

**MINUTES OF REGULAR SESSION OF COUNCIL
THURSDAY, MAY 17, 2018**

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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; and Attorney Kerry Fraas, representing Solicitor Matt Racunas.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS.**

**Christopher Raynak, 3017 Memory Lane**, said that three years ago, his taxes were \$476; three years later they increased by \$370; that is 77% more. Why? His street has not been paved; he has no street lights; there are no events for Senior Citizens, not even a bench for them to sit on in any of the parks. The new mulch looks nice, but he has only seen seven children there since it was added. Mrs. Matyasovsky said they had a Senior Citizens group in the borough at one time, which was run by the residents, but as everyone was getting older, no one wanted the responsibility of leading it, so they closed up. Mr. Ponchak said that insurance premiums increased 110.47%, and deductibles for three of our policies went up 1900%. Over \$40,000 was spent on last year's flooding. No reserve money was used to balance the budget, as had been done in the past. Insurance deductibles and premiums are killing us. Mrs. Matyasovsky said those three policies went from a \$2,500 deductible to \$50,000. Mr. Ponchak said the average home value per the county website is \$64,800. Mr. Raynak said he is not against raising taxes, if it is being used for something. Mr. Ponchak said there were two contracts settled this year, which provided for wage increases. Mr. Raynak said he has no problem with salaries going up, but the tax increase is outrageous. Nothing was said about it at election time, just that sewage rates are going to go crazy. Mr. Sloss said they did not sell the sewage system, so sewage rates won't go crazy; they will still have some control of it. Mr. Raynak said that is what they were told; if that group was elected sewage rates could be controlled. Mr. Sloss said that if you want to have roads paved, that is about \$100,000 each time. Mr. Zrenchak said that the bottom line is that two mills on an average house value of \$64,800 is about \$130 a year, which equates to \$10.80 per month. The increase depends on the property's assessed value; a \$200,000 house value will cost more. Mr. Zrenchak said his went up \$220 a year. He is not happy about it, but no costs go down. The increase was needed to keep the borough moving forward. Mr. Raynak said he doesn't see where we are moving forward; it is used to pay premiums. Mr. Sloss said you have to pay the premiums. Mrs. Weigand said we have one of the lowest millage rates around. She thinks they do a great job; she is sorry he doesn't see it. Mr. Ponchak said they have done a lot of paving, including some of the alleys. Mr. Raynak said he is not happy; he's not sure how the rest of the people feel. Mrs. Matyasovsky said everyone on council has to pay their taxes; hers went up \$130. Mrs. Morgan said they may not be happy about it, but we are one of the safest communities around. We could end up like Glassport; or go across the bridge to McKeesport. We are doing things for the residents; prices of everything go up. Mr. Raynak said he is not seeing where the money is going. Mr. Sloss said we have not even received the money yet; the rate was just raised in

January; give them a chance to get things done. Liberty Way is getting paved in June. Mr. Raynak said at the end of his driveway is a sunken part of his street where the storm sewer is; he spoke to the Public Works Department about it two years ago. Mr. Sloss said he has to fill out a complaint form and they will take care of it. Mr. Zrenchak asked for the location; Mr. Raynak said 3017 Memory Lane. Mrs. Weigand said they have a Senior Citizens' park down at the Manor ball field; they had shuffleboard down there at one time. There is a pavilion there; it has been utilized.

**Dan Luketic, 2607 C Street**, asked about Walnut Alley getting paved. Mr. Zrenchak said the inlet pipe needs to be fixed and replaced; it is on the list to be paved. Mr. Luketic said that the water was going over the top and down into the yards during the last two storms. Mr. Zrenchak said the inlet was cleaned out, then it rained again yesterday. Mr. Luketic said they were not cleaned out. Mr. Zrenchak said they were cleaned out before this last rain; there are two catch basins that are connected to each other. Mr. Luketic said he has three nice 4" bird baths that are six months old. The alley hasn't been touched this year, but when they do scrape it, the dirt goes down to the catch basin and it gets clogged. Mr. Zrenchak said it is on the list for paving.

