

Monthly Meeting Minutes

January 15th, 2025

The January 15th, 2025 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 Collevchio, President Bruce Markovich, Council Man Jack Soberick, Council Woman Jennifer Staines, and Mayor Hugh Vrablic.

Council Man Jay Doyle was absent.

Solicitor Robert Yurchak was absent during the start of the meeting but attended the last half of the meeting.

Pledge of allegiance was recited.

Bruce Markovich spoke about the executive session that discussed issues with the garbage contract.

Bruce Markovich spoke about the length of the agenda.

Public Courtesy-

Tommy Vadyak of 334 West Abbott Street spoke about a property behind his home that has finally been cleaned up due to the involvement of the Code Officer.

Tommy Vadyak commented about the positive changes he has seen on his home street due to the involvement of the Code Officer.

An audience member spoke about a draft that he left for council and a current project he is working on in the borough.

Richard and Lori Desko of 444 East Kline Avenue inquired about why they received two separate parking tickets on December 24th and 25th.

Richard and Lori Desko spoke about how the parking sign on the 400 block of East Kline Avenue states you must move your car if there is four or more inches of snow and that only two inches of snow was on the street.

Bruce Markovich emphasized that the council does not have the authority to tell the police department to issue tickets.

Joseph Butrie spoke about how the vehicles parked on East Kline Avenue impeded the snow plowing of the street.

Rosemary Cannon of 242 West Ridge Street inquired about motion item 11 and if the council could explain what the pass-through agreement is.

Rosemary Cannon inquired about motion item 12 and what is the advantage of having the Borough Secretary opening the bids rather than the bids being opened at a monthly council meeting.

Rosemary Cannon inquired about America250PA.

Rosemary Cannon inquired about motion item 28, how previous council did look into the Local Law Enforcement Support Grant Program of Act 54 of 2022, and how she feels it could help the borough with police advertising.

Police Chief Kyle Woodward introduced the new part-time police officer applicant Randy Schlatter to council and the audience.

Joe Genits of 210 West Front Street inquired about motion item 2 under Old Business and inquired about the section of the vehicle ordinance that will be amended.

Joe Genits inquired about motion item 8 under New Business and what the amount of late charge to Construction Clearance was agreed upon in the contract.

Joe Genits spoke about motion item number 10 and that a resolution would need to be written approving documents or signs to be English Only.

Joe Genits inquired if an agreement was filled out by the borough pertaining to motion item 11.

Joe Genits inquired about motion item 15 and if council could please read the resolution for regulations for conduct at open meetings and maintenance of order.

Joe Genits inquired about motion item 16 and that his payment is a disability payment and is that payment going to be taken off the bills to be paid.

Joe Genits inquired about motion item 18 and if it is a common thing for tax collectors to be closed for a certain period of time.

Joe Genits spoke about motion item 19 and motion item 21 and that the section number needs to be changed.

Joe Genits inquired about motion item 20 and what the new rental package for 2025 rental renewal will include.

Joe Genits inquired if the borough will be doing the rental license ordinance enforcement and if the borough's code and ordinance officer will be doing rental inspections.

Joe Genits inquired about if the code and ordinance officer will become full-time in the future.

Joe Genits spoke about how the rental license ordinance needs to be changed and improved.

Approval of Meeting Minutes-

Motion to approve the November 21st, 2024 Special Meeting Minutes-

Motioned by Gwyneth Collevchio and seconded by Bruce Markovich.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the December 3rd, 2024 Committee Meeting Minutes-

Motioned by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Gwyneth Collevchio.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the December 11th, 2024 Monthly Meeting Minutes-

Motioned by Michele Bartek and seconded by Jennifer Staines.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the December 26th, 2024 Special Meeting Minutes-

Motioned by Michele Bartek and seconded by Bruce Markovich.

Motion passed unanimously.

Correspondence-

Bruce Markovich spoke about the December 26th, 2024 about rental properties and that he reached out to Arro Consulting via email about why they did not attend.

Bruce Markovich spoke about how Arro Consulting stated in the email they would have attended the December 26th, 2024 meeting but did not because they were not invited to attend.

Jennifer Staines spoke about the email she sent to Arro Consulting and that the wording could have been changed on the email sent to them.

Bruce Markovich stated that Arro Consulting requested that it is on the recorded that Arro Consulting did not attend the meeting because they were not invited to attend.

Committee Reports-

Fire Department Report-

Michele Bartek spoke about the Fire Department Report.

For the month of December. Total calls were 18 for the month. For the year, there were 197. Total man hours that were spent were 85 for the month and 1,459.25 for the year to date. In-house work, total hours served were 30, year-to-date 333, total man-hours for the month were 112, and year-to-date, the final report for the year of 2024, were 1,589.5.

Fundraising, total fundraising hours were 15 for the month, year-to-date 206, total man-hours that were spent for the month were 110, year-to-date was 2,289.5. The response times in the area, right, we had for the month, zero, our in town calls were 6, our year-to-date were 97.

Trainings for the Environment, total training hours were 6.5, year to date were 423, total man hours were 80, and year to date was 1,996. Community service, two for the month, 16 to date, total hours served was 4.5, year to date were 44, total man hours that were spent were 18.5, and for the year, 319.

The administrative time, there were 80 for the month, yeah, 80 for the month, and year to date, there was 960. Total man hours year to date were 8,613.25.

Michele Bartek commended the Fire Department for the time they spent volunteering.

Ambulance Report-

Michele Bartek spoke about the Ambulance Report.

Leighton Ambulance responded to 58 incidents in December 2024. There was an average time of 10.9 minutes from the time of dispatch until arrival on the scene. Of 58 responses,

10 were non-emergency assistance, and including standby, et cetera, with a time of 8.8 minutes. 25 were non-emergency patients with a time of 11.6 minutes. 23 emergency responses time of 11.2 minutes.

Mayor's and Police Report-

Hugh Vrablic spoke the Police Report.

269 calls and complaints, 19 cases that were cleared, 26 arrests, 20 traffic contacts, 66 parking/borough ordinance tickets issued. Total mileage patrolled was 2,888.

Code Report and Zoning Report-

Jennifer Staines spoke the Code Report.

NOVs. There were eight NOVs prepared and sent out. There are five awaiting certified to be delivered before taking action. There are four citations to be filed or are already filed. And court hearing schedules this time.

Code and Ordinance Enforcement Officer Shane Monk did a December report and end of the year report. Complaints received, in December, 23, walk-ins unannounced, 22, tickets issued, 12, properties approved 4. Shane went out, he walked to see if everything was taken off the sidewalk from the snow storms. Shane and Jennifer have been getting together, discussing the rental process and the things that are going on outside of here.

All right, the 2024 year of end report. Shane was hired technically on July 1st. From that date to now. ...complaints 137, houses up to code starting 33, number of sidewalks found in violation of code 38, inspection tickets issued 41, rental inspections assisted 30.

Since the start of July, we have had 33 properties bring to code with no violation. Shane's been gathering photos and addresses for sidewalks that will need repair. Shane Monk has been able to train off of Ray Swartz will he is Lansford.

Rental Report-

Jennifer Staines spoke the Rental Report.

1,116 original numbers of properties, 1,147 current potential number of properties. 442 properties have been reported as not a rental, owner-occupied, family occupied. 336 rental

registrations for properties. 220 rental registrations for properties. 40 inspections were scheduled or conducted. 38 inspections were conducted on the property as certificate of occupancy. Two inspections were conducted, and they failed. 363 that's the property for failing to register for 2024. The number of properties that need enforcement for 2024, 363 out there that did not.

Solicitors Report-

Bruce Markovich spoke about how Solicitor Robert Yurchak is going to try to attend the meeting after his meeting at the school board and there are a few things he would like to bring up.

Bruce Markovich stated that Robert Yurchak would like council to either withdrawal or vote down the English-only motion the agenda due to that violating federal law.

Bruce Markovich stated Robert Yurchak is working on a towing ordinance.

Bruce Markovich stated Robert Yurchak would like the council to hold off on a penalty for Construction Clearance due them not receiving the letters sent to them.

Bruce Markovich stated Robert Yurchak is working on the animal ordinance, dumpster ordinance, and residential rental ordinance.

Bruce Markovich stated that Robert Yurchak stated that motion 19 is to be done with a ordinance amendment to the Rental Property Ordinance.

Bruce Markovich spoke about how the ordinances were done in draft and sent to council, once they are revised, the council will then be able to advertise them.

