

President Harvey Marshall called the November 1, 2021 Council meeting to order at 7:00 pm with the pledge to the flag. Council members present were V.P. Mark Spotts, Mike Martin, Matt Miller, Dean Johnson and Rod Soliday. Jamie Burrus was absent. Also attending the meeting were SHPD Chief Leon Grim, Mayor Randy Gartner, Solicitor John Muir, Part-time secretary Victoria Wawrzyniak and Manager Lisa Heilman. Citizens and visitors attending the meeting were David Randler, David Bright, Dave Rohrbach, John Schoener, Scott Adams, Carol Werkheiser, Geneva Berger, Dave Hannigan and Tim Rowe. A motion was made by Mr. Soliday to approve the minutes of the October 4, 2021 Council Meeting. Mr. Johnson seconded and Council approved unanimously.

VISITORS & CITIZENS: David Bright informed Council that POSofA Camp 113 will be holding a Flag Retirement Ceremony on Saturday, November 6th at 11AM. John Schoener and Scott Adams were in attendance to determine if there has been any movement on the “squatters” living in the old Gloray Building and expressed their frustration with the amount of time it is taking to get the matter resolved since the tenants of the building are still harassing the customers of Castanedas Mexican Restaurant. Mayor Gartner noted that the Womelsdorf-Robesonia Joint Authority noted that they had an issue with the sprinkler system in that building and that Mr. Charles was required to install a backflow preventer and to repair the sprinkler system and wondered if that would be a reason to gain access to the building. Mr. Soliday asked Chief Grim if they’ve received any harassment complaints regarding this issue and, if so, to provide it to the Solicitor and Council. Solicitor Muir was provided with updated information and will be discussing the matter of obtaining an administrative search warrant with Technicon. They will attempt to pool as much recent information as they can to justify obtaining an administrative search warrant and present it to District Justice Ann Young to see if she will issue the warrant. Tracy Rice asked if the Borough submitted a request to DEP regarding the environmental remediation of the Furnace Hill AARC property on Freeman Street to request participation in the remediation of the property. Solicitor Muir advised Ms. Rice that Council felt it was not necessary to spend more taxpayer funds to oversee the DEP. Tim Rowe advised Council that he had heard some rumors regarding a neighboring property and was there to observe if it was discussed. All other visitors were observing.

MAYOR – Mayor Gartner read an email submitted to him from Scott Adams & John Schoener, owners of Quality Awnings, regarding the comings and goings of John Suey and Gennie Cheng, tenants of the old Gloray Building at 317 E. Penn Avenue, and their ongoing harassment of the Castaneda’s clientele.

SOLICITOR – No report.

ENGINEER – The Engineer’s Report was included in the agenda packet. A 6-month extension was granted by Jack Keener for the review of the 10-unit extension of his Furnace Village project. Mayor Gartner asked what would happen if Council refused to approve the extension. After some conversation and consideration a motion was made by Mr. Soliday to accept the 6 month extension and seconded by Mr. Miller. A roll call vote was taken: Martin, yes; Miller, yes; Soliday, yes; Johnson, yes; Spotts, yes; Marshall, yes. Motion passed unanimously.

PLANNING COMMISSION – The October Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for November 17th at 7PM. C2C Design will be submitting plans for the Furnace Hill AARC to be discussed and reviewed at that meeting.

MANAGER – Do we want to renew our pesticide applicator’s license? If so, we will need to send one or both of our regular streets/maintenance employees to be certified. Council recommends we renew and send both employees.

Presented a bid obtained to update the technology/connectivity in the borough office. The total cost for everything includes two computers, a new printer/fax/scanner/copier, security, cloud storage, and

updated cables to improve wifi connectivity. The low bid (and only bidder who could provide everything we asked for from one place) was SMRTGUYS at a cost of \$8,843.00. Mr. Martin made the motion to approve the purchase, Mr. Soliday seconded. Council approved unanimously. Manager then asked if the expenditure should be paid from the American Rescue Plan Funds or from the General Fund. Mr. Spotts recommended it be paid from the American Rescue Plan Funds. Mr. Martin seconded and Council approved unanimously. Manager expressed her appreciation to Council for their expressions of sympathy during the recent loss of her mother.

PAYMENT OF INVOICES- Motion by Mr. Martin, seconded by Mr. Johnson and unanimously carried, the bills were ordered paid as presented, including those paid prior to the meeting to avoid penalties.

COMMITTEE REPORTS-

Finance/Administration –2022 Budget work is all but complete. There are just a few numbers that still need to be updated pending a personnel decision by Council. At this point, the total budget is \$1,842,118 which includes the General Fund (\$916,700), Trash Fund (\$450,775), Liquid Fuels Fund (\$261,143), General Equipment Fund (\$40,005), MS4 Fund (\$73,495) and American Rescue Plan Fund (\$100,000). Once the numbers are provided, Manager will work on completing budget and present at the November 16th Workshop Meeting.

Personnel: Manager advised Council that she received a notice of resignation from Tori Wawrzyniak from her position as P/T secretary effective November 12th. Mr. Soliday made the motion to enter into Executive Session at 7:30pm to discuss Personnel Issues. Mr. Miller seconded. At 7:51 Mr. Soliday made the motion to reconvene regular session. Mr. Johnson seconded and Council approved unanimously.

Fire Protection/Safety – Mike Martin advised Council that the Fire Company and Police Department held a joint Trick or Treat event for the kids and it went extremely well. Over 400 items were given out to the kids. It was a great community event.

