

The regular meeting of the Borough Council of the Borough of Sinking Spring was called to order on Thursday, December 12, 2024, at 7:00 p.m., by Council Vice-President H. David Miller. After the pledge to the flag, Elizabeth Eagelman called the roll reflecting the following Council Members present:

Tracy Peterson (Absent)  
H. David Miller  
Denise Stine  
Lisa Gantner  
Brian Hoffa  
Robert Metzgar  
John Eagelman

Other officials present: Mayor Gary Cirulli; Charles Haws, Barley Snyder, Borough Solicitor; Lowell Leaman, ARRO Consulting; Michael Hart, Borough Manager; Police Chief James Oxenreider; and Elizabeth Eagelman, Borough Secretary, who recorded the minutes of the proceeding.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Mr. Miller asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 14, 2024 Council Meeting. Mrs. Stine made the motion to approve the minutes; seconded by Mrs. Gantner. AYES – 6, NAYS – 0, ABSENT - 1. Motion carried.

**VISITORS/PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There were no visitors signed in.

**CORRESPONDENCE/POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS:**

Mr. Miller stated that we received a letter of interest for the vacant Zoning Hearing Board seat from Mr. Harry Speidel. Mrs. Stine made the motion to appoint Mr. Speidel to the Zoning Hearing Board; seconded by Mr. Metzger. AYES – 6, NAYS – 0, ABSENT - 1. Motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF THE BILLS AND THE TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Mr. Miller asked for a motion to approve the bills and the Treasurer's Report for November 2024. Mr. Hoffa made a motion to approve the bills, seconded by Mrs. Stine. AYES – 6, NAYS – 0, ABSENT - 1. Motion carried.

**WESTERN BERKS FIRE DEPARTMENT:**

Mr. Renshaw stated that his report should be in the email packet. He mentioned that this past Monday they had a fire call at 710 James Street in one of the apartments. He stated that it was a working fire in the kitchen and living room area of the apartment and they were able to hold it to the apartment of origin.

Mrs. Gantner thank Mr. Renshaw for delivering Santa to our Open House. Mr. Miller asked how the building plans are coming along. Mr. Renshaw stated that they just finished the feasibility study and that each municipality will get a copy to review.

**WESTERN BERKS AMBULANCE:**

Mr. Miller stated that their November Activity Report is included in the email packet.

**REVITALIZATION:**

Mr. Hoffa stated that they have a meeting next Tuesday, December 17<sup>th</sup>.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS/POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS:**

Mr. Miller stated that the first item is to approve the Resolutions for the 2025 General Fund, Sewer Fund and Emergency Services Fund Budgets. Mr. Hoffa made the motion to approve the Resolutions; seconded by Mr. Metzgar. AYES – 6, NAYS – 0, ABSENT - 1. Motion carried.

The next item was to approve the Ordinances for the 2025 Tax Rates. Mr. Hoffa made the motion to approve the Ordinances; seconded by Mrs. Gantner. AYES – 6, NAYS – 0, ABSENT - 1. Motion carried.

**NEW BUSINESS/POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS:**

The first item was to approve the hiring of Gabriel Hirsch for the Community Coordinator Position. Mr. Hart stated that Mr. Hirsch was interviewed two times by a handful of Council members and that he is a very nice young man and seemed very positive. Mr. Metzgar made a motion to approve hiring Mr. Hirsch; seconded by Mr. Hoffa. AYES – 6, NAYS – 0, ABSENT - 1. Motion carried.

**LOWELL LEAMAN – ARRO CONSULTING – ENGINEER:**

Mr. Leaman stated that there were no action items for this evening and asked if Council had any questions on the report. Mr. Haws asked about item number 3 for Village Greens and if we ever figured out what they need to do to make their request for bond release because he got an email asking where that was at. Mr. Leaman stated that he coordinated with him this week and they are going to go out there hopefully in the next week and walk the site and confirm completion and should include the lot 2 items as well.

**CHIEF OXENREIDER:**

Chief Oxenreider went over his Activity Report for November 2024.

