

Oakland Borough Council

380 State Street

Susquehanna, PA 18847

General Business Meeting

July 14, 2022

Attendance: President Valerie Senese, Vice-President Gary Boughton, Robert Muiteer, Patrick Gall, Solicitor John Martin, Mayor Randy Glover, Administrator Jennifer Bixby.

Absent: Brad Krayeski, Treasurer/ Assistant Administrator Rhonda Parfitt.

President Valerie Senese stated that this meeting is being recorded.

Meeting Called to Order at 7:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance and moment of silence was observed.

1. Agenda:

A. Motion by Robert Muiteer, 2nd by Patrick Gall to adopt the agenda with the following changes:

1. Under Parks Committee:

A. Add letter F- Tree Bids.

B. Add letter G- Site Excavation and Stone Base for playground equipment.

2. Under Grant Update:

A. Add letter D- Marcellus Legacy Fund Mini Grant Application.

All in favor, motion carried.

2. Minutes:

A. Motion by Robert Muiteer, 2nd by Vice- President Gary Boughton to approve the June 9, 2022 minutes as presented with the following change:

1. Under Adjournment add meeting ended at 8:06 p.m.

All in favor, motion carried.

3. Public Comment was opened by President Valerie Senese at 7:03 p.m.

A. Jessica Komula, address 27 East High Street, Susquehanna, PA. 18847 still concerned about the trash that is accumulating on side of the building at 89 Westfall Avenue, Susquehanna, PA. 18847. Ms. Komula stated she has read through our codes from the website for rental properties. The owner of rental property of East High Street and Westfall Avenue, unsure of the exact address, is putting a new roof and painting the building. Now renting the house out. Ms. Komula asked the tenant from that house nicely to walk her dogs on the opposite side of the house. Ms. Komula stated

she was screamed at by the tenant. Ms. Komula asked council to please do something about these rental properties so that she would be able to enjoy her property again.

President Valerie Senese stated thank you for your comment and closed public comment at 7:07 p.m.

4. Community Development Report:

- A. Chairperson Heather Kraveski for Community Development was not present to give a report.

5. Financial Reports:

- A. Treasurer Rhonda Parfitt was not present at meeting. Report given by Finance Chairperson Robert Muiter.
- B. Motion by Vice-President Gary Boughton, 2nd by Patrick Gall to approve the Treasurer's Report after the following report that was given by Finance Chairperson Robert Muiter:
 - 1. All accounts are up to date and in good standing.
 - 2. Significant increase in royalties between April and June that are reflected under the deposits in the report.All in favor, motion carried.

- C. Motion by Vice-President Gary Boughton, 2nd by Robert Muiter to approve and pay Bill List as presented with the following given by Finance Chairperson Robert Muiter:
 - 1. Steve's Tree removed a tree from the resident's property for \$1000.00. Council thought this would be covered under Borough's insurance, it was not. The bill was paid out of the General Funds.
 - 2. PSATS membership is for \$200.00. President Valerie Senese proposed to discontinue the membership with PSATS, but keep PSAB. Motion by Robert Muiter, 2nd by Patrick Gall to discontinue PSATS. All in favor, motion carried.
 - 3. The bill for OEM was paid in April for a new computer. This bill was not paid.All in favor, motion carried.

6. Correspondence:

- A. There was no correspondence for this month.

7. Codes Report:

Brad Kraveski was not present to give a verbal report. Report was given by Robert Muiter.

Last month a meeting was held to discussed the Rental Ordinance, a rental permit application, a rental checklist and a rental fee schedule for each property. Mr. Muiter asked Solicitor John Martin if he had reviewed the paperwork. Solicitor John Martin stated he did review the paperwork.

