

The regular meeting of the Borough Council of the Borough of Sinking Spring was called to order on Thursday, November 2, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. at the Sinking Spring Borough Hall by President James Pachuillo. After the Pledge to the Flag, Elizabeth Eagelman called the roll reflecting the following Council Members present:

James Pachuillo
T.J. Huckleberry (Absent)
H. David Miller
Denise Stine
Lisa Gantner
Tracy Peterson
Brian Hoffa (Absent)

Other officials present were: Mayor Gary Cirulli; Charles Haws, Borough Solicitor; Robert Ludgate Sr., Ludgate Engineering; Brad Smith, ARRO Consulting; Michael Hart, Borough Manager; Bryce Zohner, Public Works Director; Police Chief Lee Schweyer, and Elizabeth Eagelman, Borough Secretary, who recorded the minutes of the proceeding.

Mr. Pachuillo requested a moment of silence to honor our first responders, Police, Fire Fighters, EMS and our Armed Forces who protect us every day here and abroad.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Pachuillo asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the October 5, 2017 Council Meeting and the October 25, 2017 Workshop Meeting. Mrs. Peterson made the motion to approve the minutes; seconded by Mrs. Gantner. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0, ABSENT – 2. Motion carried.

VISITORS/PUBLIC COMMENT:

There were no visitors.

CORRESPONDENCE:

There was no correspondence.

APPROVAL OF THE BILLS:

Mr. Pachuillo asked for a motion to approve the bills for October 2017. Mrs. Stine made a motion to approve the bills, seconded by Mrs. Peterson. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0, ABSENT – 2. Motion carried.

WESTERN BERKS FIRE DEPARTMENT:

Mr. Renshaw mentioned that the call volume for October was a lot slower than it has been but the activity picked up because it was Fire Prevention Month and they did a lot of school and group visits. He stated that they would like to host another Town Hall Meeting and have it here at the Borough Hall after the new year. He stated that he will work with Mr. Hart to see when the room is available.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Mr. Pachuillo stated that the first item is to Ratify the purchase of the Backhoe because last meetings motion basically just covered the down payment. Mrs. Peterson made a motion to authorize the purchase of the Backhoe through a five (5) year Lease and put \$10,000.00 down; seconded by Mrs. Gantner. AYES – 4, NAYS – 1 (Mrs. Stine), ABSENT – 2. Motion carried.

Mr. Pachuillo stated that the next item is the 2018 Meeting Dates. He stated that they discussed moving the February Workshop meeting. Mrs. Eageman mentioned that February 21st is ok for the Workshop Meeting. Mr. Pachuillo mentioned that we have to have the January meeting on Tuesday, January 2nd because of the Reorganization. Mr. Pachuillo asked for a motion to advertise the 2018 Meeting Dates and to adopt the Resolution. Mr. Miller made the motion; seconded by Mrs. Stine. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0, ABSENT – 2. Motion carried.

BUDGETS:

Mr. Pachuillo stated that the next item is the 2018 Budgets. Mr. Hart mentioned that he sent them out hoping everyone would have a chance to review them. He stated that the individual tax rates are changing but the overall total percentage will stay the same.

Mr. Hart went over the Fire/Ambulance Budget for 2018. He stated that the only thing that changed is the charges for the communications from the County which went up 18%. He stated that the Fire tax rate will be .73 mills and the Ambulance Tax rate will be .30 mills. Mrs. Stine made a motion to advertise the Fire/Ambulance Budget for 2018; seconded by Mrs. Peterson. AYES – 4, ABSTAIN – 1 (Mr. Miller); NAYS – 0, ABSENT – 2. Motion carried.

Mrs. Stine stated that there are no increases for the Sewer Budget for 2018 and that it is staying pretty much the same. Mr. Hart mentioned that they did include the fourth person for the plant under the salaries even though they have not filled the position yet. Mrs. Stine made a motion to advertise the Sewer Budget for 2018; seconded by Mrs. Gantner. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0, ABSENT – 2. Motion carried.

Mr. Hart went over the General Budget for 2018. He mentioned that he did a lot of restructuring and found alternate ways to funds some of the items. He stated that if Council approves, we can use some of the Capital Fund money to fund some of the expenses and Liquid Fuels money to fund others.

BUDGETS:

He stated that he would like to use the Capital Fund to pay for the Financial Study that we are having done, the replacement of office and police computers, the installation of a Tracs Computer system for the police vehicles and the payoff of the Pedestrian Safety loan. He stated that the total amount would be about \$104,000.00. He stated that he would like to use Liquid Fuels Funds to pay for the Backhoe Lease, the Traffic Signal expenses and the street lighting. He stated that the total amount would also be about \$104,000.00. He stated that if Council agrees to using these other funding sources then we can balance the budget as submitted. Discussion ensued. Mrs. Peterson stated that Mr. Hart did a phenomenal job figuring out where we can move things from. She stated that the Admin committee is for the proposed budget and not having a tax increase. Discussion ensued concerning the cost of street projects.

