

REGULAR MEETING OF PALMERTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

HELD IN BOROUGH HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2023 AT 7:00 P.M.

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
Kris W. Hoffner, Council Vice-President
Andrew J. Hollywood
Cory Kepner
Holly F. Hausman Sell
William A. Gallagher

Don Herrmann, Mayor
Timothy Kromer, Police Chief
Donna I. McGarry, Manager/Secretary
Kimberly A. Rodrigues, Recording Secretary

Absent: Richard Nothstein
Jenny Y.C. Cheng, Esq.

VISITORS

Jason Behler, 727 Franklin Avenue; Raberta & Jeremy Hans, 435 Franklin Avenue; Lisa Snell-Kern, 220 Edgemont Avenue; Autumn Canfield, 256 River Road, White Haven; Terry Ahner, Times News Reporter.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

HEARING OF VISITORS

No comments.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

PUBLIC SAFETY

Kris Hoffner reported:

1. Kris Hoffner introduced Fire Chief Jason Behler, who provided Council with the 2022 statistics of the Fire Company. In addition to the data provided, he relayed there is a current roster of 40 members with 5 of those members being junior firefighters. Kris Hoffner mentioned that the member list grew from 12 members to 40 members within 10 years. Andrew Hollywood relayed how proud Council is of the department, while William Gallagher commended their outstanding response times.

FINANCE

Kris Hoffner reported:

1. Donna McGarry updated Council on a repository sale of two properties within the Borough. She explained when properties are held by the Tax Claim Bureau for non-payment of real estate taxes and are not sold at tax claim or upset/judicial sales, the properties are held in “repository” until bids are accepted from buyers. They remain here, untaxed, until the TCB puts them out for bid. As a related matter, Donna McGarry attended the blight committee meeting last week where several municipalities expressed dismay about properties sold in repository to LLC companies. Unfortunately, when many of these properties are purchased they are let go and the property becomes a blight issue. The municipalities have difficulty determining the exact ownership and are unable to serve necessary notices. Fortunately this has not been an issue in the Borough, but it is something to be aware of. These two properties are land only properties located (1) near 577 Mauch Chunk Road and (2) on the 1000 block of West Princeton Avenue.

On motion by Kris Hoffner, second by Andrew Hollywood and voice vote, Council accepted the bids of two Borough repository properties as held by the Carbon County Tax Claim Bureau.

2. On motion by Kris Hoffner, second by Andrew Hollywood and voice vote, Council approved the first reading of Resolution 694 regarding a County blight fee. Donna McGarry informed Council there was no need for a first reading of this type of Resolution and can be approved this evening. On motion by Kris Hoffner, second by Holly Sell and voice vote, Council amended the motion to advertise, and adopted Resolution 694 regarding a County blight fee.

PUBLIC RELATIONS/BOROUGH CODE

Holly Sell had no report.

BUILDINGS/RECREATION

Cory Kepner reported:

1. On motion by Cory Kepner, second by Andrew Hollywood and voice vote, Council approved the purchase of property 29A-33-106 from the Carbon County Tax Claim Bureau for a price of \$1,872.00.
2. Cory Kepner relayed to Council the Recreation Committee is not ready to introduce the Park ordinance for approval as there are a few areas that need clarification. The committee will meet to finalize the details for approval at a future meeting.

Holly Sell voiced her concern about the number of people in the Park who are feeding squirrels and feels this is a safety issue and may be something to add to the Park ordinance. Terry Costenbader relayed the PA Game Commission restricts feeding wildlife, but Andrew Hollywood feels we should consider adding it to the ordinance.

Andrew Hollywood addressed a few issues recently occurring at the dog park. He relayed the gates are being left open, which allows wildlife to enter and reminded residents to clean up after their animals. He also would like the Borough to begin seeding the bare areas of the dog park.

Cory Kepner added there should be No Smoking signage installed at the Dog Park.

STREETS & SIDEWALKS

Andrew Hollywood had no report.

