

February 8, 2021

A special meeting of Lehigh Borough Council was held in the municipal building on Monday, February 8, 2021. The meeting was called to order at 7 PM by President Grant Hunsicker. Members in attendance were: Councilors Lisa Perry, Autumn Abelovsky, Ryan Saunders and Joe Flickinger. Absent: Councilors Donnie Rehrig and Darryl Arner.

Officials in attendance were: Borough Manager Nicole Beckett, Borough Secretary Brenda Kreitz and Solicitor James Nanovic.

Pledge of Allegiance

Presentation: Karla Gadecki – Pedestrian Crosswalk System Request and Petition

Ms. Gadecki of South 1<sup>st</sup> Street addressed council with her concerns crossing the street at the corner of Bankway and Bridge Street. She stated the crosswalk is very faded and cars do not stop. It is a very dangerous intersection. There is nothing there to tell motorists there is a crosswalk. Ms. Gadecki is hoping that council will consider doing something to improve the safety aspect of crossing the street in that area with signage, Rapid Flashing Beacons and/or at least the piano keys style crosswalk like the one by Dunkin Donuts. She provided council with a lot of information. She also suggested that maybe the “Safe Routes to School” and/or “America Walks” grants might be available to help fund the project.

Ms. Gadecki had a petition with over 300 names on it; all are in favor of making this intersection safer to pedestrians.

Councilor Abelovsky asked if Nicole looked into what the cost of a study would be. Nicole provided, in council packets, what the options would be after talking to PennDOT. If a study were to be done the borough would be required to sign a funding commitment letter prior to knowing what the cost of the study would be prior to PennDOT doing the study.

Councilor Flickinger said he is concerned with all the different angles of approach that make the intersection unsafe and feels it should be removed. Joe said the state put the crosswalk in when they put the handicap corners in. They also put the signage by Dunkin Donuts and the state put the traffic light there that was then taken out because the state said it wasn't needed. It would make more sense to move the crosswalk to the beginning of Sgt. Stanley Hoffman Blvd. It is not as convenient to those using the crosswalk but it is safer. Ms. Gadecki was fine with moving the crosswalk to the beginning of the bypass if it would be safer.

Nicole read Councilor Rehrig's thoughts on this item to council. Councilor Rehrig said he does not think we should be dealing with this due to the offset in the roadway. He feels the crosswalk should be removed and after looking through the petition of 288 signatures only 126 were from Lehigh and do not feel we should pursue this.

Councilor Saunders said moving the crosswalk to the beginning of the bypass gives vehicles a longer range to see you as you're crossing. There is also a longer span of roadway for traffic to be stopped for someone crossing the road making the intersection at the bridges less congested. He also feels the crosswalk should be removed from its current location.

Nicole said she did not ask PennDOT if the crosswalk could be removed. Council asked her to look into having it removed.

#### HEARING OF PERSONS PRESENT

Brandon Bell of 26 Sawmill Lane, Jim Thorpe came before council. He is the lead coordinator pushing a petition around to have all 23 municipalities of Carbon County be listed as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Sanctuary. He will leave the petition with each borough for elderly residents who own guns and do not have access to social media but wish to sign the petition to protect their rights. Mr. Bell has 3 townships looking to adopt this ordinance. He has been in contact with multiple mayors and is waiting for their monthly meeting to come up giving him a chance to present the ordinance to them.

Mr. Bell thanked council for the opportunity to present the ordinance and hopes to meet with Mayor Ritter in the near future.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

##### Regular Meeting of January 4, 2021

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

#### NEW BUSINESS

##### Motion to ratify all items updated in the COVID – 19 Action Plan

Councilors Perry/Abelovsky made the motions to ratify the plan and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

##### Motion to adopt Resolution R4–2021 declaring a Snow Emergency on January 31, 2021

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

##### Consideration on request from resident regarding garbage bill

Councilor Perry asked if this was done for anyone else before and Nicole said no. Nicole said in looking into this, the staff told her the property is charged occupied or unoccupied; however, the ordinance does not state this. Solicitor Nanovic said he would not suggest forgiving the payments but recommended telling the owner to contract with a private hauler and then he will not be charged by the borough. Council denied the request.

##### Consideration on amendments to the garbage ordinance

Councilors Saunders/Perry made the motions to advertise the proposed amendments and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

##### Consideration on the Blanski Energy Management proposal for the HVAC Maintenance Agreement for the Annex

Nicole said we are annually paying Dual Temp \$15,855. The proposal provided by Tom also includes replacement of one pump a year. With this proposal we not only have a maintenance program but an annual upgrade program for less money.

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

##### Consideration on the request from Jim Thorpe Borough to contract for street sweeping

Councilor Perry questioned Jim Thorpe Borough belonging to the COG and why they wouldn't use that street sweeper.

Solicitor Nanovic said because Jim Thorpe Borough's solicitor told them the contract was terrible and they shouldn't rent from the COG.

