

BOROUGH OF WEST EASTON
COUNCIL MEETING

FEBRUARY 13, 2017

APPROVED

The regular monthly meeting of the Council of the Borough of West Easton, Northampton County, Pennsylvania, was called to order at 6:30 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, Paul James and Bob Lewis. Council members Henry Nodoline, Thomas Nodoline and Ron Nixon were absent. Mayor, Gerald Gross; Solicitor, Steve Goudsouzian; Borough Manager, Joan Heebner; and Borough Senior Clerk, David Gehman were present. Daniel Redington of the Mary Meuser Public Library was an invited guest to speak to Council. Members of the public in attendance: Pete & Bonnie Mammana, Leon Stull, Trude Hargraves, Don Chegwidan, Tricia Mezzacappa and David Bogusky.

Upon motion by Mr. H. Nodoline, second by Mr. Dees; Council approved check #15615 through #15691 from the General Fund Account.

Discussion – A question was raised in regards checks #15654 and #15678. Mr. Gehman replied that these are annual contracts, one for weed control and the other is for pest control.

Motion passed 4 - 0.

Upon motion by Mr. James, second by Mr. Lewis; Council approved check #2020 and #2021 from the Sewer Fund Account.

Motion passed 4 - 0.

Upon motion by Mr. James, second by Mr. Dees; Council approved the Deposit and Receipts for January 2017

Motion passed 4 - 0.

Upon motion by Mr. Dees, second by Mr. Lewis; Council approved the minutes from the January 9, 2017 meeting with corrections.

Discussion – Mr. Dees asked to have a statement attributed to him corrected to Mr. DePaul in regards to the next round of CDBG grants coming up.

Motion passed with correction 4 - 0.

Upon motion by Mr. Lewis, second by Mr. James; Council approved the Treasurer's Report for January 2017.

Discussion – None

Motion passed 4 – 0.

Public Comment –

Tricia Mezzacappa of Ridge Street asked why the Complaint form was not on the Borough's website. Ms. Heebner replied that she will put it on the website.

Ms. Mezzacappa again asked Councilman Dees for a copy of his discharge paperwork. Mr. Dees asked Council President DePaul for a point of order on three separate occasions. Mr. DePaul stated that it was asked and answered and Mr. Dees did not have to address the issue again. Mr. DePaul asked Ms. Mezzacappa if she had any other comments. She did not.

Leon Stull of Second Street commented that Dane Thatcher did a good job clearing the snow from the last storm.

Donald Chegwidden of Tenth Street, asked Council if there was anything that could be done to reduce his sewer and trash costs for the cottage that is located on his property. He explained that for the last two years, the cottage has remained empty and was not producing an income. Council President DePaul told Mr. Chegwidden that he would still be responsible for the trash for the unit but if he had the water turned off to the cottage that he would not be charged the sewer portion of the utility bill.

Guest – Daniel Redington, Director of Mary Meuser Library

Daniel Redington, the Director of the Mary Meuser Library was on hand to pass out the library's 2016 annual report. Mr. Redington pointed out several facts pertaining to the Borough including there are 450 card holding members from the Borough. Mr. Redington offered to sign up anyone at the meeting who wanted a library card and he also explained some of the additional benefits of the library.

Mayor Gross complimented Mr. Redington on the library. The Mayor stated in this day and age of the computer and cell phone not as many people read books. Mr. Redington replied that there currently has been an uptick in the usage of the library. Mr. Redington also noted that there are seven computers available at the library for public use for people who do not own a computer.

Mr. Dees asked if the library still carried books on tape. Mr. Redington said that the library does carry books on CD/DVD that tapes are no longer used.

Mr. Redington also provided a little history about the building that it was built in 1924 as a wedding present to Mary Meuser. He stated the building is in relatively good condition but one wall will need repair from years of exposure to the weather. He hopes when the repairs are made that an outdoor reading area could be built.

Engineer's Report – None

Mayor's Report –

Mayor Gross received information on the 2020 census. He stated there are on-line webinars in March, July and October in regards to the census. The Borough must develop a program and begin obtaining the information.

The Mayor mentioned that in correlation to the CDBG grant for Second Street he would like to see all new curbs and sidewalks on Second Street. Council President DePaul agreed with the Mayor and said that new curbs and sidewalks are being looked into.

