MINUTES OF REGULAR SESSION OF COUNCIL

March 27, 2024

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Regular session of Borough Council convened at 6:00 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance. Present were Councilors Mike Matlos, Elizabeth Lape, Tim Sloss, Mr. Sowa, Janice Matyasovsky, Chris Ponchak, Michael Zrenchak, Mayor Larry Sikorski, Solicitor Matt Racunas, and Borough Engineer Lou Corrales.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None.

**PROPERTY:** Chris Ponchak

Mr. Ponchak reported that the Dollar General is busy working over on Liberty Way and as the residents can see the company has already started constructing the walls. Mr. Ponchak informed the public that Jazon Ruzich is still in the process of trying to sell the property on Scene Ridge. Mr. Ruzich has put up signs and put outposts on social media but has not had any interest yet. Mr. Ponchak reported that the Borough received a complaint about a storm drain caving in at 2801 F Street. He informed everyone that Mr. Matlos went over and addressed the issue and safeguarded the drain. Mr. Matlos said that there are still some issues with the drain but that he is continuing to watch it and maintain the drain. Mr. Ponchak asked Mr. Racunas if there was any more progress with the consolidation of the A Street Garage. Mr. Racunas said he will discuss it later in the executive session.

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

Mr. Ponchak read the Fire Department Report for March 2024 submitted by Fire Chief Corey Derr:

Fires 4

Rescue & Emergency Service Calls 2

Hazardous Condition (No Fire) 3

Service Call 2

Good Intent Call 1

False Alarm & False Call 3

Total Incidents 15

Mr. Ponchak read the EMS Report for February 2024. There were 18 EMS Calls, and the average response time was 9.6 minutes.

**LEGISLATION:** David Sowa

**Motion to adopt** Resolution 2024-02 accepting the Junior Councilmember Program with Liberty Borough.

**Motion: Mr. Matlos Second: Mrs. Lape**

**All in favor. Motion carries.**

Mr. Sowa reported that the Borough of Liberty is waiting for a letter of interest for a student to become a Junior Councilmember. Mr. Sowa said that all the paperwork was given to the students and the borough is just waiting for the paperwork to be returned.

**PARKS & RECREATION:** Janice Matyasovsky

Mrs. Matyasovsky announced that the Easter Egg Hunt was held on March 23, 2024. She said that it was cold and there were probably thirty kids there, and that there was not a big turnout, but she figured it was because it was cold outside. She stated that despite the cold the hunt turned out to be a nice event.

Mrs. Matyasovsky announced the Senior Citizen Dinner was being held on April 11, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at the Liberty Borough Volunteer Fire Department Social Hall. She asked if the residents could please RSVP if they are going to attend. Mrs. Matyasovsky reported that the Liberty Borough Clean Up Day will be held on April 27, 2024, in the parking lot behind the Liberty Borough Fire Hall from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. She explained that we will not be able to take any chemicals, building materials, and only tires if the white walls have been cut out of them. Mrs. Matyasovsky stated that there will be an electronics container for all the Borough residents’ old electronics. Bigs Sanitation is supplying the dumpster at a cost of $650.00. She told the residents this is the time to get rid of all your old electronics and make the cost worth it.

**Motion to agree to pay** Big’s Sanitation $650.00 for the cost of electronics container.

**Motion: Mr. Matlos Second: Mr. Sowa**

**All in favor. Motion carries.**

Mrs. Matyasovsky reported that they will have to discuss National Night Out with Chief Lynch and see if he has any ideas on what to do for that evening. Council decided to discuss it when they get more information on the event.

**HEALTH & ORDINANCE**: Chris Ponchak

**Motion to appoint** Linda Surgeon to the Blight Committee effective March 2024.

**Motion: Mr. Matlos Second: Mr. Sowa**

**All in favor. Motion carries.**

Mr. Ponchak reported that the Liberty Borough Garbage Contract will be ending at the end of the year. He stated that the borough will need to put the garbage contract out for bid. Mr. Ponchak explained that the representative from Waste Management requested to speak with the Borough but that they have not contacted each other, and he will try and reach out to her again this week coming up.

