

REGULAR MEETING OF PALMERTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

HELD IN BOROUGH HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2022, AT 7:00 P.M.

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Terry L. Costenbader, President of Council, called the duly advertised meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., with the following members present:

Terry L. Costenbader, Council President	Jenny Y. C. Cheng, Esq.
Kris W. Hoffner, Vice-President	Don Herrmann, Mayor
Michael J. Ballard	Timothy Kromer, Chief of Police
Andrew J. Hollywood	Donna I. McGarry, Borough Manager
Holly F. Hausman Sell	Kimberly A. Rodrigues, Recording Secretary
Cory Kepner	

Absent: Richard Nothstein

VISITORS

Janis Sylstra, 568 Mauch Chunk Road; Dennis Haydt, 542 Lehigh Avenue; James Brown, 536 Lehigh Avenue; Raberta and Jeremy Hans, 435 Franklin Avenue; Jared Cebrosky, 445 Princeton Avenue; John Cebrosky Jr., 950 Edgemont Avenue; William Gallagher, 877 Lafayette Avenue; Joseph Federanich, 418 Princeton Avenue; Robert Janko, 155 Franklin Avenue; Terry Ahner, Times News Reporter; Drew Snowberger, TV-13 Cameraman.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

HEARING OF VISITORS

Janice Sylstra of 568 Mauch Chunk Road addressed Council with a few concerns in her area. She fears someone pulling out of Railroad Alley onto Mauch Chunk Road will be hit by one of the many cars that drive too fast on Mauch Chunk Road. She also reported the one-way road is being used both ways. She has already contacted the Police department about these issues, and they will be stepping up the patrol.

Other troubles in Railroad Alley are the collapsing wall, the sinking storm drain, and the numerous potholes. Donna McGarry will confirm, but believes the wall is Northface property. She also relayed that storm drains appear to sink during this time due to freeze-thaw cycles but will report it to the Public Works department and when weather allows will be repaired or re-built if needed. She added that CDBG grant money will be used next year for Railroad Alley and will notify the Borough engineer about the water run-off concern on Mauch Chunk Road also reported by Ms. Sylstra.

James Brown of 536 Lehigh Avenue asked Council how the new Quality of Life ticketing system works. Donna McGarry relayed it is a more affordable practice that promotes quicker action by ticketing immediately rather than sending a letter and issuing a citation. Mr. Brown informed Council he has

been reporting his neighbor for property maintenance issues for seven years, but nothing has been done. There are junked vehicles in the back of the property and rats coming from the yard, confirmed by Mayor Don Herrmann. Donna McGarry will talk to the Code Officer about the property and Chief Kromer advised Officer Flexer is working on the junked vehicles.

Robert Janko of 155 Franklin Avenue asked for help in the 100 block of Franklin Avenue with speeding. Terry Costenbader relayed it will be looked into.

#### RATIFICATION OF MINUTES

On motion by Kris Hoffner, second by Michael Ballard and voice vote, Council approved the January 27, 2022 regular meeting minutes.

#### PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

President Costenbader announced that a summary of the petitions and communications is available for public inspection in the Borough Office in the form of a weekly mail log.

#### REPORTS OF VARIOUS COMMITTEES AND OFFICES

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|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Treasurer's Report       | 5. Moving Permit Report         |
| 2. Zoning Officer Report    | 6. Code Compliance Agent Report |
| 3. Police Department Report | 7. Street Supervisor Report     |
| 4. Fire Chief Report        |                                 |

President Costenbader announced that these are on file in the Borough Office for public inspection during regular business hours.

#### MANAGER'S REPORT

Donna McGarry reported:

1. Donna McGarry asked Council to consider releasing the current COVID restrictions on the employees and building as things have been improving and the gym could be re-opened for use. On motion by Holly Sell, second by Michael Ballard and voice vote, Council removed all COVID-19 restrictions for all employees and buildings.
2. Donna McGarry requested plans from Council for CDBG funds. Typically there is a three-year plan which currently has 2019/2020 funds allocated for repaving the South side of Mauch Chunk Road, and 2021/2022 funds for Railroad Alley and all alleys leading to Mauch Chunk Road. We may also need to include demolition of two blighted properties the Code Officer is working on.
3. Donna McGarry thanked St. Luke's Health Network and the Country Harvest Family Market for their contributions towards the fencing at the Elmer Valo Field. The sponsor signs are complete and will be hung.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

FINANCE

Kris Hoffner reported:

1. On motion by Kris Hoffner, second by Michael Ballard and voice vote (Holly Sell abstained), Council adopted Resolution 673-22, authorizing LSA grant application in the amount of \$68,960 for the fire department exhaust system. A copy of this is attached to these minutes.
2. On motion by Kris Hoffner, second by Michael Ballard and voice vote (Holly Sell abstained), Council adopted Resolution 674-22, authorizing LSA grant application in the amount of \$179,250 for a parking lot east of the fire station. A copy of this is attached to these minutes.
3. On motion by Kris Hoffner, second by Michael Ballard and voice vote, Council adopted Resolution 675-22, authorizing LSA grant application in the amount of \$47,305 for the purchase of a police car. A copy of this is attached to these minutes.

Kris Hoffner informed residents the LSA grant funds are generated from Monroe County gambling monies and is a very competitive grant process.

