

December 6, 2021

A regular meeting of Lehigh Borough Council was held in the municipal building on Monday, December 6, 2021. The meeting was called to order at 7 PM by President Grant Hunsicker. Members in attendance were: Councilors Ryan Saunders, Autumn Abelovsky, Donnie Rehrig, Lisa Perry and Darryl Arner. Absent: Councilor Joe Flickinger and Fire Chief Patrick Mriss.

Officials in attendance were: Borough Manager Nicole Beckett, Borough Secretary Brenda Kreitz, Solicitor James Nanovic, Borough Engineer Bruce Steigerwalt, Police Chief Brian Biechy, Mayor Clark Ritter, Light & Power Assistant Supervisor Barry Fisher, and Public Works Assistant Supervisor Jeff Smith.

Pledge of Allegiance

Guest Speakers: Kathy Henderson and Bambi Elsasser, Carbon Chamber and Economic Development Corp. Update on Caboose Project and Lehigh Downtown Partnership

Ms. Elsasser said she wanted to update everyone on what has been happening with the Downtown Partnership. They have been having meetings and formed two committees. They are the Design & Economic Development with a chairperson and Organization & Promotions with a chairperson.

Santa in the Park yesterday was a huge success. Ten kids won bikes donated by the Orioles. This Saturday, December 11th will be "Christmas Lane." There will be battery operated luminaries going down Sgt. Stanley Hoffman Boulevard coming around and down all of 1st Street. We hope to have enough to come up North and South Streets to the borough building and down 2nd Street.

We are preparing for our 2nd Saturday's beginning in January and asking all the stores to stay open late that night.

Kathy Henderson was not available to give an update on the caboose project. Bambi said the caboose has been delivered to Jim Thorpe. It is a Lehigh Valley caboose and the restoration work will be handled by the CCEDC, Lehigh Downtown Partnership and any other groups or individuals that wish to participate. The rails and ties for the caboose to rest on and the ballasts are all secured. A crane and 2 flatbeds will be required to move the caboose to its new home and a quote for this has been obtained. The timeline for

delivery is early Spring, depending on when the location for placement is finalized.

Nicole added that she provided a map for the Caboose Project in the agenda packet with the proposed area highlighted. The location will require a request for in-kind services and land use.

HEARING OF PERSONS PRESENT

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular meetings of November 1, 2021 and Special Meetings of November 8 and 22, 2021

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Consideration on the use of space in Borough Hall for Mayor's Office

Councilors Rehrig/Saunders made the motions to table this item again until the full board of council is present and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

NEW BUSINESS

Consideration on the requests for the Caboose Project for in-kind services and use of land

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

Motion to approve \$2,550 contribution to the Lehigh Downtown Partnership towards the proposal for landscaping and raised bed at the gateway sign

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

Motion to accept the resignation of Georgine Balliet as Crossing Guard

Councilor Abelovsky asked if Georgine was able to reapply for the position would she need to have her clearances redone as part of the process and was told only if they had expired.

Councilors Rehrig/Saunders made the motions to approve the resignation along with a letter of appreciation being sent and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Consideration on request from Bennett Family Properties, LLC for 100 Blakeslee Boulevard

Nicole said Mr. Bennett is asking for a credit for 100 Blakeslee Boulevard; one of the properties past Fastenal that were turned over by PennDOT. At some point in time lights were seen on at this address and decorations in the windows so we reactivated the account. Mr. Bennett paid it for some time. Noticed he was paying it and did not agree and is now requesting to be reimbursed for what he paid and a credit for the balance due on it. Nicole said Mr. Bennett is calling it a commercial property and said that no garbage was collected from the property but we did not interpret it that way beings someone was living there.

Councilor Saunders/Rehrig made the motions to deny the request and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to approve Keystone Consulting Engineers invoice in the amount of \$3,697.75 for the Blight Remediation Grant Project

Councilors Perry/Abelovsky made the motions approve the invoice and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to approve Resolution R19-2021 establishing the current base purchased power cost for the PPAC

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

Motion to approve the Audit Engagement Letter with Hutchinson, Gillahan and Freeh for the 2021 Audit in the amount of \$20,475

Councilors Rehrig/Perry made the motions to approve the Engagement Letter and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to advertise the Rooming House Ordinance

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

Consideration on the approval of the EPPG Letter authorizing AMP to purchase the long-term pool resource provided in the NextEra Installed Capacity Program

Nicole said this project is on hold and no action is required at this time.

