

March 5, 2023

The regular meeting of Lehigh Borough Council was held in the municipal building on Monday, March 5, 2023. The meeting was called to order at 7 PM by President Grant Hunsicker. Members in attendance were: Lisa Perry, Autumn Abelovsky, Ryan Saunders and Rebecca Worthy. Absent: Councilors Darryl Arner and Donnie Rehrig,

Officials in attendance were: Borough Manager Steve Travers, Borough Secretary Brenda Kreitz, Solicitor James Nanovic, Borough Engineer Vanessa Nedrick, Police Chief Joe Sparich, Mayor Clark Ritter, L&P Superintendent Lonny Armbruster and Public Works Supervisor Kris Kunkle. Absent: Fire Chief Patrick Mriss and Recreation Director Tom Evans.

#### Pledge of Allegiance

#### Zoning Ordinance Public Hearing

#### Guest Speaker: Bambi Elsasser – Lehigh Main Street Manager – Updates on the Lehigh Downtown Partnership

Bambi updated council on several events she is looking to hold in the coming months. She applied for a \$12,000 grant to have 5 benches placed along 1<sup>st</sup> Street. She is not sure where exactly they will go but she will know by the end of April if she is awarded the grant or not. She will have to come up with \$6,000 as the match if awarded.

She would also like to apply for bike racks along 1<sup>st</sup> Street for D&L trail users but there is an ordinance in place prohibiting bikes on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2nd, North & South Streets. She is not sure if she can still move forward or not with the grant.

Bambi then asked about where the Wine on the River event stands. She thought she had approval to hold the event and started moving forward with the preparations. The borough manager told Bambi council approved moving the event to Baer Memorial but they now need to approve holding the event itself. Councilor Perry said some of them had questions. They are concerned with the amount of vendors parking on the field and ruining it if it rains. Bambi said there is a rain date of May 7<sup>th</sup> and if the weather is that bad, she can always cancel the event. She provided a rough sketch of the layout. Bambi did fill out the alcohol permit.

Councilor Abelovsky talked to Bambi about the event earlier today. Her questions were pertaining to trucks on the practice field and Bambi said only the vendors will be on the field; no trucks. She is concerned about the stage being the back of a flatbed truck on the grass. Bambi said they have a wooden stage that will do no damage whatsoever. Autumn's biggest concern is the grass and the amount of time it would take to fix any damage before football starts. She is also concerned with moving the event out of the downtown when it is an event to benefit the downtown. In hindsight she would prefer to have events benefitting the downtown be in the downtown. Autumn's last thing is that even without rain she feels there will be damage because the area floods and is very marshy. She doesn't feel the field will dry out enough by May 6<sup>th</sup>. Bambi said she has been down there numerous times and does not recall it ever being marshy.

Kris said the borough spent close to \$1,000 between fertilizers and grass seed and basically not giving it the time to do what is needed by the event date. Autumn said she is concerned over the long term effect to the field should it be damaged. Bambi said they do have insurance and would use that to cover/correct any damage that might be caused.

Autumn also pointed out the agenda item request to hold the Senior Games at Baer Memorial 3 days later. The borough manager said he can meet with Bambi and Kris prior to the event to be sure the layout works and make any necessary changes well in advance. Bambi suggested leaving the fencing up from her event for the senior games and council thought that would be a good idea.

#### HEARING OF PERSONS PRESENT

LaRae Hlavaty asked council for permission to place a memorial bench near the POW & MIA monuments in Veteran's Park. Kevin Long of the UVO said he would oversee the request and the UVO would do any needed work for the placement of the bench.

Councilors Saunders/Perry approved the request and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

##### Regular Meeting of February 6, 2023

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

#### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

##### Continued discussion on approving request from LDP to hold "Wine on the River" at Baer Memorial Park May 6<sup>th</sup> with rain date May 7, 2023

Councilors Perry/Saunders made the motions to approve the event with alcohol and all were not in favor. Roll call: No – Councilor Abelovsky; yes – Councilors Worthy, Perry, Saunders and Hunsicker. Motion carried.

##### Continued discussion on request from LDP to hold a "Spell Binding Street Festival" September 16, 2023

Councilor Perry asked what parts of the downtown would be blocked off. Bambi said it would be the same as they did for the Hometown Vintage Christmas event they held last year. They blocked off 1<sup>st</sup> Street from North Street to Iron Street. The businesses had such success and wanted to do these events again.

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

##### Continued discussion on request to hold a "Hometown Vintage Christmas" December 9, 2023

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

##### Continued discussion on draft Rental Inspection Guidelines/Program

The borough manager said he has been working with Autumn on a draft ordinance and guidelines. He has spoken to the code official about this also. We will take it to the committee then bring it back to council for your thoughts and suggestions. He would like it to begin in 2024.

## NEW BUSINESS

### Motion to adopt the draft Zoning Ordinance

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

### Motion to approve Resolution R11–2023 designating Steve Travers as signor for H2O PA Water Supply, Sanitary Sewer and Storm Water projects grant

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

### Motion to approve Resolution R12–2023 establishing the current base purchased power cost for the for PPAC for all of 2023

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

### Consideration on request from the Office on Aging to hold Senior Games May 2–10, 2023

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

### Consideration on request to hold St. Luke's Hospice Annual Bike Ride June 3<sup>rd</sup> 8am – 3pm with rain date June 4, 2023

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

### Motion to approve request from Weissport Borough for Fire police assistance with traffic control for Armed Forces Day Parade May 20, 2023 if available

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

### Motion to approve placing ad in Carbon County Sports Hall of Fame program

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

### Consideration on drafting Horse Drawn Carriage Ordinance

Autumn said there have been issues with horse drawn carriages on the Trailhead. It has come to her attention that the carriage company is partnering with a business down there and giving rides but not cleaning up after the horses. Public Works has been having to do the cleanup. Kris said he calls about the waste left by the horse and the reply he gets is "Oh, they didn't clean it up yet?" Sometimes his department fills up two 5-gallon buckets after one of these events. Other places don't have this issue as the horses have bags or slings under the horses.

