

**BOROUGH OF NORTHAMPTON
REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING
SEPTEMBER 22, 2022**

CALL TO ORDER: A Regular Public Meeting of the Northampton Borough Council was called to order by President Anthony Lopsonzski, Jr. at 7:00 PM on Thursday September 22, 2022. The meeting was held in Council chambers and began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: Council Members present at roll call were: President Anthony Lopsonzski, Jr., Judith Haldeman, Bonnie Almond, Ronald Glassic and Anthony Lopsonzski Sr. Trevor Stone and junior council person Ryleigh Tillotson were absent. Also present were Borough Manager LeRoy Brobst, Mayor Anthony Pristash, Solicitor Chad DeFelice, Sergeant Michael Buchanan and Recording Secretary Meaghan Case.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was made by Councilman Lopsonzski, Sr., duly seconded by Councilwoman Kutzler, and unanimously carried to approve the Minutes of the Public Workshop Meeting held on August 4, 2022, and Regular Public Meeting held on August 18, 2022. Councilman Hall abstained from this motion.

HEARING OF PERSONS PRESENT:

June Whittington, 1369 Newport Avenue, Northampton, was present to complain about a citation she and the property owner, Edward Marakovits received for accumulation of trash/rubbish. She said she is not sure how she got involved in this lawsuit. She stated that the fine they received is significant and no one would be able to pay that amount of money. She stated she did not move into the property until December of 2021. She said she has 25 years of government experience in all positions. She also mentioned that she was recently sick with cancer and that Edward had a heart attack in the beginning of 2022. She stated that Keith Knoblach, code enforcement officer did not explain what was trash and what was not. They were first issued a citation by the borough's code enforcement office in August of 2021. They had their initial hearing at Magistrate Hawke's office in November of 2021 and their county court hearing in August of 2022 which they did not show up for and appealed the citation.

CONSIDER RECERTIFICATION OF NON-UNIFORMED DEFINED CONTRIBUTION PENSION PLAN:

When Mr. Brobst originally prepared the minimum municipal obligation for the non-uniformed defined contribution plan, he inadvertently made a mathematical error. To correct that, he has prepared a new certification for that particular plan.

Motion: A motion was made by Councilman Glassic, duly seconded by Councilwoman Kutzler and unanimously carried to approve the recertification of the Minimum Municipal Obligation (MMO) for the 2023 non-uniformed defined contribution pension plan for the borough of Northampton.

RESOLUTIONS:

RESOLUTION NO. 10-22:

TITLE: A RESOLUTION GRANTING PERMISSION TO SET THE BOROUGH'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE NON-UNIFORMED PENSION PLAN FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023.

Resolution No. 10-22 eliminated the Borough's annual contribution of 7% of gross salary for the non-uniformed defined benefit plan. The state aid is sufficient.

Introduced By: Anthony Lopsonzski, Sr.
Seconded By: Kenneth Hall

Resolution No. 10-22 passed unanimously as written.

RESOLUTION NO. 11-22:

TITLE: A RESOLUTION GRANTING PERMISSION TO SET THE BOROUGH'S CONTRIBUTION RATE TO THE NON-UNIFORMED DEFINED CONTRIBUTION PENSION PLAN FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023.

Resolution No. 11-22 sets the Borough's annual contribution rate at 4% of gross salary for the members of the non-uniformed defined contribution plan. This number is established by the collective bargaining agreement. The ordinance will be amended to reflect this new rate prior to the effective date of January 1, 2023.

Introduced By: Anthony Lopsonzski, Sr.
Seconded By: Bonnie Almond

Resolution No. 11-22 passed unanimously as written.

RESOLUTION NO. 12-22:

TITLE: A RESOLUTION SETTING THE CONTRIBUTION RATE THE POLICE DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES MAKE TO THE POLICE PENSION FUND FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023.

Resolution No. 12-22 sets the Borough contribution to the police pension plan at \$12,881 for fiscal year 2023.

Introduced By: Ronald Glassic
Seconded By: Julia Kutzler

Resolution No. 12-22 passed unanimously as written.
Anthony Lopsonzski, Sr. abstained from this resolution.

RESOLUTION NO. 13-22:

TITLE: AUTHORIZED RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH OF NORTHAMPTON, PA, SEPTEMBER 15, 2022, AUTHORIZING THE SUBMISSION OF A LOCAL SHARE ACCOUNT GRANT APPLICATION FOR ACQUISITION AND INSTALLATION OF VIDEO CAMERAS, MONITOR, AND COMPUTER WITH LARGE STORAGE CAPACITY.

