

January 3, 2022

The regular meeting of Lehighton Borough Council was held in the municipal building on Monday, January 3, 2022. The meeting was called to order at 7 PM by President Grant Hunsicker. Members in attendance were: Councilors Lisa Perry, Autumn Abelovsky, Ryan Saunders, Donnie Rehrig, Joe Flickinger and Darryl Arner.

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

Pledge of Allegiance

HEARING OF PERSONS PRESENT

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Meeting of December 6, 2021 and Special Meeting of December 20, 2021

Councilors Saunders/Rehrig made the motions to approve the minutes 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

Councilor Flickinger said he is still opposed to this request especially as we move forward with any possible renovations to the downstairs. It seems like most of that area could potentially go away.

Councilor Abelovsky said on the other hand, knowing the police chief will be leaving this year and seeking out a new chief she feels it would be beneficial to have a place for the mayor especially during that process.

Councilor Flickinger said that since the chief will only be there 2 days per week why not use the chief's office? The mayor said that people would then be coming into the squad room. The mayor asked Councilor Flickinger for clarification on comments Joe made at a past meeting pertaining to the mayor not needing an office because council does not have an office and Joe said that was incorrect. Joe said council does not have an office and they have more duties so someone with less duties does not need one.

Autumn said she has requested to use the office in question on numerous occasions for doing work mostly for Parks & Rec because she doesn't have the space to do it at home. Having that office available to the mayor or council is helpful.

Councilor Saunders said he would like to see advertised hours of availability for the mayor and he thinks having a dedicated spot for those hours whether at the police station or downstairs in borough hall makes sense to do that since it is an unused open space. Ryan thinks it makes sense and residents would find value in being able to seek out the mayor. Joe said he understands where Ryan is coming from but said that when Mayor Ritter first took office, he did have set hours on certain nights that were advertised on social media here in

council chambers. Ryan agreed council chambers would be a good place for the mayor to use also. Joe said it was discontinued within 5 months due to lack of interest.

Autumn said the access is not easy in chambers because you would have to set up ramps and things for people. Councilor Rehrig said he still feels the interrogation room at the police department could be used because that room is not used on a daily basis and is separate from the rest of the department.

Autumn said she still feels when people come in to pay their bill or just have a quick question, they typically go to either Brenda or Nicole's office. We have a typical small town where sometimes they just want to come in and shoot the breeze a bit or talk about the borough. She feels having the mayor there may take a bit off Nicole when she is trying to get work done. It is a nice camaraderie to come in and have your mayor sitting there.

Councilor Perry said it is an open office and if the mayor wants to use it, he should be able to use it. Once renovations are done, if it is not feasible then we revisit it. Darryl agreed and said we could move that piece of equipment if needed. The mayor did not feel that was necessary.

Councilors Abelovsky/Perry made the motions to use the office in borough hall for set mayors office hours and duties. All were not in favor. Roll call: Yes – Councilors Abelovsky, Saunders, Perry, Arner; No – Councilors Flickinger, Rehrig, Hunsicker. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Motion to adopt Resolution R2–2022 for Bituminous Materials in Small Quantities

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

Motion to adopt Ordinance 662–2022 pertaining to Rooming Houses

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

Consideration on request from Corey Schaeffer and Tim Ream to fill a vacancy on Planning Commission

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

Motion to adopt Resolution R3–2022 for establishing the current base purchased power cost for the PPAC

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

Motion to appoint David Zimmerman to the Vacancy Board with Permission

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

Motion to approve Resolution R-5-2022 setting the Contribution Rate for the Police Pension Fund

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

Motion to approve Resolution R6-2022 authorizing the Borough Manager to submit the Application for Traffic Signal Approval for the flashing beacon along Sgt. Stanley Hoffman Boulevard

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

Motion to approve Resolution R7-2022 authorizing the Borough Manager to submit the Traffic Signal Maintenance Agreement and future correspondence pertaining to the flashing beacon along Sgt. Stanley Hoffman Boulevard

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

Motion to approve the Keystone Consulting Engineers invoice in the amount of \$7,200.80 for the Blight Remediation

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

Motion to approve the Bronze Membership with Bucks County Community College for on-site training program for the Lehigh Fire Department

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

Motion to approve updated 2022 Borough EOP and Accompanying Resolution R8-2022

Councilors Saunders/Abelovsky to approve the updated EOP and resolution and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Addendum

Motion to approve Resolution R9-2022 authorizing the Borough Manager to submit the Application for Traffic Signal Approval for the Speed Indicator Sign along Sgt. Stanley Hoffman Boulevard

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

Motion to accept addendum to the agenda

Councilors Perry/Flickinger made the motions to accept the addendum and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Officials Reports

President of Council

Nothing.

Borough Manager

Nicole told council she has been providing them with regular updates via email but will provide her yearend report by month's end.

Borough Engineer

Not required to attend

Solicitor

Nothing.

Treasurer

Approval of additional bills – \$59,866.71. Councilors Saunders/Perry made the motions to approve the additional bills and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Mayor

Clark thanked those who voted to give him an office and said he had one item for executive session.

Police

Not required to attend.

Fire Chief

Not required to attend.

Light & Power Superintendent

Not required to attend.

Public Works Supervisor

Not required to attend.

Recreation Director

Not required to attend.

Committee Reports –

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

Economic Development, Buildings and Codes – Autumn Abelovsky, Chair; Darryl Arner, Co-Chair – nothing.

Police, Fire and Safety – Donnie Rehrig, Chair; Lisa Perry, Co-Chair – nothing.

Light & Power Committee – Joe Flickinger, Chair; Ryan Saunders, Co-Chair – nothing.

Sewer Committee – Darryl Arner, Chair; Autumn Abelovsky, Co-Chair – nothing.

Streets, Public Works & Recreation – Ryan Saunders, Chair; Donnie Rehrig, Co-Chair – nothing.

Library Board – Joe – nothing.

Parks & Recreation Board – Autumn – nothing.

Canal Commission – Ryan – nothing.

Acceptance of Officials Reports

Councilors Saunders/Rehrig 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 Rehrig/Saunders made the motions to accept the accounts payable and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to go into Executive Session for Personnel and Litigation

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

Motion to go back into Regular Session

Councilors Rehrig/Flickinger made the motion to go back in at 8pm and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Action on Items from Executive Session

Councilors Flickinger/Abelovsky made the motions to approve the Employment Agreement with the Borough Manager and all were in favor with no questions.

Councilors Saunders/Rehrig made the motions to approve the Employment Agreement with the Chief of Police and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Councilors Perry/Flickinger made the motions to approve Resolution R4-2022 setting salaries of Non-Union Employees with one modification for the police chief's salary and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to Adjourn the Meeting

Councilors Saunders/Abelovsky made the motions to adjourn the meeting at 8:02pm and all were in favor with no questions or objections. Meeting adjourned.

Brenda L. Kreitz
Borough Secretary