SEWER/SOLID WASTE/WATER

William Gallagher reported:

1. On motion by William Gallagher, second by Kris Hoffner and voice vote, Council awarded a three-year contract for sludge removal to Waste Management in accordance with their proposal submitted February 3, 2023 through PennBid.

PERSONNEL

Terry Costenbader reported:

1. On motion by Terry Costenbader, second by Andrew Hollywood and voice vote, Council approved the Drug and alcohol testing policy.
2. On motion by Terry Costenbader, second by Andrew Hollywood and voice vote, Council approved the cell phone policy.
3. On motion by Terry Costenbader, second by Holly Sell and voice vote, Council approved the Police Chief agreement for 2023.
4. On motion by Terry Costenbader, second by Andrew Hollywood and voice vote, Council entered into Executive session at 7:27 p.m. to discuss personnel and land matters. On motion by Andrew Hollywood, second Kris Hoffner by and voice vote, Council reconvened their regular meeting at 8:45 p.m.
5. On motion by Terry Costenbader, second by Andrew Hollywood and Roll Call vote, Council authorized a letter of support for Northface Development's point of access application to PennDOT. Our support and any future acceptance of roads within the Northface property will be contingent upon a satisfactory maintenance agreement between the Borough and Northface being executed by both parties.

Roll Call Vote:

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|-------------------|-----|-------------------|-----|
| Terry Costenbader | Aye | Andrew Hollywood | Aye |
| Kris Hoffner | Aye | Cory Kepner | Nay |
| Holly Sell | Nay | William Gallagher | Aye |

Secretary recorded 4 aye, 2 nay; motion carried.

Holly Sell explained her nay vote, saying she does not have any faith in Northface.

6. On motion by Terry Costenbader, second by Kris Hoffner and voice vote, Council approved the hiring of Autumn Canfield as Borough Manager, at a salary of \$94,000.00, effective as soon as she is available.

Ms. Canfield thanked Council for their faith in her, relaying the interview process was stress free and is looking forward to joining the team and becoming part of the Palmerton community.

REPORT OF THE MAYOR

Don Herrmann had no report.

REPORT OF THE POLICE CHIEF

Timothy Kromer reported:

1. The 2023 Police Interceptor had the graphics applied by Jet Signs and they did an amazing job, looking even better than expected. It will be going to Lehigh Valley Fleet for upfitting at the end of the month. We have not yet received a timeline on delivery of our other vehicles as they have not been assigned a production date.
2. I am a new member, and first law enforcement officer, of the Carbon County Veterans Steering Committee, which provides resources for Veterans in Carbon County, and look forward to helping to improve the quality of life for Veterans in Carbon County.
3. In April, Patrolman Stern and I will be attending an ALERRT Level I Trainer Course. The Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training is run by Texas State University and the FBI, and is the national standard for active shooter response training. The course is being hosted at our new Carbon County Emergency Operations and Training Center which has been certified by the FBI to conduct ALERRT training, allowing us to host our own courses without the logistics of using a school or other occupied building. The Trainer Course will allow us to conduct our own ALERRT Level I training courses, which is designed for patrol operations and three of our patrolmen will be attending Level I training during the week following our certification. Our goal is to have all Carbon County police officers certified in Level I by the end of the year. In addition, we will be conducting an AAIR (Active Attack Integrated Response) Course at the EOTC this fall, which consists of law enforcement, fire, EMS, and dispatch all training together. The course is designed to improve coordination between all agencies during a major event.
4. Patrolman Stern has received his BLS (Basic Life Support) Instructor Certification. Next week he will have his evaluation by St Luke's staff, which will allow him to conduct his own certifications, and in June he will be attending Firearms Instructor Course and Rifle Instructor Course at the Pennsylvania State Police's Northwest Training Center.
5. The Palmerton Police Department National Night Out will be held this year on August 1, 2023 and we look forward to building on last year's successful event.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Holly Sell, second by Andrew Hollywood and voice vote, Council adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly A. Rodrigues
Recording Secretary

Donna I. McGarry
Manager/Secretary