

Oakland Borough Council  
380 State Street  
Susquehanna, PA 18847  
Regular meeting  
June 17, 2020

The regular meeting of the Oakland Borough Council was called to order at 7:08pm via ZOOM video communications. Present were Gary Boughton, Valerie Senese, Robert Muieter, Ron Beavan, Patrick Gall, Brad Krayeski; Solicitor John Martin; and Secretary Rhonda Parfitt. Debra White joined at a later time. Mayor Randy Glover was absent.

Doug Arthur was present as a member of the public.

Mr. Boughton announced that the Council had been in executive session from 6:30-6:50 to discuss personnel.

Ms. Senese wished to amend the agenda, adding a motion to move the meetings back to the Borough building, Mannering Lane, public comment, soil and conservation, Salvation Army, water assessment, and Treasurer position. Mr. Krayeski wished to add a policy change to the streets department, tabled the burn ordinance, and added street signs under new business. Ms. Senese made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gall, to adopt the amended agenda and the motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Beavan noted a correction to page 3 of the May 20<sup>th</sup> minutes, stating that he had also volunteered to help put the flags on the poles. Ms. Senese made a motion, seconded by Mr. Beavan, to approve the May 20<sup>th</sup> minutes with the correction. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Ms. Parfitt presented the Treasurer's Report, noting that the amount remaining for the Borough mortgage had been incorrect on the last report. She stated that she was not sure where the error had occurred, but that the number on the current report was the correct amount owed. Mr. Beavan had a question about the codes webinar on the bill list, stating that he did not remember it being discussed by Council. Ms. Senese stated that Mr. Krayeski was responsible for the codes budget and was able to use the budget as he saw fit. It was also a time-sensitive expense. Ms. Senese then made a motion, seconded by Mr. Muieter, to approve the treasurer's report and bill list. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Ms. Senese presented a Blight Remediation Grant, referencing material she had emailed to all of Council. The grant would be a cooperation between Oakland Borough, Lanesboro Borough, Susquehanna Borough, and the Susquehanna County Housing and Redevelopment Authority. Each borough could choose up to three blighted houses to have removed under the grant, for a

10% match. Ms. Senese estimated that the match could be up to \$7,500 total, and the finance committee determined that this money would come from Impact Fees as an allowable use. Ms. Senese suggested that the Borough work on a condemnation process for five houses, and stated that Mr. Krayeski and Mayor Glover would choose the five houses. They would know in the Spring whether or not the grant was received. Ms. Senese stated that Mr. Boughton would need to go to the Borough to sign a resolution and a cooperation agreement for the grant. Ms. Senese made a motion, seconded by Mr. Beavan, to approve the Blight Remediation Grant with the discussed terms and for Mr. Boughton to sign a resolution and a cooperation agreement. The motion was approved by unanimous vote, with Mr. Muiteer abstaining due to conflict of interest. Mr. Martin inquired who owned the titles to the houses that would be removed. Ms. Senese stated that there were some up for sheriff sale. There was a discussion and Mr. Beavan stated that he believed Peoples Security Bank & Trust owned at least three of the houses. He stated that he had gone after PSBT on one of the houses in previous years and that PSBT had paid for the demolition of the house. Ms. Senese stated that there was time to determine ownership and choose exactly which houses would be removed. Ms. Senese stated that points of contact were needed and suggested that it be her as the grant writer and Mr. Krayeski as the head of codes. Mr. Beavan made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gall, for Valerie Senese and Brad Krayeski to be points of contact and authorized personnel for the Blight Remediation Grant. The motion was approved by unanimous vote, with Mr. Muiteer abstaining due to conflict of interest.

Mr. Krayeski made a motion, seconded by Mr. Beavan, to adopt ordinance# 2020-1 (Rescinded nuisance taxes). The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Ms. Senese made a motion, seconded by Mr. Krayeski, to adopt ordinance# 2020-2 (Flood Plain). The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Krayeski gave a codes report, stating that he had begun working on a condemnation process. He also had eight complaints in to COG for grass violations. Mr. Muiteer asked what house was being condemned, and Mr. Krayeski stated that it was 54 or 57 Westfall. Ms. Senese began a discussion about how the Borough might handle codes going forward, presenting two options. One option was to start sending out letters to those in violation in hopes that they would correct their violations on their own and a codes officer would not need to be called. She had learned that Great Bend operated this way, and Susquehanna also did. The second option would be to pay for one of the council members to become a certified codes officer. There was a discussion that the Borough may have to do both options, so that if someone did not heed the warning of a letter, a codes officer could follow through with a citation and going to the magistrate. Ms. Senese asked how everyone felt about Mr. Krayeski communicating with the Secretary to issue letters of violation. Mr. Beavan voiced his agreement. Mr. Martin asked what the success rate was with the letter writing in the other municipalities. Ms. Senese stated that she was not sure, but that Great Bend had been writing letters for a few years and was just

