

December 4, 2013

The Special Meeting of the Lehighon Borough Council was held in the Municipal Building on Wednesday, December 4, 2013. The meeting was called to order at 9:15 a.m. by President Grant Hunsicker. Members in attendance were: Bessie Bauchspies, John Kreitz, John Bird, Darryl Arner and Scott Rehrig.

Officials in attendance were: Borough Manager Nicole Beckett and Borough Secretary Brenda Koons. Absent: Councilors George Kogut.

Hearing of persons Present

Steve Holland of 113 South 7th Street came to the meeting to let council know that Jeff Smith in the Public Works department saw his mother-in-law fall and went out of his way to help her. Mr. Holland is very grateful and wanted council to know that a small town really works!

Motion to adopt the 2014 Proposed Budget

Motion to advertise the 2014 Tax Levy Ordinance at ____ mills

Motion to adopt Resolution R-025-2013 appointing liaison between Berkheimer and Borough

Councilors Rehrig/Kreitz made the motions to appoint and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to adopt Resolution R-026-2013 Appointing Berkheimer as collector of LST

Councilors Kreitz/Bauchspies made the motions to appoint and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to adopt resolution R-027-2013 Appointing Berkheimer as Tax Hearing Officer

Councilors Kreitz/Arner made the motions to appoint and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to adopt Resolution R-028-2013 Approving and adopting costs of collection schedule for delinquent taxes

Councilors Bauchspies/Kreitz made the motions to approve and adopt and all were in favor with no questions or objections

Motion to advertise ordinance declaring and acknowledging Colonel Jacob Weiss and Upper Park as borough Property

This item was tabled.

Approval of restricted Annex elevator use to handicapped and senior citizens due to high costs

Solicitor Nanovic said this cannot be done. We can however, ask for cooperation and encourage using the stairs.

Councilor Rehrig said that he was at the Annex with Tom last night and the Annex is in a state of flux. Heat and electric are being wasted and it doesn't seem like it has been cleaned in the last 5 years. The light crew should get in there immediately and take the spot lights out of the foyers and the decks. The heat has to be corrected. His real question is, we have borough employees go in the building, why didn't they say anything? How can we have

a building unsupervised for 5 years? We have to learn how to spread salt correctly. We have piles at the Rec Center and the Annex. If they don't have a little pride then they should come before us and we will tell them where they are going to go.

Nicole said they have come in and saying the air conditioning is on and we have adjusted it. It has been looked into.

Councilor Rehrig said he has seen the karate school using part of the building they are not paying for and is in favor of kicking them out. They are using the auditorium. Nicole asked how they got in there and Scott said they must have the code.

Nicole went into the budget items of concern. The fund balances are decreasing as the years go on. She moved some General Fund expenses into Highway Aid to try and reduce the necessary tax increase. She gave a list of the paving projects being considered. She is recommending a rate study be done in 2014 for residential and commercial along with any projected increases in the future.

She moved some utility expenses for electric from the General Fund to L&P to reduce the General Fund by \$20,000. All departments were within budget in 2013. She did not include any capital projects that were in the budget.

Council discussed many items on the spreadsheets provided. Research on the \$48,000 for General Fund/Recreation needs to be researched to find out why this money was budgeted in this way. Equipment must be replaced by the mileage of the vehicle not the year. Our departments have too many employees with less work getting done.

Nicole said that since she has been here 2 mills have been added for the Fire Station Project and no other mills were put on except for a ¼ mill in 2011.

On another note, Nicole said the 9th Street traffic light study came in yesterday saying a traffic light is not warranted. That will be something to look at in the future if council still feels the need for one there.

The other thing is health care. This was extended until 2015 but eventually any part time employee working over 30 hours a week will be entitled to health care.

Council discussed eliminating employees, disbanding the police department and out sourcing the electric department and contracting out the snow removal and grass cutting as some possibilities.

Nicole asked if she is to make cuts; what is she cutting? A person? Council said well we will not replace the officer that just resigned. Councilor Rehrig said we have survived with and without a police chief. Should we hire one; it doesn't have to be at the salary of the past chief. There should be a contract for 6 months where this new person shows us what they can do or they are done. Scott doesn't have a problem hiring from within the department. He does have a problem with them coming in here and we listen to what they are going to do and then they do nothing like last time and then we keep them on as chief. We have to be forceful and if you're not producing you're done. You don't keep the chief's job for the next 50 year until you retire.

Councilor Kreitz asked how do we put that into a contract? We need to hold them to the fire. The employees have been getting away with too much for too long and that is failure on our part by not getting the job done.

Nicole asked council what they wanted her to do. They said they think we could do with 1 less person in each department. Councilor Rehrig used the example of "Pete" being on public works punching in at 8 a.m. and punching out at 4:30 p.m. He eats a couple of donuts and 4 cups of coffee, works 5 hours a day and produces. Is there anybody at this table that can openly admit they know that? Scott can't. He has seen 1 guy with a shovel, another in the truck eating a sandwich and another smoking a cigarette while sitting on the wall when they were supposed to be working at the Rec Center. Councilor Kreitz said he saw 2 sitting in the truck the other day. How much is this costing us in an hour?

Nicole asked if she was to get the budget to a zero increase and if so we need another meeting. Councilor Kreitz said he isn't against raising taxes if he can justify there is a reason to do it. Nicole said had council raised taxes $\frac{1}{4}$ mill over the past years there would not be this problem now. Councilor Rehrig admitted Nicole was right and they didn't listen.

Council decided to hold another special meeting on December 9th at 9:15.
Motion to Adjourn the Meeting

Councilors Rehrig/Arner made the motions to adjourn at 10:48 a.m. and all were in favor.

Brenda L. Koons
Borough Secretary