**Motion to accept** the port a john contract with Just Klean in the amount of $534.00 monthly effective April 1, 2024, through October 31, 2024.

**Motion: Mr. Matlos Second: Mrs. Lape**

**All in favor. Motion carries.**

**LIGHTS:** Michael Matlos

No Report.

**FINANCE:** Elizabeth Lape

Mrs. Lape reported that Council is still reviewing the delinquent taxes.

**Motion to Pay:**  Bills for Ratification of **$54,895.49** and List of Bills to Pay **$185,75.91**

**Motion: Mr. Ponchak Second: Mr. Sloss**

**All in favor. Motion carries.**

Mr. Zrenchak explained that this motion needed to be amended andthe list of bills to pay needs to say **$185,705.91** to make the list correct due to a typing mistake. Mr. Zrenchak explained the list of bills is high due to the payment to Carmen Paliotta Contracting for the Liberty Way Slide Project. Mr. Zrenchak continued to explain that the Borough pays out of General Fund, submits the payment to LSA, and LSA will reimburse General Fund.

**Bills for Ratification:**

**Payroll**

03/01/2024 EFT ADP[INVOICE] - 108.38

03/08/2024 EFT ADP[CHECKS] - 13,559.49

03/08/2024 EFT ADP[TAXES ] - 4,594.47

03/15/2024 EFT ADP[INVOICE] - 85.94

03/22/2024 EFT ADP[CHECKS] - 14,883.39

03/22/2024 EFT ADP[TAXES] - 5,552.08

**TOTAL** **- 38,783.75**

**Sewer Fund**

03/05/2024 12535 PA AMERICAN WATER - 1,195.78

03/05/2024 12536 PA ONE CALL SYSTEM INC - 24.38

03/10/2024 12522 AMERICAN WATER - 80.52

03/13/2024 12527 AMERICAN WATER - 81.95

03/13/2024 12528 PA MUNICIPAL SERVICE CO - 1,023.31

**TOTAL - 2,405.94**

**Highway Fund**

03/13/2024 4595 DUQUESNE LIGHT COMPANY - 3,483.16

**TOTAL - 3,483.16**

**General Fund**

03/05/2024 23879 AFLAC - 125.84

03/05/2024 23880 DUQUESNE LIGHT COMPANY - 383.61

03/05/2024 23881 DUQUESNE LIGHT COMPANY - 328.93

03/05/2024 23882 FIRST COMMONWEALTH BANK (CC) - 305.69

03/05/2024 23883 GLENN ENGINEERING - 4,590.00 03/05/2024 23884 HOME DEPOT - 96.42

03/05/2024 23885 PEOPLES GAS COMPANY - 559.15

03/05/2024 23886 PEST B GONE - 300.00

03/05/2024 23887 RC WALTERS AND SONS - 5.76

03/13/2024 23888 AMTRUST NORTH AMERICA - 2,728.00

03/13/2024 23889 COMCAST - 462.00

03/13/2024 23890 MON VALLEY INDEPENDENT - 81.80

03/13/2024 23891 OREILLY AUTO PARTS - 75.44

03/13/2024 23892 SPECIALTY CLEANING SERVICE - 180.00

**TOTAL - 10,222.64**

**List of Bills to Pay:**

**General Fund**

03/25/2024 EFT UPMC HEALTHPLAN - 3,203.62

03/25/2024 23893 AFLAC - 125.84

03/25/2024 23894 AMERICAN LEGAL SERVICE - 101.36

03/25/2024 23895 AMTRUST NORTH AMERICA - 2,399.00

03/25/2024 23896 CHRISTIE & ASSOCIATES - 641.00

03/25/2024 23897 LBAA (PIRATE & GRANT $) - 11,453.17

03/25/2024 23898 LEAF - 236.60

03/25/2024 23899 MCI - 31.76

03/25/2024 23900 OREILLY AUTO PARTS - 4.23

03/25/2024 23901 ORKIN EXTERMINATING - 207.92

03/25/2024 23902 PA AMERICAN WATER - 206.06

03/25/2024 23903 PEOPLES NATURAL GAS - 542.54

03/25/2024 23904 RUSSEL STANDARD CORP - 297.70

03/25/2024 23905 STEEL RIVERS COG - 150.00

03/25/2024 23907 TRIPLE A EXPRESS N MORE(DOWNPYMT) - 75.00

03/25/2024 23908 VERIZON WIRELESS - 58.59

03/25/2024 23909 WESTCOM WIRELESS - 55.00

03/25/2024 23910 WITMER PUBLIC SAFETY GROUP - 2,116.52

03/26/2024 23911 CARMEN PALIOTTA CONTRACTING - 163,800.00

