

May 2, 2022

The regular meeting of Lehighon Borough Council was held in the municipal building on Monday, May 2, 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 and Donnie Rehrig.

Officials in attendance were: Borough Secretary Brenda Kreitz, Solicitor James Nanovic, Mayor Clark Ritter, Officer in Charge Gabe Szozda, Fire Chief Patrick Mriss, Borough Engineer Bruce Steigerwalt, L&P Superintendent Lonny Armbruster, Public Works Supervisor Kris Kunkle and Recreation Director Tom Evans. Absent: Borough Manager Nicole Beckett, Councilors Darryl Arner and Joe Flickinger.

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Announcement – Executive Sessions will be held June 14th & 20th Regarding Personnel
Guest Speaker: Bambi Elasser – Lehighon Main Street Manager – Updates on the Lehighon
Downtown Partnership

Bambi said there are some new businesses in town. Within Harmony will be opening as soon as they receive their occupancy permit. The new owner of the old GC Murphy building is looking into a few different options to do with the building. The Trex bench project is going well. Wine on the River is this Saturday. We are preparing for the opening day of the Farmer's Market on May 21st. She thanked Public Works for all the work they are doing to prepare for the arrival of the caboose.

Julie Harris – Lehighon Halloween Parade Committee

Julie said they would like to request to hold the parade October 15, 2022. Autumn said according to the emails Nicole passed on to council, the Borough applied for the Special Event permit and the road closures and event insurance through the Borough and has since asked that it be taken on by the parade committee. Julie said the parade runs on donations and the insurance would come out of that. The committee has a quote for \$545 but can't get the insurance without a set date.

Ryan asked Julie if they could partner with the LDP and essentially use a permit through them since they are insured. Bambi would need to check and see if that is possible. Autumn said maybe it could fall under the Parks and Rec Committee. Julie said Nicole told her the committee must meet with the police department. Will we have to pay for police too? Ryan said it is because we don't have fire police. Lisa suggested asking other municipalities to help with traffic control.

Councilors Saunders/Rehrig made the motions to hold the Halloween parade on October 15 with a rain date of October 16th and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

HEARING OF PERSONS PRESENT

Ashley Exner of 336, South 2nd Street said she has been a borough resident all her life and she and her husband have owned their home for 15 years wanted to address council about her neighbor that is impacting her property and quality of life. There are no ordinances that protect the property owner like herself from the rental property next door. It started out as harmless holiday decorating and has turned into year-round never-ending cluttering of lights, decorations and now wind chimes. Last year there were 8 or so wind chimes leading up to their front door but now this Spring it has increased to 27 a week ago and today up to 30. The property next to us has started with wind chimes as well. Ms. Exner said she did manage to find the name of the property owner and contact them about the wind chimes. The owner was very disrespectful and before she hung up on Ms. Exner, the property owner conceded by saying she never thought they would ever take the decorating to the level they have but they pay the rent so it is between you guys. This could possibly fall under the noise ordinance and she went in to decibel readings and played a clip of what the wind chimes sound like.

Ms. Exner said they can't enjoy their yard nor can their small daughter and asked for help from council. She was directed to contact the zoning officer to see if there was something he could do through the property maintenance ordinance.

John Kreitz of 416 North 3rd Street had a few questions for council about the bypass repairs costing around \$125,000 last year. He asked if these are on-going repairs to be done with that money and was told no by President Hunsicker. Grant said that was all the money we had to do what we could. Mr. Kreitz said the borough applied for a grant. Will that complete more repairs on the bypass. Ryan said there will be different types of medium installed so you won't be driving in the left lane all the time. Once the upgrades are done, bump out type medium will be installed to keep people in the right lane. John asked if council plans on fixing the rest of the bypass and if not, why not? Councilor Perry said the grant didn't cover repairing it all. John said we can't allow our infrastructure to just fall apart. Lisa said she understands that and when we have money, we will fix it but the budget has been tight. Ryan said we are fixing it as much as we can in pieces. John said we are looking to replace the borough manager now and budget more than what you are paying now. Where is that coming from? We can't take care of our infrastructure but we have money to hire a borough manager at a higher salary.

Scott Rehrig of 425 South 8th Street wanted to know where council was going to get the money to pay a new borough manager and chief of police and why aren't you going to keep school crossing guards at intersections in the borough? He also commented that he feels it would be a good idea to have the police patrol 9th Street and the other entrance to the elementary school on a daily basis before and after school. Scott said we have a full-time police department or at least he thinks we did.

