

**BOROUGH OF NORTHAMPTON
REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING
MAY 20, 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 May 20, 2021. 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., Vice-president Keith Piescienski, Anthony Lopsonzski, Sr., Anthony Pristash, Julia Kutzler, Kenneth Hall and Thomas Gehringer. Robert McHale was absent. Also present were Mayor Thomas Reenock, Solicitor Brian Panella, 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 Thomas Gehringer, and carried to approve the Minutes of the Public Workshop Meeting held on April 1, 2021 and the Regular Public Meeting held on April 15, 2021.

HEARING OF PERSONS PRESENT:

Jeff Barna, spoke on his mother's behalf of 146 Howertown Road, Northampton, was present to ask council to consider a handicapped space for his mother. He said she applied once before and her request was rejected and she has applied again. He explained she was in poor health and he was looking out for his mother's welfare.

Jason Nelson, 1373 Newport Avenue, Northampton, was present complain about the drug activity he sees in his neighborhood. He stated that he has two young boys and is fairly new to the area. He said his wife grew up in Northampton and he loves the school district, his neighbors and the area. He asked what the borough could do in reference to the drugs in the area and what can be done for properties that have excessive garbage/items outside. He was told that he could file complaints with the code office and also file complaints with the police department.

Donna Moser, 1375 Newport Avenue, Northampton, was present to express the same concerns as Jason Nelson. She also questioned about burning pallets at 1369 Newport Avenue, Northampton. She was told she needs to contact the fire department as it's happening to report it. She also questioned why the cost of plumbing permits are so high. She stated she paid \$130.00 to replace a cast iron sink in her basement.

Holly Diehl, 1367 Newport Avenue, Northampton, was present to complain about her neighbor at 1369 Newport Avenue, Northampton. She said that she moved in January of 2021. She wakes up in the middle of the night to fighting, loud arguments and sometimes construction work. She also complained of dog feces in her yard from her neighbor. She also said that she has called the police on several occasions to report these incidents. She added that her neighbor is putting trash out on her property. She was told contact the code office to report any code violations and to continue calling the police to report necessary incidents.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

President Lopsonzski, Jr. had nothing to report.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Reenock had nothing to report.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT:

Solicitor Panella had nothing to report.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES:

Administration and Finance: Councilman Hall reported that we have received a check from the PA Municipal Health Insurance Cooperative (PMHIC) in the amount of \$103,807.32. This represents 50% of the 2020 surplus distribution. We should receive a similar check later this year.

--Mr. Pany reports receiving a contribution to the Atlas Museum from Linda Reimer Gerber. She was a student of his and saw his presentation as part of the Northampton video. Her brother, Richard, was a long-time Northampton dentist on Washington Avenue.

--We have received the necessary paperwork from Ryleigh Tillotson, a student at Northampton High School, who wishes to serve as a junior council member. She will not be eligible until September of this year. In the meantime, please review her application so that when the time comes to vote, any questions you may have can be addressed.

--Enclosed in your packet is a job description that Mr. Brobst has prepared at the request of Council. Before we add it to our other job descriptions, he would like Council to review it and at some point, discuss it.

Building, Land and Recreation: Councilman Pristash reported that water is being added to the pool this week. The chemicals have been ordered and the pool will open on June 5, 2021, weather permitting. To this point, season passes are lagging far behind normal.

--On June 3, 2021, a groundbreaking ceremony will be held for the D&L Trail connectivity between North Catasauqua and Northampton Boroughs. Due to the COVID restrictions, this will not be a public event.

--The Wheels on the Canal event was a success. Mr. John Graberitz visited our office and spoke very highly of the cooperation he received from Borough officials and staff.

--With the governor's relaxation on the requirement for masks, the recreation center will ask its members when they arrive if they are double inoculated and if so, a mask will not be required.

Code and Police: Councilman Piesciensi reported that enclosed in your packet is the activity report of the code office from the month of April 2021. As you can see, they have been very busy and with the enforcement of weed and grass control beginning May 1, that activity will, no doubt, increase.

The code office staff is now comfortably located in the emergency management office. The transition went relatively smoothly. However, unexpected costs did arise, such as an additional laser printer, an additional networked computer, two telephones and manpower costs.

--Chief Bryan Kadingo is very pleased with the indoctrination process of the newly hired police officers. He said they are a welcome addition to the force.

--Chief Kadingo reports that the fingerprint machine is installed and we are waiting for company training.

Fire and Health: Councilwoman Kutzler reported that enclosed in your packet is a report from the Northampton Fire Department outlining the breakdown of the 44 responses for the month of April.

--Also included in your packet are the minutes from the April 27, 2021 Board of Health meeting and the health officer's report for March and April, 2021.

--The Board of Health is scheduled to meet on Tuesday, May 25, 2021.

