

BOROUGH OF WEST EASTON
COUNCIL MEETING
January 25, 2016

The second monthly meeting of the Council of the Borough of West Easton, Northampton County, Pennsylvania, was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Council President Dan DePaul in Council Chambers of the West Easton Municipal Building, 237 Seventh Street, West Easton, Pennsylvania.

Roll was taken and Council President noted there was a quorum. Present were Council President Dan DePaul, Council Members Ron Nixon, Matthew Dees, Henry Nodoline and Robert Lewis. Council Members Thomas Nodoline and Louis Nikos were absent. Mayor Gerald Gross and Solicitor Steve Goudsouzian were present. Pete & Bonnie Mammana, Bruce Walter, Leon Stull, Pete Rossi, Tony & Janet Giamoni, Tricia Mezzacappa, Joel & Julie Nixon of the public were in attendance. Dane Thatcher and Wayne Deemer, Borough employees were in attendance.

Public Comment

Leon Stull of Second Street: Mr. Stull commented on the letter that the Borough residents received from Advanced Disposal. He was concerned over the limitations in the amount of trash allowed and only one bulk item per trash pickup. Mr. Stull also stated that Advanced Disposal would not accept any tires.

Council President DePaul spoke with Advanced Disposal. All trash put out will be collected by Advanced Disposal. Advanced Disposal is concerned with the total amount of weight that was collected throughout the year. Council President DePaul asked the residents in attendance if anyone knew if any trash was missed. No one spoke up.

Mayor Gross mentioned that the only comments he heard was on how well they did.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Gross distributed the specifications for the generator for Borough Municipal building. He also handed a sealed bid to the Solicitor. Mayor Gross said that the advertised bid should also include the cost to complete hookup.

Mayor Gross asked the Solicitor if his rate to the Borough would vary depending on the work being done. Solicitor Goudsouzian replied that the fee is a flat \$100/hr no matter what type of work is being done.

Mayor Gross also spoke to Council regarding an engineering report by T&M Associates on the cracks in the building. The general contractor came and looked at it.

T&M dug down to see about the subsoil and compaction of the soil. There is a full report by T&M. A quote of for micro-pilings was \$20,000. The Mayor suggested that a copy of the report should be requested from T&M. T&M suggested that the corner of the building be pointed up to prevent water from coming behind the wall.

Mayor Gross felt changing the High Industry Zone to a Light Industry Zone would be beneficial to the Borough. Mr. Dees asked Mayor Gross as to the percentage that should be rezoned. Mayor Gross replied that George Johnson has been building up the area by bringing in companies that are light industry.

Council President DePaul expressed his opinion. He stated that if it is zoned for High Industry and a company that is considered to be Light Industry can occupy the property. So why change the zoning. Mayor Gross stated that the former Solicitor suggested that it would be a better idea. Mayor Gross asked the current Solicitor to review it to see if any assistance can be offered to George Johnson to continue developing the area.

Engineer's Report – None

Solicitor's Report

Solicitor Goudsouzian told the Borough Council included in their packets is a letter giving David Gehman permission to handwrite checks, such as payroll and other items necessary for operating the Borough.

Secondly, the property at 900 Palmer Street was recently purchased and there was a lien placed on the property. The lien should have been satisfied but was not satisfied. Solicitor Goudsouzian needed permission to satisfy the lien.

Bonding: The bonding limits were only \$5,000. This limit was terribly low. Solicitor Goudsouzian stated that the Borough is in a precarious position.

Solicitor Goudsouzian would like the Council's permission to update and codify the ordinance.

Carl Pierson said that Council marked up the first draft of the codification. That first draft should be available in the archives if it can be located. The first draft addressed all the ordinances up to the time it was going to be printed. Solicitor Goudsouzian said that would be a good starting point if it can be located.

Other issues will be addressed in Executive Session.

OFFICE REPORT

David Gehman stated, "The office currently does not have a working financial system." I have been able to retrieve information given to Dallas Data for the

conversion to the new system. I can take that information and update it with payments received since the end of November. The information for the W-2's for the Council and Borough employees has to be manually calculated.

A new router was installed to prevent anyone from outside the building accessing the computer system.

A computer tech company has been in the office to review the computer equipment in the office and will prepare a report as to what is still needed to run the new computer system.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Council President DePaul stated that the Borough will be buying out David Gehman's contract with Accountemps. We will discuss this further in Executive Session.

