

**MINUTES OF REGULAR SESSION OF COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY, JULY 10, 2019**

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Regular session of Borough Council convened at 7:30 pm. Present were Councilors Janice Matyasovsky, Tim Sloss, Mike Zrenchak, Jane Weigand, Mike Matlos, Chris Ponchak, and Melissa Morgan; Mayor Larry Sikorski; Solicitor Matt Racunas; and Engineer Don Glenn.

Mrs. Morgan expressed sincere condolences on behalf of council to Mayor Sikorski in the loss of his son. She knows it has been hard on him and his family. Mr. Sikorski thanked everyone for their love and support; his family appreciates it. His son passed away three weeks ago and cards are still coming in.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS.**

**Dan Gretz, 2904 H Street**, said he has been a resident for 73 years and has major problems with the sewer reclamation. He's not sure who did what; State Pipe for the sewer system or Hufnagel for the water company. Mr. Matlos stopped so Mr. Gretz could show him in person. When they came in to put the clean-out in, they removed a 2-high block wall and ripped out his plants he put there thirty years ago to stop the erosion. That property is not his, but he took care of it for thirty years and was proud of it. They put a fire hydrant in; then took it out and filled it with rocks, stones, manure, and straw. There are holes and the lawn mower can't go over. He has a company cutting his grass and they refuse to run the mower there; they have to do it with a weedwacker. He heard water running, and saw that his gutter was overflowing. When he looked at it, he saw that they had smashed his drain pipe, so water went over the gutter into his cellar. He called the water company, and Justin Nash, Senior Field Operations Supervisor, came out, and he showed him what happened. He said Hufnagel works for the water company, so it is their problem. They will come down and put in a new drain, and some kind of wall. They never came back; Mr. Gretz has left three messages. Once the replacement pavement was put in by the water company, and the way the curb was put in, water goes down over the hill and made a gulley; there is nothing to stop it from caving in. There is a dead oak tree and Mr. Gretz can't get in touch with the property owner; another tree is leaning. These trees are going to fall on his cars or on him and his wife; it is a safety issue. He contacted his insurance company, who said they will come up and take a picture. They will pay for the damages, but will go after the property owner. The new pavement is eroding underneath. He assumes the borough will have to fix it, and that is taxpayer's money. At age 73, Mr. Gretz said he is not putting another concrete wall in. It is disgusting and an eyesore; he is thinking about selling. Mr. Racunas asked if the original work was done by the water company; Mr. Gretz said both the water company and State Pipe. Mr. Racunas said that the water company is regulated by PUC, and Mr. Gretz could file an online complaint, and they will take action. Mr. Gretz thought the borough should handle it. Mr. Zrenchak said the water company must restore it to its original condition. The borough is responsible for the sewer repairs. Mr. Zrenchak said he will have to look at it to see who is responsible.

**Kathleen Stanoszek, 221 Roberts Street**, said her neighbor at 2803 C Street has tires in his yard, which were only partially covered and filled with water. He was told he was not allowed to have them. He moved them to the other side of the shed and covered with a tarp. Is this allowed? The hedges are over six feet high; he did trim the street side, but not the ones bordering her side. There are creeping vines coming into her yard. She only has about five feet from her house to her fence, which the hedges are up against. Upon trying to remove the vines from her yard last month, with long sleeves and gloves on, she had an allergic reaction and had four doctor's visits and three prescriptions of antibiotics. She can't come near them to cut her grass. Why can this man get away with the issues? Ms. Stanoszek said she was here a few months ago about his tree droppings, and it was suggested that she get an attorney; she did, and his retainer is \$5,000. She was told there are laws to protect her real estate and herself, as a homeowner. The owner has been contacted, but he is not responding. It will be going into litigation. She is scared living in her home. She did not see the neighbor do it, but a lit cigarette butt was thrown by her back sliding door. At 11:00 pm her doorbell rang, but when she got there, no one was there. She called the police and they responded promptly. The five-year-old little girl that lives there asked her when she is going to cut the bushes. Ms. Stanoszek takes that as the neighbor is never going to cut them. He is getting away with things against our borough ordinances. Mr. Racunas said the Code Enforcement Officer will go over; Mr. Bogdan said he was on vacation and didn't get there yet. Mr. Sikorski said he had reported about the tires a while ago. Mr. Racunas said she could fill out a complaint form with the Allegheny County Health Department, regarding the tires. As for the creeping vine, the borough cannot address it, but she has the right to cut it out. She could have someone else do it and sue him for the cost. Ms. Stanoszek said this has affected her very much; her real estate and health are being ruined. Ms. Stanoszek thanked each and every one for hearing her out.