**Ann Marie Sowa, 2900 Valley Street**, said that she understands that the taxes have to go up. Mrs. Sowa said you have to ask why the insurance went up; taxes will be covering that. And why did we lose our insurance? Mrs. Weigand said it was because of lawsuits. They cannot get into the specifics, because it is litigation, which falls under personnel. Mr. Fraas said they cannot comment on personnel issues. Mrs. Sowa said that it is people that work for the borough suing the borough. She would be upset to have a worker like that. Mrs. Morgan said they cannot discuss it. Mr. Ponchak said that in the past, they had been taking money out of the reserve funds to balance the budget. Recently, as is the case with landslides, you need to keep money in reserve.

**Tom Ogurchak, 102 Kollar Drive**, feels that a \$230 increase is excessive; they should have only raised it ½ mill. Or if you would have an up-to-date Website; the last entry is January. Put everything out there that you are thinking of doing. Most of the community is retired; this is a lot of money for people. Mrs. Morgan said they just addressed this. Mr. Ponchak said it was not just done today. The budget was finalized in December; it was posted. Mr. Ogurchak said there is no Daily News. Mr. Ponchak said the borough does use a daily paper. Mr. Ogurchak said people are going to be upset; it is more about how they did it, not why. Mr. Ogurchak said he understands that expenses go up; Workers Comp goes up; you have landslide; that is a part of life. But \$200 is a hell of a lot. Mrs. Matyasovsky said they agonize over a rate hike. There is nothing else to discuss; it is hard on everyone, but it is what they had to do. Mrs. Matyasovsky said that her friend in Glassport pays \$1,200 for her local tax; hers are \$538. We have a great community and we're fighting to keep it. Mr. Ogurchak said there are two abandoned homes across the street from him; they have been fighting to get something done for ten years; nothing has changed. Mrs. Matyasovsky said Mike Bogdan, the Code Enforcement Officer is here; give him the addresses. Mr. Ogurchak said they are 103 and 105 Kollar Drive. The owner doesn't have the capacity to figure out what he should do. Mr. Ogurchak said when they have visitors, they are embarrassed by it. They have known about it for ten years.

**Cathy Beadling, 2805 A Street,** asked if you need a permit to paint a portrait on the side of a building. Mrs. Morgan said if you own it, yes you can. Mrs. Beadling said she has lived here for forty seven years. The borough is not what it used to be. It is relatively safe, but there are things happening here. She has seen the cops chasing people in the woods.

**Jennifer McClelland, 3300 Oakland Drive,** asked where they are with Act 537 compliance. She knew that the end of last December was the deadline. Mr. Zrenchak said the \$1.2 million PennVest loan was approved. Don Glenn has prepared the bid specs; it is going out for bid. Mrs. McClelland asked about last year's flooding. She was still on council and they talked about dredging the creek, but they were told by someone from Don Glenn's office that you just can't do it, you have to get a permit. Is that something they should be looking into, so those houses don't get washed out again? Mr. Ponchak said the county and state came in and dredged it. Mrs. McClelland said she keeps hearing whispers in the crowd and people alluding to the insurance and lawsuits. Mrs. McClelland said she works in Human Resources so she has to be careful that she does not violate her employees' rights, or she will be sued. Has this council or the borough established guidelines to prevent an employee's rights from being violated, and they don't have grounds to sue. Everyone is blaming the people that are suing. Why is there no ownership of the issues that are causing it? Mr. Ponchak said that anyone can sue for anything at any time. Mr. Sloss said they have to pay lawyers to fight it, no matter what the issue is. Mrs. McClelland asked why are there people that constantly feel that their rights are being violated. It has been happening since she was here, and it continues to happen. Rather than face it, we're blaming the people that are suing; it's not always that person's fault. Mr. Ponchak said there is nothing in place that he is aware of; Mrs. McClelland just served on council; what was in place then? Mrs. McClelland said they followed grievance procedures. Mr. Sloss said they have done that, too. Mr. Fraas said they follow the labor contracts. Mrs. McClelland said Ann Marie (Sowa) said the taxes were raised because of the lawsuits; why do people feel they need to file suits? Mr. Ponchak said people will do what they want. Mrs. McClelland said that sounds negligent to her; to not do anything, and if people don't like what is happening, they can continue to sue us. Mr. Ponchak said he is not saying that at all. Mrs. Weigand said that she thinks that maybe some of this could have been alleviated by having a meeting or getting together more often; maybe more communication would have helped. Mr. Ogurchak said the elected officials are voluntary; not full-time. If they could spend forty hours a week on borough business, that would help, but that is not possible, so you have to live with the consequences. Mr. Ponchak said he understands that and he agrees.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS.**

