

# **BOROUGH OF WEST EASTON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**April 12, 2021**

***APPROVED***

The regular monthly meeting of the Council of the Borough of West Easton, Northampton County, Pennsylvania, was called to order at 6:32pm using Zoom videoconferencing, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Roll was taken; Council President Matthew Dees noted there was a quorum. Council members – Paul James, Pete Mammana, David Bolash, Janie Jones Brown, Ken Decker, Jr, and Steve Klaver were present. Mayor Daniel DePaul; Solicitors Steve Goudsouzian and Brian Panella of Goudsouzian & Associates; Borough Manager, Joan Heebner and West Easton Borough Police Chief, Robert Mahady were present. Members of the public in attendance: David Bogusky, Leon Stull, and Robert Harzel.

-Upon motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Mammana; Council approved expenditures as presented. Motion passed 7 - 0.

-Upon motion by Mr. James seconded by Ms. Jones Brown; Council approved the Deposits and Receipts from March, 2021. Motion passed 7 – 0.

-Upon motion by Mr. Mammana, seconded by Mr. James; Council approved the minutes from the March 8, 2021, Council Meeting. Motion passed 7- 0.

-Upon motion by Mr. Mammana, seconded by Mr. James; Council approved the Treasurer’s Report for March, 2021. Motion passed 7 – 0.

**Public Comment (Agenda Items) – None**

**Engineer Report – None**

**Office Report** – Ms. Heebner reported that for those not on Facebook, Mayor DePaul had once again gone above and beyond when he noticed a person emptying a trash receptacle at Niko Park. He was able to locate the perpetrator going into Wilson Borough where he observed the young male spray painting a wall of the former Easton Hospital. He promptly called 911 and the young male was detained.

**Sewer Report** – Mr. James reported that the EAJSA had awarded the electrical contract for the Disk Filter System. This project is big and will help long term; it is a great addition. He also reported that Weyerbacher is paid up and has no outstanding debt.

**Ordinances, Resolutions and Policies** – Mr. Mammana made a motion to advertise Ordinance 2021-19, AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF WEST EASTON, COUNTY OF NORTHAMPTON, TO REGULATE THE PARKING OF TRAILERS AND THE TARPING OF VEHICLES ON PUBLIC STREETS; INCORPORATING CHAPTER 10 “HEALTH AND SAFETY”, PART 3, “PARKING AND STORAGE OF MOTOR VEHICLES,” SECTIONS 301 - 304 INTO CHAPTER 15 “MOTOR VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC”; REPEALING CHAPTER 10 “HEALTH AND SAFETY”, PART 3, “PARKING AND STORAGE OF MOTOR VEHICLES,” SECTIONS 305 TO 307; AND AMENDING SECTION 305 OF “MOTOR VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC,” RELATING TO PENALTIES; seconded by Mr. James. No discussion. Motion passed 7-0.

**Solicitor’s Report** – None

**President’s Report** - Mr. Dees commended Mayor DePaul on his actions on April 7, 2021. Mayor DePaul observed a juvenile intentionally litter Niko Park. The juvenile then ran toward Wilson Borough and out of the jurisdiction of the West Easton Police Department. Mayor DePaul went above and beyond, by getting into his vehicle and spotting the youth in Wilson Borough. As the youth began spray painting the side of Wilson’s hospital building, Mayor DePaul placed a 911 call and Wilson Police responded and apprehended the juvenile. Mr. Dees was disappointed that some took this positive action by Mayor DePaul and attempted to make it a negative thing on social media, turning it into a call for full-time Borough police department. Mr. Dees planned on asking Council to approve a special committee to investigate a full-time police department and report its findings at the next council meeting. In the meantime, the Safety Committee will schedule a meeting to discuss ways to reinvigorate the Community Block Watch Program, which will require participation by as many renters and homeowners as possible.

**Police Chief’s Report** – Chief Mahady said that he made an arrest on the juvenile that Mayor DePaul caught scattering trash at Niko Park. He reported that the speed signs were in and working but they need to find straps to hold them to poles as the straps were not included.