Councilor Abelovsky said she would address the crossing guards since she is the one who brought it up at the last meeting. Her reasoning to work with the school district and see if they would be willing to take it over is because at the current time, we do not have enough crossing guards to staff the designated intersections the borough has asked the school district to advertise for the students to use. Ebberts Park, 11th & Mahoning Streets is the main concern. As of 2 years ago there were 23 kids crossing there. She has been told there is still 12–15 kids but they are not following what the school district has asked them to do. They are instead parking on 12th Street and Mahoning and crossing there where there is a turning lane and it is a total of 20–30 kids and parents doing this. It is not the safest place to cross and has asked the school district to please ask kids and parents to cross at 11th and Mahoning like we have done the last 3 years. Our 11th & Mahoning Street crossing guard has now quit and we can't find a replacement. Autumn does not feel comfortable having people cross there when we can't staff it even with substitutes. It is her hope that if the school took it over, they could pull from their pool of lunch aides, para-professionals, etc. to cover the locations we can't. Autumn said she feels we are doing a poor job of things and is worried about having kids cross at a place we designate as safe with no one there to cross them.

Scott asked what we are paying crossing guards and Autumn said they just got a raise this year and are at \$10.50/hour from \$8 previously.

Scott then asked why the alleys and roads are in such deplorable condition. He realizes it costs money but if you are going to pay a borough manager and police chief more money where is that going to come from? He asked if taxes were raised this year and was told no but was told they were raised 2 years ago. Lisa said in order to hire qualified people we have to pay them more because of the applications we received and the compensation that they are being paid. Just because we have a high and low number doesn't mean we have to pay the high number but pay based on their qualifications. Scott asked if the money is budgeted for and Lisa said no but with the borough manager is being paid out of the different funds so it's a little easier to do. However, the police chief is a different story but we need to replace him. Scott said that takes him back to his original question – where is the money coming from if it is not budgeted for? Lisa said it will come from somewhere. Some projects just won't be completed this year.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Meeting of April 4 and Special Meeting of April 13, 2022

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Continued discussion on establishing an ordinance to regulate and require a bulk refuse permit

Solicitor Nanovic said it was discussed at the last meeting and mentioned examples of the one's council was happy with and he put those into the form of an ordinance and if Council is satisfied it is ready to be advertised.

Autumn said in Section 213-81 letter "N" is regarding immediate removal due to snow emergencies and asked who would make the contact and when in these situations. The solicitor said he believes it would be either the police chief or Public Works supervisor and it wouldn't go in the ordinance.

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

Consideration on the 2022 Alley Paving Program and future planning

Kris said he was told he has \$14,000 and that was it to do paving. He thinks it should be council who decides what should be paved. Councilor Perry said she believed last time this was discussed 5 alleys could be done or just Division Alley and we had decided to do the 5 alleys. Kris said he thought Nicole's recommendation was to do something to Division Alley prior to doing anything to the other alleys. Councilor Saunders asked if grading or something could be done to Division Alley to lessen some of the damage to the road. Councilor Abelovsky asked if so, how much of the \$14,000 would be used to do that. Kris had no answer.

Council directed Kris to have his department decide which alleys are the worst and pave them per the \$14,000 budget amount. Kris didn't look into that but it would only be a band aid but it would make people happy for a little while. Scott Rehrig asked from the audience if that would not be a waste of money?

Autumn said she feels Kris should pick the worst ones from the list and do as many as he can with his budget and council agreed. Donnie asked Kris to get the list prioritized and give it to Nicole so council can look it over and go from there.

NEW BUSINESS

Consideration on letter of interest from Jacob Hoffner to fill vacancy on the Shade Tree Commission

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

Consideration on KME taking the new ladder truck to Harrisburg Fire Expo May 20-21, 2022

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

Motion to accept donation of the 2022 Chevrolet Silverado 3500HD from Lehigh Fire Company #1 to the Fire Department

Chief Mriss provided the COSTARS quote for the vehicle and upfitting. The Lehigh Fire Company #1 Social Quarters is generously donating the vehicle to replace the 1986 pickup.

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

Consideration on the Annex water maintenance contract and filter feeder install as provided by Tom Evans

Tom said he has a maintenance budget. This contract will save \$5,000 a year and catch all the dirt.

