

BOROUGH OF WEST EASTON
COUNCIL MEETING

DECEMBER 12, 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 Ron Nixon, Matthew Dees, Henry Nodoline, Paul James and Tom Nodoline. Council member Robert Lewis was absent. Also present were: Mayor, Gerald Gross; Borough Manager, Joan Heebner; Solicitors, Steve Goudsouzian and Robert Eyer; and Borough Senior Clerk, David Gehman. Members of the public in attendance: Pete & Bonnie Mammana, Sandi & Pete Rossi and Tricia Mezzacappa.

Upon motion by Mr. H. Nodoline, second by Mr. James; Council approved check #15543 through #15564 from the General Fund Account.

Motion passed 6 - 0.

Upon motion by Mr. H. Nodoline, second by Mr. Nixon; Council approved check #2017 from the Sewer Fund Account.

Motion passed 6 - 0.

Upon motion by Mr. Dees, second by Mr. James; Council approved the Deposit and Receipts for November 2016

Motion passed 6 - 0.

Upon motion by Mr. Dees, second by Mr. James; Council approved the minutes from the November 14, 2016 meeting.

Motion passed 6 - 0.

Upon motion by Mr. James, second by Mr. Nixon; Council approved the minutes with corrections from the November 28, 2016 meeting.

Motion passed 6 - 0

Upon motion by Mr. James, second by Mr. H. Nodoline; Council approved the Treasurer's Report for November 2016.

Motion passed 6 – 0.

Public Comment –

Tricia Mezzacappa of Ridge Street asked Council if the \$150,000 budgeted for Police could or would be restricted for only Police protection.

Solicitor Goudsouzian stated that no funds in the 2017 budget are restricted and it is the prerogative of Council if they want to adjust line items.

Ms. Mezzacappa also asked why \$50,000 of the prior year's surplus is being used to balance the 2017 budget.

Council President DePaul responded that Council wants to resurface the roads that were not done in 2016 and the monies were necessary to balance the budget without increasing taxes.

Ms. Mezzacappa also asked Mr. Dees if he would sign a release form from the National Archives, so that she could obtain a copy of his discharge papers. Mr. Dees declined Ms. Mezzacappa's continued requests. Mr. Dees had a copy of his discharge papers which he did show to Councilman James. Mr. James read to Council that Mr. Dees was honorably discharged. The response did not satisfy Ms. Mezzacappa. She said she will make a request again at the next Council meeting,

Ms. Mezzacappa also asked Council why the Quality of Life ordinance was necessary. She stated, many of the items the new ordinance covers, the Borough already has addressed previously.

Mr. James stated that the ordinance is only in draft form and that Council plans on having public meetings for input from the residents of the Borough. Mr. James stated the meeting dates will be set at the next Council meeting. He would like to have one meeting during the day and another in the evening to provide ample opportunity for residents to provide input.

Solicitor Goudsouzian left the meeting at 7:15. Solicitor Robert Eyer replaced him at the Council table.

Engineer's Report – None

Mayor's Report –

The Mayor reported that he has received numerous complaints from Borough residents regarding the sign on the Atiyeh building (former Reda Sportswear). The sign is too large and exceeds zoning's base linear footage. He wants the sign taken down.

Mayor Gross asked that Council look long and hard at the new "Quality of Life" ordinance. He feels the new ordinance is a good idea but it should not penalize the good "neighbors" because of what the few may be doing. Mayor Gross also stated that the Borough needs someone to enforce the ordinances on the books and the new ordinance will not be effective without enforcement.

Finally, Mayor Gross shared the Christmas card that he received from the White House. He stated that he has been receiving them annually since Ronald Reagan was in office.

Solicitor's report – None

Office Report -

Ms. Heebner mentioned to Council that the appointees to the Zoning Board were not given terms. She stated that she has been in contact with all the Zoning Board members with the exception of Leon Stull. The members she has spoken to have all agreed to remain on the board and so has the Zoning Solicitor, Jeremy Clark.

Upon motion by Mr. James, second by Mr. Dees; Council approved to appoint Leon Stull and Rebecca Kehm to five year terms; Steve Klaver to a four year term and David Kindrew and Michael Koehler to three year terms.

Motion passed 6- 0.

Mr. Gehman asked Council if it was alright to proceed with placing municipal liens on residents who have not paid on their utility bills for over a year.

