

SAXONBURG BOROUGH
Meeting Minutes
July 21, 2020

President Weinzierl called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

Roll Call Scott Herbst, Dave Felsing, Pat Rinebolt, Sherry Weinzierl, Carol Neubert, June Crawford, and Mayor Gillespie were present.

Josh Novotny was absent.

Also in attendance were Mary Papik/Manager, Sean Gallagher/Solicitor, Chief Joseph Beachem, Peter Watt, Bob Makowski, Rep. Marci Mustello.

Correspondence

- On July 14, the Borough received a resignation letter via email from Lee Anne Pennington for her post on the Planning Commission due to her move to Pittsburgh.

Executive Session Announcement Under the terms of Act 84, Section 8A, subsection 1, Council would meet in Executive Session just prior to adjournment, to discuss employee and contract matters. After the Executive Session, Council will reassemble in open meeting and take any actions that are required.

Minutes Motion was made and seconded by Dave Felsing/Carol Neubert to approve the minutes of June 16, 2020. The motion carried.

Public Comments None

Mayor William Gillespie Jr.

- The Mayor informed the Council that the police and the Friends of the Saxonburg Police are continuing the meal deliveries to local folks in need, and are even looking to expand the organizing by adding a subcommittee.
- The Mayor said the Saxonburg Police will have the second part of their tactical training coming up on August 22 at Makowski's. This is in addition to their weekly training session. They would like to continue tactical training on a quarterly basis. The training has been paid for by the Friends of the Saxonburg Police.
- Sister Cities, in conjunction with Sprankle's, is planning an Oktoberfest celebration on September 26 in the grocery store parking lot. They'd like to make this a Borough-wide event, if possible, and plan to sell tickets in 2-hour blocks to maintain social distancing. There is interest in possibly having a parade that would start around 10:30 a.m. while the Oktoberfest will begin at noon and run through 10 p.m. The Saxonburg Rotary Club would like to sponsor and run the parade. The Mayor has a meeting set up this Friday with Sprankle's to work out further details.

Chief of Police Joseph Beachem

- Chief Beachem discussed the need for the police training that the Mayor mentioned. He said that he and the police lieutenant train weekly at Makowski's Martial Arts and Fitness and have been doing so for a year and a half. He said failure to train is typically the biggest liability in many police departments, which is why he and the lieutenant began to organize department trainings that they hope to continue on a quarterly basis. As of now, half of the officers have completed the defensive techniques training at Makowski's and the other half will attend on August 22nd. This training aids officers in decision-making

and appropriate use of force. The Chief said that in his 26 years' experience, this is the best training he's been to and that Makowski's does an excellent job. He called upon Bob Makowski to discuss the training in more detail.

- Mr. Makowski described Krav Maga, saying it comes from the Israeli Defense Forces. It takes the best techniques from all styles of martial arts and blends them together. He said the training taken by the police department is as much de-escalation as it is proper use of force, proper techniques medically, tactically, and legally. Officers are then better able to avoid a problem, think clearly, and know how to deal with a problem because they do it routinely. He said that lack of training is what causes the problems seen on the news at night. As primary instructors, his and his son's training is ongoing, including police academy training. Makowski's offers two law enforcement classes each week.
- The Council thanked Mr. Makowski for his time and for his work with the Saxonburg Police.
- The Mayor said the most important thing is that our officers return home after each shift in the same shape they arrived in. He reminded the Council that Saxonburg once lost an officer to a hand-to-hand fight, which we never want to happen again. He said Saxonburg is very fortunate to have the police department we have, the leadership in it, and the officers' desire to learn to do the job as professionally as they can.
- The Mayor said they will look to organize another Citizen's Police Academy and include with it some self-defense.

Manager

Mary Papik

Motion was made and seconded by Dave Felsing/Carol Neubert to accept the resignation of Lee Ann Pennington from the Planning Commission, with regrets. The motion carried.

Motion was made and seconded by Dave Felsing/Carol Neubert to send road closures to PennDOT if the Oktoberfest celebration and parade should happen on September 26 as planned. The motion carried.

Bills

Motion was made and seconded by Scott Herbst/Carol Neubert to approve the bills as presented: \$57,247.81 in checks paid from the Borough's General Fund, of which \$38,853.10 is the Borough's portion of the expense and \$18,394.71 the Authority's portion of the expense. In addition, decrease adjustments in June from the Borough General Fund in the amount of \$75,109.08 of which \$26,076.54 was the Borough's portion of the expense and \$49,032.54 was the Authority's portion of the expense, and payroll for June 2020 in the amount of \$76,070.13 of which \$28,331.50 is the Borough's portion of the expense and \$47,738.63 is the Authority's portion of the expense. The motion carried, with Dave Felsing and Pat Rinebolt abstaining.

Cost Estimates for Storm Water Line Replacement on Isabella

- Mary discussed the details of the meeting held with Mr. Etzel in early July, at which Mayor Gillespie and Scott Herbst, both engineers themselves, were in attendance. She pointed Council to the map and cost estimate she'd handed out. She explained that the pond at Isabella and Water Streets would be drained and an on-lot storm water facility will be created as part of the construction of Mr. Etzel's new building and parking lot. To accomplish this, Mr. Etzel needs the existing catch-basin and pipe structure to be changed somewhat and the storm water will then be diverted into a pipeline that Mr. Etzel is installing. The costs involved in the catch basin work are approximately \$5,700 before labor. Mr. Etzel is asking the Borough for assistance for getting the catch basin

and pipe corrected. He will stave off the water for the work to be done. He has his DEP permitting to fill in the pond completed.

