

Monthly Meeting Minutes

August 14th, 2024

The August 14th, 2024 Monthly Meeting was called to order at 6:30p.m. by President Bruce Markovich at The Lansford Borough Town Hall, 1 West Ridge Street, Lansford, Pennsylvania. The meeting was attended by Council Woman Michele Bartek, Council Man Joseph Butrie, Council Woman Gwyneth Collevechio, Council Man Jay Doyle, President Bruce Markovich, Council Man Jack Soberick, and Council Woman Jennifer Staines.

Absent were Mayor Hugh Vrablic, and Solicitor Robert Yurchak.

Pledge of allegiance was recited.

Bruce Markovich stated that Mayor Hugh Vrablic was in an accident and that Solicitor Robert Yurchak is on vacation.

Bruce Markovich spoke briefly about the executive meeting which was about personnel issues with the police department. The executive session meeting was from 6:00p.m. to 6:30p.m.

Public Courtesy-

Pastor Jeremy Benack of Grace Community Church spoke about how long he has been in the community and the appreciation he has for council.

Pastor Jeremy Benack spoke a short prayer for the council, police officers, and borough workers.

Joe Genits of 210 West Front Street spoke about the improved website, agendas, and minutes.

Joe Genits congratulated the borough secretaries for all the work they do, and the improvements compared to previous years.

Tommy Vadyak of 334 West Abbott Street stated that the police are paid to enforce all laws and not selectively enforce laws.

Tommy Vadyak spoke about vehicles near his home on West Abbott that are in violation, but the violations are not being enforced.

Michele Bartek spoke about how she is currently working on updating the vehicle ordinance and that hopefully by the next meeting the ordinance revision will be completed.

Michele Bartek stated that the Chief of Police Kyle Woodward is present, and that Tommy Vadyak is welcome to inquire information from the Chief.

Kyle Woodward spoke about how the police department has been responding to Tommy Vadyak's police calls.

Tommy Vadyak spoke about a no parking sign that was installed on a property sidewalk on Ridge Street and he wants to know why the taxpayers were not reimbursed for a sign that should not have been placed on the sidewalk.

Martin Ditsky of 330 ½ East Abbott spoke about how the borough has not created a resolution to enforce no U-turns in the borough.

Robert Silver of 17 East Ridge Street inquired about the motions on the agenda to relocate the police station and to approve a resolution to apply for the LSA Grant and if they are things the residents of Lansford want.

Joseph Butrie spoke about the splash pad being able to allow the children of Lansford to have something to enjoy.

Rosemary Cannon of 242 West Ridge inquired about the splash pad status.

Burce Markovich spoke about the status of the splash pad. The borough is currently working with Brenda Sackle from Carbon County Economic Development and a site plan is still needed.

Rosemary Cannon spoke about how she feels that more needs to be done for the children and younger children such as possibly another playground.

Michele Bartek stated that she agrees that more things do need to be available for the children in the town and about how the town used to have movies in the park.

Joe Genits spoke about how he feels the borough should advertise for the Recreation Commission due to the eight open positions.

Rosemary Cannon stated she feels council should discuss moving the police once more police officers are hired.

Denise Leibensperger of 164 West Ridge Street inquired about the borough workers workdays and why no work orders or business district weed maintenance has occurred.

Jay Doyle spoke about the things that the borough workers have been doing and that it is not the borough workers responsibility to cut grass.

Jay Doyle spoke about how Code and Ordinance Officer Shane Monk will be issuing citations for high grass.

Jay Doyle stated that if he is asked, he will provide information about what the borough workers are working on.

An audience member spoke about a property near her home that is not being maintained and needs to be fixed.

Bruce Markovich stated that all cleanup companies that were contacted did not have workers compensation and could not be hired by the borough.

Joseph Butrie spoke about the issue that could occur if the borough workers were to clean up a private property yard.

Jay Doyle stated that he feels hiring an outside company to clean up abandoned property yards will cost the borough money that they will have a hard time recouping from the property owner.

Approval of Meeting Minutes-

Motion to approve the July 10th, 2024 Monthly Meeting Minutes-

Motioned by Jay Doyle and seconded by Gwyneth Collevchio.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the July 23rd, 2024 Special Meeting Minutes-

Motioned by Jay Doyle and seconded by Michele Bartek.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the August 6th, 2024 Committee Meeting Minutes-

Jennifer Staines asked that the minutes be tabled to include the condemned numbers and property information that she had spoken about at the meeting.