Resolution No. 13-22 authorizes the Borough to pursue the submission for a Local Share Account (LSA) grant of \$24,900 to be used for the purchase and installation of video cameras, monitor and necessary surveillance equipment to protect Borough parks.

Introduced By: Ronald Glassic
Seconded By: Bonnie Almond

Resolution No. 13-22 passed unanimously as written.

Councilwoman Haldeman asked if this grant applies to parks only.

Councilman Glassic asked if this is a matching grant.

Councilman Lopsonzski, Sr. asked if this applies to all parks in the borough.

Mr. Brobst said this is not a matching grant. This grant money will apply to all of the parks and borough buildings adding that the parks are more at risk for vandalism.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

President Lopsonzski, Jr. had nothing to report.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Pristash reported that the Hometown Heroes Banner program is going very well. He said to date he has received 44 request forms. The cut off date for the first round is September 30th so there is enough time to have them made for Veteran's Day.

--He gave a special thank you the Cheryl Pagent of Cub Scout Pack 99 and the children who asked to help with picking weeds throughout the borough. They have recently been doing the weeding at the Uptown Park.

--Prior to the council meeting Mayor Pristash was at a dinner with representatives of Lafarge. He informed everyone that Lafarge will be changing their name to Holcim.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT:

Solicitor DeFelice reported that there was an executive session prior to the council meeting to discuss personnel matters.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES:

Administration and Finance: Councilman Hall reported that we have been notified by the Commonwealth of PA Department of Community and Economic Development that on the 9th of September we received an electronic transfer to our General Fund in the amount of \$518,175.73. This is our second installment of the COVID fund.

--Mr. Brian Welsko began his service to the Borough of Northampton on Tuesday, September 6, 2022, and has already earned the nickname of "Tech boy." His computer knowledge has already proven to be an asset.

--Work will begin on the budget near the end of the month and continue until completion. Meetings will be scheduled to review budget requests from the department heads with the appropriate committee chairperson.

Building, Land and Recreation: Councilwoman Haldeman reported that Mr. Brobst is currently in the process of trying to arrange for the two bands that we normally provide

for the Jack Frost Parade. Council normally has the opportunity to ride in the parade and be recognized as a body. Please notify him if you are interested.

--We had to file a claim with the insurance carrier for two separate incidents: 1) a tree fell on the roof of the Canal Street pavilion. It was quickly cleaned up but the roof sustained some limited damage, and 2) the backflow regulator at the Northampton fire station was not working to its full capability and some water damage was sustained. The insurance adjuster from Philadelphia inspected both sites on Monday, September 12, 2022, and a report is forthcoming.

--A representative of the Verdin Clock Co. did an inspection on the town hall clock. It was determined that it needed a mechanical restoration. A decision is pending.

Code and Police: Councilman Lopsonzski, Sr. reported that the Zoning Hearing Board met on Thursday, September 8, 2022, to hear the appeal of Sean and Roseann Frantz of 1814 Northampton Avenue. Their appeal for a variance on the front yard setback was unanimously granted.

--The Police Department was well represented at the funeral service for former Detective Robert "Whitey" Lindenmoyer. All who knew him mourn his passing.

Fire and Health: Councilwoman Kutzler reported that the Board of Health is scheduled to return from their summer hiatus and hold their first meeting on Tuesday, September 27, 2022, at 7:00 PM. Also, enclosed in your packet is the health officer's report for the month of August.

--Enclosed in your packet is the fire police report for the month of August. As always, they have been extremely busy.

--She reviewed the fire police report for August adding that we need volunteers for the fire police.

Public Works and Sewer: Councilman Glassic reported that wastewater treatment plant superintendent Scott Gillespie has hopefully resolved ongoing problems at the Washington Avenue pump station. It seems ironic that the one facility that was most recently upgraded is giving us the most trouble.

--The storm sewer on Osborne Alley has been successfully installed. Hats off to supervisor Gregory Morey for his ingenious solution.

--In approximately one month, we will begin the shutdown process and winterization of some of the park facilities. The Canal Park will remain available for trail users.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS:

Consider Request of St. Paul's United Church of Christ:

We have received a request from St. Paul's United Church of Christ located at 105 E. 19th Street to temporarily close a one-block portion of E. 19th Street on Sunday, October 20, 2022. They will be holding their annual Community Trunk or Treat celebration from 1-4 PM. The closure would be similar to their summer vacation church school sessions and E. 19th Street would be closed from Ridge Alley to Lincoln Avenue.

Motion: A motion was made by Councilwoman Kutzler, duly seconded by Councilman Hall and unanimously carried to grant the request of St. Paul's United Church of Christ located at 105 E. 19th Street to temporarily close a one-block portion of E. 19th Street from Ridge Alley to Lincoln Avenue on Sunday, October 20, 2022. Councilwoman Almond abstained from this motion.

