

Borough Council Workshop

Minutes – March 9, 2020

Call to Order – Mr. Daly called the meeting to order at 5:31pm.

Roll Call – The following members of the Borough Council were present; Cori Belles, Jessie Dekar, Patrick Gillette, Jessica Meyer, Irene Slocum, and James Daly. **Excused:** Jason Serfas.

Also present; Henry Farley, Mayor; Gil Crossett, Assistant Fire Chief; Elizabeth Fice, Borough Treasurer; Christopher Kaiden, Code Enforcement Director; Blane Lathrop, DPW Foreman; Robert Repasky, Fire Chief; Daniel Reynolds, Police Chief; Nick Shamot, Assistant DPW Foreman; and David Jarrett, Borough Manager.

Citizens to be Heard – There were none.

Presentation – Charity Fields, District Executive Director of the Bradford & Tioga Branch of the River Valley Regional YMCA explained that she recently met with elected officials of the Valley communities to discuss the possibility of expanding the YMCA's services to the area.

Ms. Fields presented an overview of the programs offered by the organization to the Borough Council and explained that programs such as youth development programs, social programs, and health & wellness programs including but not limited to silver sneakers, swimming program, adult athletic programs, and summer camp are currently offered to their members. Ms. Fields also stated that the YMCA currently offers the Brickhouse Program which is an after school program for students in the Towanda and Athens School Districts.

Mrs. Belles asked what the hours of operation would be, and Ms. Fields stated that Towanda facility is open 24 hours a day to accommodate members who work second and third shifts, but the center is only open between 5:15am and 9:00pm for members under 18.

Mrs. Dekar asked what the next step would be, and Ms. Fields stated that the minimal option would be to fund a Program Director position who would be responsible for identifying existing resources that could be utilized for programs.

Mrs. Belles also asked if a facility in the Valley would be solely supported by one community, and Ms. Fields stated that she would like to see all of the communities work together.

Mrs. Slocum asked how much staffing would be needed, and Ms. Fields stated that a front desk receptionist would be needed, and additional staffing would be determined by the types of programs offered.

Ms. Fields stated that the School Districts offer year round sports programs, but some students may not play all sports and the YMCA could fill that void.

Ms. Fields stated that the next meeting of elected officials will be held on March 19th at the Athens Township Municipal Building.

Department Reports – The following reports were presented to the Borough Council;

- a. Administration – Mr. Jarrett reported that the Borough's engineer has submitted the required paperwork to PennDOT for the PA 199 project and that more than \$55,000

has been collected from delinquent sewer accounts. Mr. Jarrett reported that the Borough received two bids to install lighting and the electrical service in the Desmond Street walkway and that the lowest bid was submitted by Jeff Paul Plumbing & Heating in the amount of \$7,300.

The second bid was submitted by Seth Barnes and was in the amount of \$9,500.00. Mr. Jarrett stated that neither of the bids included the six (6) light fixtures for the project, and that he anticipates the fixtures costing a total of \$1,000. **A motion was made by Mrs. Dekar and seconded by Mrs. Slocum to recommend approval of the bid received from Jeff Paul Plumbing & Heating to the Borough Council. Mr. Jarrett stated that the cost of the project will be funded by the parking lot fund.**

Mr. Jarrett also reported that he is preparing a grant application for the third phase of the Diahoga Trail project which would extend the trail along the top of the Borough's levee system, and that the new equipment storage garage will be completed by the end of the month.

- b. Code Enforcement – Mr. Kaiden reported that demolition of 209 and 221-221½ South Elmer Avenue will begin this week and the contractor will then move forward with the demolition of the former Shoe Doctor building on West Lockhart Street. Mr. Kaiden also reported that he is working with a mortgage holder to recover fees owed on a vacant property.
- c. Emergency Management – Mr. Daly reported that he, Mrs. Slocum, Mrs. Belles, and Ms. Ferguson attended the ICS 402 course that was presented at the Ulster Township Fire Hall last week. Mr. Daly also reported that he has been participating in the Emergency Management teleconferences regarding the COVID19 pandemic and that there are now ten (10) reported cases in Pennsylvania.
- d. Fire Department – Chief Repasky reported that the Department will be participating in a mock DUI exercise at the Sayre High School on April 16th.
- e. Greater Valley EMS – Chief Hall was unable to attend the meeting due to work schedule conflict.
- f. Police Department – Chief Reynolds reported that Patrol Officer Murrelle's training is going well.
- g. Public Works – Mr. Lathrop reported that he is continuing to work on finalizing the 2020 paving project and that the transmission on the Department's 2002 GMC Dump Truck will be replaced. Mr. Lathrop also reported that the street sweeper is already on the road for the season and that compost material is being screened. Mayor Farley asked Mr. Lathrop if he is concerned with the potential influx of people using the drop-off center as a result of the closure of the Athens Township drop-off center, and Mr. Lathrop stated that he was not concerned because many of the residents that currently use the Borough's facility are from other municipalities.

Elected Officials Questions & Comments – Mrs. Belles asked about the status of the conflicting ordinances that address alcohol on Borough properties, and Mr. Jarrett stated that he discussed the matter with Attorney Foster last month, but the issue was not resolved. Mr. Jarrett stated that he will meet with Attorney Foster again this month to review the ordinances as well as another set of conflicting ordinances that address solicitation. Mrs. Belles also asked about the Borough’s role in the upcoming census, and Mr. Daly stated that he and Ms. Ferguson have been responding to inquiries from the Census Bureau for the past two years. Mrs. Belles suggested that information about how important the census is be posted on the Borough’s website and on the radio.

