

September 14, 2020

The regular meeting of Lehighon Borough Council was held in the municipal building on Monday, September 14, 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, and Ryan Saunders.

Officials in attendance were: Interim Borough Manager Kim Rubin, Borough Secretary Brenda Kreitz, Solicitor James Nanovic and Mayor Clark Ritter Absent: Joe Flickinger.

Pledge of Allegiance

Guest Speaker – Steve Ebbert, Training Tower Chairperson

Mr. Ebbert and Assistant Fire Chief Michael Mriss gave a presentation on the department's idea of a new training tower in the borough.

Steve asked council to consider funding their request due to having a training tower previously. That tower became unsafe and had to be torn down a few years ago. They were given permission to use the old sewer plant until that became unsafe. Now they have nothing.

Steve said the ISO (Insurance Service Organization Rating) awards points for training facilities. They set the fire insurance rates nationwide and part of their requirements in their evaluation is that we have some buildings to train in to be sure we are providing real life training to our firefighters. Unfortunately, we just received our rating which is done once every 10 years and we do not have any kind of training facility to show them so we will not be getting any points there. Just like the borough, we want to give the best savings to our citizens here in town and do everything possible, if we can financially, to pass the savings on to the citizens here in town. We are missing 3 key components – pulling charged hoses through upper floor windows, entering/exiting windows with ladders and removing victims from upper stories and windows. These are vital goals of our strategic plan and we planned to have this by 2025. The NFTA has informed us they are coming out with new standards and because of this it is going to cause the overall cost to go up for a training facility. These new standards are to go in place in October 2021.

There are 15 members on the committee. They have looked at several facilities and asked other departments what they use the most or would have done differently in building their facility to better design our facility. We are looking at a 3-story structure with a second-floor burn room providing us with the ability to train effectively in the missing components of our ISO rating. The final estimated cost would be \$318,649.70 with a 15-year warranty.

Councilor Perry asked if the department pays a fee to train at other facilities and was told yes. The fee is based on what kind of training is being done. Lisa then asked if we could rent out the proposed tower to generate some income. Steve said we could but it

would require an onsite state certified facilitator to be present during the rental but it would be up to council.

Councilor Perry asked about the training facility that is planned to be put up in Nesquehoning. She wanted to know if that facility will have the same features. Steve said they will have some of the same features. However, they recommend that all of our firefighters have 16 hours of training per month. We try to do that on our Monday trainings and have between 12 and 15 hours a month. To ask our member to use the one proposed is asking a lot. We do 3-4 hours on a Monday from start to finish. To use the proposed facility, you are adding wear and tare on the apparatus, extra fuel and time to get to the facility and back, on top of the training time. You won't get the same kind of training plus we would need to have Franklin or Mahoning cover the borough while we are gone.

Assistant Mriss said they have around 20-30 members attending their weekly training session. The proposed facility in Nesquehoning will be more for state certified classroom training, certification training and things like that more so than weekly training.

Councilor Perry asked if they had a specific location in mind for the facility. Steve said that borough council had given the department the land at the old sewer plant and is hoping that will be feasible to use for the new tower. He believes that was a motion by council many years ago. If the geo surveys from the old sewer plant are still good that would be a big cost savings to the project. Solicitor Nanovic said he does not believe that project has been closed out yet.

Councilors Saunders/Perry made the motions to have the Finance and Administration Committee meet to see if the funds are available for the project and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Hearing of Persons Present

None.

Approval of Minutes

Regular Meeting of August 3, 2020

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

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion & Update on Light & Power dump truck

Kim said Nicole had signed the approved P.O. but Kovatch said it was never received by their company. Lonny checked into things and received this new quote.

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

Motion to approve the Holiday Decorating Contest – awards to include 6 commercial credits of \$100 and 10 residential credits of \$25 (Commercial Contest to be administered by MSSC and Council to judge residential the week of December 21st)

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

Motion to approve Payment #7 in the amount of \$55,045.24 for the Lehighon Area Memorial Library Project

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

Consideration to grant permission to Zion Church to close section of Iron Street from Center Alley to Second Street

Councilors Saunders/Abelovsky made the motions to approve the street closure and fire police assistance and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to approve Resolution R25-2020 requesting DCED Multimodal Fund Grant in the amount of \$818,921 to create safe pedestrian connections and calm motorist traffic along Waterfront

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

Motion to approve the Funding Commitment Letter for DCED Multimodal Grant in the amount of \$15,676

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

Motion to approve the 2021 Uniform Minimum Municipal Obligation in the amount of \$205,457.00

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

Motion to approve the 2021 Non-Uniform Minimum Municipal Obligation in the amount of \$213,314.00

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

Motion to advertise the 2021 Garbage Contract

Brenda went over Solicitor Nanovic's comments with council and they agreed on the necessary changes to be made in the contract.

