

**BOROUGH OF SLATINGTON
COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES
2/13/23**

The Regular Meeting of Council was held on **Monday, February 13, 2023**, at 7:00 PM, to be held in the Council Room, 125 S. 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 with the following in attendance:

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT

Thomas Bartholomew
Bryon Reed
Joseph Wechsler-via phone
Ronald Kratz
Kevin Steckel
Jeffrey Hausman-via phone
Zachari Halkias

ABSENT

OTHERS PRESENT

Mayor Schoch
Lisa Young
Justin Gross
Daniel Stevens

VISITORS

Ronald Hausman, Jim Logue T/N
Drew Snowberger TV-13
Ryan Mayberry, Nancy Treskot
Bob Treskot, Justin Frable
Nicole Frable, Krystall Borman
Zoe Moyer, Dylan McDevitt
Dalton Divers, Kevin Borman
Dave Schnaars, Robert Reph
Austin Berger, Jason Breidinger
Jason Nicholas, Kris Burek
Kristie Wentling

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

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.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – Councilor Kratz made a motion, duly seconded by Councilor Reed, to approve the following minutes: **Council Meeting** – January 9, 2023; **Committee Meetings** – January 16, 2023 & January 23, 2023. President Bartholomew declared the motion passed following a Voice Vote, All in Favor.

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.

Kris Burek – 1235 Fourth Street. Signed in and was recognized to speak. Kris Burek wanted to discuss a current borough contract. In 2012 the borough entered into a lease agreement with a party identified as Vigilant Fire Company No. 2, a non-profit. She stated that this lessee is not a fire company. They do not respond to fires, they have no fire equipment, but most important they are not a non-profit. IRS terminated their non-profit status in 2011. The reason was that they hadn't filed a tax return for 3 years. But they executed this lease 6 months after losing that non-profit status and identified themselves as a non-profit. She believes they are a business. Contained in the lease the borough is using tax payer dollars to pay the expenses of this business, which includes water, sewer, trash, electric, heat, and repairs. She believes that is a misappropriation of tax dollars. Kris addressed Lisa Young and stated, Lisa, as you know the elements of avoidable contract are failure of the party to the contract to disclose the material item, misrepresentation, fraud. Kris believes you have that with this contract. Kris' idea of how do you correct this is to immediately terminate, what she believes is a bogus contract. Then you turn this space over to a true non-profit, the Slatington Volunteer Fire Company. Give them the space across the street to do fundraisers so they can buy the necessary supplies and equipment that they need.

Nancy Treskot – Chair of the Venture Group. Signed in and was recognized to speak. Nancy explained that the Venture Group are the non-profits in the area that take care of Trailhead, bathrooms, and the Slate Heritage Trail. Nancy provided the yearly update. She stated that they sent out rules to all the non-profits in the area on how to use the areas if you want to have a party or events. The Venture Group conducted a Christmas event and plan to expand that next year on a Saturday afternoon and have the tree lighting at night. They will do that in conjunction with the entire weekend that is planned with the Chamber. There are plans to have Thirsty Thursday. They will work with the Rec. Authority, because the NRLA have the Wine Down Wednesdays. The Venture Group are also planning to continue and their Oktoberfest on the third Saturday in October. They will also do some little raffles at the Trailhead for a couple of hours to bring people out at the D & L Trail, as well as the Slate Heritage Trail. There is an opportunity of obtaining benches for the trail or even the pavilion. This event requires them to collect 500 lbs. of plastic bags. More information will be coming out to the public.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

President Bartholomew announced the following:

Executive session Monday, January 16, 2023, at 7:00 PM
Executive session Saturday, January 21, 2023, at 9:00 AM
Executive session Monday, January 23, 2023, at 7:10 PM
Executive session Friday, January 27, 2023, at 4:30 PM
(All executive sessions were for discussion of personnel matters)

Special presentation NOVA

Kristie Wentling thanked the council for their support. Kristie provided a report to the council of their expenses and income for 2022. Kristie pointed out they raised \$527,000.00 to provide the service to the community. They accomplished this thru their subscription drive, grants, donations, and contributions. There had been staffing issues at the beginning of the year, but they are fully staffed at this time. Kristie stated that they have the mobile stroke unit coming into the area due to an agreement with Lehigh Valley Health Network. Lehigh Valley Health Network is honoring NOVA's subscription. Kristie stated they have received the Keystone Community Grant for \$115,000.00 for truck replacement with the help of Senator Pat Browne. At the end of this year, they are going to remount the first truck; and in January the second truck, and at the end of 2024 the third truck. They are ordering a new truck to replace one of their trucks.

APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE/TRANSFER

Councilor Kratz made a motion, duly seconded by Councilor Steckel, to approve payment of the bills and transfers as presented by the Treasurer. President Bartholomew declared the motion passed following a Roll Call, voting as follows:

ROLL CALL

AYES

Thomas Bartholomew
Bryon Reed
Joseph Wechsler
Ronald Kratz
Kevin Steckel
Jeffrey Hausman
Zachari Halkias

NAYS

ABSTAIN

REPORTS

The reports of various committees, officials and officers were provided to Council and are on file in Borough Hall and are available for public inspection.

MAYORS/POLICE REMARKS

Mayor Jeralyn Schoch

Mayor Schoch stated that the call volume is going up. For the month of January, the police department responded to 298 calls. There were 7 criminal arrests, 29 traffic citations, and 39 parking tickets. Mayor Schoch informed everyone that a couple of burglaries have occurred and to be aware of your surroundings and to watch out for your elderly neighbors.

STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Highway

Councilor Jeffrey Hausman

1. Councilor Hausman made a motion, duly seconded by Councilor Reed, to award the contract for the maintenance building generator to the Wire Guys by Arc Electric at a price not to exceed \$11,480.00. Project to be paid for with COVID19 LFRF funds. 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		
	Zachari Halkias		

2. Councilor Hausman made a motion, duly seconded by Councilor Reed, motion to award repairs for flashing light at Route 873 to BEI Electrical for \$2,600.00. 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		
	Zachari Halkias		

3. S. Walnut Street Bridge lighting information from PennDOT. Councilor Hausman stated we have received a letter from PennDOT informing the borough that Lehigh County has a light that they have been putting on all their bridges, but if we would like to go with our style of lights (like the General Morgan Bridge), we would have to put the payment out for them. In Councilor Hausman's opinion we should go with the lights that the county has on other 2 bridges they have in N. Catasauqua and Northampton area. Then it wouldn't be a cost to us. Manager Stevens added that if we chose the lights as opposed to them taking care of it, the county wanted the borough to pay for maintenance and electricity forever.
4. Motion to accept bids for the Franklin Street (Main to Second) CDBG project. Councilor Hausman requested to have bids discussed by Lehigh Engineering and if they all meet what their standards. Justin Gross stated the low bid was LB Construction Enterprises for \$101,668.00 – the

county has not gotten back to Lehigh Engineering concerning if everything is good on their end. Lehigh is waiting for the county's approval. Attorney Young added that their documents were satisfactory and if the board is inclined to take action on this, it would be contingent upon approval by the county to make sure the full grant would be released.

Councilor Hausman made a motion, duly seconded by Councilor Wechsler, to accept all bids for the E. Franklin Street CDBG project. President Bartholomew declared the motion passed following a Voice Vote, All in Favor.

5. Councilor Hausman made a motion, duly seconded by Councilor Reed, to award CDBG project for E. Franklin Street from Main Street to 2nd Street to LB Construction Enterprises, Inc. at a price of \$101,668.00 contingent on acceptance by engineer, solicitor, and Lehigh County. President Bartholomew declared the motion passed following a Roll Call, voting as follows:

ROLL CALL	<u>AYES</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>
	Thomas Bartholomew		
	Bryon Reed		
	Joseph Wechsler		
	Ronald Kratz		
	Kevin Steckel		
	Jeffrey Hausman		
	Zachari Halkias		

B. Public Safety

Councilor Kevin Steckel

1. NOVA letter thanking the borough for their contribution of \$10,000.00. (informational only)
2. Discussion and possible motion to authorize hiring new chief of police. (executive session discussion before motion)
3. Update on CDBG-CV Grant (applied for in October 26th, 2022). Manager Stevens stated that he has called the county several weeks ago. Still waiting for an answer.

C. Human/Community Services

Councilor Zachari Halkias

1. Councilor Halkias made a motion, duly seconded by Councilor Wechsler, to accept bids for Slate Heritage Trail renovation project (GTRP Grant). President Bartholomew declared the motion passed following a Voice Vote, All in Favor.
2. Councilor Halkias made a motion, duly seconded by Councilor Reed, to award bid for Slate Heritage Trail renovation project for \$131,506.84 to Bruce George Paving and Excavating. President Bartholomew declared the motion passed following a Roll Call, voting as follows:

ROLL CALL	<u>AYES</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>
	Thomas Bartholomew		
	Bryon Reed		
	Joseph Wechsler		
	Ronald Kratz		
	Kevin Steckel		
	Jeffrey Hausman		
	Zachari Halkias		

3. Discussion and possible action concerning re-bidding for Victory Park bathroom project. Councilor Halkias made a motion, duly seconded by Councilor Reed, to rebid the Victory Park bathroom project. President Bartholomew declared the motion passed following a Voice Vote, All in Favor.

Councilor Halkias made a motion, duly seconded by Councilor Kratz, to reject the existing bid for Victory Park bathroom project. President Bartholomew declared the motion passed following a Voice Vote, All in Favor.

4. Councilor Halkias made a motion, duly seconded by Councilor Wechsler, to approve 3rd Annual Kid's Fishing Contest on Saturday, 4/29/23 from 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM. President Bartholomew declared the motion passed following a Voice Vote, All in Favor.
5. Councilor Kratz made a motion, duly seconded by Councilor Weschler, to appoint Councilman Halkias to replace Councilman Kratz to the NLRA Board. President Bartholomew declared the motion passed following a Voice Vote, All in Favor.

Councilor Kratz made a motion, duly seconded by Councilor Wechsler, to rescind the prior vote. President Bartholomew declared the motion passed following a Voice Vote, All in Favor.

Councilor Kratz made a motion, duly seconded by Councilor Weschler, to appoint Councilman Halkias to the NLRA Board replacing Councilman Kratz for the remainder his term. President Bartholomew declared the motion passed following a Voice Vote, All in Favor.

6. Councilor Halkias made a motion, duly seconded by Councilor Hausman, to approve Community Yard Sales for Friday, May 19th, Saturday, May 20th, Sunday, May 21st, and Friday, September 15th, Saturday, September 16th, and Sunday, September 17th, 2023. President Bartholomew declared the motion passed following a Voice Vote, All in Favor.

D. Finance/Planning/Zoning

Councilor Ronald Kratz

1. Councilor Kratz made a motion, duly seconded by Councilor Reed, to authorize Solicitor Young to draft modifications (and advertise) changes to Ordinance 704 concerning spending limit for borough manager. President Bartholomew declared the motion passed following a Roll Call, voting as follows:

ROLL CALL

AYES

NAYS

ABSTAIN

Thomas Bartholomew
Bryon Reed
Joseph Wechsler
Ronald Kratz
Kevin Steckel
Jeffrey Hausman
Zachari Halkias

2. Discussion regarding roll of finance director (executive session)
3. Discuss the Key Bank real estate situation (executive session)

E. Sewer/Solid Waste

Councilor Joseph Wechsler

1. Electronics Recycling Day – Saturday, April 1st, 2023 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM at borough garage (informational only)

2. Update on digester lid removal project. Manager Stevens attended a pre-construction meeting with the contractor last week. Equipment was brought in today and the project could be completed by the middle, or end, of May. The only hold up is when they put the coating on because there are temperature requirements.

F. Water/Special Sewer Committee

Councilor Bryon Reed

1. Water Test Statement - Water was tested and found safe for human consumption
2. Councilor Reed made a motion, duly seconded by Councilor Kratz, to sell 10 pair of the Hubbell Commercial lights at water treatment plant to Steven Bilger as listed on MunicBid for \$100.00. President Bartholomew declared the motion passed following a Roll Call, voting as follows:

ROLL CALL

AYES

NAYS

ABSTAIN

Thomas Bartholomew
Bryon Reed
Joseph Wechsler
Ronald Kratz
Kevin Steckel
Jeffrey Hausman
Zachari Halkias

3. Update on AutoCon panel upgrades. Justin Gross has been trying to get in touch with the contractor.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS: None

NEW BUSINESS: None

COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S REPORT: None

Thomas Bartholomew

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

David Schnaars – 223 So. Walnut St. Recognized to speak. Dave asked about the contract for the trail and was wondering how the construction on the bridge will affect the work. Manager Stevens stated that the bridge probably won't start until 2024 or later, so it will not impact the trail project.

Kris Burek - Recognized to speak. Kris stated that NOVA has been in the fire department building since 2008 and has not paid a dime. She provided their 2020 tax return. Their revenue was \$1.7 million and they also received \$185,700.00 in PPP money. When they were in Walnutport, they paid \$600.00/month. She feels the borough should start charging them rent and put that money towards the repairs of fire department building. She asked the council why they aren't doing that. President Bartholomew stated the council does not choose to respond at this time.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: President Bartholomew recessed to executive session at 7:55 PM. At 8:54 PM President Bartholomew reconvened the meeting. Matters of personnel and real estate matters were discussed in executive session. Councilor Hausman left (phone) during executive session due to illness.

B.2

Discussion and possible motion to authorize hiring new chief of police. (executive session discussion before motion)

Councilor Steckel made a motion, duly seconded by Councilor Kratz, to hire Greg Winokur as Police Chief for the Borough of Slatington at a salary of \$95,000.00 per year and other terms listed in the MOU signed February 4th, 2023. In addition, hiring is contingent upon passing physical, physiological, vision, and background checks as well as meeting the requirements of Act 120. President Bartholomew declared the motion passed following a Roll Call, voting as follows:

ROLL CALL

AYES

NAYS

ABSTAIN

Thomas Bartholomew
Bryon Reed
Joseph Wechsler
Ronald Kratz
Kevin Steckel
Zachari Halkias

ADJOURNMENT

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

President Bartholomew declared the meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Daniel L. Stevens
Borough Secretary