

## BOROUGH OF SLATINGTON

The **Finance Planning/Zoning, Public Safety and Human/Community Services Committee Workshop Meetings** were held on **September 21, 2020**, in Council Room, 125 South Walnut Street, Slatington, PA 18080.

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

<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>	<u>OTHERS PRESENT</u>	<u>VISITORS</u>
Bryon Reed Jason Ruff Thomas Bartholomew Kevin Steckel		Daniel Stevens	Austin Berger

**PUBLIC COMMENT: None**

### **A. FINANCE/PLANNING/ZONING**

Thomas Bartholomew– Chairman; Members: Kevin Steckel, Jason Ruff

1. Committee Member discussion on listed topics:
  - a. Councilor Bartholomew discussed providing Tony Lopsonzski with a Borough provided cell phone. He feels this would expedite his work. Tony Lopsonzski would be able to take phone calls directly and make appointments. Since the new regulations for obtaining an inspection are now 90-days from when the new tenant inspection form is dated, having a Borough cell phone would alleviate phone tags. Manager Stevens stated that adding a phone to the plan would cost approximately \$40.00 per month. Councilor Bartholomew also mentioned that the phone could also be used as his camera. Councilor Bartholomew requested to placing this on the next regular council meeting agenda.
  - b. Councilor Bartholomew discussed the 2021 funding for NLRA. The committee reviewed emails from Joe Wechsler and Ron Krantz. Manager Stevens provided a chart showing the yearly increases over what the Borough was paying. For 2021 the contribution would be \$31,740.00; 2022 would be \$42,320.00 and 2023 would be \$52,900.00. The Borough had hoped that the community center would be up and functional at this time. Manager Stevens stated that some of the future funding was to fund a part-time staff person at the community center. President Reed spoke with Walnutport's President William Turk about the community center and NLRA. Councilor Ruff stated that it is not so much for the community center, but for the programs that the NLRA provides to the community. He also said that he would be willing to keep it at the \$7.50 per capita even if the community center never comes to fruition. Councilor Bartholomew had suggested renting the building out and having revenue coming in. Councilor Ruff informed the committee that there is community capital campaign money, but he isn't sure if this was part of the plan or impacts our per capita number. Councilor Ruff feels the whole thing

should be renegotiated even if the community center never gets built. Manager Stevens stated that the capital campaign is to build the community center. Councilor Ruff stated that they haven't raised \$100,000.00 that they were supposed to raise in 2019 and haven't raised the \$500,000 in 2020. Councilor Ruff said that since all of this is delayed, it would be safe to say all the per capita increases would get delayed. He feels that the 2022 number is actually going to go up to \$10.00 per capita. Councilor Ruff asked when will the council start budget conversations. Manager Stevens stated that budget conversations will start after the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, at the very beginning of October. Manager Stevens did mention that the Borough will take a huge hit on health care for next year. He stated that we have been informed the premiums may go up between 15% to 17%. The money we get back from refund of medical expense has lowered – it went from \$53,000.00 2 years ago to zero in 2020. Councilor Ruff said that the Borough should know what all of the costs are before discussing cutting things. Manager Stevens stated that the water, sewer, and garbage budgets should be fine. However, the increase on health care will have a major impact on the general budget. Councilor Ruff would like to have public involvement concerning the community center. President Reed suggested having a part-time person, just for Slatington, working on programs during the summer months. President Reed explained to Councilor Ruff how the community project started and, after many years, the community center is still not constructed. The committee discussed some options for the 2021 budget. Manager Stevens suggested to the committee to conduct a meeting with Walnutport and Washington Township for their input on continuing with the NLRA. Councilor Bartholomew asked to have this placed on the regular October agenda.

There were no questions from the committee members; the Finance Committee Meeting was adjourned.

## **B. PUBLIC SAFETY**

Kevin Steckel-Chairman; Members: Thomas Bartholomew, Jason Ruff

1. Committee Member discussion on listed topics:
  - a. Councilor Steckel discussed possible changes to Borough Burning Ordinance 641. Councilor Steckel introduced Captain Austin Berger from the Slatington Fire Department. Captain Berger would like to have all officers doing inspections, not just the chief, and then have all permits filed at the Borough Hall. Captain Berger would also like to see fines for non-compliance. Councilor Bartholomew suggested placing this on the agenda to have Attorney Healy review the ordinance, with suggestions from the committee and fire department. Councilor Ruff asked if there would be a fee for the permit. Councilor Steckel suggested \$5.00 for the fee and \$25.00 for the fine. The committee reviewed the ordinance concerning commercial fire pits, chimineas, grills, and homemade fire pits. Manager Stevens suggested that an initial permit be issued but not renewed every year, unless the fire pit has been altered. The committee agreed to add to the ordinance a warning for the first offense and a fine for the second offense. Also, issue a one-time no fee permit

for all commercial burning units, and have all officers the capability to inspect. Councilor Bartholomew suggested banning fire pit burning altogether except for special occasion, etc. Boys Scout, high school, etc. Manager Stevens offered to contact surrounding towns to see what they have concerning fire pits. He will share this information at the next committee meeting. This will be placed on the next committee meeting.