**Amy Lockhart, 2815 F Street**, said there are issues with the property at 2813 F Street. The owner is out of state and the borough has been cutting the grass. The fence is leaning over the opposite side and it blew over into her yard. Is there any way the borough can get the fence taken down, since they are taking care of the property now? The tenants moved, but they live across the street, and they have the owner's phone number. Mr. Bogdan said he has sent letters to the owner in California, but he gets no responses.

**Debbie Huston, 3216 Jeffrey Drive**, was inquiring about 3214 Jeffrey Dr. She wanted to thank Bruce, Mike, and the summer help for taking care of the hedges in front; this is a borough-owned property. Mr. Racunas said the closing was supposed to happen in April. The attorney handling it had corresponded with the closing company in June, to see what happened, but he did not get a response. Mr. Racunas said he will try to get an update. Ms. Huston said it is a wreck; the downspouts are not connected, and there are raccoons and possums in there.

**Zachary Barber** said he does not live in Liberty, but he works with a statewide environment group. They are working on a Clean Air Campaign, to ensure we have clean, safe, healthy air. Liberty has some of the highest cancer risks in the entire

country, and it is a danger to anyone with asthma or other respiratory issues. They are building a network of elected officials throughout Allegheny County, and fifty officials have signed on to help. He is inviting them to look at the letter and consider signing on. Mrs. Morgan said he had already sent the information and it was distributed to council.

**Greg Black, 3216 Monaca Drive**, asked where they are at in fixing the storm sewers. Mr. Zenchak said they have looked at updated costs. They have been looking at the retention pond, which seems to be a key problem. It takes water from above Jeffrey Drive, where the water tower is, and the other veins that come down through the woods. The water exits between two houses there and right down the street. One homeowner said there is a lot of shell over there, about 18" below the ground, so there is nowhere else for the water to go. There needs to be more research on the pond. Mr. Black said there was a collapsed section of pipe behind the ball field that was replaced in March 2014. Why did they replace a 24" pipe with an 18" pipe? Mr. Black said that is what the hydraulic study states. Mr. Glenn said they did not replace it with a smaller pipe; they replaced it with the exact diameter of the pipe that was crushed. Mr. Black said he had been flooded twenty one times and that is the only thing that has changed. He took a copy of the hydraulic study up to Mr. Glenn and continued to disagree with him about it. Mr. Racunas said this is not productive; this is the Public Comment section of the meeting, and not for public debate. We need to move the meeting forward. Mr. Black can put his request in writing and they will get it to the engineer for a response.

**Cara Sloss, 2811 B Street**, asked why it takes EMS so long to get here; it is ridiculous. There was a call from someone on her street with a four-week old baby that was choking and turning blue. Ms. Lockhart did CPR on the baby while waiting for the EMS to get there; it took them seventeen minutes. Mrs. Morgan said we do not have a base in the borough. Mr. Ponchak said their average response time is 8.7 minutes. Ms. Sloss said they are lying to him. Mr. Ponchak said that you have to keep in mind that all calls are not priority calls; they may not require an emergency response. Mr. Ponchak asked her to get him the date and address and he will follow up. Ms. Sloss said Officer Joll was on duty.

