

MINUTES OF REGULAR SESSION OF COUNCIL  
December 28, 2022

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Regular session of Borough Council convened at 6:00 pm. Present were Councilors Mike Matlos, Tim Sloss, Elizabeth Lape, Janice Matyasovsky, Chris Ponchak, David Sowa and Michael Zrenchak, Mayor Sikorski, and Solicitor Matt Racunas and Engineer Don Glenn.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Cathy Beadling – 2805 A Street: She asked about the dip between Roberts Street and C Street. Mr. Zrenchak explained that It started because the house on the corner was getting an ice build-up in the corner of the yard. Mr. Matlos said the water company paved that road. Mr. Zrenchak said they put the dip in the road to try to alleviate that water issue but it created a bigger issue with the dip. If you take the dip out the same thing will happen – the water is going to pond at that corner. So what they are looking at is paving back far enough back in all directions to funnel that water so it does not lay in that corner. It is on the agenda. They just need to find the funding to do it. Ideally, it would be nice if there was an inlet on that corner but here is nowhere to tie it into.

A woman in attendance asked what the Planning Commission and Zoning Boards do. Mr. Zrenchak explained that the Planning Board is more prominent in growing communities. They do planning for residential developments and business developments. A Planning Board in Liberty can look at future planning to rezone properties or split. Zoning is for people who want to build something on their property with a set-back. The Zoning Board decides if it meets with code. These boards meet when something comes up. There are 5 members on each board. Mr. Zrenchak said again that this is an opportunity to get on one of these boards and change what you do not like. Someone asked if a new business coming in would have to go through the Planning Board. Mr. Zrenchak said that he would have to get a definitive answer for that. Mr. Glenn said that it would be more of a zoning item.

**PROPERTY:**

Mr. Glenn stated that the contractor has until January 30, 2023 to complete the demolition of the Old School. He was supposed to mobilize after Christmas and start the day after New Year's.

**POLICE, FIRE and EMS:** Michael Zrenchak

Mr. Ponchak read the Police Department November 2022 Vehicle Report

Vehicle 130	1,073 miles
Vehicle 131	265 miles

Vehicle 132

329 miles

EMS Report: There was a total of 24 EMS responses to the borough with an average response time of 9.4 minutes.

**Motion to accept** the grant from Allegheny County in the amount of \$22,000 for Police Body Worn Camera's

**Motion: Mr. Matlos**

**Second: Mr. Sloss**

**Mr. Zrenchak voted no.**

**Vote was 6 YES 1 NO.**

**Motion to accept** the quote from Axon in the amount of \$21,999.99 for Body Worn Cameras.

**Motion: Mr. Matlos**

**Second: Mrs. Lape**

**Mr. Zrenchak voted no.**

**Vote was 6 YES 1 NO.**

#### **LEGISLATION:**

Mr. Zrenchak reported that at the workshop meeting, John Rushford (for Solicitor Racunas) had the ordinance for trailers and on street parking. Council returned it to Mr. Racunas to look at it to see what is going on.

#### **PARKS & RECREATION:**

Mrs. Matyasovsky reported that the Christmas party was very nice. There was not as many kids as they would have liked. Next year they will move it up.

There are possible dates:

Easter Egg Hunt	4/1/23 Saturday
Senior Dinner	3/16/23 Thursday
Movie Night	July sometime
Fun to Be A Kid	8/13/23 Sunday
Light Up Night	12/7/2023 Thursday

A woman in attendance asked if there could be a full year calendar of community events. The calendar can be put on Savvy Citizen and our website.

#### **HEALTH & ORDINANCE:**

There was nothing to report.

**LIGHTS:** Michael Matlos

Mr. Matlos reported three lights out. Two were replaced with LEDS and one is pending.

