

October 26, 2015

The regular meeting of Lehighon Borough Council was held in the municipal building on Monday, October 26, 2015. The meeting was called to order at 7 PM by President Grant Hunsicker. Members in attendance were: Helen Torok, Joe Flickinger, John Kreitz, Bessie Bauchspies, Darryl Arner, Scott Rehrig and Jr. Councilor Addison Howland.

Officials in attendance were: Solicitor James Nanovic, Borough Manager Nicole Beckett, Borough Secretary Brenda Koons, Borough Engineer Bruce Steigerwalt, Mayor Tom Mase and Fire Chief Patrick Mriss. Absent: Police Chief Brian Biechy.

Pledge of Allegiance

Trick-or-Treat Night - Will be Saturday, October 31st 6-8 p.m. - Due to the heavy rain expected on Wednesday.

2nd Public Hearing -- CDBG

GUEST SPEAKER - Ryan Saunders, Lehighon Downtown Initiative

Ryan wanted to let council know that LDI would like to try doing a Betterment/Beautification project in the Downtown. They are thinking of painting the parking meters in the school colors. They thought maybe silver poles with maroon meters. LDI will do the work and will pull the weeds, etc. Ryan wanted to thank the borough for painting the curbing and the parking space lines.

Councilor Rehrig asked LDI to give council time to think about the idea and what would be involved and thanked Ryan for showing interest in the borough. President Hunsicker said the borough has to be sure the meters do not need to be replaced prior to the project starting. Councilor Torok said the fire hydrants could also be painted like was done in Harrisburg. She hoped that might be a long range project to be looked at. Nicole thanked him for having the group look at the whole picture and not just planning events. Grant suggested that if they like the idea of painting the fire hydrants to check with the water authority for approval prior to doing that project.

HEARING OF PERSONS PRESENT

Tarone Blocker of Blocker Collision on North 7th Street said he was not prepared at last month's meeting and is present now that he is more prepared. Over the last 10 years of doing towing in the borough, 20% went to AAA and 10% was the people's choice. He spoke to the Jim Thorpe Police who said 20% of towing goes to AAA but they don't wait with a DUI. The state police call him 3 - 4 times a month so there is definitely a problem in the borough. If someone wants AAA that is fine with Mr. Blocker. But he feels there is a problem. He has been in business over 40 years and has 7 employees who rely on towing jobs to help keep the business going. He did a \$1,400 repair for one of the police cars and didn't charge the borough a dime. He doesn't want a pat on the back because as a businessman he knows you need to give back to the community your live and work in. This is why he felt he needed to address this lack of towing job with the borough at a public meeting.

Councilor Arner said he didn't realize all that is involved in towing and feels a local company should get the work. President Hunsicker, Councilors Kreitz and Rehrig agreed. Tarone said he just wants a fair shake and doesn't know what's wrong.

Mayor Mase said he will have the number of vehicle requiring towing and what company towed those vehicles added to the monthly police report starting next month so it is made clear.

Councilor Kreitz asked if this was SOP in the borough. The mayor said that 85% of cars towed are by people requesting a company unless the vehicle has to be moved ASAP. The mayor assured Tarone and council that this will be looked into.

Jared Gard gave council his resume and stated he had recently submitted a job application to the borough. He is a recent graduate of the Southeastern Lineman Training Center and wanted to introduce himself to council.

Mark Hoffman and Mason Strausberger of the Shade Tree Commission addressed council about their project of planting 150 trees for the 150th Celebration of the borough. They showed council a map of the right side of the bypass where they would like to plant a grove of trees to beautify the area and maybe add a few benches and picnic table to make it more inviting upon entering the borough. They are also looking at adding a few near Domino's Pizza. They are planning on planting smaller ones at businesses and larger ones when you start coming down the bypass.

Councilor Rehrig asked if some could be planted near the pavilion. Councilor Flickinger said that area has a large water main that must be considered.