Secondly; issues with the Workman's Compensation for the Volunteer Fire Company which has been well known throughout the Borough for years. Through investigation it was found that only one company is offering the insurance in the state of Pennsylvania. The Borough could opt for a State Fund but then it could also pay more if were to participate. Rates for Workman's Compensation are determined by the size of the population, not anything else.

RESOLUTIONS

A motion by Mr. Henry Nodoline, second Mr. Nixon, the Council approved a \$15,000 donation to Safety First Volunteer Fire Company.

Discussion: The Mayor commented that the amount is well worth it. He asked Bill Bogari, Jr., Fire Chief for an updated budget so that Council can provide an accurate amount for the donation. Council President DePaul noted that in addition to the donation the Borough pays for the Workman's Compensation for the Fire Company.

Motion approved 5-0.

Council President DePaul turned the floor over to Solicitor Goudsouzian. The next resolution is to establish a policy for escrow accounts. Monies are to be kept separate from the Borough's funds. Mr. Dees asked if there is a minimum required.

A motion by Mr. Dees, second by Mr. Lewis, the Council approved the motion to establish separate Escrow Accounts. Motion approved 5-0.

Solicitor Goudsouzian continued with the next resolution that established rights of the Borough residents to use the outlets in Council chambers.

A motion by Mr. Nixon, second by Mr. Lewis the Council approved motion to allow the public the right to use the electrical outlets. Motion approved 4-0. Mr. Dees abstained.

Solicitor Goudsouzian explained the next resolution allows the office personnel, specifically Joan and David, to spend up to \$800.00/month without prior Council approval. The expenditures must be presented at the next Council meeting.

A motion by Mr. Henry Nodoline, second by Mr. Dees the Council approved the motion to allow the office personnel to spend up to \$800/month without prior Council approval. The expenditures and receipts must be presented at the next Council meeting. Motion 5-0.

Committee Reports –

Finance – Mr. Lewis stated that we need a motion to close the budget. Carl Pierson would like to attend the next Finance meeting because he will have questions for the committee. Mayor Gross would also like to attend the meeting.

Property/Highway – Mr. Henry Nodoline talked about the new plow truck that the spreader literally fell apart when being used the first time. The plow on the new truck also would not lock into place. The old truck first had a flat tire. That was fixed. Then the rear went in the old truck. The new truck is currently at Star Pontiac because the universal broke on the front end of the truck. Repairs to the old truck could run as much as \$2,000. A 550-truck would be the best type of truck to handle the heavier snows. We need a truck with 4-wheel drive not rear wheel drive because of the hills. If we have ice tonight we will not be able to spread salt on the roads.

Mayor Gross told Mr. Nodoline that Wilson Borough is getting rid of some of their older trucks. Mayor Gross said to speak to Greg, let him know we would be interested in one. Mr. Nodoline said that only Ford and Dodge make the 550 model of truck.

Mr. Lewis also mentioned to look at Costars through the state. No bidding would be necessary the state already has done the work for us.

Mr. Nixon wanted to know what Star Pontiac said about the new truck. Mr. Henry Nodoline said that the repairs probably will not be under warranty because plowing isn't considered normal use.

The Mayor said to Mr. Henry Nodoline that a preventive maintenance schedule might prevent some of these issues.

Mr. Henry Nodoline wants to know why the dealership didn't speak up and advise the Borough's representatives to go with a better and stronger truck.

Mr. Dees reports back to Council regarding purchasing a “Deer” camera with a “Bear” box. The cost of the camera would be about \$130.00. Council President DePaul suggested purchasing one and seeing how well it operates. Then depending on the results from the camera an additional camera(s) may be purchased.

A motion by Mr. Nixon, second by Mr. Henry Nodoline, Council approved the purchase a field camera. Motion approved 5-0.

Public Safety – Council President DePaul said we have already talked about the Snow removal. One other item is the funds from the Block watch account were transferred to the Community Activities account and the Block Watch account was closed.

Legal/Newsletter/Commuter – Mr. Dees started with the good news. The new Borough website was up for review on Friday, Saturday and Sunday (1/22-24). The initial costs were \$197 for the domain name and possibly another \$150 in additional costs will be necessary. Council members and Borough employees received information sheets to be complete so that information can be uploaded to the website. The website will be up again on Saturday, January 30th for an additional preview. Mr. Dees would like feedback on the website. When the website is ready to be launched, Mr. Dees would train the Borough manager to upload information.