Council agreed to table the minutes for further approval.

Committee Reports-

Fire Department Report-

Michele Bartek spoke about the Fire Department Report.

Call volume. Total calls for the month were 16. Year-to-date were 124.

Total incident time in hours was 9.25 in the month. 170.25 year-to-date.

Total bad hours were 60.5 in the month. And 1,013 year-to-date. In-house work details. Total hours served were 14. Year-to-date is 226.

Total man-hours for the month were 40. Year-to-date were 852.5.

Fundraising for the month was zero. Year-to-date was 932.5. Training.

Total training hours for this month were 8. Year-to-date were 307.5.

Total man-hours for training were 118. Year-to-date were 1252

Community service was zero for the month. Year-to-date, it was 129.5 hours. The administrative duties.

Total administrative hours were 20. Total man-hours on that were 12.

Total hours of all activities for the year to date were 875.75. Total hours

of all activities for your report period was 51.25. Total man hours for the month were 285.75, total man hours for the year to date were 4,739.5.

Ambulance Report-

Michele Bartek spoke about the Ambulance Report.

The ambulance responded to 64 incidents. In July of 2024, there was an average response time of 10.92 minutes from the time of dispatch until arrival on the scene. Of 64 responses, 10 were non-emergency assistance, including standby, etc., with a time of 13.1 minutes. 22 were non-emergency patient services, with a time of 10.95 minutes. And 32 were emergency responses, with a time of 10.2 minutes. In July, stats, 230 calls in place, 19 cases cleared, 17 deaths.

Mayor's and Police Report-

Chief of Police Kyle Woodward spoke the Police Report.

In July there were 230 calls and complaints, 19 cases cleared, and 17 arrests. Four non-traffic citations filed, 13 traffic contacts, 1 search warrant, 14 parking/ borough ordinance tickets issued, and 2,596 miles patrolled.

Code Report-

Jennifer Staines spoke the Code Report.

Shane monk has been out in the borough verifying violations and leaving his card at properties, while waiting for when he is able to write citations. Five houses with weeds and high, four houses with garbage rubbish, and six houses with trash have responded to the warnings

Shane has issued them. Ray Swartz is going to be taking Shane with him to court hearings to allow Shane to gain court hearing experience.

Rental Report-

Jennifer Staines spoke the Rental Report.

The property units have been processed as follows. 1,116, original number of properties on the list. 820 letters sent to potential rental property owners. 1,137, current potential number of properties. 185 properties have been reported as not a renter, only an owner-occupied, family-occupied, or under construction vacant. Rental registrations for properties processed 345 units. 118 rental registrations issued for properties, and that's 130. Four inspections conducted on the properties, and a certificate of occupancy issued. 700 properties for potential non-registration action. Rental applications are still being processed.

Bruce Markovich spoke with Bill McMullen from Arro Consulting and Bill stated that the number one reason people are not filling out rental licenses is because they do not fire insurance. The people that are submitting their rental applications are submitting rental applications with new fire insurance policies that were written within a day or two.

Zoning Report-

Jennifer Staines spoke the Zoning Report.

Ray Swartz has clearance upcoming for September 23rd. He's awaiting conditional use appeal for zoning and application for processed

apartments. Shane Monk and Ray Swartz have been out there, they've been visiting the sites, taking photographs. Citations are being filed at the magistrate. Fourth hearing, the two citations being withdrawn for compulsive violations. There's another hearing, well that was on the 23rd. That was continued. Guilty pleas. Citations are waiting to hear back. Ray Swartz has been spending time with Shane Monk to provide him with some citation and court hearing experience.

Solicitors Report-

Due to Solicitor Robert Yurchak being on vacation no Solicitor Report was given.

Tax Collector's Report-

Maria Ahner communicated the tax report.

From July 1st, 2024 to July 31st, 2024, the total tax collected was
\$60,318.65

Motion to pay the bills-

Motioned by Jennifer Staines and seconded by Gwyneth Collevchio.

Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

Motion to approve a refund of \$81.20 (601 E Bertsch) to Kathlal Realty LLC due to overpayment on her sanitation and sewage transmission bill and her property having already been sold.

Maria Ahner stated anyone who has overpaid on any of their utilities and who has already sold their property must be refunded, due the credit on the account not going to the new owner or the borough, it must go directly to the seller. The information was confirmed with Solicitor Robert Yurchak.

Motioned by Jay Doyle and seconded by Jack Soberick.

Motion was favored by Gwyneth Collevchio, Michele Bartek, Jay Doyle, Bruce Markovich, Jack Soberick, and Jennifer Staines.

Motion was opposed by Joseph Butrie.

Motion was passed by majority.

Motions:

Motion to approve the special event form from K&D Investment Properties for a Charity Event at Zoo Stock on September 2nd, 2024.

Motioned by Jack Soberick and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve a special event form from Carbon County Children and Youth for a Community Outreach with lunch at Ashton Park on August 23rd, 2024.

Carbon County Children and Youth requested to be allowed to use the concession stand at Ashton Park during the event.

Motioned by Jack Soberick and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve a special event form from Sync Recovery for a SAVE A LIFE DAY OUT REACH/COMMUNITY SUPPORT FREE HARM REDUCTION: NARCAN, TEST STRIPS AT Kennedy Park on September 26th, 2024.

Gwyneth Collevecchio stated that more information is needed about the event.

Joseph Butrie spoke about tabling the event until more information is provided.

Motion to table by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Jennifer Staines.

Motion to table passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the Handicap Parking request from Tina Ludwig for Jeffrey Lugwig at 332 East Bertsch Street.

Motioned by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Michele Bartek.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the Handicap Parking request from Annette White at 627 East Patterson Street.

Michele Bartek spoke about tabling the handicap parking request until she can speak with the borough solicitor.

Motion to table by Michele Bartek and seconded by Jack Soberick.

Motion to table passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the Handicap Parking request from John Tucker at 145 West Abbott Street.

Motioned by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Gwyneth Collevecchio.

Motion passed unanimously.

To approve the opening of a 9month CD at a 5% interest in Jim Thorpe Neighborhood Bank for the following accounts: Sewer 12-moth, Lansford Pool, M&T Bank 5402, MCT Bank 7360, MCT Bank 7373.

Motioned by Jennifer Staines and seconded by Michele Bartek.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion approve a Resolution for the contributions to the Police Pension Plan establishing a 3.5% contribution rate and authorizing the deduction of the same from the average monthly compensation to the police officers for the 2022 and 2023 year.

Maria Ahner stated that This is based on the pension police audit that we are going through. And it's because we, the council, the Bureau of Pension Counsel, based on the contract. Article number 9, you guys chose to only deduct 3.5. Based on the law, state of Pennsylvania law for the pension, if it's not higher than 5 and above, a resolution must be filed every year.

Motioned by Jay Doyle and seconded by Michele Bartek.

Motion was favored by Gwyneth Collevecchio, Michele Bartek, Jay Doyle, Bruce Markovich, Joseph Butrie, and Jennifer Staines.

Jack Soberick abstained due to conflict of interest.

Motion was passed by majority.

Motion to approve a Resolution for the contributions to the Police Pension Plan establishing a 3.5% contribution rate and authorizing the deduction of the same from the average monthly compensation to the police officers for the 2024 year.

Motioned by Jay Doyle and seconded by Gwyneth Collevecchio.

Motion was favored by Gwyneth Collevecchio, Michele Bartek, Jay Doyle, Bruce Markovich, Joseph Butrie, and Jennifer Staines.

Jack Soberick abstained due to conflict of interest.

Motion was passed by majority.

Motion to approve a Resolution that authorizes retired police officers to purchase their duty weapon.

Motioned by Jay Doyle and seconded by Jennifer Staines.

Motion was favored by Gwyneth Collevchio, Michele Bartek, Jay Doyle, Bruce Markovich, Joseph Butrie, and Jennifer Staines.

Jack Soberick abstained due to conflict of interest.

Motion was passed by majority.

Motion to approve a Resolution to apply for a \$25,000 LSA Monroe Grant to be used to hire a certified company to prepare a site and development plan for a splash pad at the pool complex.