Mr. Dees asked if the fees involved would also be included in the amount. Ms. Heebner replied that the Borough would pay the fees upfront but the Borough would recoup the fees when the property would be sold or the lien is satisfied

Finally, Mr. Gehman relayed to Council that citations are waiting to be signed by the magistrate. Joe Hoffman of Barry Isett and Associates has filed the necessary paperwork with the magistrate in regards to the having the violations served.

President's Report – None.

Upon motion by Mr. H. Nodoline, second by Mr. Dees; Council approved the formation of a police department.

Motion passed 6-0.

Round Table –

Mr. Dees asked about providing a grace period before late fees are accessed on the Borough's utility bill. Mr. Gehman and Ms. Heebner both felt that it would be too hard to enforce. Bills are due on a specific date, normally one month from the date the bill is sent out. Late notices are sent out the day following the due date. Residents typically include the late fee when paying even the day after the due date, reported Mr. Gehman.

Council President DePaul made it known that the Ridge Street property has been cleaned up and the building taken down. The work was done by Councilman, Henry Nodoline, and Borough Maintenance man, Dane Thatcher. Equipment was rented and the property cleaned up. The building was in worse shape than expected and it was razed. Mr. H. Nodoline stated that the footers and the slab remain in good condition and could be used for a future building.

Mayor Gross commented that the building should be designed for its usage. The Mayor stated that former Council President, Bill Bogari, wanted a study done to make efficient use of the building.

Committee Reports –

Finance Committee – None

Highway/Property Committee –

Committee chair, Mr. H. Nodoline commented that there are trees that need to be taken down along the alleyway of the Ridge Street property.

Upon motion by Mr. H. Nodoline, second by Mr. James; Council approved spending \$650.00 to have the trees cleared by Treeline Tree Service.

Council President DePaul asked for a voice vote: Mr. DePaul - Yes, Mr. Nixon – Yes, Mr. Dees – No, Mr. T. Nodoline – No, Mr. H. Nodoline – Yes, Mr. James – Yes.

Motion passed 4 – 2. (Mr. T. Nodoline and Mr. Dees were the dissenting votes).

Mayor Gross offered to replace the Centennial tree which died a few years ago at his personal expense.

Public Safety/Personnel Committee –

Council President DePaul scheduled two Public Safety/Personnel Committees meetings: the first for Thursday, December 15 at 10am and the second Monday, December 19 at 10am

Legal/Newsletter/Computer Committee – Councilman Mr. James mentioned that public meetings will be scheduled after the first of the year so that concerns can be heard from the public.

Utilities Committee – None

Recreation – None

Councilman Dees asked when the dedication of the Gerald W. Gross Park was going to be scheduled.

Ms. Heebner stated that the Mayor was tired of waiting.

Mr. Dees stated the Borough should hold a dedication for the 50 years of service the Mayor has provided to the residents of the Borough.

A possible date to coincide with the Easter egg hunt in spring was suggested.

Grants – None

Solicitor Goudsouzian returned from his commitment at 7:50.

Old Business –

Upon motion by Mr. James, second Mr. H. Nodoline; Council approved to pass the 2017 budget as advertised.

Council President DePaul asked for a voice vote – Mr. DePaul – Yes, Mr. Nixon – Yes, Mr. Dees – Yes, Mr. T. Nodoline – No, Mr. H. Nodoline – Yes, Mr. James – Yes.

Motion passed 5 – 1 (Mr. T. Nodoline was the dissenting vote)

Councilman, Mr. H. Nodoline, asked if something could be done for him and other hearing impaired people. He stated that he cannot hear a lot of what is being said during Council meetings.

Mr. Gehman replied that the Borough did have someone evaluate Council chambers and the solutions would run about \$9000.

A further investigation would be done for more cost effective alternatives.

Upon motion by Mr. James, second by Mr. Dees; Council approved the meeting dates and time for 2017 as previously advertised.

Motion passed 6 – 0.

New Business -

Council President De Paul commented that the new council completed many of the tasks set forth at the beginning of the year. Many of the streets in the Borough were resurfaced with the remaining streets to be done in 2017. Problem properties within in the Borough were addresses and cleaned up. The Borough has now taken possession of the former Nodoline property on Ridge Street.

Mayor Gross complimented the Council on the functionality of their committees and that Council has been performing at a high level.

Mr. Nixon asked if the issue with having cars towed has been resolved. Solicitor Goudsouzian stated he would contact the Borough's towing company.

Additional Public Comment –

None

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

Meeting was adjourned at 8:11pm.

Respectfully submitted by:
David W. Gehman, Borough Senior Clerk