

Oakland Borough Council
380 State Street
Susquehanna, PA 18847
Special meeting
March 28, 2020

The special meeting of the Oakland Borough Council was called to order at 10:01am. Present were Council members Valerie Senese, Brad Krayeski, Robert Muiiter, and Patrick Gall. Gary Boughton arrived at a later time. Also present were Solicitor John Martin and Secretary Rhonda Parfitt. Ron Beavan, Debra White, and Mayor Randy Glover were absent.

Resident Doug Arthur was present as a member of the public.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was observed.

Ms. Senese added several items to the agenda: 2018 Audit, 2019 Audit RFP, Administration needs, resumes, streets and volunteer updates, ordinance for nuisance taxes, resolution to extend state of emergency, park update, and codes update. Mr. Krayeski made a motion to adopt the amended agenda. It was seconded by Mr. Muiiter and approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Gall made a motion to accept the January 23rd minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Muiiter and approved by unanimous vote. Regarding the February 19th minutes, Ms. Senese stated for the record on the Mayor's behalf that the statement on page 5 stating that TBMA had an issue with him having a key was not true. The statement was to remain in the minutes because it had been said. Mr. Muiiter made a motion to approve the February 19th minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gall and approved by unanimous vote. Ms. Senese abstained from the vote due to her absence from the February 19th meeting.

Ms. Senese stated that Treasurer Ann Stewart had officially resigned. She had wished to resign in the late fall but agreed to stay to help with finances during Ms. Parfitt's maternity leave. Ms. Senese said that it had been suggested by PEL to hire an accounting firm to manage the Borough's finances but this was simply not affordable. Mr. Muiiter asked if the Secretary and Treasurer could be the same person and discussion ensued. The end result was confirmation that the Secretary and Treasurer should not be the same person in order to protect the taxpayer dollars. Mr. Martin adamantly agreed. Ms. Parfitt stated that she had prepared a proposal for how the duties should be split between the secretary, who would act as an assistant treasurer, and the treasurer. Assistant treasurer duties would be: open mail containing invoices and checks for deposit, reconcile Quickbooks with bank statements received, signatory on checks, and attend finance committee meetings as requested. Treasurer

duties would be: pay invoices and handle related correspondence, make deposits, payroll, monthly and quarterly payroll and UC reports, work with Secretary to completed annual DCED reports, maintain budget as passed by Council, advise Council regarding spending decisions, attend Borough meetings in order to provide treasurer's report, bills list, and copies of employee time sheets for each monthly meeting and as requested for special meetings, and attend finance committee meetings. Mr. Martin stated that the treasurer should also, on a quarterly basis, obtain bank statements directly from the bank to ensure that the ones in possession of the Secretary had not been altered. Ms. Senese stated that she believed the treasurer should be paid a monthly stipend to make it worth someone's time to drive to the Borough building and perform their duties. Ms. Parfitt had estimated that the work would be about 15 hours per month. Ms. Senese suggested a \$400 per month stipend and Council was agreeable to this suggestion. Mr. Krayski made a motion to place a \$50 ad in the Mulligan's advertising the treasurer position for \$400 per month. The motion was seconded by Mr. Muiter and approved by unanimous vote.

Ms. Parfitt presented the treasurer's report, noting that there was nothing remarkable. She explained that all bills on the bills list had been paid with the exception of the ones marked with an asterisk. Mr. Boughton had authorized this to avoid late payments. Mr. Muiter asked if in the future, there would be a way for Ms. Parfitt to indicate the frequency of the payment. Council agreed that this was a good idea and Ms. Parfitt concurred and agreed to make this adjustment. Ms. Parfitt noted that the payment for \$1,099.25 to JHA for the Prospect Street plans would put the Council over the \$5,600 budget they had voted on. Ms. Senese stated that she had spoken with Mr. Boughton and he had authorized the payment, but she wanted Council to know that she was not happy with the service from JHA. She did not like that everything was a separate cost and couldn't believe that they had to pay for an estimated cost of the project, which is the cost that put the project over budget. The Borough would also have to pay for printed paper copies of the plans, which was the \$27.00 on the bills list. Ms. Senese stated that she would like for the Secretary to draft a letter to the company which explained the dissatisfaction. Council was in agreement. Mr. Muiter made a motion to accept the treasurer's report and bills list. Mr. Krayski seconded the motion and it was approved by unanimous vote. The time sheets were reviewed and there were no comments.

Ms. Senese stressed the need to have an employee policy in place. She stated that the Borough could be in great legal trouble without one. Ms. Senese requested that Ms. Parfitt email the sample policy from the PSAB to everyone for review. She also stated that the Borough needed to be doing evaluations and keeping track of employee performance for the purpose of keeping personnel files for firing, unemployment, and raises. After discussion, Mr. Muiter made a motion for the department heads to perform two employee evaluations per year- one in January and one in June. Ms. Senese seconded this motion and it was approved by unanimous

vote. Ms. Senese stated that the Borough would need to get rid of its application for employment, as they had learned at the PSAB boot camp that most applications were illegal. From now on the Borough would be asking only for resumes for open positions. Ms. Senese also stated that the department heads should watch the PSAB's webinar on personnel. Current department heads are Mayor Randy Glover and Council President Mr. Boughton.

