

Oakland Borough
380 State Street
Susquehanna, PA 18847
Regular business meeting
October 21, 2020

The regular meeting of the Oakland Borough Council was called to order at 7:00pm. Present were council members Gary Boughton, Valerie Senese, Ron Beavan, Rob Muiteer, and Patrick Gall; Mayor Randy Glover; Solicitor John Martin; and Secretary Rhonda Parfitt. Council members Debra White and Brad Kraveski were absent.

Also present were residents Doug and Sue Arthur. Chief Creamer arrived at 7:55pm.

The pledge of allegiance was recited and a moment of silence was observed.

Added to the agenda under the streets report was a request for a DPW and an update about Prospect Street. Added to the agenda under new business was NIMS training and a request for a special meeting. Police discussion was added after the executive session. Mr. Muiteer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gall, to adopt the amended agenda. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Beavan made a motion, seconded by Mr. Muiteer, to accept the September 16th minutes as presented. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

A change was made to the October 5th minutes. On page one of the minutes, they were inaccurately labeled as the minutes for October 21st. Ms. Senese made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gall, to approve the October 5th minutes with the date change. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Ms. Senese made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gall, to approve Resolution# 2020-9. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Ms. Parfitt presented the treasurer's report, stating that there were no notes. Regarding the bill list, Ms. Parfitt added a payment to John Martin for \$2,127.50 for two months of solicitor fees. These fees did not include phone calls or emails over the last couple of months as Mr. Martin stated that he tries to keep the bills down. Ms. Parfitt also added \$121.00 for the annual PSAB membership. Regarding the International Code Council membership, Ms. Senese asked if there was time to wait so that they could ask Mr. Kraveski if he felt it was needed. Ms. Parfitt stated that there was. Mr. Beavan questioned the hours for Chief Creamer, stating that he had found a discrepancy between the time sheets and the hours Ms. Parfitt had listed on the bill list. Ms. Parfitt stated that she would double check the time sheets and correct an error if it was made.

Ms. Senese made a motion, seconded by Mr. Muiter, to approve the bills list with the changes. The motion was approved by unanimous vote. Mr. Muiter made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gall, to accept the treasurer's report as presented. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Due to Mr. Krayeski's absence, there was no codes report. Mr. Beavan stated that he had a codes question, and wondered if the council had decided not to pursue grass complaints. Ms. Senese stated that the agreement had been for Ms. Parfitt to send letters at the direction of Mr. Krayeski. Mr. Beavan stated that Mr. Krayeski had told him the Council had decided not to pursue grass enforcement. Ms. Senese stated that there was obviously a discrepancy and it would need to be cleared up when Mr. Krayeski was present. Ms. Parfitt was asked to add this item to the agenda for next month.

Mayor Glover gave the streets report, stating that a ditch had been fixed on High Street. He thanked Ozzie and Christian Miller for their help as they were nearby and had brought the proper equipment over to fix the drainage pipe. The Millers did not wish to be paid, but Ms. Parfitt was asked to send a letter of thanks. Mayor Glover noted that there was a sewer pipe over the drainage pipe and that he wasn't sure who had placed it but that it would probably cause issues in the future. Mr. Boughton asked if Boyden Street was going to be okay to plow for the winter. Mayor Glover stated that there were a couple of areas where the water authority had dug and had not fixed yet. They were fairly new digs, but he stated that he would reach out to the water authority to be sure they intended to fix them before winter. Mr. Beavan asked what the conclusion of the ditches on state roads was, and Ms. Senese gave a response that was told to her by Lanesboro's Mayor Chris Maby. If the ditch is an open ditch, it is the state's responsibility to enforce the property owner to maintain the ditch. If it is a closed ditch, it is the Borough's responsibility to enforce the same. It was noted that these were open ditches and there was a discussion about how weeds are actually good because they prevent washouts in heavy rain. There was some disagreement about this between council members. Ms. Senese stated that she would like for next year's CBDG grant to cover an issue on Westfall where the sidewalk is falling, but that engineering plans would need to be purchased for such a project. Mr. Boughton stated that he had noticed that the leaning pole on High Street had been fixed. Mayor Glover had contacted Adams Cable about the pole. Mayor Glover stated that the truck repair was not yet completed but that Mr. Cleveland had promised to have it ready for winter. Ms. Parfitt stated that the Pierson Street and 3rd Avenue project was going to be started on Monday the 26th as there had been a hold-up on Mr. Garnett receiving a bond. Mayor Glover stated that Dennis Fisk had agreed to allowing Mr. Garnett to store materials and equipment on his property. He had also agreed to allow the plow driver to use his passage to make plowing Pierson Street easier. Ms. Senese presented her request to rename the streets department to be the Department of Public Works, so that the streets employee would also be responsible for maintaining the Borough building and the park. There was discussion about how this would help him get more hours since he didn't even come close to his budget this year. Mr.