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

There was nothing to report.

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

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

Vehicle mileage:

|               | BEGIN | END   | MILEAGE |
|---------------|-------|-------|---------|
| Unit #130     | 77950 | 79685 | 1735    |
| Unit #131     | 23200 | 24020 | 820     |
| Unit #132     | 54200 | 54429 | 229     |
| Total mileage |       |       | 2784    |

Vehicle Maintenance:

Unit 130

- Oil change; rear brakes; replace headlight assembly

Unit 131

- None

Unit 132

- None

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

Total calls: 9

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Fires                    | 4 |
| Service Call             | 3 |
| False Alarm & False Call | 2 |

Mr. Ponchak called for a motion to adopt Resolution 2018-08, requesting grant funds from the PA Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED) in the amount of \$60,000 for the purchase of a police vehicle. Mrs. Matyasovsky made the motion. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sloss and passed unanimously.

Mr. Ponchak called for a motion to promote Officer Brice Joll to Sergeant of the Liberty Borough Police Department, with no increase in compensation. Mr. Matlos made the motion. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Morgan and passed unanimously.

**LEGISLATION.** Mr. Ponchak, Chairman, reporting.

There was nothing to report.

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

Mrs. Morgan said the Memorial Day Parade will be held on Saturday, May 26 at noon. The Honor Guard will fire; Mr. Suckfiel will speak; afterwards they will go to the Vet's Club for a small luncheon.

Fun-To-Be-A-Kid Day will be held on Saturday, August 18, behind the Fire Hall. The donations are coming in. We will all be working together on it.

**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:

|                                                                    |                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Amazon.com – minute book paper / ink cartridge for Tax Collector   | \$ 103.20          |
| American Legal Services – police insurance [May]                   | 36.20              |
| Bowling, Daniel – LST refunds [2016 and 2017]                      | 68.00              |
| Center Independent Oil (Double Car Wash) – police vehicles [March] | 30.00              |
| Dearborn National – life insurance [5/1/18 – 7/31/18]              | 232.20             |
| Finneran, Shaun – annual backflow valve testing (3 @ \$75)         | 225.00             |
| First Commonwealth Bank – loan payment [PW truck]                  | 1,301.99           |
| First Commonwealth Bank – loan payment [2015 street paving]        | 3,686.14           |
| Liberty Boro Auto Sales – oil change / rear brakes [marked car]    | 189.87             |
| MCI – long distance                                                | 27.94              |
| Orkin – sewers                                                     | 207.92             |
| PA American Water – consumption data                               | 66.23              |
| PA American Water – EMS                                            | 18.00              |
| PA American Water – garage                                         | 220.42             |
| PA American Water – Municipal Building                             | 146.49             |
| Racunas Law Group, LLC – Solicitor fees [March]                    | 2,814.00           |
| Ricoh – copier maintenance                                         | 38.22              |
| Sprint – mobile laptop                                             | 40.24              |
| UPMC Health Plan – health insurance [May]                          | 2,485.26           |
| Verizon – garage                                                   | 56.95              |
| WestComm Wireless – police radios maintenance                      | 55.00              |
| <b>TOTAL RATIFIED BILLS</b>                                        | <b>\$12,049.27</b> |

