

**BOROUGH OF WEST EASTON
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

December 11, 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.

Mr. James spoke of the passing of Councilman Matthew A. Dees. He spoke of his many contributions to the borough and the fact that he always kept the borough residents in mind. He said that Mr. Dees was especially proud of being a Navy veteran. Mr. James then asked for a moment of silence for Mr. Dees, stating he would be missed.

Roll was taken; Council President Paul James noted there was a quorum. Council members – Janie Jones Brown, Pete Mammana, David Bolash, and Robert Adams were present; Kenny Decker, Jr. was absent. Mayor Daniel DePaul, Solicitor Steven Goudsouzian, Police Chief Robert Mahady, and Borough Manager Joan Heebner were present. Members of the public in attendance: Leon Stull, Carl Pierson, Robin Strawn, and Jamie Horinko.

Solicitor Goudsouzian explained that when someone dies as a council member, it is different than a resignation. We have thirty days from the person's death to name a replacement before it goes to the Vacancy Board. Council was able to pick someone at tonight's meeting. Ms. Robin Strawn was in the audience. Ms. Jones Brown spoke of Ms. Strawn's enthusiastically working with her over the past couple of years and that she hoped Ms. Strawn would consider being on Council. Mayor DePaul added that he also hoped that Ms. Strawn would consider joining Council. Ms. Strawn expressed her interest in being on Council, saying she'd lived in the borough about 33 years. Mr. Bolash made a motion to have Ms. Robin Strawn appointed as a council member, seconded by Mr. Mammana. No discussion. Motion passed 5-0. Mayor DePaul swore Ms. Strawn in and Ms. Strawn took a seat at the council table. Solicitor Goudsouzian explained to her that she did not have to vote on motions as she was new; she could if she wanted to, but did not have to.

-Upon motion by Mr. Mammana, seconded by Mr. Bolash; Council approved expenditures as presented. No discussion. Motion passed 5-0.

-Upon motion by Ms. Jones Brown, seconded by Mr. Mammana; Council approved the Deposits for November 2023. No discussion. Motion passed 5-0.

-Upon motion by Mr. Adams, seconded by Ms. Jones Brown; Council approved the minutes from the November 13, 2023, meeting. No discussion. Motion passed 5-0.

-Upon motion by Mr. Bolash, seconded by Mr. Mammana; Council approved the Treasurer's Report for November 2023. No discussion. Motion passed 5-0.

Public Comment (Agenda Items) – None

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Engineer's Report – None

Office Report – Ms. Heebner informed council that she had received a letter from the County, stating they had approved a CDBG Grant award in the amount of \$100,000 for West Easton's Park Improvement Project.

Sewer Report – Mr. James reported that the EAJSA is looking into tax credits and grants for collecting FOGs, fat, oils and grease. They decided it would be easier to collect the FOGs from the restaurants directly. They had two gators that were falling apart; they are going to buy two 2019 gators from the City of Easton. They voted to approve a study of methane gas at a cost of \$16,000.

Solicitor's Report – None

President's Report – Mr. James shared information about a meeting he and Ms. Heebner had with three engineers from Barry Isett & Associates. They are looking into the cost of three different possibilities for the borough in an effort to meet unfunded mandate MS4 requirements. They hope to have answers for us at the January 2nd meeting.

-He talked to Suburban EMS about the borough's contingent donation for 2024.

-He went over the payrates included in the budget that had been passed:

Occasional office help: \$14.50/hr

Public works assistant: \$15-\$18 depending on experience (Brandon is leaving.)

Call-in plow rate: \$18/hour

PT Accountant: 15-20 hrs a week: \$25 hr

PW Supervisor, Dane Thatcher: 35 hours a week, \$25/hr

PT PD officers: \$25/hr

Chief Mahady: \$34/hr

Borough Manager/Secretary/AORO, Joan Heebner: 40 hours a week, \$34/hr

Police Chief's Report – Chief Mahady, who arrived a few minutes after the meeting had started, asked if Mr. Dees had been mentioned. He was told he had been. Chief Mahady shared that Mr. Dees had always supported the police and had been very helpful.

-He said he plans on getting a chip reader as there had been several dogs running loose in the borough. The cost is approximately \$40.

-He is still looking into selling the older PD cars.

-He said so far we do not have any reports of houses being broken into and the only cases of items being stolen from cars, have been from unlocked cars. He urges everyone to keep their car doors locked and valuables out of sight.

-He shared that the incidents of "Porch Pirates" has greatly increased. He reminded everyone to be a good neighbor and keep an open eye.

-He recommended to Ms. Jones Brown that if they get swings for the porch, that they get really strong/sturdy swings. He said he often sees 4-7 children on one swing at a time.

Mayor's Report – Mayor DePaul said he plans to talk to the owner of 1550 Lehigh Drive to see what his plans are following the fire in April.

Round Table – Ms. Jones Brown shared that Mary Meuser Library will have baked goods and hot chocolate on December 13th; she invited everyone to stop over. She is making her coffee cake.

Committee Reports

Business and Finance Committee – None

Property and Roads Committee – None

Public Safety and Personnel Committee – None

Legal and Technology Committee – None

Utilities and Fire Committee – None

Parks and Recreation Committee – Ms. Jones Brown shared that her committee did not get to plant the wildflower seeds as planned; they will do that in the spring. She has completed the paperwork and survey for the tree grant. She said how thrilled she was that the borough looks like they will receive the \$100,000 grant for Gross Park. She concluded by mentioning the Zoom meeting she and Mr. James attended with the County about connecting the bike path. There is a mandatory grant workshop in February which Mr. James plans to attend.

Grants and Public Relations Committee – None

Unfinished Business – None

New Business – None

Public Comment (Open) – Leon Stull said on the way to the meeting tonight he noticed the streetlight at Third and East was out. Mr. Adams said he's been working on packing gravel at Spring Street Alley. He asked about having the bucket truck to help move the stones and sand. Mr. Jurinko said the borough has done good work with grants, and mentioned how nice the sidewalks and public works building is.

Executive Session – None

Upon motion by Mr. Mammana, seconded by Ms. Jones Brown, no discussion, Council voted to adjourn the meeting by a vote of 6-0. Meeting was adjourned at 7:33pm.

Respectfully submitted by:
Joan Heebner, Secretary/Manager
