

The Monthly meeting of Lansford Borough Council for general and executive purposes was held 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, February 8, 2017, at the borough hall. The meeting was called to order by President Martin Ditsky and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. In attendance in addition to council : Ron Gower (reporter from Times New Newspaper), TV Channel 13 reporter & camera man, and the following residents: Christopher Ondrus, Marie Ondrus, Mary Soto, Irma Leibensperger, Bob Silver, Don Gildea, Robert Dobosh, Larry Wittig, Police Chief Jack Soberick, Mary Soberick and Bill Reed.

### **ROLL CALL**

Roll call was taken by Secretary Treasurer Jill Seigendall. Council members in attendance were; President Martin Ditsky, Vice President Rose Mary Cannon, Matthew Walsh, Joe Butrie, Jared Soto, Mayor James Romankow and Solicitor Michael Greek (arrived about 5 minutes late; during public courtesy). Absent were Colin Jones and John Turcmanovich.

### **PUBLIC COURTESY**

Chris Ondrus, 10 Edgemont Road, asked for clarification on the following items on the agenda: under unfinished business, appointment of code & zoning officials and the vacant property ordinance (draft being considered by council), under solicitor's report, code officials contract (sample enclosed) and details of the 2 scheduling orders in the Goncalves vs. Borough of Lansford civil action suit. Ondrus made 2 suggestions: 1.) Not to approve any more vacant property ordinances until the current ordinances are enforced and, 2) Have members of the police department and code enforcement company present when the code ordinances are being reviewed and considered because these departments usually enforce the ordinances.

Robert Silver, 17 E. Ridge Street, asked whether the code contract is an annual contract. Solicitor Greek explained that he reviewed the contract details, responded to Lehigh Valley Inspection Service (LVIS) with revisions and additions. LVIS has not gotten back to council with its revised contract.

Mary Soberick, 109 W Abbott Street, asked whether council is planning on appointing LVIS even without a contract. Martin Ditsky said he would not.

### **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:**

Meeting Minutes for regular meeting January 11, 2017 were reviewed. **Rose Mary Cannon made a motion to approve the January 11, 2017 minutes; the motion was second by Matthew Walsh, motion passed unanimously.**

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

Interest in Planning Commission seat - Donna Valent submitted a letter of interest in the open seat. Rose Mary Cannon explained that Valent cannot be appointed because she is already a member of the Zoning Hearing Board and the borough code specifies that a member of the Zoning Hearing Board cannot serve on another borough board.

John Modric, 314 W. Patterson St, submitted a letter dated 1/24/17 asking whether anything can be done with a property next to his, 316 W. Patterson Street, which sustained a fire on January 22, 2017. Martin Ditsky spoke to the owner of 316, Bridget Horvath, and said she told him she does not have insurance or a mortgage on the property. The borough sent a letter to Ms. Horvath asking for this information in writing in case a fire escrow account will be needed, however the borough has not received a response. Mayor Romankow suggested contacting the county to see if funds are available to take down the building.

A letter was received from Step-Up Carbon dated 1/23/17, addressing the opioid/heroin epidemic; the following meetings are scheduled: 3/1/17 6:30 p.m. Crime Watch town hall meeting; 3/30/17 6:30 p.m. meeting to combat blight, both to be held at PV High School. On 4/12/17, 6 p.m., a meeting about drug courts at the Tamaqua Middle School and on 4/22/17 coordinating community involvement to spruce up community parks.

A letter was received from Coaldale Lansford Summit Hill Sewer Authority/Carbon Engineering dated 1/11/17 requesting completion of Chapter 94 Waste load Management Report for 2016; Eric Snyder of Keystone Engineering has been notified to complete the report.

