

BOROUGH OF SLATINGTON

The **Finance Planning/Zoning, Public Safety and Human/Community Services Committee Workshop Meetings** were held on **February 21, 2022** in Council Room, 125 South Walnut Street, Slatington, PA 18080.

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

PRESENT

Thomas Bartholomew
Ronald Kratz
Kevin Steckel
Zachari Halkias

ABSENT

OTHERS PRESENT

Mayor Schoch
Daniel Stevens

VISITORS

Jeffrey Hausman
Crystal Hausman
Ron Hausman
David Diehl
Austin Berger
Lindsay Taylor
Crystal Fink
Bryon Reed

PUBLIC COMMENT:

David Diehl – 528 E. Church Street. Signed in and was recognized to speak. David is concerned about hiring an assistant code enforcement officer. David has spoken to many residents about this and they are against it. He stated that since money is tight for the Borough, the money could go elsewhere. Councilor Kratz was surprised to hear of this, because he thought the residents considered it was a good idea. President Bartholomew clarified that the code enforcement officer only works 19-hours a week and spends time in court, filing citations, etc. President Bartholomew clarified that Tony cannot work over 19 hours, or we would have to pay a pension. He also stated that the assistant part-time code officer would be working in the afternoons and on Fridays. (when Tony does not work)

Jeffrey Hausman – 46 So. Walnut Street. Signed in and was recognized to speak. He signed in concerning the fire department issue on the agenda.

Austin Berger – Signed in and was recognized to speak. Austin provided a list of repairs that are known to the fire department. Austin stated that if all the repairs were to be done, the fire department would be significantly over budget for most of the trucks. Councilor Kratz asked if this information was known before the budget was done. Austin informed him that this has been accumulated over the past 5 years and was never addressed. Austin went to the new person handling maintenance, and requested a list of known issues with every piece of apparatus. He asked what direction the fire department should go. Manager Stevens pointed out some things that would not be costly. Austin stated there are a lot of things that can be done in-house. Manager Stevens stated Council has the option to use some of the COVID money for necessary repairs. President Bartholomew requested a color-coded priority list and pricing for the next committee meeting. Austin provided a report about the blackout on the February 18th. There was an issue at the substation at the top of the hill on Rte 873. There was a surge that blew

out a couple of breakers, wires, and a couple of transformers. However, the exact cause is unknown.

A. FINANCE/PLANNING/ZONING

Ronald Kratz – Chairman; Members: Kevin Steckel, Zachari Halkias

1. Committee Member discussion on listed topics:
 - a. The committee discussed 234 Cherry Street as requested by Crystal Fink at the regular council meeting. Councilor Kratz stated the council could not target a specific building for a tax break. Manager Stevens stated that if the KOZ is still in existence, it actually is possible. When they established the Stanwood Mills, they voted just that property for the KOZ. In addition, the Slatington Market Place was a KOZ site. Bryon Reed stated that 3 tax authorities would have to agree: (school district, borough, and the county). Bryon also explained the history on this property.
 - b. The committee discussed the e-mail from Mike Turoscy resigning from the UCC Board of Appeals. Councilor Kratz requested Manager Stevens contact Larry Turoscy or suggestions for a replacement for Mike.
 - c. The committee discussed the lease for the copier at the Borough office. Manager Stevens informed the committee the office is currently using Stratix and we are at 4 years of the 5-year lease. Stratix is running a deal where they will buy back the lease at no cost for the last year. Manager Stevens thinks we should obtain 3 prices due to the estimated cost. Manager Stevens has called Davis and Fraser for additional pricing. President Bartholomew requested this be placed on the next committee agenda.

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

B. PUBLIC SAFETY

Kevin Steckel - Chairman; Members: Ronald Kratz, Zachari Halkias

1. Committee Member discussion on listed topics:
 - a. Councilor Steckel discussed Ordinance 684 – for possible revisions concerning the fire chief living in the borough. Councilor Steckel asked Jeffrey Hausman if he had obtained information from other boroughs concerning this issue. Jeffrey stated he did speak with other municipalities, but does not have any documentation. However, Washington Township, and other municipalities, said they do not have any residency requirements. Councilor Steckel feels it is important to have the fire chief live nearby for quick response. Jeffrey noted that the school district is very big, approximately 5 miles. Jeffrey informed the committee that there are several residents who run with other fire departments and not the Slatington Fire Department. Councilor Kratz was concerned about poaching members from other fire departments. Austin stated that people who live too far out do not respond to an alarm. Austin and Jeffrey feel that there must be some restrictions on the distance a fire fighter, or fire chief resides. The committee

discussed how big the radius would be. President Bartholomew requested this be tabled until further information from the fire department could be obtained.