**FINANCE:** Elizabeth Lape

**Motion to Pay:** Bills for Ratification of \$226,660.92 and List of Bills to Pay \$7,580.25

**Motion: Mr. Matlos**

**Second: Mr. Sloss**

**All in favor. Motion carries.**

**Bills for Ratification:**

12/01/2022	EFT	ADP [CHECKS]	-11,683.02
12/01/2022	EFT	ADP	-4,226.30
11/29/2022	EFT	PA SCDU	-82.52
12/01/2022	EFT	ADP [INVOICE]	-77.56
11/25/2022	EFT	ADP [INVOICE]	-92.51
12/16/2022	EFT	PA SCDU	-82.52
12/14/2022	4576	DUQUESNE LIGHT CO	-3,364.91
12/14/2022	12434	DUQUESNE LIGHT CO	-153.56
12/14/2022	12435	GLENN ENGINEERING & ASSOC	-470.00
			-
12/14/2022	12436	PA AMERICAN WATER	105,290.21
12/14/2022	12437	PA MUNICIPAL SERVICE CO	-976.54
12/14/2022	12438	PA ONE-CALL SYSTEM INC	-8.88
12/14/2022	12439	STANTON INDUSTRIAL ELECTRIC	-1,936.65
12/14/2022	12440	W C WEIL COMPANY	-165.00
11/24/2022	23037	AMERICAN LEGAL SERVICES	-65.16
11/24/2022	23038	JORDAN TAX SERVICE INC	-412.00
12/02/2022	23040	FLEMING LANDSCAPING CO	-125.00
12/06/2022	23041	AFLAC	-223.36
12/14/2022	23042	AQUA FILTER FRESH INC	-47.20
12/14/2022	23043	Bearcom	-335.35
12/14/2022	23044	CARA SLOSS	-106.44
12/14/2022	23045	CENTER INDEPENDENT ENERGY	-54.82
12/14/2022	23046	COMCAST	-368.92
12/14/2022	23047	CSX TRANSPORTATION	-708.50
12/14/2022	23048	DUQUESNE LIGHT CO	-400.29
12/14/2022	23049	ELIZABETH ELECTRIC SUPPLY CO	-277.00
12/14/2022	23050	FIRST COMMONWEALTH BANK (CREDIT CARD)	-351.32
12/14/2022	23051	GLENN ENGINEERING & ASSOC	-853.75
12/14/2022	23052	HOME DEPOT	-30.81
12/14/2022	23053	MON VALLEY INDEPENDENT	-247.50
12/14/2022	23054	NORTH EASTERN UNIFORMS & EQUIP., INC.	-16.00
12/14/2022	23055	O'REILLY AUTO PARTS	0.00
12/14/2022	23056	ONE DIGITAL	-40.00

12/14/2022	23057	ORKIN EXTERMINATING	-415.84
12/14/2022	23058	PA AMERICAN WATER	-1,158.51
12/14/2022	23059	PEOPLES NATURAL GAS	-709.81
12/14/2022	23060	QUILL	-142.52
12/14/2022	23061	RC WALTER & SONS INC	-134.02
12/14/2022	23062	Safsecur LLC	-808.34
12/14/2022	23063	SouthEast Regional EMS	-6,000.00
12/14/2022	23064	T-MOBILE	-175.82
12/14/2022	23065	ULINE	-131.67
12/14/2022	23066	VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S ASSOC OF LIBERTY	-36,250.00
12/14/2022	23067	RACUNAS LAW GROUP LLC	-1,473.00
12/14/2022	23068	Jill Pack	-64.98
12/16/2022	23069	PA MUNICIPAL RETIREMENT SYSTEM	-605.85
12/16/2022	23070	TEAMSTERS LOCAL UNION #205	-188.00
12/14/2022	23071	ABCO FIRE PROTECTION INC	-129.52
12/15/2022	23072	Swede Construction Corp	-44,820.00
12/15/2022	23073	Jill Pack	-75.52
12/15/2022	23074	Inferno Pizza	-60.00
12/15/2022	23075	O'REILLY AUTO PARTS	-43.92
			-
			226,660.92