Beavan asked if Mr. Arthur was capable of doing public works kind of work, and Ms. Senese stated that Mr. Arthur was very handy. Mayor Glover stated that they would not ask him to do any projects that were above his ability. Mr. Muieter made a motion, seconded by Ms. Senese, to initiate proceedings to rename the Streets department into the Public Works department to include amending the job description of the employee and/or future employees. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Ms. Senese stated that the 2020 CBDG had been tentatively approved for \$60,000 (it was in its last phase of approval with the DCED) to spend on the Prospect Street project with the plans that had been created by JHA. This is a grant that comes at no monetary obligation for the Borough. The plan is for the project to be completed in the spring or summer of 2021.

Due to Mr. Krayski's absence, there was no codes committee report.

Due to Ms. White's absence, there was no community development committee report.

Ms. Senese presented the finance committee report. Mr. Beavan made a motion, seconded by Ms. Senese, to approve Resolution 2020-10. The motion was approved by unanimous vote. The tax collector would receive a copy of the resolution as passed.

Ms. Senese presented her proposal for the Borough to transform the Secretary position into a Borough Administrator. Main reasons for this were long-term stability of the Borough and to prevent burn-out of council members who were volunteering a lot of their time keeping the Borough moving forward. Ms. Senese stated that she felt that this was the next logical step for the Borough moving forward. One of the six possible budgets that had been created included a full-time salaried administrator and one police officer at 40 hours per week. Mr. Beavan stated that he felt it was irresponsible to create an administrator position because nobody knew what was going to happen with COVID-19. He also questioned what would happen when the administrator left and he felt it was best to keep the responsibilities spread out among multiple people. Ms. Senese answered that the points of contact would still be in place, but that the administrator would help them accomplish and follow-up with their responsibilities. Everyone who was involved would still stay involved, but the administrator would be doing the bulk of the work. Ms. Senese asked Ms. Parfitt for permission to discuss her personnel in the meeting, and Ms. Parfitt gave verbal consent. Ms. Senese stated that Ms. Parfitt was ready to take the administrator position if it was approved and offered. The administrator would also absorb the treasurer duties. Ms. Senese stated that although she had made it known that she wanted the two to be separated, her solution was for Ms. Parfitt to create the checks, but be unable to sign them. The president, vice president, and a third council member would have check-signing abilities, and two of the three signatures would be needed on each check. The administrator's work with the finances would continue to be closely monitored by the finance committee. Mr. Beavan stated his concerns over streets and codes not being taken care of. Ms. Senese stated that codes were addressed in the budget and that the finance committee was preparing for a truck to be purchased out of Impact Fees when the