Mr. Hoffman said that Frank Snyder of DCNR is helping them choose the trees that will work best in the different areas. They are looking at Red Maples, London Plains and Dogwoods for the most part. The cost is a factor of the tree is also a factor. We want this project to be cost effective or we won't have anyone wishing to purchase a tree if it is too expensive. Rep. Heffley will loan the commission a backhoe and donate the soil to plant the 150 trees. Mark said they plan to start planting in April 2016. Nicole told him to coordinate with public works and light & power so there are no problems with anything underground or with the maintenance of the trees.

Theresa Chapman of South 7th Street wanted to thank council for the new play equipment at the Grove and to let the police chief and mayor know the police presence in the area of the Grove has been fantastic. It is really helping.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Meeting of September 28, 2015

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

NEW BUSINESS

Motion to adopt resolution R010-2015 designating state aid allocation

Councilors Arner/Bauchspies made the motions to adopt the resolution and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to adopt ordinance prohibiting parking during/after snowstorms

Councilors Rehrig/Flickinger made motions to adopt the ordinance and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to approve list of items to be sold at the Lehigh Valley Municipality/Surplus Equipment Auction

Nicole said the Blazer will be sent to the scarp yard.

Councilors Rehrig/Arner made the motions to approve the list minus the John Deere mower and Blazer and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to have concrete piping removed at the Public Works Garage by November 30th

Councilors Arner/Flickinger made the motions to approve having the piping removed and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to transfer the Wacker RD11A Small Roller and New Holland L785 Skid Steer to the Lehigh Water Authority

President Hunsicker said the Water Authority puts money toward these items so transferring ownership is allowed by law.

Councilors Rehrig/Flickinger made the motions to approve the transfer of ownership to the Water Authority and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion on the request to close Borough Hall on December 24th and December 31st

Councilors Kreitz/Bauchspies made the motions to close Borough Hall on those dates and all were in favor with no question or objections.

Approval of 2014 Utility Write-Offs

Councilors Rehrig/Flickinger made the motions to approve the write-offs and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Discussion/Action on the Caterpillar Purchase Package for the trade of M313D & Purchase of Backhoe Loader, Skid Steer and Asphalt Roller in the amount of \$105,286

Councilors Arner/Torok made the motions to purchase the Caterpillar package with the money taken from the Sewer Reserve Fund and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Discussion on the purchase of the SNOGO Snow Blower for New Caterpillar Loader

Nicole said this item was looked at last year and the price has gone up \$20,000 from last year. Does council want to budget this item for next year or move on it now?

Councilors Rehrig/Kreitz made the motions to purchase at a cost of \$126,467 taken from Capital Reserves and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to hire Claudia Ebbert as a substitute crossing guard pending the pre-employment physical and clearances

Councilor Rehrig requested the chief and mayor meet with her first prior to hiring.

Councilors Bauchspies/Torok made the motions to approve the hire and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to accept Paul Mriss' resignation from Police Civil Service Commission

Councilors Arner/Flickinger made the motions to accept with a letter of appreciation being sent, advertise the position vacancy and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to reclassify Jeffrey Repsher to Apprentice Lineman 1st Year retroactive to July 9, 2015

Councilors Rehrig/Flickinger made the motions to reclassify Mr. Repsher retroactive to July 9th and all were in favor with no further questions and no objections.

Motion to rehire seasonal staff for winter youth program pending receipt of clearances (if not already received – all current employees)

Nicole said the rehires are Regina Marzen, Rick & Robin Rimby.

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

Motion to approve lease for Recreation Center with the Carbon County Area Agency on Aging

Councilors Arner/Rehrig made the motions to approve the lease and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Unfinished Business

Adoption of Ordinance 624–2015 pertaining to the construction and maintenance of sidewalks in the borough

The solicitor said this should still be discussion of the ordinance. Council did not make a decision to proceed with this item last month.

Councilors Rehrig/Flickinger made the motions to table this item again and all were in favor.

