

**BOROUGH OF WEST EASTON
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

AUGUST 14, 2023

APPROVED

The regular monthly meeting of the Council of the Borough of West Easton, Northampton County, Pennsylvania, was called to order at 6:30pm by Council President Paul James in Council Chambers of the West Easton Municipal Building, 237 Seventh Street, West Easton, Pennsylvania.

Roll was taken; Council President Paul James noted there was a quorum. Council members – Janie Jones Brown, Mathew Dees, Pete Mammana, David Bolash, Kenny Decker, Jr., and Robert Adams were present. Mayor Daniel DePaul, Solicitor Steve Goudsouzian, and Borough Manager Joan Heebner were present. Members of the public in attendance: Tricia Mezzacappa 7:19pm-7:29pm.

-Upon motion by Mr. Bolash, seconded by Ms. Jones Brown; Council approved expenditures as presented. No discussion. Motion passed 7-0.

-Upon motion by Ms. Jones Brown, seconded by Mr. Mammana; Council approved the Deposits and Receipts from July 2023. No discussion. Motion passed 7-0.

-Upon motion by Mr. Mammana, seconded by Mr. Bolash; Council approved the minutes from the July 10, 2023, Council Meeting. No discussion. Motion passed 7-0.

-Upon motion by Mr. Bolash, seconded by Mr. Mammana; Council approved the Treasurer's Report for July 2023. No discussion. Motion passed 7-0.

Public Comment (Agenda Items) – None

Engineer's Report – None

Office Report – Ms. Heebner shared several items:

-the Community Yard Sale, August 12th, appeared to have gone off without any problems.

-August 21st the Free Ice Cream and Art Project event is scheduled for 6pm-8pm at Gross Park.

-September 23rd is an Electronics Recycling Event at Easton High School.

-September 30th is a Household Hazardous Waste Event at NCC; pre-registration is required

Ms. Heebner had asked for estimates in taking down some trees in the Borough. She heard back from Snowscapes and Jesse Bush (Stump Humpers). For the 9th Street Park tree to come down, Mr. Bush gave a \$1000 bid, and Snowscapes quoted \$2300 to cut it flush, and \$2500 to remove the stump. Mr. Dees made a motion, seconded by Ms. Jones Brown, to approve the cost of \$1000, to Jesse Bush, to have the dead tree at 9th Street Park removed. No discussion. Motion passed 7-0.

Ms. Heebner shared that she had asked for a quote on taking four trees down from the Spring Street Alley. Mr. Bush has not had a chance to give an estimate on that yet. Snowscapes submitted a bid of \$1925 for the removal of the four trees. Ms. Jones Brown made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bolash, to have the trees removed in the Spring Street Alley to the lowest responsible bidder, up to \$1925. No discussion. Motion passed 7-0.

The topic of the LSA grants was discussed. Some suggestions were: new dump truck with plow as ours is 23+ years old; a small pickup truck for Public Works. The Jeeps they use are approximately 20 years old as well. Adding water and sewer hookups to the Pole Barn was discussed. Ms. Heebner will check with the grant writer to see which projects would best be received by each grant.

Sewer Report – Mr. James said they had their first meeting in the new admin building. They discussed pump station repairs; the pump is old. EAJSA has purchased their own vac truck.

Solicitor's Report – Executive Session

President's Report – Mr. James thanked Ms. Heebner for her work on the Community Yard Sale. He said that now that he is retired and able to be around more, he appreciates, even more than he did before, all the work that Public Works and Council does.

Police Chief's Report – Chief Mahady was unable to attend this meeting as he had an important event to attend. He left information with Ms. Heebner: He has been working with LVHN to get 2 or 3 AEDs (Automated External Defibrillators) donated to the Borough. He has been working with our grant writer on a potential grant.

Mayor's Report – Mayor DePaul mentioned that he had recently received the insurance info from Mr. Bush, of Stump Humpers. He stated that he thinks something should be done about the sidewalks in bad condition at some of the residents' homes. A short discussion was had.

Round Table – Ms. Jones Brown informed everyone of the book sale that Mary Meuser Library will have on September 9th and 10th. She reminded everyone that the Library has free admission passes to several local museums. She said that the Welcome to West Easton sign on Adamson Street looks bad; she asked what Council thought should be done about it. Fast Signs has given an approximate quote of \$1000-\$1500 installed, depending on what the budget would be.

Committee Reports

Business and Finance Committee – Mr. Mammana said the committee met and went over General expenses. A budget meeting was set for September 5th, 4:30pm, at Borough Hall.

Property and Roads Committee – None

Public Safety and Personnel Committee – None

Legal and Technology Committee – None

Utilities and Fire Committee – Meeting set for September 6th, noon, at Borough Hall.

Parks and Recreation Committee – From Ms. Jones Brown's notes:

I applied for the Tree Pennsylvania Fall Tree Grant for the Borough. We met with Julianne, an arborist. Thank you to Paul James, Sharon Niko, Dane Thatcher and myself for participating in our impromptu planning meeting. She helped us construct the tree plan at Niko and Gerald Gross Park. She also helped us assess the health of the trees currently planted and growing. She helped identify trees to be removed hopefully this Fall as well.