**Sarah Lujetic, 2416 Latrobe Street**, said she spoke with Code Enforcement Officer Mike Bogdan today regarding abandoned property, and borough-owned property. She is concerned about so many abandoned homes, fifty seven total, and wanted to know if anyone takes time to vet the people that the borough is selling the homes to, to keep the neighborhoods from becoming terrible. Mr. Racunas said the borough does not own a lot of property, but people have a constitutional right to purchase property. What the borough can do, if they become delinquent on their taxes, we can take the properties to Sheriff Sale and get it into the hands of a new owner. Ms. Lujetic said she is concerned for the safety of the neighborhood, and about squatters in the abandoned homes. Mr. Racunas said what she is talking about is blight. It involves the Code Enforcement Officer and Police and it is a lengthy process. Mrs. Morgan said she had the police look into it; Chief Riley, Lt. Johnson, and Officer Harrison were all down there and looked. Ms. Lujetic said she was told that about five weeks ago, there was a man at the tree line staring at people; they went to look and there was something set up and fish line. Ms. Lujetic said she is concerned; she has a ten-year old; this is near a playground. Mr.

Racunas said if they see anything, call 9-1-1 for the police. They can set up a neighborhood watch; they can go to the school board meeting and ask them to proceed with a delinquent Sheriff Sale process. Mr. Sikorski said our officers are on top of it; we have a good safety rating in the borough.

**Cathy Beadling, 2805 A Street,** asked how she can get a list of the abandoned properties. Mr. Racunas said the borough usually does not know, but if she sees a property that seems to be abandoned, she can search for the owner information on the Allegheny County Website. Mrs. Beadling said they need to start enforcing ordinances on the cleanliness of properties. Mr. Ponchak said that Mr. Bogdan is doing a good job, and is getting a lot of work done. Mr. Bogdan said he needs to work in the parameter of the laws. Mrs. Weigand said there used to be funding by the county through the COG, and we could get houses torn down. Now it is at borough cost, and an asbestos survey is required. Mr. Racunas said that Allegheny County is the only county that requires an asbestos survey, which costs about \$1,000. A simple tear down will cost about \$7,000 at a minimum. Mr. Bogdan said the DeShields property has been condemned, but we have to get the funds to get it taken down. There are about 20-25 properties that the borough is cutting. The owners can't be found, and we will never recover the money. Mrs. Beadling wants to know the addresses. Mr. Bogdan said there are empty houses, not rented out at the moment. Mr. Racunas said that just because the borough is cutting the grass, it doesn't mean it is an abandoned property.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS.**

**PROPERTY.** Mrs. Weigand, Chairman, reporting.

Mrs. Weigand said that termites were found in the Municipal Building. Orkin did an inspection and provided a quote of \$2,117 for the initial treatment. Mr. Ponchak made a motion to accept the quote. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Matyasovsky and passed unanimously.

Mrs. Weigand received information from the Allegheny County Health Department, and they will be baiting the raccoons with the rabies vaccine from August 5<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup>. They put out about 300,000 baits.

**POLICE.** Mr. Ponchak, Chairman, reporting.

Mr. Ponchak read Lieutenant Johnson's report on police equipment for the month of June, as follows:

Vehicle mileage:

|               | BEGIN  | END    | MILEAGE |
|---------------|--------|--------|---------|
| Unit #130     | Parked | Parked | 0       |
| Unit #131     | 37240  | 38400  | 1160    |
| Unit #132     | 67235  | 68641  | 1406    |
| Total mileage |        |        | 2566    |

Vehicle Maintenance:

Unit 130

- None

Unit 131

- None

Unit 132

- None

Mr. Ponchak read Fire Chief Derr's report for the month of June, as follows:

Total calls: 20

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Structure Fire  | 3 |
| Traffic Control | 2 |
| MVC             | 2 |
| Tree Down       | 4 |
| Rubbish Fire    | 1 |
| Fire Alarm      | 1 |
| Water Condition | 5 |
| Wired Down      | 2 |

**LEGISLATION.**

There was nothing to report.

**PARKS & RECREATION.** Mrs. Morgan, Chairman, reporting.

Fun-To-Be-A-Kid Day will be held Saturday, July 27, from noon to 3:00 pm. Tomorrow is the last day to sign-up the kids.

**HEALTH & ORDINANCE.** Mr. Sloss, Chairman, reporting.

There was nothing to report.

