

LANSFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Special Meeting

January 24, 2018 6:00 p.m.

A special meeting of Lansford Borough Council was held 6:00 p.m., January 24, 2018, at borough hall, 1 W. Ridge Street, for general purposes and the appointment to the vacant seat of mayor.

The meeting was called to order by Council President acting as Mayor Jared Soto and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Roll call was taken by Secretary Treasurer Jill Seigendall: attending were Joseph Butrie, vice president Irma Leibensperger, Marie Ondrus, Bob Silver, president Jared Soto, John Turcmanovich, Matthew Walsh, and Solicitor Michael Greek. Absent was junior council person Isabella Blasko.

Executive Session:

Executive session was called by Jared Soto to discuss the police collective bargaining agreement, personnel and possible property sales and purchases.

Reconvened:

The group reconvened at 6:31 p.m. and President Soto opened the floor for public courtesy.

Public Courtesy:

James Romankow, 602 W. Bertsch Street, asked about the status of the Lansford Ambulance. The ambulance has been sitting outside the former ambulance building, 26 E. Ridge Street, now owned by Tyrolean Enterprises, Louis Albertini. Joseph Butrie recalled that the ambulance was purchased with grant funds and when the Lansford Ambulance Association disbanded the vehicle would go to another ambulance company. The Leighton Ambulance Association is interested in the vehicle but the status of the Lansford vehicle is unclear at this time. Rose Mary Cannon said FEMA would be making the decision about the ambulance.

Morgan Jones Jr., 102 W. Bertsch Street, works at 26 E. Ridge Street and he asked about the status of the borough garage. He was told it would be discussed at this meeting.

Rose Mary Cannon, 242 W. Ridge Street, gave her opinions about expenses incurred because of council's recent decisions: to change the borough auditor, no appointment of a borough engineer, location changes for the borough garage and reopening the budget. Also that Mr. Silver should have made a more timely decision about which elected position he wanted because it caused confusion for the appointment to the vacant seat of mayor as addressed at the January 10th meeting.

Mary Soberick, 109 W. Abbott Street, spoke about the appointment of mayor and the mayor's role in charge of public safety. She asked that council consider the intentions of candidates and hopes someone with positive intentions is appointed, and that candidates be interviewed if possible.

Appointment of Mayor:

Letters of Interest were received from the following residents: Ronald Derr, Robert Gaughan, Douglas Knauss, Timothy Midas, James Romankow, Tommy Vadyak, Hugh Vrablic, and Michael Zavagansky. Council had the three candidates in attendance give a short speech of why they want to be mayor. Ronald Derr, James Romankow and Douglas Knauss spoke. Jared Soto called for a motion to appoint a mayor:

Joseph Butrie made a motion to appoint by resolution Tommy Vadyak mayor. The motion was second by Matthew Walsh. On roll call vote: Matthew Walsh, yes, John Turcmanovich, no, Joseph Butrie, yes, Marie Ondrus, no, Bob Silver, no, Irma Leibensperger, no. Results: 2 Yes, 4 No, Motion fails.

Bob Silver made a motion to appoint by resolution Robert Gaughan mayor. The motion was second by Marie Ondrus. On roll call vote: Matthew Walsh, no, John Turcmanovich, no, Joseph Butrie, no, Marie Ondrus, yes, Bob Silver, yes, Irma Leibensperger, no. Results: 2 Yes, 4 No, Motion fails.

Joseph Butrie made a motion to appoint by resolution James Romankow mayor. The motion was second by John Turcmanovich. On roll call vote: Matthew Walsh, yes, John Turcmanovich, yes, Joseph Butrie, yes, Marie Ondrus, no, Bob Silver, no, Irma Leibensperger, no. 3 Yes, 3 No. Jared Soto was advised by Attorney Greek that as acting mayor he had the ability to break a tie or may take 10 days to render his decision. Jared Soto said he voted yes to appoint James Romankow mayor by Resolution. Results: 4 yes, 3 no. Motion passed, there were applause.

Resolution 2018-02 Mayor appointment: James Romankow verified he is a resident of the borough and was sworn in as mayor by Attorney (and Notary) Michael Greek.

Meeting Minutes for approval:

The January 2, 2018 reorganization meeting minutes were reviewed.

A motion was made by John Turcmanovich to approve the January 2, 2018 minutes. The motion was second by Joseph Butrie. All were in favor, motion passed.

Correspondence:

Solid Waste Removal - A letter was reviewed from Larry Wittig, owner of Tamaqua Transfer & Recycling Inc., offering to extend the current Municipal Solid Waste Removal & Recycling contract for another year at the contract amount of \$304,030.00 (\$25,335.83 per month). The offer is the same rate as last year, with the contract running April 1, 2018 to April 1, 2019.

