

Oakland Borough Council
380 State Street
Susquehanna, PA 18847
Monthly business meeting
April 15, 2020

The regular meeting of the Oakland Borough Council was called order at 7:06pm via ZOOM video communications. Present were council members Gary Boughton, Valerie Senese, Ron Beavan, Brad Krayeski, and Robert Muiter; Solicitor John Martin; and Secretary Rhonda Parfitt. Council members Pat Gall, Debra White, and Mayor Randy Glover were absent.

Doug Arthur was in attendance as a member of the public.

Mr. Boughton announced the executive session that occurred after the meeting on March 21st from 11:34am-12:10pm for personnel, contractual, and litigation purposes. Included in this session were solicitor John Martin and Secretary Rhonda Parfitt.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Street sign replacement was added under streets report, the pet ordinance and sidewalk ordinance were tabled, and the Water Authority was added under new business. Ms. Senese made a motion to adopt the amended agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Krayeski and approved by unanimous vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Beavan noted that the March 21st minutes did not state who was absent. Ms. Senese made a motion to approve the March 21st minutes with the absences added. The motion was seconded by Mr. Krayeski and approved by unanimous vote.

Regarding the March 28th, Ms. Senese noted that on page 3, the ZOOM platform purchase should be \$14.99 monthly instead of annually. Mr. Krayeski noted on page 6 that it was COG doing emergency-only calls rather than NEIC. Ms. Senese made a motion to approve the March 28th minutes with the changes. Mr. Krayeski seconded the motion and it was approved by unanimous vote.

AUDIT PROPOSAL

Ms. Parfitt presented an audit proposal from Brian T. Kelly, CPA & Associates, LLC. The proposal contained different levels of completion and different price quotes according to each level. Mr. Krayeski inquired if the cheapest quote was what the Borough would need to meet its requirements with the DCED. Ms. Parfitt stated that she was unsure. Ms. Senese asked Mr. Boughton to read the audit and come back with an answer. Council agreed to table discussion of the audit proposal until more information could be gathered. Ms. Parfitt inquired if Council wished for her to get another proposal, as she had sent 7 RFP's and had only received on proposal. Mr. Martin stated that he had contacted two different accountants who had stated

that the aforementioned firm was the only one in the area performing municipal audits anymore.

Ms. Senese asked if Ms. Parfitt had completed the PUC Usage report which was due on April 13th. Ms. Parfitt stated that she had not, as she had not received a reminder and was not aware that it was due. Ms. Senese requested that Ms. Parfitt complete the report as soon as was possible for her to do so.

Mr. Beavan asked if the finance committee would be reviewing or addressing the audit. Ms. Senese stated that it was something that could be gone over with PEL. Ms. Parfitt stated that she and Ms. Senese had been planning a finance meeting that had not happened yet and that she had it on her list of things to be discussed.

TREASURER'S REPORT/BILL LIST/REVIEW OF TIME SHEETS

After discussing the bill list, Ms. Parfitt made a request that Council reconsider advertising the treasurer position sooner rather than later, stating that the work was becoming a little too much and she was uncomfortable being solely responsible for the finances of the Borough. Council agreed to place an advertisement in the County Transcript rather than the Mulligan's. The ad was to meet the \$50 per week maximum. Mr. Krayeski asked Ms. Parfitt if she had enough hours to get everything done, noting the number of hours on her last time sheet. Ms. Parfitt stated that it was enough hours because things were fairly quiet in the Borough, and that once the treasurer duties were given to someone else, she would have more than enough hours allotted.

Mr. Krayeski noted that there was no time sheet from Chief Creamer. There was a short discussion about how the acquisition of employee time sheets had been a little bit of an issue. Mr. Martin asked if the time sheet policy was in writing somewhere. Ms. Parfitt stated that she didn't believe it was. Ms. Senese had stated that there had been a motion regarding time sheets when payroll was changed shortly after she was hired. After some discussion, Ms. Senese made a motion that time sheets are due on the Monday of pay week at 4:00pm; that checks are not available for cashing until Thursday of the pay week. The motion was seconded by Mr. Krayeski and approved by vote. Ms. Senese requested that Ms. Parfitt type a letter and inform all employees of the motion.

CODES REPORT

Mr. Krayeski stated that COG was doing emergency-only calls due to the government restrictions. He also noted that an email had come from COG which stated the State Police would need to be contacted if someone wanted to report a contractor for working. This had been an issue recently.