Motioned by Jack Soberick and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the payment of reoccurring monthly bills that become due prior to the council meeting. See Resolution 2024-16

Maria Ahner stated that to avoid interest, late charges and reduce the amount of checks that have to be written.

Motioned by Jay Doyle and seconded by Michele Bartek.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the upgrade and change of contract for Verizon for \$529.87 per month.

To upgrade the Verizon contract and to add additional phones and a MiFi. That's an extra Wi-Fi internet on the police cars. And this is to add to give Shane a phone. To upgrade our workers, public workers phones because they still have the old phones that they can only do is call and text.

In total, we'll be five for the police. With three MIFIs. Five for, including Shane Monk, one for the office, and five for the public worker, in total, 13. One in the office so the office can communicate and due to a lot of accounts requiring verifications codes like PP&L, to be sent to a phone that has text capability.

Motioned by Jack Soberick and seconded by Jay Doyle.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve advance yearly bill payments to IPFS Corporation of \$60,759.44 for liability insurance. The yearly advance payment to save the borough \$379.75 in penalty fees.-Requested by office

The payments to save the borough \$3,600 in yearly late fees due the \$379.75 being charged monthly.

Motioned by Gwyneth Collevchio and seconded by Michele Bartek.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to authorize the Lansford Borough Civil Service Commission to begin the testing process to prepare a current eligibility list of new police officers.

Motioned by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Michele Bartek.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to vote if council will continue to look for companies to hire for abandoned property clean up.

Motion to continue to look for companies that will come in and cut grass to clean up abandoned properties.

Motioned by Michele Bartek and seconded by Jay Doyle.

Motioned by passed unanimously.

Motion to approve amending the Moving Permit Ordinance to include that documentation showing passed inspection and approved rental license is required to acquire a moving permit. -Requested by Joesph Butrie

Joseph Butrie spoke about other borough's that do not issue moving permits until a property has been inspected.

Jay Doyle spoke about how previous administration had issued moving permits.

Joseph Butrie stated he would be preparing a sample ordinance to send to the solicitor for his review for adoption at a later date.

Motion to table amending the Moving permit Ordinance by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Jay Doyle.

Motion to table passed unanimously.

Motion to vote on moving the police station to be located at the Silberline Building.-Requested by Michele Bartek.

Michele Bartek stated she feels moving the police station would be beneficial to the police and the borough due to the offices that could be rented to other law enforcement agencies and the overall set up that the Silberline Building has which is better for the officers.

Bruce Markovich spoke about the meeting he had with Bill McMullen and water company about the Silberline Building.

Bruce Markovich spoke about the Silberline Building needing to come up to current code and how expensive that would be.

Motion to table by Jack Soberick and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion to table passed unanimously.

Motion to vote on gifting Jack Soberick his police badge.-Requested by Michele Bartek

Motioned by Jay Doyle and seconded by Jennifer Staines.

Motion was favored by Gwyneth Collevecchio, Michele Bartek, Jay Doyle, Bruce Markovich, Joseph Butrie, and Jennifer Staines.

Jack Soberick abstained due to conflict of interest.

Motion was passed by majority.

Motion to establish a policy that Police Officers are not permitted to leave the borough while on duty except for official business.

Motion to table by Michele Bartek and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion to table passed unanimously.

Motion to obtain bids for the costs to tear down the Koch Building.

Bruce Markovich spoke about how the building has multiple citations, but the owner has not addressed them.

Bruce Markovich stated that if the borough is going to try to go to court over the matter a costs for tearing the property down is needed.

Motioned by Jack Soberick and seconded by Jay Doyle.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to go of the agenda-

Motioned by Michele Bartek and seconded by Gwyneth Collevecchio.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the cooperation agreement between the Borough of Lansford and Carbon County.

The Community Development Block Grant for 2024 is \$94,848.00.

Carbon County is taking \$17,078.00 in costs from the \$94,848.00 with a total of \$77,800.00 left to the Borough of Lansford.

The cooperation agreement must be agreed upon for the Community Development Block Grant to be submitted.

Motioned by Jay Doyle and seconded by Jack Soberick.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to adjourn-

Motioned by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Jay Doyle.

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned by President Bruce Markovich at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Ashley McLaughlin

Assistant Secretary/Treasurer