now hiring a codes officer as a back-up. Mr. Muiter stated that there should be information readily available to the public so that they could verify their violation and be assured the Borough wasn't just making things up. Ms. Senese agreed, and stated that the IPMC could be accessed online, and that the most commonly violated ordinances could be placed on the website for public review. Mr. Muiter made a motion, seconded by Ms. White, for the Secretary to be the codes administrator; for Brad Krayeski to have the authority to note citations to the Secretary. The motion was approved by unanimous vote. Ms. Senese continued the discussion about having a council member certified to be a codes officer. She commended Mr. Krayeski for doing a lot of work and saving the Borough so much money and stated that if a council member became certified, they would be allowed to be paid a salary and be covered by insurance in case they were to get hurt while acting as codes enforcer. Mr. Krayeski stated that he would have no problem being the codes enforcer, but that he is not able to leave his job to go to the magistrate if it were to be necessary. Mr. Muiter stated that he would have the same issue. It was discussed that maybe the codes officer would not necessarily need to be present. The idea was tabled and it was determined that someone would call the magistrate and get information and report back to Council. Ms. Senese requested that Mr. Krayeski reach out to COG to see if they had begun working on the grass complaints, and if not, to please have Ms. Parfitt send letters.

Mr. Boughton presented the police report, stating that there were 36 calls between the Borough and the Township, with three arrests. Mr. Beavan made a motion, seconded by Mr. Muiter, to accept the police report. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Krayeski gave the streets report, stating that River Road work was almost completed and the intersections were being cleared of the leftover cinders from the winter. He also recommended that the policy be changed so that there is no first or second to be called out but that they be able to call out whoever is needed to get the work done. Mr. Beavan made a motion, seconded by Mr. Muiter, to approve said streets policy change. The motion was approved by unanimous vote with Ms. Senese abstaining due to financial conflict of interest. Ms. Senese then stated that she had a walk-through scheduled with Soil and Conservation the next day and stated that Mr. Arthur would be in attendance in place of Mayor Glover or Mr. Krayeski, as they could not attend due to work obligations. She also requested permission to apply for the grant through Susquehanna County Soil and Conservation. Mr. Krayeski made a motion, seconded by Mr. Muiter, for Valerie Senese to apply for the Susquehanna County Soil and Conservation Grant on behalf of the Borough. The motion was approved by unanimous vote. Ms. Senese requested that the streets department do the work of checking to see if Mannering Lane was ever adopted as a Borough street. Mr. Beavan stated that he believed it had been, but only the paved portion of it. Ms. Senese stated that a resident recently had a survey done and there was question if Mannering Lane was actually an official road.

Mr. Krayeski stated that the codes committee was on hold, as the only thing they were working on was the burn ordinance.

Ms. White stated that there was nothing the Community Development Committee could do during the virus restrictions. She stated that she had planted some flowers at the Borough building and wanted to weed but that she had an injury she was waiting to recover from.

Ms. Senese gave the finance committee report, first stating that the committee was beginning work on the 2021 budget and requested each department to submit their own budgets for consideration. The reasoning for this was to give the departments a little more autonomy and have a say in their budget rather than being told what they had to work with. She also stated that the finance committee had discussed the possibility of creating a Parks and Recreation Board rather than having a committee and asked the Council to be considering it. She stated that park boards could be more productive on a smaller budget than committees could. Mr. Beavan, referencing a document that Ms. Senese had emailed, stated that he was having difficulty finding the differences between a committee and a board. Ms. Senese stated that she would work on drawing the distinctions out of the document to make it more clear. Mr. Muiter asked if the Board would be similar to an authority. Mr. Martin stated that they were similar but that an authority was a municipal government while a board was not. Ms. Senese stated that the board would be allowed to make decisions without the approval of Council, so if they wanted to paint or cut down trees or things of the like, they would be able to. Committees were also supposed to be comprised of Oakland residents only, and if there was a board formed, Ms. Senese imagined there would be many more members. The board would basically take full responsibility for the park, but could request money from the Borough also. Mr. Muiter asked if a board could create debt and Mr. Martin stated that it could not. Ms. Senese stated that the board would have to be created by ordinance. Mr. Martin asked when the Borough would have the allowance through the STMP to work on ordinances, and Ms. Senese answered that her best guess would be in the fall. DCED funds had been frozen but they would not be frozen forever. Regarding the treasurer position, Ms. Senese made a change to what the finance committee had discussed and made a motion, seconded by Mr. Muiter, for Rhonda Parfitt to be transferred to the treasurer position; to advertise the secretary position for \$12 per hour part-time; and for the ad to be placed in the Mulligan's two times on alternating weeks.

