

Borough of Northumberland
175 Orange Street, Northumberland, PA 17857
Northumberland Borough Council Meeting
August 4, 2020

President Paul Ruane called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and Mayor Dan Berard offered an Invocation.

Roll Call

Council members present were Ann Boyer, Denise Guilbault, Ellie Rees, Paul Ruane, and Frank Wetzel. Others present were Mayor Berard; Melissa Kelso, Borough Solicitor; C.L. Kriner, Police Chief; MaryKay Clark, Code Enforcement Officer; and Janice Bowman, Borough Manager. Council members Kaitlyn Simmons and Orlando Toro were absent.

Public Comment

Mr. Robert Row informed council that at the last meeting, he was told that the neighbor would have to clean out the brush and open the drain. On Friday, the Borough crew was there to install a new box. Mr. Row felt that there had never been an issue with it until now. He also explained that he had stored a ladder at the barn when the barn was owned by the former owner. He had offered to allow the neighbor to borrow it. The neighbor is now saying that Mr. Row took the ladder from his barn.

Mr. Row noted that the main problem with the stormwater is due to the way the street is contoured.

Presentation – Susquehanna Valley Community Education Project

Megan Beck, president of the board, and Dr. Lenaire Ahlum, Executive Project Director of the Susquehanna Valley Community Education Project provided a slide presentation to the council. Their purpose is to raise community awareness and support for a new regional community college that would serve Northumberland, Snyder, Union, and Montour counties. The council members were provided with several handouts explaining the need and value of a local community college. The group is approaching the county commissioners in the four counties and requesting monetary support for the community college. They noted that the state, region, and student each contribute about one third of the cost of the student's education. Benefits of a community college were listed. 94% of people who attend community college, remain in the area. Community Colleges primarily focus on accredited training and may also transition into higher education.

The impact of a community college has a great multiplier. Examples were given about the annual return on investment in a community college. One example was that Cambria County's 1.2-million-dollar investment has shown a 58.7-million-dollar return.

The group has a preliminary site which was not disclosed. Their five-year plan was explained to the council:

2021 – University partnership agreement

2021-2022 - Multi-county sponsorship resolution

2022 - state application submitted for approval
2023-2024 - hire

Board members are approaching the municipalities in the 4-county region, requesting that each municipality submit a letter of support to their county commissioners. The board feels that the approximate cost for a community college would be \$1.14 per household per month. This fee would be assessed by the counties to fund the college. Additional information is available on their website at <https://newcommunitycollege.org> and on their Facebook page at New Community College for Susquehanna Valley.

Mr. Ruane suggested that council read the information provided and consider a letter of support at the next borough council meeting.

Bid Opening – Paving Bid

Mr. Ruane opened the bids for the paving project for 2020. The bid results are as follows:

M&M Asphalt	\$174,066.49
New Enterprise	\$127,601.10
Glenn O. Hawbaker, Inc.	\$177,877.50
Meckley's Limestone Products, Inc.	\$114,456.10
Big Rock Paving	\$126,351.00
Gutelius, Inc.	\$122,838.20

Mr. Wetzel made a motion to accept the low bid of \$114,456.10 from Meckley's Limestone Products, Inc. Mrs. Boyer seconded the motion. Council approved unanimously.

Council Meeting Minutes

Upon motion by Mrs. Rees, seconded by Mr. Wetzel, council voted to unanimously approve the council meeting minutes of July 7, 2020.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Berard reported that for the month of July, the police department issued 24 traffic citations, 2 non-traffic citations, and 277 parking tickets. They answered 278 calls for service, made 20 court appearances, and recorded 6.5 training hours. Several people were arrested for misdemeanor crimes, including unsworn falsification, simple assault, drug law violations, and DUI. The police department responded to 37 assist calls; 13 to Point Township, five to Sunbury, and 19 to other agencies. 1,754.4 miles were traveled for the month.

Mayor Berard requested that the council approve a motion for the police chief to order a new vehicle, a Dodge Charger, to replace the 2015 Dodge Dakota. The first payment for the car would be due one year after taking possession of the vehicle. Mrs. Rees **made** a motion to approve the purchase of the new vehicle for the police department and to sell the 2015 Dodge Dakota. Mr. Wetzel seconded the motion. Council approved unanimously.

Northumberland Borough Sewer Department

Mr. Ruane explained that a proposal has been received from RETTEW for design construction documents to replace the belt filter press sludge feed pump at a cost of \$18,900. Mr. Rees moved to approve the proposal. Mrs. Boyer seconded the motion. Council approved unanimously.

Mr. Ruane announced that the Sewer Department budget meetings are set for August 24, September 8 and 21, October 5 and 19 at 4:00 p.m. The meetings are open to the public and are held at the Borough Office.

Code Enforcement Officer's Report

Ms. MaryKay Clark reported on the activity of the Code Enforcement Office for the month of July 2020. Two building permits and two zoning permits were issued with fees totaling \$79. She received seven complaints, filed one citation, had one court appearance, and issued nine code violations. Seven rental inspections were conducted with fees totaling \$350. Five "Quality of Life" notices and five "Quality of Life" tickets were issued. 42 miles were traveled.