STREETS REPORT

Mr. Krayeski gave the streets report in Mayor Glover's absence. He stated that the tractor had undergone a hydraulic repair and that three bags of cold patch had been used- two on Wilson Ave and one on 3rd and High Street. Mayor Glover requested for the Council to keep plowing

employee Peter Miller on for summer work as well. Mr. Boughton and Mr. Beavan stated their opinions that this was a good idea. There was a discussion about the rate which Mr. Miller would be paid for streets work. Ms. Senese read previous minutes to remind Council that the streets workers were paid \$15 per hour and the plowing employee was paid \$20 per hour. Mr. Krayeski stated that he was not sure that Mr. Miller knew he would be paid only \$15 per hour for streets work instead of \$20. Mr. Beavan recommended making a motion to hire Mr. Miller on the terms of \$15 per hour, and he could start right away if he chose to accept the rate. After some more discussion, Mr. Muiter made a motion to offer Mr. Miller to continue as a streets employee at a rate of \$15 per hour and to start immediately, contingent upon his acceptance. Mr. Beavan seconded the motion and it was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Krayeski then referenced a quote from Bradco Supply that he had received for the replacement of the street signs mentioned at the previous meeting. He noted that they would need two Blind Person signs rather than just the one that was quoted and wondered about just using the telephone poles to hang the signs. Mr. Beavan and Mr. Martin stated that using the telephone poles would be illegal. Mr. Beavan requested that Mr. Krayeski also ask Bradco about poles for the Blind Person signs. Mr. Krayeski made a motion for the Borough to purchase the three road signs. Ms. Senese seconded the motion and it was approved by unanimous vote. It was agreed that the money would come out of the Liquid Fuels account.

POLICE REPORT

Mr. Boughton asked if anyone had the March police report and it was answered no. Mr. Martin asked if it was a requirement that one be presented at each meeting. Ms. Senese stated that Chief Creamer used to issue Comm Reports to Council but that they had not been received in a while. Mr. Muiter stated that the standard needed to be clear going forward. Mr. Martin agreed, stating that the current contract discussion was dead but that it would eventually be revived and the police report was something that would need to be addressed in the contract. Mr. Beavan stated that it was his understanding that nothing was happening with the police and the Borough would be keeping its own department. Ms. Senese stated that the Borough's intentions had never been stated in a public meeting and thought it might be a good idea if such was done. Council began to reference conversation from executive session which could not be stated in a public meeting, and agreed that they should let Susquehanna know that they share their same concerns, but also that there is an insurance issue with the way the contract currently stands. Mr. Martin stated that the contract was set to be approved before Susquehanna entered an insurance issue into the contract. Ms. Senese stated that she felt the contract should be discussed again in executive session after the meeting. Council agreed.

Mr. Boughton stated that he had been informed that the Chevy Impala had been stripped of all things useful and was ready to be sent for junk and wondered what the process was. Mr. Martin stated that something of that nature did not need to go for bid and the Council could take the car wherever they wished for scrap.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

There was no Codes Committee Report, as the Burn Ordinance had been drafted and was the only thing the committee was working on.

There was no Community Development Committee Report due to Ms. White's absence.

Ms. Senese presented the finance committee report (attached) and stated that the meeting with PEL had contained a lot of hard facts. She encouraged everyone to prepare to be open-minded for the meeting with PEL when they would present their findings. She stated that their presentation had consisted of a lot of material, but one of the most important things to note was that raising the millage rate would not have gotten Oakland nearly the money that enforcing the EIT would and that the new tax was indeed a good plan. She stated that Phase 1 was coming to a close and that Phase 2 was around the corner. She encouraged all council members to be thinking about what they would like the Borough to look like and what they felt would be essential for Borough operations going forward. Mr. Beavan asked when this input should be given, and Ms. Senese encouraged all to send their thoughts to the Borough email as soon as possible so they could be considered in the final recommendations. Ms. Senese reminded Council of the 90% match rate and also stated that there were opportunities for a grant for a Borough truck if the Borough chose to continue with their own streets department.

Due to Mr. Arthur being unable to speak, Ms. Senese stated on his behalf that the Park concession stand had been broken into but that nothing had been taken. Mr. Arthur was going to get a new lock. She also reminded Council that they would re-visit the re-opening of the park's green spaces for families to be able to take their children during the quarantine. She stated that she hadn't heard of open green spaces being a problem at other playgrounds and that for the most part, parents were understanding that it was not ideal for their children to be touching the equipment. She also noted that the DCNR was encouraging parks to stay open so that the state parks were not overrun and people would be able to maintain the social distancing standards. After a phone call to Mr. Arthur and further discussion, Mr. Muiter made a motion to open the ball field and basketball court, removing the hoops; to barricade the playground; and to tape off the dugouts. Ms. Senese seconded the motion and it was approved by unanimous vote.

There was no volunteer committee report as volunteer activity had been suspended due to the government restrictions.

OLD BUSINESS

Regarding the burn ordinance, Mr. Krayeski stated that he was just waiting for the completed draft of the ordinance from Mr. Martin. Mr. Martin stated that he would email it over to Mr. Krayeski shortly.

Regarding the Flood Plain ordinance, Council had to answer several questions so that the ordinance could be buttoned up by Mr. Eby from JHA. Based on the questions, decisions were made that the Borough Secretary would be the administrator of the ordinance, violating the ordinance would be considered a summary offense, development within a flood plain would be

permitted with safer-than-minimum guidelines, and the ordinance would be effective 15 days after it was adopted by the Council. Mr. Beavan stated his concern about conducting too much business without the public present, as they had the right to have their voices heard before Council made any decisions. Mr. Martin stated that the ordinance would have to be noticed in the paper and the public had the right to examine the ordinance before it was adopted, but the Council could certainly wait to adopt the ordinance until they were able to have a public meeting in the Borough building again. Ms. Senese mentioned that perhaps an outdoor meeting would be possible if anyone was concerned about being inside the building.

Regarding the nuisance tax ordinance, Mr. Martin stated he would send the ordinance forward to Ms. Parfitt and that Council could hold a special meeting to adopt the ordinance or just adopt it at a future meeting. It was agreed that no special meeting would be necessary. The EIT was mentioned and Ms. Parfitt stated that the Borough had received a small payment from Berkheimer but that the quarterly collection was not due until the end of April so she would update Council on what the payment was, as this would be a good idea of what they could expect to see quarterly. Ms. Senese corrected, stating that because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the numbers for 2020 would not be an accurate reflection of what the Borough could expect to see in a normal year and she wanted everyone to keep that in mind.

Regarding the NEP contract, there was still some confusion as to whether or not the contract was acceptable. Some council members felt that NEP was asking for a franchise agreement stating that no competitor could come in lower than they did, and other council members disagreed with this interpretation. All council members were in favor of allowing the market to be the market and giving the residents the freedom to choose which provider they wanted to use. Ms. Senese offered to call Mr. Tourje and clear up the confusion and also invite him to the next meeting. Council was agreeable.

Regarding furnace repair, Ms. Parfitt stated that she had been in contact with Mr. Williams, who stated that he would get the furnace maintenance scheduled but never contacted her back. Mr. Beavan stated that he had called Mr. Williams and asked about the furnace and Mr. Williams stated that he had forgotten. Mr. Beavan stated that he wouldn't mind if someone else did the maintenance since Mr. Williams was so hard to communicate with. Ms. Parfitt offered to call Auchinachie and get a quote on the repair and maintenance, as the system is due for another servicing to be good for the summer months. Council was agreeable.

Regarding the employee policy, Ms. Senese stated that she had begun to read through the policy and that although it needed some changes, she felt it was right for the Borough to have it. She suggested that each council member read it through so that they could do the grunt work and save on the solicitor fees, just having Mr. Martin review the final draft. The employee policy was tabled as no council members had been able to read the whole document.

Ms. Parfitt gave an update on the street light replacement, apologizing for the delay as there had been much to accomplish in the last few months and the streetlight replacement request was quite the process. She stated that she had ordered the minimum of 12 lights to begin being

replaced on High Street at 50 lumens each, which was the lowest Penelec offered. The decision had been made after consulting with Chief Creamer and Mr. Krayeski. She stated that she would reach out to Penelec for an update on replacement, but she had been told that converting lights to LED was not Penelec's first priority and that the lights were replaced in their spare time.

