

The regular meeting of the Borough Council of the Borough of Sinking Spring was called to order on Thursday, March 9, 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 (Absent)
Lisa Gantner
Brian Hoffa
Robert Metzgar
Patrick Giambalvo (Absent)

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mrs. Peterson asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the February 9, 2023 Council Meeting. Mr. Hoffa made the motion to approve the minutes; seconded by Mr. Miller. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0, ABSENT - 2. Motion carried.

VISITORS/PUBLIC COMMENT:

The first visitor was Mr. Tom Bausher from the West Side Regional Emergency Management Agency. Mr. Bausher stated that he has received numerous questions about what is going on with the railroad after what happened in Ohio. He stated that they have done some preplanning for these types of incidents and that he created this presentation on Railroad Incident Action Plan Resource Information. Mr. Bausher went over contact information for railroads and resources, access to railroad maintenance via public streets, staging, fire hydrant locations and storm drain locations. After the presentation, Mrs. Peterson thanked Mr. Bausher for taking the time to do this.

The next visitors were Allan and Kathy Norris from 14 Krick Avenue. Mr. and Mrs. Norris were looking for an update on the status of their property. Mr. Norris stated that they are confused because they were told previously in November that the Borough had the funds to purchase the property and now, they are being told that the Borough does not have the funds to purchase the property. Mr. Hart explained that the Borough was awarded a grant that could use for the purchase of properties but we are not able to pull from that grant yet so the Borough cannot currently purchase their property. Mr. Norris asked if they should just say that everything is on hold until they hear from the Borough? Mrs. Peterson stated yes, at this point, and that we would contact them as soon as we find anything out. Mrs. Norris asked if anyone is going to be checking on the other half of the property that the Borough already took possession of to make sure that nothing is

VISITORS/PUBLIC COMMENT (Cont.):

wrong that would affect their property. Mr. Hart stated that they have been checking on it on a regular basis. Mr. Hoffa advised them to contact Mr. Hart right away if they notice anything that is affecting their property. Mr. Norris stated that he wanted to make sure that they are clear and stated that what he understands is that they should not be looking at anything or expecting anything any time soon. Mr. Metzgar stated that he would be reluctant to provide any direction. Mr. Miller stated that the real answer is that we do not know and that Council is waiting for answers from the state and as soon as we hear anything we will let them know. Mr. Norris asked if Council had any idea of a time line. Mr. Miller stated that we do not know at this time. He stated that if they have questions they should write them down and send them to Mr. Hart and copy Council if they wish and that way they can stay organized with information.

The next visitor was State Representative Johanny Cepeda-Freytiz. Mrs. Cepeda-Freytiz introduced herself as the Borough's new State Representative and mentioned that she has an office at 1111 Penn Avenue in Wyomissing. She stated that she is here at our service and to please reach out. She stated that she would like to know what is going on and how she can help with the previously discussed issue with the grant and anything else the Borough needs.

CORRESPONDENCE:

There was no correspondence to discuss.

APPROVAL OF THE BILLS:

Mrs. Peterson asked for a motion to approve the bills for February 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 February 2023. Mr. Hoffa made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report; seconded by Mr. Metzgar. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0 ABSENT – 2. Motion carried.

WESTERN BERKS FIRE DEPARTMENT:

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

WESTERN BERKS AMBULANCE:

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

REVITALIZATION:

Mr. Hoffa stated that Mr. Loth's Report to Council from February 22, 2023 is included in the email packet. He mentioned that he has a few notes; 1) they are starting the second round for the Façade Grant and Mr. Loth is working with different businesses on that; 2) they have a new BOSS Forward website www.bossforward.org; 3) they are working on the zoning for the D1 District. He announced that Ms. Tammy Rider has accepted the Chair position for the Design Guidelines Committee for the D1 District. Ms. Rider stated that she has already created a template based on some examples. She mentioned that they are going to try to meet the first week of April.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS/POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS:

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

NEW BUSINESS/POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS:

The first item was the Cohen Law Group Engagement for Service Electric Franchise Negotiation Services in the amount of \$8,900.00. Mr. Hart explained that he and Mr. Haws were approached by Service Electric of Birdsboro. He stated that they are looking to install and supply television and Wi-Fi service in this area. He stated that they, Service Electric, started talking to Wyomissing and Spring Township and both of those areas have engaged in a contract with Cohen Law Group. He stated that Cohen set up a price quote for the Borough to join in on this. He stated that Cohen Law Group did say that if this goes through, the money will be reimbursed because they usually charge the fee to the provider going for the franchise. Mr. Metzgar made a motion authorizing Mr. Hart to sign the Engagement for Services from Cohen Law Group; seconded by Mr. Miller. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0 ABSENT – 2. Motion carried.