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

Approval of Seasonal Employee list for Baer Memorial Swimming Pool 2022 Season

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

Consideration on request from Zion Church to hold their annual Country Fair September 24th from 8am to 3pm with rain dates of September 25th 11am to 5pm or October 1st from 8am to 3pm

Councilor Saunders said he thinks they handle things themselves. Autumn said Nicole communicated with them that fire police are not available for traffic control and must contract with the police for services.

Councilors Rehrig/Saunders made the motions to approve the request and notify them of the new procedure for traffic control through a police services agreement if needed and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Consideration on request from Lehigh Water Authority to refrain from paving any streets until their upcoming project is complete

Kris said the Water Authority has to come up with a list of where they need to replace pipes. He believes the project must be completed by sometime in 2024. Donnie asked Kris if he and Armon will work together on this and Kris said yes.

Council agreed Armon and Kris should keep each other apprised of what street will be affected as the project progresses.

Consideration from Chief Biechy to purchase his service weapon at full replacement cost

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

Motion to approve Resolution R20-2022 establishing the current base purchased power cost for the PPAC

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

Approval to submit final drafts of the updated Zoning and SALDO Ordinances and Map to meet grant requirements

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

Motion to approve Final Payment Request in the amount of \$10,532.30 for Blight Remediation Demolition Project

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

Motion to Approve Keystone Consulting Engineers Invoice in the amount of \$1,195.00 for the Blight Remediation Grant

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

Officials Reports

President of Council

Nothing.

Borough Manager

Absent.

Borough Engineer

Bruce said he is working on the subdivision of the Walker property in Franklin Twp. for the Transformer project.

Solicitor

Jim said he has a few things to discuss in executive session. The other item pertains to a previous request from the Water Authority to draft an ordinance to require separate water lines. He drafted it, sent it to Nicole. When he spoke with her today, he asked Nicole if she sent it to the Water Authority and she said she thinks so but will double check. It must be looked at by the Water Authority to see that it meets with their approval and then it will come back to council for approval.

Treasurer

Approval of additional bills totaling \$10,982.85

Mayor

Nothing.

Police

Nothing.

Fire Chief

Nothing.

Light & Power Superintendent

Lonny asked if he can give poles to Manny DaCosta to use to for his parking lot at the Band Hall. Bruce said he can have them if he is using them as a bumper guard yes. If he's using the to make a wall then it would be best to say no.

Public Works Supervisor

Nothing.

Recreation Director

Nothing.

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 – Autumn said Bambi touched on the new businesses going in on 1st Street.

She spoke with Zoning /Code today and he has been working on those later this week.

Police, Fire and Safety – Donnie Rehrig, Chair; Lisa Perry, Co-Chair – meetings continue to move forward with some of the issues in the department and being very positively addressed as we go. Lisa thanked Gabe for stepping in as Officer-in-Charge until a new chief is hired.

Light & Power Committee – Joe Flickinger, Chair; Ryan Saunders, Co-Chair – absent.

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

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

Library Board – Joe – Absent.

Parks & Recreation Board – Autumn – nothing. Clark said they discussed sidewalks in the Grove. Mr. Zimmerman is going to handle getting the information on the project. Autumn said she believes Bethlehem City had done this. They offered to let us borrow the stencils to use throughout the walk ways in the Grove.

Scott Rehrig asked if there is any intention of adding more equipment to the Grove. Ryan said there is. They have the estimates and money set aside to add/replace things. Tome said there is something coming soon that cost about \$30,000. It has been ordered and he believes it should have been here by now so he will talk to Nicole to find out where it is.

Canal Commission – Ryan – nothing.

Acceptance of Officials Reports

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

Motion to go into Executive Session for Police and Administration

Councilors Flickinger/Perry made the motions to go into executive session at 8pm and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to go back into Regular Session

Councilors Saunders/Perry made the motions to go back into regular session at 8:45pm and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Action on Items from Executive Session

Motion to approve letter of resignation/retirement of Employee #65

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

Consideration on the appointment of an Interim Manager as per the terms agreed by Council

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

The solicitor said the part-time wage scale will be \$25 for a new certified police officer, \$26.70 after 500 hours with the department and \$28.60 after 1,000 hours with the department.

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

Motion to Adjourn the Meeting

Councilors Perry/Rehrig made the motions to adjourn the meeting at 8:47pm and all were in favor with no questions or objections. Meeting adjourned.

Brenda L. Kreitz
Borough Secretary