Motion to approve the AFSCME Collective Bargaining Agreement from January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2024

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

Motion to adopt the 2022 Proposed Budget

Councilors Perry/Arner made the motions to adopt the proposed budget with a ½ mill increase and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to advertise the ordinance setting the 2022 Tax Rates

Councilors Saunders/Abelovsky made the motions to advertise the tax ordinance and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to accept the notice of retirement from Chief Biechy effective August 10, 2022

Councilors Perry/Rehrig made the motions to accept the notice of retirement and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to approve the Lafayette College Meyner Center proposal for recruitment services for the Chief of Police position and approve consulting rate of \$95/hr. for any work outside of the proposal

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

Motion to appoint Sara Wingert to the Shade Tree Commission

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

Motion to appoint Corey Schaffer to the Planning Commission (with permission)

Council was asked to table this item until the next meeting as a second letter of interest came in today.

Councilors Saunders/Rehrig made the motions to table this item until the January Meeting and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Consideration on the approval of agreement w/the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce for the Lehigh Main Street Manager position

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

Motion to approve the reappointment list with permission:

Zoning Hearing Board – Michael DeDonato; Water Authority Board – Lamont Ebbert; Property Maintenance Board – John Krietz; Parks & Rec Board – Autumn Abelovsky & Clark Ritter; Central Carbon Municipal Authority – Jim Deebl

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

Officials Reports

President of Council – Thanked Autumn for another excellent tree lighting in the park weekend.

Borough Manager – She thanked Parks & Rec for another great event.

Nicole said she just received the conceptual drawings for the Waterfront Traffic Improvement project. She is meeting with Bryan Smith December 13th and then they will present to council.

The Blight Remediation Project is moving ahead. Pre-Bid, neighboring residents meetings are scheduled with bids being opened next Friday.

The CDBG project at 135-139 North 1st Street is being worked on.

The required recorded easements for the LASD have been received. All that remains is the traffic signal agreement and from there the C.O. will be issued.

Borough Engineer – Nothing.

Solicitor – absent.

Treasurer – Motion to approve budgetary transfer of \$500,000 as needed

Councilors Rehrig/Abelovsky made the motions to approve the transfer as needed and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Mayor – Nothing.

Police – Chief Biechy said he has been working with the borough manager on a few budget concerns. He did request an executive session for personnel.

Fire Chief – Absent.

Light & Power Superintendent – Barry wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Public Works Supervisor – Jeff thanked all departments for all the work done behind the scenes all year.

Recreation Director – nothing.

Committee Reports

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

Economic Development, Buildings and Codes – Joe Flickinger, Chair; Donnie Rehrig, Co-Chair – absent.

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

Light & Power Committee – Autumn Abelovsky, Chair; Lisa Perry, Co-Chair – nothing.

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

Streets, Public Works & Recreation – Darryl Arner, Chair; Ryan Saunders, Co-Chair – nothing.

Library Board – nothing.

Parks & Recreation Board – Autumn said she wanted to thank everyone who came out to the tree lighting ceremony. She thanked all departments for helping to always make this event beautiful. Autumn thanks Chris Botek from Crystal Springs Tree Farm for the trees. She said they were one day away from cancelling the event this year because we couldn't get trees. The trees just aren't there. The big tree in the amphitheater was from Santa Claus.

Autumn said the board is also working on securing funds to purchase the remaining benches for the upper park. She asked Nicole to get a price quote for them.

School Board – Autumn asked to resign as the liaison and requested that all further communication between LASD and the Borough be handled through the Borough Manager and solicitors.

Councilors Perry/Saunders made the motions to accept the resignation and the request and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Canal Commission – nothing.

Acceptance of Officials Reports

Councilors Saunders/Perry 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 Arner/Abelovsky made the motions to approve the accounts payable, and additional bills totaling \$5,827.42 and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to go into Executive Session for Personnel (Annex Custodian Position and Heart & Lung Application)

Councilors Parry/Saunders made the motion to go into executive session at 7:35 pm and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to go back into Regular Session

Councilors Rehrig/Abelovsky made the motions to go back into regular session at 8:02pm and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Action on Items from Executive Session

Motion to terminate the position of Custodian and Employee #194

Councilors Perry/Abelovsky made the motions to terminate the Annex Custodian Position and Employee #194 and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Follow up Action on the Heart and Lung Application for Employee #67

Councilors Saunders/Perry made the motions to deny the Heart and Lung application and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to Adjourn the Meeting

Councilors Saunders/Rehrig made the motions to adjourn the meeting at 8:04pm and all were in favor with no questions or objections. Meeting adjourned.

Brenda L. Kreitz
Borough Secretary