The Mayor also asked to have sidewalks put in on Spring Street, Fifth Street and Iron Street around the park. The Mayor stated that students walking from school come down the Wilson side of Avona Street and then need to cross Spring Street at Iron Street to be able to walk on sidewalk rather than out in the street or in the mud.

Mr. Dees told the Mayor that the Borough has previously applied for a grant for the sidewalks but was turned town.

The Mayor stated that he has spoken to the Chief of Staff for State Senator Boscola and to State Representative, Bob Freeman extensively with regards to the proposed State Budget item requiring municipalities to pay for the use State Police for police protection.

The Mayor also wanted to compliment Dane Thatcher on the job well done removing snow from the Borough Streets after the latest storm.

Solicitor's report –

Solicitor Goudsouzian commented that the codification was being worked on and the entire book was now in electronic format so that it could be worked on easier.

Secondly, the solicitor had several resolutions to be passed to continue the formation of the Police department.

The first resolution was to establish a job description for the Police Chief.

Upon motion by Mr. James, second by Mr. Lewis; Council approved to establish job descriptions for all positions available at the Borough Police Department.

Motion passed 4 – 0.

The second resolution was to advertise the creation of the Police department.

Upon motion by Mr. Lewis, second by Mr. James; Council approved to advertise the Borough Police department

Motion passed 4 – 0.

The third resolution was to post a police department employment application on the website.

Upon motion by Mr. James, second by Mr. Lewis; Council approved to post a police department employment application on the Borough website.

Motion passed 4 – 0.

The final resolution is to develop hiring policies for the Police department.

Upon motion by Mr. Lewis, second by Mr. James; Council approved to develop hiring policies with the Police department.

Motion passed 4 – 0.

The final issue would be discussed in Executive session.

Office Report -

Ms. Heebner informed Council that a new Toshiba Copier has been installed in the office. The new lease will save the Borough approximately \$1,000 per year over the old lease.

Ms. Heebner mentioned to Council that Northampton County will be holding two electronic recycling events within a week of each other. Easton is having one April 29th and Tatamy is having theirs the following Saturday, May 6th. Upon motion by Mr. Dees, second by Mr. Lewis: Council declined to be a participating municipality in the electronic recycling event hosted by Tatamy Borough.

Motion passed 4-0.

Ms. Heebner noted that the Borough received an insurance check for \$160 to replace the street signs at Front & Iron damaged in a traffic accident.

Ms. Heebner also told Council members that the Chapter 94 report has been completed by Barry Isett & Associates and a copy has been emailed to the Council members.

Mr. Gehman informed council that the audit for 2016 is nearly complete. The auditor expects to spend one additional day in the Borough to complete the audit.

President's Report –

Council President DePaul personally reviewed the expense account of the Safety First Volunteer Fire Company.

Upon motion by Mr. Dees, second by Mr. Lewis; Council approved a donation of \$16,000 to Safety First Volunteer Fire Company.

Motion passed 4–0.

Upon motion by Mr. James, second by Mr. Lewis; Council approved a donation of \$1,000 to the Wilson Recreation Board.

Discussion – Mr. Dees asked if anyone knew what Wilson Borough gave as a donation. Mr. DePaul responded that he thought Wilson gave \$2,000.

Motion passed 4-0.

Upon motion by Mr. Lewis, second by Mr. Dees; Council approved a donation of \$150 to Suburban EMS.

Discussion – Mayor Gross stated that Suburban provides support to the fire company when the equipment goes out on a call or alarm. He also stated that Suburban attends Borough functions such as the Halloween parade.

Council President DePaul said memberships were \$30 for an individual or \$55 for a family.

Motion passed 4-0.

Mr. James mentioned that due to the snow storm last week, the public meetings on the Quality of Life ordinance will be this Thursday, February 16th at 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Council President DePaul expressed a concern about the new Quality of Life ordinance; many of the issues addressed in the new ordinance are already covered by prior ordinances and resolutions. Council President DePaul provided a list of the following:

- O-884 – International Property Maintenance Code
- O-476 – Animals
- O-894 – Weed/High Grass
- O-633 – Motor Vehicles
- O-632 – Removal of snow & ice
- O-894 – Zoning – Swimming pools
- O-606 – Noise

Ms. Heebner asked about advertising the ordinance. If the ordinance needed to be listed entirely or if a summary of the ordinance can be printed to reduce the cost of advertising. Solicitor Goudsouzian stated that a summary is fine and this ordinance could be combined with others that Council is looking to pass.

