

Oakland Borough Council
380 State Street
Susquehanna PA 18847
Regular meeting minutes
June 24, 2021

Passed motions:

to adopt the amended agenda

to adopt the May 13th meeting minutes as presented

to adopt the May 26th minutes as presented

to approve the Treasurer's report as presented

to approve the bills list as presented

to approve the employee time sheets

to accept the codes report as presented

to terminate Lawrence Rudock from his position as part-time DPW employee

to place the ad for the dumpster usage in the Mulligan's

to hire Garnett Excavating at a rate of \$90 per hour to fill potholes in the Borough, not to exceed \$720 total.

to obtain three telephone bids for the Chestnut/High Street project and to hire the lowest bidder, pending an email to Council which would include the bidders and bid amounts

to move forward with the rain garden with a budget not to exceed \$1,000

to place winter maintenance out to bid with the Borough providing road treatment materials

to obtain three telephone bids for the cleaning of the Borough building and to choose the lowest bid

to draft a letter to both Lanesboro and Susquehanna proposing a shared employee

to allow Doug Arthur and Valerie Senese to attend a Little League board meeting in order to discuss Little League's return to the Oakland Park

to accept the parks committee report

to accept the volunteer committee report as presented

to approve the expenditure (\$5,855.00) and allow Delta to aid the Community Development Committee in the design of the pocket park

to request that Adams Cable maintain the Borough's flags out of a measure of goodwill

to adjourn the meeting at 8:57pm

Minutes:

The special meeting of the Oakland Borough Council was called to order at 7:01pm. Present were council members Gary Boughton, Valerie Senese, Robert Muiiter, Brad Krayeski, and Pat Gall; Solicitor John Martin; and Administrator Rhonda Parfitt. Council member Debra White and Mayor Randy Glover were absent.

Present as a member of the public was resident Doug Arthur.

1. Adoption of the agenda: Mr. Muiiter wished to add to the agenda a request to Adams Cable to help maintain the Borough's flags. This was added under new business.
 - a. Mr. Muiiter made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gall, to adopt the amended agenda. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.
2. Minutes
 - a. Mr. Muiiter made a motion, seconded by Ms. Senese, to adopt the May 13th meeting minutes as presented. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.
 - b. Mr. Muiiter made a motion, seconded by Ms. Senese, to adopt the May 26th minutes as presented. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.
3. Public Comment- there was no public comment.
4. Financial reports
 - a. Mr. Muiiter made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gall, to approve the Treasurer's report as presented. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.
 - b. Mr. Muiiter made a motion, seconded by Mr. Krayeski, to approve the bills list as presented. The motion was approved by unanimous vote. Mr. Martin asked where the bill was for the police coverage. Ms. Parfitt stated that she had not yet received one, although she had requested it.
 - c. Ms. Senese made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gall, to approve the employee time sheets. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.
5. Correspondence:
 - a. Ms. Parfitt stated that she had received correspondence from Peoples Security Bank and Trust which stated that one of the loans which the Oakland Borough Water Authority was responsible for paying had been paid in full in the spring. The loan had been for approximately \$320K and originated in 2004. There was

one more loan which they were responsible for paying it the total due was still over \$100,000 but she did not have an exact number handy.

- b. A request for a donation to the SCDA Hometown Days Committee had also been received. Ms. Senese stated that she was not comfortable giving taxpayer dollars to something that did not provide a free service. Attenders of Hometown Days have to pay for everything except walking around and fireworks and the fireworks have historically been sponsored by the Dubas family. After some discussion, the Council agreed that it would sponsor a free activity at future Hometown Days events but would not spend taxpayer dollars on events that didn't offer something free to the community.
 - c. Additionally, a thank-you note was received from Kindred Spirits, thanking the Borough and donors for making the trap, spay/neuter, release program possible. Kindred Spirits is at Montrose Feed & Supply for the summer but will return to Oakland in the fall of 2021 and stay for the winter and spring.
6. Codes Report: Bold portion provided by Brad Kraveski: **I did not receive any code complaints. I received a call that I'm waiting to hear back on. It concerned the buying of property and zoning but he did mention township so I need clarification. At the May 18th COG meeting we discussed the NEIC codes proposal. It was discussed that most members were "ok" with the current set up and were not interested in the proposal from NEIC for codes enforcement. Therefore if Oakland wanted to continue forward we would have to cover 100% of the cost and I politely declined the proposal on Oaklands behalf. COG has changed their floodplain engineer services from Shumaker Eng. to Nate Tompkins Eng. due to changes in fee schedules and what is covered under each schedule. COG is looking for more membership participation. If you know municipalities that are members, try to convince them to show up. We also discussed how well the codes "Follow up" is and this seemed to be a common concern between members. Tina was going to work on it.**

It was again noted that being a code enforcer is not a particularly fun or easy job and that many municipalities have enforcement issues due to the shortage of code enforcement officers. There does not seem to be a great solution for the Borough to pursue at this time.

