

BOROUGH OF WEST EASTON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

June 14, 2021

APPROVED

The regular monthly meeting of the Council of the Borough of West Easton, Northampton County, Pennsylvania, was called to order at 6:34pm 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. There were no members of the public present.

-Upon motion by Mr. James, seconded by Ms. Jones Brown; Council approved expenditures as presented. No discussion. Motion passed 7 - 0.

-Upon motion by Mr. Mammana, seconded by Mr. James; Council approved two checks to Brown & Brown, LV: #C5415 in the amount of \$14,477 and #C5416 in the amount of \$1,682.42. No discussion. Motion passed 7-0.

-Upon motion by Mr. James seconded by Ms. Jones Brown; Council approved the Deposits and Receipts from May 2021. No discussion. Motion passed 7 – 0.

-Upon motion by Mr. Mammana, seconded by Mr. James; Council approved the minutes from the May 10, 2021, Council Meeting. No discussion. Motion passed 7- 0.

-Upon motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Mammana; Council approved the Treasurer’s Report for May 2021. No discussion. Motion passed 7 – 0.

Public Comment (Agenda Items) – None

Engineer Report – None

Office Report – Ms. Heebner updated Council on several matters:

-The Waste Management contract has been extended through the end of 2022.

-We received confirmation on the leaf vacuum grant: \$42,444 of \$47,160 awarded, or a 90/10 match. Mayor DePaul and Council President Dees both researched and came up with a new vendor as the vendor of the original leaf vac estimate no longer carried the make and model of the unit we had planned to purchase.

-We have received notice that we will receive \$59,573 from the LSA Northampton and Lehigh grant, and \$162, 642 from the LSA Monroe grant towards the Pole Barn Building Project.

-West Easton Borough will be receiving up to \$130,836.52, over 2 years, in 2 equal payments, from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021(ARPA).

-There are two CDs scheduled to mature between now and the end of June. Interest rates are down all over. Mr. Mammana made a motion to transfer the CD money back into the General and Sewer accounts at Fidelity at .2% for now, seconded by Mr. James. No discussion. Motion passed 7-0.

-She thanked Ms. Jones Brown and Ms. Robin Strawn for all their work and planting at Borough Hall and thanked Ms. Jones Brown for all the donations of perennials and plants she has made.

-Mr. Paul Altimare, a West Easton Borough resident, who is a middle school teacher and basketball coach, has volunteered to work on basketball skills with West Easton children every other Saturday morning, 9am – 11am, starting June 26th. Ms. Heebner checked with the Borough insurance carrier and got their approval; Solicitor Goudsouzian has provided a waiver for all parents or guardians to sign. Mr. Altimare will provide the Borough with his clearances. Ms. Jones Brown made a motion to allow volunteer basketball practice for West Easton children as long as waivers are signed, seconded by Mr. James. Discussion was had. Motion passed 7-0.

Sewer Report – Mr. James reported that the EAJSA bylaws have been amended and accepted; they were really old. They are working on a \$900,000 project to replace a bar screen. They have approved local limits on high volume users and did a lot of hard work to get an A rating in going after a 10-million-dollar bond. The EAJSA is now meeting in person at Palmer Library.

Ordinances, Resolutions and Policies – Mr. James made a motion to approve Ordinance 2021-20, AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF WEST EASTON, AMENDING THE ORDINANCES AT CHAPTER 18, ENTITLED “SEWERS AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL” TO COMPLY WITH UPDATED REQUIREMENTS OF THE FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY”, seconded by Mr. Mammana. No discussion. Motion passed 7-0.

Solicitor’s Report – Solicitor Goudsouzian reported that the Laurel Hills project is moving forward.

President’s Report – Mr. Dees noted that:

-The grants mentioned in the Office Report help alleviate the financial burden on the borough, in completing the Public Works Building and obtaining a new leaf vacuum.