Ms. Parfitt asked if Council wished for her to purchase a year-long ZOOM platform for the Borough or if they wished to continue to pay month-to-month for the service. The situation surrounding COVID was so uncertain and nobody knew when governments could feel comfortable conducting in-person meetings again. Ms. Senese added that even after states lifted their restrictions, she felt that individual entities may bar their employees from travelling and that it would be easy to hold ZOOM meetings. She also noted that the Borough's committees could make use of ZOOM as any council member could access the platform using the login information. It would also be more efficient if a council member could not attend in person to use the platform instead of trying to call in on a cell phone. Mr. Beavan stated that he believed the Borough should pay month-to-month. Mr. Krayeski noted that it would save the solicitor two hours in travel time and would save the Borough having to pay his travel time if he could call in via ZOOM instead of being physically present at the meeting. He noted his favor of the year-long subscription, stating that it would pay for itself quickly. When asked, Ms. Parfitt noted it was approximately \$25 in savings to purchase a year-long subscription as opposed to paying for a full year month-to-month. After some more discussion, Mr. Muiter made a motion to pay for an annual subscription of ZOOM. The motion was seconded by Ms. Senese and approved by unanimous vote.

Ms. Parfitt presented the website management information from the PSAB, which she had emailed to all of Council. The website would cost \$389 per year plus a one-time \$50 set-up fee. This included 7 hours of tech support. Ms. Parfitt would be able to make changes to the website, but she could also ask the PSAB to do it. Ms. Senese was in favor of this website option, stating that it would cost more than this to pay Ms. Parfitt to create and maintain a website. Mr. Beavan was opposed, stating that he felt the money could be used elsewhere and that the Borough didn't need a website. He stated that he thought the website would not get used and that a website would be no good if it was not used. Ms. Senese stated that she has always agreed with Mr. Beavan on this point, but that was before the pandemic and she felt that the website was now needed in order to fulfill the sunshine law and other legal purposes. She felt it was best to show the public the Council was making every possible effort to be open and informative. She felt the website was a better option than a Facebook page because there could be no comments and the information on the website would be strictly for informing the public. Mr. Muiter stated that there was new legislation in Pennsylvania that was not yet approved but that was paving the way for less restrictions on agencies during emergencies like the pandemic. Mr. Krayeski asked if advertisements on the website could take the place of advertisements in the paper. It was answered that they could not. After some discussion, Ms. Senese made a motion to purchase the PSAB website management program for one (1) year. The motion was seconded by Mr. Muiter and approved by majority vote with Mr. Beavan being opposed.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Senese stated that when the finance committee made the budget, they made it with the intention of putting the park maintenance out to bid, but she had been told by Mayor Glover that he intended to hire the streets employees to do the mowing. Mr. Krayeski stated that when the park was regularly maintained, it had taken him just one hour to do the mowing and he thought weed-whacking could be done twice a month which would be a little bit of extra time. Council was in agreement that it would be very cost effective to hire the streets employees for the park maintenance and that doing so would fall at or below budget.

Regarding the new Resource Room, Ms. Senese stated that she had a meeting with Weinberg and they were going to provide all of the food for the room. She stated that she had donated a freezer and some shelving and that she would also donate time to be the coordinator. The Resource Room would be referral-based. Susquehanna County residents in need would call 2-1-1 and would be directed to Oakland if it was determined that Oakland was the best fit for their needs. Ms. Senese stated that she would personally deliver items to Oakland Borough residents who were in need of delivery. She also stated that she had entered a resource request for gloves, masks, and hand sanitizer for the Borough's use. Ms. Senese stated that the room which contained the Weinberg food would need to be locked as she would be accountable for the contents. She asked Mr. Boughton if he was able to get her list of supplies that she had requested. Mr. Boughton responded that he was able to get three N-95 masks, two boxes of gloves, and two thermometers. Ms. Senese stated that she would need to purchase a rolling food cart but that Mr. Dubas of Schneider's Market was temporarily lending a cart. Ms. Senese asked Council if what she had done was okay and what Council had in mind as far as a resource for the community. Mr. Beavan stated that she had done well, and Mr. Muiter stated that she had far exceeded what he had expected would happen. Ms. Senese stated that she was not looking for compliments but wanted to make sure she hadn't stepped on toes.

Ms. Parfitt stated that she had seen APPI energy in the PSAB magazine and wondered if Council wished for her to contact them regarding the negotiation of energy services. Council discussed this and it was determined that the contracts are often not worth it. They did not wish for Ms. Parfitt to proceed.

The letter received from the Water Authority was briefly discussed. Ms. Senese stated that she felt it was executive session material as she was afraid that the letter threatened a lawsuit. Mr. Martin agreed. Mr. Arthur exited the meeting to allow Council to hold executive session. Ms. Senese wished for Ms. Parfitt to be included. Mr. Krayeski made a motion, seconded by Ms. Senese, to adjourn the meeting at 9:51pm. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote.

Council entered executive session for litigation and contractual purposes. Council adjourned executive session at 10:36pm.