Playground Grant Process Update: *We are waiting to hear back about our grant submission, which can take several months. Sending positive energy for much needed funds.*

Fall planting project: *Last year we planted bulbs and this year we hope to plant Deer Resistant Wildflowers at Borough Hall and possibly at our parks. Wildflowers are some of the easiest and most rewarding plants to grow. They require little effort and water once they are established, and provide show-stopping color year after year. They also help provide food and habitat for local wild-life and pollinators, including birds, butterflies, bees, and more.*

Residents have been asking for years if we could open up the garage to have a pavilion. We would like to put funds into the budget for next year.

Exciting News- Paul James, Dane Thatcher, Mayor Depaul, and myself met with Sherry Acevedo from Northampton County to discuss possibly connecting the West Easton section to the bike trail. We are waiting for a virtual meeting date with other county officials to help with possible funding for this exciting project.

Community Event: *August 21st next Monday 6-8PM at Gerald Gross Park- We look forward to seeing everyone at our community Rock Painting and Chalk The Walks Event and free ice cream truck. Thank you to Joan for scheduling the free ice cream truck.*

Grants and Public Relations Committee – None

Unfinished Business – None

New Business – None

Public Comment (Open) – (7:19pm-7:29pm) Tricia Mezzacappa shared her thoughts on the parking problems in the Borough; she does not feel it can be put off much longer: She stated she is concerned with the parking problems in the 800 block of Ridge Street and a lot of people complain about it in other areas as well. The 800 block has five duplexes and one triple home for a total of 13 households and only five to six parking spaces. In yester years this would work as the overflow could park down further on the hill. But now because of the No Parking signs on Spring Street alley, the Spring Street alley people are parking on Ridge and there is nowhere for the Ridge Street people to park. She asked if it was time for permit parking or maybe one of the sides of Spring Street could be used for parking. She stated the people on 10th Street are having problems, because of the people of Freemansburg Avenue. There used to be three or four spots at the pole barn building, that is now all fenced in; it is really not suitable now, so there is nowhere for the other cars to park. A previously vacant home for over ten years has now been refurbished and is occupied by people that have a lot of cars. She wondered if permit parking would work, maybe the Borough could trim back its fence and make a few spots. Mr. James asked if there was any off-street parking behind her house, in an alley. Ms. Mezzacappa replied there was no alley, the alley disappeared years ago, before she moved in. She stated people come in with three or four cars, and that is not helping either. Mr. James stated that there was very little the borough can do about that. She said she knew that, and said if the borough went to permit parking and gave every resident two permits and then every permit beyond that was \$125/year, people would stop bringing in so many vehicles. Mr. James asked if there were cars that were not moving. Ms. Mezzacappa said she did not know because she did not really keep track of that anymore. If she sees one that appears to be dumped,

she will obviously say something. When she moved in 25 years ago, the side streets were almost empty; Ridge Street was always full, but the side streets were always very sparse, and it has just exploded. She offered a few suggestions: 1) Turn 9th Street Park into a parking lot and hope it does not get dumped cars and abandoned cars on it. 2) Take the pole building front lot and move the fence back and put in three or four spaces. 3) Go to UGI and see if the Borough can work something out to pave an area and that would be three or four spots. 4) Allow more parking on Spring Street, adding a few more spaces. She doesn't feel allowing parking on both sides of Ridge would be helpful. She continued, if you drive through Wilson, you can see you can't even keep your side mirrors out; it's so narrow. It's been going on and on and on and we are just getting more crowded. Mr. Dees asked if she thought most of the cars were residents' cars, or people from Wilson were parking here. She stated she did not know but she had heard people from Freemansburg Avenue were parking on 10th Street, forcing 10th Street people to park on Ridge and she did not think it was any better on the 900 block of Ridge. Mr. Dees asked the solicitor if there was any way to make certain areas of parking for residents only. The solicitor stated that you can but then you have to mark them, and identify them; it could be done, just like permit parking could be done. It comes with a cost and so on. Ms. Mezzacappa stated parking permits might work but then the police would have to enforce it and we don't have full staffed police; a lot of times when she has called she is told all the time that they are not on, so they are not signing in to communications and that is another problem, and the State Police won't have anything to do with parking. She added that you (council) may even want to explore even dumping the police department and going into a co-op with the Easton Parking Authority, because they (WEPD) are really not doing anything. The Easton Parking Authority operates under the Easton Police Department; it would be just like a parking contract because the police over here (WEPD) are really not doing much and they don't even call into communications when they are supposed to and nobody is ever on so maybe you (council) might want to regionalize or just disband it, that's her suggestion. Mr. Adams asked if this was just over weekends; she replied that she thinks it is continual, that maybe if you drive into Ridge Street at 9 or 10 o'clock at night, you're not going to be able to park. She has already had to park over on Sterlingworth. She is no longer comfortable parking over on 9th Street because of the children with an AR-15 type legal toy spraying the neighborhood with bullets and the police did absolutely nothing about it. The State Police did absolutely nothing about it. She filed a complaint about it and the answer she got was that they acted appropriately, absolutely nothing was done about it. So, she stated, these are really not good times for parking and parking on 9th which she is just avoiding completely, not that there are really that many spaces there. She doesn't really know about parking up by the 9th Street Park; she's heard a lot of garbage about what goes on there and just wants to just avoid that too. Mr. James said the borough would look into her suggestions. Ms. Mezzacappa said she'd be back at the next meeting.

Executive Session – 7:13pm – 7:18pm and 7:30-7:34pm. Legal matters were discussed.

Upon motion by Mr. Dees, seconded by Ms. Jones Brown, no discussion, Council voted to adjourn the meeting by a vote of 7-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:35pm.

Respectfully submitted by:
Joan Heebner, Secretary/Manager
