

The regular meeting of the Borough Council of the Borough of Sinking Spring was called to order on Thursday, February 8, 2024 at 7:00 p.m., by Council President Tracy Peterson. After the pledge to the flag, Elizabeth Eagelman called the roll reflecting the following Council Members present:

Tracy Peterson
H. David Miller
Denise Stine
Lisa Gantner
Brian Hoffa
Robert Metzgar
Michael Caron

Other officials present: Mayor Gary Cirulli, Charles Haws, Barley Snyder, Borough Solicitor; Brad Smith, 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:

Mrs. Peterson asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the January 2, 2024 Reorganization Meeting, January 2, 2024 Council Meeting and January 24, 2024 Council Workshop Meeting. Mr. Hoffa made the motion to approve the minutes; seconded by Mrs. Stine. AYES – 7, NAYS – 0. Motion carried.

VISITORS/PUBLIC COMMENT:

Julie Beth Drey of 3314 Reedy Road addressed Council concerning flooding issues and sewer backups at her property. She was looking for answers and assistance and stated that in September of 2021 and again in July of 2023 she had sewer water gush into her house in her basement. She mentioned that she had a plumber out yesterday and they are trying to figure out what they can do differently. She stated that the plumber noted that there was water running in the new pipe in her yard when no one was in the house running any water. Mr. Miller explained that these storms are hitting us more often and with the storm in July we received close to 8 inches of rain from that one storm and the rainwater gets into the sewer lines and fills the system. Ms. Drey asked if there was an issue at the plant. Mr. Miller stated that there was no issue at the plant that it was just too much water at one time. Ms. Drey asked about the water that is running in the pipe. Mr. Hart stated that it sounds like there may be a break in the pipe somewhere between the house and the cleanout and ground water is getting into it. He stated that the plumber could televise the line to see if there is a break. Mr. Miller asked if she had a sump pump. Ms. Drey stated that she has two that have been running nonstop since December 19th and it is piped out to the curb line to the storm drain. Mr. Miller asked for her phone number and stated that we would look into things and stay in touch with her. Ms. Drey stated that she would like that and that every time there is a storm warning they panic.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Mrs. Peterson mentioned that Council received an invitation to the Municipal Officials Dinner on Thursday, March 14th. Mr. Miller asked if anyone was interested in going. Mrs. Gantner mentioned that we have Council Meeting that night.

Mrs. Peterson mentioned that we received a letter from Nanette Dunford from 744 Maria Avenue and that she is interested in serving on the Planning Commission. She stated that Ms. Dunford is very qualified. Mrs. Gantner made a motion to appoint Nanette Dunford to the Planning Commission; seconded by Mr. Hoffa. AYES – 7, NAYS – 0. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF THE BILLS:

Mrs. Peterson asked for a motion to approve the bills for January 2024. Mrs. Stine made a motion to approve the bills, seconded by Mr. Miller. AYES – 7, NAYS – 0. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Mrs. Peterson asked for a motion to approve the Treasures Report for January 2024. Mrs. Stine made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report; seconded by Mrs. Gantner. AYES – 7, NAYS – 0. Motion carried.

WESTERN BERKS FIRE DEPARTMENT:

Mr. Renshaw mentioned that his January Activity Report is included in the email packet. He stated that in 2023 they responded to a total of 1,234 calls which is a 15% increase over 2022. He attributed the increase in call volume to the increase in developments in the area. He also mentioned that they were just awarded a \$56,000.00 grant from the office of the state fire commissioner and that it is the ninth year in a row that they received a grant from them. He stated that they started the process to gauge feasibility of their headquarters in Wernersville as to whether they can do a remodel or do a rebuild down the road.

WESTERN BERKS AMBULANCE:

Mrs. Peterson stated that their December and January Activity Reports are in the email packet. She stated that they changed their format. Mr. Miller stated that it is a work in progress.

REVITALIZATION:

Mr. Hoffa mentioned that they had to postpone their last meeting because not enough people could make it. He asked that something be put out on the website that they are looking for volunteers. He stated that he would reach out to Ms. Dunford to see if she would be interested.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS/POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS:

There was no unfinished business to be discussed.

NEW BUSINESS/POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS:

Mrs. Peterson stated that the only item is the proposed 2024 trash rates which is a 48.6 % increase. Mr. Hart stated that it will be an increase of \$7.09 per month for single family residents and that multi-unit and commercial were also increased the same percentage. Council requested that information about the increase be put on the sewer bill and on the Borough Web Site and Facebook page. Mr. Metzgar stated that we need a messaging service that would call the residents with important information. Mr. Hart stated that we have the Code Red system that we could use but the issue is that some people don't register for it. Mr. Miller mentioned that there would be a fee to use the Code Red system for non-emergency messaging. Mr. Miller made a motion to approve the 2024 Trash Rates; seconded by Mr. Hoffa. AYES – 7, NAYS – 0. Motion carried.