Mr. Hart mentioned that there is a slight increase in the General Fund Millage but it is part of the adjustment with the Fire and Ambulance. He stated that he is proposing to lower the Fire Tax from .82 to .73 and to lower the Ambulance Tax from .31 to .30 since there is a surplus in both those funds. He stated that the General Fund would then increase from 6.86 to 6.96 so the total base millage will still be 7.99.

Mrs. Stine asked if the additional full-time Police Officer is in the budget. Mr. Hart stated that it is not and that we would have to raise the tax rate at least .50 mill just to cover their salary and benefits. Discussion ensued concerning the need for an additional officer.

Mrs. Peterson made a motion to advertise the General Fund Budget for 2018; seconded by Mrs. Gantner. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0, ABSENT – 2. Motion carried.

Mr. Haws asked if Council will be having their November Workshop Meeting. Mr. Pachuillo stated that we will have to see if we can get a quorum. Mr. Miller and Mrs. Stine both will not be able to make the Workshop meeting. Mr. Pachuillo asked that an e-mail be sent out to see who all would be able to attend. Mr. Haws stated that he will have everything ready for the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

There was no new business.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Mr. Pachuillo asked for a motion to accept the Treasures Report as written. Mrs. Stine made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as written; seconded by Mrs. Peterson. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0, ABSENT – 2. Motion carried.

POLICE CHIEF LEE SCHWEYER:

Chief Schweyer mentioned that he got Officer Oxenreider, who is our detective, cross designed as a County Detective. He stated that this will allow him to continue an investigation, that started in the Borough, anywhere in the county.

ROBERT LUDGATE SR. – BOROUGH ENGINEER

Mr. Ludgate mentioned that the Plans for the Columbia/Cacoosing intersection were submitted to PennDOT on November 1st. He stated that he has requested a meeting on or around the 15th to review it with PennDOT. He stated that this is a step in the process of obtaining the permit and that there are three steps remaining which are the Storm Water Design, a right-of-way plan, and a very detailed traffic management plan. He stated that he has submitted to PennDOT a tentative schedule calling for taking bids in January, awarding a contract by the first of March and have construction substantially completed by the end of September. He mentioned that there are two additional grants that we are expecting, one is for Storm Water and the other is for the Green Light Go Project.

BRYCE ZOHNER – PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR:

Mr. Zohner mentioned that they have been talking about doing a stream buffer on the Borough Property along Reedy Road. He stated that he has been working with the Berks County Conservation District and they were looking for avenues for us to acquire the trees and create a community outreach program to do so. He stated that we got 400 trees from PP&L which is part of their Community Roots Program. He mentioned that there is a contract from an organization called Stroud Water Research Center. He stated that they are donating all of the tree tubes and all of the materials to plant the trees and along with that they ask that we sign this contract stating that we agree to mow around the trees and take care of them. He stated that the Conservation District has agreed to assist with pesticide application and assist with paperwork and replace if needed. He stated that he believes it will be good for the ecosystem out there and that we can use this area to go towards our MS4 projects down the road. He also mentioned that the Conservation District wants to organize a Community Clean up this Spring where volunteers come out and clean up trash and plant trees. He stated that he will have Mr. Haws look over the contract before he signs it and asked if Council would approve moving forward with this project. Mrs. Stine made a motion to approve Mr. Zohner to move forward with the project contingent on Mr. Haws's approval of the contract; seconded by Mrs. Gantner. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0, ABSENT – 2. Motion carried.

SEWER ENGINEER – ARRO CONSULTING – ALEX MORRISON:

Mr. Smith called attention to item 4 on his report in regards to the Solids Handling Project. He stated that the Sewer Committee did meet before tonight's meeting and that he will be issuing an interim report on the technology tested so far. He mentioned that we are going to go back to aerating the digesters again and see how that does to improve the dewatering of the solids.

MICHAEL HART – BOROUGH MANAGER:

Mr. Hart reported that the Joint Comprehensive Plan is moving ahead. He stated that they have three (3) meetings left and that is it coming down to the final stages. He mentioned that there is a questionnaire for everyone to complete and submit and that it is on the Borough Web Site.

Mr. Hart stated that we are going to have to act on the \$2.1 million loan. He stated that the draw down time ends on December 1st and there is a remaining balance to draw down of approximately \$850,000.00. He stated that we are going to need those funds so he would like approval to pull it out and put it in a separate account for the Columbia/Cacoosing/Penn Construction. Mrs. Peterson made a motion to authorize drawing down the remaining balance and placing it in a separate account; seconded by Mrs. Gantner. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0, ABSENT – 2. Motion carried.

JAMES PACHUILO – COUNCIL PRESIDENT:

Mr. Pachuillo wished everyone good luck in the upcoming election on Tuesday.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Council went into Executive Session at 8:00 p.m. for personnel issues.

RECONVENE:

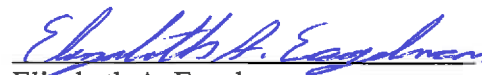
Council reconvened at 8:15 p.m.

Mrs. Stine made a motion to authorize Chief Schweyer and Mayor Cirulli, if they see fit after their meeting with Mr. Nicholas Concordia tomorrow, to bring him back to work; seconded by Mrs. Gantner. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0, ABSENT – 2. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mrs. Peterson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Elizabeth A. Eagelman
Borough Secretary