Autumn researched this and found no local ordinances but provided some from other states to see if the rest of council agrees with drafting an ordinance to stop this issue. Council agreed to this for sanitary reasons.

### Consideration on request from Lehigh Area School District for Commencement Motorcade 2023

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

### Approval of Blight Remediation Grant time extension request

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

### Motion to approve Resolution R13-2023 for the GRIP Grant

The Borough Manager said there is a grant AMP has approached the borough about. Amp has been working with the Department of Energy to assist municipalities installing smart metering. Steve knows council had looked at this before and it was very costly. AMP is looking for a resolution; not a firm commitment at this point but they need to show the Department of Energy there is interest in the grant and provide the resolution showing municipalities are interested.

So far 10 municipalities are interested. It is a \$1.4 million grant and we would be responsible for \$800,000 over the course of 10 years. That would be about \$6,900 a month for 10 years financed through AMP. The number might go down if the larger municipality opts in with the grant. There would be some changes needing to be made to the resolution because it is over Ohio and Pennsylvania. AMP mostly wants to know if we are interested at this time. The resolution can come later.

Solicitor Nanovic said he is ok with expressing interest in the grant as long as the borough can back out at a later time. From what he has read it sound more like they are asking us to sign a commitment letter and does not feel that is wise. The Borough Manager said there is no firm commitment at this time and will wait until we have more solid numbers to go by before signing the resolution.

Councilors Saunders/Abelovsky made the motions to approve the resolution with revisions done by Attorney Nanovic if the numbers are good and a letter of intent but not a commitment letter and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

### Officials Reports

#### President of Council

Nothing.

#### Borough Manager

Steve said he emailed council his weekly report and if anyone has questions, they should reach out to him.

#### Borough Engineer – Active Projects and Task Report

Vanessa said she had a few updates for council. The easement for 93 Lentz Avenue is completed. The only thing left to do is have Ms. Finney pay the fees owed to the Borough and have the easement recorded.

The subdivision for the new transformer has all been turned in to Franklin Twp. by the previous borough engineer. All the permit applications are in, the access road is designed so everything is on schedule and there are no worries about paying storage fees.

The Office of Senator Bob Casey put out the fiscal year 2024 appropriations and her firm looked at all the available funding for different types of projects. She spoke to Public Works and the borough manager and they came up with 3 projects – Rehabilitation of sewer pipes in drainage areas 1 & 5. The current H2O Grant that we applied for is for drainage areas 3 & 6.

These projects will help save the borough money. Another project was the replacement of storm sewers as many of them are showing damage and age. The third project is the removal and replacement of failing storm inlet basins with the worst 7 basins being identified for removal and replacement. There is a minimal 20% cost sharing for the projects. If the borough wants to proceed, she is happy to help.

Solicitor

Nothing.

Treasurer

Approval of additional bills and transfer

Mayor

He said he has had some complaints about noise from residents but to enforce the ordinance you need a decibel reader. He found some for under \$300 but the officers would have to be trained on how to use it.

Police

Chief Sparich said he was hoping to have a part-timer on the agenda but the background check is taking longer than anticipated.

The chief also asked if a committee was being put together to look into a new police station. Councilor Perry didn't feel she should be on the committee as this is her last year. She feels someone who will on council until the project is completed would better serve the committee. Councilor Abelovsky suggested that the police chief, mayor and borough manager pick a date and time to hold a meeting and email the information to council and whomever wants to attend can attend. Chief Sparich said he would do that.

Fire Chief

Absent due to training class.

Light & Power Superintendent

Lonny thanked R. W. Moyer Contracting for doing the site work at the new transformer location in 4 days. March 13<sup>th</sup> G & S Technologies will come and remove the old transformer and that should be completed by week's end. On March 27 Virginia Transformer is scheduled to set the new transformer in place. It will be a week till it is dressed and energized. It will sit for about a week to let it soak with no load in case we have issues. The 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> week of April the new transformer will go online to service the Borough of Lehighton.

Mrs. Finney got her pole and line in at 93 Lentz Avenue and is awaiting her electrician doing what he needs to do.

Public Works Supervisor

Kris said the new Ventrac was used the other day and he was very pleased with how many man hours were saved by using it.

Recreation Director

Absent.

Committee Reports –

Finance and Administration – Lisa Perry, Chair; Rebecca Worthy, 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 – Donnie absent due to training class.

Light & Power Committee – Rebecca Worthy, Chair; Ryan Saunders, Co-Chair

Nothing.

Sewer Committee – Darryl Arner, Chair; Autumn Abelovsky, Co-Chair – Darryl was absent.

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

Library Board – Rebecca had nothing.

Parks & Recreation Board – Autumn – they are working on their 2023 Summer Music in the Park series. More information on that will be announced shortly.

Canal Commission – Ryan – they should be meeting this month so he will have something for April's meeting.

#### 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, additional bills totaling \$122,869.93 and \$200,000 transfer

Councilors Saunders/Perry made the motions to accept the accounts payable plus additional bills and transfer and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

#### Motion to go into Executive Session

None needed.

#### Motion to Adjourn the Meeting

Councilors Saunders/Abelovsky made the motions to adjourn the meeting at 8:05pm and all were in favor with no questions or objections. Meeting adjourned.

Brenda L. Kreitz  
Borough Secretary