Mr. Muter explained and reviewed the checklist for Council. The checklist that will carry for all rental properties and will be inspected. There will be significant penalties for non-compliancy. Mr. Muter explained the Rental Permit Application. The license fee for the permit will be \$100.00 per unit. The landlord is responsible to schedule an appointment for the inspection with COG or the Code Enforcer Officer. If the unit passes the first inspection the landlord will receive a \$50.00 refund. If the unit requires a second inspection the landlord will not receive the refund as it will pay for the second inspection. The landlord will also need to schedule the second inspection with COG or the Code Enforcer Officer. There will be a \$50.00 fee for each additional inspection until the unit is in complaint with the code. The rental fee schedule is \$100.00 per unit per year. Solicitor John Martin asked who will be doing the inspections? President Valerie explained that it will be a designated representative that will be doing the inspection either COG or a Code Enforcer Officer that Oakland Borough will be advertising for.

- A. Robert Muter motioned, 2nd by Vice-President Gary Boughton to adopt the Rental Permit as presented. All in favor, motioned carried.
- B. Robert Muter motioned, 2nd by Vice-President Gary Boughton to adopt the Rental Checklist. All in favor, motion carried.
- C. Motion by Robert Muter, 2nd by Vice-President Gary Boughton for rental fee schedule of \$100.00 per unit per year. All in favor, motion carried.
- D. Motion by Vice-President Gary Boughton, 2nd by Robert Muter to advertise for Code Enforcer Officer. All in favor, motion carried.
- E. Motion by Vice-President Gary Boughton, 2nd by Robert Muter to advertise in the Susquehanna Transcript newspaper the Rental Ordinance. All in favor, motion carried.

Robert Muter asked how Oakland Borough was going to implement the code? President Valerie Senese explained that Oakland Borough will use all resources. Examples: talking to the tax collector, talking to the County, using the Water Authority, putting it in the newspaper, on facebook, on the website and in the newsletter. Sending a Code Enforcer Officer to knock on each door giving rental property owners a rental application with the checklist and explain they will need to comply. In the beginning it is going to be labor intensive. After that the Code Enforcer Officer will have a data base to work from to follow up every single year. It will take time. Solicitor John Martin also explained that no rental property owner will be grandfathered in.

8. Police Report:

- A. Chief Officer Creamer was not present to give report. Mayor Randy Glover gave a report consisting of patrolling, 3 traffic stops, a few harassments, domestic disputes, well-being check, a quad on the road and a dog bite.
- B. Solicitor John Martin asked Mayor Randy Glover if he was happy with the service

now that Oakland Borough is 6 months into the contract. President Valerie Senese proposed having a meeting to discuss the pros and cons and what should be addressed.

The Council reviewed the Police Bill and Log and will be submitted to the meeting minutes.

DPW Report:

- A. Verbal report given by Head of DPW Randy Glover. Things are getting done. Has young DPW worker cutting brush around the fire hydrants, taking care of the park. Head of DPW Randy Glover would like someone to put in an application for the job to help young DPW worker learn the ropes. Head of DPW Randy Glover requesting another Help Wanted Ad be placed again in newspaper. President Valerie Senese proposed having a Finance meeting to see, if possible, to hire a full time DPW worker.
- A. Head of DPW Randy Glover requested reflectors or guardrails to be put up on top of Chestnut Street where the rocks are. Mr. Glover explained if the plow truck comes round the bend, it will remove the large rocks that are there and the rocks will be out into the road. Mr. Muiter asked if there were any guardrails behind the garage? Mr. Glover will check behind garage to see if there are any guardrails there.

