

Monthly Meeting Minutes

November 13th, 2024

The November 13th, 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 Collevchio, President Bruce Markovich, Council Woman Jennifer Staines, Mayor Hugh Vrablic, and Solicitor Robert Yurchak.

Council Man Jay Doyle, and Council Man Jack Soberick were absent.

Pledge of allegiance was recited.

Bruce Markovich spoke about the executive session that discussed personnel matters.

**Public Courtesy-**

Rosemary Cannon of 242 West Ridge Street spoke about a social media site that is using the Borough of Lansford Logo and has been discussing meeting attendance while asking people to notice who is not in attendance.

Rosemary Cannon spoke about how the public can obtain committee reports to gather information about who attends the meeting.

Rosemary Cannon inquired about how much one mil equals.

Tommy Vadyak of 334 West Abbott Street thanked the present council members and mayor for attending the meeting.

Tommy Vadyak inquired about the police schedule and the hours they are scheduled.

Tommy Vadyak inquired about why three officers were on duty on Monday during the day.

Tommy Vadyak inquired of Solicitor Robert Yurchak the status of the towing ordinance.

Robert Yurchak and Chief Kyle Woodward spoke about the current towing ordinance.

Joe Genits of 210 West Front Street inquired about the bank accounts for property sales and if the money for the recent property sale will be placed into a new bank account.

Joe Genits inquired about the format of the agenda and the changes he would like to see.

Joe Genits spoke about an auction company that sells properties along with the items inside said properties and that he feels that is something the borough should consider.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes-**

Motion to approve the October 9th, 2024 Monthly Meeting Minutes-

Motioned by Michele Bartek and seconded by Gwyneth Collevecchio.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the October 15th, 2024 Budget Meeting Minutes-

Motioned by Jennifer Staines and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the October 29th, 2024 Budget Meeting Minutes-

Motioned by Jennifer Staines and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed unanimously.

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

Motioned by Michele Bartek and seconded by Gwyneth Collevecchio.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Committee Reports-**

**Fire Department Report-**

Michele Bartek spoke about the Fire Department Report.

For the October report, 2024, the activity report of the American Fire Company, Lansford. Their call volume for the month is an average of 17 calls, two calls that occurred at the same time, this month were a house fire and within the borough, a simple motor vehicle accident. The fire call had engaged the firemen for four hours. The motor vehicle accident took 1.5 hours. The fire on 10-17-24 occurred at 243 East Ridge Street, in which was one end of a three-way home. There were 243 in the rear of it. There were two rooms on fire. It was noted that five victims were transported to the hospital from smoke inhalation. The other incident took longer and then expected. The accident was a motor vehicle accident that occurred on 10-20. The accident took twice as long due to no police being on duty at the time. The accident shut down at 209 in an area of Center and Patterson Street for 1.5 hours. State police were delayed in arriving, and then they had to await the towing service that they contacted to finish cleaning up the scene.

Total incident time for the year is 120.75 hours for the year. For the month, it was 13.25 hours. Total man hours were 141. For the year it is 1235.75.

In-house work details. For the month, it was 197. For the year, it's 1,382.5.

Fundraising hours. For the month, it was 540. Year-to-date, it's 2,103.5.

Response by area, which means in town, or if we had joined Summit Hill. In town, there was seven. Summit Hill, there was five. Coaldale, there was three.

Nesquehoning, there was one. And other, there was one. Year-to-date, in town, there's been 80. Where we helped Summit Hill, it was 29. In Coaldale, there was 30. Nesquehoning was seven. Tamaqua was four. Jim Thorpe was five.

The training sessions. There were 12. Year to date, there was 71. The total training hours were 60. Year to date, it's 406.5. Total man hours are 268. And year to date, it was 1,858.

Community service. For the month, there was three events. Year to date, 13. Total hours served, there was 10 for this month. Year to date, there was 35.5. Total man hours were 64 and year-to-date were 236.5.

Administrative hours were 4 this month, year-to-date is 804. Total administrative hours used this month were 20, year-to-date were 200, total man hours were 80, and year-to-date were 800.

### **Ambulance Report-**

Michele Bartek spoke about the Ambulance Report.

