

January 2, 2024

The regular meeting of Lehighon Borough Council was held in the municipal building on Tuesday, January 2, 2024. The meeting was called to order at 7 PM by President Grant Hunsicker. Members in attendance were: Councilors John Kreitz, Autumn Abelovsky, Ryan Saunders, Steve Hawk, Dave Zimmerman and Rebecca Worthy.

Officials in attendance were: Borough Manager Dane DeWire, Borough Secretary Brenda Kreitz, Solicitor James Nanovic, Mayor Clark Ritter, Police Chief Troy Abelovsky, Fire Chief Patrick Mriss, Public Works Superintendent Kris Kunkle and Light & Power Superintendent Lonny Armbruster.

Pledge of Allegiance

Guest Speaker: Julie Harris – Halloween Parade

Julie was present to request permission to hold the Halloween Parade Saturday, October 19, 2024 with a rain date of October 20<sup>th</sup>.

Councilors Abelovsky/Worthy made the motions to approve the dates and all were in favor.

Julie then asked if she was to work with the police chief as in years past for help from the fire police and police department. She was told yes by council.

HEARING OF PERSONS PRESENT

Curtis Keifer of 218 North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. He heard at the Senior Center a lot of talk about a walking trail. He seems like every year there is money earmarked for it but somehow the money gets spent somewhere else. Is that going to be the case again this year? Or are we finally going to get a walking trail? President Hunsicker said he didn't know. The borough manager said it has been brought up before but he hasn't seen any paperwork on it. He does know we have the machinery to do it inhouse. It can be looked into.

Mr. Keifer said he isn't being a wise guy when he says he doesn't see the borough work force killing themselves when doing work around the town. He feels 95% of the work could be done inhouse. Councilor Abelovsky said she believes the walking trail was part of the entire project for Baer Memorial and was removed due to the cost of the rest for the project. The borough manager can look to see what the cost would be to do it at today's cost and see if there is any wiggle room in the budget for it.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Special Meeting of November 30 and December 21, 2023

Councilors Saunders/Worthy made the motions to approve the minutes and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Motion to adopt Resolution R2-2024 for Bituminous Materials in Small Quantities

Councilors Kreitz/Hawk made the motions to adopt the resolution and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to approve Resolution R3–2024 Setting Police Pension Contribution Rate for FY 2024

Councilors Kreitz/Hawk made the motions to approve the resolution and all were in favor with no questions or objections. Councilor Abelovsky abstained.

Motion to purchase used Volvo L70 Loader Bucket from Highway Equipment & Supply Co. in Drums for \$7,827

Councilors Kreitz/Hawk made the motions to approve the purchase and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to purchase/install Western 102” Straight Plow from West End Equipment for \$7,050

Councilors Hawk/Kreitz made the motions to approve the purchase and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to list Public Works F250 plow for sale

Councilors Hawk/Abelovsky made the motions to sell the plow and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Discussion on the 2024 Residential Rental Inspection Fee Schedule

Councilors Kreitz/Abelovsky made the motions to table this item and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Discussion on the request from All Saints Episcopal Church for a handicap parking space

Dane said he and Rebecca drove around today to look at them and they already have 4 space on Second Street and one on Coal Street. We parked on Coal Street. Council Worthy said that there is no way that anyone who is handicapped could get out on that street safely. She thinks to put a second handicap spot there would be terrible. She doesn't even know why the first one was actually put there. Dane said they were even thinking about moving the one currently on Coal up to Second and giving them another one on Second Street.

Ryan said he spoke to the neighbor that lives in the parsonage if they would have a problem with this and was told no.

Becky said they also drove around to see what the other churches have. Zion has 7, Trinity has 4, SS Peter & Paul has 1, Ebenezer has 1, First Presbyterian has 2 and Bethany has 3.

Councilor Kreitz asked if they are on board with moving the one currently on Coal and Becky said she doesn't know but she thinks we should remove that one because it isn't safe so as it is and give them 2 additional ones on Second giving them a total of 6.

Ryan said the reason for the request on Coal Street is that they have church services in the downstairs when it is too hot. John said if that is where they want it we should give it to them. It is not up to us to police where they want the spot. It is up to us to give it to them or not give it to them. There is no liability on us if we approve that spot. The solicitor said there is no additional liability. There is always some liability if someone falls; they could sue the borough. There is no additional liability by approving a place if they request it. Autumn

said we could offer them another spot to put where they would like it to be and council agreed.

Councilors Abelovsky/Kreitz made the motions to offer a 6<sup>th</sup> spot and let the church decide where they would like to put it and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to adopt Resolution R5-2024 setting the salaries for FY 2024

The resolution number should be R4-2024 not R5-2024.

Councilors Kreitz/Hawk made the motions to table the resolution and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to adopt 2024 Trash Collection and Sewer Fee Schedule Resolution R6-2024

The resolution number should be R5-2024 not R6-2024.

Councilors Saunders/Worthy made the motions to adopt the resolution and all were in favor with no objections. Councilor Abelovsky had a question – what is the current trash rate? She was told \$25.