**LIGHTS.** Mr. Matlos, Chairman, reporting.

There was nothing to report.

**FINANCE.** Mrs. Matyasovsky, Chairman, reporting.

Mrs. Matyasovsky presented the Bills for Ratification, as follows:

|                                                              |          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Aflac – short-term disability [June]                         | \$ 60.90 |
| American Legal Services – police insurance [July]            | 50.68    |
| Blue Ridge Supply – 2 scoops Gabion [Roberts St]             | 54.00    |
| Building Inspection Underwriters – building inspection [May] | 110.00   |

|                                                                   |           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Christine Cooke – reimburse for fence damage [plow truck]         | 297.53    |
| Christopher Ponchak – Reimburse for police printer                | 208.63    |
| Comm of PA – PennVest loan payment [interest only]                | 675.24    |
| Craig’s List – Secretary Ad                                       | 25.00     |
| Deluxe Business Checks – payroll checks/general fund deposits     | 386.29    |
| Dravosburg Truck Stop – Inspection [2017 Chevy Silverado]         | 28.04     |
| Dravosburg Truck Stop – Repairs/inspection [2011 Ford]            | 1,329.22  |
| Econo Signs – street signs                                        | 176.81    |
| Final Score Trophies – plaque for Debbie                          | 42.50     |
| First Commonwealth Bank – loan payment [PW truck]                 | 1,301.99  |
| First Commonwealth Bank – loan payment [2015 street paving]       | 3,686.14  |
| Guy Norelli Graphics – Banner Brackets                            | 1,173.00  |
| Harbor Freight – Step bumper                                      | 26.74     |
| Joll, Brice – reimburse for toner                                 | 83.45     |
| Kenny Ross – repairs [2017 Chevy Silverado]                       | 379.05    |
| MCI – long distance                                               | 28.06     |
| Orkin – sewers                                                    | 207.92    |
| PA American Water – shut-offs / reconnects                        | 180.00    |
| PA American Water – EMS                                           | 16.79     |
| PA American Water – garage                                        | 51.92     |
| PA American Water – Municipal Building                            | 36.08     |
| Racunas Law Group, LLC – Solicitor fees [May]                     | 2,193.00  |
| Ricoh – copier maintenance                                        | 38.22     |
| Riverview Chevrolet – 2019 Chevy Tahoe [police]                   | 39,794.00 |
| S & D Calibration Services, Inc. – Accutrak certification/battery | 34.50     |
| Sprint – mobile laptop                                            | 40.24     |
| TEC Benefits – benefits admin [July]                              | 20.00     |
| TruGreen – lawn service [ball fields]                             | 715.90    |
| TruGreen – lawn service [ball fields]                             | 477.27    |
| UPMC Health Plan – health insurance [July]                        | 2,262.45  |
| Verizon – garage                                                  | 53.01     |
| WestComm Wireless – radio maintenance [7/1/19 – 8/1/19]           | 55.00     |
| Zrenchak Environmental Services – pump station inspection [April] | 350.00    |
| Zrenchak Environmental Services – pump station inspection [May]   | 385.00    |

**TOTAL RATIFIED BILLS** **\$57,034.57**

Mrs. Matyasovsky presented the list of bills, as follows:

|                                                                   |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| American Natural – gasoline and diesel                            | \$ 2,454.86 |
| AmTrust – Worker’s Comp installment                               | 3,416.00    |
| Aqua Filter Fresh – bottled water                                 | 35.62       |
| Auto Zone – wiring kit                                            | 24.99       |
| Blue Ridge Supply – 3 scoops sand [Manor Fields]                  | 90.00       |
| Breitinger’s Flowers – wind chime [Sikorski]                      | 81.40       |
| Center Independent Oil (Double Car Wash) – police vehicles [June] | 35.00       |