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

|                                                    |             |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Am Trust North America – Worker’s Comp installment | \$ 4,099.00 |
| Aqua Filter Fresh – bottled water                  | 45.17       |
| Christie & Assoc – Tax Collector bond              | 641.00      |
| Collura, Dave – wildlife control [April]           | 140.00      |
| Comcast – phones/Internet                          | 286.52      |
| Comcast – Internet [police office]                 | 163.81      |

|                                                                   |          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Commonwealth Financing Agency – GTRP grant application fee        | 100.00   |
| Direct Energy – EMS                                               | 72.18    |
| Direct Energy – garage                                            | 101.93   |
| Direct Energy – Municipal Building                                | 292.58   |
| Direct Energy – pump station                                      | 140.71   |
| Dravosburg Truck & Auto – inspection [2011 Ford]                  | 92.40    |
| Duquesne Light – street lights                                    | 3,236.20 |
| Federouch Landscaping – playground carpet [Elizabeth St Tot Lot]  | 1,350.00 |
| Federouch Landscaping – playground carpet [Fire Hall Tot Lot]     | 1,350.00 |
| Gaydos-Behanna Kennel – animal control [January]                  | 75.00    |
| Gaydos-Behanna Kennel – animal control [February]                 | 75.00    |
| Gaydos-Behanna Kennel – animal control [March]                    | 100.00   |
| Gaydos-Behanna Kennel – animal control [April]                    | 75.00    |
| Glenn Engineering – general engineering                           | 1,370.00 |
| Glenn Engineering – sewage                                        | 165.00   |
| Home Depot – Memory Lane catch basin / secure Liberty Manor       | 338.92   |
| Jefferson Hills Lawn Equipment – mower parts                      | 81.70    |
| Lehigh Hanson – asphalt [Memory Lane catch basin]                 | 96.96    |
| Liberty Boro Auto Sales – oil change [unmarked car]               | 54.88    |
| Mr. John – 1 @ Latrobe Park [4/27/18 – 5/24/18]                   | 118.00   |
| Mr. John – 2 @ Manor Park [4/27/18 – 5/24/18]                     | 236.00   |
| O'Reilly Auto Parts – garage supplies                             | 149.73   |
| Orkin – sewers                                                    | 207.92   |
| PA American Water – shut-offs/reconnects                          | 150.00   |
| PA American Water – fire hydrants                                 | 1,177.11 |
| PA Municipal Service Co – 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter sewage billing  | 913.51   |
| PA One Call – notices                                             | 7.50     |
| Paul's Auto Service – driver side headlamp [marked car]           | 268.53   |
| Peoples Gas – EMS                                                 | 140.75   |
| Peoples Gas – Municipal Building                                  | 167.57   |
| Peoples Gas – garage                                              | 95.71    |
| RC Walter & Sons – garage supplies                                | 23.46    |
| Ricoh – copier lease                                              | 114.95   |
| Sprint – cell phones                                              | 89.20    |
| Stone & Co – solid block [Memory Lane catch basin]                | 35.00    |
| TEC Benefits – benefits admin                                     | 30.00    |
| Urban Construction Services, LLC – 3310 Liberty Way storm sewer   | 3,000.00 |
| Zrenchak Environmental Services – pump station inspection [April] | 315.00   |

**TOTAL BILLS** **\$21,783.90**

Mr. Ponchak made a motion to accept the ratified bills and the list of bills. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Morgan and passed, with Mr. Zrenchak abstaining on the bill for Zrenchak Environmental Services in the amount of \$ 315.00.