Ms. Senese began to review the completed 2018 Audit. She stated that there had not been time to make copies for all of Council but that they would be assembled after the meeting and disbursed for review. The audit showed that the Borough ended 2018 with a surplus of approximately \$27,000. Regarding the 2019 audit, Ms. Parfitt stated that she and the finance committee had put together an RFP and had sent them to seven different CPA's in surrounding areas. She had followed up with them all and to her knowledge, only one was presenting the Borough with a proposal. Ms. Senese and Ms. Parfitt warned Council that the cost of the audit was going to be significantly higher than in previous years. Ms. Parfitt stated that the Borough would be paying for more quality and hoped that they would find the extra expense worth it. Ms. Senese agreed that the Borough needed to spend the money to protect the money. Mr. Martin asked why the current auditor was no longer going to be performing the audit. Ms. Senese stated that it was a matter that could be discussed in executive session under the litigation provision.

Ms. Senese stated that given the current circumstances with the virus, the Council would not be able to meet in person for an indefinite amount of time and recommended that meetings be held via ZOOM. The cost would be \$14.99 per month and the platform could include up to 100 participants. She went on to explain a little bit about how ZOOM worked and that Mr. Boughton would still have full control of the meeting as there were silencing buttons and password protection if an executive session needed to be held. Mr. Muiter expressed his opinion that it was a good idea and went on to say that there is a bill in the House of Representatives that would allow municipalities to do almost anything under emergencies, including provisions for meetings. He stated that he felt the Borough should have a website where the Council could keep the residents abreast of the ZOOM links and other information while they are so restricted in their ability to have a gathering of people at the meetings. Ms. Senese stated that they had discussed a website before but don't really have anyone to spend much time managing it. She noted that PSAB does have a website management program. The website is not the greatest looking but would get the job done, even if it was temporary. She suggested that Ms. Parfitt look into the cost and details and report back to Council. For the time being, the link for the April 15th meeting would need to be made available on the door and on the emailing list, which no residents were currently on. After some clarifications, Mr. Muiter made a motion to purchase the ZOOM platform at \$14.99 monthly; to inform the public about the switch to ZOOM meetings via newspaper advertisement; and inform the public where the

ZOOM link could be found via newspaper advertisement. Mr. Gall seconded this motion and it was approved by unanimous vote.

Ms. Senese wished to discuss the Borough's expenditures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. She stated that she was disappointed to see the Chief of Police and the EMC not present, hoped there wasn't an incident keeping them away, and that the Council would now need to use their imaginations to come up with a figure of what might be needed to cover costs. There was discussion about putting off the start of the park project, as it was supposed to begin in 2021 and the finance committee was going to recommend earmarking \$20,000 in Impact Fee money to put toward the project match. This money may now be needed for emergency preparedness and police services. Mr. Krayeski asked what Chief Creamer's projection was regarding costs of necessities. Ms. Senese stated that the chief's responses at the previous meeting had been confusing, as he had indicated there wouldn't be any higher of a call volume, but also asked if Oakland would be willing to pitch in for supplies already purchased. Mr. Muiter stated that he was okay with putting off the park project, but wanted to make sure that if the money wasn't spent for COVID, then it wouldn't be spent at all so that it would still be there for the park when the opportunity arose to begin the park. Ms. Senese stated that in addition to emergency supplies and police hours, the Borough may need to prepare to help the Water Authority with operating expenses if enough residents didn't pay their bills. She reiterated that Ms. Nickerson had stated the Authority's operating expenses were about \$50,000 for 6 months, but it was yet to be seen how many residents would be unable or unwilling to pay their bill. Ms. Senese recommended earmarking \$5,000 to be given to the Water Authority if it happened that they needed money to carry them through. It was agreed that the Authority would need to provide evidence that they really were in need of the money before the Borough would hand it over.

Ms. Senese wished to re-address the closing of the park. She stated that Park Chairman Doug Arthur was in favor of closing the whole park, including the ball field, but that she wished for the Council to reconsider. She stated that the same people who ignore caution tape around the playground equipment would be the same people who go into the park to use it when the whole thing is closed. She wanted to see residents have the ability to go to the park and run around or play ball with their kids. After some discussion, it was agreed that the entire park would remain closed until the April 15th meeting and it would be readdressed at that time.