Streets & Highways- Mr. Marshall advised Council the concrete and paving work has begun at the Borough Garage to create the area for the compost transfer facility. Mayor asked when it would be done. He was told we are having some issues locating the jersey barriers but hope to have it all done this winter.

Parks & Recreation- No report.

Library- No report.

Police- Chief Grim presented Council with some footage from the new body cameras. The technology is impressive and the officers handled themselves and the situation shown very professionally. A proposal from South Heidelberg Township for ongoing contracted police services was presented for approval. They are seeking a five year commitment with annual 4.5% cost increases as follows:

2023: \$313,611

2024: \$327,723

2025: \$342,471

2026: \$357,882

2027: \$373,986

Mr. Spotts made the motion to approve entering the five year agreement subject to the provisions of the contract remaining the same as currently in place. Mr. Miller seconded the motion and Council approved unanimously.

Water/Sewer Municipal Authorities- Rich Kuchar was removed from his position as treasurer with the Robesonia Municipal Authority since he is no longer eligible to serve. This leaves a vacancy on the

board. The RMA submitted Jon Henning's name for consideration. David Randler asked Council to consider appointing him. He noted that he currently sits on the Wernersville-Robesonia Sewer Authority board and they are getting a lot done. He also sits on the Heidelberg Township board and they have built up their sewer fund tremendously while still getting a lot of I&I repairs completed. He feels that in spite of their coffers being built up by the sewer tapping fees from the Keener development, things are still just not getting done to improve the RMA's sewer transport system as they should be. He noted that the attorneys had provided Council with an opinion stating that to appoint him would not create any type of ethics violation, however, there could be conflicts of interest that would arise from such an appointment and advised against it. He also noted that he has been in public service since the age of 18 and feels he can be impartial in serving in all three positions. He asked Council's consideration in appointing him to the vacancy. Dave Hannigan, Chairman of the Robesonia Municipal Authority, noted that the RMA, when they reorganized, had considerable debt passed on to them by the Borough which has since been paid off. He noted that sewer rates will be increasing substantially since they were just notified that their rates from the Wernersville-Robesonia Sewer Authority will be increasing by 50% in 2022. Mr. Hannigan noted that the RMA has been working to correct some of their I&I issues. They recently attempted a repair on Furnace Street but the proposed fix did not work. They recently obtained a quote to fix permanently. They also just spend \$11,000 with Ditchcreek for video services to find issues in need of repair. David Bright, engineer for the RMA, advised Council to not get the idea that the system is ready to collapse. While they do have problems, they are not nearly as significant as Wernersville's I&I issues or Heidelberg Township's before their recent repairs.

Mr. Spotts made the motion to appoint David Randler. Mr. Soliday made the motion to appoint Jon Henning. Mr. Spotts made the motion to close the nominations and Mr. Johnson seconded. Council approved unanimously. A roll call vote was taken:

Johnson- Randler; Spotts-Randler; Marshall-Randler; Soliday-Henning; Miller-Randler; Martin-Randler
Mr. Randler was appointed on a vote of 5-1.

Robesonia-Wernersville Sewer Authority submitted a letter requesting consideration of donating some of the American Rescue Plan Funds to them to be used toward their planned plant upgrades. Mr. Spotts asked if donating some of the money would have any impact on the planned 50% cost increases for treatment. Mr. Marshall advised him it would not.

Western Berks Joint Planning Commission: The next meeting will be held on November 30th at 7PM in the Robesonia Borough Hall. A quorum of each member municipality's governing body must be present to vote on the proposed changes. Mr. Spotts asked what the changes are that are being proposed by the two townships. Mr. Randler explained that the change for Heidelberg Township is for a piece of property on the west end of the township (zoned agricultural preservation) that continues into Marion Township where it is zoned medium density residential. Heidelberg is proposing to change that piece of property to make it consistent with that portion in Marion Township. North Heidelberg Township is proposing to change the required minimum average lot area for apartments in the MDR District in North Heidelberg Township to 7,500 square feet.

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Marshall- No report.

Martin- No report.

Soliday- No report.

Johnson- No report.

Spotts- No report

Burrus- No report.

Miller:. No report.

Mayor Gartner- No report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – Breininger Property Clean-up: Technicon is coordinating with Liberty Environmental on a revised RIR/CP Report (Remedial Investigation Report/Clean-up Plan). They have reached out to Liberty Environmental about the issue and are awaiting a response from Jim Cinelli. Mr. Marshall brought up the possibility of having HNT conduct a complete property survey at this property in the amount of \$5,475.00. Mayor Gartner asked to hold off on that till he speaks with Jim Cinelli of Liberty Environmental.

Mr. Rohrbach brought up the issue of an “overflow parking” area he feels should be required in the Keener Heights (Furnace Village) extension when the plans are submitted...or even before. He feels the parking provided in the original portion of the project is insufficient. TBD at the November 16 Workshop Meeting.

NEW BUSINESS – No report.

COMMUNICATIONS:

- Womelsdorf-Robeson Joint Water Authority Treasurer’s reports (September)
- Monthly Police Report. Stats section was included in agenda packet.
- Western Berks Ambulance monthly report-October
- Building Permit List-October
- RMA Treasurer’s Report (October)

On a motion by Mr. Soliday, second by Mr. Johnson and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Attest:

Lisa Heilman
Manager/Secretary/Treasurer