- a. Ms. Senese made a motion, seconded by Mr. Muiter, to accept the codes report as presented. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.
7. Police Report: There was no police report presented.
8. DPW Report: Bold portions provided by Valerie Senese
- a. **East Boyden Street: Project is completed. Project timeline was approximately 2 years. Failed trench drain was filled with modified, the road was being washed**

out, and there was no drainage for surface water on East Boyden, nor was there overflow management from Westfall ave. Now the road has a new trench drain, cohesive connections for pedestrians, a seeded ditch on East Boyden with a 10-inch pipe that crosses into a dry well that is located on private property. The road has now been paved, completing the project for East Boyden. The system proved to work on the 6/21/21 rainstorm.

- b. Park Maintenance: The park has been maintained by a 3rd party company. Each week the grounds are kept. Weekly inspections have been favorable.**
 - i. Some council members stated that they were happy to see several different groups of people using the park for different purposes over the spring and into June.
- c. Employee: I am putting forth the recommendation to terminate the position of DPW employee Lawrence Rudock**
 - i. Mr. Muiteer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Senese, to terminate Lawrence Rudock from his position as part-time DPW employee.
- d. Key: I had a key cut for Lanesboro employee, a letter was sent to Lanesboro for record retention**
- e. Dumpster: without our planned employee, councilman Muiteer, mayor Glover and volunteer Tim Senese went to the garage to clean it up. The dumpster was due to be picked up on Monday. I would like to recommend a community clean up day where we make the dumpster available on a certain day and publicize it to the community. It would be done at the Borough garage and would need to be staffed to ensure proper waste is being deposited and also for security purposes. Tri-Boro Sewer has no problem with this arrangement so long as the property is staffed as mentioned above.**
 - i. The Council discussed and came up with a date of July 3rd in the morning hours to open the dumpster to the public. Mr. Boughton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gall, to place the ad for the dumpster usage in the Mulligan's. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.
- f. Pot Holes: Garnett Excavating has offered a rate of \$90 an hour to fill pot holes with our already purchased cold patch. This includes his truck, trailer, and two men. I would like to recommend we proceed with an 8 hour day and a total of \$720.**

- i. Mr. Gall made a motion, seconded by Mr. Krayeski, to hire Garnett Excavating at a rate of \$90 per hour to fill potholes in the Borough, not to exceed \$720 total. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

- g. **Chestnut and High: The road washed away and the guard rail is unstable. I reached out to our engineer Mr. Maby and he provided a scope of work for a contractor. I went out with Garnett Excavating to get a bid on the work. Additionally, the ditch on High Street will need to be cleaned, shaped and connected to existing drainage to ensure it doesn't happen again. The bid came in at 11K which is under the bid amount, but worth trying for three other telephone bids.**
 - i. Mr. Muter made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gall, for Ms. Parfitt to obtain three telephone bids for the Chestnut/High Street project and to hire the lowest bidder, pending an email to Council which would include the bidders and bid amounts. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

- h. **State Street: I have received confirmation that our advocacy to Penn Dot has included fixing the spring on State Street in their slide project for 2022.**
 - i. Ms. Senese stated that Chris Maby had attended a meeting with PennDOT and gone to bat for the Borough. The meeting was a success and one of the many problems along this stretch of road will now be rectified.

