

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

**July 13, 2020**

## ***APPROVED***

The regular monthly meeting of the Council of the Borough of West Easton, Northampton County, Pennsylvania, was called to order at 6:30 pm using Zoom videoconferencing, due to the COVID-19 pandemic emergency.

Roll was taken; Council President, Matthew Dees noted there was a quorum. Council members – Paul James, Pete Mammana, Janie Jones Brown and Ken Decker, Jr. were present. Council members, Ron Nixon and David Bolash were absent. Mayor Daniel DePaul; Solicitor, Steve Goudsouzian 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, Jason Vanderburg, Leon Stull, and Trude Hargraves.

-Upon motion by Mr. James, seconded by Ms. Jones Brown; Council approved expenditures as presented. Motion passed 5-0.

-Upon motion by Mr. James, seconded by Ms. Jones Brown; Council approved the Deposits and Receipts from June 2020. No discussion. Motion passed 5 – 0.

-Upon motion by Mr. Mammana, seconded by Mr. James; Council approved the minutes from the June 8, 2020 Council meeting. Motion passed 5 – 0.

-Upon motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Mammana; Council approved the Treasurer’s Report for June, 2020. Motion passed 5 – 0.

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

**Engineer Report** – Council was referred to the paperwork from Barry Isett & Associates, detailing estimated costs for engineering on Phase 2 of the Pole Building Project. Mr. Mammana made a motion to approve additional funds of \$2,238 towards engineering costs; seconded by Mr. Decker. Discussion was had. Motion passed 5-0.

**Office Report** -Ms. Heebner confirmed that 2 CDs were invested with Merchants Bank, now Fidelity Bank, for one year, with an interest rate of .5%. PLGIT was only able to offer a rate of .2%.

**Sewer Report** – Mr. James reported that the EAJSA had a proposal for a 2<sup>nd</sup> Street pump station pipe support protection; they excavated a 14 foot section to fix a 10 foot crack. The cost was \$57,841; it took five days and the money came from their capital projects account.

**Policies, Resolutions and Ordinances** - Council President Dees “virtually handed” the gavel to Council Vice-President James and made a motion to approve his resolution: Declaring Unequivocally that Black Lives Matter and Reaffirming West Easton Policies and Ordinances that Prohibit Discrimination; seconded by Ms. Jones Brown. Discussion was had. Mayor DePaul asked if the wording on the number of police officers could or should be changed from “four”; Solicitor Goudsouzian suggested to change the wording to “one or more”. Mr. Dees asked for a

voice vote: Mr. Decker, Jr: No; Ms. Jones Brown: Yes; Mr. Mammana: No (because it was not discussed in advance with the council or the legal committee); Mr. James: Yes; Mr. Dees: Yes. Motion passed 3-2.

**Solicitor's Report** – Solicitor Goudsouzian stated they are working on RTK appeals and litigation.

**President's Report** – Mr. Dees reported that:

- Northampton County was moved to the “Green Phase” in the battle against Covid-19. Unaware to some is that, “Green” does not mean “normal.” The pandemic is still here and people are still becoming infected due to many who refuse to wear masks and do not social distance.
- It is still up to individual communities to determine how they will conduct business, taking into account numerous factors in making that decision.
- For West Easton, we have a significant population of elderly, we lack the space in our Borough Hall to hold meetings while maintaining proper social distancing, we don't have the staff to clean our lobby and bathrooms after each resident might enter, and at least one resident has openly declared they will not wear a mask when entering the building.
- Since June 17, when Pennsylvania reported a low of 336 positives, the infected have risen to around 1000 reported positives on July 10.
- After weighing the status of the pandemic, the requirements needed for the borough to meet CDC guidelines and seeking input from our Borough Manager, Borough Hall will continue operating as it has been, closed to the public, until a date to be determined in the future. We will not risk the health of residents and staff.
- We are aware of firework complaints; we checked around and while there were lots of complaints, area police gave out a lot of warnings but no citations that we are aware of. Mr. Dees suggested getting in touch with Senator Boscola and Representative Freeman if you'd like to voice your opinion in supporting the legislation of having the sale of fireworks law rolled back.