BRAD SMITH – ARRO CONSULTING – ENGINEER:

Mr. Smith reported on the Municipal Engineering portion of his report. He stated that the work on the traffic signals for the Penn, Columbia, Cacoosing intersection are approximately 75% complete. He also mentioned that CMS will be applying to PennDOT for a paving extension to start work in the beginning of March weather permitting. He also reported that ARRO provided the solicitor with items for the dedication of the improved portion of Reedy Road along the Village Greens Subdivision. Mrs. Peterson mentioned that there are sign poles on Reedy Road and she was wondering what they are for. Mrs. Stine mentioned that there is a new sign pole in front of her house on Cacoosing Avenue also. Mr. Smith stated that he would look into it and let them know.

Mr. Smith reported on the Environmental Engineering portion of his report. He stated that Ms. Cherry received the grant agreement today from DCED for the Reed Bed Refurbishment. He stated that she emailed it over to him, but he did not have a chance to look over it yet.

Discussion ensued concerning traffic/detour issues with South Hull Street. Mrs. Peterson stated that cars are driving the wrong way and coming out to Penn Avenue. Mr. Miller mentioned that the detour signs are a little confusing. He stated that the detour signs on Penn Avenue pointing to South Hull and the ones on Columbia pointing to South Hull Street are pedestrian detours not for cars.

CHIEF OXENREIDER:

Chief Oxenreider went over his January 2024 Activity Report.

MICHAEL HART – BOROUGH MANAGER:

Mr. Hart mentioned that we are still working off two grants for the highway project and that two have been used up. He mentioned that both of the grants expire June 30th, so he sent letters asking for them to be extended again just in case the project is not completed by then.

Mr. Hart stated that he received a notice from Mr. Tom Baucher that they will be having an Open House on Thursday, February 29th between 7 p.m. and 8 p.m. at the Emergency Operations Center located in the Spring Township Fire Station. He stated that it is for Council Members to see the operations center and what they do there.

Mr. Hart mentioned that Mr. Loth stopped in and dropped off all the BOSS Revitalization information including Façade Grant information that he had. He stated that he is working on some of the stuff and that he has submitted one Façade Grant reimbursement already. He mentioned that the Grant business is getting very busy and that he is working with eleven (11) of them with the new ones. Mrs. Peterson stated that we spoke about this previously, but they didn't know if there was enough to hire a full-time person. She asked if it is enough to keep a part-time person busy or if we needed to go for a full-time person. Mr. Hart stated that he didn't think that we were ready for a full-time person yet. Mr. Metzgar stated that he would highly recommend that this be something that comes through committee prior to discussion in public. Discussion ensued.

ELIZABETH EAGELMAN – BOROUGH SECRETARY:

Mrs. Eagelman mentioned that they should start thinking about the Spring/Summer Newsletter. She stated that she would like to get it out by mid-March.

H. DAVID MILLER – SEWER/SANITATION:

Mr. Miller mentioned that they will be having a committee meeting sometime this month. He also mentioned that the Little Food Pantry has been relocated to the side of the building by the Library Book Drop. Mrs. Peterson thanked him for taking care of that and mentioned that we should put something on our Facebook page stating that it was relocated.

TRACY PETERSON – LIBRARY:

Mrs. Peterson mentioned that they have their Library Board meeting on Monday at 7 p.m.

MAYOR CIRULLI:

Mayor Cirulli stated that they need to start working on the National Night Out since they don't know what Lower or South are doing. Chief Oxenreider stated that he sent them letters to them but has not heard from either yet.

ROBERT METZGAR – FINANCE:

Mr. Metzgar stated that he would like to schedule the next Admin meeting before they leave tonight. He mentioned that the minutes from their January 8th meeting are included in the email packet.

Mr. Metzgar mentioned that he has a soft spot for animals and that he saw a dog that had been struck by a vehicle today. He stated that he just wanted to mention on record and state that he thinks that it is really important that we all do our part to do what we can to be responsible for our pets.

LISA GANTNER - RECREATION:

Mrs. Gantner mentioned that she needed to speak to Mr. Hart about a few things and then she would get her report out to everyone from their last meeting. She stated that they did decide on the Summer Playground dates which will be Wednesday, June 5th through Tuesday, August 6th which is National Night Out. She also mentioned that she will be meeting with Wilson Education about Bulldog Blast for this year. She stated that the Easter Egg Hunt will be on Saturday, March 23rd at 10 a.m. on the Fire Company Grounds and Ms. Stuck, from the Fire Company, will be filling all the eggs again this year. She mentioned that she registered to go to the Pennsylvania Rec and Park Society preconference to learn about grant writing.

DENISE STINE – PUBLIC SAFETY:

Mrs. Stine mentioned that they are going to have a committee meeting sometime next month.

MICHAEL CARON – PUBLIC WORKS:

Mr. Caron mentioned that they are working on scheduling a meeting and would like to set the time tonight before everyone leaves. He also requested that Mr. Hart attend the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Hoffa made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Elizabeth A. Eageman
Borough Secretary