**POLICE CONTRACT AND CHIEF'S EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT:**

Mr. Miller asked Mrs. Stine if all the changes had been made. Mrs. Stine stated that as far as she could see they were. Mr. Haws briefly went over the changes to the previous three (3) contract including the wage increases of 12% for 2025 and 3.25% for 2026 thru 2029, adding Easter Sunday as a paid holiday, increasing the Borough share of the health insurance deductible to 75% put into the HAS and the officers to 25%. Mrs. Stine mentioned that this is the first year that we are doing a five (5) year contract. Mr. Miller mentioned that the 12% wage increase for 2025 is a parity increase to bring them in line with what other municipalities of comparable size to the borough are paying.

Mr. Miller stated that since the Police Contract and the Chief's Employment Agreement were not on the original agenda, we should do an Amendment to the Agenda and asked for a motion to do so since they need to be completed prior to the end of the year to avoid a lapse in the contract. Mrs. Stine made a motion to approve amending tonight's meeting agenda to include the Police Contract for 2025 through 2029 and the Chief's Employment Agreement; seconded by Mrs. Gantner. AYES – 6, NAYS – 0, ABSENT - 1. Motion carried.

Mr. Miller asked for a motion to approve the Police Contract for years 2025 through 2029. Mrs. Stine made that motion; seconded by Mr. Eagelman. AYES – 6, NAYS – 0, ABSENT - 1. Motion carried.

Mr. Miller stated that the Employment Agreement for the Chief would be next and asked if there were any questions on this one. Mrs. Stine mentioned that the wage increases would be 8% for 2025, 5.5% for 2026 and 5% for 2027 and that it is a one (1) year Agreement that would automatically roll over unless terminated by either party. She stated that the only other change was the addition of Easter Sunday as a holiday and that they also added paragraph 26 stating that the employee shall not accept part-time work any other employer and shall terminate any current part time employment for the entire term of the agreement. Mr. Miller asked Mr. Haws if he would be more comfortable with Council approving it pending his favorable review. Mr. Haws stated yes, so he could make sure there were not any edits. Mrs. Stine made a motion to approve the Employment Agreement pending a favorable review by the solicitor; seconded by Mrs. Gantner. AYES – 6, NAYS – 0, ABSENT - 1. Motion carried.

**ELIZABETH EAGELMAN – BOROUGH SECRETARY:**

Mrs. Eagelman mentioned that Hometown Press contacted her about the newsletter and that we should get it out soon since they received payments for advertisements. Mr. Miller asked Mr. Hoffa if he could put something together and Mrs. Gantner stated that she would put something together. Mr. Miller asked that all articles be sent in by December 30<sup>th</sup>.

**MAYOR GARY CIRULLI:**

Mayor Cirulli thanked the Rec Board for the Holiday Open House and stated that they did a wonderful job.

**ROBERT METZGAR – FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION:**

Mr. Metzgar mentioned that they had an Admin meeting on November 18<sup>th</sup> and they discussed employee management and property acquisition. He stated that they had a Planning Commission meeting last month and that Mr. Eagelman agreed to spearhead their effort to review the SALDO. He also mentioned that they reviewed a sketch plan for a property in the middle of the Downtown District.

**LISA GANTNER – RECREATION:**

Mrs. Gantner mentioned the holiday decorating contest and that she gave everyone a sheet for voting and asked that they be returned by next Friday. She also mentioned that the luncheon is Friday, December 20<sup>th</sup> at the Railroad House at noon. He stated that a resident on Reedy Road has reported that an alarm is going off on the Golf Course property at night and it is going off all the time. Mr. Hart stated that he met with the general contractor, and he stated that they don't have any type of alarm, only cameras, and that they will check with their subcontractors. The chief stated that he will have it checked out.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Council went into executive session at 7:41 P.M. for a litigation issue.

**RECONVENE:**

Council reconvened at 7:57 P.M.

No action was taken.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Mr. Hoffa made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 P.M.; seconded by Mr. Metzgar.  
AYES – 6, NAYS – 0, ABSENT - 1. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Elizabeth A. Egelman  
Borough Secretary