

BOROUGH OF WEST EASTON
COUNCIL MEETING

May 9, 2016

APPROVED

The regular 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 Matthew Dees, Henry Nodoline, Thomas Nodoline and Robert Lewis. Council Members Ron Nixon and Louis Niko were absent. Mayor Gerald Gross, Interim Borough Manager Pete Rossi; Solicitor Steve Goudsouzian and Carl Pierson, Treasurer were present. Pete & Bonnie Mammana, Leon Stull, Bruce Walter, Sandi Rossi, Trude Hargraves, Betsy Wagner and Robin Colabaugh were members of the public in attendance.

A motion by Mr. H. Nodoline, second by Mr. Lewis; Council approved check # 14944 through #15005 in the General Fund.

Discussion – Mr. Dees commented on ck# 14963 that the check was not for web hosting/design. The charges incurred were for the cost of the domain name and the transfer of the domain name to a different registrar.

Motion passed 5-0.

A motion by Mr. H. Nodoline, second by Mr. Dees; Council approved checks #1949 and #1951 from the Sewer Fund. Motion passed 5-0.

A motion by Mr. Dees, second by Mr. H. Nodoline; Council approved Deposits & Receipts for April 2016. Motion passed 5-0.

A motion by Mr. Lewis and second by Mr. Dees, Council approved the minutes for April 11, 2016

Discussion – Mr. Dees had corrections. Page 2, third paragraph from the bottom. Mr. Nixon made the comment not Mr. Dees. Page 6, second paragraph, the website should be www.westeastonborough.com. "Borough" was omitted.

Motion passed with changes passed 5-0.

A motion by Mr. Lewis and second by Mr. H. Nodoline, Council approved the April 2016 Treasurer's Report.

Discussion – Mr. Dees asked if anyone has looked into getting a better interest rate. Mr. Rossi replied that he spoke with someone from Merchants Bank of Bangor. A representative will be meeting with the office personnel later this week.

Motion passed 4-1. Mr. T. Nodoline was the dissenting vote.

A motion by Mr. Dees, second Mr. Lewis; Council authorized the Borough Manager to prepare, file and sign the necessary paperwork at a FDIC insured institution for a period of one year.

Motion passed 4-1. Mr. T. Nodoline was the dissenting vote.

Public Comment –

Leon Stull of Second Street – Mr. Stull wanted to discuss the trimming of weeds in the borough.

Trude Hargraves of Second Street – Asked about Mr. Niko.

Mayor's Report –

The Mayor first discussed that the Borough needs an Emergency Management Coordinator. The Mayor has spoken with Bill Bogari, Sr and Bill Bogari, Jr. and neither have the desire to do to assume the position. Mayor Gross stated that he and Council President DePaul would be the only “qualified” individuals to make decisions on behalf of the Borough. The main concern for residents living on Lehigh Drive is flooding. The Mayor requests a meeting with the Borough Council to make sure that a plan is in place in the event of a disaster involving the Borough.

Council President DePaul suggested speaking to the Assistant Fire Chief. The Mayor also suggested to speaking to other Fire Chief in neighboring municipalities. Mr. Rossi stated he was exploring those resources.

Mayor Gross said that he is constantly being asked by Borough residents when the Borough would be getting police coverage. The Mayor has had meetings and the next step is that the Borough Council President will be contacted in regards to coverage. The Mayor stated his major concern is public safety.

The Mayor again complimented Council members for the ongoing training that some have completed.

Engineer's Report –

Chris Geary from Barry Isett & Associates reported back to Council on the road repair on Adamson Street and also on Spring Street at the railroad trestle using the

previous reports prepared by T & M Associates and Earth Engineering and his own recent inspection.

Mr. Geary offered three options for Adamson Street (approximately 575 feet from the railroad tracks to the railroad bridge. The first option would be to mill and overlay which would last 3-5 years, price would be approximately \$75,000. The second option would be to excavate the middle portion of the road the cost would be \$143,000. The third option which is a total reconstruction would be \$240,000.

Mr. T. Nodoline questioned about repairing the sewer drain pipes that run underneath the roadway when the street is repaired. Mr. Rossi confirmed that the street is mostly concrete under the current surface. He also agreed with Mr. T. Nodoline that when the street is opened for repairs if the sewer drains pipes should be repaired depending upon their condition.

Bids would be can be put out by Barry Isett and Associates but must follow Penn DOT guidelines since the Borough will be using Liquid Fuels money.

A motion by Mr. Lewis, second by Mr. Dees; Council approved that the proposal be sent to the Property/Highway Committee for review.

Discussion – Mayor Gross mentioned that the longer Council delays on putting the project out for bid the more it will cost because fuel costs continue to rise. Mr. Rossi stated that he has companies coming into the Borough regarding the crack sealing of the streets.

Motion carried 4-1. Mr. T. Nodoline was the dissenting vote.

The Property/Highway Committee will meet on Friday, May 13 @ 1pm.

Mr. Geary also reported on Spring Street in the trestle area. The repair area would consist of 215 feet (the repair would be between Iron Street and Center Street). The recommendation would be to saw cut the necessary repair in the trestle area and micro-seal the remaining area of the project.

Mr. Geary stated that Barry Isett & Associates reviewed the prior reports on the building foundation. To get a definitive answer another study would need to be done to provide current information.