### List of Bills to Pay:

#### AMERICAN LEGAL SERVICES

	12/19/2022	118-26529	12/29/2022	65.16
Total AMERICAN LEGAL SERVICES				65.16

#### AMERICAN WATER

	12/01/2022	4000249324	12/11/2022	75.16
Total AMERICAN WATER				75.16

#### City of McKeesport

	12/14/2022	Novembe 2022	12/24/2022	100.00
Total City of McKeesport				100.00

#### COMM OF PA - USTIF

	12/05/2022	829514	12/15/2022	41.25
Total COMM OF PA - USTIF				41.25

#### FOSTER & SON

	12/19/2022	187337	12/29/2022	93.78
Total FOSTER & SON				93.78

#### HOME DEPOT

	12/19/2022	4194929		-59.97
	12/15/2022	8615254	12/25/2022	111.45
	12/19/2022	4523459	12/29/2022	<u>20.52</u>
Total HOME DEPOT				72.00
<b>ONE DIGITAL</b>				
	12/16/2022	Pack	12/26/2022	<u>337.81</u>
Total ONE DIGITAL				337.81
<b>PA AMERICAN WATER</b>				
	12/14/2022	1024-210033713752	12/24/2022	159.17
	12/14/2022	1024-210034877260	01/05/2023	34.04
	12/15/2022	1024-210030156299	01/06/2023	<u>17.67</u>
Total PA AMERICAN WATER				210.88
<b>RICOH USA</b>				
	12/16/2022	106791918	12/26/2022	<u>149.42</u>
Total RICOH USA				149.42
<b>S &amp; D CALIBRATION SERVICES</b>				
	12/22/2022	12604	01/01/2023	<u>111.00</u>
Total S & D CALIBRATION SERVICES				111.00
<b>Sensaphone</b>				
	12/27/2022	33917	01/06/2023	<u>299.40</u>
Total Sensaphone				299.40
<b>UPMC HEALTH PLAN</b>				
	12/15/2022	ML0000312533	12/25/2022	<u>5,197.60</u>
Total UPMC HEALTH PLAN				5,197.60
<b>VERIZON GARAGE</b>				
	12/09/2022	450-731-927-0001-53	12/19/2022	<u>56.79</u>
Total VERIZON GARAGE				56.79
<b>W C WEIL COMPANY</b>				
	12/16/2022	8624	12/26/2022	<u>715.00</u>
Total W C WEIL COMPANY				715.00
<b>WESTCOM WIRELESS INC</b>				
	12/14/2022	1190	12/24/2022	<u>55.00</u>
Total WESTCOM WIRELESS INC				<u>55.00</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>				<u><u>7,580.25</u></u>

## PERSONNEL:

There was nothing to report.

## STREETS AND SEWERS: Tim Sloss

Mr. Sloss stated that PA American Water has increased the rate for bulk sewage. Mr. Zrenchak went on to explain that in March or April, PAWC requested a rate hike from the