**Mayor's Report** - Mayor DePaul spoke to Mr. Kleinman; there is nothing going on at the DUI Center; there may be nothing happening there until October. The Social Club opened for Bingo.

**Round Table** – Mr. James reported on his attending an LVPC meeting:

- LVPC consolidated several meetings into one due to COVID-19.
- Because of COVID-19 there were less trucks on the road and less people driving, so liquid fuels money will probably be down.
- The best way to avoid Census takers at your doorstep is to fill out the Census form.
- Residential sales are up; Commercial sales are down.
- Fireworks: the bill was rushed through; it was just enacted. It will probably take time to get fixed.
- Reminded everyone that tax day is July 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Committee Reports**

**Business and Finance Committee** – Meeting scheduled for July 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm. The office will have the 6- month report prepared for committee.

**Property and Roads Committee** – None.

**Public Safety and Personnel Committee** – Chief Mahady reported that the Police Department should be live July 23<sup>rd</sup> by County dispatch. Meeting set for August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6pm.

**Legal and Technology Committee** – Zoom meeting set for August 6<sup>th</sup>, 6pm.

**Utilities and Fire** – Mr. James reported that his committee met and stated that they discussed the proposal for garbage bids and suggested cutting the insurance requirement to 5 million, down from 10 million, to enable more potential bidders to qualify. Meeting set for July 28<sup>th</sup>, 6pm.

**Parks and Recreation Committee** – Ms. Jones Brown reported that her committee met and discussed:

-Clean-up crew t-shirt ideas: “Community Clean-up Crew”. Cost would be \$6-\$8 each, paid by residents. The slogan is “Keep West Easton Beautiful”. Ms. Jones Brown made a motion to approve a fee for 2 t-shirt silk-screens, not to exceed a total of \$50; seconded by Mr. James. Discussion was had. Motion passed 5-0.

-Flag mural; reminded residents and council members to continue to collect clean red, white and blue bottle caps.

-Storm drain murals; look for volunteer artists. Clear epoxy costs \$140 gallon; regular outdoor paint costs approximately \$7, more on this at later meeting.

-Rock painting; Due to COVID-19 the committee would like to set up a table at the park one day and make up kits with paint, brushes and rocks for residents to take home to paint their rocks. They would hopefully then send pictures to the Borough and they will be placed on Facebook. Finished rocks could be placed at Borough Hall in the garden or hidden for others to find. Ms. Jones Brown made a motion to purchase supplies for not more than \$75; seconded by Mr. Mammana. Motion passed 5-0.

-Residents and council members should look around at the parks for possible suggestions on how to improve them. Meetings set for Zoom on August 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, 5pm.

**Grants and Public Relations Committee** – None

**Unfinished Business** – Mr. James hopes to arrange a meeting with Fire Chief Bogari. Mr. Decker offered to see if Chief Bogari can make the scheduled Utilities and Fire meeting.

**New Business** – Mr. Dees informed council that Mr. Jason Vanderburg had put in a letter of interest to fill the vacant seat on the Zoning Board. Ms. Jones Brown made a motion to approve Mr. Vanderburg to fill the vacant seat on the Zoning Board; Mr. James seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

**Public Comment (Open)** – Leon Stull mentioned a tractor trailer parked on a Borough Street; he was told action had been taken.

-Trude Hargraves asked when Mr. Mahady would be available to get some information.

**Executive Session Entered 8:15 pm – Exited 8:23 pm**

Discussed possible litigation.

-Upon motion by Ms. Jones Brown, seconded by Mr. James, no discussion, Council voted to adjourn the meeting by a vote of 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Joan Heebner, Secretary/Manager

7/13/2020