

**BOROUGH OF SLATINGTON**

The **Water, Sewer/Solid Waste, and Highway Committee Workshop Meetings** were held on **March 18, 2019**, in Council Room, 125 South Walnut Street, Slatington, PA.

The meeting was called to order by President Stevens at 6:30 PM with the following in attendance:

PRESENT

Daniel Stevens  
Bryon Reed  
Ronald Kratz  
Joseph Wechsler

ABSENT

OTHERS

Larry Turoscy  
Office Concilio

VISITORS

Ed Ziegler  
Tom Bartholomew  
Mel Gildner

**PUBLIC COMMENT: None**

**A. HIGHWAY**

Bryon Reed – Members: Joseph Wechsler, Ronald Kratz

1. Committee Member Discussion:

- a. The committee discussed the e-mail request, dated 3/13/19, from Todd E. Weidman, Washington Township Manager, to borrow the bucket truck. Councilor Reed found out they only need the bucket truck to do the lights in a parking lot. President Stevens stated that Washington Township must also ask Walnutport for permission because they own half of the truck. Councilor Reed will check into the insurance coverage.
- b. The committee discussed the possibility of hiring an outside lawn mowing service in order to free- up the highway crew for more important things. The committee reviewed quotes from last year. Councilor Reed stated that it is cheaper for the borough to have the borough crew do blacktop. The areas that would be mowed would include, Victory Park, Memorial Park, wastewater treatment plant, and the Westend Playground. Thomas Bartholomew had suggested the committee look at some type of permanent planting that would eliminate the grass at the wastewater and treatment plants. He said that Penn State would come out and evaluate the situation for free. The committee would like to obtain a per diem contract for the weed whacking and mowing. President Stevens mentioned Memorial Park that the borough had authorized the boxwoods be replaced last year. He asked the committee if he should call and have the rose bushes trimmed back. Councilor Reed will look into obtaining quotes for the mowing service.
- c. The committee discussed the e-mail from Dave Bratina, Office of Multimodal Transportation Fund, dated 3/11/19 concerning the PD Multimodal Fund. Cristie Barry from Taylor McCormick would like to set up a kickoff scoping meeting and have the draft agreement review at this time. Larry Turoscy added that we are at a point, between the borough and

the county, that we must pick an alignment and provide for additional turning lanes that are need at the intersection. Larry has a report that PennDOT needs and some of the work that has been done by the county consultant. They show 7 alternatives for the alignment, but Larry feels there are really only 2 alternatives.

- d. President Stevens informed the committee that UGI has a station down near the pump station. UGI needs to replace this station with a new one and have proposed other locations in Slatington on which to build. UGI has picked the borough lot on Diamond and Chestnut, which is really for recreation purposes. The committee agrees that this is not the best location, and is not in favor of the proposal.
- e. Councilor Reed informed the committee The Green Light Go project is for the light at Main and Dowell Street. Councilor Reed questioned the bill for approximately \$20,863.56. He would like to have a formal invoice to see what was done.

President Stevens informed the committee he had just received a letter from Sen. Pat Browne's office. It stated that DCED is currently accepting applications for the MultiModal Transportation fund through July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019. Please note, this is separate from the PennDOT MultiModal fund. The project must be for a minimum of \$100,000 and up to \$3,000,000, 30% match. The committee discussed different ideas to apply for this application. The committee agreed that an application should be submitted.

There were no further questions from the committee members, and so the Highway Committee Meeting was adjourned.

## **B. SEWER**

Joseph Wechsler – Chairman; Members: Bryon Reed, Ronald Kratz

### 1. Committee Member Discussion:

- a. Councilor Wechsler gave an update on the digester project. He spoke with ARRO and Alex said they are starting to move. PSI, Pumping Solutions Incorporated, sent a bill to the borough for \$53, 308, which is bill number 1 and that will go on our bill number 7. This will be submitted to Marge Ryan. We also received an invoice for \$4,500 for Lehigh Valley Inspections. Councilor Wechsler spoke with Kelly Brenner and feels the \$4,500 should be paid by the contractor. ARRO (Kelly) will check into it and get back with Councilor Wechsler. Councilor Wechsler had received an e-mail from Kelly Brenner (ARRO) requesting an extension, and the request must come from the borough. He was informed that Hayden Electric was done with their work, but this was not true.
- b. Chapter 94 Municipal Waste Load Management Annual Report. The committee reviewed the report. Information only

Councilor Wechsler received an e-mail from Duane Szczesny stating they need information on the number of collection systems inspected, flushed or repaired in 2018, and if any manholes were replaced. The report is for the meeting in Philadelphia with the EPA. They also need the total customers EDU (equivalent dwelling unit) used for Slatington, Walnutport, and Washington Township.

- c. This e-mail from Kelly Brenner, dated 3/15/19, requesting an extension for the digester contract completion date was discussed in Section B.1.a.

Being no further questions from the committee members, the Sewer Committee meeting was adjourned.

### **C. WATER/SPECIAL SEWER COMMITTEE**

Ronald Kratz – Chairman; Members: Joseph Wechsler, Bryon Reed

#### 1. Committee Member Discussion:

- a. Councilor Kratz stated the PA Small Water grant - Shadow Oaks Lane - is progressing along.