Councilor Saunders/Abelovsky made the motions to advertise with Attorney Nanovic's changes and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to advertise the Fireworks Ordinance

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

Motion to sign the 2020 CDBG Application

Councilors Arner/Rehrig made the motion to advertise the application and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Approval of Lioness Application to hold Pink Light Walk October 6, 2020

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

Discussion on Landscaper Proposal & Maintenance Plan

Councilor Perry asked if the cost was for twice a year or each time. Kim said for twice a year. Councilor Saunders asked if that included the flower beds and Kim said it was only for the Lower Park. Council thought it was too expensive.

Councilors Rehrig/Perry made the motions to table this item until March/April meeting and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Discussion on the need for a replacement roof at Engine Company #1

Council thought this definitely needs to be addressed. Councilor Rehrig said there has been some damage to the social club that has damaged some of the improvements they had recently made. The bids were all over \$21,000 and will need to go out for bid. Councilor Rehrig asked if the budget can absorb something like this and was told no. It has been repaired for now.

Councilors Saunders/Abelovsky made the motions to table this item until the October meeting after the Finance & Administration meet with the Treasurer to see if there is funding and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Discussion on Trick or Treat

Councilors Saunders/Arner made the motions to allow Trick-or-Treat October 28th from 6-8pm and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Discussion on request from the Recreation Director for a new pavilion at the pool

Tom said he and the Pool Pals would like to have another pavilion at the pool behind the green slides. The Pool Pals will pay for it.

Councilors Arner/Saunders made the motions to allow the Pool Pals to pay for the requested pavilion at the pool and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Unfinished Business

Continued discussion for Safe School Awareness and Plan

Councilor Abelovsky said the plan is still on hold. They did prep for the 2020/2021 school year with the idea that most of the borough residents will be walking due to not having transportation this year. Steve Ebbert from the LASD, Chief Biechy, the mayor and myself met and came up with 3 walking routes within town and recommended the children use these to walk to and from school. We had a test run with school officials and students to determine how long to have the crossing guards out for. She was pleasantly surprised the walks were under an hour. There will be a few changes as to where the crossing guards are because of more walkers in the afternoon than mornings. Chief Biechy is in contact with the school regarding any issues with traffic patterns.

Consideration on the EEC Proposal for the Annex Control Unit

Tom said he has no control with the heating or air conditioning. The total savings will probably be around \$1,500/month. That is not counting the cost of the pumps which

are running continuously right now. The price of a pump will cost \$2,500 to replace and we can't control the water temperature especially going into winter. Councilor Perry asked if we have enough in the budget to cover it now and Tom said he believes under "maintenance agreements" we do.

Tom said we are holding back \$1,300-\$1,500 from the contractor because the tower isn't working right. The company is not getting back to us so we are holding money back for that project.

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

Continued discussion on Live Streaming meetings

Councilors Abelovsky/Perry made the motions to not live stream meetings and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Officials' Reports

Borough Manager

Nicole is on maternity leave. Councilors Saunders/Abelovsky told Kim she is doing a wonderful job so far.

Borough Engineer

Nothing.

Police

Nothing. President Hunsicker asked why we are spending so many hours out of the borough. Councilor Abelovsky said she thinks a few months ago we did have a discussion about outgoing mutual aide being excessive. She said the mayor had taken care of it then and now it is becoming an issue again. Mayor Ritter said he had a discussion with Chief Biechy a while back but if they need help, they need help.

Councilor Rehrig said that is true but each time our police leave the borough it is leaving the borough unprotected. Clark said we have overlapping schedules to help cover the borough. Autumn said she understands the concept but said Weissport only has a part-time officer. She asked if the borough covers Weissport when their officer is not working and was told no, the state police cover Weissport then.

Councilor Abelovsky said we should respond when needed but wonders if the other municipalities are starting to rely on us more and more.

Mayor

Clark said the Trailhead problem is being addressed with numerous checks down there on each shift. He has directed the department to use Vascar on Mahoning Street for speed violations in the school zone. They will be cited for speeding and not given a warning. He had complaints about the stop sign at 12th Street with people not stopping. It always seems to happen at shift change. He will have the department keep an eye out there as well.