No report on Legal information until we go into Executive session. The community newsletter has been delayed because of the computer issues in the borough office. Council President DePaul suggested that a short newsletter go out with the Utility billing.

A review of the computers in the Borough office shows that we have two working desktop computers. A third one is missing. The workstation/server in the back office is not useable due to the fact that we do not have passwords. Mr. Dees stated that the Borough did not receive what they paid for. Mr. Dees suggested that the Solicitor look at the invoices that have been and determine if anything can be done to rectify the problem.

Mr. Dees also would like to a backup done at least once a week with the backup being locked in a safe. Mr. Dees agrees that we should have two IT companies/firms to use especially with the upcoming conversion to the Cassel software.

Mr. Dees would like to have a Legal/Newsletter/Commuter committee meeting at 10am on Wednesday, January 27th.

A motion by Mr. Dees, second by Mr. Nixon, Council approved Mr. Lewis to watch the webinars. Motion approved 5-0.

David Gehman brought up that Council select an IT company.

A motion by Mr. Lewis, second by Mr. Dees, the Council approved David Gehman to select a IT company for the borough. Motion approved 5-0.

Grants – The information on the next CIPP grant should be coming out at the end of February, per Council President DePaul.

OLD BUSINESS

A motion by Mr. Lewis, second by Mr. Dees, the Council approved Barry Isett & Associates to be our Zoning Officer. Motion approved 5-0.

Mayor Gross asked Solicitor Goudsouzian if an exit interview needs to be done on the previous zoning officer.

Mr. Henry Nodoline asked who the Right-To-Know officer. Council President DePaul stated that Joan Heeber, the Borough Secretary would now be the Right-To-Know officer with Solicitor Goudsouzian being the assistant Right-To-Know officer.

A motion by Mr. Henry Nodoline, second by Mr. Dees, the Council approved Joan Heebner as the Borough's Right-To-Know officer with Solicitor Goudsouzian as the assistant Right-To-Know officer. Motion approved 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Henry Nodoline suggested that people on Ninth and Tenth Street could park on the Borough property on Ridge Street to get the cars off the streets so that they can be streets can be plowed properly.

Council President DePaul directed Mr. Dees to put in the next newsletter about Odd and Even Parking for subsequent snow storms so that the street can be cleared properly.

Mayor Gross said that Joseph Cicero works with his neighbors and gets Fifth Street cleared. Tricia Mezzacappa suggested that once the Emergency Routes are cleared the Borough allow residents to park on the Emergency Routes while the other streets are cleared. Pete Mammana also stated that people park in front of his home but don't live in the near him. They clear the snow off of their cars and leave piles of snow for him and his neighbors to clear.

Mr. Nixon also mentioned about having the fire hydrants marked so that they can be located in the snow. Council President DePaul said he will speak with the Fire Chief regarding that matter.

A motion by Mr. Dees, second by Mr. Nixon, the Council approved that bids be accepted for the generator with the specifications that Mayor Gross obtained for the Kohler generator.

Discussion – Mr. Lewis asked the Mayor if Costar has been checked regarding the generator. The Mayor replied he did not. Mr. Dees agreed to table the motion. Mayor Gross gave the Solicitor a sealed bid for the generator.

A motion by Mr. Dees, second by Mr. Lewis, the Council approved Solicitor Goudsouzian to work the Borough Clerk to establish a list of ordinances and to have the list codified. Motion 5-0.

Mr. Dees also brought up giving a raise to the Borough's maintenance man. Mr. Dees asked Dane Thatcher when the last time he had a monetary raise. Mr. Thatcher replied 4 ½ years. Council President referred this matter to the Solicitor when we go into Executive Session.

Mr. Dees also questioned Mr. Thatcher where he lives. Mr. Thatcher said he lives about 13 miles from the Borough. Mr. Dees said he understood Mr. Thatcher has previously slept on the floor in the Municipal Building. Mr. Thatcher said he has during snow storms.

A motion by Mr. Dees, second by Mr. Lewis, the Council approved Dane Thatcher to spend up to \$150 for bedding that can be used in the Borough Municipal Building during snow storms.

Discussion – Mr. Henry Nodoline thanked Mr. Thatcher for a great job during the historic snowstorm. Mr. Wayne Deemer spoke up that he has been working for the Borough since 2007 on a part-time basis and he has not received an increase in that entire time. Mr. Lewis asked the Mayor if there was a cot at the Fire Company to provide shelter.

