MINUTES

NOVEMBER 3, 2011

The regular meeting of the Borough Council of the Borough of Sinking Spring was called to order on Thursday, November 3, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. at the Sinking Spring Borough Hall by President Stewart Wenrich. After the Pledge to the Flag, Regina Shade called the roll reflecting the following Council Members present:

Stewart Wenrich
Edward Oswald (absent)
George Butkus
Elizabeth Sloan (absent)
Gary Cirulli
James Pachuilo
Denise Stine

Other officials present were: Mayor Francis Butkus, Keith Mooney, Borough Solicitor, Robert Ludgate, Sr., Ludgate Engineering, David M. Schlott, Jr., ARRO Consulting, Michael Hart, Public Works Director, Officer in Charge, Lee Schweyer, and Regina Shade who recorded the minutes of the proceeding.

Mr. Wenrich requested a moment of silence for the men and women in our armed forces, police officers, and firefighters. In addition, he asked that everyone keep our former “Mayor” Clarence J. Noecker in your thoughts and prayers.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mrs. Stine made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from 09/28/11, 10/6/11 and 10/26/11 seconded by Mr. Cirulli. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0, ABSENT -2 (Ms. Sloan and Mr. Oswald); motion carried.

VISITORS:

There were no visitors.

COMMUNICATIONS:

There were no communications.

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Mr. Pachuilo made a motion to pay the bills; seconded by Mrs. Stine. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0, ABSENT – 2; motion carried.

WESTERN BERKS FIRE DEPARTMENT:

Mr. Weidner was unable to be at the meeting. Their monthly report is in the binder.
MILLER ENVIRONMENTAL:

Mr. Peter Juzyk gave the report for October, 2011. Mr. Juzyk stated we had less rain that month than we did in September which was a good thing. The influent loading data is within design limits. During the month they drained oxidation ditch #2 and replaced the rubber squeegees on clarifier #1. They have continued the chemical application for phosphorus removal during October. The results to date, we have averaged 1.2 mg/l which is well within what our permit limit will be. The repairs were complete to the Chevy pick-up truck and it is now back in service. They continue to train the new employees while looking for a replacement for Mr. Justin Kennedy’s position.

REVITALIZATION:

Mr. Ludgate said the planters are moving forward. Alcon Foundation has furnished an $8,000.00 grant to BOSS 2020. That grant was used to hire an architect to provide a conceptual plan of the downtown. That plan has been worked on and is almost completed or is as complete as it can be for now. They then met with the Alcon people and they were happy with the plan. They are interested in providing more financial assistance. The other important issue was that Mr. Ludgate had attended a Reading Area Transportation Study (RATS) meeting that day. He had been working with a lot of people on a lot of different ideas. He brought to the table an idea of using 50% federal funding and 50% private enterprise. He was pleased to report that the PENNDOT official at the meeting “took up the idea” and has promised to have a meeting in Harrisburg to explore it more thoroughly. It falls in line with the desire to see private enterprise contribute and help to achieve transportation improvements. He feels private enterprise should split the cost 50/50 with the government. We have a long way to go to achieve that. Mr. Ludgate explained how long the delays would be come over the next years if nothing is done. It would become gridlock. It was agreed it is a terrible intersection and that something needs to be done about it.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

The first item was the establishment of budget meeting dates. Mr. Pachulio stated that our assessed value is dropping. Mr. Mooney said we have a draft budget. What he suggested is that they authorize him and Mrs. Shade to take the steps necessary to open the draft budget for public inspection. It has to be open for ten (10) days before we can vote on it. You can continue to work on it. If you want to think on voting on it at the December meeting you need to set a date at least that would open it. Mr. Pachulio made a motion to authorize Mr. Mooney and Mrs. Shade to start the ball rolling on advertising the budgets; seconded by Mr. Cirulli. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0, ABSENT – 2; motion carried. Mr. Butkus explained about a huge increase in the sewer budget for I&I correction. Mr. Mooney said we are going to need to get a proposed tax ordinance together also. You can adjust the tax rate down after it is advertised however you can’t adjust it upward without having to re-advertise. Mr. Pachulio suggested using the extra 1.25 mils and then we can cut through the budget. Mrs. Stine felt it was a wise decision as we need to get it moving and if we can come down all the better. Mr. Pachulio questioned if there were road projects figured into the budget to which Mr. Hart said no, only patching. Mr. Pachulio said we did nothing major this year. Mr. Wenrich said not to pick on the police department but we replaced a car; we had to replace and order some new pistols; additional safety equipment. We advertise for a 1.25 general fund; no sewer increase; .02 for fire, and .01 for ambulance. Mr. Butkus made a motion to authorize Mrs.
UNFINISHED BUSINESS (cont’d):

