

MINUTES ** ECONOMY BOROUGH COUNCIL ** 11 February 14

Council President RJ Burns called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM in Council Chambers of the Economy Municipal Building.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Courtney B. Barthelemy, Esq., Gary Bucuren, Tom Fetkovich, Larry Googins, Frank Morrone, Pat Skonieczny, RJ Burns

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor David N. Poling, Joseph Askar, Esq., Scott Shoup, P.E., P.L.S., Randy S. Kunkle, Borough Manager

Pensions Update: Mr Bill Vescio of Vescio Asset Management reviewed the year-end performance of the police and non-uniform pension plans. Both did very well with the police earning 15.66% and the non-uniform at 16.62%.

VFD Update: Chief Thomas reports they have over 20 younger firemen certified in rescue with another 15 preparing to go through the certification process. The department purchased a used rescue vehicle for \$93,000 that new would have cost approximately \$500,000.

The department will replace its 24 year old engine with a new one that will cost between \$400,000 and \$500,000.

The department appreciates the community's and borough's support and mentions fish fries will start March 7th.

Police Update: Chief O'Brien reports the Civil Service Commission has been in contact with him and they have started the hiring process and will be making promotions possible in the near future. The department needs vehicles as two have well over 100,000 miles on them. Walmart does want the borough to enforce traffic laws and the appropriate paperwork will be drawn.

Public Works Update: Mr. Dunn reports the department dealt with snow 15 days in January. 1000 tons of salt is on order through Morton but since they won't be delivering until March salt is ordered through COSTARS, although at a higher cost. Trucks incurred axle and spring issues through all the plowing and when it wasn't snowing the department dismantled the old, broken kitchen appliances in the Community Building and replaced them with newer, used ones.

HEAR THE PUBLIC:

George Foltz, Bock Lane, applauds council for promoting Mike O'Brien to Chief.

Kim Capo, 100 Chestnut, questions what qualifications were used in selecting the Chief, the old ones developed last fall or were new ones developed? Mr Burns responds the new council wanted to hire from within.

Mrs Barthelemy states the Chief was appointed on January 6th at \$86,000 and questions if he gets overtime. Mrs. Skonieczny thinks it is required by law to pay overtime as it is on an hourly rate.

Mrs Skonieczny responds as follows: “May I interject here please? I think what the, I think what the miscommunication is and misunderstanding is, in the prior process the Chief of Police was going to be a salaried Chief of Police. Chief O’Brien was hired at a base salary of 86,000 dollars, a starting base salary of 86,000 dollars, which is an hourly wage, which equates to 86,000 dollars. If his job necessitates some overtime, I believe under the labor relations Act, or the law, that we are required to pay him overtime then and I think that’s the distinction of the misunderstanding in or how Chief O’Brien was hired.” 25:00

Steve Baroto, 2001 Conway Wallrose Road, asks if our PD opens locked car doors? Chief O’Brien answers no as the newer models are harder to open, require special tools, and there is liability. Adds most towing companies and AAA have the special tools.

Mr Foltz asks if Chief Harrington was paid overtime; yes is the answer.

Audrey Mutschler, Ridge Road Extension, states Kim Capo’s question had nothing to do with overtime so why did the conversation go there?

Michelle Sovich-Lapinski, 225 Roberts Lane, asks if the Chief is a manager or working officer. Chief O’Brien states the DOJ says his job is administrative/managerial; purely administrative.

Mrs Lapinski requests research be done to determine the number of cars and employees needed. Mr Burns responds he has looked into this and most departments start looking at replacing cars at 80,000 miles, some at 100,000 and definitely after 120,000 miles.

JoAnn Boroto, 2001 Conway Wallrose Road, asks that the long term costs of new hires be taken into consideration, like pensions. Mayor Poling points out that one officer will be replacing Chief O’Brien and another will replace Sgt Heitzenrater, who retired a number of years ago. The new hires make less and start with fewer benefits.

Meagan Trimber, 3225 Ridge Road Extension, asks how much was spent for Vicky Beatty? She heard the borough had no money in January and the borough sued the tax collector because we could not afford her, yet at the end of the 2013 there was \$1.4 million left.

Gerry States, 219 Silverdale Drive, suggest everyone who lives near a fire hydrant go out and clear it of snow.

Dave Shumsky, 206 Fernwood Drive, asks if anything is going to be done about the drainage on his property. Mr Burns explains this has been looked at and isn’t a borough problem. Mr Shoup will get with his brother and Mr Bucuren to discuss it further.

Mrs Lapinski asks if the results of the forensic audit will be made public. Solicitor Askar states that will be decided at the time.