The receipts for the month of April are as follows:

**GENERAL FUND**

|                                       |                     |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Real Estate Tax – Aquilante           | 1,083.85            |
| Fire Tax – Aquilante                  | 191.27              |
| Delinquent Real Estate Tax – Keystone | 677.69              |
| Act 77 Tax Refund                     | 5,042.87            |
| Real Estate Transfer Tax              | 2,329.95            |
| Earned Income Tax – Keystone          | 9,325.75            |
| Local Services Tax                    | 5,616.00            |
| Zoning/Building Permits               | 72.05               |
| Zoning/Occupancy Permits              | 30.00               |
| Dye Test Permits                      | 50.00               |
| Street Opening Permits                | 203.00              |
| Police Fines                          | 473.83              |
| No Lien Letters                       | 15.00               |
| Right-To-Know Requests                | 4.00                |
| Police Reports                        | 15.00               |
| Fun-To-Be-A-Kid Day Donations         | 350.00              |
| <b>TOTAL RECEIPTS FOR THE MONTH</b>   | <b>\$ 25,480.26</b> |

**GENERAL FUND**

**REGISTER BALANCE** **\$ 7,353.11**

**GENERAL FUND SAVINGS**

Interest 42.43  
**REGISTER BALANCE** **203,060.83**

**SEWER FUND**

Customer Payments 8,499.79  
Surcharge 637.89  
**REGISTER BALANCE** **\$ 43,639.26**

**HIGHWAY AID FUND**

Interest 11.59  
**REGISTER BALANCE** **\$ 56,249.25**

Mr. Zrenchak made a motion to purchase the 2018 version of QuickBooks at a cost not to exceed \$350. The 2013 version will no longer be supported after June. The motion was seconded by Mr. Matlos and passed unanimously.

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

Mr. Ponchak called for a motion to publicize for the hiring of at least one police officer. Mr. Matlos made the motion. The motion was seconded by Mr. Zrenchak and passed unanimously.

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

In regards to the project involving the fuel tanks at the Maintenance Garage, the Street Department employees have been trained and the information will be sent to DEP. We should be in compliance and be able to have the tanks recertified.

We already touched on the issue of the catch basin in Walnut Alley. The Street Department will be out to repair the pipe.

As an update on the Act 537/PennVest loan, bid specs have been reviewed and the project has been put out for bid. They will be opened on June 11.

**MAYOR SIKORSKI'S REPORT.**

Mr. Sikorski highlighted the following police activity from the April report:

|                                             |    |     |
|---------------------------------------------|----|-----|
| Total Call Activity                         |    | 176 |
| Calls for Service                           | 28 |     |
| Criminal Mischief Complaints                | 4  |     |
| Theft Reports                               | 7  |     |
| Traffic Violations                          | 27 |     |
| Adult Arrests                               |    | 3   |
| Juvenile Arrests                            |    | 2   |
| Traffic Citations Issued                    |    | 22  |
| Non-Traffic Citations Issued                |    | 5   |
| Assist Other Departments                    |    | 12  |
| Assist By Other Departments                 |    | 7   |
| Junk/Abandoned Vehicles<br>Removed by Owner |    | 2   |



**SOLICITOR RACUNAS'S REPORT.** Mr. Fraas reporting.

Everyone was provided with a copy of the proposed 3-year Public Works contract, covering the years of 2018-2020. Mr. Ponchak made a motion to adopt the contract. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Weigand and passed, with Mr. Matlos abstaining.

**ENGINEER GLENN'S REPORT.**

Mr. Glenn had to leave earlier this evening. Mrs. Morgan called for a motion to adopt Resolution 2018-09, requesting a Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP) grant in the amount of \$69,790 for Liberty Park upgrades. The borough's share is \$12,316. Mr. Matlos made the motion. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Weigand and passed unanimously.

There was no Old Business, New Business, or Correspondence.

Mr. Ponchak made a motion to accept the typed minutes from the Regular Session on April 11, 2018. The motion was seconded by Mr. Matlos and passed unanimously.

The next meeting date is June 13, 2018, with the Work Session at 6:00 pm and the Regular Session at 7:30 pm.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. Morgan, seconded by Mr. Matlos. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra L. Helderlein  
Borough Secretary