Shade to contact Spring Township and try to get a confirmation on whether they will be increasing the cost of the yard waste site fees for 2012; seconded by Mr. Pachuilo. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0, ABSENT – 2; motion carried. Mr. Mooney will prepare the resolution for the increase of $25 per household for the trash collection. Mr. Pachuilo made a motion to advertise the proposed budget and to advertise the tax ordinance at an increase of 1.25 mils which will bring the new rate to 5.19 mils for the general fund and for .01 increase for ambulance, and an increase of .02 for fire and no rate change for sewer; seconded by Mrs. Stine. Mr. Butkus questioned what the new rates will be for fire and sewer. Mrs. Shade stated fire will be .87 mils and ambulance will be .26 mils. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0, ABSENT – 2; motion carried. Mr. Butkus said everyone can now look at the budget. Mr. Mooney said for those that want copies, the ad will probably be run next Wednesday as Tuesday is election day and the Borough Hall office will be closed. So they will be available for pick up and inspection on Wednesday. The first budget meeting day would be November 22, 2011. We will also set up a meeting for December 14th if needed. The last meeting will be December 28th to pay the bills. The proposal meeting for the sewer treatment plant is next Tuesday and the proposals are due at the Borough Hall on Thursday the 17th.

The next item is the Ag Ordinance. Mr. Mooney distributed what the Planning Commission gave him along with the area Mr. Hart gave him and he put it into a workable overlay district for Council’s review. He said we can vote on it at the next meeting. We can cover this at the November 22nd meeting.

EIT Ordinance was next on the agenda. It was advertised according to the law. It was advertised three (3) times. It can be adopted that evening. This was the combined EIT collection ordinance. They are standardizing the collector all through the County. Berks Earned Income Tax Bureau will collect it for the County. Mr. Butkus made a motion to pass the Ordinance; seconded by Mr. Pachuilo. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0, ABSENT – 2; motion carried.

The electrical contract was next. Mr. Hart said our current contract is set to expire on December 4th. Our new contract will begin at that time. It took a lot of research but we got a great rate, Mr. Hart reported. Under our old supplier our base kilowatt hour could be anywhere from .1015 to .1169. There were four (4) rates. The new rate and we are locked into a three (3) year contract is .074. There is an estimated savings of over $100,000.00 over the next three (3) years. A brief discussion ensued as to how the electrical contract could affect the RFP for the running of the plant. Mr. Mooney said unless we are going to pay the electric bill, we will need to let it be known that there was a decrease the electric rate and that should be reflected in the RFP we would get back. Mr. Schlott can inform them at the pre-bid meeting what the rate should be for electric. Mr. Butkus made a motion to authorize Mr. Hart to move forward with the paperwork locking in the rate at .074 kilowatt hour; seconded by Mr. Cirulli. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0, ABSENT – 2; motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mrs. Stine handed out some papers from Technicon Enterprises. It was discussed at the budget meeting. This was for the rental inspection program, code enforcement, and zoning. She feels it is a good program. She asked them for this information so they have something to compare.
NEW BUSINESS (cont’d):

She went on to say in Mr. Hart’s proposal he spoke of hiring someone. She said if we can farm this out and make some money on it, we will be ahead of the deal. She wanted a comparison. Mrs. Stine stated they use them at Caenearvon Township as well as some other local municipalities. The owner, Jeff Curlin will be more than happy and come speak to Council. Mr. Hart said you are talking about four (4) different items; code enforcement, zoning, rental inspections, and building permits. Mr. Pachuilo said they will talk to Mr. Hart. Mrs. Stine stated if we bring the sewer department back in house, they want him to be on sewer and on streets. She said if you have all these things on your plate, you can’t possibly do them all perfectly. She feels it is worth looking at. Mr. Hart stated code enforcement consumes a large amount of time. The other one that could hog up a lot of time would be the rental inspections. Building permits do not take up a lot of time. He went on to say that the zoning goes hand in hand with the building permits. With that you will need to have a certified building code official as well. There are a whole lot of things that will need to be looked at, Mr. Hart said.