- Mayor Gillespie said Mr. Etzel's plans to put a warehouse or showroom in place of the pond would help the Etzel business, and anything the Borough can do to aid that tax growth would be a benefit to the Borough. He reminded Council that the storm water drainage from that area benefits the Borough but does not directly benefit Mr. Etzel.
- Mary estimated the labor costs if the Borough undertook the project to be around \$2,000 in addition to the original estimate of \$5,700. She said the Borough's budget has earmarked \$16,000 in storm water funding which is available for such a project as this.

Motion was made and seconded by Dave Felsing/Scott Herbst to authorize a committee made of up Scott Herbst, Mayor Gillespie, and Mary Papik, to further discuss the project with Mr. Etzel, and allot up to \$8,000 to get the project started. The motion carried, with Carol Neubert and June Crawford voting Nay.

Ordinance Discussion

- Mary discussed the Ordinance Committee's decision to update the "Chicken Ordinance" to allow up to a total of twelve birds, i.e. chickens or ducks, in any combination not to exceed twelve so long as they are females only. The current limit is 4 chickens only. Mary explained the research behind this decision, so that egg-layers are added in pairs and retired out every few years.
- Council felt that twelve birds is too many and reduced the number to 6 chickens and ducks in any combination so long as they are all female, keeping the proper housing and storage of food.

Motion was made and seconded by Scott Herbst/June Crawford to increase the current Ordinance to 6 total birds, chickens or ducks, females only, and to send that language to the Solicitor. The motion carried.

Illegal Firework Activity in the Borough

- Scott Herbst described the seeming increase in personal fireworks lately, not sparklers but the kind that shoot up into the air and come down possibly on someone else's property, roofs, or trees. These fireworks contain metals and other chemicals that are toxic to humans and pets, and this has been an exceptionally dry year. Scott said he's even been awoken by fireworks at 2 a.m. Chief and Officer Stiles took care of it, but he's concerned and wondering if other Councilmembers are experiencing the same trouble.
- Pat Rinebolt discussed the noise in her neighborhood due to someone's personal fireworks the previous night but said that it ended quickly. The noise may even have come from Jefferson since she lives so close to the border.
- Dave Felsing agreed he's heard fireworks but couldn't say if they were in Clinton Township or not.
- Mary reminded the Council that there is no noise ordinance in the Borough. The State has made fireworks legal, but the Borough could possibly limit the times they're permitted to be set off. She said the Solicitor could also look into any other restrictions that might be made if the Council should want. Or, she said, we could ask [Rep.] Marci [Mustello], who was in attendance and said she's in the process of looking up information that she'll send to Mary.
- Sherry Weinzierl reminded Council that fireworks are not permitted in the Park.
- Chief Beachem provided a handout and reminded the Council that fireworks are not permitted within 150 of any occupied structure, which would rule out most places in the Borough.
- June Crawford said her building doesn't allow fireworks but will allow sparklers. She also said they have mandated quiet hours between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m.

Fire Hall Construction Sign

- Mary explained that the Fire Department is considering purchasing the lighted sign they've had out advertising the Sports Fest. Currently they rent the sign. They are asking the Council's permission to purchase the sign because currently the Ordinance says such a sign can be temporary (used up to 30 days only) but not permanent. If Council were amenable, the Fire Hall would purchase the sign and allow the Borough to use it to advertise other events.
- Pat Rinebolt said lighted and flashing signs can be a distraction to drivers, similar to a sign she's seen in Lower Burrell.
- Mary said Saxonburg's historic district has specification on signage, so likely the sign would still not be permitted there.
- The Solicitor advised that changes to the Sign Ordinance would require specific language on the locations, esthetics, and dimensions, but not the messages on the signs themselves.

Motion was made and seconded by Carol Neubert/Dave Felsing to let the Fire Department know the Borough would seek to include the sign in future Ordinance work if the sign is purchased, but that the Fire Department would also need to honor future restrictions, if any. The motion carried.

Cooper Hall Event Update

- Mary directed Council to a handout with the Governor's updated COVID-19 restrictions which are specific to hosted/rental events while still permitting the events to take place. Additionally, Mary directed the Council to the list of events that have cancelled due to COVID-19, and the remaining 6 events that are scheduled for the Park and Cooper Hall whose renters are eager to hear if they can hold their events. The remaining events are weddings and the brides are anxious to hear if they can hold their events or not.
- Solicitor Gallagher ensured that the Borough is able to continue to rent Roebling Park and Cooper Hall so long as renters adhere to the Governor's and/or Dr. Rachel Levine's COVID-19 restrictions in place at the time of the event.

Solicitor Solicitor Sean Gallagher
Solicitor Gallagher had no further report at this time.

Old Business None

New Business None

Executive Session The meeting recessed at 8:44 p.m. to go into Executive Session to discuss legal matters.

The meeting reconvened at 9:00 p.m. with no further business.

Adjournment The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 18, 2020 at 7 p.m.

Jody Brown
Secretary