- i. **Rain Garden on Walnut: I would like to propose that the DPW work on installing rain gardens where appropriate. This is to: cut down on weed whacking maintenance, reduce surface water, and enhance the local community. Additionally, they are a best management practice to increase water quality in the Chesapeake Bay.**
 - i. After explanation was received about what a rain garden is and what the process would be to install one, Mr. Muter made a motion, seconded by Mr. Krayeski, to move forward with the rain garden with a budget not to exceed \$1,000. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

- j. **Spring Creek: Some potholes were filled on Spring Creek. Unfortunately, Spring Creek will be a major project as the road is eroding. There is no drainage on Spring Creek, and this is seriously undermining the road. Spring Creek needs to be evaluated for the installation of drainage and a new road. The expense of the road is likely to be massive, and there are only a handful of residents on the road. I would recommend a quote also be secured for returning the road to**

dirt. The Borough should analyze the cost difference in a new asphalt vs. dirt road.

- i. Ms. Senese stated that there is more funding available for the maintenance of dirt roads and wondered if it would be worth it to convert the road to dirt. Council was not in favor of this consideration. Ms. Senese stated that either way, engineering plans would be needed for the road, which was determined by map to be .25 miles long, and she felt the cost could be up to \$20,000.

k. Snow Plowing: I would like to recommend the Borough seek bids for winter maintenance.

- i. The Council clarified that Ms. Senese was not looking to get rid of Pete Miller. Ms. Senese stated that Mr. Miller could only work certain hours and that she felt it best that he get the hours that work for him and a contractor could do the hours that he cannot. After the heavy snowfall winter and the way that the roads had been disastrous, Ms. Senese wished to have a different plan. Mr. Krayeski stated that the Borough had just purchased a new truck and all the amenities to plow and that Mr. Miller should remain the primary plowing person. Ms. Senese stated that Mr. Miller was refusing to drive the new truck and the topic might need to be discussed in executive session because it was personnel. After more conversation, Mr. Boughton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Muieter, to place winter maintenance out to bid with the Borough providing road treatment materials. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

l. Contractor on retainer: I would like to recommend the Borough seek bids for a contractor on retainer. This will enable the Borough to use a contractor when there is no employee to get work done quickly and efficiently, while ensuring we are getting the best price.

- i. The Council engaged in much debate and back-and-forth over this subject. Mr. Muieter stated that he didn't mind having a contractor on retainer, but that larger projects should still be requested for phone bids because the Council did not want to be unethical. Ms. Senese stated that the point of putting the retainer out to bid was that the Council would know it was already getting the cheapest price and they wouldn't have to worry. She noted that bid limits change every year. She then voiced her frustration of having to come to the Council for every penny and that projects were taking months longer than necessary because the Borough did not have a DPW employee or an agreement with a contractor to do any work at all. Residents were complaining about the conditions of the

streets and she, as the DPW supervisor, was not able to get any work done. After much debate, Mr. Muiteer made a motion to proceed with soliciting bids, but Ms. Senese disagreed, stating that the topic was too contentious and the motion should not continue.

- m. Truck: Waiting to hear back from Clevelands on the cost of fixing the dump truck. If the truck is worth fixing, we need to get the plow fixed as well.**

- n. CDBG: The water authority would like the Borough to consider applying for CDBG funds to purchase a generator for the water authority. They do not have the funds, but are in need because they are unable to fill the water tank without electric. They are unable to apply themselves and need to apply through the Borough. An application for the water authority would compete for an application for park equipment. I would like to recommend not applying for the park equipment and applying for the generator. A generator will ensure the safety and well-being of our residents in a power outage, a current systemic issue that Oakland faces regularly.**
 - i. After receiving new information, Ms. Senese “scratched” this portion of the report and stated that it would be discussed in executive session.

- o. Building Cleaning: I would like to recommend the Borough hire a cleaning company to clean the Borough once a month. This should be done with an attempt at three telephone bids, and the lowest bid chosen.**
 - i. Mr. Krayeski made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gall, to obtain three telephone bids for the cleaning of the Borough building and to choose the lowest bid. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

- p. Increase DPW Wages: I would like to recommend increasing the DPW wages from \$15 an hour to \$20 hour to entice more applicants. Even with an increase, the Borough is saving money vs. paying out to contractors.**
 - i. Also discussed was the possibility of hiring Lanesboro’s DPW employee, contracting with Lanesboro, or contracting with Susquehanna. Susquehanna was in need of an employee but having a hard time filling the part time position. Lanesboro’s employee was desiring of more hours but wanted to make sure he could fulfill his commitment to Lanesboro before committing to Oakland. Mr. Krayeski made a motion, seconded by Ms. Senese, for Ms. Parfitt to draft a letter to both Lanesboro and Susquehanna proposing a shared employee.

