

BOROUGH OF WEST EASTON
COUNCIL MEETING

NOVEMBER 28, 2016

APPROVED

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, Tom Nodoline, Henry Nodoline and Paul James. Council member Robert Lewis was absent. Also present were: Mayor, Gerald Gross; Borough Manager, Joan Heebner; Borough Senior Clerk, David Gehman and Borough Solicitor, Steve Goudsouzian. Members of the public in attendance: Nancy Kutz, Sandi & Pete Rossi, Leon Stull, Peter & Bonnie Mammana, Jim & Elaine Jankowich, Sean Bercaw and David Bogusky.

Upon motion by Mr. Dees, second by Mr. James; Council approved check #15505 through #15541 and #15546 from the General Fund Account.

Discussion - Mr. Dees questioned why there was no amount for check # 15514. Mr. Gehman replied that check #15514 and check #15523 through #15526 were voided checks. The checks were then cut correctly (check #15531 and check #15538 through #15541). The checks were for the settlement on the Ridge Street property formerly owned by the Nodoline family.

Motion passed 6 - 0.

Upon motion by Mr. H. Nodoline, second by Mr. James; Council approved check #2015 through #2106 from the Sewer Fund Account.

Motion passed 6 - 0.

Upon motion by Mr. Nixon, second by Mr. Dees; Council approved to advertise the 2017 budget.

Motion passed 6 – 0.

Public Comment –

Nancy Kutz of Spring Street raised the question regarding Kelly Gross removing the trash charge from her utility bill for five years.

Council President DePaul asked Solicitor Goudsouzian to respond to Ms. Kutz.

Solicitor Goudsouzian answered for the Council in brief. The matter was looked into. The findings were given to the appropriate authority and they decided no action would be taken.

Ms. Kutz felt that it was unfair for Ms. Gross to not pay all the additional late charges and fees especially since the Utility bill is to be paid in full. Ms. Kutz stated that the Council was very unfair and corrupt.

Mr. Dees responded to Ms. Kutz's comment that this incident happened under the former Council and the current Council acted appropriately. Ms. Kutz agreed.

Mayor's Report –

The Mayor questioned the amount of \$3,000 that appeared in the 2017 budget for matching funds for grants. Mr. Dees commented that the \$3,000 referred to applications fees and preparation fees for the grants.

Mayor Gross gave the example of the Leaf Loader. He mentioned that the piece of equipment was getting old and would need to be replaced. He felt that the Borough should get estimates on replacing the equipment and have the monies available when it does need to be replaced.

Mayor Gross also agreed with the Quality of Life ordinance that the Legal Committee has been working on for the past several months. He also believes that the Borough code, should be updated and a code enforcement officer be hired to enforce them. If the Borough does not start its own police department, the Borough should hire a code enforcement officer that has policing power.

The code enforcement officer could remove cars off the Snow Emergency routes for snow removal. The Mayor also brought up the existing issue of safety at the Hubcap Store because of the number of tractor trailers. The Mayor hopes that Council would take the Borough code enforcement officer under advisement.

The Borough code enforcement officer would also tie in with the enforcement of the Borough's Quality of Life ordinance.

Solicitor's report –

Solicitor Goudsouzian had several points to be discussed. First of all, Solicitor Goudsouzian stated that the Condemnation of the Ridge Street property has been settled. The Borough Council approved the checks payable to the legal representatives of the Nodoline family earlier in the meeting.

Solicitor Goudsouzian stated that his office forwarded information to Council regarding the compensation of an auditor. The Mezzacappa litigation will be updated in the Executive Session.

The number of police officers that a municipality can have without being required to have Civil Service Commission is less than three.

The final issue that the Solicitor discussed was the International Property Code ordinance. The Borough's ordinance does not update automatically and the ordinance needs to be corrected/re-written to bring it current.

Mr. Dees questioned the Solicitor regarding to the police staffing if the Police Chief was included in the number of officers. The Solicitor replied that the Chief would be included in that number.

Office Report –

Mr. Gehman had two items to bring to Council. First of all, a letter has been sent to Dallas Data Systems terminating our contract for Caselle.

Secondly, Joe Hoffman from Barry Isett & Associates has sent out letters to businesses and residents that currently have code issues which have not been resolved. The Borough is currently in a holding pattern until the mail certification cards are returned. Barry Isett will either receive the signed green card or the certified letter will be returned as being unclaimed.

President's Report –

Council President DePaul stated that the Ridge Street property was going to be cleaned up this week but due to the poor weather expected the next several days the clean-up will be done next week.

Council Roundtable –

Mr. Dees asked about Life Insurance that is offered to the elected officials. Is it considered compensation or not? Mr. Gehman stated that PSAB, the insurance company that initiated the program and the current insurance company handling the insurance have all been contacted numerous times with no resolution.

Mr. Gehman will continue to work on getting the information for Council.

Committee Reports –

Finance Committee –

Mr. James stated that the next Finance Committee will be on Thursday, December 8, 2016 at 1:00pm.

Property/Street Department - None

Public Safety/Personnel Committee – None

Legal/Newsletter/Computer Committee –

Mr. James, Committee chairperson, stated the committee has met during the last two months working out the Quality of Life ordinance. Mr. James would like to set up public meeting so that the public's interest could be expressed and their input used in the ordinance.

Mr. James also scheduled the next committee meeting for Thursday, December 8, 2016 for 2:00pm.

Utilities Committee –

Mr. Nixon stated that everything has been submitted to Met-Ed for the changeover of the street lights to LED lighting. The project should be completed within in the next 6 months.

Recreation – None

Grants –

Chairman, Mr. Dees, stated that we are waiting for approval of the grant for the public works building from HUD. Council President DePaul added that HUD was limiting the amount of engineering fees that can be included in the proposal to 10% of the total amount of the grant.

Unfinished Business

New Business –

Paul James began a discussion on increasing the salaries of Council members and the Mayor. Mr. James said the recommendation was to increase all salaries by \$100 for the newly elected officers that would take office in January 2018.

Discussion was tabled until June, 2017.

Additional Public Comment - None

**Mr. Thomas Nodoline left Council meeting at the start of the Executive Session.

Entered Executive Session at 8:00 pm

Exited Executive Session at 8:15 pm

Council took no action on Executive Session items.

Upon motion by Mr. Ron Nixon, second by Mr. James; Council voted to adjourn.

Motion passed 5 - 0. Meeting adjourned at 9:19pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

David W. Gehman, Borough Senior Clerk