
MINUTES

Call to Order: Mr. Belmonte

Pledge of Allegiance Mayor Heller

Roll Call:

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|--------------|--------------|-------------------------------|-----|
| Ms. Liscio | Yes | Mr. Belmonte | Yes |
| Mr. Meshanko | Absent | Mayor Heller | Yes |
| Mr. Mrazik | Arrived Late | Janet Sullivan, Tax Collector | Yes |
| Mr. O'Malley | Yes | Steve Korbel, Solicitor | Yes |
| Mr. Porco | Yes | Paul Gaus, Engineer | Yes |
| Mr. Tomasic | Yes | Steven Morus, Manager | Yes |

Public Hearings – Two Conditional Use applications Mr. Korbel

Conditional Use – Gordon Handelsman – Physician's Office – 1723 Ardmore Blvd., lot & block 299-k-106. Details of the public hearing can be provided by the transcript prepared by the court reporter present.

Mr. Korbel noted the exhibits present and explained the procedures.

Dr. Handelsman explained his request.

Motion to close the hearing by Mr. O'Malley and seconded by Mr. Belmonte. There were no objections.

Conditional Use – Eric C. Strong – Dry Cleaning Drop Off Store lot and block 300-C-150.

Details of the public hearing can be provided by the transcript by the court reporter present.

Mr. Korbel noted the exhibits present and explained the procedures.

Mr. Strong explained his request.

Motion to close the hearing by Mr. Porco and seconded by Ms. Liscio. There were no objections.

President's Report

Mr. Belmonte

Mr. Belmonte welcomed students who were present from Woodland Hills.

Building Inspection Underwriters representative Chuck Kovach present to introduce the borough's new code enforcement officer, Don Bagdassarian.

Noted there would be an executive session to discuss budget issues re: public safety.

Mr. Belmonte recalled his comments from last meeting and discussed looking at the future and working with the borough's neighboring municipalities.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Heller

Mayor Heller had no report.

Tax Collector's Report

Ms. Sullivan

Ms. Sullivan presented her monthly report for December 2006.

Police Chief's Report

Chief Fabrizi

Chief Fabrizi presented his monthly report of activities and presented a comparison in writing between year end 2006 and year end 2005.

Have collected \$880 toward the canine program.

The department has received the tasers and the chief is working to schedule training.

Ms. Liscio asked Faith Katchmar to comment on the letter she sent on behalf of the public safety committee of the "We the People" organization. Discussed the canine program and fundraisers; also discussed equipment needs including additional tasers, securing body shields and cell phones.

Chief noted that it would be nice if each officer had a taser but that at least one extra would be good to cover down time or additional officers on a shift.

Ms. Liscio comments the budget is in place for this year but we can try to find the money for an additional taser and possibly budget for next year to expand on the tasers.

Ms. Liscio would like Chief Fabrizi to comment on the body shields.

Chief Fabrizi comments that he is not familiar with the type of body shields that were addressed tonight. The body shield he is familiar with is the type the Swat Team would

carrier into an incident, which would take up too much room in the police cars. He will research the fold up style of body shields to see if they would work.

Volunteer Fire Department Report

Chief Heller

Rick Colella will be present to update council on lease purchase options for the new fire truck. Discussed the lease purchase options from Laurel Mountain Leasing and Pierce.

He explained why there is a need for a truck now and how the 2006 engines are still available and will be cheaper in the long run with lower maintenance.

Mr. Porco inquires how much can we expect to receive on the sale of the truck?

Rick Colella comments that the salesman believes we can get \$150,000.

Mr. Belmonte – what is the time frame between placing the order and taking delivery of the truck?

Rick Colella – the truck will go on the line in May and be done in July. We can take delivery sometime in July or August.

Mr. Belmonte – there are a lot of discounts for us to take advantage of and we should review them, make a decision, and move on it.

Woodland Hills EMS Report

Adam Knight

No report.

Solicitor's Report

Steve Korbelt

Mr. Korbelt noted that a draft of the zoning ordinance has been sent to Allegheny County for review and comment. The solicitor hopes to have a public hearing on Feb. 28.

Wilkesburg Penn Joint Water Authority Report

Vivian Broz

Ms. Broz presented a monthly activity report and that there is no rate increase. The weather has created additional breaks in lines.

Public Comment

No comments.