Consideration on request to allow LDI to hold the Hometown Vintage Christmas December 14, 2024

Councilors Worthy/Abelovsky made the motions to allow the request and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Discussion on Municipal Engineering Proposals and Interview Schedule

The borough manager said we need to come up with an interview schedule if we plan on interviewing. Right now, requests for proposals will end on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January. We will have 2 full weeks between the submission deadline and the next council meeting. We will need at least 1 night when we will hold interviews and we need to pick the date while we are all in the same room. He asked what nights absolutely won't work for council. Dane thought the 25<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. Autumn said it is possible she wouldn't make the 30<sup>th</sup> and possibly not the 25<sup>th</sup> either but was ok with council still holding the interviews without her. It was brought to council's attention that the Zoning Hearing Board will meet on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Dane then asked about Wednesday the 24<sup>th</sup>. Brenda said there are no meetings but she is not available any Wednesday. Tuesday January 30<sup>th</sup> was chosen and the following Thursday, February 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:30 pm for interviews as needed.

Discussion on Carbon County Action Committee

Councilor Abelovsky said a few months ago she and Ryan had agreed to look into "Tent City" and the homeless situation in the borough. This information was brought to her attention a couple of days ago and she wanted to share what they do.

The Action Committee provides emergency housing in the county. They serve the homeless population in Carbon County. Every year they do a "Point in Time" count. Essentially a census of the homeless population in the county and each municipality. The dates are selected by the state. It is always on the coldest days of the year. They try to make personal contact with the homeless people and try to get information on where they came from, their situation and their plans. They try to provide them with food and other items that

will help them due to being homeless. The count is always done by volunteers and Autumn reached out to the executive director about volunteering. She is thinking of volunteering to get a better understanding of the homeless situation in the borough as she really doesn't know much. Autumn thought this would be a good learning experience and wonders if any other council people would like to volunteer. They do not put anyone in harms way. The police department could possibly try making contact the residents of "Tent City" the day before and let them know where they could meet with the volunteers at the Trailhead to do the count. They will be holding a training for this year's count on January 9<sup>th</sup> at 11 am. With council's blessing she will attend the online meeting to get more information and then pass it along to any council members that are interested in this.

#### Addendum

##### Motion to amend the agenda to reopen the 2024 budget

Councilors Kreitz/Abelovsky made the motions to amend the agenda to reopen the 2024 budget and all were not in favor. Roll call: No – Councilor Worthy; Yes – Councilors Saunders, Hawk, Zimmerman, Abelovsky, Kreitz and Hunsicker. Motion carried.

#### Officials Reports

##### President of Council

Nothing.

##### Borough Manager

Dane had nothing other than his report was included.

##### Borough Engineer

Vanessa said she wanted to announce the H2O PA grant was awarded December 21 and the borough will be receiving \$611,245 in grant money. The purpose of the grant is to do I&I abatement work throughout the borough. Ultimately that gives the borough funds to remove stormwater from the sanitary sewer resulting in less flow going to CCMA's treatment plant and lowering the bill to the borough because of the lower flow. She believes it is over the bidding threshold so it will need to be bid out and will confirm that. Council thanked her for doing the grant for us. She is not sure if there is a match for this grant and thinks the timeline to use the funds is 3 years. Dane then added that today he received word that the borough received \$401,000 from Senator Casey from the Appropriations. He will have to look at the verbiage for both to be sure there is no conflict in trying to use the funds for the same project.

##### Solicitor

The solicitor said you have until February 15 to adopt an amended budget. You must advertise it for 10 days so your meeting is on February 5<sup>th</sup> unless you are going to have a special meeting later. You need to have a meeting to amend it and then advertise it. Dane suggested doing this at one of the special meetings for interviews. Councilor Kreitz suggested doing it January 11 or 18<sup>th</sup> because we can't wait till the last minute to amend it.

Council agreed on January 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 to hold the meeting.

Treasurer

Approval of year-end bills – \$352,882.63 and transfer from L&P of \$200,000 as needed.

Mayor

Nothing.

Police

Chief Abelovsky has a few items for executive session.

Fire Chief

Nothing.

Light & Power Superintendent

Lonny said that the week of January 15<sup>th</sup> the one transformer will be taken out of service to replace the bushings. This will take about 4 days and the town will be running on one transformer. By the looks of the long range forecast we should be good. Subzero temps could be a game changer though. They may also have to drain the oil out of the transformer.

Public Works Supervisor

Nothing.

Recreation Director

Nothing.

Acceptance of Officials Reports

Councilors Saunders/Worthy made the motions to accept the official's reports as presented and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Acceptance of Accounts Payable and any additional bills

Councilors Saunders/Hawk made the motions to accept the accounts payable totaling \$23,331.04, additional bills totaling \$5,717.68, year-end bills and transfer as needed and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to Adjourn the Meeting

Councilors Saunders/Hawk made the motions to adjourn the meeting at 7:31 pm and all were in favor with no questions or objections. Meeting adjourned.

Council announced they were going to have an executive session for personnel

Brenda L. Kreitz  
Borough Secretary