

The regular meeting of the Borough Council of the Borough of Sinking Spring was called to order on Thursday, July 13, 2023, 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(Absent)
Patrick Giambalvo(Absent)

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

Mr. Miller made a motion to make two amendments to the Meeting Agenda. The first was to reaffirm the Declaration of Emergency, due to the flooding on July 9th that was signed by Mayor Cirulli and himself, and the second was to support and submit an application for an LSA Grant on behalf of Western Berks Ambulance. He stated that they both could go under New Business. Mrs. Stine seconded the motion to amend the Meeting Agenda. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0, ABSENT - 2. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mrs. Peterson asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the June 8, 2023 Council Meeting. Mr. Hoffa made the motion to approve the minutes; seconded by Mrs. Gantner. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0, ABSENT - 2. Motion carried.

VISITORS/PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mr. Donald Good of 201 Keller Avenue addressed Council concerning flooding from the storms on Sunday, July 9th. He stated that he had water in his basement and believes that it is because the water runs off the ballfields behind his house. He also mentioned that the people from the ball teams park in front of their driveways and garages. Mrs. Peterson stated that Mr. Hart will have to go out during a storm to see the water flowing and that the Police Department will patrol back there and to call them if they have any issues.

CORRESPONDENCE:

There was no correspondence.

APPROVAL OF THE BILLS:

Mrs. Peterson asked for a motion to approve the bills for June 2023. Mr. Hoffa made a motion to approve the bills, seconded by Mrs. Gantner. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0 ABSENT - 2. Motion carried.

TREASURER’S REPORT:

Mrs. Peterson asked for a motion to approve the Treasures Report for June 2023. Mr. Hoffa made a motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report; seconded by Mrs. Stine. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0 ABSENT – 2. Motion carried.

WESTERN BERKS FIRE DEPARTMENT:

Mr. Renshaw stated that their June Activity Report is included in the email packet. He mentioned that on Friday, July 7th there was a house fire in the Borough on Beacon Avenue. He stated that the fire started in the basement in the in-law quarters and that luckily all of the occupants got out and they held the fire to the basement although there was smoke damage to the first and second floors. He also mentioned the flooding on Sunday, July 9th and that they had some water rescues because people drove around barricades.

WESTERN BERKS AMBULANCE:

Mrs. Peterson mentioned that their June Activity Report is included in the email packet.

REVITALIZATION:

Mr. Hoffa went over the BOSS July 2023 Report to Borough Council. He stated that Mr. Merlin Weaver, BOSS Forward president, will be attending five training sessions scheduled by the PA Downtown Center over the next ten months. He mentioned that the courses include Organizational Development, Design, Marketing, Asset Enhancement and Safe, Clean & Green Standards. He also mentioned that they are looking into Keystone Communities Designations and will determine how best to utilize the program and whether to pursue a designation by DCED. He stated that they are also looking into crosswalk enhancements for the intersection at Penn and South Hull. He stated that they will be applying to the PA “Municipal Assistance Program” or “Local Share Account” for a \$25,000.00 matching grant for the Main Street program that we have. He also mentioned that they had a meeting with SCTA a couple months ago and they are trying to get a second meeting scheduled. He stated that they have six applicants for the Façade Improvement Program.

Mr. Miller made a motion to allow BOSS Forward, on behalf of the Borough, to apply for the grants from PA Municipal Assistance Program and the Local Share Account; seconded by Mrs. Gantner. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0 ABSENT – 2. Motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS/POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS:

Mrs. Peterson stated that the first item is the approval of the Franchise Agreement with Service Electric and the Ordinance. Mr. Haws stated that the Ordinance was advertised for consideration of adoption at tonight's meeting and that the Ordinance authorizes the signing of the Franchise Agreement. Mrs. Stine made a motion to adopt the Ordinance authorizing the signing of the Franchise Agreement with Service Electric; seconded by Mr. Hoffa. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0 ABSENT – 2. Motion carried.

