

**Penbrook Borough
Caucus Meeting
Minutes
February 20, 2024
6:30 PM**

1. Call to order and roll call: President Deardorff called the public meeting to order at 6:30 pm. All members present. Council members Stokes arrived at 6:41 pm.
2. Citizen Comments on Agenda Items – N/A
3. Discussion and Action Items
 - A. Troy Kieser from DCED presented to Council on the Strategic Management Planning Program. Discussion of this will be on future Caucus agenda items. Kieser will forward to the manager a template for a request for proposals. This is a matching grant program designed to allow the Borough to partner with a professional organization to identify and plan for the future of the community.
 - B. Solicitor Kern provided Council with a draft of the offer letter and job description for the temporary/part-time public works position. Shaw made a motion to approve the documents and Newcomer seconded. Unanimous.
 - C. Solicitor Kern provided Council with a draft of the field use agreement between the Borough and the Harrisburg Area Police Athletic League. The HAPAL wants to use the large ball field at Community Park. Questions from Council members included use of the water, which is turned off and the insurance amounts listed. Hogarth explained the current situation with the water service. Kern believes the insurance amounts are standard but if the HAPAL cannot meet that coverage that will be a decision for Council at a later date. Stokes wants to have a meeting with the 3 organizations wanting to use the field so everyone is on the same page with what can be used when.
 - D. Similar to action item C, the Solicitor provided Council with a draft agreement for the Wilhelm Paxtang Association for use of CP. This is a recurring agreement that needs to be extended. There were no questions and this and the agreement with HAPAL will appear on the March Council agenda for action.
 - E. Hogarth presented Council with a supplemental 457 retirement plan that would be available on a voluntary basis for all borough employees. The plan is offered through the Englebert Financial Advisors Group in Allentown. The Group also manages the 457 fund for Susquehanna Twp and many other PA

- municipalities. Hogarth asked Council to consider approving the plan as well as funding the plan until it's established at a cost of approximately \$1,000.00 per year. Armbruster was opposed to providing any supplemental retirement plan to the employees. Hogarth pointed out that borough employee wages, particularly the police, are not competitive with surrounding municipalities and in spite of this, employees stay. Hogarth believes offering the plan will add another low-cost benefit to the employees.
- F. Kern distributed the draft of the Quality-of-Life Ordinance and asked for feedback. All areas of the IPMC must be included in the ordinance. Armbruster asked about the "private advertising". Kern said the best example would be junk mail. Armbruster pointed out that the vegetation/plant growth should read eight inches not six. Armbruster asked about water diversion and mentioned properties on Parkway Blvd. A concern was brought up about sump pumps discharging into our storm water system. Hogarth said he and Rettew had researched that, and it is allowed by our current ordinances but Hogarth couldn't remember specifically which. (note: 226-1301(D)(5)). A discussion was had regarding the effective date if adopted. Kern suggested a period of public education and offered June considering the timeline to advertise and hold a public meeting. An action item to advertise the draft ordinance will be on the March Council agenda.
- G. Council discussed the rental and buyer inspection programs which are currently suspended by a unanimous vote of Council after staff and third-party changes. Buyer inspections remain suspended. Several Council members agree that the rental inspection program needs to be enforced again. Hogarth said the current program needs evaluated to allow staff to successfully administer the program. Burdine, the Codes Committee Chair, will set up a meeting to discuss the proposed changes with staff members.
- H. Kern distributed the latest draft of the comprehensive employee policy manual and noted that the policy required by Benecon regarding benefit eligibility was added. Kern also reviewed the FMLA requirements and explained why the Borough isn't subject to that Act. There were no further suggested changes by Council. The policy draft will be part of the March Council agenda for adoption.
- I. Deardorff and Newcomer wanted Council to consider each members goals, objectives and priorities for the future. Each member was given an opportunity, but common issues included borough parks, relevant and updated ordinances, rental property management and enforcement and sustaining revenues by means other than property tax increases.

4. Citizen Comments – N/A
5. Council Comments – N/A
6. The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Hogarth
Borough Secretary