

Borough Council Workshop Meeting

Minutes – October 19, 2020

Call to Order – Mr. Daly called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

Roll Call – The following members of the Borough Council were present; Cori Belles, Jessie Dekar, Jessica Meyer, Jason Serfas, Irene Slocum, and James Daly. Excused: Patrick Gillette. Also present; Henry Farley, Mayor; Gil Crossett, Asst. Fire Chief; Elizabeth Fice, Borough Treasurer; Jonathan Foster Jr., Borough Solicitor; Blane Lathrop, DPW Foreman; Christopher Kaiden, Code Enforcement Director; Daniel Reynolds, Police Chief; and David Jarrett, Borough Manager.

Citizens To Be Heard – The following citizens addressed the Borough Council;

Donna Hazleton, 212 North Thomas Avenue addressed the Borough Council and explained that she spoke to State Representative Tina Pickett regarding the legislation that would allow municipal police departments to utilize radar for speed enforcement. Ms. Hazleton stated that Representative Pickett informed her that the radar legislation will never be passed because the Pennsylvania State Police oppose it.

Debt Refinancing - Mr. Jarrett explained that the deadline to submit a proposal to PFM Financial is October 20th, and that two local banks have expressed interest to the Borough that they will be submitting proposals. Mr. Jarrett stated that proposals are being sought by the Borough to refinance existing debt and to borrow \$1.5 million for infrastructure improvements and \$2.0 million for capital expenses including a new aerial truck. PFM will review the proposals and prepare a recommendation to the Borough. Mr. Jarrett explained that the Borough Council will need to vote to adopt an ordinance authorizing the refinancing of the existing debt and borrowing of new monies at the October Council meeting. Mr. Jarrett explained that the process is different than a regular ordinance, and that Eckert Seamans will need to be retained to act as Bond Counsel for the Borough because the firm previously used by the Borough has a conflict of interest.

2021 Budget – Mr. Jarrett asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the 2021 budget as presented. Mrs. Dekar asked for further information on the following budget items;

- Unused Sick Leave – Mr. Jarrett explained that several employees are compensated annually for unused sick leave based on the language in their respective collective bargaining agreements for unionized employees and individual MOU's for non-union employees.

- Code Update – Miss Fice explained that General Code provided the Borough with a quote to review each of the Borough’s many codes and ordinances to determine if there are any contradictions. Miss Fice stated that municipalities go through this process every 20 years, but the Borough hasn’t gone through the process for nearly 30 years. Mr. Jarrett explained that the process is very time consuming and would continue through two budget cycles.
- Consultant Fees – Miss Fice explained that budget line item covers computer license fees for the various programs used for fund accounting by Administration Department staff.
- Borough Building Cost – Miss Fice explained that the budget line item is used for upkeep items for the Borough Hall and pest control services. Mrs. Dekar asked if there has been an increase in expenses this year due to COVID-19 safety precautions, and Miss Fice explained that supplies have been purchased and charged to this line item.
- School Resource Officer – Mrs. Dekar asked why the line item was reduced to \$0.00 for 2021, and Mr. Jarrett explained that the SRO salary was consolidated into the Patrol Officer Salary line item.
- Police Overtime – Mrs. Dekar asked why the line item was not increased in 2021 since it is already over budget, and Chief Reynolds explained that over time is higher than normal due to shift coverage during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Mayor Farley stated that overtime increased due to the number of public rallies held in the Borough during the past five months.
- Ammunition – Mrs. Dekar asked why the line item was decreased in 2021, and Chief Reynolds explained that he has not purchased any ammunition because the budget was frozen earlier in the year. Chief Reynolds explained that the Department did conduct training sessions during the year utilizing the simulator device, simunition weapons, and live ammunition and that he would like to purchase ammunition to replace what was used for training purposes preferably before the price increases. Chief Reynolds stated that it could take up to six (6) months to receive the ammunition after it is ordered.
- Police Department Major Equipment – Mrs. Dekar asked why the line item was reduced and what the funds are used for. Miss Fice explained that the line item being referenced is a Capital Reserve line item and that funds are budgeted and transferred to Capital Reserve for future use. Mr. Jarrett stated that \$0.00 was budgeted in 2020 due to lack of funds but \$16,000 is budgeted in 2021. Chief Reynolds explained that funds are used to purchase weapons, computers, and for ballistic shields in the past.
- Hydrant Rental – Mr. Jarrett explained that it is the annual fee paid by the Borough to Aqua PA to have the use of the fire hydrants in the Borough for fire services.

- Road Construction – Mrs. Dekar asked why the line item was decreased by \$100,000 in 2021 compared to 2020 amount, and Mr. Jarrett explained that \$100,000 was allocated from the Borough’s impact fee account to pave Pennsylvania Avenue. Mr. Jarrett stated that the Borough will utilize funds from this line item in addition to funds from the Local Services Tax and Liquid Fuels fund for paving projects in 2021.
- DPW Payroll – Mrs. Dekar asked why the line item was increased in 2021 compared to 2020 and Miss Fice explained that the Public Works Sewer related line item was reduced to \$0.00 and those funds were allocated to the Public Works Payroll line item. Miss Fice that the value of the Public Works Sewer related line item is equal to one full-time employee.
- Employee Health Insurance – Mrs. Dekar asked if the amount budgeted is an estimated amount, and Mr. Jarrett stated that the health fund provides the Borough with rates for a three year period which is very helpful for budgeting.

Mrs. Belles thanked Miss Fice for revising the budget worksheet to show end of year projections and stated that the projections are helpful. Mrs. Belles also stated that \$750,000 within the budget are directly related to projects funded by grants which inflates the budget total. Mrs. Belles stated that it will be very important to effectively communicate the budget increase to the public in a way that will help taxpayers understand the reason for the tax increase. Mayor Farley stated that purchase of new aerial truck is expensive but necessary for public safety.

There were no other questions or comments regarding the 2021 budget.

A motion was made by Mrs. Slocum and seconded by Mrs. Dekar to recommend the advertisement of the 2021 budget to the Borough Council. There were no objections.

A motion was made by Mrs. Dekar and seconded by Miss Meyer to recommend that Chief Reynolds be authorized to purchase \$4,000.00 worth of ammunition for the Police Department.

Recess – Mr. Daly recessed the meeting at 6:15pm prior to going into executive session to discuss a personnel issue and litigation issue.

Executive Session – The Borough Council went into Executive Session at 6:15pm. The session ended at 7:10pm. No action was taken following the executive session.

Adjourn - A motion was made by Mrs. Dekar and seconded by Miss Meyer to adjourn the meeting at 7:10pm. There were no objections.

Respectfully submitted,



David M Jarrett
Borough Manager/Secretary