

**BOROUGH OF NORTHAMPTON
REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING
JANUARY 21, 2021**

CALL TO ORDER: A Regular Public Meeting of the Northampton Borough Council was called to order by President Anthony Lopsonzski, Jr. at 7:30 PM on Thursday January 16, 2020. The meeting was held virtually via ZOOM and began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: Council Members present at roll call were: President Anthony Lopsonzski, Jr., Vice-president Keith Piescienski, Anthony Lopsonzski, Sr., Kenneth Hall, Anthony Pristash, Robert McHale, Julia Kutzler and Thomas Gehringer. Also present were Mayor Thomas Reenock, Solicitor Steven Goudsouzian, Borough Manager LeRoy Brobst, Police Chief Bryan Kadingo and recording secretary Meaghan Case.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was made by Anthony Pristash, duly seconded by Robert McHale, and unanimously carried to approve the Minutes of the Public Workshop Meeting held on December 3, 2020 and Regular Public Meeting held on December 17, 2020.

HEARING OF PERSONS PRESENT:
No comments were received from the public.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

President Lopsonzski, Jr. had nothing to report.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Reenock had nothing to report.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT:

Solicitor Goudsouzian had nothing to report.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES:

Administration and Finance: Councilman Hall reported that as of the close of business on January 15, 2021, we have received \$315,699.37 in garbage payments.

--Enclosed in your packet is the fee schedule for Lehigh Engineering that was requested at the last meeting.

--Atlas Museum curator Edward Pany reports the receipt of \$1,000 from Buzzi Unicem USA. As always, he is most grateful.

--Enclosed in your packet is an announcement stating that Tim Tepes will be sworn in as the Greater Lehigh Valley Realtors Board of Directors' president. This will take place on Thursday, January 28, 2021, at 11 AM at 2019 Main Street. Mayor Reenock, Council President and the Borough Manager have been invited to attend.

Building, Land and Recreation: Councilman Pristash reported that we have been notified that the annual AARP tax preparation service will not be held this year due to the pandemic.

--Mr. Brobst asked that Borough Council do some early thinking regarding operating the municipal swimming pool this year. He has spoken with other managers and it is about a 50-50 split whether they are going to open or not. He realizes this is premature and no decision is expected; however, at some point we will need to make a decision.

Code and Police: Councilman Piescienski reported that the River Central Committee met virtually on Tuesday, January 12, 2021. Community Planner Victor Rodite represented the Borough of Northampton. The next meeting will be held virtually on Tuesday, February 9, 2021.

--The response to the rental unit registration has been acceptable.

--Code Officer Keith Knoblach completed a four-day online training session.

Councilman Lopsonzski, Sr. was also in attendance for the training. The subject matter was 2015 International Fire Code Essentials and how to use the code when conducting inspections.

Fire and Health: Councilwoman Kutzler reported that included in your packet is an email that Mr. Brobst received notifying us that government employees and elected officials are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine with phase 1C. Directions are provided to fill out a questionnaire for either St. Luke's or the Lehigh Valley Health Care Network. Once completed, you would be notified when or how to schedule an appointment. This message will be posted on all department bulletin boards.

--Health Officer Ted Veresink has documented whereby restaurant operators can be certified and raise the dining room occupancy from 25 to 50%. This is done through the PA Department of Agriculture website.

--A representative of Pierce Manufacturing has been to our fire station to conduct training on the operation of the new aerial ladder truck. The training has been completed and the truck was put in service on Friday, January 15, 2021.

--Kenneth Hall added that the fire police responded to 250 calls totaling 1,763 hours.

Public Works and Sewer: Councilman McHale reported that a meeting was held this morning at the site of the Dry Run Creek restoration project. Persons in attendance were Michael Schwartz and Ben Kutz of Gilmore & Associates, Public Works Supervisor

Gregory Morey, Public Works Crew Chief Richard Ackerman, committee Council Member Keith Piesciensi and Mr. Brobst.

--Repairs to the sewer line on Doris Street have been completed. The repair was extremely difficult.

--The public works department is turning the page on picking up Christmas trees for the season. If anyone has one, it can be taken to the recycling center on King Street.

--Work began on January 13th at the wastewater treatment plant main pump station. They are slightly behind schedule but should still meet the anticipated time frame. Expected completion is sometime in March.

--He added that Gilmore will start staking out the bank limits for the Dry Run Creek project and they will tag the trees that are to remain. Letters will be sent to all affected property owners. Gilmore will prepare the bid documents.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS:

Consider Resignation of Part-time Police Officer:

We have received a formal notice of resignation from part-time police officer Jake Charles. Chief Bryan Kadingo recommends that we accept his resignation.