Captain Berger informed the committee that at the last council meeting the fire department had received a recruitment grant. A sign for recruiting with Walnutport was discussed. Walnutport is discussing a possibility of instead of erecting one sign, putting one in Walnutport and one in Slatington. Chief Nicholas asked Captain Berger to ask the committee if they think if it would be alright to put the Recruiting sign by the Welcome Sign at Victory Park. This sign is an electric sign. Manager Stevens brought up the fact that people drive very fast coming down the hill. The committee asked if the sign could also be utilized for, i.e. snow emergencies, detours, burn ban, etc. Placing the sign near the Trailhead was discussed.

Captain Berger mentioned that Jason is looking for a vehicle to be used for his officers, such as responding to calls, carrying official department business, such as inspecting fire pits, fire prevention, etc., instead of using their personal vehicle. The plus side to an official vehicle would be a more powerful radio, allow them to remain mobile, and keep all necessary paperwork. During the last tropical storm, communication was difficult. It was asked if the utility truck would be an option. Captain Berger stated that the utility truck carries all of their fire police equipment and small pumps, and he feels it is not feasible to have this truck dedicated to one person for the purpose of a radio. The highest-ranking officer, available for calls would have the vehicle at his house and be able to go to the scene and evaluate the situation. At this time, the fire department is looking to get the support for just the insurance costs from the Borough and then save up to purchase the vehicle. Captain Berger is looking into grants and donation programs. Councilor Ruff feels that it is necessary to review the budget before committing to this project. Manager Stevens informed Councilor Ruff the preliminary budget should be completed around mid-November for review. This will be in the next committee meeting for further discussion.

Councilor Ruff asked Captain Berger who gave the authority to evacuate 7<sup>th</sup> Street Village. Captain Berger informed him it was the Lehigh County Housing Authority. The committee and Captain Berger discussed how well the fire department responded to emergencies during Hurricane Isaias. Also discussed were what other actions could be done in such emergencies. Captain Berger gave Ron Hausman, Emergency Management Coordinator, kudos for his excellent job in locating housing for the residents.

There were no questions from the committee members; the Public Safety Committee meeting was adjourned.

### **C. HUMAN/COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Jason Ruff – Chairman; Members: Kevin Steckel, Thomas Bartholomew

1. Committee Member Discussion

- a. Councilor Ruff discussed the employee handbook and standardized code of conduct. He said there is no information on how one would conduct themselves in a professional manner. Manager Stevens stated that there is a policy on Unwanted Harassment and Disrespect and a policy on Sexual Harassment which could apply. Councilor Ruff pointed out that the handbook only refers to employees, not appointed officials. He would like to have the committee review the information and possibly add code and standards for appointed officials to the handbook. The SEIU Union did not adopt the employee handbook in their last contract.
- b. Councilor Ruff discussed the feasibility of having a downstairs museum at Vigilant. Councilor Ruff is waiting for information from Jeff Hausman concerning the museum. Councilor Ruff would like to table this.
- c. Councilor Ruff discussed the Voluntary Welfare Check Program started in the Borough of Bath. Councilor Ruff asked Captain Berger if they could manage a list of people who would reach out to help specific people in emergencies. Captain Berger feels that this is something they could handle. Councilor Ruff and Captain Berger will meet to discuss the details. The only situation that the fire department would have difficulty with would be in a severe storm. Doing something like this could possibly subject the Borough to liability. Maybe signing waivers would be an option, or possibly a Knox box. Captain Berger will discuss this with Fire Chief Nicholas.
- d. Recycling Event on Saturday, October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020, from 9 AM to 12 PM - informational only. This event will be drive through to follow the COVID19 regulations.
- e. Councilor Ruff discussed the Slatington Library elevator project. The project is about \$55,000.00 to \$60,000.00. They have a \$45,000.00 grant from the Trexler Foundation and a \$10,000.00 donation from an anonymous donor. They are still looking for about \$10,000.00 to \$15,000.00 to raise from the GoFundme page they have started. Councilor Ruff asked if the committee would care to help splitting the cost with Washington Township and Walnutport.

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS: NONE**

Manager Stevens informed the committee that LED lights can be done on the proposed light poles at Memorial Park. Manager Stevens informed the committee Lehigh County has rescheduled the household hazardous waste event to November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020. This will be placed on the next regular meeting agenda.

**PUBLIC COMMENT: NONE**

Councilor Ruff made a motion, duly seconded by, Councilor Steckel, to adjourn. Being no further business, President Reed declared the meeting adjourned at 9:07 PM.

Daniel L. Stevens  
Borough Secretary