“Meagan Trimber, 3225 Ridge Road Extension; I just want to ask, everybody is so concerned about this forensic audit and how much we’re going to spend on the forensic audit. I’d like to know how much we paid for Beatty, Victor Beatty for the police con, the police contract? How much money are we going to spend? And the other thing is, in regard to the forensic audit, three and a half years ago, could be as much as 4 years ago, I’ve attended council meetings for over 5 years now, I asked for a forensic audit several years ago because I saw some things that raised some questions to my concern. And I just want to bring to attention, there are several of you in the audience, January 2013 attending a meeting here we were told we had no money and the budget was tight, that things were tight. Then also we ended up having to take the tax collector to court because , I thought, there was “no money” for her, for her salary, and you wanted to cut her salary in half; and then in the end of December 2013 we find out that we have a 1.4 million dollar surplus, so I think to me, that raises concerns as a resident, I don’t know about you people, form your own decision, but to me that, that raises concerns to me, and ya know I, I want to thank Mrs Lapinski for inaudible

Mrs Lapinski states borough finances are normally tight the last quarter of the year and especially during most of the 1st quarter. A reserve of \$300,000 to \$400,000 is needed.

Mr Slappo asks if Walmart is paying full taxes; Mayor Poling answers yes.

MINUTES:

Not ready.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

ORDINANCE & PUBLIC UTILITIES: Mrs Skonieczny reports the ordinance to expand the number of members on the Planning Commission has been advertised and is ready for adoption.

Motion by Mrs Skonieczny, seconded by Mr Bucuren, to adopt Ordinance 448 that increases the Planning Commission from seven members to nine.

Mrs Barthelemy questions the need to make the change; discussion ensues.

All vote aye except Mr Googins and Mr Fetkovich.

PROPERTY and BUILDING: Mr Fetkovich reports that he and Chief O’Brien are looking at the security system at the PD. It’s starting to age and may need to be addressed; he’ll update as to what they find.

PUBLIC SAFETY: no report.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: Mr Googins reports everyone has a list of bills to be approved. Mrs Barthelemy questions the “HST Pistol & Classic Pistol Ammo” purchase; is this for a handgun? Mayor Poling replies he will find out.

Motion by Mr Googins, seconded by Mr Fetkovich, to approve the list of bills, all voted aye.

Mrs Barthelemy asks what the Solicitor is being paid. The same retainer as the previous Solicitor and \$105/hr which is lower.

Mrs Skonieczny asks why the phone budget is lower than what was spent the previous year. The previous year the borough was billed for many months the borough had not been billed in 2012.

Mrs Skonieczny asks about the amounts billed toward “arbitration” in the Solicitor’s account. A print-out and associated bills for account 404 will be forthcoming.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT: The Public Works Committee met regarding the contract and will meet again prior to reporting to Council where they feel things stand.

PARKS & RECREATION: no report.

MAYOR’S REPORT: Mayor Poling reports all is well in general and notes that last year during Halloween the PD had to cover six zones instead of the usual 8 zones due to lack of manpower.

MANAGER’S REPORT:

No report.

REPORTS:

ENGINEER: no report.

SOLICITOR: Solicitor Askar mentions the need to appoint an auditor to do the 2013 audit.

Motion by Mr Googins, seconded by Mrs Skonieczny, to have attorney Askar prepare and advertise an RFP for the 2013 audit; all voted aye.

Solicitor Askar reports he spoke with Lane Wolfe of MDIA (3rd party building inspector) about the borough adding BIU (another 3rd party inspector) to the borough and Mr Wolfe is ok with this.

Motion by Mrs Skonieczny, seconded by Mr Morrone, to have Solicitor Askar open negotiations with BIU to become another 3rd party building inspector; all voted aye.

Solicitor Askar reports the Chief's new contract is under review by the Public Safety Committee.

Solicitor Askar reports he will be meeting with John Sylvestrie, the attorney for PZ Northern, and Michael Kohleman, the County's Assessor, to discuss PZ's assessment appeal.

NEW BUSINESS: The Palosky's and Sabo's request that their subdivision be approved as only 400 square feet are being exchanged.

Motion by Mr Fedkovich, seconded by Mr Bucuren to approve the Palosky – Sabo subdivision, all voted aye.

Mrs Barthelemy announced an upcoming Women's Club craft show and the Ambridge Area Chamber of Commerce' wine and chocolate event.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Mr Googins, seconded by Mr Fetkovich to adjourn, all voted aye at 8:57pm.

To the best of my knowledge the forgoing is a true and accurate record of what occurred during this meeting.

Randy S Kunkle
Borough Manager

List of Bills attached to the Minute Book.