|                                                                       |          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Collura, Dave – wildlife control [June]                               | 175.00   |
| Comcast – police Internet                                             | 163.81   |
| Commonwealth of PA – Wastewater System [annual service fee]           | 65.00    |
| Duquesne Light – street lights                                        | 3,181.98 |
| Duquesne Light – EMS                                                  | 20.59    |
| Duquesne Light – garage                                               | 44.75    |
| Duquesne Light – Municipal Building                                   | 127.64   |
| Duquesne Light – pump station                                         | 85.17    |
| Glenn Engineering – general engineering                               | 3,817.50 |
| Glenn Engineering – Act 537                                           | 1,240.00 |
| Home Depot – small tools / ground clear                               | 147.05   |
| Liberty Boro Auto Sales – inspection / emissions / repair [2011 Ford] | 109.12   |
| Lico – ground clear                                                   | 147.50   |
| Mr. John – 1 @ Latrobe Park [6/24/19 – 7/21/19]                       | 120.00   |
| Mr. John – 2 @ Manor Park [6/24/19 – 7/21/19]                         | 240.00   |
| O’Reilly’s – pin and clip                                             | 8.99     |
| Office Depot – toner cartridges for police printer                    | 180.47   |
| PA American Water – consumption data                                  | 67.60    |
| PA American Water – fire hydrants                                     | 1,097.18 |
| Paul’s Auto Sales & Service – engine mount / crash sensor [Tahoe]     | 646.69   |
| Peoples Gas – EMS                                                     | 21.01    |
| Peoples Gas – garage                                                  | 21.01    |
| Peoples Gas – Municipal Building                                      | 21.01    |
| PSAB – 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter unemployment tax                       | 882.82   |
| R C Walter – misc parts                                               | 23.02    |
| Ricoh – copier lease                                                  | 114.95   |
| S & D Calibration – Acutrak certification [Feb]                       | 46.00    |
| S & D Calibration – Acutrak certification [April]                     | 26.00    |
| SA Football Boosters – program ad                                     | 50.00    |
| Sprint – cell phones                                                  | 69.00    |
| TEC Benefits – deductible reimbursement [Takaht]                      | 179.19   |
| WestCom Wireless – police radio repair                                | 113.55   |
| Zrenchak Environmental Services – pump station inspection [June]      | 525.00   |

**TOTAL BILLS** **\$19,916.47**

Mr. Matlos made a motion to accept the ratified bills and to pay the list of bills. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ponchak, and passed, with Mr. Zrenchak abstaining from the bills for Zrenchak Environmental Services.

The receipts for the month of June are as follows:

**GENERAL FUND**

|                                       |            |
|---------------------------------------|------------|
| Real Estate Tax – Aquilante           | 360,815.55 |
| Fire Tax – Aquilante                  | 51,545.05  |
| Delinquent Real Estate Tax – Keystone | 919.47     |

|                                          |                      |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Act 77 Tax Refund                        | 7,474.38             |
| Real Estate Transfer Tax                 | 2,498.51             |
| Earned Income Tax – Keystone             | 32,103.21            |
| Local Services Tax                       | 497.02               |
| Zoning/Building Permits                  | 172.29               |
| Zoning/Occupancy Permits                 | 90.00                |
| Solicitor’s Permits                      | 0.00                 |
| Dye Test Permits                         | 150.00               |
| Police Fines                             | 1,433.10             |
| No Lien Letters                          | 80.00                |
| Employee Contribution – Health Insurance | 20.00                |
| Political Signs Permits                  | 10.00                |
| Police Report                            | 15.00                |
| Fun-To-Be-Kid Day Donations              | <u>1,550.00</u>      |
| <b>TOTAL RECEIPTS FOR THE MONTH</b>      | <b>\$ 459,373.58</b> |

**GENERAL FUND**

**REGISTER BALANCE** **\$ 21,488.39**

**GENERAL FUND SAVINGS**

Interest 116.30  
**REGISTER BALANCE** **694,711.59**

**SEWER FUND**

Customer Payments 25,388.41  
**REGISTER BALANCE** **138,006.72**

**HIGHWAY AID FUND**

Interest 19.57  
**REGISTER BALANCE** **\$ 66,129.71**

**SINKING FUND [2018 NOTE]**

Surcharge 5,407.00  
**REGISTER BALANCE** **\$ 102,153.26**



Mrs. Matyasovsky called for a motion to adopt a resolution to obtain a First Commonwealth credit card. Mrs. Weigand made the motion. The motion was seconded by Mr. Matlos and passed unanimously.