Motion: Anthony Lopsonzski, Sr. moved, seconded by Thomas Gehringer and unanimously carried to accept resignation of part-time police officer Jake Charles.

Consider Request to Hire a Part-time Police Officer:

Chief Bryan Kadingo has submitted a request to hire John Shoemaker as a part-time officer for the police department.

Motion: Anthony Pristash moved, seconded by Julia Kutzler and unanimously carried to hire John Shoemaker as a part-time officer for the police department.

Consider Request to Serve on the Police Pension Committee:

Before Detective Glenn Deist retired, he served as the police department pension committee representative. We have received a request from Officer Matthew Bennicoff to fill that void.

Motion: Thomas Gehringer moved, seconded by Kenneth Hall and unanimously carried to have Officer Matthew Bennicoff serve as the police department pension committee representative.

Report on Electricity Contract:

You may recall that some time ago Mr. McHale volunteered to help investigate a new electricity contractor. He had been in contact with Brianna Wright of APPI

an organization recommended by the PA State Association of Boroughs. APPI contacted 40 different vendors in an effort to obtain the best price. That was provided by Freepoint Energy Solutions. At that point, I was in contact with Ms. Wright, a person I have dealt with in the past, and she provided a copy of the agreement. I forwarded it to the solicitor for review and a copy of his response is enclosed. His recommendation was to deal with someone with whom we are comfortable. APPI has handled our last two electricity agreements. I took it upon myself, as I had in the past, to execute the agreement. My failure was to notify Mr. McHale, seemingly to snub his offer of assistance. This was not my intention. I simply wanted to get the matter closed and move on.

Robert McHale expressed his disappointment in not being included on the decision of the electricity contract. He said there should be protocols in place and Borough Council needs to be involved and communication should be open. He said that there was not a request for approval. He said there needs to be more transparency in the future. He said that the contract did not expire until December 1, 2021, adding that we could have possibly saved the taxpayers money. He asked that the Borough code be checked for approvals such as this. He asked that this be added as an agenda item for the next meeting.

Julia Kutzler thanked Robert McHale for his research and input.

REPORTS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Robert McHale congratulated Tim Teppes on his achievement.

--He said that the sewer plant sludge contract ends at the end of April 2021. He would like to see the bid specifications prior to going out for bid and asked that Council receive a copy. Bids will be opened at the first council meeting in April.

--He asked council members for their thoughts on assessing storm water fees. He stated that there are approximately 4,000 parcels in the Borough. He said that the MS4 project will cost about \$400,000 and required a 2 mil increase. He said he spoke with the water authority and they would have no issue with adding it to the water bill. He said it looks like a potential possibility and we could start billing for it soon, possibly by the 2nd quarter of 2021. He said he will contact Gilmore about a mapping system. He added that larger municipalities have storm water fees.

Julia Kutzler thanked Keith Knoblach for the annual fire department report.

--She said that the fire police had 250 calls, totaling 1,763 hours. She thanked Ken Hall and his group for serving.

--She thanked Officer Charles for his service to the Borough.

--She said that the pool should open for the 2021 season. She said they use chemicals for the pool and the staff does a great job keeping the areas clean. She said if the recreation is open the pool should be open.

--**Anthony Lopsonzski, Sr.** asked Mr. Brobst if the Community Center would be an option for giving out COVID vaccines.

--He asked if there has been progress on a junior council representative. He suggested a sophomore or junior.

--He asked about 105/107 Laubach Avenue. He said it's been in disrepair for too long and he would like to see it gone.

--He congratulated Tim Teppes on his certificate of acknowledgement.

--He suggested that the pool open for the 2021 season.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

--Mr. Brobst stated that the Community Center is not currently operating due to state restrictions.

--He asked council to consider adding the Community Center building to the Borough's insurance policy. Their current insurance policy has increased significantly. Saving them money would in turn save the Borough money. He said he met with Brosky Insurance and will meet again with them on Monday, January 25, 2021. He added that the Borough receives 50% of their profits.

Solicitor Goudsouzian asked council to make a motion to have the ordinance making West Alley and Station Alley one-way streets on the next meeting agenda for approval.

Motion: Robert McHale moved, seconded by Julia Kutzler and unanimously carried to have the ordinance making West Alley and Station Alley one-way streets on the next meeting agenda for approval.

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Motion: Mr. Lopsonzski, Sr. moved, seconded by Mr. Pristash and unanimously carried to pay the bills as listed on A/P Journal #1B, dated January 21, 2021, totaling \$288,657.98.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Mr. Piescienski, duly seconded by Mr. Hall and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Meaghan Case
Recording Secretary