9. Codes Committee report: The committee did not meet. We are waiting on the drafted codification of ordinances.
10. Community Development Committee report: The committee did not meet.
11. Finance Committee report: The committee did not meet. Finances are in good standing.
12. Parks Committee report: The Parks committee reported that they would like for Doug Arthur and Valerie Senese to attend a Little League Board meeting to discuss the future of the entities. Ms. Senese and Mr. Arthur are of the opinion that if Little League is not going to come back to Oakland, it is a waste of money to institute the park according to the engineered plans. After all, the plans were made with Little League in mind and were approved by the Board. Mr. Krayeski voiced his opinion that the Council should carry on with the plans as they were created and felt that Little League would return in the future. He did not see it being feasible for Prospect Park to be their permanent home for all players as some practices had to be cancelled this year due to “over-activity” on the fields. Ms. Parfitt had contacted Kim Keyes who stated that the Board would be getting some different members in August, and the Council agreed that would be the best time to speak with the Board.

- a. Mr. Muiter made a motion, seconded by Mr. Krayeski, to allow Doug Arthur and Valerie Senese to attend a Little League board meeting in order to discuss Little League’s return to the Oakland Park. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.
- b. Mr. Krayeski made a motion, seconded by Mr. Muiter, to accept the parks committee report. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

13. Volunteer Committee report: **Bold portion provided by Brad Krayeski: On May 15th a group of 4 adults and their 6 children met at the Borough building to take care of the flower beds out front. Together they planted flowers, pulled weeds, laid a stone perimeter, and mulched. They put forth 20 hours of great volunteer time. On the same day 2 others were at the park contributing 8 hrs of time to help keep the ball field mowed and knotweed knocked down along the fence.**

On June 6th a group of 3 got together to tackle the annual state street sidewalk project. Randy Glover had volunteered his time and also the use of his tractor to aid in the cleanup. They spent 12 volunteer hours doing a great job on a Sunday. The use of some Borough power tools helped expedite the process. And the use of the road signs helped motorists be aware of the project.

While together we discussed some upcoming opportunities for some projects that seem to mostly be “overgrowth” related.

- a. Mr. Krayeski made a motion, seconded by Ms. Senese, to accept the volunteer committee report as presented. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

- b. Ms. Senese stated that she had taken a volunteer management class and learned the sad fact that most volunteers are no longer contributing to their communities for the good of the cause, but because there is a monetary figure attached to it and it looks good on a resume. She proposed that there be a volunteer fund in the 2022 budget to make volunteering for the Borough look a little more appealing and to keep up with volunteer trends of offering a \$5 gift card or some other nominal reward.
- 14. Ordinance codification: Tom Shepstone stated that he would have a draft of the codification complete by the end of June.
- 15. Streetlight replacement- Mr. Krayeski stated that some lights had been converted at the beginning of State Street and he was concerned about the safety hazard as the lights were at the right angle to blind a driver. He wondered if Penelec could be asked for a shroud or shield for the lights. Ms. Senese reminded the Council that she had also complained about the safety hazard when the lights had been replaced on High Street. Mr. Martin instructed Ms. Parfitt to write to Penelec and tell them that it was a safety issue that needed to be rectified. Council was pleased with this solution.
- 16. Petition to Penelec: Nothing to report
- 17. Food Pantry: nothing to report
- 18. Kindred Spirits: As previously noted during correspondence, they will return in the fall
- 19. Ms. Senese brought a proposal from the Community Development Committee to convert the empty space at the entrance to the old bridge at the bottom of Westfall Ave into a Veterans Memorial Pocket Park. This would provide a clean space to sit and would also aid in creating an appealing gateway to the community. A quote of \$5,855.00 from Delta Engineering had been received for surveys and design of the park. Mr. Krayeski made a motion, seconded by Mr. Muiteer, to approve the expenditure and allow Delta to aid the Community Development Committee in the design of the pocket park. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.
- 20. Mr. Muiteer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Senese, to request that Adams Cable maintain the Borough's flags out of a measure of goodwill. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.
- 21. Mr. Boughton announced that an executive session was being held for personnel and contracts and that there would be no motion afterward. Ms. Senese made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gall, to adjourn the meeting at 8:57pm. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote.