

**BOROUGH OF SLATINGTON
COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES
11/28/22**

The Special Meeting of Council was held on **Monday, November 28, 2022**, at 7:00 PM, at the Council Room, 125 So. Walnut Street, First Floor, Slatington, PA 18080.

Presiding: Thomas Bartholomew: President of Council

Recording Secretary: Daniel Stevens, Borough Manager/Secretary

The meeting was called to order by President Bartholomew at 7:00 PM following in attendance:

ROLL CALL:

<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>	<u>OTHERS PRESENT</u>	<u>VISITORS</u>
Thomas Bartholomew	Zachari Halkias	Mayor Schoch	Steve Waldon
Bryon Reed		Daniel Stevens	Austin Berger
Joseph Wechsler via phone			Robert Rep
Ronald Kratz			Dave Schnaars
Kevin Steckel			
Jeffrey Hausman			

NOTIFICATION:

President Bartholomew announced that all public sessions of Borough Council are electronically recorded and such recordings are maintained as part of the meeting record until the minutes are transcribed and approved by the Board, at which time the recordings shall be erased.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Agenda and Non-Agenda items) You will have three minutes to address Council from the podium. The three minutes applies to your time at the podium. If you exit the podium, you have yielded the floor, and any time you have remaining.

David Schnaars – 223 So. Walnut Street – Signed in and was recognized to speak. David Schnaars is president of the Northern Lehigh Recreation Authority. David informed the council that the NLRA has been asked to take over the operation of the pool. They have received financial information from the pool authority and it looks like they will be to operate on a break-even basis. David is looking to secure support from Slatington Borough Council and Washington Township to confirm that support for the NLRA and the pool will continue. David informed the council that the community center has been sold and purchased by the Masons and as part of the agreement of sale the NLRA will have use of half of the building. This will help because they will not be paying out rent for the different activities. David is requesting the borough continue to supply the pool chemicals and services from the borough employees, specifically water sampling and work on the system at the pool. Manager Stevens informed David that in the preliminary 2023 budget the funding is the same as it was last year for the NLRA. Mayor Schoch thought that once they hired a pool manager, he/she would take over that job and the chemical purchasing. David explained that they are not at that level yet. Councilor Reed asked if this would be a good time to revisit with Walnutport. David stated that only if Walnutport is willing to join the authority via ordinance. They have been in and out twice and their participation is not reliable.

7. Councilor Reed made a motion, duly seconded by Councilor Wechsler, to authorize yearly donation to the Slatington Public Library, and Northern Lehigh Pool Association. President Bartholomew declared the motion passed following a Roll Call, voting as follows:

<u>ROLL CALL</u>	<u>AYES</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>
	Thomas Bartholomew		

Bryon Reed
Joseph Wechsler
Ronald Kratz
Kevin Steckel
Jeffrey Hausman

8. Discussion and possible motion to ratify 4-year agreement with Slatington Police Association covering the period of January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2026. (review agreement in executive session)
9. Discussion of 2023 Preliminary Budget:

General Fund

Liquid Fuels Fund

Page 1 – Revenue & Expense. Manager Stevens stated the revenue is slightly higher than last year. Road construction projects tripled due to because that is our 10% match for the CDBG on Franklin Street and the 2 CDBG's on South Street. Manager Stevens added that if the bids come in low enough, we don't have to use the 10% match.

Garbage Fund

Page 1 – Revenue. Manager Stevens stated there was a slight increase due to the addition of more billing units.

Page 2 – Expense. A new line item was added for tire recycling expense. Manager Stevens stated that we use the garbage surplus to pay off the \$66,700.00 deficit in garbage instead of raising the rate. Last year the rate was increased from \$50.00 to \$80.00 due to the new garbage hauling contract.

Sewer Fund

Page 1 – Revenue. Review is slightly higher than last year - \$1,243,037.

Page 2 – Expense. General Expense went up because we have the DRBC and the DRBC (docket renewal) that must be done this year. Contracted services are up due to LCA raising their fee for televising. Manager Stevens stated that in all these budgets insurance costs are estimated. Manager Stevens does not have the final numbers and is working off of estimated percentages. The authority expense went up due to new fees.

Pages 3 – Expense. Labor costs are up a little and this is based on spending and the contract. Engineering for the digester lid is approximately \$15,000.00. Laboratory reports will remain the same due to new testing that will have to be done this year. Councilor Kratz asked what would be the greatest risk for the budget. Manager Stevens stated that probably would be fuel and heating costs.

Page 4 – Expense. There is still a question on how much the digester lid will cost. We have budgeted \$170,000.00. The surplus for sewer is \$122,863.00.

Water Fund

Page 1 – Revenue. No issues

Page 2 – Expense. Seminars/Education increased due to lack of seminars during COVID19.

Page 3 – Expense. Lab/testing supplies, heating oil, gasoline, are up. Telephone has dropped drastically due to the RTU units being removed and replaced with a different system. Capital Purchases was increased to \$70,000.00 to finish the AutoCon and SCADA system

Page 4 – Expense. Manager Stevens clarified that the health insurance did not decrease it is because split, i.e., (how many single people vs. married in the new contract). The surplus for water is \$140,622.00

Fire Fund

Page 1 – Revenue. No issues

Page 2 – Expense. Maintenance numbers have increased due to equipment aging. There is a \$16,122.00 deficit for the fire department. Councilor Hausman asked if there is something that could be done to lower heating/cooling costs. NOVA is located at the fire department but does not pay rent. Manager Stevens pointed out that in 2023 tires must be purchased, which were not purchased last year at a cost of \$2,800.00. Councilor Hausman asked what it would take to cover some expenses. Manager Stevens stated it would be a 10th of a mil increase which would bring in approximately \$17,465.00.

General Fund

Manager Stevens stated that the General Fund is balanced, and any additions could require a tax increase.

Page 1 – Revenue. Manager Stevens stated the Real Estate Transfer Tax is difficult to estimate, due to volatility of the real estate market. Earned Income Tax was raised a little. Cable Franchise Agreement has dropped slowly for years. Street Opening Permits has increased ever since the ordinance was changed.

Page 2 – Revenue. Rent – Municipal Bldg. Tenants is up and an additional \$300.00 will be added to Rep. Mako's rent number. All offices are rented. Manager Stevens pointed out the PA DOT Project is for the TASA grant, which is for the 100 steps, at \$400,000.00. The PA Dept Conserv & Nat Resources is for the trail grant at \$105,489.000. Manager Stevens will be adding an additional \$1,200.00 for the recycling grant in the revenue. Local/County Community Dvlpmt is higher due to all 3 CDBG grants together at \$287,656.00. Our revenue looks higher due to so many grants calculated in for next year. Manager Stevens stated he figured in the refund of health insurance expense which is an estimate based on year-to-date numbers. This year we received "0", but last year we received \$54,000.00, so it is hard to predict.

Page 3 – Revenue. Manager Stevens stated we sold about \$7,500.00 in assets this year. Total revenue is \$2,780,201.00.

Page 4 – Expense. Manager Stevens removed the expense for the codification fee. He clarified that the COVID monies are not listed in the budget either expenses or revenue. This is how we did it last year.

Page 5 – Expense. Manager Stevens pointed out increases in Fuel & Light – Vigilant Bldg went up to \$20,500.00 from \$11,500.00 due to the increase in oil prices. Locations with fuel oil have all been increased drastically.

Page 6 – Expense. Manager Stevens stated that he did not include the purchase of a new police vehicle this year. He explained that if they want to obtain a new vehicle, they could make the first payment with COVID money. The 2021 Dodge will be paid off in 2023 and then we would only have 1 payment the next year.

Page 7 – Expense. The 2023 budget for Ordin Enforcement/Zoning Officer(s) is lower due to not hiring a new part time employee. Councilor Hausman stated that taxes had gone up last year in hopes of hiring the part time employee and codification. Councilor Hausman asked what happened to that money. Manager Stevens stated the money was used for other unexpected items that came up. Manager Stevens informed the council we are still looking for people for the Zoning Hearing Board.

Page 8 – Expense. Manager Stevens pointed out the increase in diesel and gasoline costs. Vehicle maintenance costs pretty much remain the same. A lot of work had been done on vehicle maintenance in the previous year. Engineering Services increased due to multiple grants – TASA Grant, and 3 CDBG grants.

Page 9 – Expense. Construction Projects-Hwy Dept - \$687,656.00 – this is the CDBG and TASA grants together. Manager Stevens stated that snow and ice removal, electric for traffic signals added and street lights, street markings, certain signs, and new traffic lights are paid for under Liquid Fuels. Councilor Hausman questioned the capital and vehicle purchases. Councilor Hausman stated we are setup for the police station for years, but why is it for highway and fire department there are no plans to replace vehicles every so many years. Manager Stevens stated that it based on the condition of the vehicles. Also, police vehicles must be ready for emergency calls. Councilor Hausman stated some of the fire vehicles are over 20 years old. Councilor Hausman reiterated the importance of hiring another employee for the Highway Department due to employees getting closure to retirement.

Page 10 – Expense. Manager Stevens pointed out that the cost of chlorine has increased for the pool. The YTD for Trees/landscaping Parks&Rec was high due to purchasing sod in front of the amphitheater for which COVID money was used. Capital project – trail grant bidding will be done in February. Will use the COVID money for the Victory Park match. This will be bid the same time as the trail grant and the CDBG. The total for EXPENSES is \$2,779,774; Revenue is \$2,780,201.00 = there is a \$427.00 surplus but Manager Stevens will be adding another \$1,500.00 more in revenue.

13. COURTESY OF THE FLOOR – (Agenda Items Only – You will have two (2) minutes to address Council from the podium on Agenda Items Only.)

Steven Walden - 2230 High Point Lane. Steven commented on the budget and pointed out that only \$20,000.00 was budgeted for highway for road maintenance and repair. Steven is asking the council what can be done to obtain money for the roads at Maple Spring Acres. The council explained to Steven how grants work, and at this time a defined amount of money cannot be calculated. The borough will not float a bond until it has a clear idea of how much money is needed. They can calculate this once they hear from all the grant applications.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: President Bartholomew recessed to executive session at 9:31 PM. At 10:08 PM President Bartholomew reconvened the meeting. Matters of contract negotiations were discussed in executive session.

8. Councilor Steckel made a motion, duly seconded by Councilor Reed, to ratify 4-year agreement with Slatington Police Association covering the period of January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2026 as presented by the negotiating committee. President Bartholomew declared the motion passed following a Roll Call, voting as follows:

<u>ROLL CALL</u>	<u>AYES</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>
	Thomas Bartholomew		
	Bryon Reed		
	Joseph Wechsler		

Ronald Kratz
Kevin Steckel
Jeffrey Hausman

10. Councilor Steckel made a motion, duly seconded by Councilor Reed, to advertise the 2023 preliminary budget as presented to the Council. President Bartholomew declared the motion passed following a Voice Vote, All in Favor.

11. **OTHER BUSINESS: None**

12. **EXECUTIVE SESSION: None**

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, Councilor Steckel made the motion, duly seconded by Councilor Kratz, to adjourn the meeting. President Bartholomew declared the motion passed following a Voice Vote, All in Favor.

President Bartholomew declared the meeting adjourned at 10:10 PM.

Daniel L. Stevens
Borough Secretary