Committee Reports

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Mr. Porco

General Report:

1. The committee heard an update from the manager and engineer regarding the pavement improvement program. Along with the foreman, the manager and engineer are working to update the "Paserware" program, a free software program that uses standards established by the national Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to evaluate roads and create a road improvement program while maintaining a record or history of work done on all streets in a computer database. The update should be completed by the February 6 committee meeting.
2. The committee is reviewing a proposal from the foreman to purchase a new truck to replace truck number 73 which is a 1997 F350 with about 60,000 miles. Funds were appropriated for this purchase in the 2007 capital improvements plan.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mr. Tomasic

Mr. Tomasic noted that we do not have bills for December ready for authorization due to year end closing. We should have these at the February meeting along with January's.

Motion: Move to adopt resolution no. 1058 establishing and updating fees for various borough services and permits.

Moved: Mr. Tomasic
Second: Mr. O'Malley

Mr. Tomasic reviewed the change to the resolution shown below.

Note: The fee resolution will be approved in full with this motion in order to maintain the fee resolution as a single document but the only language change to the last version of this resolution is as follows:

Section 23 – Trash & Recycling Fee. Borough Council hereby imposes an annual charge or fee for collection and removal of garbage, household rubbish, debris, and recyclables from each dwelling unit in the amount of \$165.00 commencing with the date of approval of this resolution. The trash fee must be paid in full on or before March 1. However, rate payers may select the option of paying in two annual installments of \$83 each with the first installment due on or before March 1 and the second installment due on or before May 1.

Senior citizens who qualify for the real estate tax discount under the Forest Hills Borough Property Tax Relief Ordinance, Ordinance No. 907, are eligible for a \$50 discount, reducing the annual charge to \$115, for each dwelling unit, effective with the date of approval of this resolution. Eligible senior citizens include:

- Those who were previously approved for the real estate tax discount under Ordinance No. 907 and who maintain their income and residence eligibility as specified in the instructions for the application for participation under Ordinance No. 907; and
- Those who apply and are approved for eligibility under Ordinance No.907 in the year this resolution is approved, provided all instructions are followed and with the qualification stated below.

Senior citizens eligible for the trash fee discount may pay in two installments with the first installment of \$83 due on or before March 1 and the second installment of \$32 due on or before May 1. Seniors who have first applied for the real estate tax discount under Ordinance No. 907 during the current year must pay the full amount of \$165 or the first installment payment by the due date above pending approval of their application. A qualifying senior citizen will receive a rebate of any overpayment once his or her application under Ordinance No. 907 is approved.

This Resolution is adopted pursuant to the provisions of Ordinance No. 785, as amended, and the provisions of the Ordinance are incorporated in this Resolution by reference as set forth in full in this section. Fees for backyard collection are established by and paid directly to the contracted trash hauler as part of the contract agreement with the borough. Fees charged for rental properties are the ultimate responsibility of the property owner and will be billed directly to the property owner for collection. Any charge not paid on or before the date such charge is due shall accrue interest at a rate of 10% per year or a pro rata fraction thereof.

Roll Call Vote:

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|--------------|-----|
| Ms. Liscio | Yes |
| Mr. Mrazik | Yes |
| Mr. O'Malley | Yes |
| Mr. Porco | Yes |
| Mr. Tomasic | Yes |
| Mr. Belmonte | Yes |

General Report:

1. Chairman Bill Tomasic will review:
 - a. The funds received for the purchase of several tasers for the police department. A letter was sent to the district attorney to

- thank him for the \$3,559.85 grant.
- b. Thanked the Woodland Progress for their reporting on recent budget changes. However, he asked to explain the one mill increase which is dedicated exclusively to the pavement improvement program (the manager is reviewing proper procedure for accounting for this with the borough's auditors)
 - c. Suggestion for reducing police overtime by use of "readers" or liaisons at traffic court. Mr. Tomasic is researching this suggestion. He suggests that things like this may help to save money to use to purchase some of the additional equipment for police suggested earlier. Not all magistrates do this but Judge Evashavik does to his knowledge.
 - d. The committee discussed the need to review future pension estimates with the borough's actuary to enable the borough to prepare for contributions and reviewed the pension suit and associated costs currently at \$4,500. Noted that there could be problems in the future and he is concerned about fulfilling the borough's obligation to all the officers including the ones who have been injured. Mr. Belmonte noted that he and Mr. Porco discussed the issue with some of the officers and that they indicated they would be willing to contribute.