PUC. Residential customers using 3,212 gallons of water a month would increase from \$77.54 to \$95.69 and if you are a sewage customer, it would jump from \$61.62 to \$76.93. Liberty Borough is considered a bulk customer going to McKeesport because we are not their customer. We pay a set amount and how they charge us per 100 gallons. We were told as a bulk customer (Versailles, Elizabeth Township, Liberty Borough, Glassport, Lincoln, North Versailles, White Oak and East McKeesport) they were going to charge us \$1.3250 per 100 gallons. We bill in 1,000 gallons. Our bulk customer rate previously was \$1.019 or \$10.19 per 1,000 gallons and we added \$2.31 to have a little bit to put back into the system. Historically, PA American would ask for 30% to 35% and they may get 18% to 20%. They never get what they ask for. So we thought that they would get around \$12.20 or \$12.30 and we would still have a little bit to put back into the system so we didn't feel we needed to raise rates. Moving forward to December 8<sup>th</sup>, the PUC approves their rate increase to \$1.668 per 100 gallons which is \$16.68 per 1,000 gallons – a 64% rate increase. Over the last three years, our rate with PA American Water have gone up from \$8.40 per 1,000 right after they sold in 2020. They asked for a rate increase in 2021 to go from \$8.40 to \$9.10 which is 9% which is somewhat reasonable. In 2022 it went from \$9.10 to \$10.19 – an 11% increase. It is on the high side but not an unreasonable charge. It has now gone from \$10.19 to \$16.68 which is 64% – this is an 85% rate increase in three years. To give you an idea, if you are a McKeesport customer, the monthly service charge is \$14.30 and they are charging the residents 2.534 cents per 100 gallons which equates to \$25.30 per 1,000 gallons. The problem is, this rate increase goes into effect at the end of January and in order for us (Liberty Borough) to just pay the bills, we have to raise rates from \$10.19 to \$16.68 which is a \$4.18 increase. This does not include anything extra to put back into the system. Council is going to have to decide if they will put anything else on top of that or, we do have a surplus in that fund – just do the \$4.18 to make sure we can pay our rates to McKeesport. Mr. Zrenchak has reached out to some of the other communities to see if they are interested in pursuing something against PA American. He does not know if it would do anything but the biggest thing that he could do is to encourage the residents to file a complaint on the PUC website that it is becoming unaffordable. It seems that the bulk rate customers listed are the ones who still own their own system. It seems to him that we are being forced to sell our system to them. They are a for profit company, and he does not think it is a good idea to sell. Once we let it go, we have no control over anything. We do not have control now over what they charge us. Not that we want to do it, PA American has tied our hand and we have no choice but to pass it on. Years ago we did away with the minimum charge which he thinks that was something that should not have happened. At a minimum, the bills have to go up \$4.18. Mrs. Lape said that our hands are tied, and they will have to raise the rates. She said they did not budget for this high of a rate increase. When Mr. Zrenchak spoke to our special account representative, she said that she came out and met with Jamie and Jill and said she told them about this. They were told \$1.325 not \$1.668. He does not know what happened between the last notice filed in June and where the additional came in. He dug through the PUC website, and it is ridiculous. He foresees that either next year or the year after, they will ask for another rate increase. It is to make up for all the things they are acquiring. Act 12 lets them spread the rates out over the entire state which would make you think that with hundreds of thousands of customers your rates would go down not increase. They are using this under the guise to do all kinds of

updates to the systems that need millions of dollars of work. Mr. Zrenchak stated that they requested 35% and got 64%. Our account rep was looking into this for him and he has not heard back from her. He said that people will see the new rate in February because we run a month behind. They gave us 6 weeks to react to the rate increase. A woman asked how long it would take for someone's water to be shut off because of this rate increase. Mr. Zrenchak said that PA American has a winter moratorium that goes from November to March where no shut offs are done. Jamie would have a better answer as to the process. There is a late notice and then an opportunity to pay. If they can't pay, there is an opportunity for a payment plan. Shutting off is a last, last, last resort. If he is correct, it could take 3 to 4 months to get shut off. Solicitor Racunas stated that his other communities that are affected by this rate increase are very upset. They are looking into if there is an appeal process and what they can do about it just due to the impact on the ratepayers. It is a community wide issue not just a Liberty issue. One of the thoughts is to join the communities to do something about this. He does not know what the PUC appeal process is. Most likely, if the communities band together, they may have to get special counsel that actually does those types of appeals in order to challenge the rate increase. Unfortunately, it is going to be a big impact on the ratepayers. Mr. Zrenchak asked Mr. Glenn how this has affected the communities he represents as far as budgeting. He said that North Versailles has their meeting last night and they have the same concerns. They want to get together with Liberty and Matt (Racunas) to talk about this. Mr. Racunas said the timing of this is the worst part because rates have already been set. Mr. Zrenchak said that we need to do something about this because our hands are tied. A 64% increase is bad all around. He said complaints should be filed with the PUC and even PAWC. He said that he can provide the information regarding this increase for residents who want to register their concerns with the PUC or PAWC. When it was McKeesport the rate was \$8.40 for 5, 6, 7, 8 years. If they did increase it, it was a small amount – 20 cents, 25 cents. The is almost a 100% increase in three years. I will be an impact on people who do not use a lot of water as well, but a family like his when his three were at home they would use 8,500 gallons of water a month. Matt Racunas said that part of the agreement for McKeesport to sell was that rates would be held for a certain amount of time. Now that we are past that time the barn doors are open as far as PA American feels about it. Mr. Zrenchak wants to be transparent about this and provide all the information he has. He asked Jackie (PAWC) to have someone at the meeting tonight and, as you can see, that didn't happen.