Ms. Senese began discussion about the Borough creating a resource room which could be filled with supplies that would assist the residents in their time of hardship during the pandemic. She stated that she, Mayor Glover, and Mr. Beavan all agreed that the Borough should have a resource room but that Mayor Glover and Mr. Beavan were both opposed to spending Borough money on supplies and wished for everything to be provided by donation instead. Ms. Senese reiterated what she had said at the previous meeting about food banks providing food only

once a month and some of them not taking new applicants or running out of food. She wished for the resource room to be referral-based- it wasn't just going to be a free-for-all. Her thought was that residents would approach a council member, the council member would ask someone how many people were in their household and what kind of things they might need, and the council member would then choose items for the resident, document what they gave, and send the resident on their way. She wanted to make clear that she was not suggesting that Oakland start its own food bank, but that she felt there should be a little more help for the taxpayers of Oakland. Mr. Krayeski stated his concern that if Oakland were to stock up on supplies, it wouldn't help the shortage problem that already existed with the public hoarding. Ms. Senese stated that she wasn't advocating for stocking up but she didn't see the harm in having a few items available for desperate people. She also felt that the supplies for the Oakland Police and EMC should be kept in the resource room to make sure that supplies purchased by Oakland were being used for Oakland. There was continued discussion, and Ms. Senese asked if Council could agree to earmark some money for the resource room. Mr. Muiter asked if the money could ever be reimbursed and it was answered that it could, if it was kept track of and approved for reimbursement through state or federal funds. There was also discussion about a resource request form, and Ms. Senese stated that the problem with the request form was that it would not help people with an immediate need. She estimated at least three weeks, if not longer, to get a request filled, due to the process it has to go through. Mr. Muiter stated that he was in favor of the resource room, but stocking the room needed to be established. Mr. Boughton asked how much Ms. Senese was planning to spend. She stated that it would be no more than \$1,000. Mr. Krayeski was in favor of the room, but stated that he felt the Council may have other, more pressing things that they were responsible for providing. He joined those who were in favor of a donation basket. Mr. Muiter made a motion for the Borough to have a resource room. This motion was seconded by Mr. Gall and approved by unanimous vote. It was agreed that donations would be the priority. Mr. Muiter made a motion for no more than \$500 to be spent on supplies for the resource room. Mr. Boughton seconded this motion and the motion was approved by majority vote with Mr. Krayeski being opposed.

Regarding the resolution for State of Emergency (hereafter abbreviated SOE), Mr. Gall made a motion for the Mayor's SOE to remain in place until the State and County lifted theirs, and for a resolution to be signed declaring such extension. Mr. Boughton seconded the motion and it was approved by unanimous vote. Mr. Martin would prepare the appropriate resolution for signing and be in contact with the Secretary.

Mr. Krayeski gave a codes update, stating that he had called COG regarding the fallen retaining wall at the property of Ken and Kimberly Irwin. Ms. Irwin had contacted the Borough and stated that she felt there was an emergency, as she was concerned that the neighboring yellow house would fall into her driveway after another few good rainstorms. Mr. Krayeski sent pictures to

NEIC who determined that due to the amount of vegetation on the wall, it had been an ongoing problem and there was no immediate concern that the neighboring house would collapse. This was the second time the issue had been looked at by a codes officer and both officers reached the same conclusion. Mr. Krayeski stated that he also had a complaint about vehicles up on Wilson Ave but COG is doing emergency-only calls during the SOE and it would have to be handled after the SOE is over. He ended by saying that Volunteer Committee happenings would be suspended during the SOE.

Ms. Senese opened the floor to public comment. Mr. Arthur suggested that the Borough try to obtain donations for the resource room from Weinberg. He also stated that he owns his own acetylene tanks and stated that it costs him \$130 as opposed to the \$148 the Borough is paying. Ms. Senese commented that if the Borough were to get a more established streets department, perhaps it would be something to consider to save a few dollars. Mr. Arthur asked if employees would get copies of their evaluations and it was answered that they would.

Mr. Boughton asked if they had addressed obtaining a "blind person" sign to place at 5657 High Street. Ms. Senese stated that she thought signage had to be approved by PennDOT. There was some disagreement and Mr. Krayeski was asked to check with COG. Mr. Boughton also stated that there was a Yield sign at the intersection of Boyden Street and 3rd Ave that needed to be replaced.

Mr. Muiter asked for an update on the police contract. Mr. Martin said the contract looked good except for an insurance issue. Ms. Senese stated that the contract would be discussed in executive session under the contractual agreement provision.

Mr. Krayeski asked Mr. Martin about the burn ordinance. Mr. Martin stated that he had not been allowed to stop at his office due to the Stay-At-Home order, so the ordinance could not be discussed at this meeting.

Mr. Krayeski made a motion, seconded by Mr. Muiter, to adjourn the meeting at 11:34am. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote.

Council entered executive session for litigation, personnel, and contractual issues at 11:34am and exited at 12:10pm. Included in the session were Mr. Martin and Ms. Parfitt.