--The new aerial ladder truck was involved in an accident while turning the corner at West 17th Street and Newport Avenue. An estimate of approximately \$3,400 for repairs was received and a claim was filed with our insurance carrier.

Public Works and Sewer: Councilman Piesciensi reported that a meeting was held on Wednesday, May 12, 2021, at the wastewater treatment plant with Tom Duffy of Gilmore & Associates, Head Operator Steven Urban, Council Member Robert McHale and Mr. Brobst. We reviewed the process involved updating the main pump station, reviewed the current status and discussed what the Borough's next step might be.

--On Thursday, May 13, 2021, Public Works Supervisor Gregory Morey and I met with four members from UGI. We discussed the condition of the roads and we were assured that this will be addressed. Mr. Morey will do a tour of the area that will be home base for the Street Fair and mark problem areas. Then, UGI will make appropriate repairs to provide a safe walking space for those who attend the event.

--Very soon, we will begin a limited paving program for 2021. Our first job will be Doris Street that was literally destroyed while we had to replace a collapsed sewer line. We have received complaints regarding Kingston Court and we will have to arrange to have our engineer meet us on site so he can provide a professional repair opinion.

--Our CDBG grant for this year provides money to construct handicapped access curbing in the Newport section. This work will also begin as soon as possible.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS:**Presentation by Lafayette College Technical Clinic Team:**

Members of the Lafayette Technical Clinic Team were on hand to make a presentation.

Consider Request of Northampton Area Chamber of Commerce:

Northampton Area Chamber of Commerce is requesting permission to conduct the annual "Uptown" Street Fair on September 11, 2021. This will be held in the same area as their past events. So, they are requesting closure of Main Street from East 17th Street to 21st Street, between 7 AM and 6 PM. They are also requesting use of the portable band trailer and the portable rest room.

Motion: A motion was made by Thomas Gehringer duly seconded by Julia Kutzler and unanimously carried to grant permission to the Northampton Area Chamber of Commerce to conduct the annual "Uptown" Street Fair on September 11, 2021, including the closure of Main Street from East 17th Street to 21st Street, between 7 AM and 6 PM. Also approved is use of the portable band trailer and the portable rest room.

Consider Request of Covenant United Methodist Church of Moore Township:

We have received a request from the Covenant United Methodist Church of Moore Township to use our portable band trailer on Saturday, August 28, 2021, for a Youth Rally and the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference retreat. Their event will go from 9 AM to 7 PM. They will be required to provide a delivery and removal fee and also a Certificate of Insurance naming Northampton Borough as additionally insured.

Motion: A motion was made by Anthony Pristash duly seconded by Kenneth Hall and unanimously carried to grant permission to Covenant United Methodist Church of Moore Township to use our portable band trailer on Saturday, August 28, 2021, for a Youth Rally and the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference retreat.

Consider Request for Handicapped Parking Zone:

We have received a request to create a handicapped parking zone in the area of 146 Howertown Road. Chief Kadingo has reviewed it and rejected the request.

Motion: A motion was made by Anthony Lopsonzski, Sr., duly seconded by Anthony Pristash and unanimously carried to grant permission to create a handicapped parking zone in the area of 146 Howertown Road.

Consider Request for Handicapped Parking Zone:

We have received a request to create a handicapped parking zone in the area of 1258 Main Street. Chief Kadingo has reviewed the request and recommends approval.

Motion: A motion was made by Anthony Pristash duly seconded by Thomas Gehringer and unanimously carried to grant permission to create a handicapped parking zone in the area of 1258 Main Street.

Consider Request of Joint Veterans ' Organizations:

The Northampton Joint Veterans' organizations are asking permission to conduct a memorial tribute on Monday, May 31, 2021, starting at 11 AM at the Northampton Memorial Plaza located at 14th and Washington Avenue. At that time, a rededication ceremony will take place for the 105 mm Howitzer that has found its new home on the Plaza.

Motion: A motion was made by Anthony Lopsonzski, Sr. duly seconded by Keith Piescienski and unanimously carried to grant permission to the Northampton Joint Veterans' organizations to conduct a memorial tribute on Monday, May 31, 2021, starting at 11 AM at the Northampton Memorial Plaza located at 14th and Washington Avenue.

Consider Request of Northampton Fire Department:

We have received a request from the Northampton Fire Department seeking permission to participate in the Diamond Fire Company of Walnutport's 125th Anniversary Parade. The event will be held on Saturday, June 12, 2021. Adequate fire protection will remain in the Borough during this event.

Motion: A motion was made by Julia Kutzler duly seconded by Anthony Pristash and unanimously carried to grant permission to the Northampton Fire Department to participate in the Diamond Fire Company of Walnutport's 125th Anniversary Parade on Saturday, June 12, 2021.

Consider Request of Northampton Fire Department:

The Northampton Fire Department is seeking permission to conduct their 3rd Annual Firefighters Parade on Saturday, July 10, 2021. The parade would begin at approximately 5:30 PM, leaving the fire station and following the route outlined on the map that is provided. This parade will be held in conjunction with Community Days.