A letter dated 1/19/17 regarding the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church, 116 E. Bertsch Street. **Rose Mary Cannon made a motion to prepare a resolution for the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary for the March meeting. The motion was second by Joe Butrie, all were in favor, motion passed.** Martin Ditsky asked Lansford Alive members in the audience for an update on erecting a sign in front of the church for the anniversary. Chris

Ondrus said Lansford Alive checked with code enforcement. Permits are necessary and Lansford Alive will be purchasing the signs for the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

A letter was received dated 1/25/17 from TCI Environmental Services regarding property at 6 E. Ridge Street (the Elks building). It gave a summary of hazardous materials in the building: a sitting refrigerator, cans of oil, paint caulking, lubricants, and 2 fuel oil tanks. The building is to be taken down using Carbon County CDBG funds. Demolition will start on the Patterson Street end of the building and the company will inspect for asbestos a bit at a time and slowly work towards the Ridge Street end of the building.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Municipal Administration** – The January report was enclosed and read by Rose Mary Cannon. The report has a list of repairs for the borough building. The borough's \$35,000.00 small water and sewer grant application was denied.

**Public Safety** – No paper report, no meeting was held in January.

**Fire Department** – The January report was enclosed & House Bill 1683, the report was read by Matthew Walsh: 13 calls; in town 8; Summit Hill 3, Nesquehoning 1 Other 1. There was mention of the Local Tax Credit for volunteer firefighter as outlined in House Bill 1683. Joe Butrie noted the fire co breakfast on 2/12/17 and urged all to support the event.

**Ambulance** – No report received as of Agenda printing.

**Mayors Report** – The January report was read by James Romankow, monthly total collected \$1,239.50, year to date \$3,642.61. The Mayor announced that a snow emergency declaration was put into effect tonight due to the forecast of 6" to 10" of snow tonight. Chief Soberick (also EMA coordinator) explained the police & street dept. posted temporary "no parking" signs on Kline, Water, and Snyder & Front Streets for 7p.m. tonight to 7p.m Thursday, planning for curb to curb plowing on Friday if necessary. The mayor thanked residents for helping with social media responses when the police department posts inquiries online; Facebook.

**Police Report** – The January report was read by Mayor Romankow; 15 Criminal arrests, 10 traffic citation, 20 non traffic citations, 20 parking tickets, 32 Quality of Life tickets issued.

**Parks & Recreation** – No paper report, no meeting held in January. Rose Mary Cannon reported that on February 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. Brent Boyer of Aquatic Facilities Design will give a presentation on the Lansford Pool feasibility study.

**Public Works** – The January report was read by Martin Ditsky. There was discussion about the sewer inlets on Patterson Street (about 15 need replacing) tentative resurfacing start date is August of 2017. Public Works considered renting/leasing an excavator to install the inlets. Also discussed was parallel parking along W. Ridge Street, on the south side from 154 W. Patterson Street to Center Street, Penn Dot legal length requirements will be considered. Also discussed was the September report for DCBG funds to repave the 200 Block of W. Bertsch St. and a section of the 300 block of E. Ridge Street.

**Code Enforcement** – No report – Steve Meylach of LVIS is working on Residential Rental License renewals.

**Planning, Zoning & Code** – January report was read by Martin Ditsky. It discussed the handling of code and zoning ordinances and empty properties. There was also discussion of the vacant building ordinance and who will enforce it.

**Carbon County Tax Collection Committee** – No report, next meeting is scheduled for Feb. 28<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 a.m. at the Leighton School District administration building.

**Treasurers Report** – The report was read by Jill Seigendall. Bills to be approved total \$19,227.52; General fund \$11,443.20 & Liquid Fuels \$7,784.32. Council received the monthly checking account activity, Income Report, Profit/ Loss Budget vs Actual for all funds.

- The Tax Anticipation Note Funds (\$125,000.00 minus \$1,000.00 fee) were received and deposited on 1/6/17.
- **Purchase of 2017 Ford Explorer police cruiser from Kovatch Ford, financial review, cost is \$40,521.57; \$4,000.00 down payment (paid from LST account); balance will be paid January 1<sup>st</sup> on the next 3 years \$13,204.09 per year to Community Leasing Partners(Community First National Bank), interest rate is 4.17%. Rose Mary Cannon made a motion to accept the financing terms of the loan. Matthew Walsh questioned whether the whole amount could be paid up front to save on the interest cost. After discussion, Jared Soto second the motion and voting on the motion resumed, all were in favor except Matthew Walsh, motion passed.**
- Coaldale Lansford Summit Hill Sewer Authority - Receipt of \$35,023.94 annual commission.
- Public Works 2014 International Dump Truck loan (paid to M&T bank) is paid in full.
- **Matthew Walsh made a motion to pay the bills totaling \$19,227.52, a second to the motion was made by Joseph Butrie, all were in favor, motion passed.**
- Seigendall explained that the balance of the Street Light Fund is currently \$4,936.31 and the expected March PPL electric bill is about \$5,586.53. The March PPL bill cannot