Mr. Wetzel asked how the "Quality of Life" tickets are going. Ms. Clark responded that she has been issuing the tickets rather than issuing citations. The difference is that the tickets are paid like parking tickets. *She asked the solicitor if there could be a problem with citing the tenant, rather than the property owner, if the tenant is not paying the ticket. Ms. Kelso responded that according to the definitions of the ordinance, the person responsible for the property could be the tenant so the Borough may cite the tenant.* She advised taking the ordinance along to the District Justice's office if there is a hearing.

Street Supervisor's Report – no report

Committee Reports

Community Development

Gymnasium

A quote of \$6,200 was received from Steven Johnson Drywall to patch the plaster and install drywall in the two small rooms on either side of stage. Mr. Johnson had repaired the walls on the stage using the same method of repairing plaster and installing drywall. Once the walls are finished, the electrical lines can be run, and the lift can be installed. Mr. Wetzel so moved, Dr. Guilbault seconded the motion. Council voted unanimously to approve.

Santa House

The current Santa House was built on the trailer and is in poor condition. Pricing has been obtained from Yoder's Barns in Mifflinburg to purchase a small, shed type structure that has a porch on the front. The electrical work can be completed by the Street department and a Boy Scout would like to install the insulation and drywall and inside finishing. The Borough has a trailer than may be used to move the building, but a winch is needed to get the building on the trailer. The estimated cost for the building, winch, and supplies is approximately \$7,000. The Borough Manager requested approval to apply to the Joseph J. Anselmo, Sr. Community Trust for the funding. Dr. Guilbault made a motion to apply for the funds. Mr. Wetzel seconded the motion. Council approved unanimously.

Finance

Mrs. Rees made a motion to approve the donations to Priestley-Forsyth Memorial Library (\$3,000), Penn Valley Airport Authority (\$1,500), and the Shade Tree Account (\$2,500). These amounts are in the 2020 budget. Dr. Guilbault seconded the motion. Council approved unanimously.

Personnel

Mr. Wetzel informed council that MarySue Smith, the Borough's Health Officer has resigned. He added that MaryKay Clark is willing to be appointed to the position and a state health officer will provide training for her. Ms. Kelso advised that two motions should be approved by council.

Mr. Wetzel moved to accept MarySue Smith's resignation as Health Officer. Dr. Guilbault seconded the motion. Council approved unanimously.

Mr. Wetzel moved to appoint MaryKay Clark as the Borough Health Officer. Mrs. Rees seconded the motion. Mayor Berard asked what the duties of the health officer are. Mr. Wetzel replied that the Health Officer inspects all the businesses in town that serve food that are made on the premises; A-Plus, all bars and restaurants, and any private homes that have commercial kitchens. Mr. Ruane noted that this work is like inspecting rental properties; just inspecting other items. Council voted unanimously to appoint Ms. Clark as Health Officer.

Public Safety – no report

Rules

Dr. Guilbault thanked Mrs. Rees for her part in moving forward the no vaping/smoking restrictions for playgrounds. She noted that the signs have been ordered. The Borough Manager informed council that the signs arrived last week and some of them have been installed.

Autistic Child signs

Ms. Clark contacted the property owner and learned that the children have been adopted. The residents would prefer that the signs designate "autistic child area" rather than "children at play" signs. Ms. Kelso informed council that these signs are not prohibited in Pennsylvania and she does not feel that erecting the signs would pose any liability for the Borough.

Mrs. Boyer moved to obtain the signs and Mr. Wetzel seconded the motion. Council approved unanimously.

Streets – no report

Finance

Mrs. Rees informed council that the Finance committee would conduct budget meetings on August 25th, September 22nd, and October 27th. Council would vote on the 2021 budget on November 2nd and December 1st.

Old Business

1. Mrs. Rees made a motion to move ahead with Mr. Wetzel's idea about storage for RVs at Pineknott Park and Liberty Splashland and to approve the lease that was provided by Ms. Kelso for the rental agreements. Dr. Guilbault seconded the motion. Council approved unanimously.

New Business

1. Upon motion by Mrs. Boyer, seconded by Mr. Wetzel, council unanimously approved payment of the bills, including an invoice submitted by John Rollins for \$70 for CPR and First Aid books that he purchased for the police department, and a Coles bill of \$78.92 from the fire police for paint and supplies for the fire police building. Bills to be paid from the General Fund total \$50,979.97; Liberty Splashland bills total \$29.02; and Sewer Department bills total \$100,907.13.
2. The Borough received a request for a property tax refund in the amount of \$824.77 from Winston and Catherine Ortiz. Mr. Ortiz is a disabled veteran and has submitted documents from the Pennsylvania department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the Northumberland County Board of Assessment Appeals that move the property into exempt status. Mr. and Mrs. Ortiz had paid the property tax bill before learning that their request for exemption was approved.

Dr. Guilbault moved to refund the property tax of \$824.77 to Mr. and Mrs. Ortiz. Mrs. Rees seconded the motion. Council approved unanimously.

3. Mr. Jon Apple asked if the Borough would have a Halloween Parade this year. He noted that Selinsgrove and Danville have canceled their parades but noted that their parades use state roads. Mr. Wetzel asked if there is a committee that does the parade. He was informed that a committee member, Noelle Long, has asked for council's opinion. Mr. Ruane asked Mr. Apple if council could make the decision at the September meeting. Mr. Apple responded that it would be pushing it but would be okay.

Executive Session

Mr. Ruane adjourned the council meeting for the Executive Session at 8:04 p.m. to discuss litigation issues. He added that the meeting would not be reconvened.

The Executive Session was concluded at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice R. Bowman
Borough Manager