Motion approved 5-0.

Council President DePaul brought up advertising for the Borough Manager. Since we do not have a functional office do we precede? Does Council want to hire a Borough Manager now or does Council want to hire an Interim Borough Manager until the office is back up and running and functional.

Mr. Dees reviewed the applications that had been received and they covered a broad range of experience. Mr. Dees said it would be good to maybe find someone with a general knowledge. Personnel Committee will meet on Thursday, January 28th, 10am.

A motion by Mr. Henry Nodoline, second by Mr. Dees, the Council approved Solicitor Goudsouzian to satisfy the lien on 900 Palmer Street. Motion approved 5-0.

Solicitor Goudsouzian stated that the Zoning ordinances are severally out of date.

A motion by Mr. Henry Nodoline, second by Mr. Dees, the Council approved the Zoning Officer to review the Zoning book and provide his finding to the Solicitor.

Discussion – Mayor Gross asked who the new Zoning officer was. Solicitor Goudsouzian said it was Barry Isset & Associates. Council President DePaul asked if the former Zone Officer, John Lezoche would also provide input. Solicitor Goudsouzian agreed that would also be helpful.

Motion approved 5-0.

A motion by Mr. Lewis, second by Mr. Dees, the Council approved to draft a letter to be sent to Mr. Bill Bogari, Jr. in resuming the position as Emergency Management Coordinator for the Borough.

Council President DePaul has asked Bill Bogari, Jr. in resuming the position as Emergency Management Coordinator for the Borough. President DePaul said we could approach Mr. Bogari with a formal letter requesting him return to the position. If he accepts, the Council could nominate him.

Mayor Gross said that it would make his job easier. The Mayor also stated that Bill Bogari, Jr. is highly respected in the County and the State.

Motion approved 5-0.

Council President DePaul asked about the letter in the Council packets in regarding to MECAB. Dues are \$50 for the year. The next meeting is January 27th at 7pm in Freemansburg.

A motion by Mr. Henry Nodoline, second Mr. Dees, Council approved to pay the \$50 fee to rejoin MECAB.

Discussion – Mr. Dees asked if anyone was a member of the organization. Mayor Gross said he used to attend years ago when he was Council president. Mr. Lewis asked what they do for us or what we do for them. Council President DePaul said they hold regular meeting and usually invite a speaker. The meeting on Wednesday, January 27th the guest speaker is State Representative Robert Freeman and you can ask any questions you want.

Motion 5-0

A motion by Mr. Nixon, second by Mr. Lewis, Council approved to go into Executive Session. Motion approved 5-0.

A motion by Mr. Dees, second by Mr. Nixon, Council returned from Executive Session. Motion approved 5-0.

A motion by Mr. Dee, second by Mr. Lewis, Council approved to increase the hourly rate of Dane Thatcher to \$17.52/hr. Motion approved 5-0.

A motion by Mr. Henry Nodoline, second by Mr. Dees, Council approved to increase the hourly rate for the part-time employees for snow removal to \$13.09/hr. Motion approved 5-0.

A motion by Mr. Lewis, second by Mr. Nixon, Council approved to pay Joan Heebner the hourly rate of \$15.00/hr. Motion approved 5-0.

A motion by Mr. Nixon, second by Mr. Henry Nodoline, Council approved to pay David Gehman, Borough Senior Clerk (new employee), the hourly rate of \$15.00/hr. Motion approved 5-0.

A motion by Mr. Lewis, second by Mr. Nixon, Council approved to buyout the contract with Accounemps for David Gehman. Motion approved 5-0.

A motion by Mr. Dees, second by Mr. Nixon, Council approved Solicitor Goudsouzian to respond to the letter from T&M Associates for alleged amounts owed. Motion approved 5-0.

A motion by Mr. Lewis, second by Mr. Nixon, Council approved Solicitor Goudsouzian to respond by letter to Assad Younes for alleged amounts owed. Motion approved 5-0.

A motion by Mr. Henry Nodoline, second by Mr. Nixon, Council approved Solicitor Goudsouzian to look into alleged issues for the computers and other allegations. Motion approved 5-0.

A motion by Mr. Lewis, second by Mr. Dees, Council approved to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 10:32pm. Motion approved 5-0.