Clark said they have had a request to start a Crime Watch program. He has had 2 meetings with the group from South 2nd Street who complained about the fireworks. They are anxious to get this going. Councilor Rehrig also attended one of the meetings and suggested advertising the fact the group is starting and anyone interested should contact the borough so the entire town gets involved. COVID is limiting the number that can attend but he thinks there are a lot more people that will be interested in the program.

Clark thanked Public Works for moving the glass cases from the Annex with all the Pfc. Clyde Houser memorabilia. The items are being stored at Legion Post 314. He also reported on the arrest of a juvenile in relation to the shattered basketball backboard at the Grove. A hearing is pending. Tom said the damage was \$1,300. Clark said he would like things like this in the media to bring attention to issues the police are addressing.

Autumn said there are still 6 more showcases at the Houser Building filled with memorabilia that need a home, plus the mule and canal boat. She wondered if they could be stored in the basement. Tom said no, it's full. He thinks the mule should go to the museum in Allentown. Autumn asked if we owned the mule or not. Grant said the mule was given to the borough. Autumn believes the person who painted the mule bought it and she doesn't want to move it without knowing the owner is ok with it.

Autumn also addressed the proposed Crime Watch and asked if there was criteria for being a member and are we allowing minors to be part of that. Donnie said he doesn't think there was in the past but Clark is doing things differently. He said there needs to be structure but it was always citizens becoming involved in watching what goes on in their neighborhood. That is how the Grove was cleaned up years ago.

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 was absent. Donnie 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. Ryan said everyone is aware we have removed the picnic tables at the trailhead. He feels the billboard of the train station should be moved to the backside of the pavilion making the inside of the pavilion more visible. Grant said he is not sure it can be moved. Council suggested Ryan go down there with Kris and see what can be done if anything and asked Ryan to report back to council next month.

Library Board – Autumn had nothing.

Parks & Recreation – Autumn had nothing.

School Board – Autumn had nothing.

Canal Commission – Ryan had nothing.

Acceptance of Officials Report

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

Approval of Accounts Payable

Councilors Arner/Abelovsky made the motions to approve the accounts payable plus \$10,297.69 additional bills and all were in favor with no questions or objections

ADDENDUM

Discussion on Crossing Guard Clearances

Councilor Abelovsky said when they realized there were going to be walking routes instead of bus routes, they felt more crossing guards might be needed. Advertising is ongoing but no applicants. All the required clearances add up to \$65 – \$75 depending on what it is and a lot of money for some who have been interested in the position.

Autumn said she is suggesting that if these applicants come from the school district or George's Busing, due to most of these employees being laid off, that we use the clearances they already have. The employers would need to send the borough a copy of the current clearances and as they are reputable employers, she feels comfortable in allowing potential crossing guards with current clearances from these 2 employers be hired. Council agreed. Autumn also brought to light that we do not require clearances to be redone. The school requires a new clearance every 3 years, even for PTO members. She is not sure about George's. She feels that we should have them updated for the borough as well.

Councilors Saunders/Perry made the motions to accept clearances from reputable businesses whether it is the school district or bus company as long as it is within a 2-year time period and relevant to make them acceptable to the borough and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Councilor Abelovsky/Rehrig made the motions to have our current crossing guards update their clearances every 3 years and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Discussion on Bruce's update on CDBG

Kim said the bids were opened on August 13th but they were too high. Bruce reduced the scope of work and is waiting for John Davis at PennDOT to approve the project in case we need to use any Liquid Fuels funding. She said it will be rebid but is not sure when.

Motion to approve the additional bills totaling \$10,297.69

This item was approved with the Account Payable.

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

Councilors Arner/Perry made the motions to go into Executive Session at 8:55 PM and all were in favor.

Motion to go back into Regular Session

Councilors Saunders/Perry made the motions to go back into regular session at 9:05 pm.

Motion on items from Executive Session

Councilors Perry/Abelovsky made the motions to hire Stacey Smith as a crossing guard pending passing the pre-employment process and having a meeting with Chief Biechy prior to her start date and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Councilors Perry/Saunders made the motions to advertise for the part-time public works position and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to adjourn

Councilors Saunders/Rehrig made the motions to adjourn at 9:06 pm and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Brenda L. Kreitz
Borough Secretary