time comes. Ms. Senese stated that as far as work on the streets, she believed that grants were the future of Oakland Borough because they provided the best deal financially. There was a short discussion of how the dam was being removed and some council members would like to see river access and the Borough could make a profit. Ms. Senese asked each council member their opinion on administrator v. secretary, and also their opinion on police coverage. Mr. Beavan's opinion remained that he was not in favor of the administrator. Mr. Muter stated that he was in favor of the administrator as the Borough had advertised for both a secretary and a treasurer and had not found a qualified candidate for either position. Most of the work was already done by Ms. Parfitt anyway, and there would only be a few added duties. He was hopeful that if the time came for Ms. Parfitt to leave, she would be able to train someone else upon her exit. Mr. Gall was in favor of the administrator position and stated that the Borough needed more police coverage. Mr. Boughton voiced in favor for the administrator position as the secretary was already doing 90% of the work. He also voiced in favor of the Borough having its own police department. He stated that he felt if Susquehanna really wanted to contract, the contract would have been completed by now. Following the finance committee's recommendation, Mr. Muter made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gall, to donate \$500 to the Susquehanna County Library Association. The motion was approved by unanimous vote. It was noted that the library had been providing great services to the community throughout the virus ordeal and that they were good about letting the Borough borrow equipment for free whenever it was needed. Mr. Beavan asked if the proposed budget included the payment for the StMP program, and Ms. Senese stated that the Borough did not have to start paying for three or five years.

Chief Creamer was present at this time to present the police report. The report included 10 calls for the Borough and 8 for the Township.

Ms. Senese gave the parks committee report, stating that there had been some issues with attempted vandalism at the park and there had also been items such as a used condom and a razor found near the play equipment. The parks committee was requesting surveillance cameras. They noted that it was not going to be cheap, but they felt it was necessary. They intended to work with John Ord to obtain the cameras. The council was in agreement. Mr. Arthur stated that there was a tree by the concession stand with a branch that was hanging and he asked for permission to use the Borough's chainsaw which had an arm on it. Permission was given and a few council members offered assistance.

Due to Mr. Krayeski's absence, there was no volunteer committee report.

The burn ordinance was tabled.

Ms. Senese addressed NIMS training, stating that new council members needed to take the course. It was offered by PEMA online, did not take very long, and was free. The training would

educate all council members and the mayor on how to handle an emergency in the Borough. Mr. Beavan stated that if all members were not trained, the Borough could be prevented from receiving funds. Ms. Parfitt would send an email containing a link to the training.

Due to an issue with the Secretary's schedule, Ms. Senese requested to move the November 18th meeting to November 11th. Mr. Gall made a motion, seconded by Mr. Beavan, to move the November 18th meeting to November 11th at 7:00pm. The motion was approved by majority vote, with Mr. Muiter being opposed due to it being Veterans Day.

Mr. Beavan suggested having the meeting on the 10th instead. Ms. Senese made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gall, to rescind the previous motion. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Gall made a motion, seconded by Mr. Beavan, to move the November 18th meeting to Tuesday, November 10th at 7:00pm. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Ms. Senese made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gall, to advertise the change of meeting day for November's monthly meeting. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

The meeting was opened to public comment. Mr. Arthur stated that when PennDOT fixed the pipe this summer down by the bridge, the drain had been put in a different place and the water collection was going to cause a problem this winter. Ms. Senese stated that PennDOT was never going to come fix it, but that if the Borough was part of the AGILITY program, the Borough could fix it and get something in exchange from the state. She encouraged Mr. Muiter, who had questions about the program, to call PennDOT. She also encouraged him to speak to them about the slide project. It was noted that State Street is sliding down the hill and it was past due to being fixed, but she thought that PennDOT was having funding issues. Mr. Arthur reminded the Council that the elections board would need access to the building for elections day.

Mr. Boughton dismissed the public, stating that there may be a motion after executive session if they wanted to wait, and council convened in executive session at 8:30pm. Chief John Creamer was included for a portion of the session. The council reconvened to the public at 9:18pm with no public members present and Mr. Boughton stated that the session had been for contractual and litigation purposes. Mr. Muiter made a motion, seconded by Ms. Senese, for Mayor Glover to investigate the possibility of Chief Creamer being the chief and sole officer for Oakland Borough; to investigate the re-starting of Oakland Borough's police department; and to communicate with Oakland Township about joining in the endeavor. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Ms. Senese made a motion, seconded by Mr. Muiter, to adjourn the meeting at 9:19pm. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote.