

# **BOROUGH OF WEST EASTON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**November 9, 2020**

## ***APPROVED***

The regular monthly meeting of the Council of the Borough of West Easton, Northampton County, Pennsylvania, was called to order at 6:32pm using Zoom videoconferencing, due to the COVID-19 pandemic emergency.

Roll was taken; Council President, Matthew Dees noted there was a quorum. Council members – Paul James, Pete Mammana, Janie Jones Brown and Ken Decker, Jr. were present. Council members David Bolash and Ron Nixon were absent. Mayor Daniel DePaul; Solicitor, Steve Goudsouzian of Goudsouzian & Associates; Borough Manager, Joan Heebner and West Easton Borough Police Chief, Robert Mahady were present. Members of the public in attendance: Trude Hargraves, Tricia Mezzacappa, Bruce Walter and Leon Stull.

-Upon motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Mammana; Council approved expenditures as presented. Motion passed 5-0.

-Upon motion by Mr. Mammana, seconded by Ms. Jones Brown; Council approved the Deposits and Receipts from October, 2020. No discussion. Motion passed 5 – 0.

-Upon motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Mammana; Council approved the minutes from the October 12, 2020, Council meeting. Motion passed 5 – 0.

-Upon motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Mammana; Council approved the Treasurer's Report for October, 2020. Motion passed 5 – 0.

### **Public Comment (Agenda Items) – None**

#### **Engineer Report –**

Mr. Mammana made a motion, seconded by Mr. James; to formally decline both bids received for Phase II of the Pole Barn Building due to the bids coming in a lot higher than anticipated. No discussion. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. James made a motion, seconded by Ms. Jones Brown to approve Resolution 2020 – 032, to apply for LSA, Monroe County Grant. No discussion. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Mammana made a motion, seconded by Ms. Jones Brown; to approve Resolution 2020 - 033 to apply for LSA, Northampton County Grant. No discussion. Motion passed 5-0.

#### **Office Report –**

Mr. Dees asked for a motion to approve the proposed 2021 budget for advertising. Mr. Mammana made the motion; seconded by Mr. James. No discussion. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. James made a motion, seconded by Ms. Jones Brown; to approve 2021 dates for council meeting, as presented. No discussion. Motion passed 5-0.

**Sewer Report** – Mr. James reported that the EAJSA was working on their 2021 budget. They have approved hiring a consulting engineer for a 5-year plan, to work on the mains and pumping stations that need to be upgraded.

**Solicitor's Report** – Solicitor Goudsouzian stated he had items for Executive Session.

**President's Report** - Mr. Dees stated that:

- the Borough is still financially sound; there is no need for a tax increase.
- he is proud of the Borough for having a 73.51% voter turnout rate of registered voters.
- he'd like Council to contemplate any changes to the pole barn project, as a whole.
- he'd like Council to save money wherever possible; asked that for future PSAB conferences only a limited amount of members attend.
- he thanked Borough Manager, Ms. Heebner for obtaining Northampton County Covid-19 CRBG Grant which awarded the Borough \$9,136 for PPE and technical upgrades, with no match required.

**Police Chief's Report** – Chief Mahady reported that:

- the behavior of the parking has changed dramatically.
- there were a couple of minor incidents.
- has information and prices on some speed signs; he was happy to see that they say “Slow Down” or “Too Fast” and don't list the driver's speed so that drivers won't be enticed to test their nerve.

Ms. Jones Brown reported that she had received correspondence from a neighbor and she would be forwarding it to Chief Mahady.

**Mayor's Report** - Mayor DePaul stated that:

- the DUI Center is still down; they might still be using it for training but that's about it.
- he spoke to Dave Colver, supervisor in Palmer Township, and he will make sure Dane Thatcher has a key to continue to dump our leaves at their facility.
- the newer truck went down, repairs were covered by an extended warranty.
- the steering wheel on a police car was fixed; Chief Mahady reported that it was working great.

**Round Table** – Ms. Jones Brown stated that she attended the PSAB virtual conference; she absolutely loved the virtual format and received lots of great information. She also attended the Watershed Friendly Training; she wondered if council would like her to look into getting the certification for the Borough parks. Ms. Jones Brown mentioned that the Mary Meuser Memorial Library is having a plant sale fundraiser.

Mr. James thanked everyone that worked on the budget, the mayor, office staff and Mr. Mammana. Mr. Dees then thanked Mr. James for his work as well.

### **Committee Reports**

**Business and Finance Committee** – Mr. Mammana thanked everyone that worked on the budget; no meeting is scheduled.

**Property and Roads Committee** – None

**Public Safety and Personnel Committee** – Had a meeting with Chief Mahady and went over procedures and budget for police.

## **Legal and Technology Committee – None**

**Utilities and Fire** – Mr. James reported that they continue to work on sewer rates. A meeting was scheduled for November 18<sup>th</sup>, 6pm. The Social Club will have voting on December 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Parks and Recreation Committee** – Ms. Jones Brown reported that:

- they completed 4 of the storm drains. They plan to do more in the spring.
- Mr. Decker edged and spread mulch around the rock garden. The Committee will be adding some painted rocks to the area.
- they hope to have a Holiday Light contest. Mr. Decker has secured some prizes.
- they would like to have a virtual meeting November 18<sup>th</sup>, 4:15pm.

**Grants and Public Relations Committee** – Mr. Decker thanked Mr. Dees and Ms. Heebner for the work on grants and helping him with that.

**Unfinished Business** – Mr. Dees would like to thank residents for their voter participation, 73.57% of West Easton registered voters participated.

## **New Business – None**

**Public Comment (Open)** – Tricia Mezzacappa, Ridge Street, said she needed an answer to the question she put in Zoom chat. Solicitor Goudsouzian explained that this was a time for public comment, that if she wished to make a public comment, please do so. Ms. Mezzacappa stated she had questions. She went on to say she had about 8 questions to ask. Solicitor Goudsouzian said she was more than welcome to ask her questions but said she would not necessarily get a response today. Ms. Mezzacappa replied she had them in order; she had written them down. The first question was, ‘When do you plan on returning to in person meetings?’”. She stated there are various people in the community that are interested in attending meetings and who don’t have computer capability to do it. Solicitor Goudsouzian thanked her and asked what her next question was. Ms. Mezzacappa asked if she could have an answer to her question. Solicitor Goudsouzian reminded her it was public comment and to please go ahead. Ms. Mezzacappa said she was told that in order to get any information from the borough she has to file a RTK request, even for basic information and she would like to know why she has to do this. Solicitor Goudsouzian asked what her next question was. She said she’d like to know when the new police officers were going to be sworn in. Solicitor Goudsouzian asked for her next comment. She asked about the codification of ordinances; she understands this was done 2 or 3 years ago and we paid the solicitor maybe \$20,000 or so to codify the ordinances and they were never advertised or adopted and she’d like to know why. Solicitor Goudsouzian asked for her next question. She had heard that the Fire Company Social Hall was supposed to be sold and she was wondering if it was going to be sold or if it was sold, or what was going on with it and how much the taxpayers’ contribution is going to be for the next year for the Fire Company. Her next question was about the Federal lawsuit that she found out was denied summary judgment in favor of the plaintiff which is really horrible news for the taxpayers. She’d like to know what is going to happen, a possible settlement or if they plan on taking it to trial. Solicitor Goudsouzian asked if she had any more questions. She stated she thought that was the end of her questions but that she did have one comment reserved. Solicitor Goudsouzian told her this was her opportunity to speak. Ms. Mezzacappa stated she had some concerns about the conduct of Council President Matthew Dees. She stated that she has now been assaulted, officially twice, in 2 years by 2 separate women, both from West Easton. One was found guilty, one was pled guilty and she

attributes this to his false, disgusting hate blog, filled with lies, slander, libel and straight up garbage about her and her activities in the borough, especially pertaining to her 2019 incident involving the State Police. She stated that he has absolutely no information about, whatsoever, at all, and he has intentionally tried to inject all kinds of garbage, to the public, that's not even remotely true because he does not have one iota of information about what happened and she does not appreciate it and she wants him to shut his ugly fat mouth because he's causing violence within the community. Ms. Mezzacappa paused; Mr. Dees thanked her and asked if there was anything else. She continued that Mr. Dees should resign; he's a disaster and a walking lawsuit and "you're an asshole". Mr. Dees announced that he had muted Ms. Mezzacappa due to her use of profanity; he stated that is not allowed at a meeting, so she'd been removed.

-Trude Hargraves, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, asked what the LSA in the resolutions stood for. She asked if we could put the agenda online before the meeting so she can see it better.

[During the meeting Ms. Mezzacappa added the following comments in the chat box: "I have an election report about the disturbance at the polls perhaps the Chief can reply and I have a question at the citizen participation time; can you publish the proposed budget?; my question for the non agenda comment has to do with a photo of me from 20 years ago photoshopped onto a prostitution craigslist advertisement from 2009, never posted by me, but recently published by Council President Matthew Dees on March 19, 2020 on his blog; I have an affidavit from Matthew Dees swearing he did not get this ad from Borough Hall zoning files, but found it on the internet. Since he did not live here in 2009, when did you find this sick ad on the internet, and how long have you been storing this farse?; You should not be discussing voting results; this is not campaign headquarters; dumb as a brick; time to open your doors and accept payment from people"]

**Executive Session Entered 7:18pm – Exited 7:36 pm**

Council discussed legal matters and litigation.

-Upon motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Mammana, no discussion, Council voted to adjourn the meeting by a vote of 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:38pm.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Joan Heebner, Secretary/Manager

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