**MAYOR'S REPORT:** Larry Sikorski, Mayor

Mayor Sikorski had the police monthly report. There were 100 calls for service – everything from traffic stops to gun shots in Glassport. He said that anyone is welcome to read the report after the meeting

**SOLICITOR'S REPORT:** Matt Racunas

First, Solicitor Racunas wanted to apologize to Council and the public for his tardiness. He was in a mediation in the North Hills and got stuck in traffic.

**Motion to adopt** Ordinance 2022-04 vacating a portion of Wood Street.

**Motion: Mr. Matlos**

**Second: Mr. Sloss**

**All in favor. Motion carries.**

**ENGINEER'S REPORT:** Don Glenn

Mr. Glenn reminded Council that the contractor has until January 30<sup>th</sup> to demo the Old School and if the does not complete it by that time, they will demand COG implement the penalty procedure which s \$350 per day.

**Motion to ratify payment** to Swede Construction for progress billing Invoice #2 in the amount of \$15,750 for the Manor Park Restrooms.

**Motion: Mr. Matlos**

**Second: Mrs. Lape**

**All in favor. Motion carries**

**Motion to ratify payment** to Swede Construction for progress billing Invoice #3 in the amount of \$29,070 for the Manor Park Restrooms.

**Motion: Mr. Matlos**

**Second: Mrs. Lape**

**All in favor. Motion carries.**

Mr. Glenn said that this work being billed has been satisfactorily completed. Mrs. Matyasovsky asked if the bathrooms were done. He said they are not done but what has been billed is complete. He said that the work to be done hinges on weather and they are shooting for February to be finished.

Glenn Engineering filed a grant application for the Liberty Way Sewer. It was filed timely. It is the PA Small Water and Sewer Grant. He will turn over to the Borough the application that was submitted.

Mr. Glenn reported that the LA Grants that were supposed to announced in November will tentatively be announced in January.

A woman in attendance asked Mr. Glenn if the bathrooms were done in T-111 or siding. Mr. Glenn said it was siding. Amanda Rausch said that he bottom of he building is brick and the top, like the eves, is now siding. Mr. Glenn said that he is going to paint the exterior and that as not part of the contract.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Council is asking for Letters of Interest for the Planning Commission (1 Seat) and the Zoning Board (2 Seats). Cara Sloss submitted a letter for the Planning Commission.

**Motion to amend** the agenda to accept the letter submitted by Cara Sloss for the Planning Commission.



**Motion: Mr. Matlos**                      **Second: Mrs. Lape**  
**All in favor. Motion carries.**

**Motion to appoint** Cara Sloss to the Planning Commission.  
**Motion: Mrs. Lape**                      **Second: Mr. Ponchak**  
**All in favor. Motion carries.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Motion to adopt** the Liberty Borough 2023 Budget.  
**Motion: Mrs. Lape**                      **Second: Mr. Sloss**  
**All in favor. Motion carries.**

There was no tax increase for 2023.

**Motion to ratify** the renewal of the Worker's Comp insurance in the amount of \$42,712.  
**Motion: Mr. Matlos**                      **Second: Mr. Ponchak**  
**All in favor. Motion carries**

**Motion to adopt** Resolution 2022-18 implementing Act 57 of 2022 for the 2022 Tax Penalty Waiver Provisions.  
**Motion: Mr. Matlos**                      **Second: Mr. Ponchak**  
**All in favor. Motion carries**

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

**Motion to advertise** the 2023 meeting dates and times.  
**Motion: Mr. Matlos**                      **Second: Mr. Sloss**  
**All in favor. Motion carries.**

**Motion to accept** the typed minutes from the November 23, 2022 meeting.  
**Motion: Mr. Matlos**                      **Second: Mr. Ponchak**  
**All in favor. Motion carries.**

Next meeting dates/times: Work Session, Wednesday January 11, 2023 at 6:00 pm –  
Regular Session, Wednesday, January 25, 2023 at 6:00 pm.

**Motion to adjourn**  
**Motion: Mr. Matlos**                      **Second: Mrs. Lape**  
**All in favor. Motion carries.**

**Meeting adjourned at 6:37 pm**

Respectfully Submitted by:  
Jill Pack – Borough Secretary