A motion was made by Bob Silver to extend the solid waste removal contract with Tamaqua Transfer & Recycling Inc. for another year. The motion was second by Matthew Walsh. All were in approval, motion passed.

This is the seventh year of service with Tamaqua Transfer at the same price.

Chapter 94 Waste load Report – A letter from R. Michael Tirpak, CLSH Sewer Authority Engineer, asking for completion of the annual Chapter 94 Waste load Management Report for 2017. The Report is due March 10,2018. The topic was tabled by Joseph Butrie.

LSA Grant for Pool – Notification was received in an e-mail on January 23, 2018, from Kellyann Sonnon, DCED, that the borough's application for Lansford Pool restoration project was approved for a LSA-Monroe grant in the amount of \$35,000.00. The grant application requested \$500,000.00 and \$35,000.00 was granted. Ms. Sonnon asked for confirmation whether the project will remain the same or scaled back based on the awarded amount. If scaling back, a new narrative and revised budget must be submitted to DCED.

Councilman Joseph Butrie left the meeting at approximately 7:45 p.m.

Unfinished Business:

2018 Reopened Budget:

Councilman Silver gave the following options to revise the budget:

1.) Keep 2017 millage rates except to transfer park & recreation 1.02 millage to the general fund millage, leaving no millage in park & recreation for 2018, and use the existing funds in park and recreation for

maintenance costs and previously planned park and recreation projects. This would mean changing the tax levy ordinance. The tax levy ordinance must be (and was) approved by December 31st. There were questions about whether the tax ordinance could be changed and the time frame required for advertising the ordinance (an ordinance must be advertised not more than 60 days or less than seven days before adoption at a public meeting) and the required ten day posting of a revised 2018 Budget and the special meeting for its adoption. The revised Budget must be adopted by February 15th.

A motion was made by Bob Silver to adopt a 2018 Budget and Tax Levy Ordinance that eliminates the 1.02 millage rate in the park and recreation fund, adding 1.02 millage rate to the general fund, retaining the 34.53 tax millage rate of 2017. The motion failed due to no second.

There was discussion to reduce the park and recreation millage instead of eliminating all millage. Rose Mary Cannon spoke of her concern that without tax money to park & recreation, improvements would not be made at the parks for the children and residents of the community.

2.) Bob Silver suggested removing \$11,000.00 from the police budget and paying police expenses from the LST Fund (those police expenses related to emergency and safety.); reducing millage in the general fund, requiring a change to the tax levy ordinance.

3.) Mr. Silver said savings could be found in the estimated income and expenses in the Sanitation Fund.

Bob Silver made a motion to remove 1.00 mill from the park and recreation fund, in the reopened 2018 budget, and leave the rest of the budget as it stands. The motion was second by Irma Leibensperger. Matthew Walsh said he couldn't go with complete removal of the 1.00 mill from park & recreation. John Turcmanovich reminded everyone this would be in violation of the Tax Levy Ordinance already in place. On roll call vote: Matthew Walsh, no, John Turcmanovich, no, Marie Ondrus, no, Jared Soto, no, Bob Silver, yes, Irma Leibensperger, yes. Results: 2 Yes, 4 No, Motion fails.

All seemed resigned to the fact that due to time constraints a revised Budget and revised Tax Levy Ordinance could not be adopted.

A motion was made by Bob Silver to rescind his motion made at the January 2, 2018 reorganization meeting to reopen the 2018 budget. The motion was second by Matthew Walsh. On roll call vote: Matthew Walsh, yes, John Turcmanovich, yes, Marie Ondrus, yes, Jared Soto, yes, Bob Silver, yes, Irma Leibensperger, no. Results: 5 Yes, 1 no, Motion passed.

New Business:

The 2014 International Truck was leaking antifreeze. It has been towed to International in Allentown (the third time in recent months).

Mayor Romankow thanked everyone for their efforts during the last snow fall. The police department didn't issue many tickets.

Jared Soto announced that Sanitation Bills were mailed January 8th (late due to new signors on the bank accounts). Residents have called the borough office saying they have not received their bill yet. The post office has been contacted but office staff doesn't know why there is a delay in delivery.

At 8:00 p.m. Jared Soto called a five minute break followed by a continuation of the previous executive session.

Adjournment:

At 8:30 p.m. Jared Soto reopened the meeting to the public. Matthew Walsh made a motion to adjourn the meeting, second by Irma Leibensperger, all were in approval and the group disbanded.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jill Seigendall

Borough Secretary/Treasurer