**PERSONNEL.** Mrs. Matyasovsky, Chairman, reporting.

There was nothing to report.

**STREETS & SEWERS.** Mr. Zrenchak, Chairman, reporting.

The #1 sewer pump at the pump station was repaired today. The supply of parts is gone, and we will need to get a list together to purchase more.

The PennVest Project has wrapped up. Mr. Zrenchak called for a motion to accept change orders LCO-12, LCO-13, LCO-14, LCO-15, and LCO-16. The project ended \$40,111 under budget. Mr. Matlos made a motion to accept the change orders. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ponchak and passed unanimously.

Mr. Zrenchak was presented with two invoices from Glenn Engineering, which was the result of two calculation errors earlier on in the PennVest Project. Mr. Zrenchak called for a motion to pay the two invoices, contingent that the borough can verify that the amounts are correct. Mr. Matlos made the motion. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Morgan and passed unanimously.

**MAYOR SIKORSKI'S REPORT.**

Mr. Sikorski read the police activity from the June report:

|                              |    |     |
|------------------------------|----|-----|
| Total Call Activity          |    | 122 |
| Calls for Service            | 23 |     |
| Domestic Complaints          | 1  |     |
| Juvenile Complaints          | 1  |     |
| Suspicious Persons/etc       | 2  |     |
| Alarms                       | 3  |     |
| Animal Complaints            | 9  |     |
| Disturbances                 | 2  |     |
| Local Ordinance Complaints   | 3  |     |
| Assaults                     | 2  |     |
| Harassment Complaints        | 1  |     |
| Criminal Mischief Complaints | 3  |     |
| Theft Reports                | 3  |     |
| Traffic Accidents            | 3  |     |
| Traffic Stops                | 23 |     |
| Traffic Citations Issued     |    | 21  |

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Non-Traffic Citations Issued | 1 |
| Assist Other Departments     | 8 |
| Assist By Other Departments  | 5 |

The fines for the month were \$1,433.10.

Mr. Sikorski said the police are busy; even he has to call 9-1-1 to reach them. Mr. Sikorski added a comment in regards to the EMS time response: thirteen minutes is a long time to wait if someone is not breathing.

**SOLICITOR RACUNAS’S REPORT.**

There was nothing to report.

**ENGINEER GLENN’S REPORT.**

Mr. Glenn presented an invoice for the remainder of the paving project, which was Roberts Street, in the amount of \$11,335.00. Mr. Matlos made a motion to pay the invoice. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sloss and passed unanimously. Mr. Glenn reminded Debbie that once the checks are cashed, he will need a copy of the front and back of each one for reimbursement.

**NEW BUSINESS.**

Mr. Racunas presented Resolution 2019-05, appointing Melissa Morgan as the Assistant Secretary for Liberty Borough. Mr. Matlos made a motion to adopt the resolution. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ponchak and passed, with Mr. Sloss, Mrs. Weigand, Mr. Matlos and Mr. Ponchak voting in favor, Mrs. Matyasovsky voting no, and Mr. Zrenchak and Mrs. Morgan abstaining.

Mrs. Morgan resigned as Council President. Mr. Matlos made a motion to accept the resignation. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Weigand and passed unanimously.

Mr. Racunas called for a motion to appoint Council President. Mrs. Weigand made a motion to appoint Chris Ponchak. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Morgan and passed, with Mr. Ponchak abstaining.

Mr. Racunas called for a motion to appoint Council Vice President. Mrs. Weigand made a motion to appoint Tim Sloss. The motion was seconded by Mr. Matlos and passed unanimously.

There was no Old Business or Correspondence.

The next meeting date is Wednesday, August 14, 2019; Work Session at 6:00 pm and Regular Session at 7:30 pm.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. Morgan, seconded by Mrs. Weigand. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra L. Helderlein  
Borough Secretary