Nicole spoke to Khris before bringing this item to council to be sure Public Works can handle this and Kris said he could.

Councilors Saunders/Perry made the motions to approve the request and all were in favor with no questions or objections. The solicitor will draw up an agreement.

Consideration on the request from H&K Group for use of former sewer plant land SR443 Project Staging Area

Nicole said they want to store materials and equipment there. Typically, the way this works for their projects is they either consider an agreement to bring the land back to its original state or a rental rate not to exceed \$100/month with a year-to-year agreement is agreed upon.

Nicole said that is also where we have piled most of the snow this year. If council agrees to this it will have to be after the snow melts.

The solicitor suggested leaving it up to the borough manager whether or not we \$100 or barter. Council agreed.

Councilors Saunders/Flickinger made the motions to consider the request with a year-to-year agreement and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Consideration on the request from Kovatch to pay for Light & Power Truck chassis prior to delivery of vehicle

Nicole said this was a unique request on the truck we had ordered last January/February that has now come in. The body is out getting put on but we might not have it until early March. This is not something we had agreed to do when purchased.

Councilor Flickinger said since it is wasn't part of the purchase agreement, he would not do it especially when it is almost March. Others agreed.

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

Motion to accept the resignations of Paul Wallace and Hilbert Haas as crossing guards

Council asked for letter of appreciation be sent to both as well as having the Public Information officer to do a social media post letting it be known we need crossing guards.

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

Discussion on snow removal and budget

Nicole said she estimated about \$25,000 for overtime and the contracted haulers for snow removal and we look to come in around \$24,000. The budget for over time has been met along with the budget for contracted haulers. If February is bad, we will be over budget

and will need council's authorization to do what we need when we need to do it within reason.

Council commended the departments for how well they worked together get the streets cleared of snow. Nicole said they are a great group to work with and is very proud of them all.

Nicole said she had asked Autumn to do something up on what is involved in snow plowing and removal to make residents aware of what all goes into clearing our streets. Nicole hopes council will approve it being released to the public. Council was satisfied with the flyer.

#### Unfinished Business

None.

#### Officials Reports

##### Borough Manager

Nicole said council received her January and February reports. She said the treasurer is requesting a \$100,000 transfer as needed. She went over the rest of her report and asked for questions but there were none.

Nicole told council she can send them a link to see how the new website is coming along if requested. She is asking council and the department heads for input to make this website shine and has not gotten much response to date.

##### Borough Engineer

Nothing.

##### Police

Nothing.

##### Mayor

Nothing

##### Fire Chief

Nothing.

##### President of Council

Nothing.

##### Solicitor

Nothing.

##### Treasurer

Additional bills totaling \$196,292.70 and \$100,000 transfer from L&P Fund to General Fund as needed.

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

##### Light & Power Superintendent

Nothing.

##### Public Works Supervisor

Nothing.

##### Recreation Director

Nothing.

#### Committee Reports – December

Finance and Administration – Lisa Perry, Chair; Joe Flickinger, Co-Chair – nothing.

Economic Development, Buildings and Codes – Joe Flickinger, Chair; Donnie Rehrig, Co-Chair – Joe said due to these heavy storms and age of our structures with flat roofs we will need to keep an eye on them and some of the blighted properties on 1<sup>st</sup> Street.

Police, Fire and Safety – Ryan Saunders, Chair; Autumn Abelovsky, Co-Chair – nothing.

Light & Power Committee – Autumn Abelovsky, Chair; Lisa Perry, Co-Chair – Autumn said Lonny told her the substation breakers have been serviced and tested.

Sewer Committee – Donnie Rehrig, Chair; Darryl Arner, Co-Chair – nothing.

Streets, Public Works & Recreation – Darryl Arner, Chair; Ryan Saunders, Co-Chair – absent.

Library Board – nothing.

Parks & Recreation Board – nothing. Nicole said the benches were ordered and shipped.

School Board – nothing.

Canal Commission – nothing.

#### Acceptance of Officials Reports

Councilors Perry/Abelovsky 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

Councilors Abelovsky/Saunders made the motions to approve the accounts payable and additional bills and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

#### Motion to go into Executive Session for Personnel and Litigation

Councilors Perry/Saunders made the motions to go into executive session at 7:57pm and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

#### Motion to go back into Regular Session

Councilors Saunders/Abelovsky made the motion to go back in at 8:16pm and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

#### Action on Items from Executive Session

Councilors Saunders/Perry made the motions to bid out for sale the borough owned parking lot behind the high rise and all were in favor with no questions.

Councilors Saunders/Abelovsky made the motions to hire Keifer Bathgate as a full-time police officer pending the completion of preemployment processes and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

#### Motion to Adjourn the Meeting

Councilors Perry/Flickinger made the motions to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 pm and all were in favor with no questions or objections. Meeting adjourned.

Brenda L. Kreitz  
Borough Secretary