

Borough of Northumberland
175 Orange Street, Northumberland, PA 17857
Northumberland Borough Council Meeting
October 6, 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, Kaitlyn Simmons, and Frank Wetzel. Others present were Mayor Berard; Melissa Kelso, Borough Solicitor; C.L. Kriner, Police Chief; Jeremy Deitrick, Sewer Department Superintendent; Vernon Morgan, Street Supervisor; and Janice Bowman, Borough Manager. Council member Orlando Toro was absent.

Public Comment

Ms. Meghan Beck stated that she is attending to follow up on issues about the Community College.

Audit – Anthony Gagliardi (Klacik & Associates, P.C.)

Mr. Gagliardi informed the council that he is with Klacik & Associates and the company does the Borough's annual audit. He thanked the office and sewer staffs for their cooperation in conducting the audit. Mr. Gagliardi reported that there were no findings in the audit. He pointed out that the governmental funds are reported on pages 9-14. The sewer and pool funds are reported separately as proprietary funds and are on pages 15-17. The notes on the financial statements begin on page 18. Mr. Gagliardi explained that one of the last notes on page 50 discussed the Covid-19 issue. Pages 51-55 discuss the pension plans. This information was received from PMRS. The DCED report was also completed.

Mr. Ruane asked if anyone had any questions on the audit. No questions were asked.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Berard reported that for the month of September, the police department had 83 traffic citations and one non-traffic citation. 105 parking tickets were issued. The department had 289 calls for service and 27 court appearances. There were 60 training hours. Several people were arrested for felony and misdemeanor crimes, some of which included rape, terroristic threats, contempt, hindering the apprehension, flight to avoid apprehension, drug law violations, and DUI.

The police answered 37 assist calls for the month; twelve calls to Point Township, fourteen to Sunbury, and 11 to other agencies. 1,692.6 miles were traveled for the month.

Mayor Berard pointed out that construction has begun on the police training facility.

Northumberland Borough Sewer Department

Mr. Jeremy Deitrick requested that council approve the purchase of a pump through co-stars bidding at a price of \$15,528.30. Upon motion by Mrs. Rees, seconded by Mr. Wetzel, council unanimously approved the purchase.

Code Enforcement Officer's Report

Mr. Ruane read the report from MaryKay Clark, the Code Enforcement Officer. During September, six building permits and one zoning permit were issued with permit fees totaling \$1,222.00. Ms. Clark had two court appearances, issued two certificates of occupancy, and condemned one property. Five complaints were received, 7 code violations were issued and one citation was filed. Three street cut permits were issued with backfilling fees of \$1,550. Twenty rental inspections were conducted with \$1,000 fees collected. Eight Quality of Life notices and eight tickets were issued with fines of \$200. 62 miles were traveled for the month.

Street Supervisor's Report

Mr. Vern Morgan reported that the street department is transitioning from summer to fall. Mr. Ruane asked if the leaf picker is ready to go. Mr. Morgan responded that it needs a new battery, but will be ready. Mr. Morgan stated that the pool is being filled in.

Committee Reports

Community Development

Ms. Kaitlyn Simmons reported that a resident attended the committee meeting to discuss the possibility of a week-long festival next year. Because there are a lot of unknowns, the committee requested that she provided a written proposal with all the details so council has more information and can share it with the solicitor.

Finance

Mrs. Rees noted that the committee met last month to discuss the 2021 budget.

Personnel – no report

Public Safety – no report

Rules

Dr. Guilbault reported that the committee is continuing to review the code book. They are up to chapter 22 and have found nothing major thus far.

Streets

Mr. Ruane noted that the street paving has been completed. He added that the sewer lids on Riverview have been lowered to make it easier to plow.

The committee has requested that the Police Chief do a study for 4-way stop signs at Sheetz and Brickyard Avenues; 7th and Orange Streets; 5th and Prince Streets;

and to make Wheatley Avenue one way from 7th Street to 6th Street. Mr. Ruane added that the Hookies sent a letter to the Borough supporting the 4-way stop signs at Sheetz and Brickyard Avenues.

Old Business

1. Susquehanna Valley Community Education Project

Dr. Guilbault moved, and Mr. Wetzel seconded the motion to write a letter of support for the Susquehanna Valley Community Education Project for a regional college.

