnings and 8 property maintenance violations issued. Mrs. Speicher inquired if electric bicycles were allowed and if they must follow the same traffic laws as vehicles. Chief Newman stated that all laws are the same for bicycles as with cars and if an officer sees them not obeying traffic laws they would be pulled over.

Fire Company Report

The May 2024 Fire Chief's Report was received. Asst. Chief Carbaugh reported 6 calls in Southmont Borough with 12 assists. Asst. Chief Carbaugh also thanked the borough workers for their assistance with the annual Jubilee.

Engineer's Report

Mrs. Speicher inquired about the remaining properties from the re-inspection list. Mr. McAdams reported all were inspected during the April rain event and notices were sent to properties that were reported as failing. Mr. Banks stated the numbers from the April storm event showed that the borough is close to meeting the numbers required by Department of Environmental Protection, but still not enough noting the flow meters are still in place and awaiting a 2-year storm event. Mr. Banks stated the ball is now in DEP's court.

Zoning Officer's Report:

Mrs. Speicher asked if hearing dates were scheduled for the properties listed in the monthly report as having charges filed on May 21, 2024. Mrs. Layton stated that she didn't receive notice of hearing dates. Solicitor Hochfeld stated the process is that Laurel Municipal Inspection Agency files the appropriate paperwork with West Hills Regional Police who then file a citation with the District Magistrate who then schedules a hearing date noting the police will be made aware of the hearing dates and LMIA will be subpoenaed to attend the hearing. Solicitor Hochfeld stated he will request that the borough be provided the hearing dates.

Solicitor's Report

Solicitor Hochfeld reported he was authorized to send a notice to Laurel Municipal Inspection Agency to begin filing citations noting several citations have been filed. Solicitor Hochfeld stated Mrs. Layton provided him with a list of liens to be filed noting that with Ordinance 551, providing for penalties, attorney fees and interest on outstanding garbage and sewage bills, he will begin to send out notices for the borough to recoup those costs.

Street Commissioner's Report

June 17, 2024 Minutes 3 of 4

The Street Commissioner's Report was received and is on file. Mr. McAdams stated they are working on painting curbs and stop bars in the borough and continuing to work toward crossing items off their list and new side brooms were installed on the street sweeper.

Borough Manager Report

The Borough Manager's Report was received and is on file. Mrs. Layton stated she spoke to the property manager of 521 State Street who stated that the interior sewer work was completed a while ago and they would check with the contractor as to why a pressure test was not done after the work was completed.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Keiper thanked Mr. Harchick for coming to the meeting to state his concerns regarding the vacant property on Palliser Street.

Committees:

Administration/Borough Services: Nothing to report.

Community Planning & Improvements: Mr. Burkert reported there be a meeting with Stephanie Edwards of the Department of Community and Economic Development to answer and questions and clarify the process of a comprehensive plan on June 18, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.

Emergency Management: Nothing to report.

Finance: Mrs. Speicher stated the committee met with Adam Gerczyk of Kotzan & Associates to review the 2023 audit noting there were only 4 recommendations for Quickbooks reporting that have been taken care of and otherwise everything looked good.

Greater Johnstown Water Authority: Nothing to report.

MS4/Stormwater: Nothing to report.

Personnel: Mr. Beri reported there will be a meeting July 9, 2024 at 4:00 p.m. to review job descriptions and employee reviews.

Police: Nothing to report.

Property Maintenance, Streets and Sidewalks: Mr. McVicker stated he will be reviewing an updated sidewalk ordinance draft with the committee

Shade Tree: Nothing to report.

New Business:

Business Items:

A motion was made by Mrs. Speicher to approve the Kotzan CPA & Associates audit engagement letter for 2024, 2025, and 2026. Motion seconded by Mr. Kupchella. All in favor motion carried (7-0).

A motion was made by Mrs. Speicher to table the decision on the 511 Edward Street water run-off for the solicitor and engineer to review. Motion seconded by Mr. McVicker. All in favor motion carried (7-0).

June 17, 2024 Minutes – Page 4 of 4

A motion was made by Mrs. Speicher to reimburse the landscaping costs for 117 Dahlia regarding the trap removal for \$350.00. Motion seconded by Mr. Morgan. All in favor motion carried (6-0). Mr. Ewald abstained.

A motion was made by Mrs. Speicher to approve ratification of payroll from May 21, 2024 to June 17, 2024 in the amount of \$14,347.15. Motion seconded by Mr. Morgan. Roll call: Mr. Beri, Mr. Burkert, Mr. Morgan, Mrs. Speicher, Mr. Kupchella, Mr. Ewald and Mr. Mc Vicker in favor. Motion carried (7-0).

A motion was made by Mrs. Speicher to approve payment of bills from April 16, 2024 through May 20, 2024 in the amount of \$113,239.51. Motion seconded by Mr. Morgan. Roll call: Mr. Beri, Mr. Burkert, Mr. Morgan, Mrs. Speicher, Mr. Kupchella, Mr. Ewald and Mr. McVicker in favor. Motion carried (7-0).

A motion was made by Mrs. Speicher to approve transfers from April 16, 2024 through May 20, 2024 in the amount of \$66,060.00. Motion seconded by Mr. Burkert Roll call: Mr. Beri, Mr. Burkert, Mr. Morgan, Mrs. Speicher, Mr. Kupchella, Mr. Ewald, and Mr. McVicker in favor. Motion carried (7-0).

A motion was made by Mrs. Speicher to approve the May 2024 Treasurer's Report. Motion seconded by Mr. Burkert. All in favor, motion carried (7-0).

A motion was made by Mrs. Speicher to accept the May 2024 Tax Collection's Report. Motion seconded by Mr. Burkert. All in favor, motion carried (7-0).

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mrs. Speicher for adjournment of the June 17, 2024, meeting at 4:45 p.m. Motion seconded by Mr. Burkert. All in favor, motion carried (7-0).

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra Riek
Assistant Secretary