**TOTAL - 185,705.91**

**PERSONNEL:** Tim Sloss

**Motion to accept** the resignation of Aaron Artz from the Liberty Borough Police Department effective 02/04/2024.

**Motion: Mr. Matlos Second: Mr. Ponchak**

**All in favor. Motion carries.**

**Motion to accept** the resignation of Jason Pfoertner from the Liberty Borough Police Department effective 01/01/2024.

**Motion: Mr. Matlos Second: Mr. Ponchak**

**All in favor. Motion carries.**

Mr. Zrenchak explained that both Officers have full-time jobs elsewhere. He continued to say that Officer Pfoertner has not had a shift in Liberty Borough in over two years and Aaron Artz accepted a job closer to where he lives and had a shift in four months. These Officers decided that instead of staying on the Liberty Borough Police Department’s roster they would just submit their resignation.

**STREETS AND SEWERS:** Tim Sloss

No Report.

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

Mayor Sikorski read the Police Report.

Accident Report 1

Animal Report 1

Assault Report 1

Assist with other Agencies 4

Burglar Alarm 1

Civil Dispute 1

Natural Death 1

Domestic Disturbance 1

Fraud 2

Harassment 2

Hazardous Conditions 1

Health & Safety 2

Missing Persons 1

Narcotic Complaint 1

PFA Violation 1

Public Drunkenness 2

Traffic Stops 3

Warrant Service 1

Welfare Check 2

**Total** **29**

Mayor Sikorski stated the Liberty Borough Police Department distributed four traffic citations to Judge Armand Martins Office. Mayor Sikorski reported that the total calls for this year are 218 for the year (2024) so far. He said that all calls that are reported are not listed on the county report each month.

**SOLICITOR’S REPORT:** Mr. Racunas

Mr. Racunas asked Council for a brief executive session to discuss some proposed terms relating to the Memorandum of Understanding with South Allegheny School District.

**ENGINEER’S REPORT:** Lou Corrales

**Motion to approve** the change order for $3,000.00 for guardrails for the Liberty Way Slide Project Phase 1

**Motion: Mr. Ponchak Second: Mr. Matlos**

**All in favor. Motion carries.**

Mrs. Matyasovsky inquired why the guardrails were not in the bid specs that went out. Mr. Zrenchak explained that originally the company was going to reuse the old guardrails and are now unable to do so. Mr. Corrales explained that they cannot use the old guardrails due to safety issues. Mrs. Matyasovsky said that this should have been known before the project was started. Mrs. Matyasovsky said that you could tell that the guardrail was falling, they should have realized that it could never be reused. She expressed her disappointment in the fact that this cost was being added after the fact. Mr. Zrenchak explained that no one realized that the guardrail was bad until they started taking it apart. He explained to Mrs. Matyasovsky that Paliotta should have been able to unbolt the guardrail and reuse it, but the guardrail was in bad condition and had to be cut apart. Mr. Corrales explained that the bolts from the guardrail had to be burned off. He said that when you burn the bolts, it puts a larger hole in rail. So, when you try and put new bolts in the rail, it will not hold the guiderail up. Mrs. Matyasovsky said that she assumed that the company would know from the start that the guardrail was going to be bad and that they were not going to be able to use it. Mr. Zrenchak said that the borough received a better price for the guardrail afterwards for the change order than you would have gotten beforehand in the bids. He said $30.00 a foot for guardrail is cheap. Mr. Zrenchak asked for confirmation that guardrail usually goes for about $45.00 a foot. Mr. Matlos and Mr. Corrales agreed with him and stated that the posts are longer also. Mrs. Matyasovsky said that she was surprised that you cannot see much going over that hill with the new guardrail and that she is impressed with all the work that Paliotta is doing to ensure the hillside all up.