Regarding the parks committee report, Ms. Senese requested that the Council re-open the park in its entirety, stating that Lanesboro's park had been open during the shutdown and they had had no reported issues. She also stated that Little League was going to begin using the field and that she felt it would be safer to not have caution tape and barricades with children running around. Ms. Senese made a motion, seconded by Mr. Muiter, to re-open the entire park. The motion was approved by majority vote with Mr. Beavan being opposed. Mr. Boughton was asked to reach out to the Water Authority to have the water turned back on in the concession

stand, but Mr. Arthur stated that they should ask Little League first if they would even be using the concession stand since they were just practicing.

Ms. Senese then stated that the Park Committee would like to hold their annual Community Yard Sale and Vendor Day fundraiser on August 1<sup>st</sup> at the Borough building. The reasons for this were availability for restrooms (saving money on renting porto-johns), better visibility, and the fact that the park just was not currently set up for such an event. The event would be the same as last year with the yard sale map, with each resident paying a \$10 donation to be on the map, and vendors also paying \$10 to have a spot. Mr. Beavan asked if there would be enough room at the Borough building, and Ms. Senese stated that Mr. Arthur had planned to ask Tim Roe to move his truck for the day. Mr. Beavan made a motion, seconded by Mr. Muiter, to hold the community yard sale and vendor fair as discussed. The motion was approved by vote.

Mr. Krayeski gave the volunteer committee report, stating that they had planned to take care of the sidewalks on State Street but the truck had been out for repair so they would reschedule. Mr. Muiter followed up on a conversation at the May 20<sup>th</sup> meeting about sweeping the streets. Mr. Krayeski stated that the phone number he had been given had a dead end and that he had a new phone number he needed to call. Mr. Muiter volunteered to his help if it was needed.

A discussion was had about the replacement of the furnace. Mr. Krayeski, referencing the quote from Auchinachie, asked how Council felt about spending \$7,000 on a new furnace. He inquired if the Borough had the money for it. Ms. Parfitt and Ms. Senese stated that it was possible for the money to come from the EIT revenue. Mr. Beavan had obtained a quote from Jim Williams that was significantly lower. Ms. Senese expressed her concern that Mr. Williams never came back to make the repairs that he knew needed to be made, and that the Secretary had been trying since October to get him to the Borough to make the repairs. Mr. Muiter also expressed his concern over the availability and dependability of Mr. Williams. There was lengthy discussion regarding the furnace, including brand, replacing the power venter, and possible replacement of the air conditioning unit. Ultimately, it was decided that more quotes were needed to make a decision. Mr. Muiter made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gall, for Ms. Parfitt to obtain three phone bids for the replacement of the furnace. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Ms. Parfitt gave an update on the new Borough website, apologizing that she had neglected to send the link. She stated that she believed the website was live and available to be viewed.

Ms. Senese gave a pantry update, stating that Mr. Arthur had secured a large donation from Penn Cann Speedway that would be coming as a result of their July 3<sup>rd</sup> races. She asked Council to create a new bank account to keep the pantry money separate, and also suggested creating financial guidelines for the money. Mr. Beavan asked what accountability of funds would look like. Ms. Senese stated that any receipts would be kept with the treasurer to keep track of

purchases and matched to the bank statement. Mr. Muiter made a motion, seconded by Ms. White, to open a new bank account for food pantry use and for Valerie Senese and Rhonda Parfitt to have access to this account. The motion was approved by unanimous vote. Ms. Parfitt asked Ms. Senese how she would feel about having a debit card on the account rather than having to buy supplies on her own and be reimbursed. Mr. Beavan stated that he liked the idea. Ms. Senese agreed. Ms. Senese then made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gall, to amend the previous motion to include a debit card for Valerie Senese for the account. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Ms. Senese then stated that she would like to move the pantry to the center room in the Borough office because it was larger. She noted that to do so, one of the doors needed to be fixed or replaced. She also noted that more shelving would be needed for pantry items. Ms. Parfitt stated that there was still money remaining out of the approved \$500 for the resource room that could be used. Mr. Muiter stated that the door needed to be fixed anyway and that it should not have to come out of the pantry money. Council agreed. Mr. Beavan made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gall, to switch the rooms for the food pantry. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Ms. Senese then requested to make the old water authority office into a council library. Her idea was that educational materials and copies of the Borough's ordinances could be in the library for Council access. The space would be open to any council member working on Borough business. She also stated that she would like the Borough to purchase a round table large enough to seat all seven council members, the mayor, and the solicitor for executive session. It was agreed that the table could be paid for out of the building repair and maintenance budget.

