

Monthly Meeting Minutes

September 11th, 2024

The September 11th, 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, Council Woman Jennifer Staines, Mayor Hugh Vrablic, and Solicitor Robert Yurchak.

Pledge of allegiance was recited.

Joseph Butrie requested the audience give a moment of silence for the remembrance of September 11th, 2001.

Bruce Markovich spoke briefly about the executive meeting which was about how the borough could get more police officers and other personnel matters. The executive session meeting was from 6:00p.m. to 6:30p.m.

Bruce Markovich spoke about the size of the agenda and requested that the public keep remarks to three minutes.

Public Courtesy-

An audience member spoke about the hill going down Ridge Street.

Martin Ditsky of 330 ½ East Abbott Street spoke about motion twelve on the agenda and that the 400 Block of West Abbott Street that is going down to East Bertsch Street has a ditch that needs to be cleared out.

Michael Riccardi representative of the Carbon County Hot Wheels Club spoke about the special event form that was submitted and the meeting they would like the borough to approve for September 21st, 2024 at Ashton Park from 6:00p.m. to 8:00p.m.

Michael Riccardi spoke about the club's background and the number of people who would be attending the group.

Joseph Butrie asked if the group had any kind of insurance.

Michael Riccardi spoke about the group not having insurance due to it being a group of guys that meet off a Facebook Page.

Michael Riccardi stated that a paper was submitted to the borough stating that the group waives liability from the borough should anything happen during the event.

Michael Riccardi talked about the club having the potential of becoming larger in the future.

A property owner of West Bertsch Street thanked council for the stop sign they installed on West Bertsch Street and Parkway Road but stated that he feels the police need to watch the area due to people ignoring the sign.

Rosemary Cannon of 242 West Ridge Street spoke about the last council meeting and inquired about a remark made about money being taken from the police budget.

Rosemary Cannon inquired about why the police budget was cut and where the money was reallocated to.

Michele Bartek stated she was not on council at the time the budget was cut thus she is unsure why the police budget was cut.

Bruce Markovich spoke about how he does not recall previous council motioning to take money from the police budget and reallocated elsewhere.

Rosemary Cannon inquired about how in previous meeting about the status of the ACT 537.

Bruce Markovich spoke about needing half a million dollars for sewer lines and that the sewer authority stated the borough is responsible for everything but the main lines.

Bruce Markovich spoke about the meeting he had with the sewer authority.

Rosemary Cannon inquired about when the street paving was going to begin.

Jay Doyle remarked the paving has begun.

Approval of Meeting Minutes-

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

Motioned by Jay Doyle and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the August 14th, 2024 Special Meeting Minutes-

Motioned by Gwyneth Collevecchio and seconded by Jay Doyle.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the September 3rd, 2024 Budget Meeting Minutes-

Motioned by Jay Doyle and seconded by Gwyneth Collevecchio.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the September 3th, 2024 Committee Meeting Minutes

Motioned by Jay Doyle and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed unanimously.

Committee Reports-

Fire Department Report-

Mayor Hugh Vrablic spoke about the Fire Department Report.

The average call volume for the month of August was 14 calls with a total of 67.5 man hours. Responses by area equaled 10 in town, 2 in Summit Hill, and 2 in coaldale.

Administrative duties were 20 hours, number of personnel was 4, with a total of 80-man hours.

Training was 11 hours and 172 total man hours. The training hours have exceeded the average of 8 hours per month to 11 hours. The average man hours of training increased 14% from 150 hours to 172 hours.

Hugh Vrablic remarked about the changes that are going on with the fire service and that they are changing the way they are working.

Total man hours year to date are 5,329.

Ambulance Report-

Hugh Vrablic spoke about the Ambulance Report.

The ambulance responded to 82 calls. Average response time is 10 minutes from dispatch. Of the 82, 14 were non-emergencies, such as standbys with a time of 10.9 minutes, 24 were for non-emergent patient services with a time of 11.05 minutes, and 44 emergent responses with a time of 9.8 minutes.

Mayor's and Police Report-

Hugh Vrablic spoke the Police Report.

There were 225 calls. 22 cases were cleared, 15 arrests, 4 non-traffic citations, 3 traffic contacts, 15 parking ordinance issues with tickets issued. Police patrolling was roughly 1,411 miles. The fines and accident report fees collected were \$335. There were several drug seizures over that last couple weeks and guns taken off the streets. The accountable money for the August Bill was \$2,724. The money being held until the processing is done and the NADAC accepts it.

Code Report and Zoning Report-

Jennifer Staines spoke the Code Report.

The 2023 notice of violation list, there is a total of 15 owners, three have court dates set, seven citations have been given or to be given, five are awaiting certifying mail and must sign before action can be taken. The issues are various such as but not limited to rubbish, ground, weak, working without a permit and unsafe structures.

Rental Report-

Jennifer Staines spoke the Rental Report.