Bruce Markovich stated that Robert Yurchak is currently working on a separate motion for towing rules.

Tax Collector's Report-

Secretary Ashley Mclaughlin spoke the tax report.

From December 1st, 2024 to December 31st, 2024, taxes collected were \$37,794.00.

Motion to pay the bills-

Motioned by Gwyneth Collevchio and seconded by Michele Bartek.

Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

Discussion/Motion to approve Billitier Electric to install 10-LED 480 Volt lights in the Mechanic Garage Area of the Borough Garage. The cost to be \$5,178.00. –

Joseph Butrie spoke about how if a new borough garage is being built it is a waste of money on lights in the borough garage that could be spent elsewhere.

Joesph Butrie stated he would like to withdrawal the motion.

Motioned to be withdrawn by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Jack Soberick.

Motion to be withdrawn passed unanimously.

Motion to amend the vehicle ordinance that if they do not have an inspection sticker or their inspection is more than 30 days old their sticker and it's out of date that the vehicles can be towed with no exception. -request by Michele Bartek

Motioned to be withdrawn by Michele Bartek and seconded by Jack Soberick.

Motion to be withdrawn passed unanimously.

New Business:

Motion/Discussion for Council to join the America250PA

Michele Bartek spoke about America250PA.

Michele was invited to attend a meeting down in carbon county for the United States sequential, centennial which means America will be 250 years old July the 4th. 2026.

America250PA has 67 different communities involved in it. Lansford borough would have to approve a resolution and get back to America250PA if they would like to be involved.

Michele Bartek speaks about the benefits of the borough being involved in America250PA and how she feels that this could be something positive for the borough.

Michele Bartek also spoke about how during this time Lansford Borough would be 150 years old and that Lansford Borough could do something during that time to celebrate Lansford being 150 years old.

Michele Bartek speaks about some of the events that could happen to celebrate the events.

Motion/Discussion to approve the resolution allowing the council to join the America250PA

Motioned by Gwyneth Collevchio and seconded by Jack Soberick.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motions:

Motion to accept Garbage Bid

Motioned to accept the sole bid from Tamaqua Transfer by Jack Soberick and seconded by Jennifer Staines.

Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/Motion to award Garbage Bid

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

Motion to table passed unanimously.

Motion to reappoint John Tucker to the Coaldale-Lansford-Summit Hill Sewer Authority.

John Tucker was the only applicant received.

Motioned by Gwyneth Collevchio and seconded by Michele Bartek.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to appoint either Steven Foster, Tommy Vadyak, Zachary Gilbert, Robert Greenall, or Nicholas Vavro as a Member of the Lansford-Coaldale Water Authority (5 applications received).

Motion to appoint Tommy Vadyak as a member of the Lansford-Coaldale Water Authority.

Motioned by Jennifer Staines and seconded by Michele Bartek.

Motion was favored by Michele Bartek, Joseph Butrie, Gwyneth Collevchio, and Michele Bartek.

Motion was opposed by Bruce Markovich and Jack Soberick.

Motion passed by majority vote.

Motion to appoint either Michele Bartek, Joseph Butrie, Jennifer Staines, or John Zym as a Member of the Civil Service Commission.

Jennifer Staines spoke about how she feels a resident, taxpayer should be a member of the Civil Service Commission before council.

Motion to appoint John Zym as a member of the Civil Service Commission.

Motioned by Jennifer Staines and seconded by Jack Soberick.

Motion was favored by Jennifer Staines, Jack Soberick, and Joseph Butrie.

Motion was opposed by Michele Bartek, Gwyneth Collevchio, and Bruce Markovich.

Due to split council vote the Mayor Hugh Vrablic voted in favor of the motion, resulting in the motion passing.

Discussion/Motion to approve charging Construction Clearance a 6% late rent charge.

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

Motion to table passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the purchase of a Stihl Cut Off Saw with attachments in the amount of \$2,078.35 to be paid out of the Sewer Transmission Fund. -request by Joseph Butrie

Motioned by Jack Soberick and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/Motion to have any official documents or sign in English only-request by Joseph Butrie

Motioned to be withdrawn by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Jennifer Staines.

Motion to be withdrawn passed unanimously.

Motion for the approval of changes to the Boroughs Standard Grant Pass Through Agreement, requested by Community Action Lehigh Valley for the Grace Community Church Project. Changes consist of:

- 1. The borough agrees to submit requests for reimbursements to the Commonwealth Financing Authority on behalf of Community Action Lehigh Valley.**
- 2. The Borough agrees to reimburse Community Action Lehigh Valley within fifteen days of funds being received by the borough from the Commonwealth Financing Authority.**
- 3. The agreement when approved and signed represents the only agreement between the Borough and Community Action Lehigh Valley.**

Motioned by Jennifer Staines and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion- Under Section 1402 (b)(2) of the Borough Code to appoint the Borough Secretary to open all bids at the time advertised in the bid notice, to record all bids and to forward the information contained in all bids to council for further action.

Motioned by Gwyneth Collevchio and seconded by Michele Bartek.

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

Motion was opposed by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed by majority vote.

Motion-Under Section 1402(b)(2)(c) of the Borough Code to require successful bidders to furnish a bond, irrevocable letter of credit or other acceptable security of 100% of the bid amount within 20 days of the date of date the contract was awarded.

Motioned by Jennifer Staines and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve a cooperative agreement between the Borough of Lansford and the County of Carbon for the Brimbles Wall Project as provided by The Department of Community and Economic Development.

Motioned by Gwyneth Collevecchio and seconded by Jack Soberick.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve a resolution for regulations for the conduct of open meetings and the maintenance of order.

Motioned to be withdrawn by Gwyneth Collevecchio and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion to be withdrawn passed unanimously.

Motion to process the payment of Dennis Starry's pension every month through ADP. This will include tax deductions, allowing ADP to issue a 1099 at the end of the year.

Motioned Gwyneth Collevecchio and seconded by Michele Bartek.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to send the delinquent account for the 2024 utilities to Portnoff for collection.

Motioned by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Jennifer Staines.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to request the Borough Tax Collector to change the billing software for the borough taxes from Municipal Tax system to Berks Intermediate System. There is no cost for the changeover.

Motioned by Jennifer Staines and seconded by Michele Bartek.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to rescind or waive Section 338-15 of the Rental Property Ordinance that requires proof that all overdue taxes, garbage collection fees, water, sewage, sewer transmission fees have been paid prior to issuing a rental license.

Motioned to table by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Bruce Markovich.

Motion to table passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the new rental package sent for renewal for 2025, which includes the notice for past due violations related to the 2024 rental license.

Motioned by Gwyneth Collevecchio and seconded by Bruce Markovich.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to require proof of fire insurance under Section 338-15 (1) of the Rental License Ordinance.

Motioned to table by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Bruce Markovich.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to advertise to accept applications for a part-time Code Enforcement Officer to be hired at a later date.

Motioned by Michele Bartek and seconded by Jack Soberick.

Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/Motion to apply for a 2025 LSA Monroe Grant for upgrades at Ashton Park Playground. To include fencing, two handicap accessible rides and two additional rides and two handicap accessible entry ramps. Estimated costs of \$250,000.

Motioned by Michele Bartek and seconded by Gwyneth Collevchio.

Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/Motion to have Solicitor Robert Yurchak draft an Amusement Device Tax Ordinance. – request by Jennifer Staines

Motioned by Jennifer Staines and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/Motion to hire Randy Schlatter as a Part-Time Officer with a conditional offer of employment pending further background investigation, medical, act 57 and polygraph. - request by Michele Bartek

Motioned by Jennifer Staines and seconded by Michele Bartek.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to accept the resignation letter from Matthew Houser effective as of February 4th, 2025.

Motioned by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Michele Bartek.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to accept the resignation letter from Chief of Police Kyle Woodward effective as of March 31st, 2025.

Jennifer Staines stated she is opposed to the motion due to not wanting him to leave.

Motioned by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Jack Soberick.

Motion was favored by Joseph Butrie, Michele Bartek, Gwyneth Collevchio, Bruce Markovich, and Jack Soberick.

Motion was opposed by Jennifer Staines.

Motion passed by majority vote.

Discussion/Motion for council to approve Michele Bartek to apply for the Local Law Enforcement Support Grant Program of Act 54 of 2022. -request by Michele Bartek

Motioned by Jack Soberick and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting proceeded into an executive session at 7:50p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Ashley McLaughlin

Secretary