- b. Manager Stevens discussed the replacement of floor, carpet, and cleaning at the police station. An insurance claim has already been submitted and settled. Manager Stevens asked the committee, that before he calls as to what kind of floor should be put down, (a floating floor, vinyl). Bryon Reed suggested solid vinyl floor would be waterproof. What is currently down is not waterproof. President Bartholomew suggested commercial vinyl flooring that is glued down. Manager Stevens will call Slatington Floor Center to obtain suggestions and estimates. President Bartholomew would like this put for the next regular council agenda.

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

C. HUMAN/COMMUNITY SERVICES

Zachari Halkias – Chairman; Members: Kevin Steckel, Ronald Kratz

1. Committee Member discussion on listed topics:

- a. The committee review potential fees for use of the amphitheater. Lyndsay Taylor stated that other municipalities have fees for their amphitheater for weddings, church services, etc. Lindsay stated the fees are in-line with what the Borough charges for the pavilion which is \$100.00 a day. The fees could be rated for ½ a day, 1 hour, etc. Non-profits are not charged. President Bartholomew requested this be placed on the next council agenda.
- b. Lindsay Taylor discussed the Victory Park bathroom project. NLRA applied for, and received, a grant in the amount of \$50,000.00. This was a Small Communities Grant through DCNR to renovate the Victory Park bathroom. It is \$40,000.00 with a match by the Borough of \$20,000.00. The total with Borough match is \$70,000.00. An additional \$10,000.00 was provided by the state for technical support. The NLRA received the grant then proceeded to switch the grant funding from NLRA to the Borough. Lindsay provided the committee with the scope of the project. They are looking at totally renovating the building. This would be a 2-family bathroom. Accessibility from the bathroom to the pavilion will be more extensive than originally planned. Lindsay is asking whether the Borough or NRLA would be managing the project. Manager Stevens suggested doing it jointly. President Bartholomew requested this be placed on the next regular council agenda for a motion.
- c. The committee reviewed the request from St. Luke's Hospice application for 11th Annual Charity Bike Ride event on Saturday, June 4, 2022 from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM at the Trailhead. President Bartholomew requested this be placed on the next regular council agenda for approval.

- d. The committee reviewed letter from Slatington Library Director Rosanne Pugh submitting David Hauser to complete the term of Debbie Silfies. President Bartholomew requested this be placed on the next regular agenda for approval.
- e. NLRA will be appointing Michelle Raber as a director to fill the position, formally occupied by her late husband. President Bartholomew requested to place on the next regular council agenda for approval.

There were no questions from the committee members; the Human/Community Services Committee meeting was adjourned.

D. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS: None

E. COURTESY TO THE FLOOR:

Crystal Fink – 25 Stable Road, Lehighton. Was recognized to speak. At the regular Council meeting, Crystal had asked for the tax abatement and help with her restoration of 234 Cherry Street. President Bartholomew asked if this would be for the entire building or the half she just acquired. Crystal stated that she would be happy with either. The half she purchased from Gogel is in deplorable condition. Crystal said that her father had put in a lot of work in the other half of the building, but at this time there is no revenue. Crystal is looking for ideas to put businesses in the building. Councilor Kratz stated that she should come with some visions to sell it to the community and explain how it would be a benefit. Byron Reed suggested contacting the Chamber of Commerce for help. Crystal has done research on grants and feels she would qualify. The committee agrees that more information is needed. Manager Stevens suggested Crystal look into whether the KOZ is still available.

Councilor Kratz made a motion, duly seconded by Councilor Steckel, to adjourn. Being no further business, President Bartholomew declared the meeting adjourned at 7:44 PM.

Daniel L. Stevens
Borough Secretary