From ARRO the original number of properties on the lists is 1,116. The number of potential properties is 1,137. The number of properties that have been reported not a rental, owner-occupied, family occupied, under a construction, or vacant is 194. The number of rental registrations for properties that were processed were 279 with 380 pending. 177 registration licenses were issued. 5 inspections were conducted of properties and a certificate of occupancy was issued. 644 properties for potential non-registration actions.

Jennifer Staines inquired about how council feels about the numbers she provided and stated that she feels council needs to meet with ARRO to find a solution to simplify the rental process.

Bruce Markovich stated that many of the landlords are long-time landlords.

Solicitors Report-

Robert Yurchak spoke the solicitors report.

Robert Yurchak stated that one of the things he wants to talk about is going to be discussed under new business on the agenda.

An assessment appeal is being worked on. He is recommending a property in town be appealed for assessment. The property is sold down the street, has two different parcels, descriptions on this deed, which requires an appraisal when you do a property appeal on that. The county has the property listed for \$790,000 and the property sold for at least \$1.3 million. It's a substantial increase in the market value for that property, but it does require an appraisal to assign values for each parcel that's on the deed.

The school district's already approved going ahead with the appeal and getting an appraisal done when that comes. An appeal and appraisal like that, all three municipal bodies kick in for the percentage of what they get from the taxes. The school district pays the most, and then the borough would pay the next one, and then it would be the county after that. The school district already approved, and the county agrees.

Robert Yurchak inquired how council would feel about going in on the appraisal due to the appraisal helping to increase property values.

Robert Yurchak stated the building being discussed is the old bay building.

Tax Collector's Report-

Maria Ahner communicated the tax report.

From August 1st, 2024 to August 31st, 2024, the total taxes collected were \$4,436.64.

Motion to pay the bills-

Motioned by Gwyneth Collevchio and seconded by Jay Doyle.

Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

Motion to approve the Handicap Parking Request from Annette White for 627 East Patterson Street.

Michele Bartek stated there is no curbing on the sidewalk at 627 East Patterson Street.

Motioned by Michele Bartek. No member of council seconded the motion.

Motion died due to lack of a second.

New Business:

Discussion about amending the Sewer Transmission Ordinance - Requested by Robert Yurchak

Robert Yurchak spoke about the Sewer Transmission Ordinance and that the ordinance does not address multiple commercial structures.

Robert Yurchak spoke about how the ordinance does not cover if more than one commercial enterprise is occurring in one building.

Motion to draft to amend section 345-25 of the Sewer Transmission Ordinance.

Motioned by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Jennifer Staines.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motions:

Motion to approve the special event form submitted from the Carbon County Hot Wheels Club for a Meeting of Hot wheels Enthusiast on September 21st, 2024 at 6:00p.m. in Ashton Park.

Motioned by Jay Doyle and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the special event form submitted from the Panther Valley Junior Senior Highschool Homecoming/Senior Advisors for the homecoming parade on September 20th, 2024 at 5:45p.m.

Motioned by Jay Doyle and seconded by Gwyneth Collevecchio.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the special event form submitted from the Friends of Lansford Recreation for Tree lighting/Santa/Music in Kennedy Park on November 26th, 27th, 29th, and 30th, 2024 and December 1st, 2024 from 2p.m. to 5p.m.

Gwyneth Collevecchio spoke about how on November 26th and 27th the trees and tree stands will be delivered and installed.

Gwyneth Collevechio stated that the November 29th, 30th, and December 1st will be the dates the trees will be decorated.

Gwyneth Collevechio spoke about how the decorating on December 1st will stop at 2p.m. due to the program from Lansford Alive beginning.

The rain/sleet/Snow date for the event is December 8th, 2024 and will have the same time as December 1st, 2024.

Motioned by Jay Doyle and seconded by Michele Bartek.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the pay-off payment on The MEM Debacle-Lfund Loan in the amount of \$14,604.11 to save on interest charges. -Requested by Office

Motioned by Jay Doyle and seconded by Jennifer Staines.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve opening a fire escrow account for 245 East Abbott Street in the amount of \$29,605.04.- Requested by Office

Motioned by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Jay Doyle.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the 50% deposit payments in the amount of \$2,258.50 and \$4,097 for the camera security system for the Borough Hall and Police Department to be taken out of ARPA (Covid) Fund- Requested by Office

Motioned by Michele Bartek and seconded by Jennifer Staines.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve to extend Dennis Anderson's hours for another 300 hours.

Motioned by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Gwyneth Collevechio.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve a request from the Water Authority to waive the street opening fees for the West Abbott Street Water System Improvement Project

The water line on one block of West Abbott Street is going to be dug up, replaced, and the street to be repaved in the spring of 2025 once the street has set.

Motioned by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Jay Doyle.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve a request from Panther Valley School District to move the bus stop on Walnut Street and Abbott Street to Walnut Street and Bertsch Street due to the ongoing construction at the church.

Motioned by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Gwyneth Collevechio.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to have the Zimmerman Building property surveyed.

Motioned by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Jay Doyle.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion for ARRO Engineering to prepare the specifications for the borough to advertise bids for the Borough Salt Shed

Bruce Markovich stated the shed would go next to the borough garage.

