

**BOROUGH OF WEST EASTON
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
April 8, 2024**

APPROVED

The regular monthly meeting of the Council of the Borough of West Easton, Northampton County, Pennsylvania, was called to order at 6:02pm 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, Robert Adams, Pete Mammana, Kenny Decker, Jr., and Robin Strawn were present at the time of roll call. Dave Bolash came in at 6:26pm. Solicitor Stephanie J Steward, Police Chief Robert Mahady, Mayor Dan DePaul, and Borough Manager Joan Heebner were present. Members of the public in attendance: Leon Stull, and Trude Hargraves.

-Upon motion by Ms. Jones Brown, seconded by Mr. Mammana; Council approved expenditures as presented. No discussion. Motion passed 6-0.

-Upon motion by Mr. Adams, seconded by Ms. Jones Brown; Council approved the Deposits for March 2024. No discussion Motion passed 6-0.

-Upon motion by Ms. Strawn, seconded by Mr. Adams; Council approved the minutes from the March 11, 2024, meeting. No discussion. Motion passed 6-0.

-Upon motion by Mr. Mammana, seconded by Mr. Adams; Council approved the Treasurer’s Report for March 2024. No discussion. Motion passed 6-0.

Public Comment (Agenda Items) – None

Engineer’s Report – Ms. Heebner shared her notes from a meeting with the engineer earlier in the day: She handed out a list of what the CDBG grant could be used for, noting that originally she thought it would be good for improvements at the park, but then saw it could be used for stormwater improvements, which is an unfunded mandate, which could help save the taxpayers money.

- She talked about the \$150,000 Small Water and Sewer Grant, which the borough has a \$27,000 match pledged. We can use the grant to film the sewer lines we suspect of possible problems, and then use grant money to line the ones that need it most.

- Ron Kimes, from BIA, reports that the Laurel Hill project is proceeding well.

- H&K, winner of CDBG bid, is now setting May 6th as the tentative starting date for the project.

- Benesch engineers have sent out questions for the borough to answer to move forward to having the trestles taken down; Kevin Thomas, from BIA, is looking into what is needed.

Office Report – Mr. James asked for a motion to approve a proclamation requested by PA 811 to recognize the month of April 2024 as “Pennsylvania 811 Safe Digging Month”. Mr. Adams made the motion, seconded by Mr. Mammana. Discussion followed. Motion passed 6-0.

Ms. Heebner stated that a borough resident has offered to supply and maintain a blessing box for food for homeless and struggling residents. Solicitor Stewart suggested we wait until the next meeting and present this as a resolution.

Sewer Report – Mr. James reported that the EAJSA solicitor warned members about using their personal social media accounts to share borough business. There are 1st Amendment problems if you block someone on your personal page that you use to share borough business. The borough will not receive a rebate this year; we will owe \$11,811.

Solicitor's Report – Solicitor Steward shared that she had made some minor corrections to the paperwork for the CDBG grant paperwork.

Council President's Report – Mr. James reminded everyone to vote on April 23rd.

Police Chief's Report – Police Chief Mahady reminded everyone again to lock their car doors. There are many cases in several municipalities where people are going around going through unlocked cars.

- He thanked the borough for the new PD computers for their cars; they very much appreciate them.
- Mr. James asked about a situation where a former tenant was coming back to their former residence to feed feral cats and animals; the surrounding neighbors are not happy about it.
- Mayor DePaul asked that he and the office know when a police car is moved somewhere else.
- Ms. Jones Brown mentioned that now that spring is here, kids are back to climbing on the trestles.
- Chief Mahady thanked those that attended the UGI seminar on safety.

Mayor's Report – Mayor DePaul said he will be reaching out to the County and DA for possible contributions toward the new PD car. He mentioned that Gross Park had a lot of litter around for the Egg Hunt.

Council Round Table – None

Committee Reports

Business and Finance Committee – None

Property and Roads Committee – Mr. Adams stated everything remains stable.

Public Safety and Personnel Committee – Ms. Strawn thanked Chief Mahady and the officers for all their work. Mr. James will look into a possible internship from CIT for summer help for Dane Thatcher. Ms. Strawn set a meeting for April 17th at 6:30pm, with a backup date of April 24th at 6:30pm. Mr. Mammana made a motion, seconded by Ms. Jones Brown, to advertise the office help position. Discussion was had. Motion passed 7-0. Ms. Strawn made a motion, seconded by Ms. Jones Brown, to advertise the position for a seasonal worker for public works. Discussion was had. Motion passed 7-0.

Legal and Technology Committee – Mr. Bolash asked where we stand on codification. Solicitor Stewart said she has been going through and revamping the chapters.

Utilities and Fire Committee – Meeting was set for April 23rd to continue discussing sewer rates.

Parks and Recreation Committee – Ms. Jones Brown reminded everyone that April 27th is the annual clean up event, meeting at Gross Park at 11am and then going up to Niko Park. Last year they had over 30 people and are hoping for even more this year. After a short lunch break, she plans on continuing the day by planting the wildflower patch they had hoped to do in the fall.

- On the playground update: Ms. Jones Brown has met with two reps to see what can be purchased with the \$100,000 grant money. She noted the lack of mulch at Gross Park. She asked about turning the Keystone garage back into a pavilion. Possibly the first step is to turn it back into a pavilion and then see how that goes; maybe in the future look into tables and chairs. Also, adding another camera under the pavilion.

- She said despite her committee's hard work, not much is growing at the front of Borough Hall. She and Dane Thatcher both agree to take the gardens down and build them back up.

Grants and Public Relations Committee – Meeting set for April 15th at 6pm. They will discuss the Greenways Trails and other grants. There is a \$250,000 limit to request, with a 15% match due from the borough.

Unfinished Business – Ms. Heebner thanked Mayor DePaul; she stated that even though she does not see him as often in person at Borough Hall since he has been trying to turn around the Social Club, he has 100% of the time helped when she has asked.

New Business – None

Public Comment (Open) – Mr. Adams mentioned there had been no further word on the 4.8 earthquake

Executive Session – None

Upon motion by Ms. Jones Brown, seconded by Ms. Strawn, no discussion, Council voted to adjourn the meeting by a vote of 7-0. Meeting was adjourned at 7:14pm.

Respectfully submitted by:
Joan Heebner, Secretary/Manager