be paid unless money (perhaps delinquent tax funds) is received, money is moved from another fund or the PPL bill is paid from another fund. Rose Mary Cannon remarked that The Street Light fund also pays the loan from the Municipal Energy Matters (MEM) debacle. No action was taken at this time.

**Bank Accounts**

End of month balances January 2017

FUND	Account Title	End of Dec	End of Jan
General Fund	General Acct	\$214,742.94	\$275,130.88
Sanitation Fund	Sanitation Fund	\$58,699.28	\$91,722.93
Sanitation Fund	Investors Money Mkt Acct	\$51,477.34	\$51,477.34
Sewer Transmission	Sewer Trans	\$163,992.28	\$163,992.28
General Fund	Escrow for 22 W(E) Kline	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
General Fund	Escrow for 20 E Kline	\$2,180.00	\$2,180.00
Lansford Pool A	Lansford Pool Account	\$1,329.65	\$1,329.67
Hi Way/Liq Fuels	Treasurers Sp Hi Way	\$46,790.03	\$43,278.93
General Fund	DCED Grant/Fire Co	\$0.00	\$0.00
Sewer Transmission	Sewage Transmission	\$73,261.59	\$93,451.64
Sewer Transmission	Loan Proceeds Acct	\$202,577.84	\$202,588.16
LST	Local Service Tax/EIT	\$34,083.80	\$30,302.82
Sanitation Fund	Sanitation Money Mkt	\$12,155.68	\$12,155.69
Fire Tax Fund	Fire	\$36,312.51	\$37,496.72
Park & Rec Fund	Recreation	\$62,578.40	\$63,661.96
Street Light Fund	Street Lights	\$12,782.24	\$10,523.05
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$975,963.58</b>	<b>\$1,082,292.07</b>

**Solicitor’s Report –**

- Carbon County Court of Common Pleas – Case Management Conference Order is set for 3/28/17 at 1:15 p.m. RE: Hiles vs. Borough of Lansford civil action regarding water flow in that area.
- The borough received 2 Scheduling Orders setting 3/2/17 9:00 a.m. RE: Goncalves Vs. Borough of Lansford, civil action. Attorney Greek filed preliminary objections and a brief. Greek explained it was a poorly written complaint having numerous reasons for dismissal.
- Attorney Greek explained that he reviewed the Code Officials proposed contract (from LVIS), changes were noted and returned to LVIS however there has been no correspondence at this time. Greek explained a code official could be appointed without a contract.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Appointment of Zoning Officer & UCC Officials was discussed. Matthew Walsh suggested appointing LVIS provided it accepts Attorney Greeks revisions to the proposed contract. Attorney Greek suggested council meet with Paul Jarrett of LVIS with a plan of how to proceed, meet on a monthly basis, and prioritize a list of projects. The next zoning & ordinance committee meeting is scheduled for Feb 27th at 5:45 p.m. Ditsky and Walsh plan to invite LVIS and council to attend the meeting to iron out the details of the contract. Mary Soberick suggest making the appointment at tonight’s meeting, stating it as a “at will” position until the contract is ironed out. **Matthew Walsh made a motion to appoint Lehigh Valley Inspection Services (and its designees) as Code Official and Zoning Officer. Motion was second by Jared Soto, all were in favor except Martin Ditsky, motion passed.**

Appointment of borough engineer was discussed. Joe Butrie made a motion we advertising for other firms besides Keystone Consulting Engineers. There was no second to the motion. Rose Mary Cannon said we are in the middle of many projects. **A motion made by Rose Mary Cannon to appoint Keystone Consulting Engineers as the borough’s engineer. The motion was second by Martin Ditsky, all were in favor except Joe Butrie, motion passed.**

