

August 3, 2020

The regular meeting of Lehighton Borough Council was held in the municipal building on Monday, August 3, 2020. The meeting was called to order at 7 PM by President Grant Hunsicker. Members in attendance were: Councilors Lisa Perry, Darryl Arner, Donnie Rehrig, Autumn Abelovsky, Ryan Saunders, and Joe Flickinger

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Hearing of Persons Present

Jenny from Jenny's Sweets and More addressed council about the weeds in the Lower Park. She said she sent an email to the council members. Jenny said she does not like to come before council without having some sort of resolution to the problem but this time she doesn't have one. She said that we have people visiting the downtown and the park is not very inviting with all the weeds. She feels we have a high tide of pride in the town and now is the time to do something to support one another. Jenny sees the park as the focal point of the downtown with all the work that has gone into improving them both. LDI tried to clean it up 2 years ago. Last year the Leo's tried and both groups did a great job at making things look good. The problem is maintaining them. Jenny asked if maybe a maintenance program could be set up to take care of the issue.

Nicole said they went back and forth over this issue. Several possibilities were discussed and what she did ask council if they wanted her to get a cost on what a landscaper would charge. Nicole did reach out to a local contractor who did not give her a formal cost for he did not seem to make it to be too much of a project. He made it sound like he could come in once a month and take care of things. She is waiting on the cost to come in and will let council know when she has it.

Nicole said the Main Street Committee had discussed financing this once they were up and running but this might be a feasible solution in the meantime.

Robert Reed of 125 Coal Street addressed council about atv's in East Alley driven by kids. 12-14 years old kids are driving the atv's without a license. This goes on frequently and is being precipitated by someone who has a garage in the alley by the post office and a few other families that are in to atv's and let them drive them up and down the alley.

Mr. Reed said he has kids that go to the top of North 2nd Street and come down Coal Street. They are young toddlers about 3-4 years old with little pushcarts and peddle carts and they start at the top, coast down to his property which has a disability ramp and come down and go right out in the alley. Blue Ridge, UPS, trucks, cars and other 2-way traffic goes through that alley all the time and someone is going to get hit. Mr. Reed just wanted to bring the issue to council's attention. He had already brought it to the police department's attention.

Approval of Minutes

Regular Meeting of July 6, 2020

Councilors Arner/Autumn made the motions to approve the minutes and all were in favor with no questions or objections

NEW BUSINESS

Ratification of COVID-19 "Task Force" Actions since July 6, 2020

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

Consideration on the appointment of Karen Reichard as Police Department Right-to-Know Officer

Nicole said Brenda serves as the Right-to-Know officer for the entire borough but it gets complicated when one comes in for the police department. If Karen is on vacation the request sits up there until Karen returns or vice versa which does not work well for the response timeframe. Nicole said she did check with the Right-to-Know office and we can have a separate officer just for the police department. Karen is fine with having the appointment as long as she receives the proper training.

Councilor Saunders/Rehrig made the motions to appoint Karen upon receiving proper training and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to release the bond for AutoZone Land Development Project

Nicole said this goes back to 2015. We are sitting on a large bond and we received a request to release the bond. Nicole talked to the solicitor and Bruce as far as outstanding items. One was the as-built plans were not satisfactory when we received them but they were not part of the land development requirements. The other item was the finalization of the HOP through PennDOT. She did reach out to PennDOT and heard back from them late Friday and found out the process was never completed.

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

Motion to approve Payment Request #3 in the amount of \$234,193.42 for the Beaver Run Circuit Upgrade Project (Project complete and closed)

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

Motion to approve Payment Request #6 in the amount of \$96,988.98 for the Lehighton Area Memorial Library Project

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

Consideration on the award of the 2000 Ford Mini Dump Truck to Kevin Fox in the amount of \$13,501

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

Motion to approve Resolution R24–2020 requesting a Blight Remediation Grant and Designating Jim Thorpe Representatives for Grant Submission and Execution

Nicole said the grant was submitted last Friday. The project we would be pursuing would be 209 North 1st Street not 135–139 North 1st Street because the grant won't cover the cost of that building. We have applied for a little over \$100,000. The next motion is the funding commitment letter for this project. Nicole reduced the amount to 10% being that it was less money for this side of it.

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

Motion to approve 10% Funding Commitment Letter for Blight Remediation Grant

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

Request from Jim Thorpe Borough for Fire Police Assistance for pedestrian crossing, vehicular traffic and crowd control for October 2020 weekends

Councilor Flickinger said he spoke to Fire Police Lt. Gower over the weekend. Lt. Gower said he and Rich had notified Mayor Sofranko when he had personally come up to them asking them to do this that they would not be interested. They did not have the manpower, Mayor Sofranko needed to look at other options and they couldn't be tied up for this amount of time.

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

Discussion on proposed changes to garbage contract

Brenda said she emailed council the current contract and ordinance and provided the changes to the contract she would like to have made. She said the contract is up the end of 2020. She asked council for their thoughts and if anyone would like to sit and go over the contract with her. Councilors Abelovsky, Saunders and Perry said they would like to meet to discuss the contract with her. Brenda will set up a meeting for next week.

Unfinished Business

Continued discussion for Safe School Awareness and Plan

Councilor Abelovsky said they have a meeting set up for the week of August 10th with the police chief, Steve Ebbert who will be the school liaison for the walking routes that will be established.

