

Penbrook Borough Council Meeting Minutes
February 5, 2024

1. Call to order
 - A. On February 5, 2024 President Deardorff called the Borough Council to order at 6:30 pm followed by a salute to the flag and a prayer by Pastor Mark Halliday.
 - B. Roll call was performed and all elected officials were present along with Solicitor Kern and Manager Hogarth.
2. Police Officer Recognition and Awards were presented by Chief Hogarth
3. Citizen comments on agenda items: N/A
4. Consent Agenda
 - A. Shaw asked that item C be removed from the consent agenda for discussion. The approval of minutes and the Treasurer's Report and Resolution 2024-8 remained. Armbruster made a motion to approve items A, B and D on the consent agenda. Seconded by Burdine. The motion carried unanimously.
 - B. Shaw asked if the insurance company had reimbursed the borough for repairs made to one of the police vehicles that was damaged by a driver of a stolen car. Hogarth said the insurance payment was received. Nothing further. Armbruster made a motion to pay the bills. Seconded by Dry and carried unanimously.
5. Reports
 - A. The Mayor provided Council with the January 2024 Police report.
 - B. Manager
 - i. There are two action items under new business that will need Council consideration. One is a decision where to invest general and sewer fund money within PLGIT considering the current interest rates. The other is action to approve Rettew to advertise the bid documents for the Thomas Street sewer line replacement subsidized in part by a CDBG grant.

ii. Hogarth briefed council on the Little Valley Park project. The light pole has been received and will be installed as the weather permits. Once grading and seeding is done Phase I will be ready for DCNR inspection. Hogarth is working with H.E. Black to start Phases II and III.

C. Solicitor

- i. Council was sent the two proposed employee agreements for the positions of Police Chief and Borough Manager. There are action items under new business for these proposals.
- ii. Solicitor Kern is prepared to brief and advise Council regarding the part-time temporary employee proposal for snow plow duties considering the soon to be long term absence of Shaun Trude due to military orders.
- iii. Solicitor Kern is being kept in the loop and working behind the scenes regarding the SALDO applications.

D. STEMS – No report

E. Fire Chief – Deardorff read the monthly stats and also noted the FD received a 30k grant to be used for the live-in program and a 14k grant for the engine debt reduction.

F. Committees

- i. Codes – Deardorff reviewed the codes and property maint. Stats were sent to all of Council via email.
- ii. Public Safety – EMC Bloss read the monthly report and reviewed the incident regarding the commercial roof at 127 S 28th St. The February Council representatives are Moore, Stokes and Shaw.
- iii. Parks and Property –
 - a. The committee will begin planning for the Summer Program later this month.
 - b. Newcomer reviewed the Little Valley Park project.

iv. Public Works – N. Shaw reviewed the monthly activities performed by the public works staff and provided a recap of the committee meeting held in January.

v. Personnel – No report

vi. Community and Government – Moore will be coordinating a regularly scheduled sub-committee meeting starting the second Tuesday in February.

vii. Budget – No report

viii. Authority – The SWA will be reviewing data provided by Rettew which may allow a fee change for pervious versus impervious surface of parcels. Officers were nominated at January's meeting and there were no changes from previous positions. There were two delinquent accounts presented by property owners with action by the Authority on both requests.

ix. Planning Commission –

- a. There are petition signature sheets being presented to all eligible voters of the borough regarding alcohol licensing questions that would appear on the November ballot. 103 signatures are needed to proceed with the referendum.
- b. The SALDO applicant from 650 S 28th had a zoning hearing and was granted partial relief. They are to present additional information regarding the application to the planning commission at this month's meeting. That information as well as the Commission's recommendations will be presented to Council. The Commission has heard complaints from residents in the area regarding the parking when the funeral home has a funeral.
- c. The applicant for 2701 Herr is disputing zoning requirements for their application and has engaged McNees Wallace to assert their position rather than going through the ZHB.

6. New Business

- A. Hogarth briefed Council on PLGIT's current interest rates. Council had been investing one million from the general fund and one million from the sewer fund in PLGIT's 90-day Term Plan but that plan currently has a lower interest rate than the PLGIT Prime account which is where the money usually sits. Hogarth wanted Council's decision on how to proceed. Motion to leave in the Prime account from Dry second Armbruster. Carried unanimously.
- B. A motion is needed to approve the advertisement of a Request for Proposal to replace the sewer line underneath Thomas St as well as manhole #D158. This project is funded mostly by a CDBG grant. Motion to approve by Stokes and seconded by Burdine. Carried unanimously.
- C. A motion is needed to approve the employee agreement with Joseph Hogarth for the position of Borough Manager. Armbruster made a motion to approve and Dry seconded. Carried unanimously.
- D. A motion is needed to approve the employee agreement with Joseph Hogarth for the position of Police Chief. Armbruster made a motion to approve and Burdine Seconded. Carried unanimously.
- E. A discussion and if necessary, action on employment agreements for part-time temporary workers for plowing snow. Kern advised Council that she recommends, rather than an employee agreement, creating a job description for general purposes and then an offer letter to specific persons they want to do the job. Council agreed and Kern will have a draft for the February Caucus meeting.

7. Visitors to be heard –

- A. Clyde Bateman, 2615 Boas thanked the borough staff for filling in the pothole near his house and made complaints about the trash service not taking his woody waste material.
- B. Mark Halliday 2733 Canby asked in reference to the referendum question to appear on the ballot if signatures have to be from borough residents. Deardorff advised they do and those residents have to be eligible to vote.

8. Council comments

- A. Burdine commented that he has received concerns from some renters fearing retaliation for making complaints about living conditions that are not being addressed by the property owner. Deardorff responded by saying he wants to have a discussion about rental inspections started back up on the February Caucus agenda.
- B. Armbruster noted that Friday was the last day for newsletter submissions.
- C. Newcomer would like to have an agenda item to discuss borough-wide goals and objective so everyone can get on the same page with priorities both long and short term.
- D. Moore asked where her phone number is published that it be her public number not private. She also asked about training and how those classes are paid for. Hogarth said there is a line item in the General Fund for training that has been used for elected officials, but it may need adjusted and should be discussed in this year's budget meetings.
- E. Shaw wanted to thank Jim Armbruster and Fred Pace for donating funds to help pay for the police officer's awards that were presented this evening. He also wanted to thank the public works staff for their efforts during the last snow event.

9. President Deardorff is requesting an Executive Session to discuss a personnel issue. The public meeting was adjourned at 8:03 pm. The Exec Session was called to order at 8:06 pm and adjourned at 8:57 pm.

Respectfully submitted and attested,

Joseph Hogarth
Borough Manager and Municipal Secretary