Mr. Hart stated the employee who requested the time off for the baby at Thanksgiving has gone “fast pace”. The baby was born on October 31, 2011. He is using his six (6) weeks now. This is going to mess up the schedule. The gentleman that he was going to use was in the process of getting his business in line so he could come in and work for us after Thanksgiving. He is not available at the present time. With the weekend snow, we had a lot of tree damage at the playground. The big maple tree right at the dumpster as you entered the playground split. One third of it fell and the rest will need to be removed. He will need to rent an aerial lift to get him up there to cut it around the power line for the overhead light. Mr. Butkus made a motion to expend the funds necessary to rent a bucket truck; seconded by Mrs. Stine. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0, ABSENT – 2; motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Council went into executive session at 8:05 p.m. for a personnel matter.

RECONVENE:

Council reconvened at 8:15 p.m. No action was taken.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There were no public comments.

POLICE DEPARTMENT – OIC SCHWEYER:

OIC Schweyer said they received a donation the day prior from MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Drivers) for an Alco Sensor Device. They are very grateful for the donation. A letter of thanks will be sent. The radios were next. A decision needs to be made that evening. Mr. Butkus made a motion to go with the tentative “go big” list which includes one (1) base station. The amount will be charging us $12,078.73 for seven (7) years at a no interest loan provided by the County; seconded by Mr. Cirulli. This is only tentative. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0, ABSENT 0 2;
POLICE DEPARTMENT – OIC SCHWEYER (cont’d):

motion carried. The final answer for all of this will probably be needed by March of 2012. Mr. Cirulli wanted the public to know that we are not just buying radios for the sake of buying radios. We are being federally mandated to purchase them.

LIBRARY – DENISE STINE:

The library has questioned Mrs. Stine again about moving their money. Mr. Butkus said as long as they can meet the statutorily requirements he sees no problem. Mr. Wenrich told her to tell them we are looking into it.

SEWER ENGINEER – DAVID M. SCHLOTT, JR.– ARRO COUNSULTING:

Mr. Schlott stated Council received a copy of his report. He informed Council that the RFP for contract ops was handed out.

BOROUGH ENGINEER – ROBERT LUDGATE, SR – LUDGATE ENGINEERING:

Mr. Ludgate stated that perhaps by the next meeting we might have a safer intersection at Mt. Home and Columbia. They should be putting an all way stop there. Next spring then the maintenance people should apply skid resistant asphalt paving in. That should make that intersection a lot safer.

TREASURER REPORT:

General Account
Opening Balance – September 30, 2011  $346,239.35
PLGIT  9,113.33
Invest  Recreation  40,168.07
General  64,215.19
Deposits as of October 31, 2011  82,253.55
Checks Written  182,175.04
Payroll  68,031.85
PENNVEST Auto Debit  2,576.47
To Be Paid  40,790.96
Balance as of November 3, 2011  $248,415.17

Sewer Account
Opening Balance – September 30, 2011  $345,170.10
PLGIT  61,393.68
Invest  322,417.83
Deposits as of October 30, 2011  114,072.24
Checks Written  90,154.57
Auto Debit National Penn  19,308.91
TREASURER REPORT (cont’d):

To Be Paid 
\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Balance as of November 3, 2011} \\
\text{58,329.85} \\
\text{$675,260.52}
\end{array}
\]

Mr. Butkus made a motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report; seconded by Mrs. Stine. 
AYES – 5, NAYS – 0, ABSENT - 2; motion carried.

Mr. Wenrich urged everyone to get out and vote. He was happy to see new faces out in the crowd. A Meet the Candidate night was held earlier and no one came out. The only way John Q. Public is going to understand the workings of this Borough would be to attend the meetings; then read the minutes. The truth can’t be learned by gossip and hearsay. Council is not here to spend; they are to be care takers of the Borough. He wants to make sure the Borough remains cost friendly. They will make mistakes but they are going to try and limit those mistakes. Each and every Councilperson have families and bills but the responsibility comes back to the people’s vote.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Butkus made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]
Regina M. Shade
Borough Secretary/Treasurer