The next item was reaffirming the 7 Brew Plans for Recording. Mr. Hart explained that the 7 Brew Plans were not submitted to the Berks County Planning Commission for review prior to the Borough approving the plans. He stated that the County has now reviewed the plan and that the Borough now needs to reaffirm their approval of the plan and submit a letter to the BCPC stating the meeting date and all of Council's signatures before it can be recorded. Mr. Hoffa made the motion to reaffirm the approval of the 7 Brew plans; seconded by Mrs. Stine. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0 ABSENT – 2. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS/POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS:

Mrs. Peterson stated that the first item is to approve the hiring of Alexandra Gonzales for the Library at \$12.00 per hour. She stated that Ms. Gonzales will be working 10 to 20 hours per week and will be replacing an employee that left. Mrs. Peterson made the motion to approve hiring Alexandra Gonzales at \$12.00 per hour; seconded by Mr. Hoffa. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0 ABSENT – 2. Motion carried.

The next item was a motion by Mr. Miller to ratify the Declaration of Emergency due to the flooding on Sunday, July 9, 2023; seconded by Mrs. Stine. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0 ABSENT – 2. Motion carried

The next item was a motion by Mr. Miller to support and submit an application for LSA Grant funding on behalf of the Western Berks Ambulance; seconded by Mrs. Gantner. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0 ABSENT – 2. Motion carried. Mr. Miller mentioned that they will be submitting for two ambulances and an ATV for our grant.

BRAD SMITH – ARRO CONSULTING – ENGINEER:

Mr. Smith went over his Environmental and Municipal Engineer's Report. There were no action items. He gave an update on the Phase 2 HOP. He stated that the culvert is still in conflict with their design, so they submitted a fix to PennDOT, and they are waiting for a reply. He stated that the fix is acceptable to the construction unit, but they had to stop work on Columbia until they hear back from the PennDOT HOP Unit. He stated that CMS has jumped over to Cacoosing to start work on the basin where they are finding Verizon conduit that is not where it is supposed to be per the PA One Call and that UGI has lines right under the existing pavement and will have to be lowered. He stated that CMS is working with the utilities to coordinate all of that.

BRAD SMITH – ARRO CONSULTING – ENGINEER (Cont.):

Mr. Smith stated that a sketch plan was submitted to the Planning Commission for review for two apartment buildings to be located at 4100 Penn Avenue and 20 Woodrow Avenue. He mentioned that there are significant zoning issues with the proposal which were discussed with the owner's representative. He stated that their intention is to seek relief from the Zoning Hearing Board with numerous variances. He stated that ARRO recommended that they submit a preliminary plan and after review either proceed with compliance or a hearing. Discussion ensued. Mr. Haws reminded Council that they can participate in support or opposition in any application and that they do not have to leave it up to the Zoning Hearing Board Members to guess as to whether Council wants more development or not.

Mr. Smith mentioned that ARRO completed the field data collection for the Borough mapping of the MS4 and Pollution Reduction Plan and they are continuing to calculate the reduction provided by existing BMP's and looking into possible projects to meet the MS4 requirements.