Councilman Lopsonzski, Sr. asked if they needed the portable restroom. Mr. Brobst said they do not need the portable restroom.

Consider Cost-of-Living Adjustment for Non-Uniformed Retirees:

Mr. Steven Urban, the representative of the non-uniformed defined benefit pension plan, is requesting an actuarial study to determine the feasibility of a 3% cost-of-living adjustment for the current 17 retired employees. Such a cost-of-living has not been granted since 2015.

Motion: A motion was made by Councilman Lopsonzski, Sr. duly seconded by Councilman Glassic and unanimously carried to grant the request of Mr. Steven Urban, the representative of the non-uniformed defined benefit pension plan, to have an actuarial study to determine the feasibility of a 3% cost-of-living adjustment for the current 17 retired employees.

Consider Request of New Journey Community Church:

We have received a request from the New Journey Community Church requesting permission to utilize the Canal Street pavilion on Sunday, September 25, 2022. Their event will go from 12:00 noon until 3:00 PM and they have requested that Council waive the rental fee.

Motion: A motion was made by Councilwoman Kutzler, duly seconded by Councilwoman Almond, and unanimously carried to grant the request of New Journey Community Church to utilize the Canal Street pavilion on Sunday, September 25, 2022, waiving the rental fee.

Councilman Glassic asked if we did away with the waiver of rental fees. Mr. Brobst said no, we will grant the waiver of fees for 501(c)(3) organizations.

Councilman Lopsonzski, Sr. asked if they needed the portable restroom. Mr. Brobst said they do not need the portable restroom.

Consider Request of South Whitehall Township:

South Whitehall Township is requesting the use of our portable band trailer in conjunction with their Community Tree Lighting event. This is scheduled for Saturday, December 3, 2022, from 5:30 PM until 7:00 PM. They also have requested that we waive the fee. They will be required to pay a delivery and removal fee and provide a Certificate of Insurance naming Northampton Borough as additionally insured.

Motion: A motion was made by Councilman Glassic, duly seconded by Councilman Hall, and unanimously carried to grant the request of South Whitehall Township to use our portable band trailer in conjunction with their Community Tree Lighting event on Saturday, December 3, 2022, from 5:30 PM until 7:00 PM, waiving the rental fee.

Councilwoman Kutzler said she thought we were no longer renting out the band trailer. Mr. Brobst said the idea was presented not to rent it out but nothing was officially decided.

Councilwoman Almond asked if we need the band trailer for our tree lighting ceremony. Mr. Brobst said yes, we will have it for our tree lighting on Sunday, November 27, 2022.

Consider Request of Northampton Fire Department:

The Northampton Fire Department is requesting permission to conduct a coin toss on Saturday, October 8, 2022, from 8:00 AM until approximately 2:00 PM. The rain date would be Saturday, October 15, 2022. This will take place at the intersection of 21st and Main Streets.

Motion: A motion was made by Councilwoman Almond, duly seconded by Councilwoman Haldeman, and unanimously carried to grant the request of the Fire Department to conduct a coin toss on Saturday, October 8, 2022, from 8:00 AM until approximately 2:00 PM at the intersection of 21st and Main Streets.

Consider Request of Borough of Coplay Police Department:

We have received a request from Coplay Police Chief Ryan Emerich to have our fire police assist with their annual Halloween Parade on Tuesday, October 18, 2022, with no rain date. We have done this for the last several years and it has always gone well.

Motion: A motion was made by Councilwoman Kutzler, duly seconded by Councilwoman Haldeman, and unanimously carried to grant the request of Coplay

Police Chief Ryan Emerich to have our fire police assist with their annual Halloween Parade on Tuesday, October 18, 2022.

Consider Resignation of Part-Time Police Officer:

Part-time police officer George Walsh has submitted a letter of resignation. We commend him for his many years of exemplary service.

Motion: A motion was made by Councilman Lopsonzski, Sr., duly seconded by Councilman Hall, and unanimously carried to accept the resignation of part-time police officer George Walsh.

Councilwoman Kutzler said that she had the honor of working with him for many years. She accepts his resignation with regret.

Approval to Set Trick or Treat:

Historically, Northampton Borough has held Trick or Treat from 6-8 PM on October 31. This year that is a Monday evening.

Motion: A motion was made by Councilwoman Almond, duly seconded by Councilwoman Haldeman, and unanimously carried to have Trick or Treat in the borough from 6-8 PM on Monday, October 31st.

REPORTS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Kenneth Hall thanked everyone for their support in his mother's passing.