-The Property and Roads Committee may want to make a recommendation on whether to scale back the Pole Barn Building Project, specifically to remove the bathroom facilities and its associated plumbing. He feels it is unnecessary for the intended use as a storage unit for equipment and its elimination will greatly reduce the cost of the building, as well as the maintenance and heating costs that would be involved.

-A felled tree was removed from Lehigh Drive earlier this month; he thanked Mayor DePaul for being present during its removal.

- Council members received a draft proposal from Wilson Borough to join the newly formed Wilson Athletic Commission. Wilson Council President, Tony Verenna and Mr. Dees met to discuss his proposal and the provided documentation was forwarded to Council. Some questions were raised on the original document and Mr. Verenna will be revising his original proposal. Until Wilson Borough forwards something new to Council, the subject will wait until an updated proposal is presented by Mr. Verenna, or the Wilson Athletic Commission.

-Council should follow the Covid-19 numbers in June and July and if there is no increase in cases, we might consider voting at the August meeting to start in-person meetings again in September.

Police Chief's Report – Chief Mahady reported that one of the two speed signs has been hung up at the corner of Spring and Keystone and so far, it seems to be having an impact on drivers. Three part-time officers have now been sworn in.

Mayor's Report - Mayor DePaul reported that:

-The situation where the tree that was hit and fell on Lehigh Drive happened right in front of the Pump House where there are cameras. They are hoping to be able to see who hit it.

-He is very happy with the UGI road repairs, as are several other people. He said they've done a super job; they went way beyond what we had hoped for. Ridge Street was done curb to curb.

-There's been trouble with one of the police cars; he returned the charger and got a new battery.

-He would like to meet with the Council President and Borough Manager about the sidewalks, some are really bad and he believes we need to move forward on that.

Round Table – Council President Dees referred Council to the estimate for a park security camera system from Hi-Tech Security Alarms. Ms. Jones Brown made a motion to have Hi-Tech Security Alarms install a camera system at Gross Park at a cost of \$4875, seconded by Mr. Decker, Jr. No discussion. Motion passed 7-0.

Mr. James made a motion to revise the scope of work at the Public Works Pole Barn Project to exclude the bathroom and plumbing, seconded by Mr. Klaver. Discussion was had. Motion passed 7-0.

Ms. Jones Brown reminded Council she is their Mary Meuser Memorial Library representative and that every time someone stops into the Library they will be receiving a ticket that they can enter into a raffle for a gift basket. Also, this Thursday, June 17th, there is a free outdoor garden workshop at the Library and you can take a free plant home with you.

Committee Reports

Business and Finance Committee – None

Property and Roads Committee – Mr. Klaver reported that the scheduled meeting at the park did not take place, due to a lack of a quorum.

Public Safety and Personnel Committee – Mr. Dees stated that at their last meeting they discussed the Neighborhood Watch Program. He asked that other council members volunteer to become Block Captains and reach out to their neighbors to get them involved. They should contact Mayor DePaul directly, if they wish to volunteer.

Legal and Technology Committee – None

Utilities and Fire Committee – Mr. James reported that the Committee is still actively working on sewer rates. A meeting was set for June 23rd, at 6pm.

Parks and Recreation Committee – Ms. Jones Brown mentioned that they will be working on the bottle cap flag mural soon; she stated it is more of an adult project than for children.

Grants and Public Relations Committee – Mr. Decker, Jr. did not have anything new to report. He thanked Mr. Dees and Ms. Heebner for their work on the recent grants.

Unfinished Business – Mr. Dees asked Mr. Decker, Jr. if he had any updates on his research into a full-time police department. Mr. Decker, Jr. replied that he did not think there was any reason to look any further into a full-time police department; the residents seem happy with the part-time police department we have now.

New Business – None

Public Comment (Open) – None

Executive Session Entered 7:10pm – Exited 7:26pm

Council discussed legal matters.

Mr. James made a motion for the Solicitor to take appropriate action to have all illegal vehicles removed from Borough property, seconded by Mr. Decker, Jr. No discussion. Motion passed 7-0.

-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 7:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:
Joan Heebner, Secretary/Manager