Mr. James explained that the new ordinance would combine the ordinances that Council President DePaul listed and others under one ordinance and provide penalties when issues are not resolved. Mayor Gross thought the new ordinance was well prepared and liked the penalty phase of the ordinance. Ms. Heebner commented that the ordinance is basic common decency.

Council President DePaul mentioned the work to be done to correct the storm water run-off/storm sewer on Second Street. Council is looking into having curbs and sidewalks repaired in the Borough.

Mr. Gehman read Resolution 580, Section 8, Responsibility for Maintenance: It shall be the full responsibility of every owner of property which abuts any street to keep the sidewalks, curbs and passageways in a safe condition at all times.

Mr. Dees suggested that maybe a grant would become available to assist Borough residents with the cost of repairing or replacing sidewalks and curbs.

Finally, Council President DePaul noted that the Borough had an excess of revenues over expenses. Mayor Gross stated that there were many years that the Borough started out the year, “pay when funds were available.”

Policies –

Upon motion by Mr. Dees, second Mr. James; Council approved the Late Payment Policy as presented.

Discussion – Mr. Dees stated that the Solicitor reviewed the policy and made necessary corrections.

Council President DePaul requested a voice vote. Mr. James – Yes, Mr. Dees – Yes, Mr. Lewis – No, Mr. DePaul – Yes.

Motion passed 3-1. Dissenting vote Mr. Lewis

Upon motion by Mr. Dees, second by Mr. James; Council approved to accept advertising on the Borough website and in the Borough newsletter.

Discussion – Mr. James asked about pricing. Mr. Dees responded that pricing would be determined at a later date. That his sample was only for example purposes.

Motion passed 4-0.

Round Table – None

Committee Reports –

Finance Committee – None

Highway/Property Committee – None

Public Safety/Personnel Committee – Council President DePaul scheduled a 10:00 a.m. meeting for the Public Safety Committee for Tuesday, February 14th, Thursday, February 16th and Friday, February 17th.

Legal/Newsletter/Computer Committee – Committee Chair, Mr. James rescheduled public meetings on the Quality of Life ordinance for Thursday, February 16th at 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. to hear the concerns of the residents on the proposed ordinance. Mr. James also scheduled a Committee meeting for Thursday, February 16th at 11:00 a.m.

Utilities Committee – None

Recreation – None

Grants – Committee chair, Mr. Dees scheduled a Grant Committee meeting for February 14th at 11:00 a.m.

Old Business – None

New Business - None

Additional Public Comment –

Daniel Redington, Director of the Mary Meuser Library mentioned that since West Easton provides a donation to the Wilson Recreation Board, he wanted everyone to be aware that the Recreation Board has a Bingo event for Senior Citizens. He thought it was the third Thursday of each month at 1pm at the Wilson Borough Community Center. Mr. Redington mentioned that light refreshments are served and it is well attended by the area Senior Citizens.

Mr. Peter Mammanna of Tenth Street asked what to do when he sees someone throwing snow out into the middle of the street. Council President DePaul told Mr. Mammanna to contact the Borough office and let the staff know where and when this is happening. Mr. Mammanna commented that he saw two occurrences during the last snow clean-up.

Ms. Tricia Mezzacappa of Ridge Street questioned the minimum age of a police officer to be 18 when you must be 21 to be licensed. Solicitor Goudsouzian stated that it is only a basic hiring guideline. Ms. Mezzacappa stated that you have to be 21 to be licensed for a gun.

Ms. Mezzacappa said, "About this advertising on the Borough website, Dan. If somebody advertises that's one thing. If somebody clicks on the ad, revenue goes back to Hostgator, which is owned by Councilman Dees." Council President DePaul and Councilman Dees started to respond but Ms. Mezzacappa left the Council meeting.

Entered Executive Session – 8:16 pm

Exited Executive Session – 8:34 pm

Upon motion by Mr. James, second by Mr. Lewis; Council decided to take no further action in regards to the letter from the District Attorney John Morganelli.

Upon motion by Mr. Dees, second by Mr. Lewis; Council approved to adjourn.
8:36 pm

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