**Mayor’s Report** - Mayor DePaul reported that:

- fuses were purchased for the Cub Cadet and that is up and working now.
- Deltawash’s well is now up and running and we will continue to take readings for sewer bills.
- a few years ago there was a grant to buy a few park benches. He and Dane Thatcher had now moved one from the DUI Center up to Gross Park.
- the Jeep needs two new tires and will be inspected.
- people should not compare borough taxes to township taxes.

**Round Table** – Council President Dees asked Council member Mr. Decker, Jr., who publicly made known his desire to look into a full-time police department, to head the special committee to investigate current costs of a full-time police force, and to report to Council the following: The total number of full-time police officers needed to cover the borough 24/7/365, including any part-timers needed to cover for those officers who call out sick, go on vacation, take personal days, or have Court obligations; total yearly wages for all officers combined, including anticipated holiday/overtime pay; total yearly cost to the borough of medical benefits packages for all full-time officers; the cost of training, uniforms, and weapons the borough would be required to provide each officer; Civil Service costs to the borough, including pension contributions; any total tax millage increase needed to be added to the 11.7 mills homeowners currently pay.

Council President Dees informed Councilman Decker, Jr. that the Council of 2016 consisting of now-Mayor DePaul, Vice President Paul James, and himself, who are still serving today, investigated the possibility of a full-time police department. It was determined then, to be cost prohibitive and a tax burden that residents could not afford. Mr. Dees said that if Mr. Decker, Jr. can provide numbers showing a 1 or 2 mil increase in taxes for a full-time police department he would consider supporting it, but believes the millage increase would likely be 20 mils.

No Special Committee was created, as Councilman Decker, Jr. did not accept the Special Committee assignment, but said he would still look into costs and report his findings to Council.

Mr. James added that the West Easton Scholarship Committee plans to hand out three scholarships this year: two college scholarships of \$1,000 each and one trade school scholarship for \$1,000.

### **Committee Reports**

**Business and Finance Committee** – None

**Property and Roads Committee** – Mayor DePaul and Mr. Klaver will meet with a UGI supervisor to go over the roads that UGI has worked on to discuss milling the roads to get them back to better than they were before.

**Public Safety and Personnel Committee** – A meeting is set for April 29<sup>th</sup>, 5:30pm at Borough Hall, to discuss bringing back the Community Block Watch.

**Legal and Technology Committee** – None

**Utilities and Fire** – Mr. James said the committee worked on sewer rates and they will continue to work on the rates; the garbage contract will be discussed at next meeting. Meeting set for April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 6pm, at Borough Hall.

**Parks and Recreation Committee** – Ms. Jones Brown reminded everyone that the Community Clean Up event is scheduled for Saturday, April 17<sup>th</sup>. She has noticed a lot of trash; she often does “eco-walking” where she walks with a trash bag and picks up litter as she finds it. A meeting was set for May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 3:30pm at Gross Park to discuss summer projects. Meeting will be held via Zoom if the weather is bad.

**Grants and Public Relations Committee** – None

**Unfinished Business** – None

**New Business** – Mr. Klaver asked about the possibility of a streetlight on 4<sup>th</sup> Street. He said one area is very dark and he felt a light would be a crime deterrent. He first wants to check with his neighbors to be sure they are all right with a light if one is placed there. Mr. James will see where he wants it and look into the costs.

-Mr. Klaver believes the garbage trucks are leaving oil stains on his street that will not wash off.

-Mr. Mammana asked what time the trash haulers are allowed to be in the Borough. He said it's been as early as 5:45am.

-Mr. James reminded everyone of the email sent out by Ms. Heebner with links to watch MS4 videos for training. Ms. Heebner stated it is one of the areas the Borough is lacking in the annual MS4 report.

-Mayor DePaul said that the Ukrainian Church will be having a pierogi sale.

**Public Comment (Open)** – None

**Executive Session Entered 8:08pm – Exited 8:33 pm.**

Council discussed legal matters.

-Upon motion by Mr. James; seconded by Ms. Jones Brown, no discussion, Council voted to adjourn the meeting by a vote of 7-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:34pm.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Joan Heebner, Secretary/Manager

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