9. Finance Committee Report:

- A. Robert Muiter stated that there was no Finance meeting this past month.
- B. Robert Muiter gave an update for CD investments which include: Quote from Peoples Security starting at 0.15% for 3 months to 0.35% for 42 months. Quote from Honesdale National Bank starting at 0.10% for 3 months to 0.50% for 48 months. Quote from Edward Jones starting at 2.0% for 3 months to 3.30% for 48 months. Robert Muiter questioned why Edward Jones is a much higher rate. President Valerie Senese explained that Edward Jones Investment buys in mass volume in different types of CD's and investments and that they would be able to put out a higher investment rate. The money in CD's is federally insured. Robert Muiter explained that he would not like to tie up all the Borough's Capital Reserve money. President Valerie Senese asked if there was an amount discussed. Robert Muiter stated there were no exact numbers. President Valerie Senese proposed to table this till next month, and asked Robert Muiter to contact Treasurer Rhonda Parfitt and discuss this. Robert Muiter will do this.
- C. Motion for Resolution for Certificate of Deposit was not discussed. Will be tabled till next month.
- D. President Valerie Senese proposed to adopt an "exact change" policy. Any transaction with the Borough should be paid with exact change, money order or

check. Motion by Robert Muiter, 2nd Vice-President Gary Boughton. All in favor, motion carried. Notice will be placed on front door.

10. Parks Committee Report:

- A. Head of Park Committee Gary Boughton stated there was no meeting this month for the Parks Committee. Mr. Boughton would like to say thank you the residents that donated rubber mulch for the park, it was very much appreciated.
- B. Head of Parks Committee Gary Boughton stated that there is nothing to report on the cameras for the park. Ms. Bixby gave a copy of the camera's Oakland Borough would like to purchase to John Ord. Ms. Bixby will send email to see if John Ord has any update on prices yet for the cameras.
- C. Tree thinning at lower end of park was not discussed. Will be tabled till next month.
- D. Head of Parks Committee Gary Boughton explained that a huge tree limb fell on the fence around the basketball court. Head of DPW Randy Glover and DPW Christopher Eger helped Gary Boughton remove the limb. Mayor Randy Glover asked if the fence around the basketball court should be removed. Mr. Gary Boughton said yes as the fence is no longer in good condition.
- E. Mr. Gary Boughton also requested to rent a log chipper and spreader. President Valerie Senese questioned to rent or to buy a log chipper. Mayor Randy Glover stated it would be great if we could buy one. Mayor Randy Glover will look into getting prices for a log chipper and spreader.
- F. Jim Kessler a forensic forester from Soil and Conservation came in and checked out a few trees at the park. Mr. Kessler explained that all the trees he looked at except 1 should come down. The trees have gypsy moth rot and is rotted all the way through. President Valerie Senese explained that the Borough was hoping to be able to save the trees. Oakland Borough removed 9 trees in the beginning and kept 5 or 6. There was a desire to save the oak trees. This is also including the big one right in the center; the roots are above the surface and girdling and the tree is suffocating itself. Mr. Kessler also explained on an oak tree you shouldn't be able to look through the canopy of the tree. Mr. Kessler showed where the disease entered the trees at the base and climbed up the trees.
President Valerie Senese stated that Oakland Borough would be able to replant new trees after all the work is finished at the park.
Robert Muiter questioned if Oakland Borough would be able to get a written report from Jim Kessler defining what is wrong with the trees, and must be removed for safety reasons. So, when some residents get upset that the trees were removed Oakland Borough has a report to show them what was wrong with the trees.
Head of Parks Gary Boughton requested to get bids to have the trees that need to be removed, and also the one that the large limb fell off of. Motion by Robert Muiter, 2nd by Patrick Gall to advertise for tree bids. All in favor, motion carried.
- G. Head of Parks Gary Boughton explained the site excavation and stone base to be done at the park.

1. Prep site as follows:

- Strip top soil for a max depth of 12”.
- Dispose of top soil and other spoils on site or by others.
- Supply and install 4” of compacted stone base for approximately 2,250 square foot area.
- Final surfacing material supplied and installed by others.

President Valerie Senese explained that this job doesn't need to go out to bid as the Company Willow Playworks works with Costar. Ms. Bixby will sign paperwork and send it to the Representative.

