

REGULAR MEETING OF PALMERTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

HELD IN BOROUGH HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 2022, 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	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
Richard L. Nothstein	

Absent: Cory Kepner

VISITORS

James Brown, 536 Lehigh Avenue; William Gallagher, 877 Lafayette Avenue; Raberta and Jeremy Hans, 435 Franklin Avenue; John Cebrosky Jr., 950 Edgemont Avenue; Jared Cebrosky, 445 Princeton Avenue; Clare Papay, 1002 Third Street; Terry Ahner, Times News Reporter; Drew Snowberger, TV-13 Cameraman.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

HEARING OF VISITORS

James Brown of 536 Lehigh Avenue asked Council when the property next door to him will be cleaned up. He claims he has a rat issue as a result and wants something done. Terry Costenbader asked if anyone in the area is feeding animals. Mr. Brown assured him there is not as he walks the neighborhood to make sure. Donna McGarry added rats are attracted to garbage sources and can be feeding on trash throughout the alley. She asked Mr. Brown if he would be willing to testify to seeing rats in the neighbor's yard and he agreed.

RATIFICATION OF MINUTES

On motion by Richard Nothstein, second by Michael Ballard and voice vote, Council approved the February 24, 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. Berkheimer Tax Associates has been the earned income tax collection service for over ten years and their contract with the Carbon County Tax Collection Committee is coming up for renewal in January 2023.

On motion by Richard Nothstein, second by Michael Ballard and voice vote, Council authorized Donna McGarry, who serves as our representative to the Carbon County Tax Collection Committee, to vote in favor of renewing the agreement with Berkheimer Tax Associates to serve as the Earned Income Tax collector at a rate of 1.73% for ten years, effective January 1, 2023.

2. The Public Works department has been busy. They have been working hard on refurbishing park benches, completing 82 to date with approximately 24 remaining. Holly Sell thanked the Public Works for their hard work on the benches and keeping the park clean.

They are also involved in a valve replacement project from Eighth Street to Little Gap Road. The work is going well and will continue over the next few weeks to improve water supply towards the Little Gap area. Notifications to residents are being sent through the Borough’s SwiftReach 911 system.

3. Tree replacements in the park will begin soon. Donna McGarry had a meeting with the landscaper and will reach out to people who offered to donate as soon as the costs of the trees are determined.
4. The flags on Delaware Avenue need to be replaced. The office staff is working on pricing for new poles and flags.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

FINANCE

Richard Nothstein had no report.

PUBLIC RELATIONS/BOROUGH CODE

Holly Sell had no report.

BUILDINGS/RECREATION

Andrew Hollywood reported:

1. On motion by Andrew Hollywood, 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>
Concourse Club	Park	Movie in the Park
Palmerton/Towamensing Athletic Asn	Elmer Valo Field	Baseball/Softball
CC Voter Registration	Borough Garage	Polling Place
Chamber of Commerce	Park	Egg Hunt
Tammy Recker	Park/Bandstand	Prom in Park

2. There is no update on the Municipal Services building as quotes are expected from contractors.
3. On motion by Andrew Hollywood, second by Richard Nothstein and voice vote, Council approved the request from Palmerton-Towamensing Little League to construct batting cages at the Elmer Valo Field.
4. On motion by Andrew Hollywood, second by Michael Ballard and voice vote, Council authorized a grant application to the Pocono Mountain Vacation Bureau in the amount of \$4630.00 for beautification of the area at the entrance to Palmerton. This is a 50-50 grant, so one-half would be the Borough's responsibility.

Andrew Hollywood made a motion, second by Kris Hoffner, to authorize a grant application to the Pocono Mountain Vacation Bureau in the amount of \$8370.00 to renovate the basketball court adjacent to the Elmer Valo baseball field. Work would include refurbishing the backboards, sealing cracks, coating the court, painting lines and increasing the height of the existing 4' fence to 8'.

Holly Sell asked Council to consider installing new instead of refurbishing the existing backboards as the current ones do not provide the give and performance of newer models. Donna McGarry relayed the grant application is not due until April 30, 2022 which would give enough time to research the cost of new backboards and poles. No vote was taken on the original motion.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Kris Hoffner reported:

1. Kris Hoffner, Chief Tim Kromer, Terry Costenbader, and Donna McGarry met with the Palmerton Area School District on March 14, 2022 to advise the Borough will no longer be providing Crossing Guards for the 2022/2023 school year. Andrew Hollywood voiced his concern about the safety of the students, but Kris Hoffner advised him the school has security that would assure their safety.