PUBLIC RELATIONS/BOROUGH CODE

Holly Sell reported:

1. On motion by Holly Sell, second by Michael Ballard and voice vote, Council adopted Resolution 670-22 authorizing records disposal. A copy of this is attached to these minutes.

BUILDINGS/RECREATION

Cory Kepner reported:

1. On motion by Cory Kepner, second by Michael Ballard and voice, Council approved the following use requests. The approvals are subject to scheduling and availability.

<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Facility</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
Parkside SHINE	Grass area between PPD & Parkside	Family Game Night
Kiki Peppard	Park grass area	Qigong Exercise Classes
Bo Tkach Foundation	Park	5K Race
Holiday Lighting	Park	Christmas in the Park
Jonathan Eichert	Bandstand	Marriage Ceremony
Ivette Morgan	Bandstand	Marriage Ceremony

2. On motion by Cory Kepner, second by Andrew Hollywood and voice vote, Council approved application to Pocono Mountain Vacation Bureau for grant funds available for recreation/beautification projects. There are two ideas for use of the funds which include beautification of the entrance to Palmerton, and rehabilitation of the basketball court by the Elmer Valo field, but remain open to other ideas.

3. Cory Kepner updated Council on the remediation done at the Municipal Services building saying much has already taken place. The committee will continue to meet to discuss further options and what is best for the Police Department and the town.

#### PUBLIC SAFETY

Kris Hoffner reported:

1. On motion by Kris Hoffner, second by Holly Sell and voice vote, Council approved the Lehigh Township fire police assistance request.
2. On motion by Kris Hoffner, second by Holly Sell and voice vote, Council approved, retroactively, the Bowmanstown Borough fire police assistance request.
3. On motion by Kris Hoffner, second by Holly Sell and voice vote, Council approved the Police Code of Conduct.
4. On motion by Kris Hoffner, second by Michael Ballard and voice vote (Holly Sell abstained) Council approved the \$4,000 Fire truck change order to include a front pumper discharge gun.
5. On motion by Kris Hoffner, second by Michael Ballard and voice vote, Council approved the Fire Department command vehicle policy.
6. On motion by Kris Hoffner, second by Michael Ballard and voice vote, Council approved the bike patrol request.

Mayor Don Hermann informed Council the two bikes requested by the Police Department were Fuji bikes at a cost of \$750 each. Two better grade bikes were paid for by donations and in the end the program equipment may only cost the Borough approximately \$450.

#### STREETS & SIDEWALKS

Andrew Hollywood reported:

1. On motion by Andrew Hollywood, second by Cory Kepner and voice vote, Council approved the advertising of Ordinance 764 amending Vehicles and Traffic, Junked Vehicles, and Snow and Ice Removal sections of Borough Code.

#### SEWER/SOLID WASTE/WATER

Michael Ballard had no report.

#### PERSONNEL

Terry Costenbader had no report.

DISPOSITION OF BILLS

On motion by Kris Hoffner, second by Michael Ballard and voice vote, Council approved payment of the invoices and the check register as presented.

REPORT OF THE MAYOR

Don Herrmann reported:

1. Don Herrmann welcomed new officer Derrek Koch to the department.
2. Thank you to the Public Works department for the work done at the Police Department, as well as the Borough Manager and Council for future endeavors.
3. A replacement AED unit and pads were provided to the Police Department by Rachel Moyer of AED Advocacy of Shawnee.
4. Thank you to the Public Safety Committee for approving the bike patrol, and to Harold Schishler and Dr. Louis Sportelli for their donations towards the bike purchases.
5. Don Herrmann found the “Boot Camp” program for newly elected officials to be very useful. During that time he was able to tour the Manheim Police Department and has a tour of the Summit Hill department scheduled in the near future. He has also been approved to visit the Lehigh, Jim Thorpe and Franklin Township departments.
6. Don Herrmann asked residents to contact the Police Department at 610-826-4055 if they are missing a bicycle. We have a collection that has grown over the years, and they will all be disposed of after March 31.
7. Don Herrmann informed Council that the Police Department was dispatched to 2,870 calls from the Carbon County Communications Center in 2021.
8. Don Herrmann reminded residents to yield to pedestrians in the crosswalks, to follow posted speed limit signs and to not block fire hydrants.
9. The Palmerton Memorial Pool is in need of lifeguards for the 2022 season.
10. On motion by Kris Hoffner, second by Holly Sell and voice vote, Council renewed the COVID Emergency Declaration for 90 Days.
11. Andrew Hollywood recommended a policy for the AED machines be implemented moving forward. Chief Timothy Kromer informed Council the battery life should no longer be an issue as the units will no longer be kept in the cars and the officers will be reporting to the Mayor whenever a pad is used.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Holly Sell asked what residents can do about skunk problems. Donna McGarry relayed skunks cannot be trapped by residents and they should contact the PA Game Commission for a licensed trapper. She recommended trying an equal mixture of bleach and water to spray around their properties to deter them.
2. Chief Kromer asked for Council to consider allowing the department to re-enter the DUI checkpoint program. He advised there is no cost to the Borough as it is covered with overtime hours and reimbursed back to the Borough. Terry Costenbader stated this will be discussed as we have had issues with this program in the past.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Kris Hoffner, second by Michael Ballard and voice vote, Council adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly A. Rodrigues  
Recording Secretary

Donna I. McGarry  
Borough Manager