The next item was to approve the purchase of new guns for the Police Department. Chief Oxenreider mentioned that they budgeted \$12,000.00 for new guns, holsters, etc. for this year. He stated that the actual cost of the guns was \$7,460.00. Mr. Miller made a motion to approve the purchase of the new guns; seconded by Mr. Hoffa. Mrs. Peterson asked what we do with the old firearms. Chief Oxenreider stated that five (5) weapons were traded in for the new ones and the other nine (9) will be offered to the Officers. He mentioned that they have not come up with a price yet. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0 ABSENT – 2. Motion carried.

The next item was the Resolution to apply for grant funding for the playground project. Mrs. Gantner explained that we hired a firm to do the playground master plan and that we need the master plan to apply for grant funding for the playground project. She mentioned that they are going to have a public meeting on Wednesday, March 15th at 7 p.m. to go over the concept. She stated that their number one priority that will come up at the public meeting is the pavilion and the entrance into the park. She mentioned that the first grant is due in by April and does not get awarded until November so we probably would not see any funds until 2024 if we do get the grant. She stated that it is a long process and that she thought that we could apply for this one and then apply for another one next year. She mentioned that there are two big grants, one is through the DCNR and the other is through CFA and they have different matching fund requirements. She

NEW BUSINESS/POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS:

stated that the one that she is hoping Council will approve moving forward on is through the DCNR and you can request up to \$300,000.00 and there is a 50% match which is the bad part. She mentioned that the CFA one that is due the end of May is a 15% match and if we apply for both of them and we get part of each then they can match each other which would be less out of pocket for us. She stated that what she is asking for today is to apply for the DCNR one that is due in April in the amount of \$250,000.00 which should cover about half of the pavilion and the entrance way. Mrs. Gantner made a motion to approve applying for a DCNR Grant in the amount of \$250,000.00 for the Playground Project; seconded by Mr. Metzgar. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0 ABSENT – 2. Motion carried. Mrs. Gantner stated that she spoke to Lauren from HRG and asked what it would cost for them to write the grants for us and it will be another \$8,000.00 to do both grants. Mr. Hoffa mentioned that Mr. Loth does our grant writing for Revitalization so it is a option to discuss it with him. Mrs. Gantner stated that the compromise is that, since the one is due right away and they are hustling to try to get everything done for it, is to have HRG do this one for \$4,000.00 and the other one isn't due until May so we could check with Mr. Loth on that one. It was agreed to let HRG move forward with writing the first grant and then check with Mr. Loth for the second one.

BRAD SMITH – ARRO CONSULTING – ENGINEER – POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS:

Mr. Smith mentioned that 7Brew Coffee submitted a sketch plan and it came before the Planning Commission on February 28th. . He stated that they are asking for a waiver to proceed as a preliminary final plan instead of going through the two-step process of a separate preliminary and final plan. He stated that the Planning Commission is recommending approval of that waiver and if Council takes action on that tonight, they can go ahead and prepare the appropriate plans for the next meeting. Mr. Miller made a motion to grant a waiver of the land development process for 7Brew; seconded by Mr. Hoffa. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0 ABSENT – 2. Motion carried.

POLICE CHIEF JAMES OXENREIDER:

Chief Oxenreider went over his activity report for February 2023.

BRAD SMITH – ARRO CONSULTING – ENGINEER

Mr. Smith stated that PennDOT has finally issued a supplement to the HOP for the work out here at the Penn/Columbia/Cacoosing intersection. He mentioned that they met with the contractor and gave them the change of plans and they are working on a new schedule. He also mentioned that they are meeting next Thursday to discuss the schedule. He also mentioned that they had a new traffic engineer start and with the approval of that supplement we are now proceeding on moving forward with that.

MIKE HART – BOROUGH MANAGER:

Mr. Hart reminded everyone that on March 23rd we are hosting the County Commissioners meeting here at 7 p.m. for anybody that wants to attend. He mentioned that if anyone would like to speak at the meeting the commissioners would like to have a written form prior to the meeting so they can review it and have it on their agenda.

Mrs. Peterson asked about the post concerning the fiber optics and if they had permits. Mr. Hart stated that they only need permits if they are digging up the street and that they do not need permits to dig in the right-of-way.

TRACY PETERSON – LIBRARY:

Mrs. Peterson stated that the Library would like to hire Mr. Adam Smith at \$12.00 per hour to work 10 – 15 hours per week and he will also be a passport agent. Mrs. Peterson made that a motion; seconded by Mrs. Gantner. AYES – 5, NAYS – 0 ABSENT – 2. Motion carried. Mrs. Peterson also mentioned that there are some other personnel issues going on in the library and there will probably be some changes once they have their Library Board Meeting next week.

ROBERT METZGAR – FINANCE:

Mr. Metzgar mentioned that they have not had a meeting in several months.

LISA GANTNER – RECREATION:

Mrs. Gantner reminded everyone that the Easter Egg Hunt will be Saturday, April 1st at 10 a.m.. Anyone who is interested in helping out should let her know.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Hoffa made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Elizabeth A. Eagelman
Borough Secretary