The 2017 committee meeting dates were set for advertisement. It is as follows: Park & Recreation, first Wednesday of the month 6:00 p.m.; Municipal Administration, first Wednesday of the month 6:45 p.m.; Planning, Zoning & Ordinance, last Monday of the month 5:45 p.m.; Public Safety, last Monday of the month 6:30 p.m.; Public Works, last Monday of the month 7:00 p.m. **A motion was made by Matthew Walsh to advertise the meeting dates, second by Joe Butrie, all were in favor, motion passed.**

Existing board vacancies are listed below.

- Zoning Hearing Board – 2 alternate seats allowed
- Recreation Commission – 1 expired seat
- Civil Service Commission – 3 alternates allowed
- Planning Commission – 1 vacant seat

- Vacancy Board – 1 vacant seat
- Police pension board
- Part time pub works worker 30-32 hrs. per week salary based on experience CDL etc.

**Rose Mary Cannon made motion to advertise above positions. Motion was second by Matthew Walsh, all were in favor, motion passed.**

Ordinance 2017-01 setting the 3% compensation rate for the Tax Collector beginning in 2018, was offered for consideration by council. **A motion was made by Rose Mary Cannon to approve Ordinance 2017-01. The motion was second by Joe Butrie, all were in favor, motion passed.**

The current Garbage Contract expires 4/10/2017. Bid advertising will be required. Matthew Walsh suggests extending the present contract for one year as it is allowed in the contract. Joe Butrie was against the extension because of complaints the borough has received about the Tamaqua Transfer workers; cinders strewn on the street, workers going through the garbage. Martin Ditsky said drivers and pickers have been changed. Joe Butrie made a motion to advertise for garbage bids. There was no second to the motion. Tamaqua Transfer owner Larry Wittig (in the audience) shook his head in agreement that there would be no increase to the current rate. **Rose Mary Cannon made a motion not to advertise for garbage bid contracts and to extend Tamaqua Transfer's contract with no increase in rate. The motion was second by Matthew Walsh. All were in favor except Joe Butrie, motion passed.**

Three written estimates were received for construction of a counter/shelving unit to be installed at the front of the borough office. The bids were received from The Service Team, \$2,600.00; Valley Home Improvements \$815.00; BGM General Contractor \$3,585.00. The topic was tabled because handicap accessibility, specifications and style are still being discussed.

A (draft) vacant property ordinance was discussed. Attorney Greek explained that the borough has run down vacant properties owned by mortgage companies that will not foreclose on those properties because it will not get sufficient payment. Mortgage Companies don't want to take ownership of the properties because they would have to maintain them. This ordinance will provide the bridge requiring the mortgage company to do something whether or not it takes ownership of the property. Matthew Walsh would like to table the ordinance for another month. All agreed.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Street Material and Antiskid Contracts expire 4/17/17. Advertising is required. **A motion to advertise for street material bids and antiskid bids was made by Matthew Walsh. A second to the motion was made by Joe Butrie. All were in favor, motion passed.**

At approximately 8:15 p.m. Martin Ditsky announced there would be a five minute recess followed by an executive session for personnel purposes & discussion of property.

#### **Out of Executive Session**

Back on the record at 8:40 p.m. **Rose Mary Cannon made a motion to hire public works part time worker Colton Black as a full time worker under the terms of the TEAMSTERS Contract. The motion was second by Martin Ditsky, all were in favor, and motion passes.**

**Rose Mary Cannon made a motion to hire part time assistant secretary Wendy Butrie as full time assistant secretary/treasurer under the terms of the Lansford Employee Handbook. Starting rate will be \$11.50 and a medical benefit package for herself only will be offered. The motion was second by Matthew Walsh. All were in favor, Joe Butrie abstained from voting. Motion passed.**

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Matthew Walsh made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Joseph Butrie second the motion, all were in favor, motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Jill Seigendall*

Secretary/Treasurer