Mrs. Peterson mentioned that she has had a few people ask her about this and wanted to know how long the roads will be shut down. Mr. Smith stated that we have not received a schedule from CMS that is approved by PennDOT yet. Mr. Hart stated that we have a tentative one that takes us to November. Mrs. Peterson asked that we put it out there because she did not have any idea that the area in front of her development was going to be closed. Mr. Hart explained that a sink hole opened up there last Friday evening, so it was an emergency shutdown of Reedy Road between Brookfield Avenue and Winding Brook Drive. Mr. Miller suggested using CodeRed to get the word out on road closures and emergencies. Mrs. Peterson mentioned that Lower Heidelberg has a notification system that contacts the residents anytime a road is going to be closed or when trash will be delayed. She stated that we need to do a better job of keeping the residents notified of what is going on. Discussion ensued concerning CodeRed and other notification systems. Mr. Miller stated that he will look into the CodeRed system. Mr. Hart mentioned that the contractor has put out notices that the roads will be closed a week in advance, so they are doing what they are supposed to do, and all of the detours have been pre-approved by PennDOT. He stated that the Reedy Road closure happened late Friday when the sinkhole opened where the contractor for Village Green laid the new pipe, so they have to fix that. Mr. Hart also mentioned that one of our issues is staffing. He stated that it is hard to keep up with all of the social media stuff and get the day-to-day work done with just a few people. Mrs. Peterson mentioned that we had advertised for a part-time person to help with the rec stuff and newsletters, but no one was interested. Mr. Hart stated that he may have someone that is interested now. Mrs. Peterson stated that they can discuss that at the next Admin meeting. Mr. Smith stated that if they receive any questions that they cannot answer to call him and if he doesn't know he will find out. Mrs. Stine asked if an email could be sent to the Council members when emergencies happen like the Reedy Road closure so they can answer questions if asked. Mrs. Peterson stated that it would do a lot for our public relations if we got the information out there for the residents.

POLICE CHIEF JAMES OXENREIDER:

Chief Oxenreider went over his report for June 2023. He reminded Council that the Sinking Spring Police Department is hosting the National Night Out on Tuesday, August 1st at the playground from 6 pm to 9 pm. He stated that they are getting a lot of donations, there will be food and bounce houses and the Rec Board and Library are also assisting.

MIKE HART – BOROUGH MANAGER:

Mr. Hart mentioned that the old retaining wall at the side of the building has been replaced. He explained that the owner of the property next door, Bachman Roofing, contacted him about going together to replace it. He stated that the Borough bought the block for \$1,400.00 and Bachman did all of the demo work and the construction of the new wall.

Mr. Hart thanked Mr. Miller for helping out on Sunday with all of the issues at the Sewer Plant due to the flooding. He mentioned that our average flow at the plant right now is about 600,000 GPD, on Sunday at 1:45 pm the plant was doing 773,000 GPD, a half hour later we went to 2,000,000 GPD and at 9:46 pm it peaked at 3,800,000 GPD. He stated that he knows some residents, and we have been making a list of complaints, that had sewer back up because of all the flood water going into the sewer laterals on Park Road, Shillington Road, and South Hull Street. He stated that it was just too much water for the system to handle. He stated that the best thing residents can do is put check valves in so the sewer cannot back up into their property, but they require maintenance and people don't want to put them in. He mentioned that Village Greens water detention did great and the ditch on Broad Street never came up over the curb line and didn't even hit the bridge.

H. DAVID MILLER – SEWER AND SANITATION:

Mr. Miller mentioned that one of the issues, as Mr. Hart stated, and probably one of the biggest culprits, is when the water goes over the curb line and runs into the vents. He stated that one of the things that he noticed at the plant was that the water from the property was running around the tanks and right into the wet well. He stated that there used to be a curb there but when they made modifications at the plant it must have been removed, so they are going to work on some modifications there. He also mentioned the storm sewer issue on Mt. Home Road at Bilco. He stated that the contraption that they insisted be installed failed and the water went back into their building.

LISA GANTNER - RECREATION:

Mrs. Gantner mentioned that they have a handful of parents that are causing a lot of trouble at the playground, but they are working through it. She stated that next Friday the petting zoo is coming to us, and they will be there for the playground from 9 am to 1 pm and they are working with the library so if they get enough kids, it will be from 2 pm to 4 pm for the library. She stated that there will be a cost per child. She stated that on July 28th they are going to do an adult movie

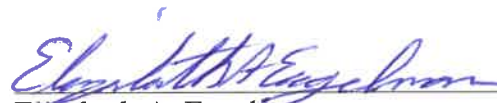
LISA GANTNER – RECREATION (Cont.):

and they will be showing Top Gun Maverick. She mentioned that they used the Freight House for the movie night last time because it was going to rain, and it worked out great.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Hoffa made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Elizabeth A. Eagelman
Borough Secretary