Mike Belmonte made a statement about the shootings and the two police officers who are now permanently disabled. Notes that the borough did not receive help from the state or from Wilkins Twp.

Mr. Tomasic discussed the pension issue regarding Officer Ellicker who was injured and went on disability in 2000. Officer Ellicker signed a paper that he would receive 100% pension benefit until superannuation when the benefit would be reduced to 50%. The ordinance is 7 years old passed by council in March of 2000 and signed off on by Mayor Gormley. The borough just received notice of a lawsuit based on the language of that ordinance.

Mr. Porco noted that Mr. Tomasic should be thanked for discussing the issue with the district attorney to get funds for the tasers.

He also discussed the pension lawsuit. The ordinance goes back to the early 1990's and it has been modified several times over the years to increase the benefit. Council at the time it was moved to 100% used language that was crafted by the police association's attorney, Gary Lightman. State law only requires the borough to contribute 50%.

Sr. Mathias, Sumner Avenue – questioned who would serve as readers to replace officers at the magistrates. Mr. Tomasic noted that he is still

getting information on this suggestion; it could be the chief or it could be someone else. He said that the magistrate could hold off any decision should any defendant who decided to fight the ticket want to face the officer.

Mayor Heller noted that the chief could be used but we want to be careful about needs for his time on the daylight shift. He noted that we often have officers deal with several citations at one time. He added that it is important to find savings where possible but asked that we look at this carefully.

Chief Fabrizi comments that in 33 years of service he has never ran into anyone who has ran a red light, it is always yellow, or the officer has something against them, etc. Moving violations make up 99% of the hearings and this is what the officers are up against. When an officer goes for a hearing he goes for more than one hearing at a time sometimes there are 5 to 7 hearings. The officer provides more information about the incident than just what is on the citation.

The chief noted that Wilkins, Churchill and Edgewood (which primarily has part time police officers) use it at times in response to a question from Mr. Porco. He noted that it could make sense for a license violation or a sticker violation but concerned about other issues the majority of time.

2. Committee members reviewed the status of cash in various funds and agreed to continue to allow excess funds to earn interest until they are needed following the state guidelines for municipal investment in their fiscal management booklet.
3. Members asked the manager to continue/complete the capital purchases for the borough's Geographic Information System and computer system upgrade. These improvements were started with the 2006 capital improvements plan and/or 2002 bond issue and continued in the 2007 budget.
4. The committee asked for continued updates on purchase options for the new fire truck from the FHVFD.

BOROUGH PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Mr. O'Malley

General Report:

1. Members and the mayor conducted a lengthy discussion on long proposed improvements to the borough building:

- a. The manager discussed original plans to improve/increase security in the main office through plans to install walls & windows at the two stations at the front of the office (tax collector and administrative assistant) and a wall with door to prevent access to the office without permission. This plan was first proposed in 2002 to increase building security with \$12,000 budgeted in the capital improvements plan to cover the cost of this improvement as well as awnings for the building entrances and concrete repairs at the main entrance.
 - b. Mayor Heller discussed concerns for improving the police side of the borough building including improve locker room/shower access, security for the evidence locker, potential relocation of the police chief and police secretary office, potential relocation of the mayor's office, and storage improvements.
2. The public works crew will use an access road off Barclay Avenue near the recreation center to provide an area for storage of material during construction projects (currently sewer and road projects) as well as dumping clean fill material from these projects now that the borough no longer has access to a dump area in Wilkins.
 3. The engineer reported that he is preparing a specification for conversion to a chlorine tablet system at the pool and that he is investigating alternatives for painting of the pool walls and floor.

Mr. Tomasic noted that the committee discussed the plans to improve security in the borough office and believes that the money budgeted should be used. He is concerned about using the crew to handle the work provided that it doesn't require overtime for other work by the crew.

Mayor Heller would like to see more security for the police. Suggests some ideas for giving the police additional space and having the main entrance to the police department be off the Ardmore. The main entrance would then need to be made handicapped accessible.

Ms. Liscio inquires if it has been determined that the former dispatch room is large enough for a locker room?

Mayor Heller between the three of them, the Chief's, Sandy's and the dispatch area there would be room with work stations between them and then the locker room. Where the building inspector is now would become the reception area where the police secretary would be.

Ms. Liscio comments that this will go back to committee on Feb. 6th.

Mr. O'Malley would like to have a sketch of the area before the meeting.