11. Food Pantry:

- A. Ms. Bixby gave a report on purchasing hamburger and whole chickens for the food pantry through the Food Pantry account. Robert Muter asked if there was anything else that the food pantry could use. Ms. Bixby explained that soap, laundry detergent, toothpaste, shampoo and conditioner are some of the items that usually are unable to get through Weinberg.
- B. Ms. Bixby explained that a cell phone had been purchased for the food pantry. The monthly minutes will cost \$30.00. Ms. Bixby will have the phone number on the website changed to the Borough's phone and the cell phone number.

12. Grant Update:

- A. President Valerie Senese explained the Soil and Conservation Grant/ Upper Boyden Street audit was done by Delta Engineering. The bid shows that it was over 200% of what it should have been. The bid should have been under \$85,000.00. The two suggestions that Delta Engineering suggested are as follows:
1. Ask Oakland Borough's funder if the project could wait till next spring and rebid to get the best price. Have a pre-bid meeting so the bidders would be able to ask questions about the project.
 2. Try again this fall and have a pre-bid meeting. Soil and Conservation did confirm that Oakland Borough would be able to hold off till next spring. President Valerie Senese asked if there was clarification if Oakland Borough holds off till spring if we would be able to apply for funding this year. Ms. Bixby stated this would not inhibit Oakland Borough from applying for funding this year. Delta Engineering said the earlier Oakland Borough puts the bid out the cheaper the price should be, as contractors are looking to start a new project. Contractors raises the price at the end of the year due to that they are trying to finish projects already committed to doing. Motion by Robert Muter, 2nd by Vice-President Gary Boughton to hold off project till spring and advertise the pre-bid meeting in February or March. All in favor, motion carried.
- B. President Valerie Senese stated the Overlook Tree Removal went well and looks great.

- C. President Valerie Senese stated that the CDBG Grant has been submitted. Hopefully Oakland Borough will hear back soon.
- D. President Valerie Senese stated that the Marcellus Legacy Grant is now open. This is a no match grant. Last year the highest payout was \$4,000.00, the year before that the payout was \$26,000. President Valerie Senese proposed to Council that Ms. Bixby work with Delta Engineering to write the grant for the Overlook project. Motion by Patrick Gall, 2nd by Vice-President Gary Boughton to submit the application for Marcellus Legacy for the Overlook. All in favor, motion carried.

Old/ Tabled Business:

- 13. President Valerie Senese excused herself from any decisions due to conflict of interest. President Valerie Senese passed the gavel to Vice-President Gary Boughton.

- A. Robert Muiter explained that Ms. Bixby and himself had a phone conference on Tuesday July 12, 2022 with Andrew Strauss to discuss getting a contract to have blighted homes in Oakland Borough fixed up and brought up to code. Robert Muiter explained to Mr. Strauss what Oakland Borough's objective was. Mr. Strauss explained he had never done anything like this before. Mr. Strauss did however explain a few steps Oakland Borough would have to take in detail. Mr. Muiter explained the details of the following steps.

- 1. Prequalify contractors:
 - A. The risk
 - B. The Standards
 - C. Bidding for the contractors
- 2. Attorneys:
 - A. The research
 - B. The Redevelopment Statutes
 - C. The Legal Challenges
- 3. Grants, Loans or Credit from Banks:
 - A. County Money
 - B. Stabilization of tax
 - C. Other Municipalities
 - D. County Planning Commission

Mr. Strauss asked to have some time to do some research. If he is unable to do this he will refer Oakland Borough to someone who would be more qualified to help.

Robert Muiter did explain that Mr. Strauss did email Ms. Bixby on July 14, 2022 referring Oakland Borough to Barry Isset and Associates that is more qualified. Mr. Strauss spoke with Barry Isset and Associates and explained what Oakland Borough is looking to do. Mr. Strauss asked Oakland Borough to reach out to Stephanie Milewski. President Valerie Senese asked Ms. Bixby to reach to Ms. Milewski. President Valerie Senese explained the Redevelopment Authority