Dr. Guilbault asked if Ms. Beck has any more recent studies on the economic impact that community colleges have on a specific area. She noted that the two studies that she received are pretty old, one from 2010 and 2016. They are the Butler and Penn Highland studies. Ms. Beck responded that there was one study done in Erie just this year. She offered to provide this study. She also stated that Butler is in the Pittsburgh area.

The cost to attend a community college is about \$3,600 per semester. Other 2-year institutions charge around three times the cost. The reason community colleges cost less is because the community and state help to pay the costs. They want to create an open enrollment and improved access for people who find the costs prohibitive to obtain higher education.

The committee has signed paperwork to have a study done which would project the economic impact of a regional college.

Dr. Guilbault noted that several universities and colleges in the state have lost funding recently. She added that she feels that a community college is a great idea but questions if it is the right time.

Ms. Beck agreed, but noted that there is never a “good time”.

Community colleges can shift easily to offer new courses of study when needs arise.

Mayor Berard stated that he thinks there will be a rise in blue collar work. He noted that Pennsylvania is 70% down on the number of plumbers. Wages for blue collar workers will rise as the demand rises. He added that community colleges can provide training for construction trades, maintenance and repairs, nursing assistants, manufacturing, automotive, and hospitality. Community colleges will have a draw for these types of courses.

The cost for each household in the county will average about \$1.14 per month, based on a millage rate, not a flat rate. Support is being sought from businesses, individuals, and government entities in the four-county area. The county governments are looking for confirmation that the communities are interested in

supporting the venture. The group is waiting on information from a partner college.

Dr. Guilbault asked when they expect the economic study to be available. Ms. Beck replied that the group has started collecting data for the study and anticipate the report should be completed before the end of the year. Dr. Guilbault responded that she would like to have the data.

The group is holding a virtual event at newcommunitycollege.org for a summit on October 23 from 9:00 to 3:00. Presenters are from other community colleges, foundations, and scholars. The presentation will be on zoom and streamed on facebook.

Mrs. Rees asked if this could be a referendum on a ballot. Ms. Beck stated that the requirements are narrow for referendums and this would not apply. They are considering putting the question on the ballot as an opinion poll to determine the support. Mrs. Rees noted that she is in favor of the idea of having a community college, but would first like a ballot opinion poll to see if there is enough community support.

Dr. Guilbault stated that she is not comfortable right now because she doesn't have enough information. Mr. Ruane stated that there is a motion and second on the floor. He added that council could table the motion. Mr. Wetzel stated that this is a only a letter of support and it isn't costing any money. Dr. Guilbault said that she would like to fully support it and she can't until she has all the information. Mr. Wetzel stated that he still thinks there should be a vote. Dr. Guilbault rescinded her motion.

Mr. Wetzel made a motion to send a letter of support. Mrs. Boyer seconded the motion. Mr. Ruane, Mrs. Simmons, Mr. Wetzel and Mrs. Boyer voted yes. Dr. Guilbault abstained, adding that she does not feel that she has enough information to make a decision. Mrs. Rees abstained. The motion passed 4-0-2.

New Business

1. Upon motion by Mrs. Boyer, seconded by Mrs. Simmons, council voted unanimously to approve payment of the bills, including payment of \$4,031.13 to Apollo Fence for fencing at Pineknottter Park.

Bills to be paid from the General Fund total \$212,594.25; 2nd Street Community Center bills total \$6,200; Donations account bills total \$696.83; Liberty Splashland bills total 28.58; Liquid Fuels bills total \$114,456.10; Park and Recreation fund bills total \$66.38; Parking Meter bills total \$399.80; and Sewer Department bills total \$101,449.50.

2. Correspondence was received from TRA Electric, Inc. regarding an Annual Traffic Signal Maintenance Agreement. This company had installed the new

traffic signals and had been servicing the Borough's traffic signals in the past. The cost is \$600 per intersection for a total of \$1,200.

Mr. Wetzel moved to approve the agreement; Ms. Simmons seconded the motion. Council approved unanimously.

3. North'd County Assessment Bureau sent an invitation to attend the Real Estate Hearing on Thursday, October 8th regarding an appeal for property at 480 Susquehanna Avenue.
4. A request for a handicap parking sign was received from Michelle Bingaman at 224 Front Street. Mr. Wetzel moved to approve the request and Mrs. Boyer seconded the motion. Council approved unanimously.

Executive Session

Mr. Ruane adjourned the meeting at 7:52 p.m. for an Executive Session to discuss litigation. The Executive Session ended at 8:30 p.m. and the council meeting was not reconvened.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice R. Bowman
Borough Manager