The franchise agreement presented by Adams Cable was discussed. There was a consensus among council members that this agreement was much better than the one proposed by NEP for a number of reasons. Mr. Martin stated that he saw no issues with the agreement at all and liked that it was truly non-exclusive. Mr. Muiter made a motion, seconded by Mr. Beavan, to adopt the franchise agreement with Adams Cable as presented. The motion was approved by unanimous vote. Mr. Martin asked if Council wished for him to present the same agreement to NEP and they agreed.

Ms. Senese began discussion about assessing the water authority. After input from Mr. Martin, it was agreed that they were actually talking about the appraisal of the Borough's water system. Ms. Senese stated that an appraisal had been done years ago, and that she would like to see another appraisal performed. Mr. Beavan noted that their [PA American Water]'s rates were increasing and wanted everyone to be aware. Ms. Senese stated that this was just an appraisal and that no decision was being made. Mr. Kraveski wanted to confirm that Ms. Senese was talking about getting an appraisal from PA American Water, and she confirmed. Mr. Kraveski made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gall, to request an appraisal of the Borough's water system from PA American Water. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Boughton stated that he had been contacted by Roger Holleran and that the Water Authority Board had requested a meeting with the full Council to discuss some miscommunications between the two entities. It would need to be a public meeting because of a quorum being present. Ms. Senese agreed that it was a good idea and suggested a special meeting. Mr. Boughton stated that Mr. Holleran had requested the meeting after the COVID was over.

Ms. Senese presented a request regarding the Salvation Army. She stated that the Salvation Army had partnered with the Borough for the food pantry and that they would like to open an office space in the Susquehanna area to service the residents. Every year, the Red Kettle outside of Schneider's raises approximately \$10,000 that gets given to the Montrose office because there is no office in Susquehanna, and Ms. Senese stated that the Susquehanna area could really use that money to service the residents. The Salvation Army uses the money to issue things like rent vouchers and sending kids to camps. Ms. Senese was volunteering to be the social services director for Susquehanna and requested that Oakland allow a space for the Salvation Army to have office. She made clear that if she was still the director after her council term had expired, she would still need access to the building to use the office space. Mr. Boughton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Krayeski, to create an office space in the Borough building for the Salvation Army's use. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Krayeski stated that he had received a request by resident Doug Arthur to extend the drainage pipe on his property. Council had concerns over this as residents had attempted similar drainage work in the past and the work was not appropriate. There was some discussion about settling on formal guidelines for such work before allowing residents to proceed. It was agreed to table the request until Soil and Conservation could look at the issue and give their input.

Mr. Krayeski stated that the streets department would like to purchase some road work signs, as the Borough currently did not own any and asked if the money could come out of the Liquid Fuels budget because the streets supplies budget was running low. Ms. Parfitt stated that all of the streets signs that had been purchased should come out of Liquid Fuels, so the streets supplies budget could be for other things. Mr. Krayeski made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gall, to purchase road work signs from Bradco Supply and to pay for the signs out of the Liquid Fuels budget. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Boughton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Muiteer, to resume public meetings at the Borough building. Ms. White asked if the occupancy would be limited. Ms. Senese stated that they were allowed 50% of the building's capacity under the governor's green phase, and they would never have that many people in attendance at a meeting. Mr. Beavan asked if masks would be required. Ms. Senese responded that they could not force anyone to wear a mask and

that they would have to be optional. The motion was approved by majority vote with Mr. Beavan being opposed.

Ms. Senese commented to Council that they did a great job getting through the agenda but requested that members be vigilant about checking their emails, reading documents, being familiar with the material, and having a decision on most items before arriving at the meeting. Mr. Boughton requested that information be provided in enough advance for Council to do as she requested.

Mr. Gall stated that he had received a phone call about the white house across from the Borough building stacking up garbage behind the house and attracting bears. Ms. Senese encouraged Mr. Gall to communicate with Mr. Krayeski about the complaint. She also stated that she was aware of bear problems all over the borough and was wondering about looking into a grant for residents to be able to get bear-proof cans as they were very expensive. Mr. Boughton suggested calls to the Game Commission.

Mr. Martin asked if it was still correct that the police contract was on hold. Ms. Senese asked Ms. Parfitt if she wanted to go into executive session to discuss the contract, and Ms. Parfitt stated that it was a good idea.

Mr. Muieter stated that he had been dismayed recently with not getting anything accomplished at the meetings and gave council a "good job" for this meeting.

Mr. Boughton announced that after adjournment, Council would be entering executive session for contractual purposes.

Mr. Gall made a motion, seconded by Mr. Beavan, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 9:00pm. Mr. Arthur exited the meeting and Council held executive session from 9:00 until 9:30pm. Included in the session were Ms. Parfitt and Mr. Martin.