Motioned by Jay Doyle and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the paving of the following streets:

100 block of East Abbott Street from Spring Garden to South Walnut Street

Coal Street from SR-209 Patterson Street to West Ridge Street

Unit Block of East Bertsch Street from Tunnell Street to Spring Garden Street

Center Street from Spring Street to Water Street

Unit Block of East Abbott Street from Spring Garden Street to midway Unit of East Abbott Street

Jay Doyle stated that six streets are going to be paved this year.

Motioned by Jay Doyle and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the purchase of a 2016 Ford SUV for the Code & Ordinance Officer in the amount of \$4,750.00 from Miracle Ford in Tamaqua, PA.

Motioned by Jay Doyle and seconded by Michele Bartek.

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

Motion was opposed by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed by majority.

Motion to approve the sale of the 2003 Mercury Code & Ordinance Vehicle once the new code vehicle is purchased.

Motioned by Jay Doyle and seconded by Gwyneth Collevichio.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to obtain costs to have the former Borough garage building and property owned by the borough on West Water Street surveyed and appraised for future sale.

Joseph Butrie stated he feels the building should be teared down before the property is sold.

Motioned by Jay Doyle and seconded by Michele Bartek.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve a Resolution to place the 1990 Ford Dump Truck up for public bid.

The minimum bid of the dump truck to be **\$3,000.**

Motioned by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Michele Bartek.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve a Resolution to place the 1991 Ford Street Sweeper up for public bid.

The minimum bid of the street sweeper to be \$3,000.

Motioned by Jay Doyle and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve a Resolution to place the 2003 Mercury former police car up for public bid

Motion was passed in previous motion.

Motion to approve a Resolution to place the 2014 Ford Police Car up for public Bid.-

Joseph Butrie stated about the police car having all the safety equipment and lettering removed from the vehicle.

Motioned by Jay Doyle and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to prohibit parking on borough property located across from the 300 block of East Ridge Street in Coaldale.

Motioned by Gwyneth Collevecchio and seconded by Michele Bartek.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to participate in the Pennsylvania Small Business Grant Initiative Program to assist startup businesses with grants to start a small business in town.

Motioned by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Jennifer Staines.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to participate in the Pennsylvania Creative Entrepreneur Grant Program to provide small businesses with marketing and development strategy.

Motioned by Jennifer Staines and seconded by Gwyneth Collevecchio.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to move our 2024 Community Development Block Grant Funding from rehabilitation of Cortright Street between Abbott and Water to demolition of the former Kochs Appliance Building on West Ridge Street.

Bruce Markovich stated the property address is 118 West Ridge Street.

Bruce Markovich stated that the property owner of 118 West Ridge Street has not responded to any citations given.

Motioned by Jay Doyle and seconded by Jennifer Staines.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to provide a letter of support to the boroughs of Nesquehoning and Summit Hill for new Christmas lights.

Motioned by Jennifer Staines and seconded by Michele Bartek.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to create a perspective bid and receive bids for the remodeling costs of converting the Silberline Building into the potential New Police Station.-Requested by Michele Bartek

Michele Bartek spoke about the things that the police station needs to be compliant with the state.

Council discussed their opinions on moving the police station.

Chief Kyle Woodward spoke about other borough's police stations and police forces.

Robert Yurchak spoke about Michele Bartek getting the bid specs for the Silberline Building and then bringing the information to council at the next meeting.

Motioned to table until Michele Bartek gets bid specs by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Jennifer Staines.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to apply for a Statewide LSA Grant in the amount of \$89,512.50 for ten new portable radios for the Lansford Fire Company.

Michele Bartek spoke about the radios and the company that provides them.

Motioned by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Jennifer Staines.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to provisionally hire Amy Barkley as a Full-Time Police Officer.

Motion to table until the completion of the Civil Service Test due to the test already being scheduled.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

Joe Genits inquired about if the Civil Service Commission vacant position is going to be advertised and if the current members have all taken an oath of office.

Joe Genits inquired if Lansford is reimbursed when the police force serves on the taskforce.

Michele Bartek spoke about the taskforce and currently there is no taskforce contract.

Motion to increase the rate of pay for Part-Time Police Officers to \$27.00.

Council agreed with the rate increase applying to the next pay period.

Motioned by Jay Doyle and seconded by Jennifer Staines.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to advertise to hire Full-Time and Part-Time Police Officers.

Council spoke about advertising online and for a period of 6-months.

Motioned by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Jennifer Staines.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to go off the agenda.

Motioned by Michele Bartek and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the purchase of 24 black waste containers for \$146.99 each and anchor kit \$9.99 each for Lansford Parks.

Motioned by Joseph Butrie and seconded by Jay Doyle.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to adjourn-

Motioned by Michele Bartek and seconded by Joseph Butrie.

Motion passed unanimously.

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

Respectfully Submitted,



Ashley McLaughlin

Assistant Secretary/Treasurer