Discussion/Action on Sewer Use Ordinance – Tabled

Councilors Rehrig/Flickinger made the motions to table this item as recommended by the borough manager and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Discussion/Action on the Return to Work Program as requested by EMC Insurance

Nicole said the borough would have to find transitional jobs for employees if injured at work. The program is designed to get worker comp claims down and get employees back to work. Solicitor Nanovic suggested a few changes and they were made and now the program is ready to go into place if council so chooses.

Councilors Rehrig/Flickinger made the motions to adopt the Return to Work Program and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Motion to approve installation of fence in Engine Company #2 Bay separating police and fire departments in the amount of \$2,965

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

Officials Reports

Borough Manager

Nicole said leaf pick up will begin October 27th along with crack sealing.

The Lower Park project was to be bid in January but was moved back to December with the awarding of the contract being in January and the work beginning in March.

Public Works is doing work in town with equipment borrowed for Franklin & Mahoning Townships

Councilors Rehrig/Arner made the motions to send a letter of thanks to both townships and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Nicole said she started work on the budget and has met with the department heads.

Borough Engineer

Nothing.

Police

Absent.

Mayor

Mayor Mase said he represented the borough at the breast cancer walk and the Halloween parade. He has noticed that where ever you go in the borough lately work is being done and thanked council for the changes made recently.

Councilor Rehrig thanked the mayor for also making some good changes within his department and for making things safer in the borough.

Fire Chief

Nothing.

President of Council

Nothing.

Solicitor

Nothing.

Treasurer

Additional list of bills totaling \$8,530.63.

Committee Reports

Finance and Administration – Nothing.

Streets, Buildings and Codes – Nothing.

Police, Fire and Safety – Councilor Rehrig said both departments are doing an excellent job. He wanted to congratulate both departments for their improved performance.

Light & Power Committee – Councilor Torok wanted to thank Lonny for a wonderful open house. Councilors Rehrig/Torok made the motions to send a thank you letter to Lonny and his department.

Sewer Committee – Nothing.

Public Works & Recreation – Councilor Rehrig wanted a letter sent to Tom for doing a good job this past summer. He also wanted a letter sent to Kris at public works for the same.

Councilor Torok suggested a letter be sent to the fire department commending them for dedication.

Councilor Rehrig reminded everyone that the rededication of the Sgt. Stanley Hoffman monument will be held November 7th at 1 p.m.

Acceptance of Officials Reports

Councilors Kreitz/Rehrig made the motions to accept the official's reports as presented and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Acceptance of Accounts Payable

Councilors Arner/Rehrig made the motions to accept the accounts payable as presented and the additional list of bills totaling \$8,530.63 and all were in favor with no questions were objections.

Motion to go into Executive Session for Personnel

Councilors Rehrig/Arner made the motions to go in at 7:55 p.m.

Motion to go back into Regular Session

Councilors Rehrig/Kreitz made the motions to go back in at 8:21 p.m.

Action on items from Executive Session

Councilors Flickinger/Torok made the motions to adopt L&P job descriptions as presented and all were in favor with no questions or objections.

Councilors Rehrig/Flickinger made the motions to transfer Ren Wentz to Lineman Helper in the L&P department and all were in favor with no questions or objections. Ren will give 2 weeks notice to Public Works before starting in the L&P department.

The Borough Secretary reported that the Touchdown Club is seeking approval to hold the bonfire and parade on November 5, 2015. The school district has decided against the fireworks and is considering allowing the bonfire on school property of 902 near Gypsy Hill. The school board will make a decision at their meeting tonight. The tentative parade route will be the opposite of the regular route and will end at the school entrance off of 902. The club is seeking permission from council to hold the parade and have police and fire police and fire department present for the event once permission is received from the school district.

Councilors Rehrig/ Kreitz made the motions to allow the bonfire and parade pending approval from the Borough Manager, Mayor, Fire Chief and Police Chief and all were in favor with no questions or objections. The Borough Secretary will coordinate things with the Touchdown Club's president Gerry Strubinger.

Motion to Adjourn the Meeting

Councilors Rehrig/Kreitz made the motions to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 PM and all were in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Brenda L. Koons
Borough Secretary