Larry Turoscy stated that they hope to have the plans done by the end of next week, so it can go out to bid in early April. Larry informed the committee the borough has received over \$900,000 in grant money. He also said the CCR report must be done by the end of March. Also, the DRBC report must be done, which is now a yearly report. The resolutions have been passed for both new projects. Councilor Reed would like to submit 2 applications - one for parking at the Veteran's Memorial and Franklin Street, and hope they pick one of them. Larry Turoscy will complete the necessary forms.

- b. Flushing schedule announcement - informational only. President Stevens stated that Steve said some of the hydrants needed re-painting and would like to make it distinctive between high and low pressure.

Mel Gildner had requested from Councilor Kratz to discuss the number of people did not reach the 8,000-gallon usage for a quarter. Councilor Kratz asked if the usage could be 5,000 gallons. President Stevens informed him their usage could go up during the summer, i.e., maybe wash your house, etc., and this could be a benefit for the customer who only uses 5 or 6 thousand in the winter. Mel had figures on how many customers use only 5,000 gallons or less a quarter. His figures were from the 5/3/17 quarter. He researched on how many customers of that billing used 5,000 gallons or less; he only researched half of the report. Of half of the report 148 customers used less than 5,000 gallons. He figures had he researched the whole report; it would be approximately 300 people that didn't even use 5,000 gallons. The total amount invoices is 1,425. Councilor Kratz stated that approximately 21% of the customers do not get to 5,000 gallons. Mel said even though customers are putting in water saving appliances, they are still getting charged for the base rate of 8,000 gallons. Councilor Kratz stated the customer is getting charged, not so much for the water, but they are paying for the care and maintenance of the infrastructure. Mel feels that it would be better to charge just for 5,000 gallons instead at a lower base rate, and then set a higher rate

for every 1,000 gallons over 5,000. Councilor Kratz asked Mel, even it is still 21% that aren't getting to the current 5,000 gallons, does that necessarily suggest that it is being unfair to the greater whole. Mel responded by saying no. The borough has not had a water and sewer rate increase in 9 years. President Stevens stated it costs approximately \$67.00/month for the water and sewer. President Stevens cited other bills, i.e., cable, electric, and feels the water/sewer bill is a bargain. Councilor Bartholomew informed the committee the water rate in Slatington is half of what it is in every other municipality where he owns property. In every other municipality where he has property the regional water works have been leased by PA American. Typically, for 2 people a month, it is a flat service charge of \$10.00 plus a month and then you pay for all your water usage. The typical bill for 2 people on his properties in Bangor, Nazareth, Wind Gap, under PA American is roughly \$65.00/month for just water, not sewer. Sewer is bill separately by the municipality. He said that if you use \$60.00 of water a month, the sewer would be \$120.00 a month. Tom said the reason their rates are so high is because PA American is a much larger infrastructure, because their billing is done monthly: meter readers and office personnel. He also stated, that if you go out of town for 3 months, you still are charged with a service fee, even if your main water was turned off, of about \$35.00 of billing. Mel feels the water bill is not equitable. Mel asked Tom if the apartments had individual meters for each unit. Tom said the water company can only charge a service fee per meter. Under PA Utility Commission you can't charge a service fee for a meter that doesn't exist. Mel had contacted Walnutport, and was told that if he had a building with 5 units, he would pay 5 base rates. President Stevens stated the word equitable is strictly interpretation, ex. school taxes - how many people pay the tax that don't have children attending the schools. Tom said that if we lower the water usage to 5,000 gallons, the fees in general are going to have to go up, which would affect 80% of the customers. Mel said the borough has over 300 units that are not paying a base rate. Tom stated that we cannot charge a base rate on an apartment that doesn't have a meter. Mel asked how to charge each tenant. President Stevens asked if you have two buildings "A" and "B", next to each other, with a 3/4" water line, it does not cost the borough any more money to bring the water into building "A", than it does to building "B"; the base rate is for the infrastructure, plant to process the water, lines in the ground, sewer, etc. building "B" may have 3 apartments and building "A" maybe a residence, so it cost the borough the same to bring the water there, which is the infrastructure. How can it be justified charging the landlord 3 base fees. Tom compared this idea for the electric and gas companies to do. The electric companies could charge the tenant a base fee. Councilor Reed said stated that if an apartment is empty, the base rate still must be paid. The borough is charging for every drop of water being used. It doesn't matter if the unit is empty. Councilor Kratz asked the committee, that if there is a hardship case, can they have an option on billing. President Stevens informed him that you cannot have 2 different billing systems for apartments; they all must be treated the same. Mel stated that former Mayor Altrichter had approved the apartment billing, because his family had apartments. Mel asked Councilor Reed how many meters does he have on his rental units. Councilor Reed stated just one. Mel feels that if Councilor Reed had individual meters, all landlords would follow suit. Mel said there is a landlord that has 13 units and pays 13 base rates. President Stevens said that is the landlord's decision.

Tom stated that no municipality requires apartments to have individual meters. President Stevens informed Mel the council had voted at the regular council meeting on 3/11/19 not to commit time, or borough resources, to the water billing issue. Mel stated he is not interested in the price; he thinks it is just not equitable.

Ed Ziegler - Ed brought up his 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter bill that was high. He feels that water meter was incorrect. The meter was tested and found to be in good order.

Being no further questions from the committee members, the Water/Special Sewer Committee Meeting was adjourned.

**COURTESY TO THE FLOOR: None**

Councilor Reed made a motion, duly seconded by Councilor Wechsler to adjourn. All in favor. President Stevens adjourned the meeting at 8:13 PM

Colleen Bresnak  
Assistant Borough Secretary