**Motion to approve** payment Invoice #1 in the amount of $163,800.00 to Carmen Paliotta Contracting for Liberty Way Slide Project Phase 1.

**Motion: Mr. Matlos Second: Mr. Sowa**

**All in favor. Motion carries.**

Mr. Corrales reported that Murin and Murn submitted the paperwork and Mr. Glenn approved the paperwork. Murin and Murn would like to start next week, and they are going to call on Monday to schedule a reconstruction meeting. Mr. Corrales said if anyone wants to attend that meeting, to just let him know so that he can text the time and day. Mr. Corrales reported that the contracts were sent out to Creative Enterprises for the Walnut Street Storm Sewer Project on February 29, 2024. They are just waiting for the return of the documents and the bond. Mr. Corrales stated that Glenn Engineering completed the annual waste load management report and submitted it to PA American Water Company. He also discussed purchasing the shed, generator, debris basket, and fence for the pump station. Mr. Corrales also explained that there was a pole request that was submitted to Glenn Engineering from Duquesne Light, and that Glenn Engineering sent over a letter to Liberty Borough about said request. He said that Duquesne Light will need to fill out the correct permits for the Borough.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Mr. Zrenchak stated that once again Council is asking for Letters of Interest for the Zoning Board (1 Seats) and Planning Commission (2 seats). Mr. Zrenchak said they will keep asking until those seats are filled.

Mr. Zrenchak reported that three people are attending the Steel River Council of Government General Assembly Dinner Meeting on Thursday, March 28, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. at Georgetowne Centre.

Mr. Zrenchak stated that Steel Valley Men’s Softball League reached out to him last week about using the big field. He said that they did find a sponsor. He said that it is not Port Vue Pub, but that the softball team does have a sponsor. Mr. Zrenchak said that Steel Valley will be in contact with Ms. Leber to fill out the proper application and go over all the rules and regulations for use of the field.

Mr. Zrenchak reported that Senator Brewster sent out information on grants for park rehab, which needs a match and indoor recreation facilities, which need a match, these grants are through the DCNR, these grants are due by April 4, 2024. Mr. Zrenchak said these grants are a dollar-for-dollar match. Mr. Zrenchak stated that DCED is also offering grants for multi-purpose community centers and those grants do not need a match. Those grants are in the amount of up to 2.5 million dollars. Those applications are due April 20, 2024.