The Leighton Ambulance responded to 83 incidents in October. There was an average response time of 10.2 minutes from the time of dispatch until arrival at the scene. Of the 83 responses, 14 were, for non-emergency assistance, including standby, etc. with a time of 10.7 minutes, 20 were non-emergency patient services, with a time of 10.2 minutes, and 41 emergency response with a time of 9.6 minutes.

### **Mayor's and Police Report-**

Hugh Vrablic spoke the Police Report.

156 calls and complaints, 13 cases cleared for arrest, 2 non-trafficked citations filed, 5 traffic contacts, 3 parking and ordinance tickets issued, one code search warrant served, and 882 miles patrolled.

### **Code Report and Zoning Report-**

Jennifer Staines spoke the Code Report.

36 complaints received, 16 walk-ins unannounced, tickets issued 29, properties changed 11, inspections with Ray were 11. DEP made a couple of complaints, and we answered them for a broken sewer line. With Arrow, pertaining to violations, there were 6 NOV sent, 7 certified mailed bought, vacations issued 4, court hearings are 3.

### **Rental Report-**

Jennifer Staines spoke the Rental Report.

1,116 original properties on the list. 1,141 Current potential number of properties. 279 properties have been not a rental, family occupied. 304 registrations for property process. 210 rental licenses issued, 25 inspections scheduled, 21 inspections were conducted on properties, 2 inspections were conducted and the unit failed, and 2 inspections scheduled certificates of occupancy issued. 557 properties for potential non-registration actions, 32 properties were sent NOV. 32 initially were completed and there is going to be 50 more coming due to property owners that did not respond at all to anything for the rental license.

**Solicitors Report-**

Robert Yurchak spoke the solicitors report.

Robert Yurchak spoke about the garbage specs that were sent to the borough and if council has any additional feedback before they are prepared for advertisement.

Robert Yurchak spoke about the dumpster ordinance.

Robert Yurchak spoke about the sewer transmission ordinance and that the amendment will address multi-unit properties.

Robert Yurchak spoke about Act 131 that permits council to enact an ordinance to raise council members and mayors' salaries.

Robert Yurchak stated Act 131 would not apply to already appointed board members but can be applied to council members and mayor appointed after 2025.

Robert Yurchak stated with Act 131 council can determine if council members are paid per meeting for the members that do show up but an ordinance for the act would be needed.

Jennifer Staines inquired if council members have an interest in the raise but that she is opposed to increases.

**Tax Collector's Report-**

Maria Ahner spoke the tax report.

From October 1st, 2024 to October 31st, 2024, the total taxes collected were \$17,354.88. The amount being high due to covering the balance owed to the borough from September 2024. \$3,270 was owed to the borough from September and the amount covering October is \$14,084.88. These amounts now being up-to-date balances from the tax collector office.

**Motion to pay the bills-**

Motioned by Jennifer Staines and seconded by Gwyneth Collevechio.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Old Business:**

**Motion to approve the purchase of ten new portable radios for the Lansford Fire Company in the amount of \$89,512.50 to be paid from ARPA Funds. -requested by Jennifer Staines**

The radios are being purchased from Greens Communications.

Motioned by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Jennifer Staines.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Motion to approve the amended Sewer Ordinance to establish separate bills for each unit within a multi-unit building.-requested by Robert Yurchak**

**Motion to advertise the amended sewer transmission ordinance.**

Motioned by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Michele Bartek.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Motion to approve the special event request from the Lansford Friends of Recreation for tree delivery and decorating on November 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024 from 12p.m. to 5p.m. and December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 from 12p.m. to 5p.m. at JF Kennedy Park.**

Motioned by Jennifer Staines and seconded by Michele Bartek.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Motion to obtain quotes for handicap accessible doors at the borough hall-requested by Jennifer Staines**

Council discussed handicap accessible doors.

Council agreed with Jennifer Staines obtaining handicap accessible door quotes for installation.

**New Business:**

**Discussion about Towing Zones Enforced Signs. -requested by Jennifer Staines and Joe Butrie**

Jennifer Staines and Joseph Butrie spoke signage to help with towing enforcement.

Joseph Butrie spoke about wanting to wait on ordering the signage until the borough ordinances are updated.

Joseph Butrie spoke about bringing the signage to the next meeting for everyone to see.

**Motions:**

**Motion to advertise for a Budget Meeting on November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

Executive session for general purposes with the budget meeting following. The executive session at 5:00p.m. and the budget meeting beginning at 6:00p.m.

Motioned by Gwyneth Collevchio and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Motion to advertise for a Special Meeting on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024 for the purpose of tentatively adopting the proposed 2025 Budget**

Motioned by Joesph Butrie and seconded by Gwyneth Collevchio.

Motioned passed unanimously.

**Motion to advertise the December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024 Committee Meeting to begin at 5:00p.m.**

Bruce Markovich spoke about Justine Trukpas from the Main Street Program asking to meet with council at 5:00p.m.

Motioned by Gwyneth Collevchio and seconded by Michele Bartek.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Motion to advertise for an Executive Session Meeting for the purpose of Code and Ordinance-requested by Jennifer Staines**

Jennifer Staines spoke about a gentleman from West Mahanoy Township that runs West Mahanoy Township rental program and that he is willing to come and speak with council on how to improve the borough's rental program.

Jennifer Staines spoke about a registry that can be joined for information on LLCs.

Motion to advertise for a special meeting for the purpose of rentals on Thursday November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

Motioned by Jennifer Staines and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Motion to hire Gilbert Diaz as a Part-Time Officer with a conditional offer of employment pending further background investigation, medical, act 57, and polygraph. -requested by Kyle Woodward and Michele Bartek**

Motioned by Michele Bartek and seconded by Gwyneth Collevchio.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Motion to approve the removal of the handicap parking space for Michele Bodine at 309 East Patterson Street due to her being deceased as of October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024.**

Due Michele Bodine's passing the borough can remove the handicap parking space without a motion.

Motion did not need to be motioned and all of council agreed to table.

**Motion to approve the Handicap Parking Request from Theresa Gusick at 331 East Bertsch Street**

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

Motion passed unanimously.

**Motion to approve how council would like QuickBooks Computer to be backed up with one of the following options:**

- **Installation of workstation backup includes 500gb of cloud backup for \$349.99 with a reoccurring charge of \$300.00 annually.**
- **For cloud to do onsite backups monthly to an onsite external drive which would be billed monthly at their monthly rate of approximately \$70.00 (\$840.00 annually) installation and hardware cost unknown at this time.**

- **Moved to Q Drive on Server and backed up daily with other server drive backups at no additional annual cost.**

Secretary/Treasurer Maria Ahner stated that QuickBooks needs to be backed up and spoke about the differences between the backup options.

Council discussed their views on the backup options.

Motion to approve the installation of workstation backup includes 500gb of cloud backup for \$349.99 with a reoccurring charge of \$300.00 annually.

Motioned by Michele Bartek and seconded by Jennifer Staines.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Motion to approve opening a checking account in the amount of \$ 25,700.00 with a 4.25% interest rate for the Building Developing Capital Fund. -requested by the office**

Motion to begin a Building Developing Capital Fund Account.

Motioned by Jennifer Staines and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to deposit \$25,700 from the sale of the Silberline Property into the Building Developing Capital Fund the account having a 4.25% interest rate.

Motioned by Michele Bartek and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Motion to approve to have all council members placed on the same security bundle package level except for the Council President. This to save the borough over \$900.00 in dues and fees.-requested by the office**

Maria Ahner spoke about the dues and fees that the current council security bundle package cost and how the cost can be reduced.

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

Motion to table passed unanimously.

**Motion to select a plan from the BlueCross Blue Shield options: (current plan costing \$308,665.00)**

1. **A yearly cost of \$305,907 a savings of \$2,759.00 per year**

**2. A yearly cost of \$301,676 a savings of \$6,989.00 per year**

Motioned to table by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Gwyneth Collevchio.

Motion to table passed unanimously.

**Motion to approve the payment of \$100 to The Carbon County Council of Governments for the 2025 membership fee. -requested by Jennifer Staines**

Motioned by Jennifer Staines and seconded by Michele Bartek.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Motion to approve Hometown Press to publish borough newsletters with no costs to the borough. -requested by Jennifer Staines**

Jennifer Staines spoke about how she feels the newsletter would be beneficial to the community.

Motioned by Michele Bartek and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Motion to approve refunding Kim Reccek \$1,000.00 deposit for 333 W Abbott St. the completion of street excavation. -requested by Michele Bartek**

Motioned by Michele Bartek and seconded by Jennifer Staines.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Motion to approve sending a 30-day notice to Construction Clearance to clean up all items on the property or the items will become borough property. -requested by Joseph Butrie**

Council spoke about the Construction Clearance lease.

Joseph Butrie spoke about the items that currently are surrounding the property.

Motion to have Robert Yurchak resolve the conditions surrounding Construction Clearance.

Motioned by Michele Bartek and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Motion to approve a 6% charge for late rent fees owed by Construction Clearance - requested by Joseph Butrie**

Joseph Butrie spoke about Construction Clearance not being charged for their late rent fees.

Michele Bartek stated that she would like Robert Yurchak addressing this issue.

Motion to have Robert Yurchak address the late rent fees owed by Construction Clearance.

Motioned by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Gwyneth Collevchio.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Motion to have Robert Yurchak amend the Animal Ordinance. The amendment to include chickens, roosters, exotic pets, ferrets, handler licenses, animals permitted by residents, dogs running at large, etc.- requested by Jennifer Staines**

Jennifer Staines speaks about the animal ordinance.

Robert Yurchak spoke about the animal ordinance and that exotic animals are not in the ordinance.

Motioned by Jennifer Staines and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Motion to have Robert Yurchak create ordinance to hire contractors to perform property cleanup. -requested by Jennifer Staines**

The property cleanup will be happening on abandoned and blighted properties.

Motioned by Jennifer Staines and seconded by Michele Bartek.

Motion was favored by Michele Bartek, Bruce Markovich, and Jennifer Staines.

Motion was opposed by Joseph Butrie and Gwyneth Collevchio.

Motion passed by majority vote.

**Motion to approve the purchase of 3,000 No Parking signs at a cost of \$3,950.00. The signs to be placed on borough streets for Snow Removal. – requested by Joseph Butrie**

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

Motion to table passed unanimously.

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**Motion to pass a Resolution to apply for \$800,000.00 in LSA Grant Funding for a new borough garage with the borough contributing \$200,000.00 towards the expected cost of 1 million dollars.**

Motioned by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Jennifer Staines.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Motion to approve an amendment for the Grace Church Community Center Project to designate the entire grant amount of \$252,466.00 towards repairs on the outside of the building.**

Joseph Butrie inquired about the status of that building.

Joseph Butrie inquired about who removed the condemnation that was on the building.

Motioned by Michele Bartek and seconded by Jennifer Staines.

Motion was favored by Michele Bartek, Gwyneth Collevecchio, Bruce Markovich, and Jennifer Staines.

Motion was opposed by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed by majority vote.

**Motion to apply for a USRDA Grant in the amount of \$50,000.00 towards a new borough truck.**

Motioned by Gwyneth Collevecchio and Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Motion to establish a Building and Development Account with Jim Thorpe Neighborhood Bank with net profits from the sale of the Silberline Property and other sales to be placed into the account as directed by council. Current Interest Rate of 4.25%.**

Motion to withdraw motion due to repeat motion.

Motion by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Jennifer Staines.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Motion to transfer the remainder of ARPA Grant \$45,446.24 into the General Fund under the Loss Revenue Provision of the fund.**

Bruce Markovich stated this is going to be tabled due to council wanting to purchase police body cams with ARPA funds.

Motioned to table by Gwyneth Collevchio and seconded by Michele Bartek.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Motion to approve amending the Police Pension Ordinance to include overtime in the Pension Monthly Average Salary Calculation. - requested by Michele Bartek**

Motioned by Michele Bartek and seconded by Jennifer Staines.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Motion to approve allowing Lansford Alive to decorate the vintage lampposts in the downtown with garland and lights.**

Joseph Butrie spoke about having Lansford Alive remove the decorations on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

Motion to approve Lansford Alive to decorate the vintage lampposts in the downtown with garland and lights with the lights to be removed on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

Motioned by Jennifer Staines and seconded by Michele Bartek.

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned by President Bruce Markovich at 7:58p.m.

An executive session began after the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,



Ashley McLaughlin

Assistant Secretary/Treasurer