On motion by Kris Hoffner, second by Michael Ballard and voice vote, Council voted to cancel the crossing guard agreement for the 2022/2023 school year.

Chief Timothy Kromer offered to provide the school with the gear, stop signs and training for the Crossing Guards.

2. Council agreed they will not participate in a new police regionalization study. Terry Costenbader reported there have been two past studies done, the last one in 2013, that produced no interest. Donna McGarry reached out to Bowmanstown Borough, Lower Towamensing and Towamensing Townships for their thoughts, but she did not receive a call back. Chief Kromer does not feel the study is worth the effort as the process is extremely difficult and Palmerton has no departments to combine with. The surrounding municipalities/townships currently do not pay for police service and with a regionalization they would be required to.
3. Chief Timothy Kromer reviewed handicapped parking space requests for both 235 Lafayette Avenue and 455 Franklin Avenue, conducted background checks on each and is recommending approval.

On motion by Kris Hoffner, second by Michael Ballard and voice vote, Council approved installation of a handicapped parking space on the North side of the 200 block of Lafayette Avenue and the North side of the 400 Block of Franklin Avenue.

STREETS & SIDEWALKS

Holly Sell reported:

1. On motion by Holly Sell, second by Richard Nothstein and voice vote, Council adopted Ordinance 763 amending streets and sidewalks, parking prohibited at all times section of Borough Code. A copy of the Ordinance is attached to these minutes.
2. On motion by Holly Sell, second by Richard Nothstein and voice vote, Council adopted Ordinance 764 amending Vehicles and Traffic, Junked Vehicles, and Snow and Ice Removal sections of Borough Code. A copy of the Ordinance is attached to these minutes.

SEWER/SOLID WASTE/WATER

Michael Ballard reported:

1. Council discussed adding a paper shredding option to the electronics recycling event on May 19, 2022 and the pros/cons of opening it to the public outside the Borough. Donna McGarry advised the Borough is charged for exceeding a certain volume.

On motion by Michael Ballard, second by Kris Hoffner and voice vote, Council authorized an addition of paper shredding to the electronics recycling event on May 19, 2022 and announced the event is open to Palmerton Borough residents only.

PERSONNEL

Terry Costenbader had no report.

DISPOSITION OF BILLS

On motion by Richard Nothstein, 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. Thank you to the Public Works Department for the work that they have completed at the police station so far.
2. A reminder to Borough residents if anyone is missing a bike or had a recent theft, please reach out to the Police Department at 610-826-4055 with a description of the bike and the officers will see if any match the description. After March 31, 2022, unclaimed bicycles will be properly disposed of.
3. The Police Department will be working with the Public Works department to install equipment in the police station to allow for uploads of data from the dash cams. A special thanks to Brad in Public Works for installing the dash cams in our police vehicles and to the Public Works department for their assistance.

Officer Leadbetter will be taking the lead in training our officers in the use of their dash cams and body cams. After training, Chief Kromer will write a usage policy for the officers for their review.

4. The Bike patrol hopefully will be up and running by the end of May. One bike is expected to be delivered by the end of March and the other by the end of April. Officers will be attending training in early May in Allentown.
5. Reminder to all residents there is a five-bag limit of bags to be placed out weekly for trash and to clean up after their dogs on their private property and the property of others.
6. Don Herrmann would like to have a community clean-up day like the one we had last year, hopefully sometime in late April or early May, and was already in contact with Clare Papay who organized the previous event.
7. Chief Kromer has been working on cleaning up junked vehicles parked on the street throughout town and is finding it difficult to do following the PA Vehicle Code as it only allows for removal if both the registration is expired AND it is out of inspection. He is suggesting Council amend the Borough's ordinances to address vehicles parked on the street, not only on private property to help with this issue.
8. Chief Kromer reported the department will be wearing new patches designed by Officer Shimer. It is more custom to the department and not a standard catalog patch. Council thanked Officer Shimer for his efforts.
9. Chief Kromer advised a revision to the Code of Conduct will be coming to Council for review. The body and dash cam section is nearly complete. Kris Hoffner thanked the Police department, Public Works department, Office staff and all Borough employees for their dedication to making the Borough such a nice place to live.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Council wished Times News reporter Terry Ahner a Happy Birthday.
2. Holly Sell reminded residents to be careful driving around the park with the nice weather bringing out more children. She also thanked the Police department for patrolling in the park.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Richard Nothstein, second by Michael Ballard and voice vote, Council adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly A. Rodrigues
Recording Secretary

Donna I. McGarry
Borough Manager