--He asked Chief Kadingo about the possibility of having an officer patrol on 26th Street. He said there are several buses and a mulch truck using it as a cut through. He said they are also speeding.

--He referenced a hole in the street on Howertown Road about 100 yards south of 4th Street. He asked if public works could take a look at it.

--He mentioned a tree that recently broke and a large part came down in front of the pool on Laubach Avenue. He also referenced two additional trees along Laubach Avenue that are an accident waiting to happen. Mr. Brobst and public works are already aware of these trees. Public works will begin the process of removing them as soon as possible.

Judith Haldeman asked about having an "end of season" meeting about the pool. She would like Andrew Laub at the meeting for his feedback and would like suggestions for next year.

Bonnie Almond commented on several dead trees at the Canal Street Park. She asked if public works could take a look and start removing them.

--She said that she recently saw PP&L out replacing light bulbs on the poles.

Julia Kutzler said that she recently met with members of the fire department. She expressed the importance of the fire department needing assistance with funding. She is looking for implementation of a fire tax. After speaking with them, she found that it costs approximately \$6,000 for equipment for just one fire fighter. She said they are professional volunteers and must receive consistent, updated training. She added that volunteers for the fire department and the fire police are at an all-time low. We need to develop an apparatus plan for fire trucks only. In two years, two of their trucks will need to be replaced to be in compliance with state requirements. She said they are looking at approximately \$15,000 for equipment in 2023. Looking at the industry standard, it takes approximately 24 months to produce a fire truck. This fire tax would be strictly for fire trucks only. With a 1 mill fire tax in place for 2023, it would accumulate about \$200,000 per year. The last new fire truck cost about \$1.4 million. This tax would allow the fire department to have a large amount of money “saved” when it’s time to purchase the next fire truck. She said we have to do it now or we will have to do it later. She asked everyone to look into the future five to ten years down the road. She asked everyone to please think about it.

Ronald Glassic expressed his sympathy to Councilman Hall and his entire family for the loss of his mother.

--He gave kudos to Councilwoman Kutzler for her presentation on the possibility of implementing a fire tax. He also met with Fire Chief, Keith Knoblach to get a better understanding of why there is a need for it.

--He confirmed with Mr. Brobst that the departments’ budget “wish lists” are due on September 23rd.

--He referenced a large hole that was made on 10th Street by UGI about four weeks ago. Now residents have to wait another week for work to continue with wiring and an orange fence around it. He said it’s not safe, especially with kids walking by in that area.

--He thanked Mayor Pristash for the update on the Lafarge name change.

--He asked Brian Welsko for an update on the livestreaming service. Brian said he received one quote and was waiting on a few more.

--He suggested that the borough approach all of the surrounding warehouses to ask them for money to help repair our streets since their trucks are driving through the borough. He said they need to contribute.

--He thanked Councilman Hall for reporting the hole in the street on Howertown Road.

--He added that UGI recently resumed working on 10th Street and they have laid a top coat of blacktop and have begun smoothing out several areas.

Anthony Lopsonzski, Sr. gave condolences from his family to Councilman Hall for the passing of his mother. He added that he wished he could hear his mother yell at him just one more time.

--He mentioned a monument that is currently at 25th & Main Street and was supposed to be moved to 24th & Main Street. That monument was placed there by Dragon Cement several

years ago and they were considering moving it closer to the intersection at Main Street and Cherryville Road, however, that project never came to fruition.

--He suggested that we use some of the Covid money for upgrades to our parks. He said the situation at all of the parks is bad adding that Canal Street needs a complete makeover. He again suggested changing out all of the sinks and toilets to stainless steel at every park.

--He said that he heard that the Catasauqua pool may be in the process of closing permanently.

--He agreed with Councilwoman Kutzler and Councilman Glassic that the fire department needs a tax fund. He said it needs to come to life and that it's something necessary for the future. He said this program will lay the foundational groundwork and it will be easier to get loans with significant money in the bank. He said in the long run it will be beneficial for everyone and would cost every property owner approximately \$45 per year.

Councilwoman Kutzler added that in five to ten years the emergency service will be regional and we want all of them headquartered here in the borough.

Councilwoman Almond added that she is on board with the implementation of a fire tax and asked what we have to do next.

Mr. Brobst said the proposed fire tax will be on the next agenda and council will vote on it. He said everyone has two weeks to think about it. If passed, this would be effective January 1, 2023.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mr. Brobst had nothing to report.

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Motion: Councilman Lopsonzski, Sr. moved, seconded by Councilwoman Almond and unanimously carried to pay the bills as listed on A/P Journal #9A, dated September 15, 2022, totaling \$460,493.19.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Councilman Hall, duly seconded by Councilwoman Almond and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Meaghan Case
Recording Secretary