Officials' Reports

Borough Manager

Nicole said she did submit the Carbon County COVID Block grant application for reimbursements only at this time. She did attempt to submit for some future plan expenses but she did not receive the proposals in time. Nicole said there may be a round two of grant

submission and if so, Kim will be ready to submit for all of that. We hosted the Business Owner's Roundtable during the MainStreet Steering Committee and received notice of the \$3,200 Hotel Tax Grant award for the downtown signage and rack cards along with \$5,000 from Lehigh Fire Company #. There will be money carried over into the 2021 budget if not spent this year for the Main Street Steering Committee.

Nicole said 2 property owners did repair their sidewalk grates. Three of them the borough will be replacing and then either lien them or be citing the property owners.

PathStone has asked to have all historical items removed from the 2nd floor of the Annex for student safety along with liability. She did reach out to LAHA and have received their recommendation. They are asking that the cases filled with the Clyde Houser memorabilia stay up there where people can see it the auditorium is used. They had asked about moving some of the other stuff to another location in the borough building being that they don't have a home at this point. If that is not an option, they will have to box the items up and find a place to preserve them. They are suggesting the canal related items be placed on loan to the Canal Museum in Easton. They are looking into a place to go with the mule. Nicole said Mr. Weaver said if the donated items can not be stored in a borough building, the families should be notified and given the option to have their stuff back.

Nicole said she will forward the email to council and that it will be worked on over the next few months to get some sort of resolution up there. She said we all hope to see a downtown historical museum for these items one day but this is what we have come up with so far.

Nicole forwarded the notice of violation from DEP. Kris is looking into cost proposals for a mulching program for the weekends and will provide council with additional information

There was one item not in her report. We have been continually posting our agendas online for the council meeting. There have been some comments on live streaming our meetings. She wanted council's opinion. If in favor of it would someone on council be willing to spearhead it? She can get the technology to do so but it's a matter of someone taking charge of it.

Nicole also provided council with the 2021 budget memo so they can see what her plans are for the new year. Nothing needs to be done now but she wanted council to have time to look it over in her absence.

Borough Engineer

Nicole said the bids are due for CDBG August 13th Iron Street project. Nicole provided Kim with what she believes our options are in case she isn't here. Bruce will also be involved in that.

Police

Nothing.

Mayor

Absent.

Fire Chief

Nothing.

Light & Power Superintendent

Nothing.

Public Works

Nothing.

Recreation Director

Nothing.

Solicitor

Nothing.

Treasurer

See Addendum for additional bills to be approved.

Committee Reports

Finance & Administration – Lisa had nothing.

Economic Development, Buildings & Code – Joe had nothing.

Police, Fire & Safety – Ryan had nothing.

Light & Power Committee – Autumn had nothing.

Sewer Committee – Donnie had nothing.

Streets, Public Works & Recreation – Darryl had nothing. Donnie said the Public Works is doing a great job. The pool is following the COVID guidelines.

Library Board – Autumn said the extension is up and the inside is really nice and expects it to be amazing when it is done.

Parks & Recreation – Autumn had nothing.

School Board – Autumn had nothing.

Canal Commission – Ryan had nothing.

Acceptance of Officials Report

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

Approval of Accounts Payable

Councilors Arner/Rehrig made the motions to approve the accounts payable plus \$90,425.47 additional bills and all were in favor with no questions or objections

ADDENDUM

Consideration on the appointment of Lehighton Ambulance Association as the primary AMS/BLS service in the borough

Councilor Flickinger asked to have this on the agenda. He said he was approached about 3 weeks ago by Supervisor Rigotti from the medics. They were looking for a letter

stating they were the designated provider for the Borough of Lehighton. They were looking into doing a Hazard grant and other grants. Joe told Mr. Rigotti that he would have to talk to Nicole first because he remembers years ago there being an issue with this. Joe spoke to Nicole who confirmed not all of council was in favor of the appointment years back and it would need to be brought before council again for approval.

Joe said the Lehighton Ambulance has pretty much been the borough's provider since 1954 when they were initiated, he would like to make it official.

Councilors Flickinger/Saunders made the motions to appoint the Lehighton Ambulance Association as the primary AMS/BLS service for the Borough of Lehighton and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Police, Fire & Safety Committee follow up on the fireworks ordinance

Councilor Saunders said he included in the council packets recommendations from Chief Biechy, Chief Mriss, the mayor and himself regarding revisions for the current fireworks ordinance. With council's permission he would like to submit them to the solicitor for proper verbiage to be drafted and brought back for approval.

Councilors Saunders/Rehrig made the motions to forward the proposed changes to the solicitor for drafting an ordinance.

Request from the Carbon County Commissioner for letters of support

Nicole said this letter came in late today asking for letters of support for the training facility.

Councilors Flickinger/Perry made the motions to write a letter of support and all were not in favor. Roll call: yes - Councilors Rehrig, Perry, Arner, Flickinger, Abelovsky; no - Councilors Saunders and Hunsicker. Motion carried.

Motion to approve the additional bills totaling \$90,425.47

This item was approved with the Account Payable.

Motion to go into Executive Session for Personnel, Litigation and Real Estate

Councilors Perry/Saunders made the motions to go into Executive Session at 7:36 PM and all were in favor.

Motion to go back into Regular Session

Councilors Perry/Abelovsky made the motions to go back into regular session at 7:56pm.

Motion on items from Executive Session

None.

Motion to adjourn

Councilors Flickinger/Rehrig made the motions to adjourn at 7:57pm and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Brenda L. Kreitz
Borough Secretary