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Ms. Liscio

Motion: Move to approve the purchase of a new digital video recorder system

through Omega Security Services for the cameras at the borough building at a cost of \$1,990 including installation by Omega of the system and an existing camera.

Moved: Ms. Liscio
Second: Mr. Tomasic

Roll Call Vote:

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|--------------|-----|
| Ms. Liscio | Yes |
| Mr. Mrazik | Yes |
| Mr. O'Malley | Yes |
| Mr. Porco | Yes |
| Mr. Tomasic | Yes |
| Mr. Belmonte | Yes |

Motion: Move to accept the bid of Carl Benvenuto for disposition of the DARE car in the amount of \$1.00.

Moved: Ms. Liscio
Second: Mr. Tomasic

Voice Vote – all in favor

General Report:

1. The manager reported that he has been informed that the borough's application for a shared services matching grant in the amount of \$15,000 toward the purchase of police laptop computers has been approved pending final approval of the Deputy Secretary of the PA Department of Community & Economic Development.
2. A subcommittee that will study options on the problem late last year at the County emergency 911 center when the system went down temporarily will meet on January 30, 2007 at 7 PM in the borough building.
3. The study on the regionalization of police departments in Forest Hills, Wilkins and Chalfant cannot proceed until each of the municipalities completes a survey requested by the PA Department of Community & Economic Development.

OPERATIONS & POLICY COMMITTEE

Mr. Mrazik

Motion: Move to approve the minutes of council for the December 20, 2006 meeting.

Moved: Mr. Mrazik
Second: Mr. O'Malley

Voice Vote – all in favor

Motion: Move to approve the minutes of council for the December 29, 2006 special meeting.

Moved: Mr. Mrazik
Second: Ms. Liscio

Voice Vote – all in favor

Motion: Move to authorize the manager to advertise a council strategic planning meeting for February 13, 2007 from 7 PM to 9:30 PM at the Forest Hills/Westinghouse Recreation Center.

Moved: Mr. Mrazik
Second: Mr. Porco

Voice Vote – all in favor

General Report:

1. Council continues to seek volunteers to serve on various boards and committees where vacancies may exist as of February 28, 2007. Interested residents may contact the borough office for further information or submit a letter of interest with resume or background summary to the borough office.

PLANNING & ZONING COMMITTEE

Mr. O'Malley

Motion: Motion to approve with the conditions outlined by the solicitor in his memorandum dated January 16, 2007 the conditional use application of Gordon Handelsman for a physician's office (clinic) on property located at 1723 Ardmore Boulevard, and direct the proper Borough officers to prepare findings of fact and conclusions of law in support of said decision.

Moved: Mr. O'Malley
Second: Mr. Tomasic

Roll Call Vote:

| | |
|--------------|-----|
| Ms. Liscio | Yes |
| Mr. Mrazik | Yes |
| Mr. O'Malley | Yes |
| Mr. Porco | Yes |
| Mr. Tomasic | Yes |

Mr. Belmonte Yes

Motion: Motion to approve with the conditions outlined by the solicitor in his memorandum dated January 16, 2007 the conditional use application of Eric C. Strong for an ancillary use as a dry-cleaning drop-off and pick-up store on property located at 2020 Ardmore Boulevard, Suite 160, Building No. 3, and direct the proper Borough officers to prepare findings of fact and conclusions of law in support of said decision.

Moved: Mr. O'Malley
Second: Ms. Liscio

Roll Call Vote:

| | |
|--------------|-----|
| Ms. Liscio | Yes |
| Mr. Mrazik | Yes |
| Mr. O'Malley | Yes |
| Mr. Porco | Yes |
| Mr. Tomasic | Yes |
| Mr. Belmonte | Yes |

General Report:

1. The committee discussed the proposed rental property ordinance and is considering whether to postpone consideration of the ordinance pending a review by the borough's new code enforcement officer and additional comments by the borough solicitor.
2. Committee members and council members present discussed the possible use and sale of borough property and suggested that this should be considered as a topic during the strategic planning session. There are no specific plans here only the suggestion that council should consider all options when undertaking the strategic planning process.

Old Business

None

New Business

Mr. Belmonte asked council to consider any conferences that members may want to attend for the Feb. committee meetings.

Adjourn

Motion to Adjourn by acclamation without objection

Next Council Committee meetings scheduled for Tuesday, February 6, 2007 (all 6 committees); next Council business meeting scheduled for Wednesday, February 28, 2007.