Solicitor's Report –

Solicitor Goudsouzian stated that there are two items that need to be discussed during an Executive Session. The first item pertains to the Condemnation of the Ridge Street property and the second involves the litigation with Tricia Mezzacappa.

West Easton Scholarship Committee

Robin Colabaugh, current President of the West Easton Scholarship Fund spoke to Council. She reported that the committee was formed in 1983 with the first scholarship being given in 1986. There are normally only two meetings. Applications are assigned a number and no one related to an applicant can participate in the process.

Ms. Colabaugh has asked if information can be inserted in the newsletter. Mr. Dees stated that information can be added to the Borough website for the Scholarship committee.

The Scholarship committee will be giving out two scholarship for 2016. Applications can be found at Notre Dame High School, Wilson Area High School and a satellite high school.

Office Report

Mr. Gehman provided the Council with an update on the installation of the new computer system. The system has been installed and some minor issues are being resolved.

The 2015 annual audit is complete. The report will be filed electronically on Wednesday, May 11th.

Mr. Rossi asked the Solicitor about the structuring on the Escrow Account.

The utility accounts are being cross checked with the County website to make sure that our information is up to date. The County has also contacted the Borough office regarding assessment issues such as sheds or out buildings that were built, some without the necessary permits. Over 20 senior residents came into the Borough office for the discount offered.

Northampton County also sent a list of interim assessments for the Borough. There were three properties with a decrease and ten with increases. The net gain would be about \$250.00.

**Mr. T. Nodoline needed to leave due to an alarm going off at his work. Mr. DePaul stated that a quorum was still present.

A motion by Mr. Dees, second by Mr. Lewis; Council approved the Borough tax collector to send out interim billings on the re-assessments.

Motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Rossi included a copy of a letter from an attorney who specialized in collections in the Council members pockets

Mr. Rossi also looked into the Borrowing Camera Equipment program. It would involve three cameras for one location. Battery operated. One camera is backed up by the other two cameras. One camera is for night vision; the other camera is high speed and high definition. The camera will email you the images and then images can be retrieved from the other cameras. If the cameras detects any criminal activity; the Borough must prosecute.

Mr. Rossi also discussed the issue of summer help for Dane Thatcher, Maintenance Supervisor. The DUI Center has not been able to provide the Borough with the necessary manpower. Plus the manpower from the DUI Center cannot handle power tools.

A motion by Mr. H. Nodoline, second by Mr. Lewis; Council approved the Borough Manager to get applications for summer help

Motion approved 4-0.

Mr. Rossi met with the Jeff Rohrbach from PennDOT. The Borough's responsibility for the construction on Lehigh Drive will be approximately \$7,000. A decision needs to be made how the project will be paid.

Mr. Rossi stated the Borough needs to complete the Codification of the ordinances and resolutions. The status of the Codification is stalled.

A meeting was set for Wednesday, May 11th @ 10:30 am and Wednesday, May 18th @ 10:30 am to work on Codification.

Finally, Mr. Rossi went over the LTAP Engineering report for the train trestle. Council President also received a report with color photos. The only item of eminent danger was a railroad tie that was loose and hanging down from the trestle. The loose railroad tie has been removed. Correct signage will also need to be posted on Spring Street. Council President DePaul stated that the Property/Highway Committee will review the report and make a decision.

Council President Report

Mr. DePaul reported that he has done some investigating as to the cost of a folding machine. He suggested that it might be cost efficient to purchase a simple folding machine that can fold our utility bills and quarterly newsletter.

Mr. DePaul then read the resignation letter from Councilman Mr. Louis Niko.

A motion by Mr. H. Nodoline, second by Mr. DePaul; Council accepted the resignation of Councilman Mr. Louis Niko.

Discussion – Council members debated whether to acknowledge the resignation of Mr. Niko at this meeting. Solicitor Goudsouzian made Council aware that they have 45 days to accept the resignation and then an additional 30 days to recommend and appoint a replacement.

Voice vote – Mr. DePaul – Yes, Mr. Dees – No, Mr. H. Nodoline – Yes, Mr. Lewis – No. Vote is 2 – 2. Mayor Gross broke the tie and voted “Yes” to accept the resignation of Mr. Niko.

Mr. DePaul also received a letter from Sharon Niko, Mr. Niko’s daughter, acknowledging her father’s accomplishments.

A motion by Mr. Dees, second by Mr. Lewis; Council approved the office to order an award for Mr. Niko acknowledging his service to the Borough.

Motion 4-0.

A motion by Mr. DePaul, second by Mr. Dees; Council approved to advertise the open Council seat on the website, in the office and on the bulletin board, and by word of mouth.

Motion 4-0.

Council Roundtable

None.

Committee Reports

None.

Old Business

The Mayor voiced his displeasure at the trees that were cut down around the Borough Municipal Building.

New Business

A motion by Mr. Dees, second by Mr. H. Nodoline; Council approved the travel costs for Mr. Lewis to attend the Annual Conference.

Council Entered Executive Session at 9:25pm

Council Exit Executive Session at 9:40pm

Solicitor Goudsouzian stated the need for the Executive Session was for discussing the status of the Condemnation of the Ridge Street property and the documents filed by Ms. Mezzacappa. No formal decisions were made in the Executive session.

A motion by Mr. Dees, second by Mr. H. Nodoline, Council approved to adjourn. Motion passed 4-0.

Meeting adjourned 9:43pm.