Mr. Zrenchak mentioned the Strategic Management Planning Program (STMP) through the DCED.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Mr. Zrenchak explained that Ms. Underwood wanted to give a report from the Blight Committee. Ms. Underwood said that the Blight Committee’s President Amanda Rausch would be giving the report. Mrs. Rausch reported that the Blight Committee meets once a month. She stated that the Blight committee currently consists of the following people: Amanda Rausch, Cookie Bonczek, Chris Peterson, Cathy Beadling, Vicki Underwood, and newest member Linda Surgeon. She stated that Councilmembers Dave Sowa, Mike Zrenchak and Chris Ponchak also attended these meetings with the Blight Committee. Mrs. Rausch said that the committee started in January of 2022 by getting a list of empty and/or condemned properties from Ms. Leber and Mr. Bogdan. She states that she took this list that was given to them and gave it to Council to try and obtain the funds to get those properties torn down or taken care of. Mrs. Rausch said that the committee has reviewed Ordinances. She said that they have had guest speakers. She said that Mr. Racunas was one of the guest speakers at one of the meetings, and that he gave them some good advice that the committee had questions on. She said that some real estate representatives have attended the meetings to give information on properties that are empty or vacant. They explained how to put them up for sheriff sale or get those properties back on the tax bracket. Mrs. Rausch said the committee put some stuff together for Act 152 Grant Funding. She said that they did apply for this grant, but that Liberty Borough did not get funding this year. She expressed her disappointment with this since this funding would take care of all the condemned properties that are in the Borough. Mrs. Rausch said that Council approved $16,000.00 allocated toward a budget to take care of blight in the Borough. She said that they had a field trip to the City of Jeanette, where they met with the met with Fire Chief Bill Frick who also takes care of the city’s Ordinances. She said that he gave them information and reporting forms to give them the committee and idea of how they do things in Jeanette. Mrs. Rausch states that she realizes that obviously the borough does not have the manpower or the budget that Jeanette has but that the information was very insightful. She said the committee is looking into revamping the Welcome to Liberty Borough Sign that is placed coming up the hill into the borough. Mrs. Rausch said they are looking into trying to get a Liberty Borough Newsletter to let the residents know what is going on outside of the Council Meetings, raising the awareness of the complaint forms to report blight issues, and having food trucks in the borough. They started having food trucks when Jolynn’s was in the process of rebuilding, and everyone liked the food trucks so the committee would like to continue to schedule the events.

Mrs. Rausch said that the committee that the ten mentioned highlights would be explored more deeply, and positive action would be taken. She the next step taken this year is contacting our State Representative Matt Gergely. She said that Ms. Underwood has contacted him and is collaborating with him about attending one of the blight committee’s meetings to see how we can get him to assist our borough with the issues that the committee would like to work on. Mrs. Rausch reported that the committee has produced a program to correlate with the Spring Clean at the end of April. She asked the residents to take one of the flyers explaining the Spring Spruce Up Your Outside Space. She continues to explain this program is for the residents to tackle that outside cleanup project that they have been putting off. She said these projects could include but not limited to outside painting, outside repairs, getting rid of accumulated unsightly junk, yard clean up, power washing, and beautifying property. She said that when the residents have completed these projects, the residents are encouraged to bring their before and after photos or videos to the Borough building on Saturday May 4, 2024, between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to be eligible to win one of the three $30.00 gift cards for Jolynn’s. Mrs. Rausch expressed her gratitude to an anonymous donor for the gift cards on behalf of the Blight Committee.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

**Motion to accept** the typed minutes from the February 28, 2024, meeting.

**Motion: Mr. Matlos Second: Mrs. Matyasovsky**

**All in favor. Motion carries.**

Next meeting dates/times: Work Session Meeting – Wednesday, April 10, 2024, and the Regular Session Meeting -- Wednesday, April 24, 2024, at 6:00 pm.

A resident asked if the Borough is notified of a sexual predator moving into the Borough. Mr. Zrenchak said that would be a police department notification. The resident proceeded to say that there was a sexual predator that moved in next to him and that no one knew anything about it. Mr. Racunas explained that there is a state website to search. He stated that it is a public record. The resident said he looked the information up on Megan’s Law. Mr. Racunas said that the borough is not required to receive notice from the state. He was unsure about whether the Police Department did. The resident thought that the surrounding neighbors were supposed to be notified. Mr. Zrenchak said that the person might not be complying, and he could be in violation of his probation. Mr. Racunas and Mr. Zrenchak assured the resident that they would check with the Chief of Police to see what the requirements for registering as a sexual predator are.

**Motion** to adjourn at 6:28 p.m.

**Motion: Mr. Ponchak Second: Mr. Sloss**

**All in favor. Motion carries.**

**Meeting adjourned at 6:28 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Mike Zrenchak

Council President

Typed by:

Jamie Leber

Assistant Secretary