Motion: A motion was made by Julia Kutzler duly seconded by Anthony Lopsonzski, Sr. and unanimously carried to grant permission to the Northampton Fire Department to conduct their 3rd Annual Firefighters Parade on Saturday, July 10, 2021.

Consider Resignation of Borough Council Member:

We have received notification from Council Member Thomas Gehringer that it will be necessary for him to resign his position as a Third Ward councilman. He is moving into the First Ward. Council will need to accept his resignation.

Motion: A motion was made by Anthony Pristash duly seconded by Kenneth Hall and carried to accept the resignation of Council Member Thomas Gehringer. Thomas Gehringer abstained from this motion.

Consider Resignation of Planning Commission Member:

On Tuesday, May 11, 2021, we received a notification from Council Member McHale of his official resignation as a member of the Planning Commission effective that date. Council will need to accept his resignation and then we will need to secure a replacement for that position.

Motion: A motion was made by Thomas Gehringer duly seconded by Keith Piescienski and unanimously carried to accept the resignation of Council Member Robert McHale as a member of the Planning Commission effective May 11, 2021.

Consider Resignation of Northampton Borough Municipal Authority Board Member:

In the same light, Council Member McHale will resign his position as a member of the Northampton Borough Municipal Authority Board of Directors effective June 30, 2021. Once his resignation is accepted by Council, we can begin the process to find a replacement.

Motion: A motion was made by Anthony Pristash duly seconded by Julia Kutzler and unanimously carried to accept the resignation of Council Member Robert McHale as a member of the Northampton Borough Municipal Authority Board effective June 30, 2021.

Consider Request for Permission to File for a CDBG Grant:

Community Planner Victor Rodite is in the process of preparing a grant application with Northampton County Department of Community and Economic Development in the amount of \$80,000. This grant would provide assistance to accommodate handicapped persons and to construct a park pavilion and rest room accommodations in the southern end of the Canal Street Park.

Motion: A motion was made by Anthony Pristash duly seconded by Julia Kutzler and unanimously carried to grant permission to Community Planner Victor Rodite to prepare a grant application with Northampton County Department of Community and Economic Development in the amount of \$80,000.

Continue Discussion on Creation of Stormwater Fee:

With three council members missing at the last meeting, discussion on the stormwater fee was tabled. This might be a good time to continue discussion.

Motion: A motion was made by Thomas Gehringer duly seconded by Keith Piescienski and unanimously carried to table the motion until the next council meeting on June 3, 2021.

REPORTS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Kenneth Hall said cars are still flying through Station Alley. He thought it would have slowed down due to the construction in the area, however, they are cutting through side streets dodging the back-ups on Route 329.

--He noted that the grass cutting issue in his area was taken care of.

Keith Piescienski said that UGI has corrected some areas from 18th Street to 21st. He said what they have done so far seems good.

--He noted an area with a large pot hole on 21st Street between Dewey Avenue and Lincoln Avenue.

Anthony Pristash thanked Mr. Brobst and Greg Morey for pushing UGI to have the roads somewhat repaired in time for the street fair on May 22, 2021. He said they have over 80 vendors and beautiful weather is expected.

Julia Kutzler was extremely happy with the 94% compliance rate for rental registrations/inspections.

--She asked that anyone interested in being a board member, come to a council meeting to introduce themselves.

--She asked about the tree being taken down on Osbourne Alley. Mr. Brobst said that Greg Morey said that PP&L has not trimmed the branches around the utility lines. Once they do, public works will take down the tree.

--She thanked Mr. Brobst for the detailed job description he created for the Assistant to the Borough Manager position.

Thomas Gehringer thanked everyone for allowing him to serve on borough council. He also thanked everyone for their kindness.

Anthony Lopsonzski, Sr. informed everyone about a personal medical issue he had. He said it has been addressed and corrected. He thanked everyone for caring and reaching out to him.

--He referenced the complaints received from the public. He said that certain incidents should be reported to the police department but asked that residents remember that the police can only do so much in certain situations. The code officer can issue citations for code violations. They can be reported to the code office as often as necessary.

--He asked Chief Kadingo to contact the owner of the car wash on Route 329 about vandalism.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

--Mr. Brobst thanked the Lafayette College Technical Team for their presentation, adding that they did a great job.

--He thanked Tom for serving on borough council and said that he hopes to see him back again.

--He noted that he was not laughing *at* Jason Nelson, a resident who spoke from the public. He did not mean to offend his situation.

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Motion: Anthony Lopsonzski, Sr. moved, seconded by Anthony Pristash and unanimously carried to pay the bills as listed on A/P Journal #5A, dated May 20, 2021, totaling \$236,787.17.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Keith Piescienski, duly seconded by Thomas Gehringer and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:07 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Meaghan Case
Recording Secretary