Building Permit Fee Schedule Amendment – Mr. Jarrett explained that the Borough Council approved the service agreement with Erb Inspection Services last month, and now the Borough Council will need to advertise an amendment to the Borough Ordinance revising the fee schedule. Mr. Jarrett explained that the ordinance amendment removes the fee structure from the current ordinance and states that future revisions to the fee schedule will be adopted by Resolution. **A motion was made by Mr. Gillette and seconded by Mrs. Dekar to recommend advertisement of the ordinance amendment to the Borough Council.**

Commercial Sewer Rate Ordinance Amendment - Mr. Jarrett explained that an amendment to the sewer fee ordinance was necessary to eliminate the provision of a per pupil fee for schools and that the sewer fee for all non-residential (commercial) properties would be based on water use. Mrs. Belles asked how the change would impact the schools, and Mr. Jarrett explained that the sewer fee for the high school and Snyder Elementary building would increase, but the sewer fee for the Epiphany School would decrease based on the water meter readings for each of those buildings during the previous twelve months. **A motion was made by Miss Meyer and seconded by Mrs. Belles to recommend advertisement of the ordinance amendment to the Borough Council.**

DROP Pension Enrollment – Mr. Jarrett explained that Patrol Officer Steven Burlingame has enrolled in the DROP pension plan indicating that he plans to retire within the next five years. Mr. Jarrett explained that Officer Burlingame’s pension benefit will be frozen at the time of his enrollment and that monthly payments will be deposited into an account until he officially retires. Upon retirement, Officer Burlingame will begin receiving his monthly pension benefit and the funds that have been deposited into his account will be available to him.

Debt Refinancing & Capital Projects Loan – Mr. Jarrett explained that a meeting has been scheduled on March 30th with Jaime Schlesinger of PFM who was retained by the Borough in 2019 to evaluate debt refinancing options for the Borough. Mr. Jarrett stated that the Borough has previously refinanced its debt and borrowed new money for projects through a series of bank loans, but at this time the Borough’s best opportunity to refinance its existing debt and borrow new money for capital projects at the lowest rate possible would be through the sale of bonds. Mr. Jarrett stated that a list of potential capital projects will be developed this month and presented to the Borough Council for review on March 30th.

Park Use Requests – A motion was made by Mr. Gillette and seconded by Mrs. Dekar to recommend the approval of the request from the Guthrie ICU Department to host an employee's family Easter Egg Hunt in Howard Elmer Park on April 5th, and the request to host the annual Farm, Food, and Family Festival in Howard Elmer Park on August 1st.

Arts for All Stage Use Request – A motion was made by Mrs. Dekar and seconded by Mrs. Slocum to recommend the approval of the request to use the Foster Concert Stage for this year's event on May 2nd and May 3rd.

Guthrie Gallop Request – A motion was made by Mrs. Slocum and seconded by Mrs. Dekar to recommend the approval of the request from Guthrie for the annual Guthrie Gallop on May 8th.

Sayre Business Association Requests - The Borough Council discussed the following requests received from the Association;

Parking Validation Program – Mrs. Belles asked what the reason for the request, and Mayor Farley explained that the SBA is proposing a solution for customers who park to attend movies and hair salons. Mayor Farley stated that the businesses would place a sticker on the ticket envelope indicating that customer was at the business. Miss Meyer asked if the customer would still be required to put money in the meter and that the sticker would only be used if the amount of time at the business exceeded the maximum amount of time on the meter. Mr. Daly stated that he has had conversations with business owners who were interested in being able to buy a permit to park on the street, and that the cost of the permit would be equal to the cost of parking at a meter all day, but nothing ever materialized. Mr. Gillette stated that parking validation programs are common, but questioned how difficult it would be to enforce. Chief Reynolds stated that it is obviously easier to enforce parking when there are not any special provisions, but that the Department will be able to handle any changes to the program. Mrs. Dekar asked if there are multiple issues where customers received tickets because it took longer than they expected to complete their business. Mr. Jarrett explained that the parking meters around Howard Elmer Park and on the east side of Desmond Street by the town clock are the only meters that are less than two hours and that consideration was given to hair salon customers when the new meters were installed. Mr. Jarrett stated that the Borough previously proposed a parking validation program that would allow theatre customers to place their ticket stub in the ticket envelope in the event they received a ticket, but that concept never moved forward. A motion was made by Mr. Gillette and seconded by Mrs. Belles to recommend approval of a parking validation program on a six month trial basis to the Borough Council.

Street Closure Request – Mr. Daly explained that he SBA would like to host their 3rd Annual Street Fair on Saturday, June 27th from 8:00am to 4:00pm and request the closure of the 100 and 200 block of Desmond Street and use of the Foster Concert Stage. A motion was made by Mr. Gillette and seconded by Mrs. Dekar to recommend the approval of the street closure request and stage use request with the stipulation that the stage not be used for dance groups.

Food Truck Issue – This matter was deferred for future discussion at the March 30th workshop meeting.

Additional Park Use Request - Mr. Jarrett explained that he received a request earlier in the day from the new owner of Journey Fitness (Desmond Street) to host an exercise boot camp in Howard Elmer Park on April 4th. A motion was made by Mr. Gillette and seconded by Mrs. Slocum to recommend the approval of the park use request to the Borough Council.

Recess – Mr. Daly recessed the meeting at 7:05pm prior to going into Executive Session to discuss a personnel issue.

Executive Session – The Borough Council went into Executive Session at 7:06pm and the session ended at 7:35pm.

Adjourn – A motion was made by Mr. Gillette and seconded by Mrs. Belles to adjourn the meeting at 7:35pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



David M. Jarrett
Borough Manager/Secretary